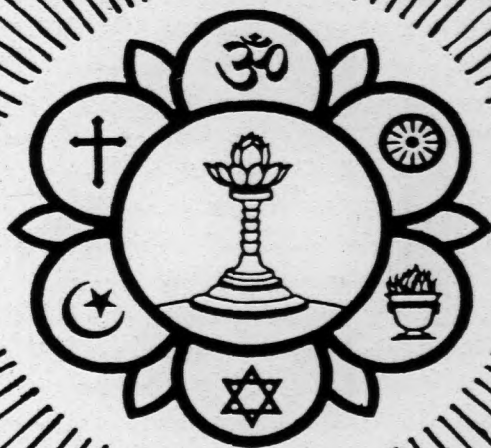




SATHYA SAI Newsletter

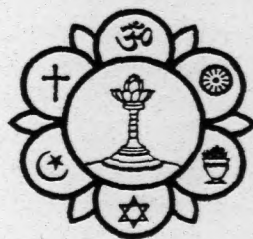
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SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER

*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 Organizations,
depicts 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 and editing material for publication. Send all literary contributions to: **Sathya Sai Newsletter**, P.O. Box 660908, Arcadia, California 91066-0908.

—Barbara Bozzani, Editor



You must all understand well the affection that Sai is showering on you. He is caring for you, his tender children; he has built for you these splendid buildings and given you all the help you need. I am not pleading for gratitude in return. . . . I feel pain when you take the wrong turn and neglect the royal road to truth, righteousness, peace and love. I feel hurt when I see you wasting the most precious period of your lives. I am anxious about your future, for your own sake. I do not get praise if you lead good lives, nor do I get blame if you enter bad ways. . . .

Keep in mind the good that the world expects from you, and be stable in the two qualities of renunciation and character. You must learn the art of renunciation; you must acquire character; these are the two eyes which can guide you safely through life. . . . Sai does everything for your sake and for teaching you high ideals.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XV, page 93

Cardiac Symposium

At Prasanthi Nilayam

The occasion was the International Cardiac Specialty Symposium in Prasanthi Nilayam, which was held less than 15 months after the inauguration of the Cardiology Wing of the magnificent Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences Hospital at Prasanthi Gram (or, to shorten it a bit, Super Specialty Hospital). . . . Sathya Sai Baba, the guiding light of the project, spoke to the delegates about a spiritual approach to health care. He outlined what the doctors could achieve by an integrated approach to the body, mind and spirit of the patient.

The symposium was conducted in the auditorium of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on February 6 and 7, 1993. Cardiac specialists from several countries and from various parts of India assembled for the inaugural ceremony. The function started with *Vedic* invocations by students of the Institute. . . . Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba arrived with Mr. B. Sankaranand, Minister of Health and Family Welfare.

Dr. A. N. Safaya, Director of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences Hospital, in his welcoming address, said that 1,051 heart operations had been performed, free of cost, within a period of 260 working days, and that 2,500 patients were examined between November 22, 1992 and February 1993.

The hospital is open to all citizens of the world irrespective of nationality, caste, creed, language or status. It is manned by a highly competent team of doctors, assisted by a dedicated paramedical staff who are looking after the blood bank, diagnostic laboratory and the material supply system. Students, trained in operating the most modern and sophisticated equipment, volunteer their assistance. . . . The infection rate is 0.8% and the net mortality rate is less than 2%. Dr. Safaya went on to describe this as a gift of divine grace. He explained how primary health centers are being developed in the villages by Sri Sathya Sai *Seva* Organizations. There are now thousands of health units which have a link with the hospital at Prasanthi Gram. "This institution is born in the lap of Divinity adding a spiritual dimension to the treatment of diseases with Bhagavan as the beacon light," concluded Dr. Safaya.

Mr. B. Sankaranand, Union Minister of Health, had no hesitation in saying, "By all standards this [hospital] is second to none in the world in cleanliness, efficiency of service, various amenities, equipment and quality of dedicated service by doctors and nurses." Turning to Baba, he said, "Revered Swamiji, the nation is grateful to you for this blessing you have conferred on the poorer sections of people, not only healing the [physical] heart but healing the heart of humanity through spirituality."

Dr. Lawrence Boncheck of Lancaster, California, USA, then delivered his address. He prefaced his talk with a reference to the sylvan surroundings of the insti-

tute and the serene atmosphere. He said, "The wonderful gift of Sathya Sai Baba to the people is in the form of the magnificent Super Specialty Hospital offering absolutely free treatment. . . ." Dr. Boncheck then referred to his association with the National Institute of Health in the USA, which is providing free treatment to the poor, and rendering assistance for medical treatment to developing countries.

Dr. Iyer of India presented case studies about pacemakers, and cardiac surgery for infants with congenital heart disorders. He explained with slides how surgery was performed on a ten-day-old baby to rectify a congenital disorder of the heart which would have proved fatal but for the surgery. He showed a picture of the mother and child—taken two years after the surgery—indicating how healthy the baby is now. Dr. Iyer remarked that it was regrettable that out of 240,000 babies who are affected by heart diseases in the country, only 214 cases could be operated on in a year with the available facilities. He pleaded for more hospitals like the Super Specialty Hospital to be established all over the country.

Sathya Sai Baba described an integral approach to human ailments by saying that the three basic elements in a human being are body, mind and integrated awareness or *prajna*. All three should be taken into account in the treatment of diseases and the promotion of health. This is the basis of the ancient system of *ayurveda*, the science of longevity.

After the welcome address by Dr. Safaya, Director of the Super Specialty Hospital at Prasanthi Gram, and the inaugural address by Mr. B. Sankaranand, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Bhagavan delivered his address, which was listened to with rapt attention by all those who were in attendance.



Sathya Sai Baba Speaks To The Physicians

Among the four *Vedas*, the *Atharva Veda** is the one that has given the science relating to longevity, known as *ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* transcends time and space and is valid for all places, at all times. It relates to the spirit, the mind and the body, and it has an integrated approach. The allopathic system came much later. It is based on an objective, external approach while *ayurveda* is subjective. Both have to be coordinated for better results. Since *ayurveda* is subjective it is more efficacious than the allopathic system. There is a superior, artistic sense in *ayurveda*.

Doctors have to realize the distinction between subjective and objective approaches. The latter has an external outlook, while the former has an inner view. The object is a reflection of the subject. Without realizing this relationship between *ayurveda* and allopathy, doctors are wasting their time in arguments. *Ayurveda* affirms that purity of mind is essential for one's health, while allopathic doctors do not consider the mind to be as important. They give importance to the eradication of disease causing germs and consider this as the only means to cure diseases. This does not

take into account the role of the mind and the spirit in the eradication of disease. Allopathy is based on external knowledge and experimentation, while *ayurveda* is based on inner knowledge and experience. There is a gulf of difference between experiment and experience. Because of the difference between the subjective and objective approaches, in the course of time, allopathy resorted to the use of antibiotics to deal with various diseases. Antibiotics act powerfully, and yield quick results in curing a disease. But, in the process of curing diseases, they give rise to adverse side effects. Allopathic doctors experiment only with matter. They do not take the inner consciousness into account.

In spite of the prodigious technological developments in the world, man is not able to enjoy peace. Peace cannot be achieved by knowledge of the physical. Peace should come from inner feelings or the spirit within. It is only when the body, the mind and the spirit are in harmony that peace will prevail. Medical science should recognize the role of the mind in causing sickness. Good health confers mental peace. Mental worry impairs physical health. *Ayurveda* emphasizes mental peace and aims at the elimination of the root cause of disease.

Three Basic Factors

There are three basic factors which are responsible for health or disease in the human body according to *ayurveda*. They are vital air, bile and phlegm. Vital air accounts for 36 diseases, bile accounts for 98 and phlegm for 96 diseases. These three factors are essential for the hu-

man body, but they should be in proper balance without exceeding their respective limits. When they are in balance, there will be no disease. Moderation is the golden rule for good health.

For the treatment of diseases arising out of vital air, bile and phlegm, gingelly oil,* ghee** and honey respectively are prescribed as remedies. These should be taken in moderation.

The body is a gift of God and cannot be made by doctors. The human heart beats 103,000 times a day. The blood circulation in the body is computed to cover 168,000 miles per day. Man breathes 21,600 times and consumes 438 cubic feet of air daily. These are based on Divine Will and regarded as Laws of Nature.

God is the preceptor of nature or *prakriti*. The body is unclean in many ways and is subject to various diseases. But, in such an inherently unattractive abode dwells the most valuable Divinity. Man should always act in harmony with nature which is a reflection of Divinity.

Hurry, Worry and Curry

What is the cause of heart ailments? Many doctors say that they are due to smoking, consumption of fatty foods, overeating and other habits. The relationship between food and habits should be properly understood. We should see that proper balance is maintained between the physical body and inner feelings. Modern man is continually in a hurry. Hurry causes worry which affects physical health. The main causes of heart trouble may be said to be hurry, worry

*gingelly or gingili is sesame seed oil. **ghee is clarified butter.

and curry. Curry means fatty foods. Many doctors have made investigations in this field, but the results have not been widely known. Heart diseases are found to be more rampant among nonvegetarians, while vegetarians are not prone to heart ailments to the same extent. This is because of the higher percentage of fats in nonvegetarian food which increases the cholesterol in the blood. Worry causes high blood pressure, and hurry causes diabetes. Both of them are like twins, one acting on the heart inside and the other externally on the blood. Everyone should know how to control these causes. Some people do not do any physical exercises and lead sedentary lives. My advice to office workers and students is that it is good for them to commute by bicycle at least five or six kilometers a day. This cycling exercise is very useful, not only for maintaining health, but also for reducing the expenditure incurred by automobiles. Another advantage is the avoidance of accidents. Further, it serves to reduce atmospheric pollution caused by the release of harmful fumes from automobiles. The carbon dioxide from motor vehicles and factories is already polluting the air in cities and is affecting the ozone layer above the earth.

Purify The Environment

Our primary task is to purify the environment which is affected by pollution of air, water and food. All the five elements are affected by pollution. People should, therefore, try to reduce the use of automobiles and control the emission of harmful industrial effluents.

In ancient times, sages and scientists commended the *ayurvedic* system of treatment as it was considered a na-

tural system for curing diseases. Trees play a vital role in helping mankind receive oxygen from the atmosphere; they absorb the carbon dioxide exhaled by human beings. Hence, the ancients favored the growing of trees to control atmospheric pollution. But nowadays, trees are cut down indiscriminately, and pollution is on the increase. The relationship between man and trees is indicated by the term *vanaspati* employed in *ayurveda*.

Body, Mind and Prajna

People are leading artificial lives today. They should understand that they are not merely the body, but that they are a combination of body, mind and spirit. In the *Gayatri* mantra, "*Om Bhur Bhuva Suvah*" is the first line. In this prayer "*Bhu*" refers to matter, that is the body; "*Bhuvah*" refers to the life principle, which animates the body; "*Suvah*" refers to awareness or conscience, which acts through radiation. Hence, people are made up of awareness, the vital force, and the body, the material substance. Doctors should not consider only the body; they should take into consideration the life force and integrated awareness. *Prajna Sakti* is the radiation energy that promotes wisdom. Vibration is the expression of the vital force. In every action, there is a vibration which is between the consciousness and the physical body. We should see to it that the mind is not influenced by any external force but, instead, by the internal source which is Integrated Awareness.

Esteemed Doctors, you must strive to ensure long and healthy lives for the people. In my view, a godly life is more im-

peoportant than mere longevity. What is the use of a selfish person leading a long life without rendering service to society? Only those who serve society and the nation should have a long life. The essence of the 18 *Puranas* was given by Vyasa as: "Help ever, hurt never."

Doctors' Duty. . .

It is true that doctors generally work with devotion and dedication. It would be better if they developed more devotion toward God instead of being concerned with earning money. Obviously, money is needed to carry on worldly life, but there should be a limit to the acquisition of money. The use of money should be properly regulated. When one does not observe restraint in daily life, he or she is prey to disease. The body is governed by limits and controls. The temperature should be 98.4 F, neither more nor less; the blood pressure should be 120/80, any increase or decrease spells illness. Doctors should not compete with one another in earning huge sums and acquiring more and more possessions. They should render free service to the poor and needy. Sacrifice is the hallmark of true education. Money earned should be usefully spent in a spirit of sacrifice.

There should be a harmonious blend of religion, philosophy and art for people to live healthfully in the world. In this context, religion means the religion of love. This is the only religion in the world. There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. One should cultivate human values for healthy living. This calls for harmony in thought, word and deed. When you cultivate this harmony you will be free from desires and fears. As selfishness is rampant in the field of medi-

cal science and other branches of science, the world is racked by many hazards and calamities. Doctors should educate laymen about the various reasons for heart ailments. Whenever people think of heart disease, the prospect of an operation looms large before them as a source of dread. As far as possible, you should avoid operations, and try to cure the patients by medication. Doctors should treat surgery as a last resort. As the word "surgery" creates fear in all types of people—whether rich or poor—you should help them to develop self-confidence and remove fear.

The People's Hospital All Are Welcome

Divine members of the medical fraternity! It is not my intention to extol the excellence of our hospital. I wish to highlight the fact that the people in these areas used to be mortally afraid of heart disease. Because there was no facility for high grade medical or surgical treatment nearby, the patients had to be taken to far off places entailing enormous expense. But, from November 22, 1992, when the Super Specialty Hospital began functioning, even children entered the hospital smiling, without any sense of fear. Their courage and faith ensured successful treatment. This is the only hospital where you can see patients, doctors, nurses, technicians and paramedical staff with smiling faces. Even the relatives accompanying the patients are all smiles. Wherever you move in the hospital, you can see smiling and cheerful faces.

How has this happiness come to people who go to the hospital for treatment of dreaded diseases? Happiness arises out of union with God. Elsewhere, there is lack of faith in God, so there is grief. In our hospital there is faith in Divinity.

This hospital is not Swami's. It belongs to all of you. This hospital was established with the noble aim of serving suffering humanity. Besides excellent equipment of the highest quality, we have here the most modern facilities for medical and surgical treatment and, above all, a team of dedicated doctors and staff who render selfless service with a smile. The construction of the hospital was completed in the incredibly short period of five months. The construction of a hospital of this magnitude might have taken as long as 10 years if the government had taken up the work. When I announced on November 23, 1990, that this hospital would start to function on November 22, 1991, many eyebrows were raised. They doubted the possibility of that date being kept. But, it became an accomplished fact as willed by Swami.

Dr. Venugopal came from Delhi to conduct the first surgeries on November 22, 1991. Ever since he took up the work, it has been a saga of success. It has not been mentioned in public before, but he is a doctor in government service, working in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. He used to start from Delhi on a Saturday, arrive here and perform operations on Sunday and return to Delhi for work on Monday. He has not taken any remuneration for his work and has even defrayed the traveling expenses himself. I am mentioning these facts only to highlight his devotion and sense of

selfless service. His entire team is of the same type. They are very happy to have the opportunity to serve here. Their purity of heart and selfless service have helped the hospital to achieve such splendid results.

Most of the nurses and technicians are our college students. They were sent to Delhi for technical training in the operation of highly sophisticated equipment. All are doing their work with devotion and dedication. They have often been working—smiling happily—from 6:00 AM to 12:00 midnight. They serve here only out of devotion to Swami and not for money.

To cite an example of the spirit of dedication by the staff: while Swami was returning from the hospital, nurses who had done strenuous work for more than three days were found walking on the road. On inquiry, it was learned that their bus had broken down, and they had decided to trek the long distance back to the temple (*mandir*) on foot. Swami asked them to wait there and arranged for a relief bus to pick them up. The relationship between Swami and devotees is heart-to-heart, based on love.

Not a penny is collected from patients for anything, right from diagnostic tests to surgery and aftercare. Even nutritious food is supplied free. In the beginning, the innocent and simple village folk did not know how to use the hospital beds. Some of them slept under the cots saying in utter simplicity that they were not worthy of sleeping on such expensive beds. Patients do not worry in this place.

Please turn to page 34

A Letter from Bosnia

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Sai! The enclosed letter from Azra, although written in the hellish surroundings of Sarajevo, bears witness to the words of Christ, "The kingdom of heaven is within you!" The letter also shows that paradise and hell have little to do with time and space, but are determined by where the human soul is. Although the letter is personal, I feel that it is within my rights to share it with other people, and that is why I send this message of truth to those who have ears to hear.

—Marija Dabic

Darling Friend, "I am still alive and healthy," is a sentence that people here repeat daily like a mantra. After six months of warfare, we understand that only life counts. I can't tell you what takes place in people's minds here. When we meet a friend, the first question to ask is if the windows are still intact. Winter is coming, and Sarajevo is almost without windows, without electricity, without gas and without water. You have no idea what people are able to endure.

First, we had to do without the normal water supply. Throughout summer, we didn't have water. Every day, I got hundreds of liters, that was when there was still water in the neighborhood. Then in August, the power failed and is still off. I have learned to live without electric lights, TV, iron and hair dryer. We cooked on a neighbor's gas stove, but now gas is finished as well. We now cook on an old paraffin stove. That shows how we daily lose more. We now get water in a backpack from another part of town, and we catch some rainwater from the roof. You won't see anybody in the streets who hasn't got buckets, plastic bags or bottles with him. There is less food available all the time. Only rice and flour-based food is still available. Rubbish is everywhere in the city and is only col-

lected once a week. People and stray dogs, plenty of those around, rummage about in the rubbish for scraps of food.

That is everyday life in Sarajevo. I don't write about the shells on purpose. There is no lack of those who know all about types of weapons and the different calibers. Every small child in Sarajevo is a specialist. Death is so close, it has become our friend. Compared with the awful injuries one suffers, death really is a friend. I don't know how much you know about all this or if you get any news at all. That is why I try to sketch our daily life. I say, "try," as nobody, really nobody, can fully understand it. If you don't have this experience, you just cannot begin to understand that these circumstances are possible at all.

That is the awful reality and I hurry to get past it, so I can start to tell you about my real life with Baba. This whole crisis situation which we are in, is not really entering my heart, as that is full of HIM. Not one day of our crisis situation would I want to exchange for something else. Compared with the last six months, my whole life before this deserves hardly a mention. These experiences can never be surpassed. To live in a hell like this and not be touched by it is only possible through Baba's love.

Everything I possessed is gone: house, car, holiday house, wardrobe. I now live in a strange house and wear someone else's clothing. I do not sleep in a bed of my own. Despite all this, I have never been happier and with more inner peace than I have right now. It would be untrue to say that I was unaffected by the loss of the house and all the other things. Although we were focused on God, we were also attached to the material world and involved with lots of trivial matters. Few among us would have had the strength to make such radical changes in our lives. This is Baba's grace.

In his message of the 25th of May, he said, *"Every day I take a word away from you, and thereby, that which you indicated with that word. Every day you will have less things around you; yet, every day you will find more of me in you. And don't be afraid that you won't know why you have to pray. When you feel me closer, there is less reason for you to pray."*

At the end of July, an aunt who used to come and sing *bhajans* suggested singing *bhajans* in the house of one of her friends. That was the first big sign that Baba was taking care of us after I had lost my house where we used to hold meetings before the war. This new place is beautiful, protected from shells and in the inner city. The lady of the house has joined us, and we now sing *bhajans* twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday. We sing in the afternoon because of the war. Two good singers have joined, so our *satsang* (fellowship) is wonderful.

Baba blesses us with his presence as never before. I can't express how this all effects us. We come back in a blissful state, moved and in tears. It is notice-

able that people like to come to us to hear about Baba's teachings. This happens daily, even from hardcore atheists. I do not imagine that this is because of me, Azra. They are people longing for love and peace, *prema* and *shanti*. I feel that I am becoming his instrument. When I help someone, I am clearly aware that Baba is working through me, and that I am not important at that moment. I believe that to be the real lesson for my ego, as it does not get a chance to become overconfident. That is one of the most precious gifts I have received in this war. Everyday, I get speed lessons in modesty and independence.

Two weeks ago was the first time that I put Baba aside. I didn't do it on purpose, of course, but what happened was this. I became angry and reacted angrily. I was within my rights, but that didn't make any difference. The moment I allowed the anger to come in, Baba did a step back. It was then that I realized what it means to be on your own. Those were the most precious moments of my life; I understood that life without his love has no value. Imagine, I am not even allowed to be annoyed, not even when I am within my rights! It has shown me that there is nothing in the world that has enough value to make me want to live without Sai for even one moment.

Dear Marija, these are the lessons I have been taught. I wanted you to know what is taking place. If anything happens to me; know that I am very happy. If it has to be that I should go to the next world, then there is no reason to pity me. You, dear friend, will understand.

—Azra

Courtesy, *Sathya Sai Baba Newsletter*,
New Zealand, July 1993, Issue No. 141

Sai Baba's Big Heart Hospital

It appears to be a pink and white apparition, a hallucination of grandeur divinely set down among the peanut vines in the parched hinterland of India's deep South. The new Super Specialty Hospital in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh is yet another boon for villagers of this remote south Indian district that already houses Sathya Sai Baba's large ashram, the Institute of Higher Learning, schools for younger students, and the Museum of Universal Religions. Villagers—used to the daily influx of traffic, foreign visitors and mushrooming ashram activities—are still awed and astonished. In their wildest imagination, the local population never thought that the opportunity of walking into a high-tech hospital just a few meters away from their modest huts. Best of all, highly skilled care is the precept. Everything there is done completely free of charge, including complicated heart and kidney surgeries.

"This institute was born in the lap of Divinity itself," Dr. A. N. Safaya told a gathering of physicians last February 1993, at the Cardiac Specialty Symposium convened by the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. "It is therefore permeated with the fervor and fragrance of spirituality. The practice of medicine in this hospital has a spiritual dimension, a breakthrough in the conceptual aspect of medicine."

Indeed, Sathya Sai Baba has often stressed the need for physicians to combine the spiritual aspect with the best of *ayurvedic* and allopathic practices. "*The doctor should think not only of the body,*" Sai Baba says, "*but the mind and con-*

science also." He boldly champions the full integration of *ayurveda*—India's ancient healing science based on subtle remedies—in his new hospital at a critical time when most Indian medicine has totally abandoned *ayurveda* in favor of Western allopathic medicine—based more on symptomatic diagnosis, intensive surgery and drug cures. Sai Baba states, "*It is necessary to understand the difference between ayurveda and allopathy. Though it is not bound by time and place, ayurveda is bound by mind, intellect and Self. Hence, mind, body and Self play a very important role in ayurveda. While allopathy is an external science, ayurveda relates to the inner feelings. Doctors have to integrate the essence of the two.*" More lightheartedly, Sathya Sai Baba jokes that heart disease is caused by "*Hurry, worry and curry.*"

Sai Baba states that we each need to better observe the laws and soul of nature to ensure both a healthier body and planet. "*The air we breathe is not pure. The water we drink is not pure. The food we eat is not pure. The sounds we hear are not pure. All the five elements of nature are polluted. This pollution has caused diseases never heard of before. Any violation of the laws of nature leads to sickness. There is a teacher for nature. That teacher is God. We should know the teacher of nature.*"

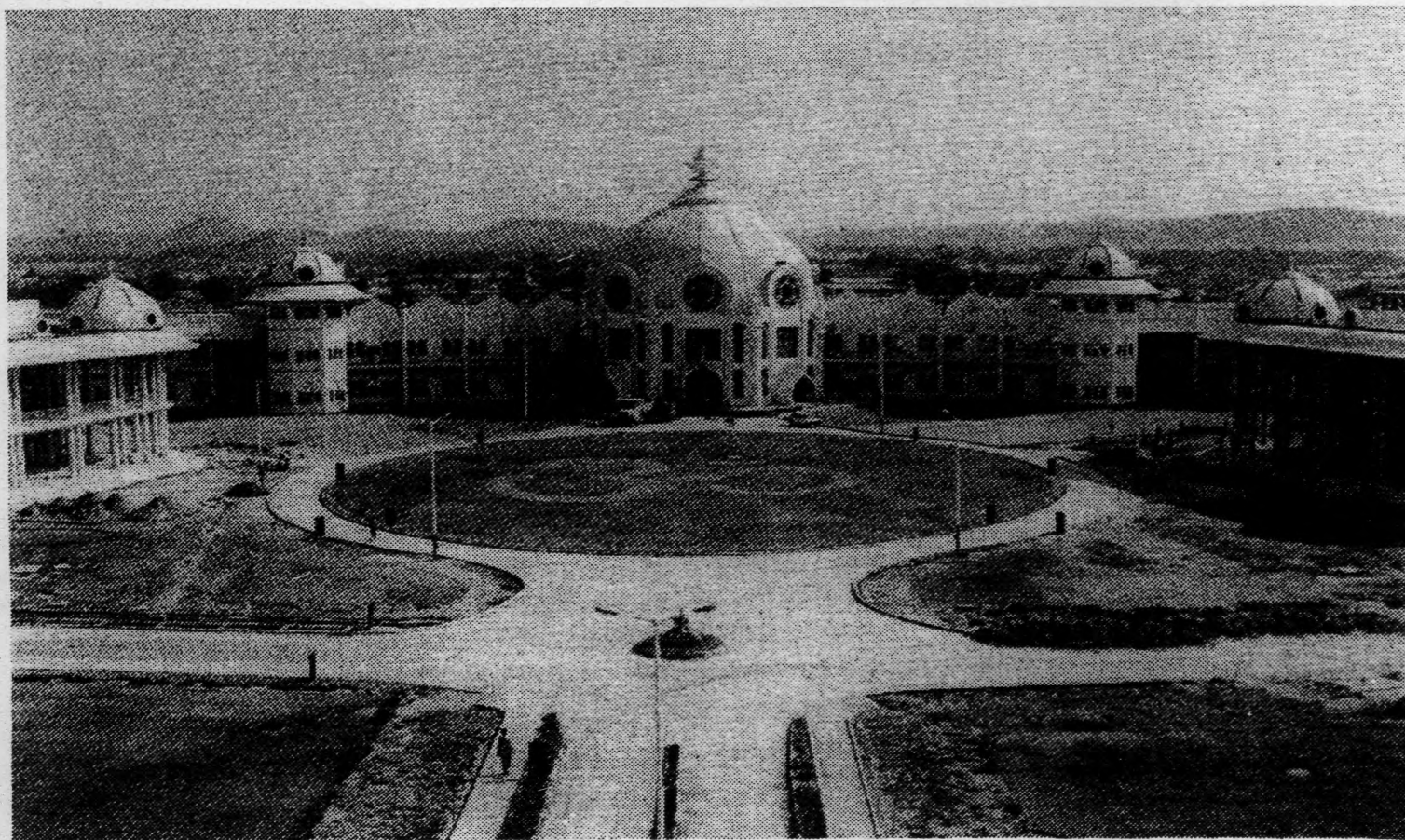
A Healing Fortress

What I saw and experienced visiting the hospital in Prashanthi Gram touched many levels of my own heart. Here was a high-tech, superhuman marvel, specifi-

cally geared to handle all citizens of the world, in a peaceful and spotlessly clean setting, far from the noise, the pollution and the masses of big industrial cities—obviously a place to be healed.

Within the hospital complex, there is a beautifully domed prayer hall, a temple of the heart inside this unique larger temple of healing. Under tall windows and graceful arches, I was able to sit in quiet reflection amidst beautiful pictures

Marble floors reflected sunlight and cleanliness. Barefoot *seva dals* (service volunteers) wearing crisp white uniforms and blue scarves, padded softly along the 14-foot-wide marble corridors, going about their various tasks. Sai Baba's smiling picture was everywhere. Upstairs, in pleasant spacious wards, beds were kept at an uncrowded limit of six per room. The hospital staff, and even the patients, wore bright smiles; *Sai Rams* gilded even routine communications.



The high-tech Super Specialty Hospital—obviously a place to be healed.

and sculptures of the deities. Rainbow circles of Sai Baba's *Sarva Dharma* emblem (see emblem on cover) bounced light in playful rhythms of color on the shiny marble floor. The echoes of saints and sages, and stained glass reflections melted the mind, freeing one to contemplate the wholeness of the heart.

I glimpsed vignettes of dedication and gentle care of patients through each open door—a *seva dal* gently braided the long, black hair of a woman patient, oiling each strand with devotion. In another ward, a parent at the bedside of a child was deep in silent prayer. The atmosphere was permeated with *bhakti*.*

Fertilized by Sai Baba's emphasis on the five *Vedic* principles—*sathya*, *dharma*, *shanti*, *prema* and *ahimsa***—watered by talent, manpower and, above all, the earnest devotion to the master, this new hospital seemed to just spring up from the ground! A visiting nurse from San Francisco told me that miraculously, just a few hours before the hospital doors were to be opened, the tiniest pieces fell into place. When the Prime Minister of India came for the opening, the hospital was suddenly completed.

The Sathya Sai Medical Trust had spent 18 million dollars to build, landscape and furnish the entire campus and the hospital. In the fields of cardiology and cardiac thoracic surgery, state of the art equipment has been installed and is in constant use. A new airport nearby can fly patients in for emergency surgery. A section devoted to kidney disease was inaugurated in March, 1993.

The hospital's clay foundation was designed a few feet higher than normal, a precaution against flooding. Central air-conditioning was another unique feature. More impressive though was the fact that the first completely free heart operation was carried out exactly 12 months to the day that the idea was first planted, fulfilling the divine will of Sathya Sai Baba.

As of October 1993, more than 1,804 heart operations had been performed, not to mention catheterizations, valvuloplasties, and angioplasties. More than 25,000 patients have received diagnostic evaluations. There is a laboratory capable of doing more than 163 hematology tests, a dietary unit and a blood bank.

bhakti** is devotion to God. *sathya** means truth; **dharma** means right action; **shanti** means peace; **prema** means love; **ahimsa** means nonviolence.

The extremely low mortality rate of 2% and an infection rate of under 1% speak for the high caliber of specialists the hospital has engaged.

Plans are in place for expansion of the 150 acres of land to include treatment for diseases of the lungs, the brain and cancer—all free of cost.

Many of the hospital workers are college students who are first sent to Delhi for technical training. Though most of the doctors and nursing staff are paid competitive salaries—and thus attract eminent physicians—more and more semi-retired doctors from around the world are coming to serve without any compensation for short periods as a spiritual offering. Also, groups of devotees come from various states within India, traveling on their own time and funds to do *seva* (selfless service).

Visitors can arrange for tours of the hospital by registering in the ashram offices at Prasanthi Nilayam. Our tour was led by a good-humored and gregarious 70-year-old guide, retired from government service and now living at the ashram. Like thousands of Sai Baba devotees, he was proud and happy about the miraculous accomplishment of his guru and the amazing specialty hospital in the remote desert of Andhra Pradesh.

Dr. Keith Critchlow, an English architect and Director of Prince of Wales Institute of Architecture in London, remembers how the hospital dream all began. Professor Critchlow said that Isaac Tigrett, a long-time Sai devotee and founder of the well-known Hard Rock

Cafes (an international chain of restaurants), suddenly showed up in his office one day. The professor went on to say, "Smiling gently behind alarmingly blue eyes, Tigrett simply said to me, "There is a holy man in India, and he needs an architect to build a Super Specialty Hospital. Would you be interested in going there and see him?" "

Critchlow and his wife were whisked off to India. Intensive meetings were held with Sathya Sai Baba who was very much involved in the conceptual stage. A distinguished group of doctors was added to the design team, and they provided important input. Critchlow returned to London in a tailspin of creative enthusiasm, praying for guidance on how the master plan should take form.

When the concept did become clear, it was quite simple. Critchlow says, "Because the symbol of health is the symbol of wholeness and unity, the central feature of the hospital should be a symbol of unity. In the human body, the heart, which is shaped like one's hand pointing downwards, corresponds to the physical incarnate state. In the symbol of architecture, we turn the heart around and point it back to God."

Professor Critchlow, whose specialty is sacred architecture, did a number of

ancient and complex mathematical calculations and formulae to support the drafting. He further enhanced the design by wrapping the hospital wards around the central building like "two arms wrapped around the centerpiece that would embrace people with love to cure and heal them."

And so, the main symbol of the center of the building was to become a large heart shaped rotunda, pointing back to heaven with a flowering lotus on top. "Itself a symbol," says Critchlow, "of the completed consciousness."

Once begun, the project seemed to take on a life of its own. A cross-cultural team of talent, pooled from around the globe, quickly came together. The group worked 17 hours a day on the drawings for three months. Then, with Sai Baba's blessings, the final drawings were dispatched to a contractor in Madras, requesting that the hospital be completed in six months—which it was! In Critchlow's experience a hospital constructed in England never takes less than seven years.

—Sheree Lipton
Kailua, Hawaii

Ms. Lipton's article also appeared in
Hinduism Today, Jan. 1994



People are fundamentally Divine; so naturally, the more they manifest the divine attributes—love, justice, truth and peace—the more bliss they are able to enjoy and impart. The less they manifest them, the more ashamed they ought to be that they are living counter to their heritage.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Saying of the day, July 5, 1989, Prasanthi Nilayam

Growing Home

It is okay to be confused. Maybe even better to not have a clue. For so many years, I have judged myself by evaluating how far along I am on my spiritual path, as if that was something easily measured. Am I a kinder person than I was 10 years ago? I certainly hope so. Do I lie less and help more? Am I a spiritual flop because I'm not a good meditator or, worse yet, that I still have an occasional burger? In the long run, does God really care how many crystals adorn my altar, or if I sometimes blow it and get angry at people during bad traffic jams? I think that I am coming to terms with the fact that none of us—not even the most long-term devotees—really know what God thinks about us. Each one of us is on a very personal journey, the long walk back home to our Source, our Creator, our beloved Lord—in whatever form we seek HIM. Perhaps the ultimate truth is that it is all a mystery—one that we have glimpses or tastes of—yet still shadowed by veils of *maya* (illusion), including, strangely enough, even spiritual *maya*.

All the rituals, prayers, dogmas and mantras are tools for our voyage, yet, not necessarily anything more than just what they are, tools. It is a private walk that we each walk. I can't know your path, and the way you should walk it any more than you know mine. Only he who created us can know where we are or where we should be. How lucky for us that he is so full of love and nonjudgmental compassion that he takes us all no matter where we are and lets us ride like a wave back to his shores. Sai Baba is our guru.

We have all, in our own way and time, come to hear about this great holy being. Other than that, we are all very different. My way is not your way, and your way, not hers or his, and so it goes. What we can do for each other—as brothers and sisters on the path—is to love and support each other even with all our differences, personality quirks, and beliefs that we know “the right way.”

How fortunate we are to be awake enough to remember that there is a reason for being on earth and in a form at this time. I would like to see us all love one another more, not just the homeless we feed and care for, but all of us together here and now within our own Sai community. Let us not be afraid to be individuals either. There is a reason God created each one of us so completely and wonderfully different from one another. Just like the miracle of our fingerprints and of snowflakes, each of us is a spark in his great play, each of us has just as important a role as the other.

The planet is in peril, that seems to be obvious. My sense is that in the months and years to come, we will all need to come together in ways that perhaps now seem unfathomable. Our own survival may depend on putting our teachings into practice and coming together as a family. What a blessing it is to know that even with all our faults and insecurities, we need only to call him, and he is there, whether we are always able to feel his presence or not.

I love all of you dear brothers and sisters, even though I am not able to stay

in that place at all times. But I'm working on it, believe me! Please let us all love and respect those who share the path with us, whether they call themselves Sai devotees or not. We can all learn so very much from one another's differences and likenesses. And while we are at it, let's remember to be gentle with ourselves too. Progress is probably a much more attainable goal than perfection. I believe that if we have open hearts

and our thoughts are on God, we can't go wrong. What an exciting time it is to be alive, no matter how insane the world seems to be. And yet, even though we may still not have a clue how to play this whole game, maybe in some way, that is exactly as it should be. How else could we grow? And that is what we are doing—Growing Home.

—Patrice Karst
Topanga, California

Darshan*

*The devotee cries for Baba,
His red-robed form to see.
He does not see sweet Baba
In the toddler at his knee.*

*He weeps for darshan, bitter tears,
The face of God he needs.
He cannot see Great Baba
In butterflies and bees.*

*So sad the plight of blindness,
Ignorance of truth,
That cannot see our Baba
In the guise of troubled youth.*

*Ensnared by drugs, God looks at you,
Wracked by cancer and old age.
From eyes of the mad, He peers at you
Through the bars of a prison's cage.*

*Needing you, beseeching you,
In all such forms he calls.
But we sob, "We cannot see you!"
Safe behind our walls.*

*Devotees rise from prayer's peace,
Go out and seek sweet Sai,
In all the faces pain has etched,
Where poor forsakens cry.*

*Then one morn, with start of day,
In the mirror you will see
The truest face of God for you,
Smiling back at thee.*

—Marie Penland Dooley
Miami, Florida

*Darshan to see a great holy being.

Impressions of Summer Course

"Write an essay about your impressions on attending the Summer Course." The task sounded deceptively simple, but how do you write an essay that adequately described a once-in-a-lifetime experience? The only thought in my mind when I boarded the plane in Chicago was that I would be seeing Sathya Sai Baba on an almost continual basis for three weeks. To be at the Lord's divine lotus feet, hearing him speak, learning from him, having his *darshan* (to see a holy being) every day—how can it be described?

Each day of the Summer Course was filled with new experiences. Every morning, we listened to many speakers discuss various aspects of Indian culture and spirituality. Through these lectures, I learned much about my heritage and myself. Each afternoon, we were blessed with attending Baba's discourse. The love with which Sai Baba imparted his infinite wisdom was overwhelming.

There were quite a few days when I despaired, thinking Swami's discourses to be beyond my comprehension. However, underneath it all, the crux of Swami's message was quite simple. "*Service to man is service to God.*" "*Love all, serve all.*" It wasn't until we reviewed the discourses that I realized the simplicity of his wisdom.

Baba spends approximately 75% of his time with the students and showers them with divine grace, attention and love. He also has very high expectations for them.

There are four qualities that every student must possess: self-respect, self-confidence, self-sacrifice and self-support. These four will help students gain self-realization. Modern students do not have these qualities. "*Without self-respect,*" Swami asks, "*how can you respect others?*" In addition he says, "*Students should sacrifice more—in sacrifice is found immortality. The only thing students sacrifice is their character.*"

To help us understand how significant it is for students to lead exemplary lives, Swami emphasized the importance of good company and harmony in thought, word and deed.

Sai Baba likened the company we keep to a flower in the hand. "*If the fragrance is pleasant, the hand smells pleasant. If the fragrance is unpleasant, the hand smells unpleasant.*" He referred to Albert Einstein, the great physicist, who said, "Tell me the company you keep, and I will tell you what you are." Good company is essential for spiritual growth because it helps us to cultivate good thoughts. Good thoughts, in turn, allow us to develop good feelings, which will help us to see the unity in diversity and treat all equally. Therefore, it seems the basis of spiritual growth is good thoughts. Swami says, "*If you sow the seed of thought, you reap the fruit of action. Sow the action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap character. Sow character and reap a fortune.*"

Another practice emphasized by Baba as very necessary for students is controlling our own mind. That kind of mind control, leads us to understand the nature of our true reality. Just as we would not feel comfortable with a snake in the house, we should not feel comfortable with bad thoughts in our mind.

Swami's discourses gave me much to aspire to, but the real test of my devotion will be putting his teachings into practice in my daily life. In the valedictory address, he told us that, although, in two weeks we had learned much about Indian culture and spirituality, it was no use merely knowing. We should put into practice at least one or two of the teachings. These teachings, I have briefly discussed, were what struck me as being important, and something that I will attempt to put into practice.

In three weeks with Swami, my emotions had run the gamut from elation to despair. However, one thing I know is that I am devoted to Sathya Sai Baba and want to please him. So, I will try my hardest to live the kind of life he wants for his students.

In conclusion, I would like to quote St. Ignatius of Loyola, who managed to summarize my devotion for Swami in these words:

"Oh, my God, I want to love you,

Not that I might gain eternal heaven,

Nor escape eternal hell.

*But Lord, to love you just because you
are my God."*

—**Rekha Rajkumar,**
graduate, Indiana University



On Wings of Eagles

I have been told, because eagles build their nests in the tops of very tall trees, or high on cliffs, the young eagles have to conquer their innate awareness of danger before they can attempt to fly. If the young bird fails in its attempt, the mother eagle will swoop down beneath it, catch it on her wings, and carry it aloft to try again.

Whether this narrative is true or not doesn't really matter, because, it illustrates an analogy of my own experience.

Like a wise mother eagle, Sai Baba sometimes seems to push us out of the

nest to make us test the wings of our own faith. On one such occasion, this eaglet failed to fly at all, and in a fit of anger and despair, I wrote a rather negative letter to Baba.

Then I spent the next several days wondering if I was going to be "fired" as a devotee because of it!

Late one evening, however, as I sat reading, the image of Sai Baba's face floated gently into my mind, along with a saying of his I had recently read:

"However you are, you are mine. . . ."

—**Linda Darnall,** Dallas, Texas

The Significance of Omkar

In Prasanthi Nilayam at early dawn, the people in the mandir chant 21 Oms and *shanti, shanti, shanti* (peace, peace, peace). Each part of this chanting—known as *Omkar*—is significant. Knowing the significance can make this spiritual discipline more meaningful to us.

Om is the verbal symbol of God, says Sai Baba; it announces the Lord's presence. It is the primeval sound. In fact, Baba has said that Om is the only sound—every other sound arises from it. He has called Om the true, life-principle of every person. So, when chanting Om, we are calling God and, also, affirming that we are God.

The number 21 is not arbitrary, and each of the 21 Oms is chanted for a purpose. Five Oms are chanted for the organs of action: vocal chords, hands, feet, elimination organs and generative organs. Five Oms are for the organs of perception: eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin, which correspond to sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Five Oms are for the five vital airs of the body. English doesn't seem to have names for these vital airs, so we list them with their Sanskrit names, they are: *prana* (located in the lungs), *apana* (flatus, which moves downward through the rectum), *vyana* (diffused throughout the whole body), *samana* (located near the navel and is essential to digestion) and *udana* (which rises through throat to the head). Finally, five Oms are for the five sheaths encasing of the body: the material sheath,

the sheath of vital air, the mental-emotional sheath, the sheath of intellect and the sheath of bliss.

Chanting 21 Oms purifies and clarifies the five organs of action, the five organs of perception, the five vital airs and the five sheaths. This prepares the human being for merger with the Supreme. The last Om is for the individual. Sai Baba advises us to think of the life-principle in a person as a rider on a twenty-headed horse; we chant Om for each of the 21 components.

Omkar ends with three *shantis*—peace is chanted for purity of the body, purity of the mind and purity of the spirit. In other words, peace is prayed for in the physical, mental and spiritual planes.

Baba has said, "*This recital of Om will tone you up, calm all agitations of the mind and quicken the downpour of grace.*" He has said, "*Spiritual discipline of this sort is a must for all Sai workers, for it alone can give them peace and the other most valuable gift, love.*"

We hope that this explanation will make *Omkar* more precious to you. For us, visualizing each component as we do *Omkar* has given this spiritual discipline new meaning.

For Swami's own words on *Omkar*, read *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Volume X, Chapter 33, pp 210-212 [page numbers vary]

—Elaine and David Gries
Ithaca, New York

Mother Divine

A person who does not have virtues such as charity, righteous conduct, compassion and morality of the highest order—a person who revels in bad qualities and evil deeds—will be without happiness in this world and even in the world beyond. A person who has love for the mother and serves the mother is free from all sins. The Lord himself would confer on that person God's grace, and free him from all grief and sorrow.

The most important duty enjoined on an individual is to love and honor the mother. If a person cannot love and respect his own mother—who carried him for nine months in her womb, who gave him birth, who gave him protection and shelter—then who else can he love in this world? The principle of motherhood is intimately associated with God who has created the entire universe, provides sustenance and grants everything that mankind needs. Your perception of this principle must be broad and benign. If you consider your own mother as a goddess and do not perceive another's likewise, it is indeed a great error. Also, you should realize that if one cannot have the good fortune of enjoying the love of his own mother, indeed one can never have the bounty of God's love either. The mother who has carried a child in her womb for months—has gone through all sorts of pain and trouble to sustain the child—is entitled to be protected. Never forget this important duty.

In daily life and in nature, we come across a number of examples to illustrate the divine nature of the "mother princi-

ple." The cow converts her own fluids into milk which gives sustenance to us all. She is considered a divine mother (*mathru moorthi*) because of this. The earth keeps us in her bosom and gives us protection at all times. The earth is also known as a divine mother. Then there are the many fluids emanating in our own body (*angiras*) that digest our food. These reside in our limbs and activate the body. They are life sustaining and, therefore, are also considered to be divine. The great sages (*maharishis*) have taught us what is desirable and what is undesirable; that is why these *maharishis* are also divine. The teacher, the preceptor—all these are the embodiments of the divine mother principle.

The mother is the divine aspect. It is in order to declare to the world this divine aspect of the mother that the *Navarathi* festival is celebrated. In the nine days of the festival we pay homage to the goddesses Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. What is the basis for this threefold aspect of the divine mother?

Durga confers physical, mental and spiritual powers. Lakshmi endows us with the splendor of knowledge, divine energy and wisdom. Saraswathi gives us the power of intellect, discrimination and words.

The mother is truly an embodiment of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. She confers on us all types of energy and power. She provides us with all manner of wealth and helps us grow and prosper. She also aspires for her children to earn fame and name through their edu-

cation. These three divine principles merge in our own mother.

It was not the skill and ability of the Pandavas that were responsible for their earning the grace of Krishna. Nor was it their penance that gave them this great privilege. It was the love of their mother, Kunthi, that conferred Krishna's grace on her sons, the Pandava brothers. Kunthi considered her children as her very life. She taught them the various types of prayers that should be offered to the Lord. At the time of that great tragic moment, when her children were living in that house of wax, Kunthi was with them.

The example of Lakshmana showering so much attention on Rama at the time of their exile in the forest was also because of the love of Lakshmana's mother, Sumitra. When Rama was sent to the forest, his mother, Kausalya, was grief-stricken. But Sumitra did not falter, she said to Lakshmana, "My son! Wherever Rama is, that is Ayodhya. Remain with him, take care of him wherever he is, and ensure that he is not put to any kind of hardship." This was her blessing to her son. Lakshmana was able to be with Rama only because of the blessing of his mother.

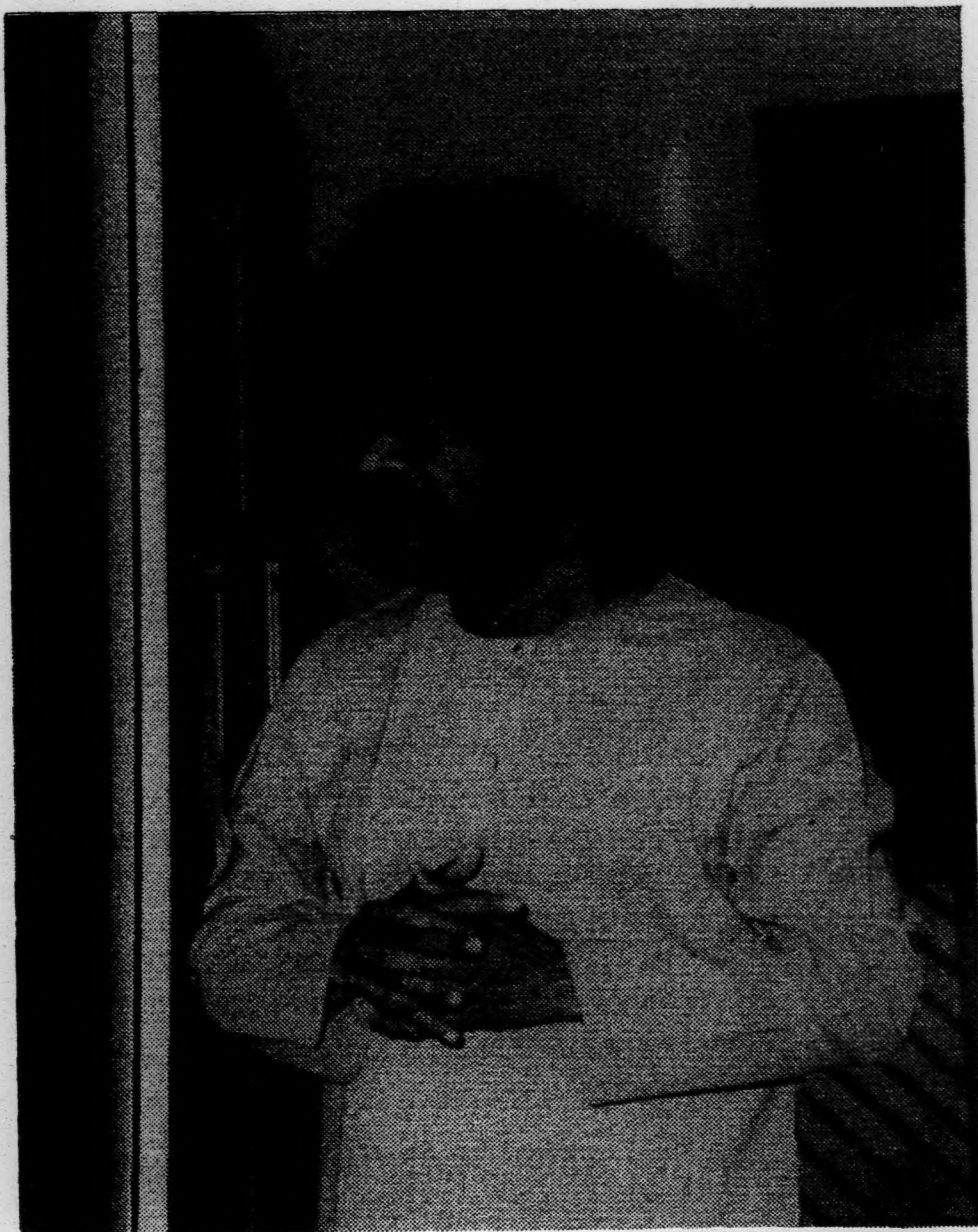
The supreme truth is that mother's love can confer on you all that you cherish.

After the Mahabharatha war, Krishna went to Dhritarashtra, the father, and Gandhari, the mother of the Kauravas, in order to test their feelings at the loss of their children in the war. Gandhari had mixed feelings at Krishna's arrival. She went close to Krishna and asked

him, "Is it right for *Bhagavan* to look at some people with benevolence and others with harshness? What is the reason for you to treat the Pandavas as dear to you, and the Kauravas as not dear to you? How is it that you did not allow even one of our hundred children to survive? Could you not save at least one of them, so that he could perform our last rites?" Krishna answered: "*Gandhari! This is not my fault. This is your fault. Did you open your eyes and look at even one of your hundred children? Was there any child who was blessed with a look from you? The children who have not been able to enjoy the love of their own mother, how can they get the love of God? It was on account of your own selfishness that your husband lost his eyesight. You did not know who your sons were because you did not even look at them. The sinners who were not fortunate enough to have their mothers' vision, how can they have my vision and my grace? On the other hand, the mothers of the Pandavas took care of their children right from birth. All the protection that the Pandavas enjoyed came from their mothers' love. It is God's grace that saved the Pandavas. Mother's love was the basis for that grace. This is a law of nature. Whoever adheres to this law will be happy.*"

We should not worship wealth. If we love our own mother who has given birth to us, then we will have worshipped everyone else. The protection given to mother is the real protection of our life. If father is the embodiment of righteousness, mother is the embodiment of love.

In the interest of the welfare of the children, the mother may give some punishment to them. We should have the dis-



"Mother's love can confer all that you cherish."

crimination to understand how this helps and protects us. For example: If a person who does not know how to swim falls into a river and dies, is it the fault of the river, or is it the mistake of the individual? After putting your finger in the fire and it gets burned, can you blame the fire for it? It is your own mistake because you did not recognize the fact that fire can burn. Similarly, if you conduct yourself in such a way that hurts your mother, and mother gives some punish-

ment, what is the use of complaining about the mother? This is something reprehensible. You should always carry out those activities which will please the mother, which are dear to the mother, which give joy to the mother. Realize the importance of the mother and her love. Take the path which will please her.

On the other hand, people buy flowers and offer worship to the idols—Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi—ignoring the aspect of honoring their mothers. The mother who has given birth to you is the very embodiment of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. You should never make your mother shed tears. In other countries there is also a belief that where women are made to cry, prosperity will vanish. Your duty therefore, is to see that you do not hurt your mother in any way.

Men should never make women weep in any way whatsoever. It is necessary in this context to recognize the truth that every woman is an embodiment of motherhood. You should therefore respect and honor her. You should not use women as playthings, considering them as very ordinary beings. This is very wrong. Indeed, it is a very great mistake. When you see them, you should offer divine greetings (*namaskars*) with all your heart. It is not proper to look at them with an evil eye and

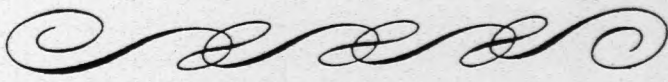
consider them as playthings. In the scriptural dictum, mother is given the first place. Even in common parlance, when you talk of mother, father, etc., mother is given precedence over all others. In Indian culture, women are given an exalted status. Are you observing this principle in daily life? Considering women as weaklings, you are taking them as people who can cook food and serve you. Even in the *Bhagavad Gita* it has been declared that women are the very embodiment of great power.

Your very first duty is to serve your mother. The mother is responsible for

your physical body. No one should cause any hurt to the mother. If you go on the wrong path, you cannot be free from sorrow. Without learning the lesson, we cannot pass the examination. Without passing various lower classes, one cannot advance to high school. In the very first instance, you must please your mother. If you cannot please your mother, how can you please God? You must therefore learn to respect and honor the mother. I give you my blessings.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Excerpted from a discourse given during
Navaratri Festival, October 1988



Of What Impact?

I was in the midst of packing for my eighth trip to India to be in the presence of Sathya Sai Baba. With only four days to go, I was in the usual pre-trip frenzy involved in transporting a family of four to another country.

While taking an evening walk, I was pondering the effort required to make such a journey; I was wondering what benefit I'd brought to others after 16 years of making such pilgrimages. Not many had come to Baba because of me, and few in our circle of family and friends had any interest in focusing on Baba.

I was feeling somewhat sad and disappointed that after having had so many wonderful opportunities to be near Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba my "Sai impact" on others was so minimal.

As I continued the steady rhythm of my walk a second time around the neighborhood circle, I sensed a response to my inner chagrin:

You have shared your good fortune and brought the Sai message to others in countless ways. I am all names and all forms. And through your steadiness, your calmness in adversity, your loyalty in friendship, you have shown my face to others. In your enduring marriage—during easy times and hard times—you have shown my face to others. And, especially, in the rearing of your children—whom you are so careful to teach respect of teachers, love of God, and critical evaluation of modern values—you are carrying to many others the blessings of Sai.

—Anonymous

Prayer Vigil

At The Northeast Region Retreat

At each Sai Retreat, a room is set aside as "Baba's room," complete with bed, night stand, chair, Baba's robe, altar, flowers, incense and pictures. Devotees usually make at least one visit to his room for meditation or prayer.

And yet, Baba's room—for all of its symbolism and all of its peaceful vibrations—is usually vacant and devoid of retreatants for most of each day during the retreat. Many devotees would only peek in for a moment and hurry away, acting as if any further stay was presumptuous! In fact, at a recent retreat, I became very upset because his room was not clearly marked; the retreat leaders gave it short-shrift, and most devotees attending didn't know there was such a room or where it was located.

And so, when my wife, Patty, and I were asked to serve on the retreat committee for the Northeast Region (which was held in May 1993), we proposed a prayer and meditation vigil in Baba's room. The idea of the vigil was to ask devotees to sign up on a registration board for one hour of prayer and meditation in Baba's room with the specific intention of praying for the uplift of the speakers, workshop leaders and devotee-retreatants.

To our delight, the response was overwhelming! Within a few hours of the announcement of the vigil, at least two peo-

ple volunteered for each hour of the retreat, day and night, around the clock! And the enthusiasm of some was amazing. The devotees of one entire Sai Center signed up to worship together in Baba's room for one hour in the early morning of the last day.

It was announced each day that the vigil was ongoing. We were all moved knowing that prayer, meditation and scriptural readings were pouring out of the hearts of the volunteers—raising the spiritual vibrations of peace, harmony and love—for all of us that weekend.

The vigil was positive on so many levels. To volunteer was a form of selfless service, *seva*. Many devotees spent holy moments in prayerful meditation and devotion calling for the uplift of the entire retreat community.

Those of us who spoke or worked on the retreat committee, or led a workshop were strengthened in our roles, knowing that others were praying for our work and our effort. Baba's room became a place of intense active devotion and was not treated simply as a curiosity.

Because the Baba room vigil was so warmly received, Patty and I hope that other Sai Retreat Committees will study the Vigil concept and incorporate it into their programs.

—Chuck DiFazio

Manchester Creek Center, Connecticut

Devotion should manifest itself in every action. Everything done out of love for God, as an offering to God, becomes devotion.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Sanathana Sarathi, April 1988, page 107

Sai Conferences and Retreats for 1994

<i>Date and Region</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Information</i>
<i>May 20-22 Pacific Region South Region #8</i>	<i>Pilgrim Pines 39570 Glen Road Yucaipa, California (near Redlands)</i>	<i>Surendra & Shakuntala Patel 18212 Leaf Circle Huntington Beach, CA 92648 (714) 847-0043</i>
<i>May 27-30 Memorial Day weekend Mid Atlantic Region #2</i>	<i>Bryn Mawr Mountain Retreat and Conference Center Homesvale, Pennsylvania (the Pocano Mountains)</i>	<i>Runee Harris 10 Heminway Ave. #B44 New Rochelle, NY 10801 (914) 636-6149</i>
<i>May 27-29 Memorial Day weekend Northeastern Region #1</i>	<i>Russell Sage College Troy, New York (near Albany)</i>	<i>Ravi Dabir 5 Lock Street Baldwinsville, NY 13027 (315) 638-7317</i>
<i>May 27-30 Memorial Day weekend South Central Region #4</i>	<i>Camp Wyman Eureka, Missouri (near St. Louis)</i>	<i>Sai Ram Venkataraman 9450-A Mary Glen Dr. Crestwood, St. Louis, MO 63126 (314) 849-3102</i>
<i>May 27-30 Memorial Day weekend Southwestern Region #9</i>	<i>Camp Charles Pearlstein 3400 Copper Basin Rd. Prescott, Arizona</i>	<i>Nula Falvey 717 West Virginia Phoenix, AZ 85007 (602) 258-3876</i>
<i>July 2-4 4th of July weekend Pacific Region South Region #8</i>	<i>Casa de Maria Montecito, California (near Santa Barbara)</i>	<i>Rattan Appoo 5263 Creekside Road Camarillo, CA 93012 (805) 482-9880 h. or 988-2723 o.</i>

<i>September 2-5 Labor Day weekend South West Region #9</i>	<i>Bodhi Mandala Jemez Springs, New Mexico (near Albuquerque)</i>	<i>Michael & Stacie Soloway 1009 Osage Circle Santa Fe, NM 87505 (505) 983-5835</i>
<i>September 2-4 Labor Day weekend South Central Region #4</i>	<i>Houston, Texas (location not established at the time of publication)</i>	<i>Rick Raines 16406 Willow Park Dr. Tomball, TX 77375 (713) 370-0833</i>
<i>September 3-5 Labor Day weekend North Central Region #5</i>	<i>Camp Ohiyesa Holly, Michigan</i>	<i>Ed Leinartas 910 South Clinton Oak Park, IL 60304 (708) 383-8462</i>
<i>September 16-18 Northern California & Nevada Region #7</i>	<i>Camp La Honda, Santa Cruz Mnts., California (between San Francisco & Santa Cruz)</i>	<i>Stephen Field 1010 Noel Drive #17 Menlo Park, CA 94025 (415) 325-4788</i>
<i>September 24-26 Pacific Region #8</i>	<i>Cedar Glen, California (near Julian in San Diego County)</i>	<i>Joanne Santangelo 4588-A West Point Loma Blvd. San Diego, CA 92107 (619) 224-8471</i>
<i>October 28-30 Pacific Region North Region #6</i>	<i>Silver Creek Falls, Oregon (near Portland)</i>	<i>Nancy Newel P. O. Box 13206 Burton, WA 98013 (206) 463-9862</i>
<i>November 25-27 Following Thanksgiving weekend Southeastern Region #3</i>	<i>Simpsonwood Conference & Retreat Center North atlanta, Georgia</i>	<i>Diane Justice P. O. Box 52404 Atlanta, GA 30355-0404 (404) 261-2197</i>

How I Learned to Save Time

Have your parents ever told you, "Don't waste time."

Well, I never thought that I was a time-waster, but I sure found out.

When it was time to do homework, I would sneak into the living room and turn on the TV very quietly, so no one would hear. (I only *thought* no one could hear). I'd say to myself, "Oh, just one TV show won't keep me from doing my homework." Then, the phone would ring, and I'd talk and talk to my friends about silly things. Next, I'd hear my parents ask, "Have you finished your homework?" And I hadn't even started!

My parents would tell me to shower. I'd get in and run the water, daydreaming about being under a waterfall, and I'd waste gallons!

When my parents came in to tuck me in bed, I'd say "Goodnight." But, I couldn't go to sleep because I felt really bad. I hadn't done my homework, I, also, wasted things like water, and I definitely wasted time!

Even when my mom asked me to go shopping, I didn't take a list and wasted an hour going up and down the aisles, trying to remember what I was supposed to get.

One day, a good friend from Sathya Sai *Bal Vikas* said that it makes God sad when we are wasteful. I thought about that! It made me feel very bad to think of all the things I was doing wrong.

So now, I come home and do homework right away, I shower without daydreaming, and I try not to waste my time on the phone. When I'm sent shopping, I don't go out without a list. I can't imagine ever wanting to make Baba sad! Can you?



—A Junior Devotee

Don't waste time. Time is God. Time wasted is life wasted. By wasting time, we are wasting our divinity, our divine power.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Newsletter, Fall 1984, page 28



Every day, whatever work you may be doing, do it in God's name. This will please God, and make your life sacred.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XV, page 2

Short Talks For Long Lasting Results

Progress on the spiritual path requires a balanced approach to study, devotion and service. Head, heart and hand all play roles in our transformation. Currently, Sathya Sai Baba Centers in the U. S. reflect the genuine devotion of participants. Devotional song programs regularly draw most active members. Indeed, the devotional meeting holds center stage among our activities. Service projects also command considerable attention, for we know the importance that Sai places on these programs. Many centers feed the poor and provide other worthwhile services to those in need. However, our mastery of Sai's teachings often falls short of expectations. The discipline and intensity displayed in devotion and service escapes the study groups. And so, we fail to meet the challenge of filling the gaps in our understanding of Sai's teachings.

Newcomers to Sai Baba Centers usually enjoy devotional singing and frequently participate in service activities. However, they often feel that Sai's teachings remain inaccessible to them. Certainly, books are available, and members will answer questions when asked, but a proper forum for group study often eludes them. Study circles exist in most centers, but they frequently lack structure and focus. Often, discussions revolve around narrow issues. Participants share

their personal views, but do not necessarily relate to Sai's teachings. As a result, newcomers may feel confused about Bhagavan's message.

To meet the need of structured education, a program of short talks has been suggested for center use. These talks aim to elucidate Sai Baba's teachings on specific topics. The program was initiated at the regional meetings in 1993,* with positive results. Speakers addressed five assigned themes by researching the issues and presenting five to 10 minute talks. Some study is required, which serves both speaker and listener. Additional benefits in public speaking and articulating Swami's message also accrue. The discipline of research encourages us to broaden our understanding and to become familiar with sources. Without knowledge and speaking ability, we lose the opportunity to serve others with the joyful message we have received. Even if we exemplify great virtue, we must sometimes explain our motivation and principles to others.

Many centers have instituted the program with favorable results. The talks have demonstrated participants' abilities to apply themselves to the task. Group members have remarked on the care that speakers take with such assignments. Some speakers even prepare

*Let us not forget that Dr. Jack Hislop, Past President of the Sathya Sai Council of the USA, encouraged devotees to instigate and participate in a short talk program for many years. His efforts have laid the groundwork for the acceptance of such a program to be put into practice at this time.

—Editor

handouts which serve as reference material for the pleasure of others.

Experience shows that some guidelines are helpful. For example, the actual delivery of the talk should be fairly spontaneous. Long quotations or direct reading of a speech should be gently discouraged. Depending on the size of the center, one 10 minute talk and one or two, five-minute talks may be sufficient on a monthly basis. A member may be appointed to display cards to let the speaker know if they have exceeded their time. Sometimes, remaining within time constraints challenges the speaker. Mark Twain once apologized to a friend to whom he wrote a letter. He said, "I am sorry this letter is so long. I didn't have time to write a shorter one."

The program of short talks is intended to supplement study circle, not replace it. It may be alternated with the regular study program, if time precludes doing both. The topics for these talks provide a broad overview of Sai's message, while the study circle examines specifics. The talks aim to inspire us and

open our hearts, whereas the study circle explores the various aspects of an issue. An open dialogue after the talk seeks to draw relevant experiences from the listeners. Rather than adhering to the more controlled format of study circle, the short talk program aims to generate enthusiasm and to fan the spark of divinity within participants.

The day will soon arrive when many of our non-devotee brothers and sisters will ask, "What is the message of Sai Baba?" We hold the responsibility to be prepared for that day. Our ability and enthusiasm for the task will be essential to the success of our mission. The exercise of regular speaking and study enables us to be more effective servants of Sai. Without correct knowledge, we renounce a most valuable tool for self-transformation and for the improvement of society. So, we must now apply the same energy to study that we commit to devotion and service. If we succeed in the task, we open the door to a new and brighter world for ourselves and others.

—Jonathan Roof
Tucson, Arizona

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Sai Ram! It has come to our notice, once again, that some individuals have been going about visiting Sai Centers. They claim to have a special relationship with, or are authorized by—Bhagavan himself, or the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, or other Sai Organizations—and are appointed to act on their behalf. It appears that some centers have been misled by believing such claims, and have offered hospitality and other forms of assistance to these people.

All centers may kindly be cautioned against such individuals and not be misled. Should this happen, please have their claims substantiated by an officer in your region. In this way, it is hoped that you can avoid risk of displeasure and undesirable consequences.

—D. Hejmadi
Central Office, Prasanthi Nilayam

Traveling to Sai—With Children

It is an adventure and a challenge to travel to India with young children. The longing to share the experience of Sai Baba's *darshan* with one's offspring can be a powerful motivator in facing and overcoming whatever difficulties accompany such a long journey.

We have taken our two children several times to Sai Baba, beginning when they were ages three years and 14 months. The following thoughts are a reflection of these experiences with the goal of offering encouragement and practical information to parents who may be considering such a trip for the first time.

There is much that can be done before the trip to enhance your visit. First, realize that you will be staying in an ashram with few of the comforts of home, but all of the love of Baba. Planning ahead in the areas of food, medicine and entertainment can make the experience easier for everyone. To make the transition in diet less of a problem, consider bringing familiar staples from home. We pack as if we are going camping. There are many quick cooking dry foods such as oatmeal, whole grains, and dehydrated back-pack meals that can be easily transported in a suitcase and cooked on a hot plate in your room. Any favorite foods that can withstand the heat are usually worth bringing. Also, the ashram has evolved much more into a family pilgrimage center in recent years. Noodles, cheese, and jelly are often sold in the ashram, as well as bread from the bakery, pizza, sodas and ice cream. Meals without spice may also be purchased.

In addition to basic foodstuffs, I recommend taking along basic medical supplies for the family. We usually pack standard allopathic and homeopathic remedies. During crowded times at the ashram, there is a lot of exposure to cold germs. And, of course, there exists the possibility of intestinal upset. We have always been very careful about what we eat and about hand washing carefully before we eat. But, the children still seem to get one bout of something or other during a trip. Sometimes we can treat it ourselves and, other times, we ask for help through the devotee grapevine. Our family has always been able to find a doctor to advise us.

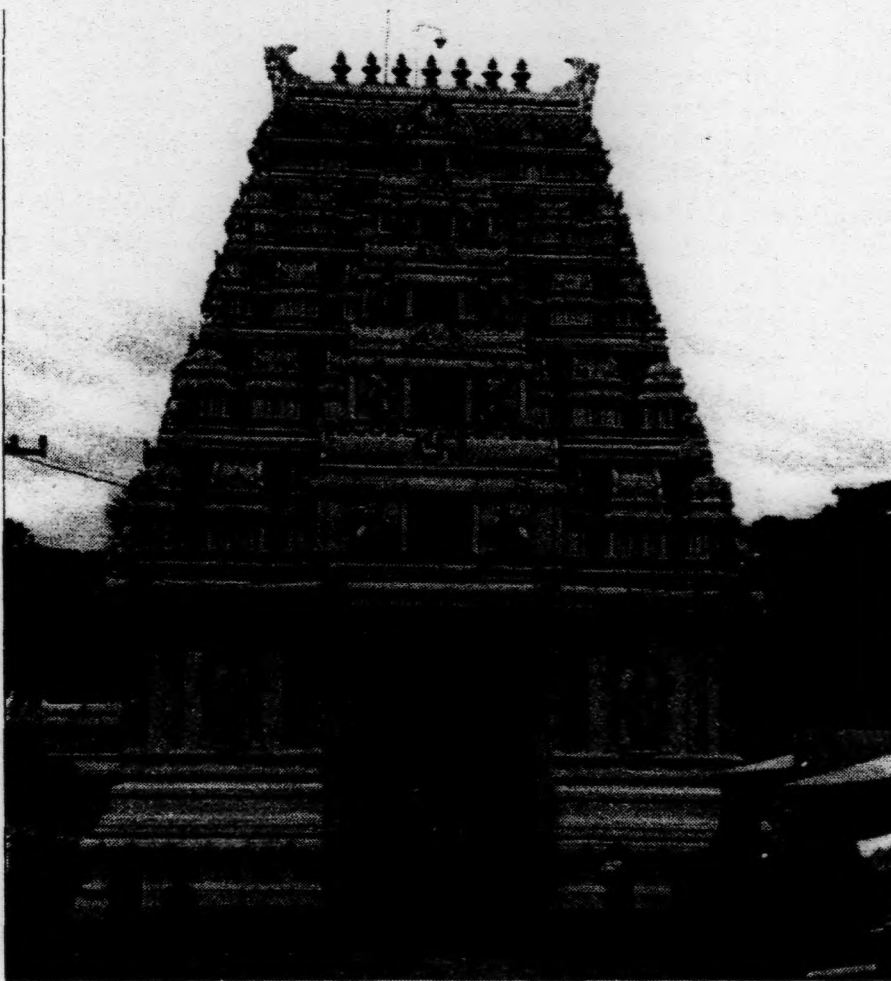
All parents of young children know how difficult it is to entertain them for long periods of time. Imagination is required in packing for this part of the trip. I suggest a variety of small playthings, books, drawing materials, and stories on tape that can be enjoyed through earphones. There are many long periods when silence and quiet play are essential: during travel, in your room at the ashram, and while waiting in the compound for Baba to give *darshan*. Of course, your child will probably end up playing most often with a stick and a pile of sand. Yet, as most parents have learned, one has to have those novel, eye-catching toys for the tight spots that are inevitable. When all else fails, you can pray for a troop of monkeys to come along and distract your fussing little one.

The actual journey to India is an event in and of itself. It requires all the inge-

nuity parents can muster to entertain little ones for hours and hours of flight. My personal bias leads me to favor airlines that tend to book lots of young children. The benefits are the potential for playmates, and the avoidance of a situation where your family is feeling solely responsible for disturbing rows of orderly, sleeping adults. Many airlines allow for an overnight stay en route and if your finances can absorb the extra hotel costs it is well worth it. And then, at last, one arrives at Prasanthi Nilayam. I am always filled with excitement, joy, and gratitude as we drive through the magnificent archways signaling our arrival at the ashram. The ashram welcomes children, and there are always many, many families. Everyone, including children of all ages, is expected to respect the times of quiet and silence, of which there are many. It is my observation that children are generally met with warmth and affection coupled with high expectations for discipline. This can be a powerful and beneficial combination.

To whatever extent possible, prepare your children for ashram life and for the presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Exposure to Sai Center activities, *bhajans*, and the quiet sitting of meditation begins to build a bridge from our outer focused Western life to the inner focused atmosphere of the ashram.

If your children are young enough to require constant supervision and you feel comfortable hiring help, sometimes a local young woman can be hired for a rela-



Arriving at Prasanthi Nilayam, I am filled with joy.

tively small fee to help with child care and chores. This is not without its problems (language differences for one) but can still be very useful at times.

There are bound to be trying moments during your stay. Crowds of people, long lines, heat and a variety of other things can contribute to bad tempers and restless children. The children will not always be perfectly quiet and they can distract you just as Baba comes near. Yet, it is my experience that the rewards have always outweighed the effort and difficulties. Thoughtful planning can minimize some of the obstacles and help clear the way for a profound family adventure.

—Marsha Abrams
South Burlington, Vermont

Dates to Remember in 1994

Mark Your Calendar

This list of holy days is given to us by the Central Office at Prasanthi Nilayam and may be of special significance to Sai devotees in the United States:

March 10, Thursday, Mahashivaratri is observed during the new moon, symbolizing a renaissance and rededication to spiritual life.

April 11, Monday, Yugadi is Telugu Lunar New Year.

April 20, Wednesday, Sri Rama Navami is the day to honor the Avatar, Rama.

May 6, Friday, Easwaramma Day is recognized as the time to pay homage to the memory of the mother of Sathya Sai Baba.

July 17, Sunday, Global Handicapped Day is a time for helping the handicapped and to remember that they need help throughout the year.

July 22, Friday, Guru Poornima is a time to pay respect to the spiritual preceptor, guide or teacher.

August 29, Monday, Sri Krishna Jayanti, to honor the birth of the Avatar, Krishna.

September 9, Friday, Ganesha Chaturthi honors Ganesha who is the remover of all obstacles and ignorance.

***September 11, Sunday, Blood Donation Day**, remember to give blood at your local hospital, Red Cross, or blood bank.

October 13, Thursday, Dasara or Vijaya Dasami is a celebration of the victory of good over evil.

****November, Saturday and Sunday, Akhanda Bhajan** is a continuous 24 hours of devotional singing dedicated to world peace and is celebrated in Sai Centers around the world. Begins at 6:00 PM, Saturday and ends at 6:00 PM on Sunday.

November 23, Wednesday, the 69th Birthday of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

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

***Please note that, because of recent disasters in the U. S., there is a shortage of available blood. It is safe and relatively painless to give a pint.**

****At the time of publication this date was not established, but it is usually the second weekend in November.**

Festival days are marked on the calendar to awaken the minds of people. . . . They are alarm bells which go off at intervals during the year warning of the journey ahead, and the goal beyond the horizon.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Sadhana, The Inward Path, page 241

"Time Wasted Is Life Wasted"

Recently, my husband went to see some friends who had just returned from a pilgrimage to India to see Sathya Sai Baba. I was not able to go with him. When he returned that night, I had already fallen asleep. Knowing that I would want to hear about our friends' trip, he awakened me and shared some of their wonderful stories. He had brought me a little packet of *vibhuti* (holy ash) given to our friends by Sai Baba. Filled with joy, I dozed off to sleep again.

The next morning I awoke to find that little packet of *vibhuti* on my bed stand. I looked at it and tears rushed to my eyes. It had been such a long time since I had been given *vibhuti*.

I remembered how it was when I was living near a large metropolitan Sai Center, I could always get a packet whenever I wanted one. And, in fact, I always had several of them around the house. Then I remembered the interview in

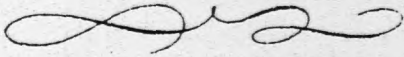
which Baba had stuffed at least 50 packets into the little backpack I was carrying. It all seemed so long ago.

Today, I'm thrilled to receive just one packet of *vibhuti*.

Ten or more years ago, I took for granted the precious experiences that Sathya Sai Baba gave me. Now, those treasures are found inside my heart. There is nostalgia and a bit of regret for those days having passed. However, Baba tells us that even his form is part of our worldly vision. Then, he tells us that there is so much more than what we see in the world.

In his present form of Sathya Sai Baba, he constantly reminds us, "*Time wasted is life wasted.*" How true that is! Or as Bob Dylan, the poet and musician, used to sing in my childhood, "The times they are a changin'."

—Chrystal Pearl
Southern California



Vibhuti is the most precious object in a truly spiritual sense. . . . [It represents the burning of desires that agitate the mind and cause confusion.] When there is no desire to warp the mind, love will be true and full. What greater offering can you give to God to glorify him than the ash signifying your triumph over desire?

Ash or vibhuti is the ultimate condition of things; it cannot undergo any further change. . . . It should inspire you to give up desire and offer to God the ashes of destruction of tantalizing desires as the most valuable of all the articles you have earned. Ash cannot fade as do flowers in a day or two; it does not dry and disappear; it will not lose its color as leaves do in just a few hours; it does not rot as fruit does after a few days. Ash is ash forever and ever. So burn your vile tendencies, your vices, your bad habits. Worship God, rendering yourself pure in thought, word and deed.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. IX, Chapter 6

A Word of Advice to The Doctors

I wish to give a word of advice to the doctors. While you are examining the patients, you should have smiling faces and talk to the patients sweetly. If you check the pulse with a grim face the patient may collapse, fearing that there is something radically wrong. Some patients even dread the very sight of a doctor when he approaches to examine them. This is not good. Doctors should infuse courage in the patients and speak soothingly, radiating compassion and love. A kind approach by the doctor will have a greater healing effect on the patient than the medicine itself. Doctors must instill courage in the patients. Swami wants more hospitals to render free treatment to the poor. Doctors should cooperate and work with unity.

It is only by control of the senses and steadfastness that one can lead a happy and healthy life. Along with control of the mind, one should control one's temper and avoid tension. Prevention of disease should be the goal. We should aim at a human society free from diseases. It will be a happy day when a hospital gets no patients at all.

Divine Practitioners of Medicine

All of you have assembled here to discuss and exchange your knowledge and experience in the field of medical science, particularly relating to the treatment of cardiac and cardiovascular cases. I wish for you to discuss, find solutions to problems and render service to the people.

Charity is the ornament for the hand.

Truth is the adornment for the tongue.

The scriptures are the ornament for the ears.

Of what avail are other ornaments?

The human body is a thing of marvelous beauty. Mankind cannot easily comprehend the secret of God's creation. No one can explain how the eyes have acquired the power of seeing this phenomenal world. The beauty of all the organs in the human body is a secret of creation. Doctors try to find out how each sense organ and each limb functions. No one tries to find out why they are functioning. This secret can be grasped only through the *Atmic Principle*.

Human life is based on six constituents, the five basic elements and the *Atma* (indwelling Divinity). To recognize this fact, three paths have to be pursued: The first is to recognize within one's self the presence of nature and the Divine. The second path is to recognize in God the cosmic creation and one's self. The third path is to see in nature the presence of God, and to see God's presence in one's self. It is only when knowledge is acquired by these three paths that knowledge of the Self arises. This threefold path is termed "integrated awareness." Every person should try to understand this threefold path. This can be done at all times, in all places. It has universal application. It has permanent validity everywhere. But, people get involved in the impermanent.

There are in the world today highly intelligent and experienced doctors of

great renown. They are, however, concerned only with the cure of diseases and not the redemption of the patient. It is more important to cure the mental condition of the patient than to relieve his physical illness.

Treat the Patient Not the Disease

During the past two days, the doctors have been discussing how to cure diseases. They have presented statistics as to the number of cases handled, the number of cures effected and the incidence of mortality. The doctors have had some doubts about how diseases are cured in our Super Specialty Hospital. How does this happen? There is a good answer for this. In regard to any action, if it is done with a pure heart and good intentions, it is bound to be successful. People, today, regard self-interest as a way of life. This has become the philosophy of the modern world. But we should consider sacrifice alone as the true philosophy for the world. When you approach the patient with a spirit of sacrifice, the patient's feelings get purified.

Our body is surrounded by divine vibrations. If you look at the thumb, there are vibrations of light around it. Few attempt to recognize this phenomenon. The body is surrounded by vibrations of light. When these vibrations of light from one person to another meet, several good things happen.

There are three important human instruments for people: One is the heart, the second is the hand. Third, the head which is preoccupied with inquiring into mundane phenomena. The head is con-

cerned with the external; its focus is on objects outside. The heart looks at what is within. The concern with the external has been termed *pravrithimarga*. All actions today—including the knowledge people acquire, the wealth they get—relate to *pravrithimarga*. The six vices: lust, anger, infatuation, greed, pride and jealousy are related to the *pravrithimarga*. These undergo constant changes. Because the body is associated with these qualities it is also subject to change.

But, the heart remains the same. It is associated with the *nivrithimarga*, the inward path. What are the qualities associated with the heart? They are truth, compassion, love, forbearance, sympathy and sacrifice. These human qualities emanate from the heart. So, in human life, the head and the heart play crucial roles. These two are kept in balance by the hand. Thus, the heart, the head and the hand are the three H's which are important in studying the human predicament.

What are the causes of disease of the heart? All diseases are a reflection of *pravrithi*, the disposition of the mind. Hence, in worldly matters, man should follow the right path. In this context, two elements among the five basic elements are important. Food is essential for nourishing the body, and clothing is necessary for protection against cold. Associated with food is water; these two occupy a prominent place in human life. Life is the subtle form of the water consumed by people. The mind is the subtle form of the food taken by people. Hence, a close connection should be established between the mind and life. As is the food, so is the head. One's thoughts, desires and aspirations are related to the kind

of food one consumes. For instance, you may discern from practical experience how food affects the mind. The cyclic process, which starts with the formation of clouds and ends in the harvest of grain, determines the kind of food one can have. Heat or fire, is the basis of this process. Fire is present within each person as the digestive fire, which accounts for the conversion of the food consumed by us into various forms of energy. This fire has to be in proper balance. When the balance is upset, you have illness. The state of the body depends on the maintenance of this balance. Our lives depend on preserving this balance. When is the balance upset? When there is no mental steadiness. People today develop all kinds of intellectual abilities, but they have not learned how to keep the mind steady. When serenity of mind is achieved there will be no diseases; illness will not approach you at all.

Food & The Mind

There should be some regulations with regard to food. Many doctors emphasize the value of proteins and recommend meat, eggs, etc. Proteins in this form build the body but do considerable harm to the mind. Doctors are primarily concerned with the gross, physical body. They pay little attention to the subtle form of the mental makeup. Most of the diseases that are prevalent in the world today are related to the mind. Mental illnesses seem to outnumber physical ailments. The *Vedas* (scriptures) have declared that the mind is the cause of man's bondage or liberation. This means that the mind has to be used properly and turned godward. Equally, the mind is responsible for health or sickness. In this

context, food is all-important. Proteins are present in milk, curds and vegetables as well as in meat. If, in the matter of diet, the doctors give the right prescription, diseases can be averted.

Prevention Is Better Than Cure

In my view, instead of treating people after the onset of illness, it is better to ensure that they do not fall ill at all. Both doctors and other authorities should educate pregnant women about prenatal care. It is distressing to find that newborn babes suffer from congenital heart diseases. Dr. Iyer showed the picture of a smiling child who had prospered after having had a heart operation shortly after birth. While one rejoices at such a sight, it is frightening to think of the operation that had to be done on a ten-day-old infant. In the case of congenital heart diseases, neither the parents nor the child can be happy. Nor can society be happy with such a situation. Something must be done to prevent heart trouble from developing during pregnancy. There are medicines for preventing congenital heart ailments. For instance, if the mother is given various vitamins, the child's heart can be strengthened. The mother should be taught all about prenatal care and given the necessary medicines. Pregnant women should be periodically checked in the hospital. It is better to take all preventive measures before the birth of a child than to carry the burden of bringing up a weak or crippled child.

Doctors alone cannot impart this message to all women. They can only advise those who come to them. But, doctors

can bring home to the authorities their responsibility in the area of preventive measures. What is the use of spending money on curative measures without promoting health? That is a waste of money. (Baba then referred to the hazards in the use of antibiotics in the treatment of certain diseases, and the use of pesticides in agriculture).

Doctors And Society

Doctors should realize what they owe to society. Society has preserved and imparted to doctors, the knowledge of medical science. Medical knowledge has been enriched by the contributions of dedicated investigators over centuries. Physicians should be grateful to society for all the knowledge and skills they have acquired from the dedicated labors of others. They should realize their indebtedness to society for all they have received. Only then, will they use their knowledge and skills in the right way.

Today, people think in terms of only their personal interests. They should develop a social consciousness realizing what they owe to society. People have become so utterly selfish that they behave in inhuman ways. They do not make proper use of their talents and resources in the service (*seva*) of their fellow human beings.

Doctors are embodiments of the Divine. As such, it is their duty to see that people do not shed tears of grief. They may doubt that this is possible. Do as much as lies within your power. What happens thereafter need not bother you. Treat duty as God, and work as worship. If you carry on your work in this spirit, the world will be a happier place for all.

I have to give a word of advice to the doctors present here. The tendency to specialize in the treatment of heart diseases has gone to absurd lengths. I would advise the doctors to treat the heart as a whole and not fragment every part of it for specialized treatment. Specialization has grown to alarming proportions in the world today. Doctors should be general practitioners who know how to treat the different ailments of patients.

The heart teaches an important lesson to mankind. It appears to beat tirelessly without stopping. But, in fact, it is able to rest for brief intervals between one beat and another. The heart teaches you how to rest even while at work. I often tell the students, "A change of work is rest." This is the way the heart functions when it pumps the blood from one chamber to the other.

Few can realize the limitless potential of each cell in the human body. It is one of the great secrets of creation. The cells teach people the lesson of sacrifice. For the progress of human life, sacrifice is essential. The scriptures declare that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice. Immortality means the removal of immorality. The various cells in the body account for the performance of various functions by the senses and the limbs of the body. The power of the cells comes from the Divine. No one can explain it. Modern scientists term it a "Law of Nature." But, from where has this "law" emerged? There should be someone who created this law. For every product, like this silver tumbler, (Swami held up his drinking glass) there is a maker. Silver is God's creation. The tumbler has been made by a silversmith. It has not

come as a ready-made tumbler. You have on the earth water and clay. They are God's creation. By mixing them both, the potter makes pots out of them. The creator for the pot is the potter. God is the Creator of the five elements: space, air, fire, water and earth. No one else can create these elements. But, people make use of these natural elements by making objects for their own enjoyment. One person produces an airplane for flying, another makes a parachute for safety if something happens to the plane. Scientists should concern themselves with producing things that ensure safety.

In this connection, I should like to tell you something, whether you believe it or not. I do not have any worry. When I embarked on the construction of such a big hospital, [Colonel] Joga Rao used to say, "We are drawing up such gigantic plans. We don't have enough money. How are we going to construct this hospital?" He was highly apprehensive. I told him, "What we are undertaking is good work for the welfare of others. There is no selfishness in me. We are doing everything for the well-being of the world. Do not give room for these depressing thoughts. It is bound to be built. Have confidence."

When does such confidence arise? When you know you are engaged in a good cause. For example, the optimist is glad when a tumbler is half-full, while the pessimist is sad when the tumbler is half-empty. You should not give way to pessimism. You must feel content with whatever you have. With contentment, anything can be achieved.

Medical Education

The plight of doctors deserves sympathy. Many of them have to spend large

sums to get seats in medical colleges and to complete their education. The doctor is worried about recovering the money that has been spent on his/her education. Something must be done to solve this problem. For instance, no one should be admitted to a medical college merely because they are able to pay a large sum of money. Only those who have the talent and aptitude for medical studies should be admitted. Such students will immensely benefit from medical education and will be of use to society. Today, you must have either plenty of money or influential backing to get into a medical college. Students who get admitted this way sometimes take as long as 12 years to complete the five year medical course. Of what use are such doctors? The emphasis should be on quality and not quantity in the sphere of medical studies.

In earlier times, medical students used to work hard, spending up to 18 hours a day. Without such hard work, no one would have gotten their degree. But, today things are different. Students pass without much study. Such poorly educated doctors are a calamity to the nation. Not all doctors are of this kind. There are many competent doctors. It is the duty of the medical profession to rectify this situation. They should contact the authorities to bring about reforms. Only then will the nation progress.

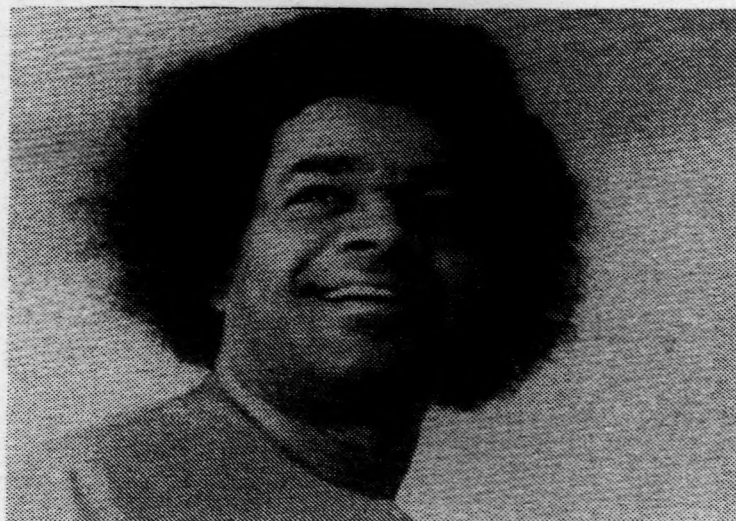
We do not need many hospitals. Patients can be treated easily. In my view, there is no need for you to worry about money and resources. Treat your patients with love. Duty is God. This love should be mutually given and taken. You may charge fees for your services, but do it with love. This is the right course

for you. When you render service in this spirit, you will be successful in all cases. When you treat the patient with love, you will win the patient's love. Hence, your motto should be: "Start the day with love, fill the day with love, end the day with love. This is the way to God."

Our American doctor, who addressed the valedictory session, said that doctors should speak sweetly to patients. Whatever you do should be filled with love. A patient feels reassured when he sees the smiling face of a doctor.

Tribute To Participants

Embodiments of Divine Love! You have come from long distances, and undergone many difficulties. Conferences and symposia of all kinds are held all over the world, all the time. But none of the decisions arrived at these gatherings are implemented. Our symposium is different. You have all come in a spirit of dedication. The decisions given here should be implemented. You came here to learn from others as well as to share your experiences with them. You shall return all the better for your visit. You should feel encouraged by your experiences here. Elated by this experience, you should be able to achieve many things. Return to your countries with joy in your hearts. You have had edifying experiences. It is fortunate that highly experienced doctors have been able to participate in this symposium. They have also visited our hospital and given many useful suggestions for expanding its usefulness in the years ahead. We shall try to put these suggestions into practice. We are making plans for developing the urology and neurology wings. Please convey your experience and suggestions from time to



"Not a penny is charged at this hospital. . . ."

time and encourage our doctors to do better. We wish that you should also make occasional visits to our institute and hospital. You are always welcome. Do not have any hesitation. This is your hospital, not mine. You are my property (There were cheers from the audience). Do not wait for invitations from here. There can be no objection to your coming to your own home.

Highly experienced professionals have come here. Without such purehearted participants, no conference could have taken place in this peaceful atmosphere. In most conferences there are heated debates. Here, everything was peaceful and calm. It was a sacred exercise. As Dr. Somaraju said, "We have here a temple where proper prayers should be offered." What should that prayer be? It is: "All patients should get well. May all people be happy."

I conclude with the benediction that, in the years to come, all people should lead healthy and ideal lives.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Excerpted from a discourse given at the Symposium, and *Sanathana Sarathi*, 3/93

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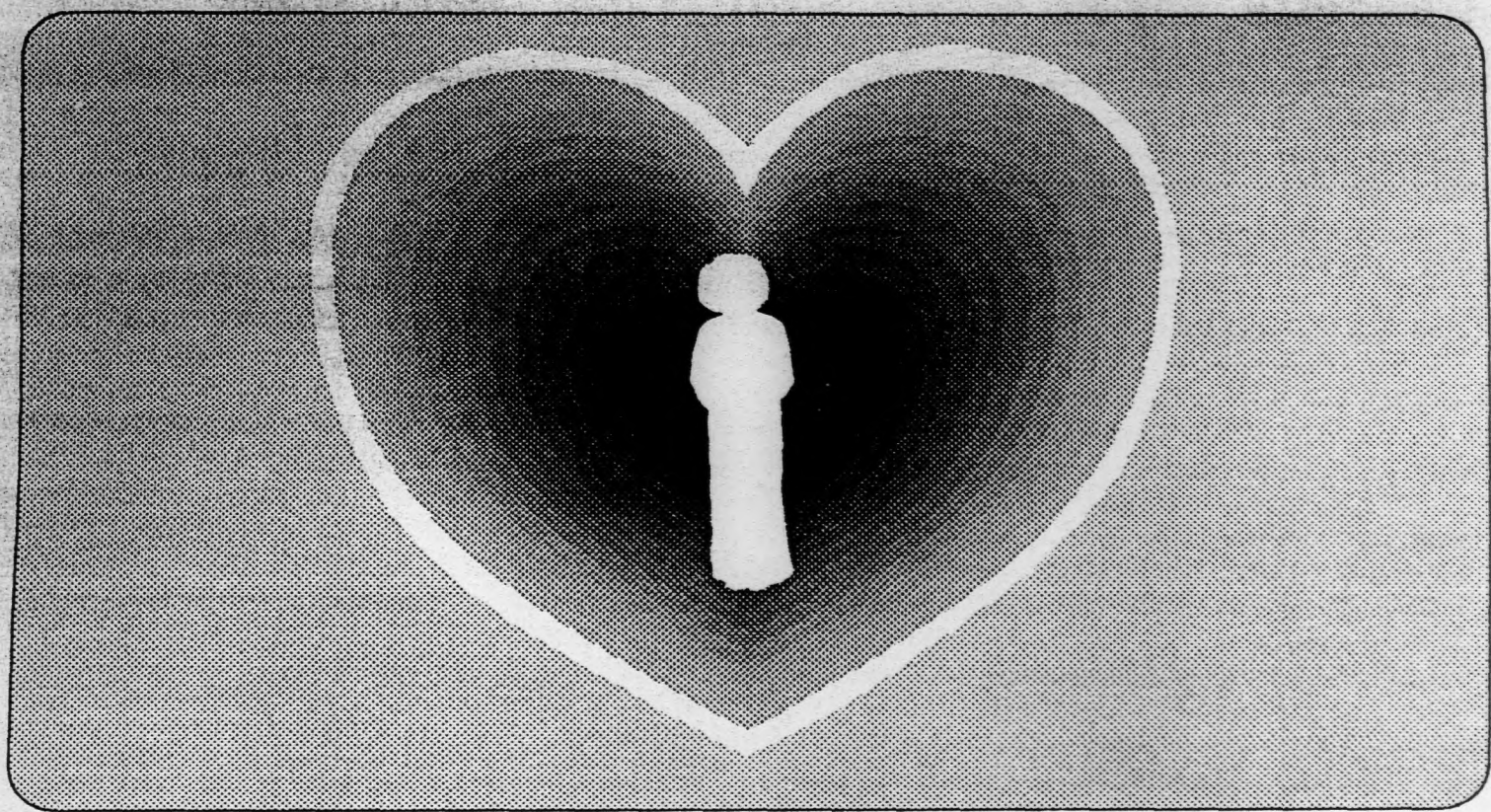
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