



SATHYA SAI

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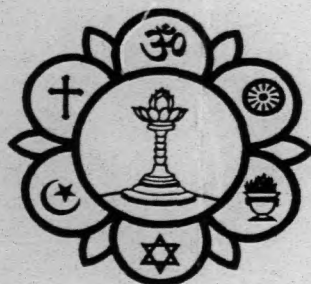
Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

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An Enclosure, published under the auspices of the Central Council, USA

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



Photographs, drawings and literary contributions are always welcomed by the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*. We reserve the right of discrimination in selecting and editing material for publication. Kindly send any material to: **Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA, P.O. Box 660908, Arcadia, California 91066-0908 or Fax (818) 355-8284.**

—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

Banking on Education



You know that you can draw checks upon a bank when you need money, provided you have enough money deposited therein. If the bank goes bankrupt, it will be a disaster. The educational system is the bank on which the nation draws a check whenever it wants strong, reliable and skilled workers. If it goes bankrupt—as it has very nearly done at this time—it is a national disaster. If the system is overhauled and lubricated, the next generation is assured of good leaders and what is equally important, good citizens.

—Sathya Sai Baba

*A Collection of Sri Sathya Sai Sayings, page 33
by T. Krishnamurthi*

Your Birthday Gift to Baba

This year has been a time to recognize Sai Education in centers and groups throughout the world. Consequently, your *Sathya Sai Newsletter* has dedicated its two most recent issues to what Baba and others have said about spiritual education for children. It is our hope that we now have a solid foundation for a spiritual legacy that we, as devotees, should leave for future generations. (There has been greater participation in the *Bal Vikas* children's education program. More details are on page 31 of this issue).

As the 69th birthday approaches, it causes one to ponder how we can appropriately recognize or celebrate the advent of Divinity taking a human birth. One is overwhelmed by such magnificence and by our own good fortune to be aware of this Avatar. So, what does one give the One who holds the whole universe in His Hand? Baba never takes, instead he always gives. Indeed, what can be given to one who never takes? The question is asked with sincerity; we do not have the answers.

Sathya Sai Baba often tells us that he wants only our love, and that we should follow his teachings; both of these are for our own good anyway. He wants what is best for us, for our spiritual growth and transformation. Further, he admonishes us to dive deeply into our own chosen religion and find the truth therein. Since all religions teach—to some extent—truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence, he assures us that they are all good.

While expressing his heartfelt gratitude to Baba, a devotee said, "Swami, you make everyone happy, but what makes you happy?" Baba replied, "*I am happy when you are happy!*"

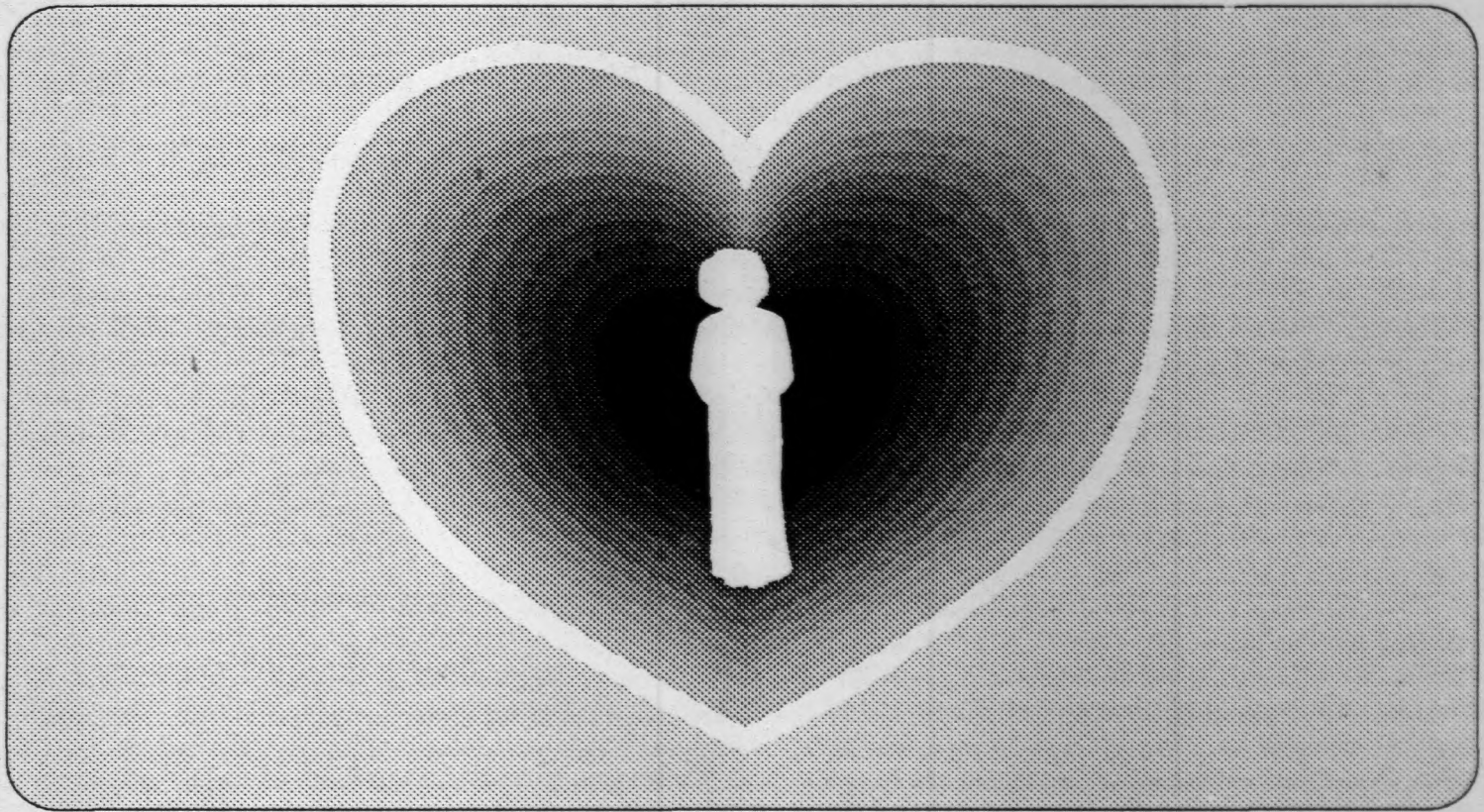
However, just walking around with a smiling face is not enough. Baba tells us that we lack "*intensity*." Let us not be overcome by apathy or think that someone else is going to get the job done; we must put forth our intensity, our loving effort.

As the auspicious 70th birthday approaches in 1995, let us double—no, triple—our efforts to follow Baba's axioms and make an even greater effort to serve God by serving humanity. As most of you know, 1995 has been proclaimed "The Year of Service" for Sai devotees everywhere. So let us—individually and collectively—listen to our own inner wisdom, our conscience, and think of how to make these birthdays truly holy and worthy of paying homage to the Avatar. Whatever gift of we may give, we shall receive more in return. And, remember, always be happy.

Jai Sai Ram
—Editor

You are thinking about the gifts you have to offer Sai on these birthdays. You can be happy that you have given Sai a proper gift only when you love your fellowmen, share their suffering and engage yourselves in serving them. That is the only gift I wish for. The present given to God has to be pure, steady and selfless.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XV, Chapter 55



different externally in the realm of body, mind and senses, but it is all one consciousness of *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute) from the point of view of the intellect.

- Good education leads to good character and a good life.
- Good education leads to peace and happiness.
- Good education leads to good company.
- Good education sanctifies life and leads to liberation.

When you have an education which is true and eternal, then you can get out of this ocean of life (*samsara*) quickly; it gives liberation. For such education, come along and follow.

Education confers humility; humility does not merely mean bowing one's head. True humility is the steady men-

filled the tanks of their hearts with thoughts of eternal truth and Divinity. Such teachers and parents cannot teach humility to children.

For example, there is fire. If you take proper precautions, it emits light and heat. If you neglect the fire, it gets covered by ash and is extinguished. In every human heart there exists the sacred fire of wisdom, the fire of a good mind. The fire of wisdom today is covered by the ash of worldly desires, hence we are unable to see the wisdom. Only when the ash is removed can you see the fire. As a result of excessive worldly desires, you have forgotten the noble thoughts and good feelings within yourselves.

Spiritual Education

Spiritual education is the only true education. Sri Krishna declared [in the

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Sai's Message

Valedictory Discourse to Teachers

Thursday, July 21, 1994 marked the culmination of the three-day "Sri Sathya Sai All-India Bal Vikas Gurus' (Teachers') Conference." Baba eloquently expressed the significance of "true" education to the thousands of devotees who were present at Brindavan. It was the 25th year of the Bal Vikas program in India, and the conference was attended by more than 5,400 Bal Vikas teachers from that country. There were a few teachers from other countries, but the main emphasis was on the Silver Jubilee of the program, and the teachers who have worked with dedication to make the Bal Vikas program a reality in India, where it began.

Teachers, who are embodiments of love, students and educators: The light you receive from the bulb, the cool air from the fan and air conditioner, and the heat from the heater, are all due to the same electricity manifesting through these different appliances. All that is seen, heard and thought appears to be different externally in the realm of body, mind and senses, but it is all one consciousness of *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute) from the point of view of the intellect.

- Good education leads to good character and a good life.
- Good education leads to peace and happiness.
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When you have an education which is true and eternal, then you can get out of this ocean of life (*samsara*) quickly; it gives liberation. For such education, come along and follow.

Education confers humility; humility does not merely mean bowing one's head. True humility is the steady men-

tal state which is egoless, free of attachment and without pomp. Such sacred humility is not taught to children today either by parents or teachers because they themselves are not humble. The quality of the water in the tank determines the nature of the water from the tap. Today, parents and teachers have not filled the tanks of their hearts with thoughts of eternal truth and Divinity. Such teachers and parents cannot teach humility to children.

For example, there is fire. If you take proper precautions, it emits light and heat. If you neglect the fire, it gets covered by ash and is extinguished. In every human heart there exists the sacred fire of wisdom, the fire of a good mind. The fire of wisdom today is covered by the ash of worldly desires, hence we are unable to see the wisdom. Only when the ash is removed can you see the fire. As a result of excessive worldly desires, you have forgotten the noble thoughts and good feelings within yourselves.

Spiritual Education

Spiritual education is the only true education. Sri Krishna declared [in the

Bhagavad Gita], "Among different types of education, I am the spiritual education." There are many noble souls in India who have obtained such spiritual education, experienced it, enjoyed it and shared it with others. People today have forgotten the teachings of such noble souls. What is needed is to teach sacred, ideal and noble ideas to our boys and girls.

It is only the sculptor who can fashion an idol out of stone. Only language gives expression to one's feelings. Only character molds students into ideal citizens. Only teachers mold boys and girls into ideal students.

Ignorant people say that those who turn to the teaching profession do so as a last resort after having exhausted all other options. This concept is wrong. Only teachers can teach others how to live. True teachers are noble people who teach good behavior to students, helping to promote equality and love among students, while leading them along the righteous path. Today, we consider teachers as employees of a low status, and we neglect them. Only teachers can lead the children along the royal path, reveal their divine light to the nation, and make their human qualities blossom. Only teachers will awaken the Constant Integrated Awareness (*prajna*) in them. They will bring out the latent Divinity in the student and show it to the world.

Students can achieve anything they want if they make an effort. To a great extent, they can reform the nation. Teachers are ideal souls and lamps of light unto humanity. Only when this light is shining effulgently, can it light up the lamps within the students. Teachers must work incessantly to pass on these

divine feelings, ideal teachings and pure thoughts to the students. Teachers are guideposts, and only they can lead the boys and girls along the sacred path of Divinity. Together with secular knowledge, spiritual knowledge—which is the basis for all types of knowledge—is absolutely necessary. Therefore, the responsibility of molding students into ideal citizens lies not only with teachers but with parents and government as well. For students, three qualities are essential:

- They should desire the welfare of the entire world.
- They should like and accept all types of knowledge.
- They must shine with all virtues.

If the student has no virtue or desire for the welfare of the country, or if he does not understand Divinity, how can you expect him to develop good human qualities? Only when Divinity is fulfilled, will society progress. Only when society progresses, will the country progress. So, the welfare of the individual, society and the country depends on good human qualities.

Since ancient times, Bharat (India) has been passing on security and peace to the entire world. The Vedic prayer says, "*Lokaa samasthaa sukhino bhavanthu.*" (May all the worlds be happy). May all lead ideal lives, and all be safe and secure.

God-Given Gifts

You should teach the students how to utilize God-given gifts like social status, intelligence and wealth. Students of today desire friendship, strength and wealth but not virtue and character. Character is the basis of life. Without character, life is a waste.

Sri Rama (an Avatar) learned many forms of education, but Ravana (a demon) was adept in many more types of education than Rama. Nevertheless, in the *Ramayana* (a sacred epic), sage Valmiki addressed Ravana as a fool. Why? In spite of his education and intelligence, Ravana became a slave to his senses. Forgetting the sanctity of his heart, he desired something [Sita, wife of Sri Rama] which was not to be desired, and which ultimately led to the destruction of his race, his kingdom and himself. You can describe Ravana as merely a well-educated person, a man of knowledge, but not as a man of wisdom (*jnani*). He possessed only bookish knowledge, the knowledge of the physical and secular world.

Real wisdom is the knowledge of *Atma* (indwelling Divinity). Wisdom entails leading an ideal and exemplary life, keeping the welfare of the world in view, adhering to truth and having sense control. Today, educated people are full of evil qualities like pomp, pride, ostentatiousness and jealousy. Because of these evil traits, they are misusing their education. Humility is essential; education confers humility; humility mandates deservedness. This leads to wealth, which in turn leads to charity, which confers happiness. Once you have humility, you can accomplish anything—that is a true human value.

You may be scholarly; you may be intelligent; you may occupy exalted positions of power; but if you do not have human values, all these are useless. What is a human value? Having a pure mind is real human value. People of today are unable to understand human values and the nature of a good mind.

God has endowed man with intelligence and a compassionate heart. If the heart is full of compassion, the whole world will be full of compassion. But these days man is stone-hearted and subject to despair and dejection. What is the reason? Man is trying to lead a life of excessive desires and ambitions, but he is frustrated due to his failures.

Nature & Human Nature

Nature is teaching us lessons in sacrifice. Earth, water, fire and air are nurturing human beings through sacrifice and selflessness. The earth provides food. Water sustains us and makes the crops grow. The sun gives life force through sunlight. Surrounded by such noble nature which teaches sacrifice, how is it that mankind has lost the quality of compassion and sacrifice? People have failed to reveal these exemplary qualities in nature, of which they are a part.

Modern man has lost and forgotten his way because of excessive desires, ambitions, meaningless worries and yearning for undesirable things. Teachers are the lamps of light. Man has forgotten that teachers show the way and enlighten us. Nowadays, mankind should not only acquire education but should also acquire wisdom. Along with education, one should have character and good behavior. Based on this, it is said, "The proper study of mankind is man." There should be harmony of thought, word and deed. People are filling their heads with bookish knowledge, but they are not able to put it into practice.

Real human value is integration of thought, word and deed. A great person is one who has harmony of thought, word and deed. A wicked person thinks one

thing, says another thing and does something else. People's lives should be ideal, valuable and exemplary, but they are forgetting such human values. They look like human beings, but they don't live like human beings.

A Sanctified Life

Teachers! All of you have the responsibility to shape the future of the students. There are many conferences held all over the world, but there is a major difference between those conferences and our conference. Delegates who attend other conferences spend their time in sightseeing and picnicking. Having traveled long distances, having spent lots of money and energy, is that what you should do? You have come here from different parts of the country to develop understand and propagate the feeling of unity, not to develop friendships.

Your life will be sanctified only when you realize and propagate Divinity. You should not waste your lives merely in self-interest and selfish actions. You should always keep the welfare of society in mind. Life will be incomplete if you are always centered around, "myself and my people." The *Vedas* have declared that Divinity is full and whole and that Divinity can be attained only by a full and sacred heart, not by living a narrow-minded life. People have fragmented society into narrow units on the basis of caste, creed and religion. Teachers! You should never involve yourselves in differences based on community or religion. Instead, you need to sustain and protect these three concepts:

- There is only one caste, the caste of humanity.
- There is only one religion, the reli-

gion of love.

- There is only one language, the language of the heart.

Though human beings are many, the principle of *Atma* is one. You should teach the principle of unity to students in this manner.

Practice, then Teach

In ancient times, people lived exemplary lives after obtaining an ideal education in *gurukulams* (schools). These teachers were sages who practiced and taught ideal values. You teachers should also enjoy, experience and only then teach ideal values to students. Today's students are very sharp and highly intelligent; they readily find out if teachers preach without practicing, and they will not respect such teachers. You should tread the path you have set before the students, thereby earning their respect. You must do justice to the title *Acharya*. The word "*Acharya*" means the one who practices. It would be artificial if one desires to be called *Acharya* without practicing [the values that are being taught to students].

True spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is to mold students in this ideal direction. If one student is spoiled, it affects only that student. However, if one teacher is spoiled, hundreds of students are affected. So, help ever, hurt never. See to it that no student treads along the wrong path. At times you should have conferences with parents to assess the progress of their children. Truly speaking, our teachers are very good; they are serving very well. They are sanctifying their lives by serving Swami, and teaching students in spite of many problems and difficulties they encounter in their homes. They consider this as their spiritual pursuit.

None Can Compare.

No other organization has dedicated and ideal workers like our teachers and volunteers (*Seva Dal*). They travel at their own expense to come to this conference in spite of many hardships, and they are spending their own money to buy food here. The Sathya Sai Trust and Sathya Sai Organization are not spending a penny for them, and they are not accepting money even if it is offered. They work in unity with single-pointed dedication. But they should not be content with this alone. They can expand into other areas of service activities and instill noble qualities.

Good Advice

From ancient times, Bharat (India) has been glorified as being a land of sacrifice (*Thyaaga bhoomi*), a land of action (*Karma bhoomi*) and a land of great spiritual practices (*Yoga bhoomi*). Listen, so that you may have a clear understanding of human values:

- Without truth, righteousness, peace and love, the value of the education one receives is zero.
- Without truth, righteousness, peace and love, the value of the acts of charity are zero.
- Without truth, righteousness, peace and love, the value of good action is zero.
- Without truth, righteousness, peace and love, the value of the position you occupy is zero.

In order to sustain the mansion of eternal truth (*Sanathana Dharma*), these are the four pillars. What better advice can I give you? Thus, truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence are real human values.

Love is the Basis

How can you practice truth? All that you speak with love, is truth. All that you do with love, is righteousness. Thoughts filled with love are peace. Love in understanding is nonviolence. So, love is the undercurrent in all the values—truth, right action, love, peace and nonviolence. Life without love is useless. You can achieve anything with love. Love is God; live in love. This is what needs to be done today. A heart without love is not a heart at all, it is only a barren land. Teachers, work with the principle of love.

Human values can be summarized into three parts: fear of sin, love of God and morality in society. Life is not worth living without these values. Society is our life. True human beings shouldn't lead isolated lives; they should have faith that society is God.

Only when there is unity, will you have purity. Only when there is purity, will you reach Divinity. Therefore, you should clearly understand the nature of these three: unity, purity and Divinity. In the mind, different thoughts arise, but don't bring them to your heart level. Everyone should live in harmony. All should be united, full of affection and love. Only then, can you experience bliss. You must get rid of bad qualities like hatred, jealousy and pride. You have to develop these types of human values. The entire earth is one. Experience the unity in diversity.

Find Pleasure in Pain

Look at the positive and brighter side of each problem and difficulty. How can you do that?

Please turn to page 33

Passport to Understanding

On a cool crisp morning, with a sky that gave new definition to the word "bright," I was waiting on the ladies' side in *darshan* line at Brindavan. The energy was, as always, electric with joy, anticipation and the very special feelings that arise when one awaits Baba's presence and knows that he is nearby.

An excited woman, who was crying and quite visibly shaken, came and sat beside me. Now, at the ashram, especially at *darshan*, one might find many people so emotionally moved that they will cry. It is not uncommon to be so deeply affected and express these sensations physically. At first sight, I gave a sympathetic look, but I was determined to give her some privacy, even under those crowded circumstances. But her sobbing could not be ignored.

I then felt the need to ask her if I might be of some assistance. She shook her head negatively but began to unfold her story anyway. It seemed that her passport and a large sum of money were taken at the airport; she said that she "had turned away from her open bag for just a moment." She continued to explain that the money was of no importance (she appeared to be a person of means), but the passport being gone meant a real dilemma for her. You see, she was from a country where the loss of a passport meant that another one would not be issued for at least one to two years.

This was devastating for her, because it would keep her from traveling to see Baba! Her heart was aching, and she felt that she was helpless to change the situation. She prayed for Swami to hear her.

I felt for her. She was so truly committed to seeing Swami and being in his presence that her pain could be felt by those around her. In fact, those close-by began to give advice, all at the same time! We were making every effort to assist and comfort her, for devotion and commitment of that nature could not be ignored. At that point, I introduced her to another lady from the same country, who was waiting with us in *darshan*. This woman was able to understand her, speak the language, determine the sequence of events and to write a letter to Sathya Sai Baba. In it she explained the loss of the passport, what it meant to her, and that the money was of no importance, just the ability to be with Sai Baba was primary. Baba is all around us, all knowing. Just writing the letter, even if it was not placed in his hand, was as though he were reading it as it was being composed.

Thousands of people wait to see Baba. We pray for things like a good position to view him, maybe to bow at his feet, possibly a glance from him—most certainly—we all have different hopes and wishes. We all hope and pray, too, that we can be perfectly still and reverent when Baba approaches and is before us. In life, we can be so subject to the body. But at this special time when we see Sathya Sai Baba approaching, we are especially conscious of remaining still and being at one with God.

It is like magic, for it seems that Swami mystically keeps these thousands of people seated with the majesty of his presence. People do not go running off



Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the occasion of his 65th birthday

hither and yon for Kleenex, drinks of water, restroom, etc.

Suddenly, the sad woman explained to those of us who surrounded her—concerned with her plight—that she had a terrible urgency to go to the restroom! This seemed very irregular to all, but we encouraged her, “Hurry, hurry! Swami will be here any minute now!” She darted off in the direction of the restroom. A few moments later, she returned to the

ing evidence of his omnipresence.

The once sad woman was now beaming with immense happiness. She had found her passport which served as a “ticket” to return to Swami soon. Someone asked if she had also recovered the money, and she said “No, no, that does not matter. As I wrote to Baba, the money is not important to me. His *darshan* is my wealth.”

—Barbara Bozzani

As told to—Marilyn Osoff

Darkness and light cannot exist at the same time in the same place. Any attempt to accommodate both in the human heart is bound to fail. So, when riches are sought [as one's main objective], God cannot be achieved. If both are sought by man, what he will achieve will be neither riches nor God but something demonic.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Bhagavatha Vahini, page 8

Bal Vikas, *Light of the Future*

[Sri Sathya Sai Baba has used Smt. Sarla I. Shah as the instrument to forge, hone and polish the Bal Vikas children's educational program which has become a model for spiritual education throughout the world. The teachings include the "Ceiling on Desires" program and an all-encompassing "Human Values" program with a view to building a better future for generations to come.

This is no small task undertaken by Smt. Shah and an army of dedicated, volunteer teachers for the past 25 years. (It should be noted that no one connected with the Bal Vikas program receives payment in any form for their services). This being the year to recognize Sai education, Smt. Shah gives an overview of the movement that may actually heal a sick and ailing society.]

We find no words to express our gratefulness to Bhagavan Baba for fulfilling our cherished wish of holding this Seventh All-India Sri Sathya Sai *Bal Vikas* Gurus' Conference, in this divine abode of Brindavan on the eve of the auspicious *Guru Poornima*. This is a rare chance for *Bal Vikas* gurus (teachers) to offer their *pranams* (a greeting to a holy and respected being) at the lotus feet of our *Sadguru* (true teacher).

This cherished wish is doubly blessed as it happens to be the Silver Jubilee of the *Bal Vikas* movement. This is the "Education Year" coordinated by the Sri Sathya Sai *Seva* Organizations all over the world and it is part of the forthcoming 70th Birthday [in 1995] which will celebrate the Divinity Incarnate.

Bhagavan! We, over 5,400 gurus representing almost every district of India, aspire to become purer, nobler and more sincere instruments in Thy Divine Hands.

I am thankful to the All-India President of the organization for having given me this opportunity to place before this august gathering, the gist of the workings of the *Bal Vikas* program during the last 25 years.

Past Accomplishments

Let us recall how in 1969 Bhagavan entrusted to the *Mahila Vibhag* (women's wing of the Sai Organization) the education of children. Baba declared, "*I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts and to see that it shines day-by-day with added luster.*" The lamp was lit in 1969 when Baba entrusted to the *Mahila Vibhag* the education of children.

Sowing the seed of this perennial tree of children's education, Bhagavan directed us thus: "*Run a Bal Vikas [education system] for children where they will learn scriptures through stories. Have them sing bhajans (devotional songs) and enact little plays on moral themes selected from classics. Through these, students will imbibe habits of mutual help, cooperation and discipline.*" Around this message, the first syllabus of *Bal Vikas* classes was prepared.

In 1970, while speaking to *Bal Vihar* teachers in Bombay, Bhagavan asked, "*Who are you all?*" They answered, "*We are teachers,*" and Baba corrected them and said, "*I have no connection with teachers. You are sadhakas (those with spiritual wisdom). The word teacher*

reflects ego and vanity. Why sadhaka? Because, while teaching the children, you are purifying yourselves. You are inculcating chittashuddhi" (intelligence controlled by virtue).

In 1971 the first All-India *Bal Vihar* Teachers' Conference was held when Bhagavan renamed "*Bal Vihar*" as "*Bal Vikas*," explaining the objective of children's education, "*To encourage the true, the beautiful and the good in the child to blossom. Therefore, Bal Vikas is the correct name.*" It was then that the rules, regulations and syllabus of the *Bal Vikas* course were drawn up with the first manual for teachers.

At Rajamundry, in 1973, the second All-India Conference of Teachers was held. At that conference, Baba addressed teachers as gurus, clarifying that a guru is one who dispels darkness and helps the child to understand Divinity within themselves and in the universe. Always stressing the universal nature of spiritual training, Swamiji said, "*We should tell the children about the different religions and bring out the universal principles of sathya (truth), dharma (righteousness), shanti (peace) and prema (love) contained in all religions.*" Bhagavan directed that there be an All-India training of gurus to bring better quality and uniformity in *Bal Vikas* education and to divide the course into age groups.

Let me express our gratefulness to Swami for his exceptional gift of grace on the totality of the *Bal Vikas* course, and for inviting efficient teacher-trainers from all states for central training. This will enable them to train prospective *Bal Vikas* gurus in their own states. It is a happy coincidence that this first central training was held in Whitefield

on this very campus where we are celebrating the Silver Jubilee. It is here that Bhagavan unfolded the importance of the *Gayatri* mantra (repetition of a holy chant which elevates consciousness) both for gurus and children and defined the duties of the *Bal Vikas* guru.

In 1975, the third conference was held at Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhagavan advised gurus to do *tapas*—viz., to synchronize one's thoughts, words and deeds—and directed them to teach through love, and to blend love with discipline. Also, the syllabus for Group III, namely ages 12 to 15, was prepared. At that conference, an 18 point program for the celebration of "Easwaramma (the mother of Sai) Day," also called "Mother's Day," was framed. It aimed at inculcating in the children reverence for mothers, as well as initiating them into service activities. Bhagavan stressed that every mother should be a *Bal Vikas* guru.

On this occasion, a rally of over 2,000 *Bal Vikas* children from all centers of the country was held, and several teaching aids were presented to gurus by the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

It was decided to award diplomas in Sai Education to those students who are successful at an All-India examination after going through the nine-year course. A comprehensive course for *Bal Vikas* in villages and slums was drawn up based on divine teachings.

The fourth conference at Prasanthi Nilayam introduced the unique "Ceiling on Desires" program for children. It was very enlightening to learn how the human value of nonviolence (*ahimsa*) is linked with this divine message. Baba unfolded how nonviolence includes the saving of food, water, energy, time and

money, and how waste of these is violence. This definition has a direct relation to the concept of Ceiling on Desires. The root cause of violence, at all times, is the proliferation of desires. The only remedy to curb violence is to minimize desires. Since then, the children's motto has been, "Waste not, but save."

The sixth All-India Gurus' Conference was held at Prasanthi Nilayam in 1983 under the auspices of the International Committee for Bhagavan's 60th Birthday Celebrations.

A Decade of Progress, 1984-1994

With the ever-increasing flow of devotees to at the Lotus Feet and simultaneous expansion of organization centers, more and more children of different castes and creeds were attracted to the *Bal Vikas* program. With the changing needs and higher I.Q. of students, we have been innovating and adding from time to time new teaching aids and techniques. To name a few: use of visual aids, Spiritual Diary for the students, spiritual games, *Nagar Sankirtan*,* *Narayana Seva*,** entertaining and playing with less fortunate children, while showing them love and care.

From 1969 until 1983, at the end of 15 years, there were 50,000 students studying in *Bal Vikas* classes with the help of 3,500 gurus at 2,700 *Bal Vikas* Centers in India.

At the Present Time

Today, in 1994, after 25 years, we

**Nagar Sankirtan*, to sanctify the atmosphere by singing the glories of God while moving about as a group. Usually done in the predawn hours.

***Narayana Seva*, saving, collecting and distributing food to the needy. Literally meaning, God's service.

****Vikas* is a kind of transformation, change or modification. *Deha*, *Mano*, *Buddhi*, *Bhava*, and *Atma* are the body, mind, intellect, emotion and divine soul, respectively.

have over a lakh (100,000) of students in 4,000 *Bal Vikas* Centers with over 8,000 honorary gurus.

Thus, *Bal Vikas* has gained momentum because of the systematic way it functioned at various levels with the other two wings of the Sai Organization, namely, the Spiritual and Service wings. The Central, State and District Organizations of the Education Wing organizes monthly meetings of administrators, quarterly refresher courses for gurus, and yearly meetings to absorb the divine guidance. It is grace which has nurtured this education wing for the last 25 years, of which I have given the important milestones and specified its growth in numerical terms. But that explains only part of the importance of the movement. Let us see the silent and steady impact of this movement.

Impact of Bal Vikas Movement

In his infinite mercy, Bhagavan has evolved this program as a solution to humanity's moral crisis. The unique techniques used for this spiritual program, which are prescribed by Bhagwan Baba include universal prayers, group devotional singing, storytelling, group activities and silent sitting. The cumulative effect of these five techniques—with direct and indirect teaching methods—promotes the fivefold development of a child's personality: *Deha Vikas*, *Mano Vikas*, *Buddhi Vikas*, *Bhava Vikas*, and *Atma Vikas*.***

Evaluation carried out on *Bal Vikas* students has shown that they have more reverence for parents and teachers, better adjustment levels, greater aesthetic values, and sympathy for the suffering of people and animals. Above all, the students have love for God, and fear of sin.

More Benefits

There are innumerable incidents, like miracles, where harmony has been restored in the home by the *Bal Vikas* student's disciplined behavior. For example: parents have adopted the habit of praying and left their unhealthy habits at the loving behest of their child. Childless gurus have received a hundred-fold love from their *Bal Vikas* students. Small children have saved money, toys, clothes and even food from their lunch boxes for the less fortunate in the class.

It is heartening to see a defeated child smilingly congratulating the winning student on the playground. But the greatest impact of the program was witnessed by thousands who were present at Prasanthi Nilayam when, during a celebration, cyclonic winds demolished the children's tents, electricity failed and rains poured. *Bal Vikas* students consoled the worried gurus with the words, "Our Sai Mother is with us, don't worry." The children fearlessly called, "*Sai Ram, Sai Ram,*" (God's blessings) started helping each other in lifting the baggage and, hand in hand, found their way to safety. Their courage, poise, and faith in Sai astonished even the elders. One had to experience it to believe it.

This and many other incidents have been a source of satisfaction and inspiration to the dedicated *Bal Vikas* gurus in every district of India.

The *Bal Vikas* program has also helped students to improve their academic careers in schools and colleges. We have noticed that *Bal Vikas* children excel in their professions and in their pursuit of the various facets of life. They have developed more self-control and self-confidence, along with humility.

They are the Mainstay

Frankly speaking, when we embarked upon the work of a *Bal Vikas* program in 1969, we did not visualize some of the benefits that would flow from it to the activities of the Sri Sathya Sai Organization. Over the years, the students from *Bal Vikas* who completed courses in the three groups have become a source for building a cadre of youth to participate in the various activities of the Sai Organization and become the mainstay of the organization. Some of them are now important officebearers of the organization and are engaged in various activities such as *Seva Dals* (service volunteers), *bhajan* singers and *Bal Vikas* gurus. Every year, roughly 2,500 students complete the nine-year course and graduate from *Bal Vikas*.

Future Plans

There are a lot of things to be done yet, and we are not satisfied with what we have done so far. It is essential that we equip the *Bal Vikas* students with "something" which can create a proper environment for other student communities. The divine theme that "*Love is the undercurrent of all human values, and it is unselfish love alone which should become a vital part of day-to-day actions from a very young age,*" is the missing "something" on which the dele-

gates of this conference are going to deliberate. Our efforts will be to integrate this divine message into the *Bal Vikas* syllabus for Groups I, II and III.

Next, a most important area is that of parent/guru relationships, where proper planning has to be done. Bhagavan, stressing the parent/guru relationship said, "*The parents and gurus should work hand-in-hand. Gurus should visit the children's homes as often as possible, and let the parents know what the child is learning, so that harmony is maintained between learning and living.*" Methods of collaboration between the parents and the gurus will be discussed in this conference, so they may reach the ideal stage in which the guru becomes the true parent of the child, and the parent the true guru of the child.

Formation of Alumni Guidance Bureaus will contribute to a more sympathetic attitude, and then, the parents will be more inclined to help the *Bal Vikas* organization.

We have to do some more concerted work in producing and improving the *Bal Vikas* literature in regional languages, and giving more attention to producing teaching aids and improving teaching techniques. For this purpose, the participants of this conference will receive great help and guidance from the exhibition of teaching aids and spiritual games which have been organized here as a part of this conference. This exhibition will stimulate ideas for improving these areas of teaching techniques, especially the most difficult age group of 12 to 15 years.

Sri Sathya Sai *Bal Vikas* program is the Divine Mission itself. It is not just one of the Sai activities. Divinity mani-

festes through the education program. Baba said in one of the discourses, "*The children of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas must know that Sathya Sai is residing in their hearts.*" The aim of every guru is to remember this divine message and experience *Sai Ram* in their own hearts. Only then can he or she reflect and convey this message to the children.

Leadership by Example

We should not miss this golden opportunity when we are celebrating the Silver Jubilee of this program at the lotus feet of our Lord, to rededicate ourselves to the inculcation and practice of human values in our own lives. Nowhere in society is leadership by example more important than in an education system. And this cannot be done without the divine grace of our beloved Lord.

Respected delegates, Bhagavan Baba is the effulgent Sun, and we are the rays, blossoming every bud—namely, the child who we come across. The children may be rich or poor, handsome or ugly, intelligent or dull. We treat them all with equal unbounded love, the love which we have received from our Divine Master.

In conclusion, may I recall the immortal declaration, "*Wherever my glory is sung, I manifest myself.*" We can say that the *Bal Vikas* program has now become a celestial song of his glory. We, all gurus, have to tune and sing the song in perfect rhythm like an efficient *bhajan* leader.

The theme of the song is to bring out human excellence which is synonymous with the divine aspect of man. The essential prerequisite to achieve this for every guru is one's own personal *sadhana* (spiritual activity). As *sadhaks*, we

know Baba to be our *karan* (necessitating Baba's presence) guru; he is showing the way and removing the obstacles. May his unseen divine grace flow unto us, lifting up the quality of the *Bal Vikas* education movement as a sacred, silent and

steady revolution to enter the 21st century, a Sathya Sai divine gift to the nation—nay, to the whole world.

—Sarla I. Shah

Talk given at Brindavan, July 21, 1994

Bal Vikas Silver Jubilee



Wondrous Trees at Prasanthi

There are wondrous trees at Prasanthi Nilayam. Perhaps you have seen them or will see them when you know that two of the trees are quite different from all others.

Under one tree you meditate. It is called the "Wish-Fulfilling Tree." When you pray deeply for something very special to come true, Baba may make it come true. Sometimes your wish does not appear to be granted—at least not as you prayed for it—but in a manner the Lord knew was the best for you. Sometime later, you might feel compelled to ask him again, but you are a long way from that Wish-Fulfilling Tree. When at home you could find your own tree and meditate under it and make other wishes, asked with love of God in your heart.

The other tree is very different, and the only place to see it at Prasanthi is in the beautiful and very interesting Spiritual Museum. It is painted on a wall. Looking at it is a grand experience. This unique tree is known as the "Upside Down Tree."

It should not be difficult to find. The roots of the tree are all in the air, the branches and leaves are all in the ground. You may never guess what it means. I'll tell you. You are looking at yourself! To simply explain: When you and I and everyone else were born, our interest was fully attracted to Planet Earth. Our attraction deepened. In time our full and only interest was people, places and things. We gave no thought to our Creator or cared where we came from. We placed our head in the ground and our feet in the air.

Now that we know of Sathya Sai Baba, turning our thought, mind and love to him should be our moment-to-moment endeavor. We turn our Upside Down Tree—our own Divine Self—so that it reflects our Inner Light for all to witness.

When you are young, your Light is able to shine ever so brightly. When older, this could become more difficult to accomplish, especially, should one never meet the Avatar Sai.

—Charles Penn

This article was first published on page 10 of *Sai World*. Upon request, Charles wrote this two days before he passed away. He worked up to the end as Baba admonishes us to do.

—Lovingly submitted by Faith Penn

Sai's Message

The Nature of Atma

Embodiments of Love

The Cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine. They are foolish who, while seeing the handiworks of the Divine everywhere, think that there is no God. Without recognizing the omnipresence of God, people seek God somewhere or other. This reflects the dualistic attitude of persons who identify themselves with the body and alienate themselves from God. While God is omnipresent and can be recognized in the divine manifestations of nature, the body consciousness prevents people from experiencing oneness with the Divine.

How to Experience God?

How is God to be experienced? The first requisite is purity of heart. All religions have affirmed the basic importance of purity. The aim of all spiritual practice is to achieve peace. Compassion towards all beings is devotion to God. God cannot be experienced through the ostentatious observance of rituals and worship. Where there is pomp and show there can be no Divinity; the bliss of the Divine cannot be found in pomp and show. As a seed will not sprout in rocky ground, the bliss of the Divine cannot be realized by worship that is devoid of humility, sincerity and purity of heart.

Spiritual practices are not pursued for realizing the *Atma* (the indwelling Divine). There is no need to seek the *Atma* which is all-pervasive and present everywhere. Spiritual practices are performed to get rid of the *anatma* (that

which bars the vision of the Divine or the *Atma*). People forget their real nature and lose themselves in the consciousness of what they are not. They forget that they are *Atma*.

In the state of deep sleep, the sleepers are totally unaware of their own name, form, position, etc. But on waking, they realize that the "I," of which they are conscious in the waking state, was also present in deep sleep. The purpose of all spiritual practice is to discover the nature of the "I" that is experienced in all the different states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

Atma and the Mind

People identify themselves with a particular name and form. They build all relationships on that basis. But, how real and permanent are these names and forms? They are all projections of the mind and have an existence only as long as the mind and the body remain. The heart represents the *Atma*; it is self-effulgent. The light from the heart illumines the mind and enables it to see the external world. Without this illumination, the mind cannot comprehend the world. The mind is like the moon which receives its light from the sun. It has no light of its own. It shines because of the light from the *Atma*. When the sun shines, the moon is hardly visible. Likewise, when there is awareness of the *Atma*, the mind is not perceivable. The *Atma* is the basis for everything.

People are naive in imagining that

the *Atma* is in the body. The truth is: that the body, the mind, the entire Cosmos are all in *Atma*. The *Atma* cannot be inside anything. It is the all; it is everything. Those who perform *japa* (repeating God's name), *dhyana* (meditation) or *puja* (rituals)—conceive God as separate from themselves—are the victims of dualism. Whatever their scholarship, they are ignorant of their own true nature when they alienate God from themselves. God is the very heart of man.

People practice spiritual exercises at the mental level. By these means, the *Atma* cannot be realized. Neither the mind nor speech can comprehend the nature of the *Atma*. The mind is turned toward the external by the sense organs. It is only by withdrawing it from sense objects that the mind can be made to develop an inner vision (*antarmukham*).

The "I" Principle

The "I" principle is present everywhere. It began with the Divine itself. The first word was *Aham* (*I*). Even the *Pranava* (*Om*) came after *Aham*. Before creation, *Aham* alone existed. That *Aham*, *I*, became the many. Only those who realize the oneness of what they regard as *I* with the cosmic *Aham* know their true reality. The universal *I* appears under different names and forms in different bodies owing to time and circumstance. Even the same person goes through many changes in form and relationships in life. But the *I* remains unchanged. It is like an actor wearing different costumes, but he remains one and the same person. The realization of the unchanging and universal character of the *I* is the essential objective of the spiritual quest.

The sense of duality arises when the *I* (*Aham*) assumes a specific form and name. The ego sense (*Ahamkara*) is the result of this change in form. It is only when one dissociates himself from name and form, that he can discover his true Divine Self. Forgetting his essential Divinity and identifying himself with a changing and impermanent form, is the cause of bondage and sorrow. The mind causes this wrongful identification because of its involvement with the external world and the impressions received through the senses. When the workings of the mind are understood, the reality of *Atma*, which is beyond the mind, will be experienced as the one omnipresent, immutable principle.

Duality

Duality is an obvious fact of everyday life. All *Sastras* and *Puranas* (scriptures) have recognized this duality and sought to regulate people's lives on that basis. As long as people are engaged in activities in the phenomenal world in any capacity, the dualistic attitude is inescapable. All scriptural injunctions are designed to regulate one's conduct in the phenomenal and temporal world.

Changing One's Outlook

The *Vedas* (scriptures) attach great importance to time. The *Sastras* prescribe duties in the relationship to time, circumstance and situation. The science of astrology prescribes what should be done according to changes in time. The *Panchanga* (Almanac) indicates what is likely to happen on the basis of astrological data.

However beneficial changes may be in the sphere of natural forces, they will

be of no use without a change in people's mental outlook and conduct. Many persons claim that they are observing rigorous austerities (*tapas*). What is the outcome of these austerities? If their hearts soften—they show compassion toward the ailing and the helpless—only then has their penance any meaning. A compassion-filled heart is the real fruit of austerities. All the spiritual practices performed by a hard-hearted person are utterly futile.

Meditation Pervades Everything

Many undertake meditation as a spiritual exercise and spend many hours a day on it. But in fact, meditation is implicit in almost every act that is done from morning till night. Meditation (in the sense of concentration) is implied in all the daily chores like eating, going to work, attending to business, etc. One is meditating while reading, playing or shopping. Without concentration, no activity of any kind can be done. When the concentration is on God, it becomes a spiritual meditation. Does such meditation call for a specific time or place? There is no special technique for meditation. By giving meditation (*dhyana*) some special names, people are forgetting its real significance. For instance, if people do not listen with *dhyana* (one-pointed attention) to Sai's discourse, they will not remember what Swami said. Therefore, even listening calls for *dhyana*. It has no specific form. No meditation is possible with a wandering mind. Today, in the name of *dhyana*, several stunts are being practiced. Instead of spending hours in so-called meditation with a mind restlessly hopping from one thought to another like a monkey, it

would be better to concentrate on the performance of one's household, official and social duties with earnestness and dedication. Is that not meditation? Of what use is it to sit in meditation for an hour when you cannot keep your mind still for a minute? Think about God while carrying on your regular duties. Regard all work as sacred offerings to the Divine. See God in everything you do. Instead of following this simple and easy path, people are engaged in all forms of gymnastics, and are subjecting themselves to various hazards. Devote yourself to your duties. Meditation is not confined to any one thing, it should permeate every action you do.

Solitude

Some aspirants wish to seek solitude (*ekantham*). But being alone is not solitude. People go to Rishikesh, Hardwar or Tapovanam in search of solitude. Only those who have not understood the real meaning of solitude will resort to such things. There is real solitude, aloneness, only when the mind is completely stilled. If while sitting alone in a forest your mind is ruminating on affairs of the world, how can it be called solitude? Without curbing thoughts, aloneness cannot be found anywhere. Either thoughts have to be eliminated or all thoughts should be turned toward the Divine.

What is Enjoyment?

Many imagine that they are deriving happiness by enjoying the things of the world. They should examine who is enjoying what. In reality, they are far from enjoying the things they possess. It is their possessions which are enjoying them. Hatred, anger, envy and other



evils bred by possessions only lead to disease and misery. Why should the body suffer from ills if possessions were really the source of happiness? Man is losing real happiness by attachment to things which cannot give him happiness.

Those who have faith should take note. It is clear that this world is ephemeral and a vale of tears. Enduring peace and bliss are not to be found by attachment to the world. The source of lasting peace and happiness is within ourselves.

That is the *Atma*; it is by realizing *Atma* that peace and bliss will be secured. One must constantly develop the consciousness that the *Atma* is everything—the doer, the deed and the outcome thereof. When the consciousness is broadened in this way, in due course it leads to Self-Realization. If your vision is broad, your destination will also be of the same magnitude. A narrow outlook can lead only to a narrow alley. If you are immersed in the petty trifles of mundane existence, how can you understand Reality which is beyond the physical and the mental? Set your sights on the Supreme; then illumination will come in a flash.

Everyone should develop the consciousness, “I am *Atma*. I am *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute).” When one says “I am *Brahman*” it is evident that there is *I* in *Brahman*. Who is that *I*? *Brahman* means pervasive, spread through every part. In declaring “I am *Brahman*,” the consciousness of all-pervasiveness should be developed. *Brahman* is equally present everywhere. You should regard yourself as all-pervasive whatever you do, whatever you see and whatever you speak, saturate it with Divinity, so that you may be aware of your own Reality.

The world will exist for you as long as you have the feeling of duality. In the deep-sleep state, you enjoy real bliss. At that time, you are not aware—of your body, your mind, your feelings, your qualities or your thoughts—but still you exist. In the same way, you exist in the waking state, the dream state and the deep-sleep state. In the gross, the subtle and the causal states, you exist. In

all these changing states and stages, it is the *Atmic* principle which remains, without undergoing any change.

Is Equanimity the Answer?

The physical body which performs *japa* or *dhyana* or the various other spiritual practices is but a water bubble. The mind which is based upon this physical body is but a mad monkey. With the help of this mad monkey mind and this water bubble body, how can you hope to achieve the permanent *Atma*? Practicing rites, meditation, austerities, sacrifices—these are all methods for temporarily controlling the mind. But there is one practice that will have a permanent effect and that is inquiry. You should go on inquiring, “Who am I? Who am I?” until you reach the stage where you find out who you really are. The inquiry should go on thus: “Here is my body, here is my mind, my heart, my feelings, my intellect, my memory power—I am not any one of these. Someone has praised me; someone has censured me, but to whom does this pertain? It pertains only to this physical body.” In this way, you have to develop a sense of detachment and a sacrificing nature. How can a physical body abuse another physical body? That is inert, and this is also inert. How can inert things criticize or admonish? They cannot. How can they even worship anything? They cannot. But then, can *Atma* criticize another *Atma*? That is absurd!

—Sathya Sai Baba

Excerpted from a discourse given at
Prasanthi Nilayam Mandir
March 30, 1987



Dispelling the Illusion of Separation

In an interview with Baba, my husband asked him the question: "Swami, are you coming to the United States?" He replied, "*Yes, yes, I will come, and I will stay at your house.*" Later, chiding me for my lack of faith, he asked, "*Don't you know that Swami always keeps his promises?*" I can now answer, though I was unable to do so at the time he asked, "Yes, our beloved Baba keeps every promise." He does not always follow our preconceived notions of the way he should do it, but he keeps all of his promises in his time and in his way, always for our highest good.

He stays at our house because his home is in our heart. He is the most substantial, most active, most evident member of the household. If his presence is not felt, we have allowed the illusion of separation to temporarily deceive us, but he will never leave. The reality is that he is watching over us. The illusion is that we have been overlooked.

Recently, in a Sathya Sai Baba Center meeting, two members told of beautiful experiences of his tender, constant care in their lives. After the meeting was over and I had retired for the evening, I found that my thoughts were dwelling on the two "miracles" which had been repeated. I know that miracles fulfill the law of God by dispelling the illusion of chaos and revealing the natural order. Nevertheless, my mind refused to settle down.

After hearing the clock strike 11:00, and then midnight, I asked Baba for help to fall asleep. As the clock began to strike at 1:00 A.M., I was surprised to hear it

continue to strike. Wondering what was happening, I counted each stroke. The clock had my full attention. After striking 191 times, it was finally silent, and I fell asleep.

The next day I told the story several times, and everyone agreed that it was a typical Baba *leela* (divine play). He uses ordinary things in extraordinary ways to produce the expected result. Who but Baba would see the relationship between a runaway grandfather clock and the vision of sheep jumping over a fence?

The story was just too delightful to keep to myself. Two days later, I related it to a group. Someone asked, "Why 191?" Admitting that I hadn't really given it any thought, I asked if anyone else could offer a suggestion. A young man spoke up. "Well, let's see," he said. "We have a 19, and the 19th letter of the alphabet is 'S'; a one which is 'A'; also a 9, which is 'I'." Before he could put together what he had spelled, the rest of the group gasped in unison: "Sai!" It was the perfect signature to a perfect *leela*.

On another occasion, when I had allowed myself to be knocked off balance by the loss of an item which seemed necessary to our efficient functioning, Baba made his presence in our house felt. This time his response taught a lesson which we needed to learn even more than we needed the lost article. As I prayed for his help, I felt the answer come from within: "Accept this loss as my gift to you and be at peace." Both my husband and I thanked Baba for this opportunity to be obedient. Removing our attention from the illusion of loss, we easily found

the substance of peace. A few days later, the lesson having been learned, the article was returned.

Another lesson began one afternoon as two devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and I were preparing to leave the room in which we had been engaged in *Sathya Sai Newsletter* work. One of the ladies said, "Oh, do you smell that?" Immediately our other friend responded, "Yes, it's *vibhuti* (holy ash)!" I sniffed expectantly but smelled nothing. Knowing that many experience Baba's grace as the fragrance of *vibhuti*, I felt quite disappointed and immediately began to search for the error in my thinking or behavior.

For more than an hour, as I was driving home, I prayed to Baba to reveal to me what I had done wrong and to help me avoid making the same mistake again. In spite of repeated entreaties and earnest self-inquiry, 36 hours passed without my having received an answer. On awaking the second morning, with the question still unresolved, I felt totally off-center. I tried not to be out of sorts but was not able to disguise my irritability

from my husband. He left for his office saying that he hoped I felt better soon.

Closing my eyes for an extra period of meditation, I was suddenly aware of the heavenly scent of *vibhuti*. I just reveled in the joy of the fragrance for a few moments, then another question jolted me out of my reverie. "Why, now, Baba?" I almost shouted. "The other afternoon I was centered, peaceful, and serving your organization and you showed me no grace. This morning I awoke lazy, disgruntled, cross with my husband, and the fragrance of your presence enfolds me. Why?"

The answer appeared clearly, then, on the screen of my heart: "In this way I bring to your remembrance that you are guiltless. I love you because of who you are, not because of what you do. I am your very Self. You are my very Self. I created you in the pure joy of Self-expression. When you criticize yourself, you criticize me. When you judge yourself, you imagine yourself to be separate from me. Surrender now, and just be what we are—Love Incarnate."

—Joy Thomas
Cherry Valley, California

The clouds appear to be stuck to the sky, so, too, maya, illusion, or the tendency to conclude that which the senses tell us is true or to project our preferences and prejudices on the world around us, gives us an untrue picture of Brahman (Eternal Absolute). It makes us believe that the world is real. Its impact warps our reasoning process, our sensory impressions and our view of God on creation and on mankind. It spreads before us a diversity which tantalizes and deceives. . .

Maya is inherent in every being and in every activity of that being. It has three aspects: sathwic, which is the calm, contented, balanced mood of equanimity; rajasic, which is the potent, passionate mood; thamasic, which is the inert, slothful, sluggish mood.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sanathana Sarathi, September 1979, pages 205-206

San Diego Reports: *They Love Quilting "Love-Quilts"*

In 1989, a few members of the Sathya Sai Baba Center of San Diego decided to start a service project making quilts. One member had a contact who gave quilts to the County Sheriff's Department. The blankets were to be kept in the officers' squad cars until they needed a quilt for a child who had been in an accident, abandoned or had to be taken from home for any reason. It was left up to the officer to decide when it is needed to use the quilt. Each quilt was to be kept by the child.

Since only one member of the group knew anything about quilting, we all had much to learn. Many had never used a sewing machine. Others hesitated, thinking the project might be too complex. A small group started making square blocks in a simple pattern called "log cabin." One person sewed, another handed material to the sewer, a third cut strips of material, a fourth ironed. Next, we put the finished top together with batting and a back and tied them. In the center of each block of the first quilts was an orange square left over from the volunteers' scarves which were made for the first San Diego area Sai conference. We still have some of that material.

Lack of Success

For a time, the project floundered from a seeming lack of interest. For a couple of years, most of the work was done by two or three women who got together once every month or six weeks. During that time, quilting was one of the

service projects at our local, annual Sai conference, but one year it was not included. It was at that time we debated whether to continue the project. When many people at the conference commented about not having the quilting for a service activity, we prayed to Baba for direction and decided to renew our efforts to get the project going again, figuring that as long as we put forth our best efforts, Sai would bless the project.

Prayers are Answered

We began by getting better organized! The project was scheduled one Saturday every month at the same place, and we met with the service committee to ask for a commitment from members to help. Our meetings started with miniseminars on each of the aspects of the work. We marked all sewing machines to insure the same seam width, taught how to hold and run the material through the machine, how to handsew pieces, how to cut fabric with a rotary cutter, how to iron the seams properly, and how to "sandwich" the fabrics together. Since each session had new people, these lessons were taught over and over.

Eventually, we had enough people trained at each task to improve the quality of work and to help train others. We began to establish a routine. Since some people wanted to do more work, they started meeting on two Tuesday evenings a month preparing materials for the Saturday gatherings. Now, there are frequently six to ten people on Tuesdays.

Our Saturday meetings start with two hours of quilting, a break and two more hours of work, followed by a potluck and *Satsang* [a time for sharing, talking about God]. When it is time to eat, we get comments like: "It can't be time yet!" "I'll just finish this section." "Just a few more blocks." "I'm almost done. . . ." The *satsangs* have become wonderful times to share Swami stories and develop a close kinship with the members of both our centers [There are two Sai Centers in San Diego.] We also have some non-devotees who come with their devotee friends and even have one regular non-devotee who really knows the art of quilting. One of the surprises is that there are often as many men volunteers as women! Our Saturday group varies in size and includes children. Some of the children insist on coming even when their parents are not sure they want to come. At our last annual Sai conference, we had close to 60 men and women involved in quilting!

Joy in Doing & Giving

During 1993, we gave quilts to retirement/convalescent homes, San Diego Hospice, Hillcrest Receiving (which gets as many as 80 children a day for placement), a center that teaches autistic children, homeless persons, Los Angeles earthquake victims, Children's Hospital Urgent Care Center, and to Sai devotees who have a special need or know someone with a special need.

This year, 1994, we had our first "Maha-Quilting." For 12 hours on Saturday, August 20th, we worked toward the goal of putting together 70 quilts in honor of Swami's 70th birthday. This year was a dry run for the actual birthday

next year. We plan to finish the quilts at the September conference and distribute them after that—all with Sathya Sai Baba's grace.

With more experience, we have learned new ways to improve the use of material and produce a better finished product. By implementing Swami's teachings as much as possible, we are able to practice his "Ceiling on Desires" program. We use all scraps, often taking what others have discarded. The sewing is done in such a way as to use the least amount of thread, fabric, etc. Sathya Sai Baba seems to keep our scrap boxes filled with material.

When it comes time to decide where the finished quilts will go, the response is always clear. The elderly in convalescent homes like the lap-sized quilts; recently, each child in an autistic children's group got a quilt. More and more, we feel Sai's presence in our work. Each quilt now has a small label on the back with the *Sarva Dharma* symbol [See the Sai symbol of all religions on the cover of this issue] and the words "Love All, Serve All." The quilts are given anonymously; however, we have gotten letters addressed to "Dear Person who made the lap blanket," or "Dear Volunteer."

Examples of "Love-Quilts"

One gentleman at the San Diego Hospice was suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease and was so despondent that he hadn't spoken or shown any interest in living for the previous two weeks. Then, a social worker placed one of the quilts on his bed. He looked at it, gazed up, smiled and whispered, "Thank you." Another recipient was a 17-year-old girl whose lung transplant was unsuccessful.

Her mother wrote a note expressing her daughter's joy and appreciation for the quilt. One Sai devotee delivered a quilt last Christmas to a man in the advanced stages of multiple sclerosis. Unable to speak, he communicated with his eyes and a letter board. He said he could "feel the love" in the quilt.

A Sai devotee works in the emergency room of a children's hospital and keeps some quilts in the trunk of her car. Some time ago, two children came to the emergency room after an auto accident, one injured and the other badly frightened. While the older child was being operated on, the younger one sat shivering in the waiting room. The devotee took a quilt from her car, wrapped the boy in it, and he fell asleep immediately. Another child was crying and shaking so much that the nurses could not give him an intravenous injection. The devotee got another quilt from her car and wrapped the boy in it. He calmed down enough to have the I.V. needle inserted and went to sleep peacefully. Another quilt made of squares that were done by the *Bal Vikas* class, hangs in the children's intensive care ward of a hospital in the nearby city of Escondido.

A Book Arrived

In early January, 1993, the founder of our project was shown a quilting book by a friend. Many of the quilts shown in the book had been made like the ones we had been making. She thought it would be a nice book to have for the project, but dismissed the idea as too expensive. A couple of weeks later, when

she walked into the San Diego Sai Center, she noticed the same book and said to the owner of the home, "You have that quilting book." The owner said, "No, that is your book. It was sent by a devotee up north to the 'person in charge of the quilting project.'" The note from the devotee said, in part, "Reading your monthly bulletin inspired me to give your quilting project a spontaneous gift. It must be Baba, since I've never made a quilt!" And indeed it was. The book has inspired us to even greater challenges.

Baba's Blessings

This spring, our project was blessed by a very personal touch from Sathya Sai Baba. When a group from San Diego went to India, they took along a quilt made from squares hand-painted by *Bal Vikas* children. They hoped that Swami would bless it. One square had a drawing of Sathya Sai Baba's feet and the words "At His Lotus Feet" written on it. After many *darshans* and *leelas*, Baba blessed and accepted the "Love-Quilt" as a gift.

Indeed, all of us have been blessed by this project, I did not know how much, until I started to write about some of our experiences and reread the notes from people who have received quilts. Although the recipients may feel that they "got the best end of the deal," I know that we truly have. Sai Baba says, "*Service to those in need blesses not only those served, but also those who serve,*" and we know that to be true.

—Jane and Joe Darin
San Diego, California

Whatever service you are rendering, you should not feel that you are serving others, but that you are serving God Himself. In this way, you can consider every activity you undertake as being done for God.

—Sathya Sai Baba, March 30, 1987

Young Adults Frogs for Friends ?

Having read a few of Baba's more theoretical discourses, it was with a little bit of fear and a great deal of awe that I sat at his divine lotus feet two summers ago. Swami had blessed my family with an interview on our first visit to Puttaparthi, and I was not sure what to expect. My main concern was that I would not be able to digest the wisdom that Baba would impart during the interview, that a discussion on a serious topic would go right over my head. Of course, I had no reason to fear, as our Swami is none other than the embodiment of divine compassion. I have no doubt that he understood my worries, as he proceeded to give us the guidance we needed with the casual, yet informative style only Baba has.

Be like fish?

Early in the interview, Swami was asking each of us where we were from, and just what we wanted from him almost as if he were making small talk until we all settled down. Then he quickly turned to my brother, Chetan, and asked, "*Is fish a good animal?*" The unexpected question took Chetan by surprise, and he replied, "I don't know." Sai Baba smiled at him and prodded again, "*What do you mean, you don't know? Is fish a good animal?*" Chetan answered, "Yes," this time but couldn't come up with a good reason. Swami then explained, "*Fish is a good animal, because it is better than a sel-fish. A fish takes in dirty water and makes it clean, but scelfish goes*

through society and makes it dirty because of ego. So, be like fish—don't be selfish."

Friends like Frogs!?

Swami often stresses the importance of choosing good friends who will help keep us on the spiritual path. The other part of this is staying away from those who would pull us away from Divinity. One of Baba's ABC's is Avoid Bad Company. It was clear that Baba wanted to emphasize this point to both Chetan and me, as he cautioned us against having fair weather friends by giving an example of frogs in the summertime.

"In the summer, when the tank is filled with water, all the frogs want to be nearby. Just like when you have money in your pocket, many friends will be around you saying, 'Hi!' 'Hi!' But, when the tank is empty, all the frogs will leave. Just like when you have no money, your pocket will be empty, and all those so-called 'friends' will leave saying 'Bye.' 'Bye.' So remember, don't have friends like frogs."

What Kind of Government?

As our interview went on, Baba asked each of the young people what we were studying in school. When I told him I was working on a B.A. in Government, Baba started by making a face as if he were disturbed by my choice. Then he laughed gently and asked, "*Good, but what is the best form of government?*" I had no idea; I wasn't even sure what kind of answer



Baba speaking with some young men during *darshan* in Kodaikanal, circa 1993.

he wanted, so I simply said, "I don't know Swami." This time, shaking a finger at me, he smiled as he gave the answer. *"Self-government, that is the best form. First, you must learn how to govern yourself and your own senses; then you can worry about governing everyone else."*

What divine messages Baba had packaged in simple examples that could

not be forgotten! Indeed, I felt as if Sathya Sai Baba had done this to confirm what I had hoped for from the beginning of the interview: that issues of religion and spirituality, though important, could still be addressed using a proper blend of humorous yet informative anecdotes.

—Ketan Kharod
Washington, D.C.

Undertake work in order to please God, not to gratify the senses. Your actions are responsible for elevation to the highest state or degradation to the lowest planes. Your joys and sorrows are created by your own actions. Your actions are responsible for your sins and virtues. Fix your mind on God; your actions will then be without attachment. Actions without attachment will destroy demonic qualities of people and promote divine tendencies.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Summer Showers in Brindavan 1979, page 37

Children's Corner

The Real Birthday

David always loved celebrating his birthday. The family gave him lots of nice presents, decorated the living room with balloons, and his mother baked a double chocolate cake. They would have pizza for dinner and David would eat at least three pieces. For, after all, it was his birthday, and he could do almost anything he wanted on that day.

On Sunday, after *Bal Vikas*, David would go home, find all his surprises, and have a delightful day. This was Thursday, and there were only three days to go. When David came home from school that day, his mother told him that this was going to be an extra special birthday. "Oh! Wow!" he thought, what else would happen? But David found out that "special" meant that he would be sharing his birthday with someone else.

He was disappointed when he heard his mother say, "Your great Uncle from Russia is arriving tonight, and he shares the same birthday as you. Your uncle Moische is a wonderful man who has lived through many hardships. It is an honor for us to have him here. He wrote to your father for many years and gave him wonderful guidance and knowledge of what things in life are most important. Your father reveres him. Now, the dear man is in frail health, so the birthday dinner will be clear broth, boiled potatoes and puddings. This is the food that he is used to, and we cannot disrupt his diet."

"Yes, Mother." That's all David said as he walked away with his head down, and his eyes on his shoelaces. He went to his room and almost cried. "My birthday," he thought, "my birthday is ruined."

That evening, Uncle Moische came from the airport with David's father. When they walked through the front door, David stared at the surprisingly tall, gray-bearded stranger. "He looks like a statue," David thought. "I have to share my birthday with a statue." He knew that his thoughts were not polite, so he stopped them and went to help carry the bags.

Later, as they ate the supper of broth, pudding and potatoes, David tried to imagine what his birthday would be like eating this same, boring food. He wanted to just forget his birthday altogether.

Well, Sunday came along, and David prepared to leave for *Bal Vikas* class. Uncle Moische entered his room and stood for a moment looking at his nephew. "David," he said in a strong voice, "Happy birthday to you!" David said thank you, and wished him a happy birthday, also. "You seem very quiet for a boy having a birthday. Where is your joy?" he asked his nephew. They talked, and

Uncle Moische even made David laugh. But then, David caught himself being happy and got mad. "Excuse me," he said, "I've got to leave now." David rushed out the door, yelled "Good-bye" to his family and headed down the street.

While in class, his *Bal Vikas* teacher spoke about revering God, and seeing God in everyone.

David remembered his mother talking about how Uncle Moische was revered. "That old man can't be God," David thought. "Why do they revere someone who can't even eat pizza?"

The class was soon over. Nobody had remembered David's birthday. He thought that maybe—because he was a new student to *Bal Vikas*—they'd have a surprise for him, but everybody just went home.

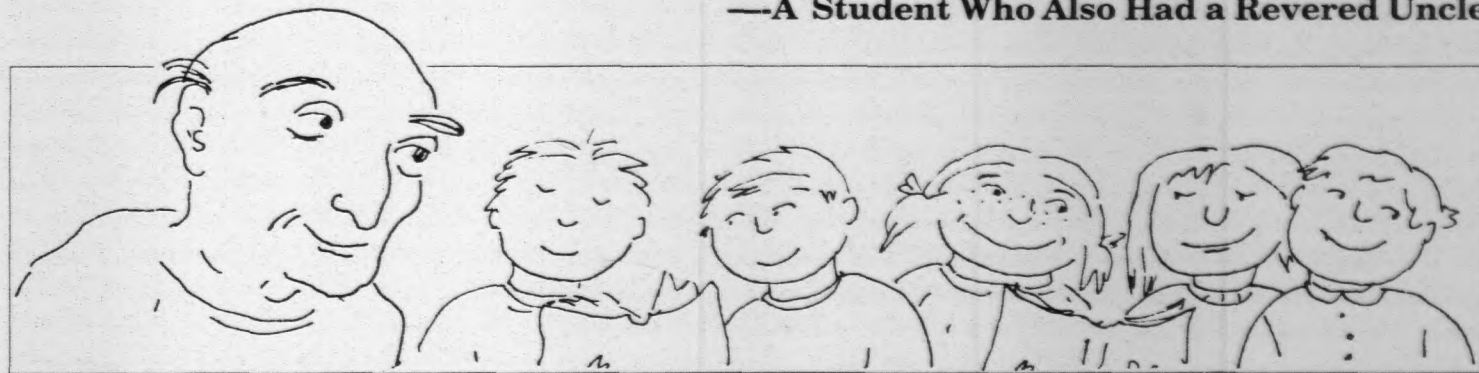
Usually, David would walk home quickly in anticipation of his birthday, but today, he spent twenty minutes scuffling along slowly. Finally, he pushed open the front door as if it weighed a thousand pounds. To his amazement, the house was decorated with more colorful balloons than he'd ever seen. All the kids from *Bal Vikas* were there, the house smelled like pizza and a three layered cake was surrounded by lots of presents. "Happy Birthday!" everyone cheered.

David was stunned. He looked around at all this beauty, love and caring and couldn't believe it. "Mom," he cried, "I thought my party wasn't going to be. What happened?" She told him that his uncle insisted that David have his special party, because seeing David happy would be his greatest present.

David realized that his uncle really was a special man. Someone special enough to revere. But where was Uncle Moische? "Mom, where is Uncle Moische?" David's mother said that he was in his room. He didn't want to disturb David and his friends.

David felt funny; he realized how spoiled and selfish he'd been and how wonderful his uncle really was. Then, David ran and knocked on his uncle's door. "Uncle Moische, how can this be a party without you? Please come! I want my friends to meet you." David also figured out what it meant to "revere" someone.

—A Student Who Also Had a Revered Uncle



—Christine Panushka

Why Have You Come, Lord?

*Why have You come, Lord?
Why have You come to me?
You have entered this life,
And made it worth living,
If only I could see.*

*If only I could see
What it is
That You see
In me.*

*You say that Liberation
Is "God Seeing God."
Yet everyday
All I see is me.*

*All I see is me
In all that is
And all that occurs.
"I" obstructs my view of Thee.*

*Why have you chosen this life
To enter into and to transform
Into an instrument
In Your Divine Hand?*

*I failed so many times,
Over and over again,
To remember the most basic fact
Of Your Divinity.*

*I never cease to amaze myself
With my own ignorance,
With my own forgetfulness
Of the Grandeur and Beauty
Of Thee.*

Treat me not as one afar, but as very close to you. Insist, demand, claim grace from me. Bring your heart to me and win my heart. Not one of you is a stranger.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. III

*Why have You come, Lord?
Why have You come to me?
What is it You wish to
Communicate?
To softly say to me?*

*At last I lose my self
And see beyond me,
And realize
You are speaking.*

*I faintly hear
Your Voice within,
Telling me Your most Sacred
Word,
Your most Sacred
Message
That is meant for all.*

*Your Voice caresses gently
In a tangible,
Loving
Way.*

*Your voice speaks sweetly
The words I need to hear,
The words that will Transform,
The words that will Heal.*

*You say to me,
"I love you,"
And
Quietly
Disappear.*

—Jim Horner

Walnut Creek, California

Announcements

The Year of Education

This year, 1994, has been celebrated as the “**Year of Education**,” with emphasis placed on strengthening the *Bal Vikas* children’s education program. The spiritual education of children of Sai devotees, and of others who wish to participate in the program, was a major thrust of the organization. Accordingly, efforts have been made to strengthen and expand teacher training, parental involvement and cultural programs that were presented by the students. Expansion of the *Bal Vikas* program, according to the records of the Sathya Sai Baba Council of USA are:

<i>The Years:</i>	1993	1994
<i>Number of Volunteer Teachers.</i>	242	305
<i>Number of Students, Groups I, II and III, Combined.</i>	901	953
<i>Number of Parents Involved.</i>	639	820

The Year of Service

The year, 1995, will be celebrated as the “**Year of Service**” and will emphasize the new National Service Program, “**The Earth—Help Ever, Hurt Never.**” Keep in mind that “*Service to others is service to God*,” and that we are the ultimate benefactors of our acts of selfless service. Devotees are urged to take this theme of service to new heights in the year 1995. Among other things, service will include expanding our efforts to reach more and more people in our respective areas, deepening our appreciation and understanding of the inner significance of serving within the home, within the Sai Centers and within the community. (For more details of the service project, read *Sathya Sai Service Opportunities* enclosed in this issue).

The Seventieth Birthday

The year, 1995, will mark the **70th Year of the Earthly Descent of the Sai Avatar** and will parallel the new National Service Program, **The Earth—Help Ever, Hurt Never**. The Sai Organization will be commemorating this grand occasion with a program highlighting the activities, achievements and accomplishments in the **Three Wings of the Sathya Sai Baba Organization—Spiritual, Educational and Service**. These activities will take place at the time of the birthday celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam in each of the consecutive years: 1993, 1994, 1995. (Last year, 1993, was the year that emphasized spirituality).

The three-year effort that culminates in 1995, at the time of Baba’s 70th birthday, shall not end there. Rather, it will pave the way for the celebrations of the 75th Birthday in the year 2000. In each of the intervening years, one of the five Human Values will be celebrated. Hence, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 will be known respectively as the years of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Nonviolence.

Questions and Answers

We regret that Dr. John Hislop, for reasons beyond his control, must discontinue his popular column of "Questions and Answers." We are hoping that this will only be temporary, and that he will start the series again at a later date. In the meantime, please do not send any questions to the *Newsletter* for Dr. Hislop's attention.

If the column is to resume, it will be announced in the *Sathya Sai Newsletter*. Until then, may we suggest reading the books by and about Sathya Sai Baba as a source of wisdom; often the answers to our spiritual questions seem to jump off the page and into our consciousness. (See pages 36-37 for a list of books.)

About Your Sathya Sai Newsletter

Each quarter we find that we have, unnecessarily, disappointed a few of our subscribers. That is because they have moved and have not given us their new address. This makes us very sad; we want to serve you! Let us remind our readers that the *SSN* is sent Bulk Rate, Third Class Mail, so what does that mean?

First, it means that Third Class Mail is not forwarded to the subscriber. Second, the U.S. Postal Service will send us your new address—if you have registered with them—and the *Newsletter* pays for that information, but the Postal Service does not return your *Newsletter* to this office. (Are you confused yet?)

Wait there's more: When we have your new address, we always *try* to send another edition of the *Sathya Sai Newsletter* you should have received, *if* that edition is still in stock. That separate *SSN*, must be sent First Class, and the rupees are mounting up. Bottom line: **Please send address corrections A.S.A.P. and be certain your address is absolutely accurate.** (Pardon me, I must go rest.)

More from the Editor's Desk

In a recent bulletin, Dr. Michael Goldstein brought to our attention that, "November 23, 1995 is almost upon us. This year [1994] the organization is emphasizing Sai Education. . . . Next year [1995] Sai Service will be the theme. All Service Coordinators should begin their planning for 1995." We are fortunate to have the National Service Project, **The Earth—Help Ever, Hurt Never** to help us grow in Sai service. Since this has been the year for Sai Education in Sathya Sai Centers and Groups throughout the world, and in cooperation with this effort, the *Sathya Sai Newsletter* has published two issues emphasizing Bhagavan's recent discourses on education. We hope that these issues—Fall 1994 and Winter 1994-95—have been interesting and informative. Let us keep in mind that the spiritual education of both children and adults does not end with the year 1994, but it should be a continuing effort on the part of all devotees, followers and those who strive for a better world.

Baba has proclaimed, "*Sai is spending 75% of the time with students.*" Doesn't that tell us that he considers spiritual education of young people to be of the utmost importance? In the broader sense, are we not all his students? So, let's get busy and fill our heads with his words, our hearts with his love and practice what we have learned. As Baba says, "*Don't try. Do!*"

- If a scorpion bites you, instead of crying, be happy that a snake didn't bite you.

- If a snake bites you, be happy that you are alive and didn't die.

- Don't cry that you don't have a car, but be happy you have legs.

- Don't feel sad that you are not a millionaire, but be happy that you have enough to eat.

This is the way to experience pleasure in pain. True idealism is the experience of pleasure in pain.

Nations are many, earth is one. Beings are many, breath is one. Jewels are many, gold is one. If you understand this principle of unity in diversity, then there is no room for hatred. Since ancient times, India has been demonstrating the ideal of unity. If you inquire with a spirit which is free from doubt, you will understand this principle of unity.

Ceiling on Desires

You don't have to be a millionaire. Who is a rich person? One without desires is truly rich. Desires are ever increasing without limit. So, you have to teach the principle of **Ceiling on Desires** to students.

Teach students that food is God, so don't waste **food**. Your body is made up of food. There are many people who are in need of food. So, take only what you can eat and do not waste food. This is the first principle of Ceiling on Desires.

The second refers to the use of money. Wealth is God, don't waste **money**. Teach the students that the misuse of money is evil, so don't misuse money. Students have to consider each penny given to them as a drop of their parents' blood. So, if they waste money, they are

wasting their parent's blood.

The next one concerns the use of **time**. Tell the students, "Don't waste time; time is God." Students are wasting a lot of time. God is described as time and, also, he is beyond time. Everything is time. Tell the students, "Don't waste time; time wasted is life wasted." You should make sure that children make proper use of every second and do not talk unnecessarily. Tell them, "Talk less and work more." Today, people talk excessively, consequently, they waste their energy. Due to loss of energy, they lose their memory power, age fast and become old prematurely. For these reasons, one should talk less. Noble souls have observed silence to conserve their energy. Teach students the following:

- See no evil, see what is good.
- Hear no evil, hear what is good.
- Think no evil, think what is good.
- Speak no evil, speak what is good.
- Do no evil, do what is good.
- This is the way to God.

You should teach this sacred path to children from a very young age. If the small plant is straight, then the big tree will also grow up to be straight. If the tender plant is crooked and bent, then the tree will also be crooked and bent. So, start early, drive slowly and arrive safely. You should make the children take these values to heart by making use of these simple maxims.

The fourth principle of Ceiling on Desires is **energy**. Many students are wasting energy and becoming weak. Because of weakness, they are not paying heed to the advice of their parents. They are traveling on the wrong path and becoming like cars without brakes. It is said, "A bull not tied to a yoke, a horse

without reins, and a life without sense control are all like cars without brakes and may meet with danger at any time. See to it that the students have sense control. You can point out to them how modern youths are becoming mad.

Nowadays, one individual desires another. Teach discrimination by pointing out that the other body is also made up of the same five senses, excreta, muscle, blood and bone like their own. So, they should not desire another body. You should teach with conviction that everything is in them; the whole world is in their hearts. The moment they truly open their eyes, they can see all of creation, but when they close their eyes, they cannot see anything. Realize that everything comes from within and that everything is only a reflection of the inner being. You should teach this truth to the children.

Harsh Words

See to it that children do not use harsh words. Teach the children that they can make their hearts pure and sacred. You can tell them, "You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly." You should teach them to talk softly, sweetly and slowly from early childhood. Nowadays, if mothers try to teach anything to their children, immediately the child will reply, "Don't say anything. I know everything." Who is responsible for such behavior? It is the mother! It means from early childhood she did not give proper guidance. Parents feel that their responsibility ends once the child is admitted into school. This is not right. Responsibility rests with parents.

[Swami concluded his discourse with his blessings to all. He reminded the

teachers, "*Mold the children into ideal citizens, and inculcate the noble qualities of faith and devotion in them.*" Then he sang, "*Hari bhajana bina sukha shanthi nahi. . . .*" After completing the devotional song, he walked among the throng of devotees. He then surprised everyone by returning to the stage and adding more information to the discourse. He began again:]

To Teachers With Love

Teachers, you have tolerated all the problems and inconveniences encountered to attend this conference; you have demonstrated your innate Divinity. You have to consider all this as spiritual pursuit. The body is given for this spiritual endeavor. Only by hard work, will you get good results; only after undergoing difficulty, you get pleasure. In *Vedantic* parlance it is said that you cannot derive pleasure from pleasure. Only after undergoing difficulty and pain, will you attain happiness. By merely asking the sugarcane for sweet juice, you cannot obtain it; you have to cut the sugarcane into pieces and crush them to obtain the sweet juice. If you want to bring out the brilliance and value to a diamond, you have to cut it into many facets and polish them. You have tolerated many inconveniences. You did not have proper food or sleep. But you have tolerated inconveniences with the feeling that they are part of selfless service.

The *Vedas* declare, "It is only sacrifice that confers immortality." For mankind, sacrifice is essential. Love and sacrifice are like our two eyes. Whatever sacrifice is done, you should consider it to be God's work. Then all work will be transformed into worship. Many of you

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Our workers are valuable like diamonds. Noble service rendered by our volunteers is beyond words and description. They say God is beyond the reach of mind and speech, but I say you are God. Man is God. This body is the temple of God. Keeping these kinds of feelings, you should think that this is your own home and you did your own work here. You should not think you came to someone else's home doing someone else's work.

Service organizations and the government of Karnataka made good arrangements [for the teachers], undergoing lots of trouble. Because your hearts have one-pointed love centered around Swami, we also have responsibility to take care of you. You came with so much faith. Therefore, you need not pay for the food you ate during all these days of conference. Would you charge your chil-

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bled thousands seemed palpable. Baba sang the devotional song, "Love is my form, Truth is my breath, Bliss is my food. . . ." Then he said:]

Your bliss is my food. So be happy. Stay here until tomorrow, [The next day was *Guru Poornima*, a time for honoring the spiritual preceptor.] and enjoy your meals, but do not pay a penny and return to your places at your own convenience. Swami's grace and blessings are always with you. Before you leave, I will discuss with you one more time about the future progress of our organization and how to practice and spread human values among people. Swami will confer joy on you by providing another opportunity to talk to you.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**

All-India *Bal Vikas* Teachers' Conference
Brindavan, Whitefield, July 21, 1994

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See to it that children do not use harsh words. Teach the children that they can make their hearts pure and sacred. You can tell them, "You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly." You should teach them to talk softly, sweetly and slowly from early childhood. Nowadays, if mothers try to teach anything to their children, immediately the child will reply, "Don't say anything. I know everything." Who is responsible for such behavior? It is the mother! It means from early childhood she did not give proper guidance. Parents feel that their responsibility ends once the child is admitted into school. This is not right. Responsibility rests with parents.

[Swami concluded his discourse with his blessings to all. He reminded the

rive pleasure from pleasure. Only after undergoing difficulty and pain, will you attain happiness. By merely asking the sugarcane for sweet juice, you cannot obtain it; you have to cut the sugarcane into pieces and crush them to obtain the sweet juice. If you want to bring out the brilliance and value to a diamond, you have to cut it into many facets and polish them. You have tolerated many inconveniences. You did not have proper food or sleep. But you have tolerated inconveniences with the feeling that they are part of selfless service.

The *Vedas* declare, "It is only sacrifice that confers immortality." For mankind, sacrifice is essential. Love and sacrifice are like our two eyes. Whatever sacrifice is done, you should consider it to be God's work. Then all work will be transformed into worship. Many of you

teachers came here—undergoing troubles and problems—because of your love and total spirit of dedication to Swami. This is your home.

[At this point, the teachers and guests became overjoyed with enthusiasm for what Baba was saying.]

To reach your own home, you have tolerated all the inconveniences on the way, until you arrived home. For all those many troubles you went through, our Central Trust has to do something to help. You are true devotees. The spirit of sacrifice seen among our workers in our Sai Organization is not seen anywhere else. Our workers are valuable like diamonds. Noble service rendered by our volunteers is beyond words and description. They say God is beyond the reach of mind and speech, but I say you are God. Man is God. This body is the temple of God. Keeping these kinds of feelings, you should think that this is your own home and you did your own work here. You should not think you came to someone else's home doing someone else's work.

Service organizations and the government of Karnataka made good arrangements [for the teachers], undergoing lots of trouble. Because your hearts have one-pointed love centered around Swami, we also have responsibility to take care of you. You came with so much faith. Therefore, you need not pay for the food you ate during all these days of conference. Would you charge your chil-

dren for the food you give when they come home? This is your home. You should not pay anything; the Central Trust will bear all expenses. If the chairman of the All-India Sathya Sai Organi-

zation collected any money for food from you, I want it to be returned to all of you. For Swami, character is important, but not money. No one can assess the value of your love. Love is invaluable. So, how can you assess the value of such love? Swami wants only your welfare, love, devotion,

progress and happiness.

[Many in the audience shed tears of joy. The love for Sai among the assembled thousands seemed palpable. Baba sang the devotional song, "Love is my form, Truth is my breath, Bliss is my food. . . ." Then he said:]

Your bliss is my food. So be happy. Stay here until tomorrow, [The next day was *Guru Poornima*, a time for honoring the spiritual preceptor.] and enjoy your meals, but do not pay a penny and return to your places at your own convenience. Swami's grace and blessings are always with you. Before you leave, I will discuss with you one more time about the future progress of our organization and how to practice and spread human values among people. Swami will confer joy on you by providing another opportunity to talk to you.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**
All-India *Bal Vikas* Teachers' Conference
Brindavan, Whitefield, July 21, 1994



Sathya Sai Book Center of America

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