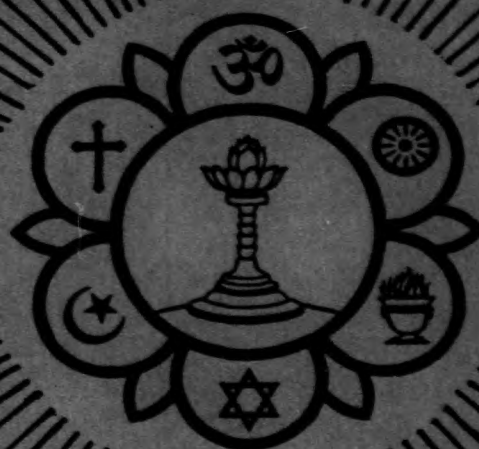




SATHYA SAI Newsletter

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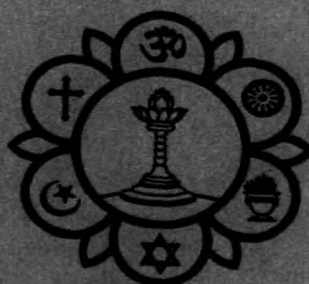
SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER

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

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The Sarva Dharma symbol, the logo of the Sri Sathya Sai Organization, represents the unity of all religions.



Photographs, drawings, and literary contributions are always welcomed by the **Sathya Sai Newsletter**. We reserve the right of discrimination in selecting, reviewing, and editing material for publication. Send all literary contributions to: **Sathya Sai Newsletter**, P.O. Box 660908, Arcadia, California 91066-0908. —**Barbara Bozzani, Editor**



Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba greeting some devotees.

“Avatars seldom give advice directly. This is characteristic of all Avatars from time immemorial. Whatever they wish to communicate, they convey more often by way of indirect suggestions and rarely by direct methods of instruction. The reason for this is that Divinity is inherent in every human being and may be manifested spontaneously if favorable conditions are provided. This inherent Divinity is like a viable seed which will germinate and grow into a tree, if suitable facilities are provided for the manifestation of its potential. People should be able to correct themselves by their own efforts—by merely being given timely suggestions—rather than by having stultified their freedom and dignity through directives imposed from without. In short, the best maxim for helping people is, ‘Help them to help themselves’ or ‘Self-help is the best help.’”

—Sathya Sai Baba

Summer Showers 1990, pages 95-96

A Birthday Greeting for Baba

We honor You, Sai Baba, on Your birthday. We have joined together to pay tribute. You have come at a time when the world is cast in darkness of the soul.

Humankind has lost its spiritual anchor. We are adrift in a sea of moral blindness and materialism. Through a false sense of freedom, many millions of souls wallow in self-indulgence and debauchery. An attachment to the senses has created customs that are deadening to spiritual life. Societies have developed where the love of God is forgotten. Consequently, family life is disappearing, leaving children homeless in spirit as well as in fact.

Five-thousand years ago on the field of Kurukshetra, Krishna told Arjuna, "Oh, *Bharata* (citizen of India), *whenever and wherever Divinity becomes subdued and humanity struggles to emerge out of ignorance, then and there I incarnate Myself.*" (Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4, Sloka 7). You have come again as promised, Baba, and just in time!

We thank You on this, Your birthday, for making the supreme sacrifice of being confined in a physical body for our benefit. We can only repay such grace by living up to Your ideals and teachings. We ask for help in this effort. We carry with us Your love as an ever present flame, illuminating our souls. Help us feel that abiding love; help us see Your abiding presence in all things.

"You can be certain of giving Swami a proper [birthday] gift when you love and serve your fellow human beings."

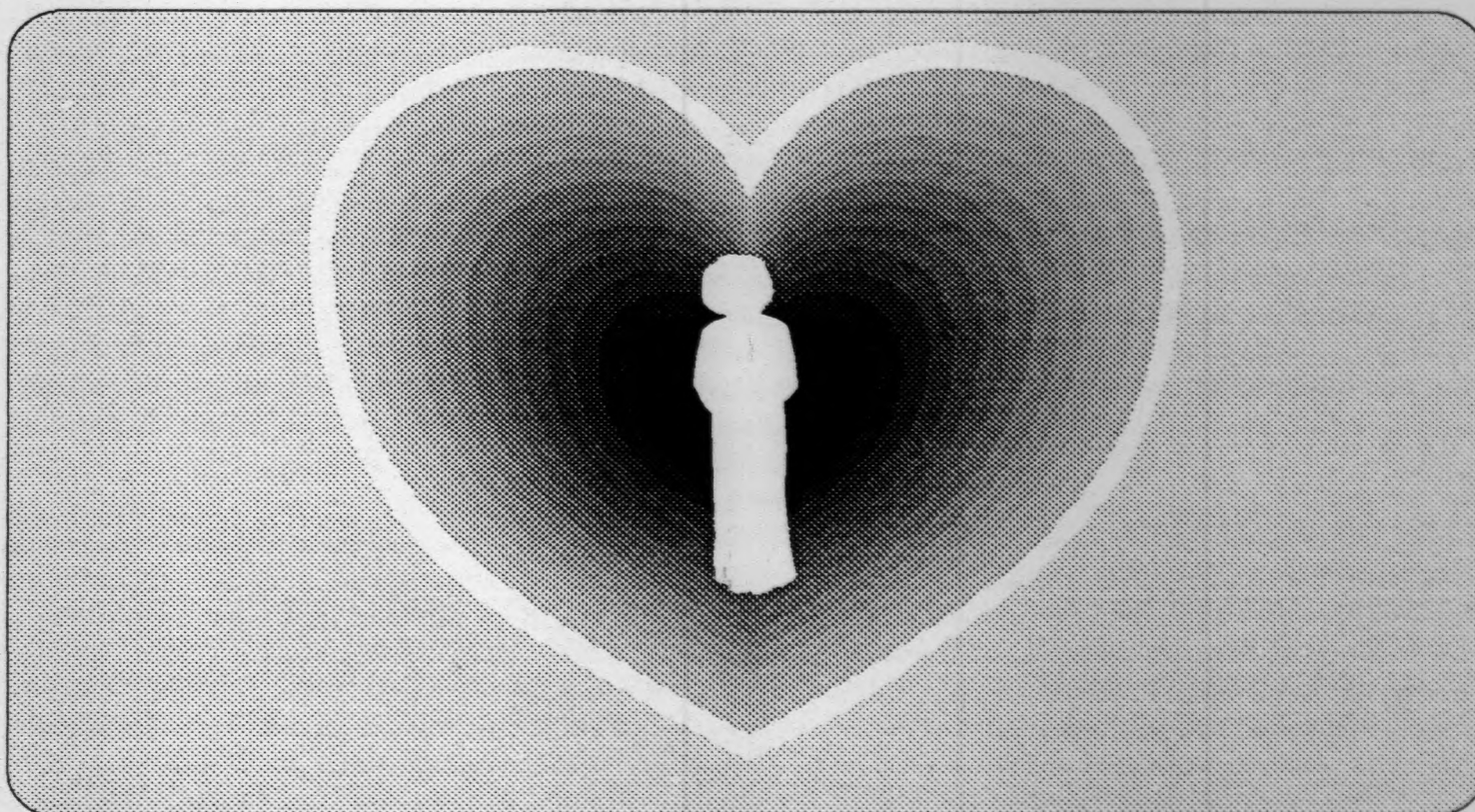
Let our longing manifest in our ability to behold You in all beings and in all creation. We leave our bouquets of devotion upon the sacred altars of our hearts. Let the perfume tell You that we are ever spiritually mindful.

The birthday celebration of this incarnation reminds us all how You have changed the world, and that we are blessed to live in a time and space where we can witness Your effulgence. We are grateful for the chance to come into this life and be the beneficiaries of Your grace. Your boons and blessings sustain us as we struggle on the path to spiritual enlightenment. Your enduring love lightens our footsteps and eases our ascent to the mountain top, the summit of Self-realization.

Dear Sathya Sai Baba, we pray that You continue to bless us: bless our homes and those who dwell therein, bless our endeavors as we go about our daily tasks, bless our friends and foes alike. Permeate our bodies with transmuting light, so that our every cell may be nourished by Your healing power. As we go forth in the world, let us be Your feet taking us to places where we may do good; let us be Your hands blessing those around us in Your name; let us be Your eyes filled with compassion for all.

—**Mary Lewis and Devotees**
of the Sathya Sai Baba Center of
Hanover, Maryland

—**Sathya Sai Baba**
Prasanthi Nilayam, November 23, 1982



or place, the differences between them are obvious. Their forms and manners differ; they differ in their cleverness and intelligence; their opinions also vary. Without understanding what underlies these differences, materialistic thinkers emphasize the differences. Today, growing numbers of intellectuals, ignoring the unity that underlies the diversity, propagate the cult of differences. Good people, who realize the unity behind the apparent diversity, are dwindling in numbers from day-to-day. This is highly unfortunate.

Mankind's foremost task is to recognize the unity that underlies the diversity. If one inquires into the matter with a pure and unselfish mind, one will see what is common to all beings. Birth and death are common to all people; hunger and thirst are experienced by everyone.

emies of man—they degrade themselves to the animal level. On the other side are those who make use of the good qualities conferred by God, such as intelligence, wisdom, and virtue. They pursue the path of truth and righteousness, engage themselves in divine activities and ultimately realize the Divine. People can choose either the path that leads to animality or to Divinity because the potential is common to all. What is important is the path one chooses. As the thoughts, so the outcome.

The mind determines the goal one pursues. Hence, it is essential to focus the mind on the right path and realize the true nobility of human existence. If you have a knife, you can use it for slicing vegetables and preparing a good meal. A person can also use a knife for taking away another person's life and behave in

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Prasanthi Nilayam, November 23, 1982

July 21, 1993

Divine Grace & Human Effort

Embodiments of Divine Atma

Speech constitutes the wealth of the world. Speech promotes friendship and kinship. It is speech that lends sweetness and affection to all relationships. Speech also leads the way to death. Speech is endowed with immense power. The power and potential of speech represents the divine feelings of mankind. Hence, one has to be very vigilant when speaking.

Factors That Unify

The mysteries of creation are intriguing. When two people meet at any time or place, the differences between them are obvious. Their forms and manners differ; they differ in their cleverness and intelligence; their opinions also vary. Without understanding what underlies these differences, materialistic thinkers emphasize the differences. Today, growing numbers of intellectuals, ignoring the unity that underlies the diversity, propagate the cult of differences. Good people, who realize the unity behind the apparent diversity, are dwindling in numbers from day-to-day. This is highly unfortunate.

Mankind's foremost task is to recognize the unity that underlies the diversity. If one inquires into the matter with a pure and unselfish mind, one will see what is common to all beings. Birth and death are common to all people; hunger and thirst are experienced by everyone.

These are truths that apply to all people, whether they are destitute or millionaires, whether they are scholarly or ignorant. Every human being has Atma (indwelling Divinity) and a body. Consequently, everyone enjoys a certain degree of freedom. This is described as "free will." Not comprehending the nature of this freedom, people tend to stress differences rather than the unifying factors.

Thoughts & Mind Power

Mankind is a combination of two kinds of traits: one is the animal nature; the other is Divine Nature. When swayed by evil qualities like lust, anger, greed, delusion, jealousy, and egoism—the six enemies of man—they degrade themselves to the animal level. On the other side are those who make use of the good qualities conferred by God, such as intelligence, wisdom, and virtue. They pursue the path of truth and righteousness, engage themselves in divine activities and ultimately realize the Divine. People can choose either the path that leads to animality or to Divinity because the potential is common to all. What is important is the path one chooses. As the thoughts, so the outcome.

The mind determines the goal one pursues. Hence, it is essential to focus the mind on the right path and realize the true nobility of human existence. If you have a knife, you can use it for slicing vegetables and preparing a good meal. A person can also use a knife for taking away another person's life and behave in

a demonic, disreputable manner, ceasing to be human.

The same mind is responsible for either animal or divine behavior. In Vedantic parlance this is stated as: "The mind is the cause of human bondage or liberation." The state of the mind depends on the nature of the thoughts with which it is filled. So, too, the smell of a paper depends on what is wrapped in it—flowers, fish, or potato chips. When the mind is used properly, one will achieve fulfillment.

People perceive the world in terms of diversity, but as the scriptures declare: "There is only the One. The wise call It by many names." People experience heat and cold, joy and sorrow, darkness and light, profit and loss. All these are opposite aspects of the same thing and not two different things. For instance, darkness helps one to enjoy light. If there were no darkness, light would have no value. Darkness is absence of light; light is absence of darkness. Darkness lends value to light. Sorrow contributes to the value of happiness. Loss enhances the value of profit. Likewise, censure has its worth; it enhances the value of praise. Censure is the stepping stone to praise; the two are interdependent.

You cannot get lasting pleasure from the senses. Joy and sorrow are one and the same. The bitter rind covers the sweet juice inside the orange. Do you consider the bitterness of the rind and sweetness of the fruit juice as separate? Only when the two are combined together is it considered to be an orange. We just enjoy the sweet juice of the fruit and discard the bitter peel.

For all the experiences in the world relating to pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, the cause is one. All the troubles one experiences are stepping stones to happiness. This is the essence of Vedanta. Hence, for mankind, the proper spiritual activity (*sadhana*) consists in cultivating equal-mindedness without succumbing to grief or getting elated over a happy event. In daily life, people experience all kinds of happiness and distress. The scriptures declare, "Treat joy and sorrow, success and failure, profit and loss alike."

Conduct & Forbearance

Embodiments of Divine Love! What is the purpose of your joining the ashram? What is the inner meaning? You have come to lead a peaceful, sacred, and blissful life dedicated to the Divine. This peace does not lie in the external world. Peace is your very form. Truth is equally so. It is folly to think that you have to search somewhere for Truth. To know one's Self is Truth. To experience the Self within is peace. Lack of peace is caused by involvement in external experiences, ignoring the Self within.

All things, good and bad, in the world are related to your actions. Your well-being is based on your conduct. Your wealth is dependent on your actions. You will secure peace and prosperity when your conduct is good. This calls for forbearance. A prayer in the *Upanishad* says, "Let us have forbearance toward each other. Let us rejoice together. Let us all strive together."

Forbearance is a potent instrument. Dharmaraja (the eldest of the five Pandava brothers) was able to score many

victories with the weapon of forbearance. Forbearance is not a sign of weakness or cowardice. No other weapon has the power of forbearance. It does not need to be used only as an individual instrument, it can also be experienced collectively. That is the reason why the scriptures have commended collective forbearance at the very outset of the spiritual quest, that is the inner meaning.

Let us live and move in harmony. Let us grow together. Let us cherish the wisdom that we have acquired together. Let us live in complete harmony without any misunderstanding. Therefore, do not have any misunderstanding among you. All should live in peace as the children of one mother.

God is all-powerful. But, at the same time, human effort is also necessary. Without it, mankind cannot enjoy the benefit of God's grace. It is only when you have both divine grace and human endeavor that you can experience bliss, just as you can enjoy the breeze of a fan only when you have both a fan and the electrical energy to operate it.

God's Cosmic Role

In the great drama of cosmic life, the Cosmic Director, God, is also an actor. The cosmic play is governed by certain rules and regulations. Because He is the Almighty, God cannot behave in an arbitrary manner. His actions have to be in accordance with His role in the cosmic play. There are certain rules as to how one should act according to the time, the place, and the circumstances. He cannot behave according to His whims just because He is all-powerful. For instance, the officer who lays down the rules for

controlling traffic cannot disobey them on the grounds that he is their author. Likewise, the Creator has to conform to the rules laid down by Him for creation.

Not recognizing this truth, people who are involved in worldly ways ask questions as to why, in certain situations, God did not use His limitless powers to avert certain untoward events. These arise out of a narrow conception of things without understanding how the Divine operates. They are concerned only about themselves and their own interests. They ask, "Here is a sacred temple, how could something unholy occur in such a place?" They see things from a narrow perspective. They do not realize that, for God, the entire universe is His temple. So, whatever happens anywhere, happens in God's temple. The cosmos is the form of God. God is immanent everywhere in the cosmos. When a temple is constructed on a piece of land, it becomes a temple. If it is knocked down, it becomes mere land again. For God, every place is a temple. "His feet and hands, His mouth and eyes, and His ears are everywhere. Encompassing all, He pervades everything." (from the *Bhagavad Gita*).

When things are seen with this broad perspective, it will be recognized that anything can happen to anyone, at any place, or at any time. No one is competent to determine where a certain thing should take place. Life may end in a town, in water, or in a forest. Each life will end in the place, the manner, and at the time prescribed for it. This is inescapable; this is according to the operation of nature's law based on the pairs of opposites in life. There is a continual conflict between these opposites [of pleasure and pain, birth and death, etc.].

Some Illustrations

By way of illustration, there is an episode in the *Mahabharata*. Krishna was all-powerful. He was aware that making peace with the Kauravas would be of no avail because of their stubbornness. He knew that war was unavoidable, but in the context of worldly affairs and having regard for public opinion, Krishna had to make an effort to promote peace. Consequently, He went as an envoy of the Pandavas, and made a vain effort to convince the Kauravas to accept a peaceful settlement. Krishna acted as if the peace mission had failed, and He told the Pandavas that war was inevitable. All these were scenes in His play.

It has been asked—when Draupadi was being humiliated in various ways, when Duryodhana was unabashedly behaving in a wicked manner in pursuance of his evil intentions—why did Krishna not intervene to prevent them? Why did Krishna not destroy the wicked Duryodhana? The reason is that the time had not yet come. Bhima was the destined instrument for slaying Duryodhana. Duryodhana had to meet with his death at the hands of Bhima and not of Krishna. Krishna was waiting for the appropriate time. Therefore, whatever has to happen, at what time and in what manner, has been predetermined. The mere fact that I am nearby will not serve to alter circumstances.

In Duryodhana's audience hall, Sisupala was hurling abuses at Krishna. But Krishna waited. The appropriate time had to come. Only when the cause, the time, and the necessary action are in fruitful combination will the event hap-

pen. Krishna was patient until the time was ripe. When the moment for action came, Krishna put an end to Sisupala.

The Lord always adheres to His laws, the rules and regulations laid down by Him. People do not always abide by the rules when they face trouble, but whatever the situation, the Lord observes His rules and regulations. Therefore, no one can determine what limits and laws govern the Lord's actions.

Jesus Christ declared, "I am the Son of God." But when He was crucified, God did not come to His rescue. Christ even cried out in anguish, "Oh, Father, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But the Lord acts, having regard for the time, the place, and the circumstances. Prophet Mohammed was chased from Mecca and Medina, though He was a great devotee of God. Why didn't God come to His rescue? He accords to each person the honor and esteem that is due him. Christ became a glorious figure in the moment of His crucifixion.

Thus, by a certain action, in a certain context, a person achieves name and fame. For instance, Abhimanyu pleaded with his mother to be allowed to fight his way through the Lotus Maze organized by the Kauravas. The mother tried to dissuade him in all possible ways. As a last resort, she told him, "The maze is a dreadful trap. The great Bhishma is commanding the enemy's army. Neither your father, Arjuna, nor your uncle, Krishna, is near. Your wife is with child. It is not proper under these circumstances for you to embark on this perilous adventure." She said all those things as a mother would.

But Abhimanyu had to speak out from the son's point of view. "Oh, Mother, is it right for you to ask a lion's cub to refrain from attacking a herd of petty animals? You should have ordered me to go and fight them like a warrior and return victorious. Instead, is it not infamous if I am asked to keep away from the fight?" Saying so, he left for the battlefield. Abhimanyu could not refrain from going to the battlefield. No warrior can fail to respond to a challenge. Death is preferable to the infamy of cowardice.

Recognizing the validity of Abhimanyu's reasoning, his mother permitted him to go. "Son, you may go. May all the goddesses protect you even as they blessed their sons when they set out to fight the demons. Above all, let Sri Rama be your protector." All these blessings did not save Abhimanyu.

Abhimanyu was destined to die in the Lotus Maze. Could the blessings save him? Because he died in the maze, he found a place in paradise reserved for heroes. Such fame is not obtained by dying in an accident, from a disease, or of old age. For every kind of fame, there is a specific form of death.

Lord Loves All—Equally

Death is born together with birth. And death must come in the way it is bound to come. The Lord, however, is a witness to all happenings. In some instances, He gives prior indications and warnings. When these are heeded, the person concerned is sanctified. But, when the warnings are disregarded, ones sanctity is forfeited. All, therefore, should do their duty. The Lord's heart is boundless; He is concerned about the collec-

tive well-being of all. People, however, tend to have a narrow and limited perspective. A narrow outlook can lead only to a limited result. God makes no distinction between one group and another. He loves all equally; He blesses all; He wishes good for everyone. "*May all the worlds be happy,*" is His benediction. Whatever the desires of people are, they will be fulfilled by God only according to what they deserve. One cannot go to the River Ganges with a small tumbler and hope to get more than a tumbler full of Ganga water, but when one acts according to the Lord's command, the capacity of the container becomes larger.

In the *Mahabharata*, Krishna wished to avoid the charge that He had done nothing to prevent the great battle. Hence, He chose to go as an ambassador of peace to the Kauravas, though Arjuna expostulated with Him in strong terms that there was no point in having peace parleys with the wicked Kauravas.

The noble and the pure have been subjected to slander in all ages. From ancient times to the present, the evil-minded have assailed the high souls who have sought to serve humanity. Such untoward events have happened many times. Only when those attacks are faced and overcome, does the glory of the Divine become manifest. No great person has ever achieved eminence without overcoming abuse and slander, trials and tribulations. Gold acquires greater brilliance by being heated in the crucible. Likewise, a diamond becomes more brilliant when it is cut to produce more facets. For good people, trials and tests are stepping stones to fame.

Please turn to page 29

Sculpting Toward Perfection

Most of you have heard some version of the story of the sculptor who produced a remarkable, lifelike elephant from a block of stone. When asked how he managed to produce such a magnificent elephant from just a crude stone, the sculptor replied, "I just chip away everything that isn't elephant."

For me, this story provides the answer to the question, "What is the purpose of my life?" The answer is to chip away everything that is not Atma in order that I may realize that Divine Reality which, Baba assures me, dwells within this crude stone.

So, how do I chip away everything that isn't Atma? Baba gives us, in the form of His teachings, a full tool box for this task. Look at His discourses, they flow from one tool to another—here He gives us an admonition, there a technique, here He provides a metaphor, there a parable, at another place a full explication, another time an injunction.

In His loving care, Baba gives us such an array of tools that each of us in our individuality can pick the tools that suit us, that feel right in our "hands." And we do have different needs. What we select will be influenced by the nature of our personalities, our different stages in life, our *vasanas* or tendencies. And, of course, we come into this life with various levels of mastery.

When I was thinking about this, I took a sort of personal inventory regarding which of Baba's teachings or tools are impacting my life right now. I came up

with three right off the bat. (Some of you might find this an interesting exercise.) It was illuminating to take a look at which teachings are shaping one's life at a given point. And, again, we all have different needs.

For example, my first tool is one large piece of non-Atma at which I always need to keep chipping away. Of course, it is the mind. Baba has given many tools for this task. I find it helpful to work at being a witness to the never-ending, incredible antics of my mind. In order to align myself with the Eternal Witness, I begin by watching my own mind with all its dreams and schemes, desires and judgments, pet ideas and concepts, and its everchanging directions. Of course, Truth, Atma, never changes, but the mind is always changing.

The second tool is an admonition from Baba which is very meaningful to me, "*Hurt never, help ever.*" This teaching really has to do with chipping away ego and separateness, allowing us to experience unity. We are one, we are not separate. So, Baba tells us "*hurt never*," not even with a word, a look, or a gesture. "*Help ever*" is an example of Baba's teachings on service. He admonishes us to serve the self-same Atma in others. If you think about it, these two—"hurt never, help ever"—are guidelines for how to live one's entire life.

The third tool that struck me—it is an important one—is the idea of surrender. This one chips away at the notion of doership. I love these three words: surrender, trust, and accept. Surrender

everything to God, trust Him completely, and accept whatever the outcome as divinely correct.

The three tools or teachings which I mentioned earlier—witness the mind, *hurt never, help ever*, and surrender everything to God—shape my life and address its divine purpose. The exciting part is, when you chip away at the mind, chip away at the ego and separateness, chip away at doership, there is something that keeps expanding: Love! That brings us to another teaching, “*God is Love; Love is God; Live in Love.*” Thank you, Baba, for Your Love.

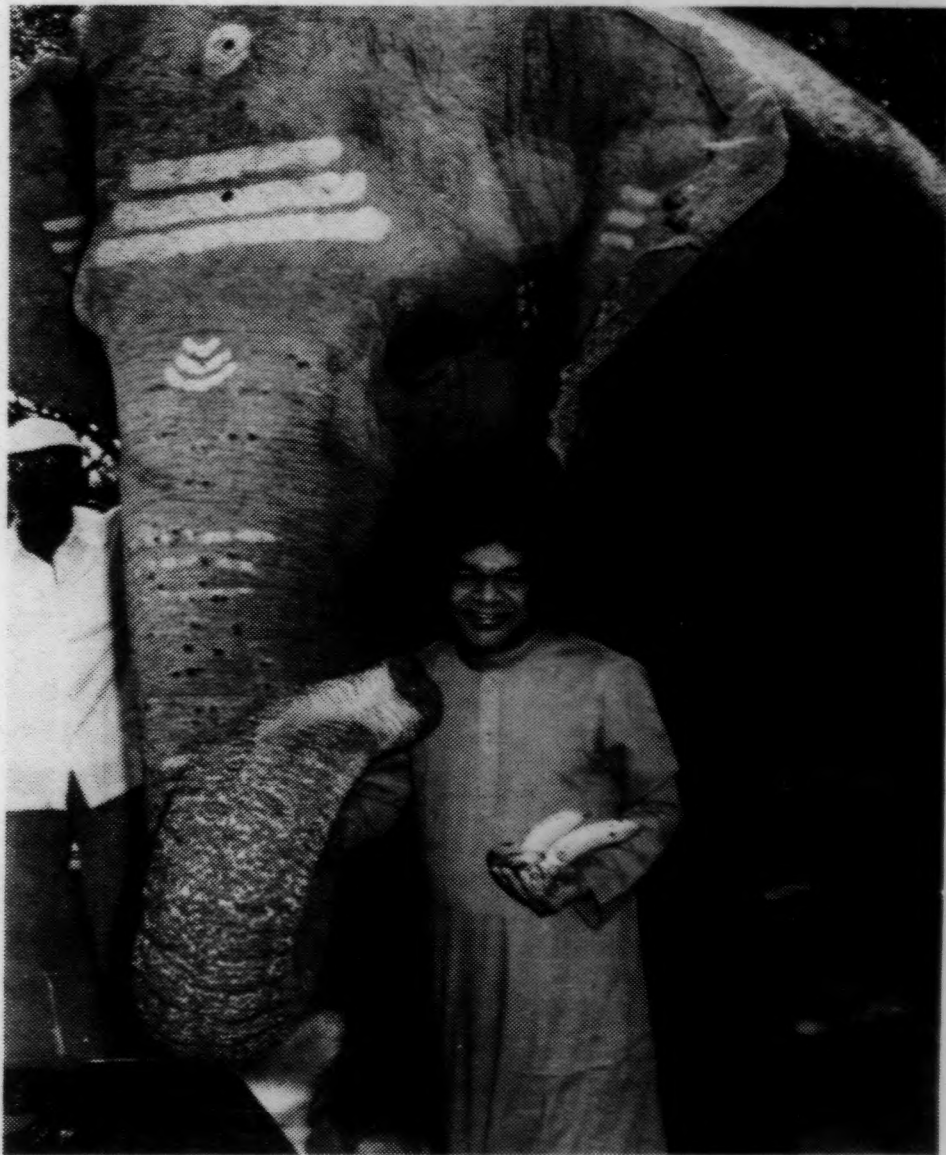
—Katie Atherton
Santa Ana, California

“Mistaking this world as ‘all’ and forgetting the Atma, which alone is eternal, is the greatest folly of mankind. Today, people are pinning all their hopes on this slippery world and are madly running after, amassing, and hoarding wealth. Material needs are to be taken care of, but not at the cost of spiritual values. . . .

Unless people have understood their inner nature, unless they have mastered their minds and grasped the inner Truth, they are of no use to the world. The individual has to be responsible for the progress of the world by upholding the values of life and striving for the good of the community. . . .

First, one has to cultivate purity of thought and mental equanimity. This mental equanimity is not something which one can purchase or obtain from outside. One has to generate it from within. . . .”

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XI. Chapter 18



Sai's elephant, Sai Gita. The pachyderm is often heard trumpeting as Baba enters or leaves the ashram.

Of Good Report

Can there be such a thing as a “bad” trip to see Sai Baba? My answer to that question has always intuitively and emphatically been “No!” However, I have at times been hard-pressed to explain my answer in terms of human experience. There is no question that the trip can be expensive, less than comfortable, and not always rewarded by the coveted interview. Baba recognizes the human difficulties which are faced by His foreign devotees. He has explained on numerous occasions that sorrows and pains are not strangers on the road of life. They are, rather, signposts to direct people away from worldly attachments, and to guide them toward Divinity, which is their destiny. Problems are not obstacles to progress. They are more like hairpin curves, which, when negotiated, will take you higher and higher on the path of progressive evolution (*Sree Sai Sudha*, page 6). But even more specifically, in a discourse given for foreign devotees in Kodaikanal, 1991, He said:

Embodiments of Divine Love! You have entered into a spiritual path and have come here, giving up a lot of physical comforts and sensual pleasures. You have traveled long distances and spent a lot of money and time. After having come here, what are you doing? What is your aim? What is your feeling? With what purpose did you come? You have to inquire into this matter properly. . . .

You are all very good people. You come with great aspirations. . . . But, because of the fickleness of your mind, you are

not receiving enough joy. Do not have fickleness of mind. Swami's grace is abundant. You are worried because Swami did not talk to you. Swami does not waste any time. Morning and evening I am granting interviews, not only here in Kodaikanal but also in Puttaparthi. Because of increasing crowds, it is not possible to see everyone. Have heart-to-heart relationship. When the time comes, I will talk to you. Without worrying, think about God with love.

Recently, in Puttaparthi, I had occasion to ponder this instruction for many weeks. Though I have experienced many of the difficulties Baba described, including the fickleness of mind, within several months after my return home, I know myself to be experiencing an elevation of mind and a higher awareness of my true being. After prayerfully asking Baba to let me understand more clearly what the effects of visiting Him are, a Japanese edition of *Time Magazine* mysteriously appeared in our little Puttaparthi apartment, and I read the following:

“There was a time when the emergence of life wasn't thought too amazing. With Darwin having explained how specks of life became us, the question of where the specks came from seemed minor. Presumably, if you let simple molecules reshuffle themselves randomly for long enough, some complex ones would get formed, and further reshuffling would make them more complex until you had something like DNA—a stable molecule that makes copies of itself.”

But recently, more careful analysis suggests that even a mildly impressive living molecule is quite unlikely to form randomly. Then, where did it come from? (For Swami's answer to this question, see this column in the Fall 1993 issue of the *Sathya Sai Newsletter*.) This is one of the questions that drives an emerging interdisciplinary field known as "complexity." One of complexity's main buzz words is self-organization. Drab, lifeless physical systems such as air and water, faced with increasing disruption, sometimes grow more structured. Air becomes more turbulent until it finally turns into whirlwinds, tornadoes, or hurricanes. Water molecules heated from below grow wilder in their gyrations un-

til they finally snap into a sweeping circular motion known as a convection cell. The Russian-born Belgian chemist, Ilya Prigogine, a Nobel laureate, sees a broad tendency for physical systems that are driven away from stability to regain it at a higher level of organization. Some would say that such a law is evidence of God. . . .

And many of us who have experienced being driven away from stability while in Swami's presence, only to find later that we have regained that stability at a higher level of consciousness, will affirm that it is God's law.

—Joy Thomas
Cherry Valley, California



"God has incarnated in human form in order to inspire people to follow higher ideals, not only in India but in all other countries. People may have different languages and life styles, but God is One and He is present everywhere. All religions speak of Him as Love and attainable through Love. Forms of worshiping God differ, for they are shaped by time and place, but Love is the basic content of all forms. The language of Love is understood and spoken by all hearts.

We now consider petty distinctions of nationality, race, religion, and language as vital and hold back Love which must flow to everyone from the heart. There is really only one race and that is the race of humanity. That was the life and message of Jesus. Nurture it in your hearts. Experience Jesus as your messenger sent from God. . . .

Become what you are—the embodiments of Love. No matter how others treat you or what they think of you, do not worry. . . . Follow your own chosen path. Let your own experience of God be your guide. . . . Speak sweetly, shed comfort with every glance. Do not be slaves to your sensual desires. . . ."

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XI, Chapter 3

Young Adult's Corner

Sai Baba's Greatest Miracle

This summer I received one of the greatest blessings an American student could hope for, a chance to live as one of Swami's students. Swami instructed Hal Honig, a long time devotee from New York, to bring a group of American college men to the Summer Discourses. Baba had said to Hal, "*You bring them. I will change [them].*" Two summers later, in May of this year, 1993, the well-anticipated journey to Sai took place. It was on this trip that I learned of Sai Baba's greatest miracle.

I had no idea what to expect from a trip put into motion by Swami, Himself. I was especially interested to see how He was going to *change* us. Sai Baba spoke to us many times, giving advice about schools, career choices, and an occasional gentle scolding about our bad thoughts. He even answered one of my mental questions about how to overcome bad thoughts. He said, "*To say, 'I am a man' is only half right. You must say, 'I am a man, not an animal.' When a bad thought comes, say, 'That is an animal quality; I am a man, not an animal.'*"

When the summer discourses started, one lecturer asked the question, "What is Swami's greatest miracle?" In my mind I wondered how anyone could know of Swami's greatest miracle unless Baba, Himself, had spoken of it. Not a second later, the lecturer explained that Swami had said His greatest miracle was His ability to change people. This state-

ment brought back to mind the words Sai Baba said to Hal Honig when He told him to bring us, "*I will change.*" I was especially excited to think that Swami was going to perform His greatest miracle on *us*!

I had already felt some change within me, but I knew that it would be an experience and not words that was going to make a significant change in me.

One morning, Swami called our group for an interview. I sat in the very back of the room, and it wasn't long before Swami looked at me and said, "*You, back boy, what do you want?*" And He motioned for me to stand and come toward Him. As I got closer, He asked again, "*What do you want?*" I said, "Anything You want to give me, Swami." Then, He told me to sit down by His feet. Swami went on with the interview giving us His words of wisdom. Later on, He asked me again, "*What do you want?*" I figured that I better come up with something good since it was my second chance to ask Him for anything I wanted; so, after a second of contemplation, I said, "I want to experience God." He then said, "*Oh! Experience!*" as though He were pleased with my choice of words. He then waved His hand and out came a ring that He put on my finger. I was a bit confused when Baba gave me a ring instead of talking to me about when and how I was going to experience God. I still had no idea what transformation Swami had in mind.



Baba giving *darshan* in the new structure at Brindavan. Some students are sitting before Him.

At that time, our trip was almost over, and I was a little anxious because I had felt that the big *change* had not yet fully happened. It was a few days later in Puttaparthi that the rest of the change took place. Swami called us in for a final interview and spoke to each of us privately. Yet, many of us left the interview with doubts about whether or not Baba was really God and wondered if we were doing the right thing in life by following His teachings, in spite of the many miracles and wondrous feelings we had experienced. I was very confused and scared and also a little bit upset at myself for losing faith, and at God for allowing me to lose faith. The only thing I was clear about was that I had never be-

fore had such an intense desire to find out what *truth* really is. That was when it occurred to me that the transformation was starting to take place. Swami had given us the very thing we needed in order to find God—the desire!

Because of this *change*, I now realize that no person or thing can make us realize God. Even God Himself will not just grant us transformation; we must find it ourselves and experience it ourselves. Only then, will we know the truth and be free of doubts. But, I also realized through this experience that He is with us and helping us the whole way, no matter how difficult or painful it is.

—Sathya Purcell
Tustin, California

Deeper Meanings

Sathya Sai Baba can take words that we use so casually in our everyday conversations, and in His inimitable fashion, He shows us how meaningful those words can be. Here are some examples:

Puttaparthi—When visiting the ashram to see Baba, He tells us that if we leave our egos behind and come with open hearts, He can fill them with the love He has come to give. So, when visiting, we should **Put Apart The I**.

Properties are not **Proper Ties**.

Parents are given that name, because it is through them that we have the wonderful chance of life on earth. For the sacrifices that they have made for us, we must **Pay Rents** to them.

Communist—When a question was asked of the problems in communist-controlled countries, Baba's response was, not communist, but **Come U Next**. Not long after that, communism became history and will only be read about, not experienced.

Peace—People clamor "I want Peace." But they won't let go of **I** (ego) or **Want**

(desire). **I** and **want** deal with the outside world. **Peace** is inside, **Pieces** are outside.

Patience—Doctors need more **Patience**, not **Patients**.

Interview—Do not clamor for an Interview. Search instead for the **Innerview**.

Diamond—Why do you seek a diamond to give you joy? Seek instead the state of **Die Mind**, which will give you pure and lasting joy.

Modern Technology is more aptly named **Modern Tricknology**.

Skill—Knowledge must develop by balance into skill, or else, it degenerates into **Kill**.

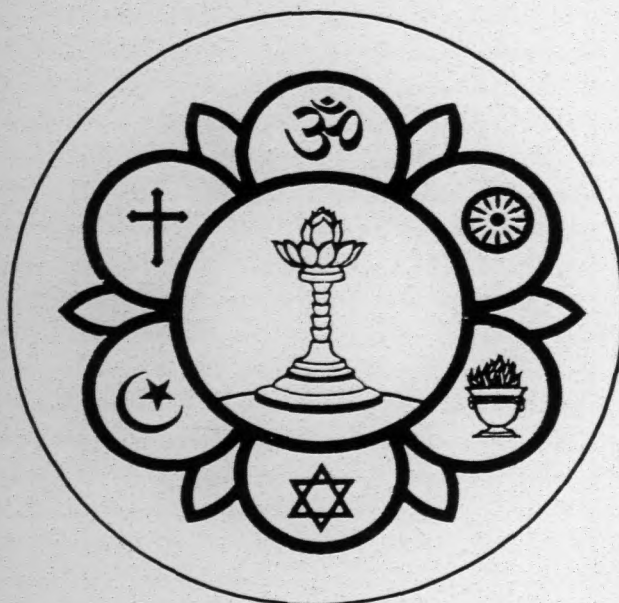
Heart is on the inside, **Art** is on the outside.

Hello—Do not greet anybody when the heart is filled with anger, distrust, etc. Have, instead, a pure **Hollow** from which a wholehearted hello emanates.

Television is **Telepoison**.

Study to be **Steady**.

Compiled by—**Suman Govindan**
New Caanan, Connecticut



The Sarva Dharma symbol above represents the unity of all religions. It is the logo of the Sai Organization. The symbol reminds us to be tolerant.

God's Road to Safety

Many years before Baba came into my life, my mother had a dream which she described as very moving and comforting. It revolved around attempting to clean the windows of her house. It was always difficult to reach those windows without a ladder. In her dream, an Indian gentleman with curly hair, came to her door and offered to do the work, so that she could have "a clear view of the world." Since he was a stranger, she was unsure and asked him to return later.

After Baba came into my life, I placed pictures of Him in my home. On my mother's first occasion to see these pictures, she was shocked and said, "Oh my, that is the man from my dream!" Since that time, although she doesn't consider herself a "regular devotee," she often refers to the fact that she directs prayers to Baba and says daily *Sai Rams*, etc.

Although I speak with my mother daily, there was a troubled morning when I was out of town, and could not be of assistance to her. Her work hours start quite early, and she is on the freeway before sunrise.

That particular morning was quite brisk and windy. As she proceeded on the basically deserted freeway, her front tire blew out. She was able to maneuver the car to the embankment and walk to a call box a short distance away. The wind was blowing, she was cold and shaken.

At the call box, she placed the call for roadside assistance but was disconnected before citing her location. After that, the call box telephone went dead!

Trying not to panic, she started back toward her car. In the meantime, a shabby, old truck pulled off the road next to her. She felt her heart pounding. Her mind raced, "Am I going to be murdered? Will I be robbed?" She felt that her heart was beating loud enough for the truck driver to hear.

The fellow approached her. He was small and had a sparkle in his eyes. "Please, do not be afraid," he said assuringly. "Is that your car on the roadside?" She affirmed. He then said, "May I please change the tire for you?" Still nervous, but somehow gaining trust, she said it would be great if he could. He showed her the safest place to stand while he did the work. When he finished, he instructed her what to do to have the necessary adjustments completed.

Ever so grateful, she offered him money, which he declined. Then my mother asked how she could repay him. He smiled and simply said, "Perform a kind act for someone in need. That would make me very happy."

He then walked away, waited in his truck until she was safely back on her way, and then, his truck disappeared in the glaring sunlight. When I spoke to her that evening, my mother said, "You know, I think that was Sathya Sai Baba again." Then she asked me if I thought He could do things like that. "I think so," I told her. "I think so. . ."

—Marilyn Osoff
Sierra Madre, California

Challenge of the Age

We breathe the air of an extraordinary time, an unparalleled historical opportunity. The Kali Yuga* Avatar walks among us. He instructs us in discourses and writings on the path to liberation itself. Indeed, He speaks to each of us in our daily experience. Sathya Sai Baba offers us the chance to approach Him and observe His life. He stands before large throngs to convey His message. Never before has a *poorna* Avatar (full, complete Avatar) allowed such access to Himself. Only a fortunate few recognized the Divinity of Rama or Krishna. Those incarnations inhabited princely realms beyond the reach of common men and women. Now Sathya Sai Baba proclaims His mission and His message for all who will see and hear.

No one who recognizes this Divinity among us can deny that we are the recipients of a great blessing. The only limitation to our spiritual blossoming lies in our inability to grasp the gift offered to us. If we fail to heed Sathya Sai's message and to implement it in our lives, the loss is our own. His teachings flow as a river of grace in flood. The benefit we receive is constricted only by our lack of facility in absorbing the nectar of His words. We forfeit our chance if we do not heed and practice His teachings.

Failure to apply ourselves in learning Sai's message would be an unthinkable tragedy. To decline the gift that generations of saints and sages have longed for would constitute an unbelievable loss, both for ourselves and for humanity. We stand poised at a critical juncture in hu-

man history. The Avatar appears revealed before us. He holds to our gaze the prize of Self-realization. He demonstrates to us that we are not different from Him. He opens the book of all knowledge before our eyes. If we slip into age-old patterns of worshiping the teacher and discarding His message, then we err grievously.

Duty calls us to seriously apply ourselves to learn and practice Bhagavan's teachings of truth, correct action, peace, love and nonviolence. Those who see and hear are wise to earnestly equip themselves with this knowledge. Many means of education beckon to us to fulfill our calling. Books by and about Baba are readily available. Sai also recommends the practice of study circle for discussing these teachings. Officers of the Sai Organization have encouraged programs of public speaking by members on spiritual topics. The public is invited to open houses where newcomers and seasoned members listen to discourses on Swami's teachings. Various avenues present themselves for learning Sai's message, but ultimately the motivation must come from within each seeker.

Motivation generates from awareness of our time and opportunity. It is sparked by our realization of how much we stand to gain in peace and joy. If we truly understand the bliss and fearlessness that Sai's message conveys, how can we forsake the progress? Such chances to benefit from divine grace are offered only once in many lifetimes. Seizing the occasion requires an iron sense of inner di-



rection and conviction. We are prudent to apply ourselves to the spiritual opportunity [more rigorously than] we now do for material gains.

During the Kali Yuga,* students work diligently to prepare themselves to acquire money or power. Years are invested in college degrees and professional training. But, few apply themselves equally to the greater task of mastering themselves. In this age of shallow values, both the difficulty of inner search and the opportunity for spiritual progress are greater. The difficulty lies in overcoming the anger and materialism which surrounds us. The opportunity arises from the ease of earning God's grace during this time of challenge.

So, who accepts the challenge of the age? Who drifts on the sea of illusion, and who seizes the opportunity to strive for liberation? The rewards lie within reach for those who embrace Sai's message. Peace, joy, love, and fearlessness are the prizes of that victory. They emerge from within our depths like a great wave, the result of a quake from our Atmic core. Time reveals [these things] to us if we have diligently applied ourselves to that supreme transformation. The voice in the heart praises or disparages our efforts. Our quest must be in earnest, for time gives back to no man that which has passed.

—Jonathan Roof
Tucson, Arizona

*Kali Yuga—the fourth and present age of the world, full of conflict and sin.

Guided Tour Forms to the Right

On my first visit to Sathya Sai Baba in January of 1976, I was given the *Om Sai Ram, Important Guidelines and Code of Conduct at Prasanthi Nilayam* which outlines appropriate behavior. I noticed a few pilgrims only glanced at those *rules*, while some used the Guidelines like a weapon to enforce their sense of discipline on other visitors. Other devotees actually took the Guidelines to heart and followed them with great sincerity. I have treasured that document and now use a copy of it as stationery for correspondence with friends. In each of its 23 points, I continue to find new levels [of wisdom] in His guidance. Two small examples are numbers 18 and 8.

Number 18 invokes care to “preserve cleanliness of the premises.” At first thought, the premises were just the ashram grounds. Later, while struggling with an unclean habit, I had a dream in which Swami reminded me of Guideline number 18. In my dream, it was written on thick, white paper in golden ink with a golden asterisk before it. As I read the words, “Spitting and other unclean habits must be avoided,” He smilingly said to me, “I do not expectorate.” I was puzzled, for I knew that He had no unclean habits at all, so why did He say that? Upon awakening, I thought this over. I realized the way He said EXPECTORATE might also mean, “I do not EXPECT or

RATE. I am never disappointed, for I have no expectations; I do not judge or rate people as other than embodiments of love.” Now I realize that the ashram is the sanctuary inside each of us, and His Universal Body is the premises to maintain. With that example, the Guidelines reveal how words are both special and ordinary at the same time. Studying them reminds us that, as devotees, we are both special and ordinary at the same time.

The second example of utility in these Guidelines is number 8 which advises devotees to “not pay any attention to anyone who claims close association to Bhagavan or claims to have inner messages or special blessings from Swami.” Many have found this attitude of indifference to the little self to be invaluable. When devotees do first hear the *inner voice*, we sometimes tend to tell others what we hear before putting what we hear into practice. It is then that we find our little selves met with indifference as if we were only “imagining things.”

Many find a sincere outlet for the overflow of grace in service, *satsang* (keeping good company) and silence. The three merge in one as we live His teachings. But how are we to discern what is *really* His inner word and what is our delusive imagination?

"Your thoughts, words, and deeds must be saturated with my message. Then they will spread effortlessly and efficiently, and the face of the world will be transformed."
(Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XI)

Om Sai Ram, Important Guidelines and Code of Conduct at Prasanthi Nilayam

1. Please maintain silence and keep children under control.
2. Devote your time to spiritual matters as far as possible.
3. Do not play tape recorders/radio sets in the rooms in such a manner as would cause disturbance to others.
4. Dress in a clean, modest, and sober manner.
5. Smoking, using alcoholic drinks, drugs, and nonvegetarian food (including eggs) on the premises are strictly forbidden.
6. Do not allow any stranger to visit your room, and do not permit others to live in the flat or the veranda unless permission has been obtained from the office.
7. Ladies and gents are not expected to mix and visit each other's rooms.
8. Do not pay any attention to those who claim close association with Bhagavan or to have inner messages or special blessings from Swami.
9. Security of your personal belongings is your responsibility. Always lock your flat when you go out. Bolt the door from inside when sleeping in the room.
10. Please keep the flat clean. Cooking in the living room is not permitted.
11. Please use minimum electricity and water. Close the taps and turn off lights/fans before leaving. Use of power appliances like electric stove and heater is not permitted.
12. Please do not put clothes for drying on the veranda or other common places.
13. Put off all lights by 9:00 PM. Please do not move about after "lights off" time.
14. Do not associate with strangers and encourage them to develop friendships with you by exchanging addresses, etc.
15. Please do not try to open locked portions of the apartment.
16. When you vacate the flat, please leave it clean, and do not pass on the key to

another person. Always return the key to the Accommodations Office.

17. You are not required to pay money anywhere to anyone on the premises except for services like accommodations and food, etc. Beware of cheats and persons collecting funds.
18. Care should be taken to preserve the cleanliness of the premises. Spitting and other unclean habits must be avoided.
19. Taking photos inside the mandir (temple) is forbidden. Recording of bhajans (devotional songs) on tape can be done only after permission is obtained from the office.
20. The flats in Prasanthi Nilayam are not owned by any person.
21. The visitors are requested to make use of the canteen where food is prepared hygienically by the devotees for the devotees.
22. The visitors are requested to utilize the services of only the authorized porters, washermen, and servants and to pay only prescribed charges.
23. The office reserves the right to allot or not to allot accommodations for any visitor or visitors and also has unfettered right to ask any occupant of any flat to vacate the flat without assigning any reason.

When His grace is first experienced, it feels like a never-ending rain of bliss in a desert. In the headiness of that sudden Presence, it is tempting to proclaim our own new insight as the only true interpretation of His good news—perhaps even issuing a new order for others to follow! Many times, however, that inner message is especially delivered only for the heart of the original listener. Redirecting such a stream toward others may make for an uncomfortable flash flood for them. Therefore, maintaining a truly proper balance with insight and action is a moment-to-moment challenge for those who drink of that nectarine inner voice of Sai.

Guideline number 8 guarantees an essential "I-solation" during the integration from listening to fulfilling. Perhaps when His message is attended fully and His inner voice is translated into loving service and not sermons, we will be met with more appreciation than indifference. Witness the book, *My Beloved* by Charles Penn. Swami Himself has announced that the inner voice which Mr. Penn heard and related so well is His own. But then, Charles Penn did the work that the voice detailed long before He published the hearing of it. Guideline number 8 implies that we, too, must wait for completion of our inner task before telling others about it.

For example, in our Sai Study Circle, we recently discussed the merits of enacting what we have heard Swami say to another person. Some folks said, "Oh yes! If we actually overhear Swami say something to someone else, then it is definitely for us, too!" Others said, "Even if we only hear a rumor that Swami said such and such, but did not hear Him ourselves, even then, we can follow that advice!" Others said, "Perhaps, but perhaps His advice is *only* directed to the person whom Swami addressed."

Some found there to be confusion. To one person Swami said, "Do this," while to another He apparently said, "Do not do this." Which are we to do? We heard both indirectly! After all, Swami advises us in print that He speaks to each one of us *directly* with no intermediary. Yet, He also tells us that He is present in all. Now, as we know that each of His words is filled with import and deserves our full attention, does He mean that we are to attend to all who report, "This is what Swami says to do and not to do"? Are we to follow *their* inner voice instead of our own inner voice? Are we to obey His outer voice or the inner voice?

That puzzle fuels an interesting question, "Where do so many untraceable Sai quotations come from?"

An elder in our group suggested that some unattributable quotes come from interviews, while many more come from *innerviews*. During a private interview Swami may say something in that little room which He has not yet disclosed to the public. Swami knows whether or not we will talk of this, and He often tells us in person what not to share with others. However, during *innerview* we may not

permit Him to tell us to keep silent! Guideline number 8 implies that we do well to maintain silence regarding these private, inner messages.

The devotee who hears the inner Swami but reports only that "Swami said to me . . ." may inadvertently introduce confusion. Suppose those who hear the story report to others that Sai Baba said these things in an interview or public discourse? Is it not appropriate then to always give the source or reference for what Swami has said?

Often even that is insufficient. Charles Penn heard an inner voice saying, "Your Mission has begun." It is said that Swami confirmed that He, indeed, was the speaker of those words to Mr. Penn on the inner plane. (That seems likely as the book is sold in the ashram bookstore). However, a film maker included in his commercial film the quotation, "Your mission has begun," and attributed it to the divine discourse spoken by Swami at dawn on the morning of His fiftieth birthday. Since then, many Sai guest speakers have alluded to Mr Penn's inner message as "The Birthday Discourse."

Again, to show how rumors become gospel, recently a devotee brought from India a new book about Swami and proceeded to share it with friends. It is a work of devotional *innerview* (words not heard from the manifest Sai in person, but from the inner voice). In the introduction, the author clearly states these are all inner conversations in her own mind and dreams. The small volume contains some published quotations of Swami mixed among those of the author's own inner hearing, all presented as direct Sai quotes.

Already, some devotees in our Center are quoting that book as if the words were literally those of Sathya Sai Baba and should be followed as advice to each of us. In the strict sense, Swami never said those words in person, so they are not His words. In the sense that some of the sentences are direct quotes, they are His words.

We discussed this in our study circle, until our facilitator suggested that we go with our own experience. By that she meant: employ the wisdom you have garnered, study His books, recall your own direct personal experience with Him, and use your own God-given discrimination. We considered then:

1. What Swami says in public is for everyone.
2. When Baba says something in a private interview, more discernment is required.
3. However, in the *innerview*, supreme discrimination is required.

One evening, I was looking through my notes to find a quote directly from Swami about following advice He had given others. Finding nothing, I recalled how Dr. Robert Priddy of Australia compiled an index of Sai quotes and teachings. I went to that list for light on our discussion. The following is the very first Sathya Sai quote from Priddy's introduction entitled "Index User Guide."

"Everyone of you is a pilgrim on that road proceeding at your own pace, according to your qualification and the

stage reached by its means. The advice that appeals to one of you or applies to one of you might not be appropriate to another who has traveled less distance or reached an advanced state. When I tell one person to follow one line of sadhana (spiritual discipline), it is specifically for his benefit; do not take it as a prescription for your own benefit also, saying, 'Swami told him thus; let me adopt it.' Each has a different makeup: mental, physical, and spiritual."

Dr. Priddy locates the quote in *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Volume IX, page 58. I feel confident the quote is Swami's, even though unable to find the exact quote where this compendium states it to be!* Now if we cannot even find the correct volume and page number in a compendium made for that purpose, what can we do about verifying someone else's inner voice?

Swami does indeed speak to us with His nectarine inner voice, but that is usually a personal and private voice, and not "commandments" for someone else.

Those who find numbers 18 and 8 of the *Om Sai Ram, Important Guidelines and Code of Conduct* to be genuinely important might consider number 20. I merrily suggest to all devotees that they spend at least one-third of their time—while visiting Prasanthi Nilayam—in the sheds! Swami can be experienced very clearly there, showing us why, "The flats in Prasanthi Nilayam are not owned by any person."

—Bon Giovanni
Los Angeles, California

*The quotation in question does appear in the Second American Printing, 1987 of *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. IX on page 58. However, it does not appear on p. 58 in other editions of Volume IX. But, the quote can be found in chapter 9, titled, "Full Circle or Half Circle?" of any edition.

I Am Yours

I am your light.

Let me say more.

I am all that is within and surrounding,

Your energy source, your vision.

I am your breath.

I won't leave you.

You may devise elaborate schemes

Where your mind inverts light

To darkness, to

Chase me away, but

I won't leave you.

Rumors that I exist / don't exist,

Rumors that I am to be defeated,

Are words of the idle.

I am your light.

Use me.

That is what I am here for.

Discover it.

Envelop me with every thought,

Every direction.

Do not mistake,

People will come and go, but

I will not leave you.

I am your light, and

As long as you require it,

I will say more.

—Michael Frank
The Foothills of California



What I do, I do for society. Since the beginning, the thought that I must have this or that has not arisen in me. . . . Whatever does arise in me is only for the peace and welfare of the world, for the progress of youth, and for the transformation of boys and girls who will lead others along the path. You must dedicate yourselves to rendering enthusiastic service to the people of the world, recognizing that the Sai Principle has no egoistic urge.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Prasanthi Nilayam, November 23, 1982

Opportunities at Summer Course

"The one who seeks pleasure cannot be a student; a student will not run after comforts." This was the opening statement of Swami's final discourse to us at the 1993 Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality. The sentence only further emphasized what we already knew. We, thirteen college women from the USA, wished to attend the summer course for food for the soul, not for the body (even though we managed with the spicy *sambar* and *rasam*). We sought peace of mind, not repose for the body. That was a good thing because we slept on the floor and took cold bucket baths at 4:00 AM. We were determined to be thought of as "students of Sai."

Having studied in institutions in America, we wished to embark on the path of

spiritual wisdom in addition to our bookish knowledge.

Baba challenged us with the material He presented. He said, *"The end of education is attaining steadiness of mind."* This is simple to say but difficult to achieve. What is mind? *"Mind,"* says Swami, *"is a bundle of thoughts. As the thoughts, so the behavior. The mind is responsible for all pleasure and pain."*

Sai Baba emphasized the importance of maintaining good company. He said that compared to being in bad company, hell is much better. He brought the concept a step further by saying that bad company refers not only to people but, also, to thoughts. So, our efforts to control and guide the mind, our bundle of thoughts, is crucial.



The thirteen college women, their chaperones, and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Earlier in 1993, the author had gone to Prasanthi Nilayam as a volunteer to study and work at the hospital. Her brief account of that experience is as follows:

Sathya Sai Baba has often said, *"To whom much is given, from him, much will be demanded."* He has been very kind to me, but I'm waiting for the *"much demanded"* part. With that in mind, let me say that my experiences in Puttaparthi have had a dramatic impact on my life.

By Swami's grace, I was given the opportunity to work at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences Hospital for a period of four months. While there, I literally felt the love that Baba says we should develop toward all living beings. Each day I saw the devotion, dedication, and discipline that the doctors, nurses, and staff exemplified. They truly personified the concept of *seva* or selfless service.

Paradoxically, I was reminded of His Divinity, yet often forgot that He *is* Divine. I thanked Him each day in my prayers for the opportunity I had been given. But, because of His close proximity, I frequently saw Sai Baba doing the most human and ordinary things. For example, in February the hospital hosted an International Cardio/Thoracic Symposium for one week. During that time Swami was seen at the hospital everyday. On one occasion, I saw Him directing the arrangement of various photographs and other objects in the main dome of the hospital. He was not only the director but also a participant in the overall activities. I was simply amazed by the sight; it struck me as being so human, so ordinary, and so sweet!

Baba need not have personally overseen the preparations for the symposium, but He did so to allow us to have His *darshan* and to give us the opportunity to serve Him. The scene was symbolic of Swami's mission. He does not need us to carry out His divine plan,

but He grants us the chance to serve Him. If we lose that chance, we have only ourselves to blame.

I traveled to Prasanthi Nilayam for two reasons: First, I was searching for some sort of inner peace. I had become increasingly dissatisfied with the "college way of life" at the university I had been attending. I needed to resolve the conflict between my external surroundings and my inner spiritual progress. So, what better place to search for peace than Prasanthi Nilayam, the Abode of Highest Peace? I went there with an idealistic attitude, thinking that everything was going to be harmonious and calm. However, as in any work environment, there were some human conflicts. The peace for which I was searching could only be found within me. That peace can be found anywhere. Baba has said, *"Prasanthi or peace is not just an external polish. It is an ennobling, elevating experience when one attains and merges with the very source of one's being."*

The second reason that I journeyed there was to acquire motivation! I had been planning to attend medical school, but I lacked the inner desire to become the best doctor that I could possibly be. A medical career is a long and arduous process which requires inspiration. I was not certain that I possessed that quality. But Swami was listening to my prayers. I had the good fortune of working under the most selfless, devoted physician I had ever met. By watching and experiencing the love that emanated from him to every patient, I was truly inspired.

I thank Baba for allowing me to learn in His presence. I pray that He continues to guide me, even if *"much is to be expected."*

—Reshma Wadwani
Shelton, Connecticut

Children's Corner

Baba's ABC's

Baba would be disappointed if we merely studied and spoke of His teachings without putting any of them into practice. The next step is to incorporate Swami's teachings in our daily lives. A, B, and C were the first letters we learned to write, and they're also a good starting point for putting some of Baba's teachings into practice.

ABC: Avoid Bad Company. Everybody is an embodiment of the Divine, and nobody is really bad, but there are people who are bad for your spiritual progress. Time and again Swami admonishes young people to be careful in selecting their friends. He says that friends are like frogs! When there is water in the pond, the frogs rush in from all directions, but when the water is gone, so, too, are the frogs. When things are going very well, you will notice that everyone is your friend, but how many of these *friends* do you find when times become a little more difficult? Baba tells us to seek only the company of good people, because they will help us to achieve our spiritual goals.

ABC: Always Be Careful. Think carefully before you speak. Swami points out that a slip of the foot heals quickly, but a slip of the tongue may cause a wound that festers for life. Think carefully before you act. Much of youth is spent in the pursuit of pleasure, but we should take a moment to realize that just because something *feels good* does not necessarily mean that it's good for us. Use your discrimination to separate right from wrong and good from bad, and then, choose the appropriate action.

ABC: Always Be Courageous, Always Be Confident. Baba says that a lack of courage leads to doubt, despair, dejection, and depression. Courage is developed through confidence, and a good way to boost your confidence is to adopt a positive attitude. View each obstacle in your path as an aid which brings you closer to God. Don't just be confident; be Self-confident. Your true Self is God, and if you always remember this, there will be no room for fear.

—Pravin Wagh
Member of Young Adults Group, Santa Ana, California



—Christine Panushka

Put Sai Baba's ABC's into practice as often as you can.

Who is God? How do we find Him, and what is His purpose on this earth? The answers to these questions are easy if we follow our hearts. God is a sacred being. He helps us jump over or tackle all the hurdles in life. He lets us know what things in life are right and what things are wrong. We can find God in our hearts, He is always guiding and protecting us. God is everywhere, watching our every step. His purpose on earth is to help and teach. He teaches us to treat other people as we would want to be treated. We are all like brothers and sisters who have only one religion, the religion of Love.

—Meghan Karuturi
Age 10, Pittsford, New York

A Tribute to Our Dr. Hislop

It is seldom that a devotee is singled out and given a tribute of this magnitude. But those gathered at the Mid-Atlantic retreat exemplified what many of us across the country have felt for a long time. This was a fitting and proper tribute that was due—perhaps overdue—for an inspiring devotee.

On Sunday, May 30, 1993, Dr. John Hislop received a standing ovation from more than 600 devotees who were gathered at Green Mountain Camp in Greeley, Pennsylvania. The occasion was the annual Mid-Atlantic conference where Dr. Hislop was guest speaker. He had given of his time almost without ceasing since he had arrived that Friday evening, as indeed he has since the Sri Sathya Sai Organization of the USA was established over 18 years ago. Speaking to devotees, old and new, to the young adults, and answering questions all day long, he brought Baba's teachings to life as only he can.

Dr. Hislop was Swami's choice as president of the Sai Organization when it was founded in 1975. He held that position for many years, and the Centers, as they now exist, owe a great deal to his guidance in those formative years. Even those present who never knew him in that context felt enormous gratitude for the books, *Conversations With Sathya Sai Baba*, and *My Baba and I*. In these, he communicated firsthand accounts of Swami's teachings as he heard them, as well as, his many remarkable experiences of Baba's grace.

The presentation on that Sunday afternoon in Pennsylvania was a total surprise to the unassuming, longtime devo-

tee. National Devotion Coordinator, Anne Sohani, asked him to stay when he was ready to leave after his closing talk. She spoke of the wish to honor Dr. Hislop for the dedicated and loving service he gave to the Sathya Sai Baba Centers throughout the years and called for some of the "old-timers" to say a few words. Philip Gosselin, Mimi Goldberg, and Vimala Pedisetti recalled examples of Dr. Hislop's kindness to American devotees at the ashram as well as his tireless support of the Centers during their early years. Michael Hollander spoke of Swami's praise of Jack Hislop and went on to express gratitude for his years of service to American devotees. Anne Sohani then presented Dr. Hislop with a silver bowl as, "a small token of what we feel." The bowl was engraved:

"Om Sai Ram. Presented to Dr. John S. Hislop, first President chosen by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to lead His Organization. With love from Sai family and friends."

The crowd stood up, applauded, and when cameras were brought out to record the moment, dozens of people came forward to gather around Dr. Hislop with spontaneous love and appreciation. The warmth of this response was a moving tribute to Jack Hislop's years of service.

—A Mid-Atlantic Devotee

What You Can Do

The world is steeped in trouble because of the divisive forces which have broken up human society on various irrational grounds. Disregarding whatever happens in the world, devotees should develop unwavering faith. Those who have pure and unselfish hearts will remain unshaken in their faith like an iron ball which remains unmoved even in a storm. But those who are swayed by mundane desires will waver like a dried leaf blown by a slight breeze. Let your devotion be firm; it is good for you!

Consider for a moment where you are and for what purpose you have come here. You have come to this ashram to fill your hearts with sacred thoughts. Not the ashramites alone, but everyone has to develop fraternal feelings and eschew hatred altogether. You have to develop equal-mindedness and face all situations in life with equanimity and fortitude. Anger, hatred, ostentation, pride, and jealousy are animal qualities. Love, kindness, forbearance, compassion, and sacrifice are natural human qualities. Spirituality does not merely consist of offering worship or singing devotional songs; it calls for the elimination of the animal qualities in human beings and striving for the realization of oneness with the Divine. Mr. Narasimhan (Editor of *Sanathana Sarathi*) said in his speech earlier, "Bear no ill-will toward anybody."

The means to prolong or shorten one's life lies in one's own hands. Your life-span is prolonged when you are full of joy, when you are calm and filled with pure thoughts. But when you are filled with envy, anger, hatred, and conceit, your

life-span gets shortened. The envious person gets no sleep at all. Sleeplessness ruins the health even more than lack of food. Envy torments a person all the time. These troubles lead to shortening one's life. As for hatred, the person filled with it cannot even bear the sight of his enemy. He suffers from hallucinations which consume the body and the spirit. Anger is the cause of destroying the divine potencies in mankind. Hatred ruins a person's circulatory system. Envy drives one crazy by depriving them of sleep. In that condition, one cannot relish food. Thus, these three evil qualities—hatred, envy, and anger—are wasting diseases. When you consider yourselves as devotees of God, you should get rid of these three evil qualities. Lead peaceful and pure lives. To call yourselves devotees but to look with envy at others is totally unbecoming. True devotees should be smiling, always exuding joy. That joy will manifest itself when you experience Oneness with the Divine within you. Happiness is union with God. If you are unhappy, it is because you have not experienced the Divine.

Don't worry about what has happened, what is happening, or what is to come. Let things happen in their due course. You, however, have to learn lessons from what has happened. Therefore, be vigilant, be vigilant. In many matters, people tend to be careless. Troubles occur from time to time to warn us to be on our guard. Recognize the truth that whatever happens is for your own good by saying, "It is good for me, good for me, good for me." Realize that even what seems to be bad is for your good. Even slander is a precursor of greater renown. Alongside of condemnation, praise also

grows. Like in the digging of a pit, a mound rises by its side. Look up to the good name that is in store for you. Do not bother about the trifles that happen. Nor should you blame others or revile them. Be vigilant and foster your good nature. Share your goodness with those around you and experience the joy that results from such sharing. Aim high, aiming low is a crime.

Advice to Students

Our young students are tenderhearted. Sainath (a student who spoke earlier) said that the students have been resorting to reciting scriptures (*parayanas*), fasting, praying, and other such practices by way of atonement for what they regard as their lapses. They are prey to all kinds of apprehensions and fancies. They should not bother about what is past or what is likely in the future. They must concentrate on the present, which is a product of the past and the parent of the future. Live in the present and be happy. Entertain only happy thoughts. Do not allow any worrisome thoughts—always be happy—that is real happiness. Behave like children of the same mother. Keep away from bad company.

In the *Mahabharata*, Sakuni always entertained bad thoughts. Duryodhana had evil plans, and Dussasana always indulged in bad deeds. The names of two of them started with *Du* (bad), and their lives ended in distress and despair. But Karna was a generous-hearted person and a greater warrior than Arjuna. Why did a noble person like Karna join the bad company of these three—Sakuni, Duryodhana, and Dussasana—and become part of the notorious “four bad

guys?” Because of the unfavorable company, he developed bad attachments and pride.

So, you should not have bad attachments; you should not indulge in evil thoughts, evil plans, or evil deeds. You must cultivate good company. How do you decide who is good and who is bad? Think over the matter deeply. The one who sees the bad in what is good is a bad person. The one who sees good even in what is bad, is a good person. Therefore, only, seek the company of the good.

Mankind, it is said, is a combination of truth and righteousness. Truth is God; righteousness is Divine. There is no greater righteousness than adherence to truth. We must live in the divine mansion of peace where the foundation is truth, the walls are righteousness, and the roof is love.

Dear students, you are the exemplars of pure hearts and unselfish lives. You are feeling sad because you feel that a slur has been cast on the good name of the Institute [Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning] and its students. Don't give any thought to this. When you are free from blame, why should you worry? In a bag of rice, there may be a few grains of sand. You should not feel that because of the misbehavior of a few, the taint affects all students.

I have told you this many times: When one mosquito bites you at night, the next day you spray insecticide and kill all mosquitoes, even those that did not hurt you. Only one mosquito has bitten you, but you have killed all the others. Similarly, if someone goes astray, it affects the good name of the others. Act on the

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with zeal and faith. Swami will return soon to Prasanthi Nilayam and fill you all with joy and enthusiasm. Never cease to meditate on God. You may forget anything but never forget God. Fight to the end. Cultivate a spirit of broadmindedness. Devotees, men and women, tend to magnify trifles. You should avoid commenting on others. You must love all, greet everyone with a smiling face, and eschew harsh language. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly. A soft answer turns away wrath.

First, recognize that the Divine is in everyone. Understanding others is the key to adjustment. When one keeps feelings of misunderstanding inside, one



Sai Baba concluded His discourse with the devotional song, *Prema mudita manase kaho Rama, Rama, Ram...* With a heart filled with love say Rama, Ram...

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conviction that no blame is attached to any of you. Act according to the prompting of your conscience. That will lead you to Divinity. Carry on the spiritual activity (*sadhana*) which you have taken up. You are bound to earn a good name and bring credit to your parents. Even the Institute will get a good name. Because you are youthful, your journey is long. You must stick to the path of truth and lead ideal lives.

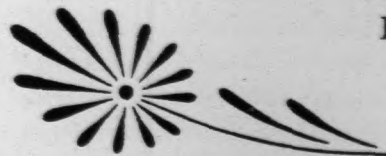
For All Devotees

Devotees also should conduct themselves with fortitude and courage. Fear sin, but otherwise, be fearless. Show gratitude to the Divine. When you have fear of sin and love for God, you are bound to observe morality in society. Carry on your activities with zeal and faith. Swami will return soon to Prasanthi Nilayam and fill you all with joy and enthusiasm. Never cease to meditate on God. You may forget anything but never forget God. Fight to the end. Cultivate a spirit of broadmindedness. Devotees, men and women, tend to magnify trifles. You should avoid commenting on others. You must love all, greet everyone with a smiling face, and eschew harsh language. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly. A soft answer turns away wrath.

First, recognize that the Divine is in everyone. Understanding others is the key to adjustment. When one keeps feelings of misunderstanding inside, one

will not be able to adjust externally. It will never work. God dwells in everyone. The body is a temple of God, a walking and talking temple. Develop this kind of feeling and cultivate love.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Prasanthi Nilayam
July 21, 1993



Sai Baba concluded His discourse with the devotional song, *Prema mudita manase kaho Rama, Rama, Ram. . .* With a heart filled with love say Rama, Ram. . .

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