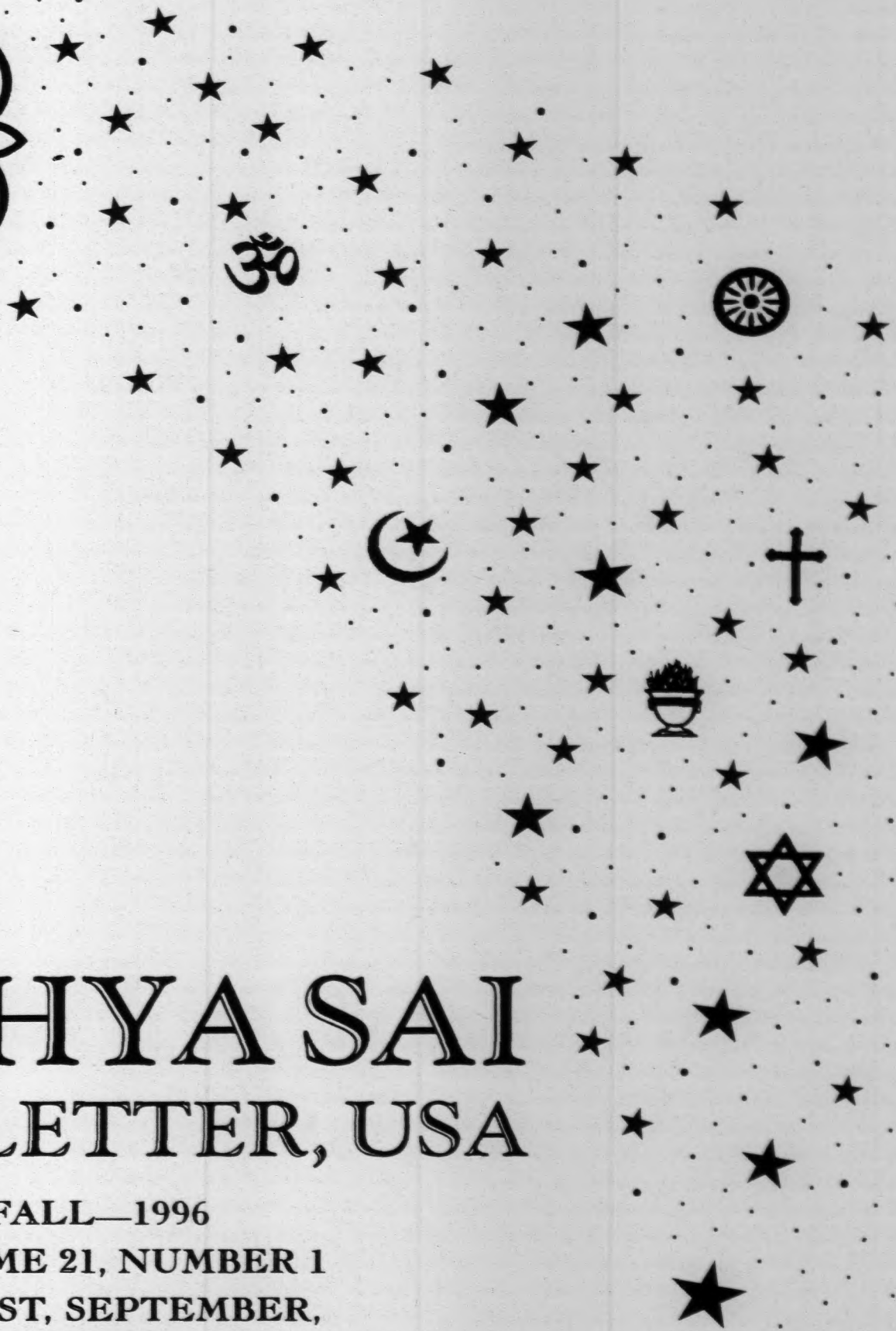
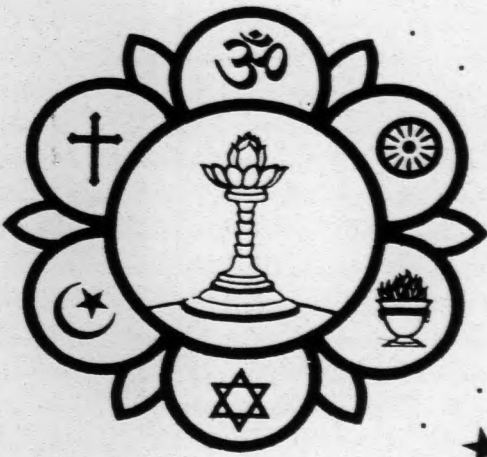




SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER, USA

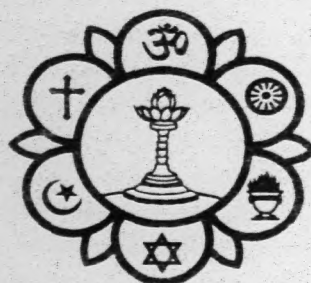
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August, September, October

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

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—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

Sai's Message

Above all, do not give room for doubt. Why argue over me, over this point or that concerning me? You discuss and debate, who exactly is this Sai Baba? What does it matter to you who I happen to be? You are concerned about your goal, your ideal, your experience, your effort, is that not true? Why then worry about my origin, my nature, my mystery, my miracle? The basic thing is the hand; the cup it holds is secondary. The entire creation (aadheya) is less important than the basic reality (aadhara). When you are not in touch with your basic reality, why waste time exploring the essence of Godhead? As a matter of fact, you can understand me only when you have understood yourself, your own basic truth.



—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. II, Chapter 28

Who Is Sathya Sai Baba?

I have been to India many times since 1977, and invariably people ask, "How was the Taj Mahal?" My answer is always the same, "I've never been there." "So where have you been?" they ask. "To see Sathya Sai Baba." The question is always, "And who is He?"

I have experienced many aspects of Baba. I've seen Him heal people, watched Him smile and talk to many while seeming to ignore others. I've looked on as He walked among the multitudes; He is there, but not really there, and yet, He is everywhere.

Yes, I have been blessed with personal interviews, as well as personal miracles, both at Prasanthi Nilayam and in my home in New York. Throughout the years, I had come to see Baba as mother, father, friend, holy man.

In the many books I've read, He has been represented as the image of God, something I've never truly understood. Consequently, there had always been a kind of separation between us. It wasn't until November 1992 that I got a glimpse of who He really is. I

began to truly understand His message, not just intellectually, but from a new space that He had opened up within me.

All through the fall of 1992, I had been trying to visit Baba. I wanted to go when the ashram was less crowded, for I had retired from teaching; I no longer had to wait for a school break or for summer vacation. I felt that I was free to go

at anytime. Yet, each time I tried, the way was blocked.

I made plans, but they kept falling apart. To my surprise, I was "pushed" into going that November, at the time of birthday celebrations and conferences. My intellect said that was not the right time, it would be far too crowded. But, my heart knew it was destiny, and I had little choice. Baba was indeed leading the way, and it was interesting for, at that time, all plans fell into place. There was no longer any trouble making plans for the trip. What ensued was the greatest miracle, a real transformation!

I arrived in India alone, and for the first time, I was tired and worried. However, the minute I stepped into the ashram, all I could hear were Baba's words, *Life's a game, play it!* This remained the theme of my visit.

That served me in good stead when

I was told, "There is no room at the inn," despite the letters of recommendation I had brought. The theme, *Life's a game, play it!* also echoed as I was repeatedly seated far back during *darshan* (to see a holy being), and yet, I

kept my cool. For the first time, I was not preoccupied with thoughts of myself. I did not ask Him for anything. I sat and observed; my eyes were only on Him. This was a far cry from the many times my mind churned with, "Baba, I'm here, look at me, help me." Instead, I was thankful to be there, to breathe in His glory and blessings, and ask for nothing.

"I arrived in India alone, and for the first time, I was tired and worried. However..."

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There, in the midst of throngs attending birthday, convocation, and conference activities, I was given the opportunity to recognize Baba in His true form—more than mother, father, friend. And I began to comprehend the meanings of omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient.

The rest of my visit was supercharged, constantly reinforcing who He

van Sri Satnya Sai
Baba has created a new being, not only freed in mind and emotions but changed on a physical plane. He has erased many of my face wrinkles and turned my lips upward, allowing sadness to give way to a smile, showing me that love really does conquer all. Yes, the Lord is truly here!

—Bea Flaig
Ithaca, New York



“Our devotion varies upon how much success we have achieved. Therefore, when things go wrong—and things do go wrong, even when He blesses you—we shift gears. The real spiritual yearning is when we reach a stage where there is nothing really wrong or right. In other words, it is necessary to transcend the concept of what is right or wrong.”

—Dr. M. V. N. Murthy
Who is a Devotee of the Lord?, Page 5

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And so, I received. No matter where I was placed, Swami was there, as visible as could be. When the temple compound was very crowded, and I was placed last, all of a sudden a new row would form, and I was right there with Sathya Sai Baba in full view.

Not only did I wind up with a room, but in the midst of hundreds of thousands, I had a dream fulfilled. I was in a room by myself—able to meditate in silence, sleep when needed, to not talk, to be alone with my own thoughts—I had never been privy to these luxuries before.

What was happening? Baba was showing me how to play life's game. In a real sense, I was finally giving of myself. There, in the midst of throngs attending birthday, convocation, and conference activities, I was given the opportunity to recognize Baba in His true form—more than mother, father, friend. And I began to comprehend the meanings of omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient.

The rest of my visit was supercharged, constantly reinforcing who He

really is. Here it is, much later, and I'm still filled with gratitude. The miracle of who Swami is still remains. It is He who has enabled me to face my trials and tribulations—my grandson's problems, my husband's major surgery—to better understand that I must see no evil, but see only good. I remember His words, *It is like baking a cake. I stir, I knead, I pound, I twist, I bake you. I drown you in tears. I scorch you in sobs. I make you sweet and crisp, an offering worthy of God.*

"This Avatar has come to console, correct, guide, and to love you. There is nothing to fear."

—Baba

And His statement to my husband and myself, *This Avatar has come to console, correct, guide, and love you. There is nothing to fear.*

And so, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai

Baba has created a new being, not only freed in mind and emotions but changed on a physical plane. He has erased many of my face wrinkles and turned my lips upward, allowing sadness to give way to a smile, showing me that love really does conquer all. Yes, the Lord is truly here!

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Sai's Message

Learning to Love

Eliminate the Three

In this world of all the many diseases, greed is the disease which has spread throughout. There is no worse disease than this. Greed makes people forget their human values. The second disease is anger. There is no greater enemy than anger. You can put your external enemies at bay, but to keep this inner enemy under check is very difficult. It is anger that kills the human qualities in people and makes them forget their own nature. There is also the terrible enemy of poverty.

What is the reason behind all this misery? It is poverty. It is not only financial poverty. It is mental and intellectual poverty as well. Because of intellectual poverty, people are suffering. Greed, anger and intellectual poverty are responsible for the ruin of society.

There is no greater pleasure than knowledge. Knowledge does not mean merely worldly knowledge, it means spiritual knowledge too. There are various forms of knowledge, like book knowledge, superficial knowledge, general knowledge, knowledge of discrimination, practical knowledge, etc. Knowledge of discrimination is not evident today. Discrimination is the basis for mankind. It is the wisdom that confers happiness.

We should develop proper wisdom to get rid of the three enemies—greed, anger and poverty of the intellect. We are participating in this conference [held at the time of the 70th birthday] to discover the means for eliminating these three.

The Purpose of Human Life

You should understand what life is. Do you consider the multifarious household duties to be the meaning of life? Do you think that eating thrice a day with contentment is the meaning of life? Does sleeping soundly to relieve oneself of the day's exertions constitute life? Does wasting the whole day in useless gossip constitute life? Is it for these things that God has given you life? Even though endowed with intelligence, you are not able to understand this. You are not utilizing your intelligence to know the very purpose of life. You make use of your intelligence to earn money, to gain worldly, transitory happiness, and to occupy positions of authority. This is not the proper use of intelligence.

Intelligence fulfills itself when we use it to know the goal of life. The intelligence that you acquire from education is only to meet your physical and material needs.

Today, society is afflicted with confusion and restlessness. Civilization is marked by the absence of humanism, loss of morality and ignorance of one's divinity. In all the fields of life, you have forgotten moral principles and a disciplined way of living. You consider the physical and material life as natural and important. You dedicate yourselves to ephemeral and transient happiness. You have lost moral values totally. In all walks of life, it is only selfishness that dominates. You do not desire objects for the good of others; you desire objects for your

own sake. When you participate in any cause, you do not participate for the sake of that cause, but for the sake of yourself. In the same manner, you participate in all activities for your own selfish interests, not for the all-around development, or for the sake of service to society. You strive only for name and fame.

How can we improve society? How can we join in service activities? Such broad feelings are totally disappearing in people. Therefore, you have to understand how important and sacred human life is. Eating, sleeping and roaming around are activities that animals and birds perform. Are we to strive for this purpose? Is it truly the purpose of human life?

Ideal Human Beings

All those who are participating in today's conference have a feeling that they are working for the organization. But what is the purpose for which we started this organization? The main objectives are the revival of human values, elimination of animal tendencies and the blossoming of divinity in mankind. Modern life is very peculiar. People have landed themselves in a situation where they do not know what their true nature is. They are not able to strive for their own emancipation and then pledge to emancipate others.

To a person who is lost in the slumber of ignorance, totally intoxicated with illusion and immersed in selfishness, the *Upanishads* give the call, "Arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached."

Oh, Embodiments of Love! This is not the time to sleep, to get intoxicated with arrogance. Do not become forgetful and lost, rather get immersed in the bliss of

reality. This means to be totally immersed in sacred feelings. Because of such sacredness of human life, it is said that human life is very, very difficult to obtain.

You should mold yourself into an ideal human being. You are born a human, but you should make yourself an ideal human being. For this, you should render service. What is the meaning of service? Timely help rendered to a person is understood as service. But this is not service. Eliminate your ego and attachments, and cultivate noble qualities like compassion and love. Then, you should participate in service activities. The service that you render is not for others' sake. It is only to promote the noble qualities present in you. Remember that service is sacred.

A Harmonious Life

Sages engage themselves in *tapas*. What is the meaning of *tapas*? The inner meaning of *tapas* is to forget the transitory, unreal world and remember reality; awakening the inner divinity is *tapas*. What will this divinity awaken? When the three basic characteristics in people are unified, dull attributes (*thamasic*) are transformed, so that they awaken one's inner divinity (*tapas*). What are these three characteristics? *Sathwa* (pure, good), *rajo* (active, craving adventure) and *thamo* (dull) *gunas* (qualities). *Gunas* are not the true characteristics; they are only distorted qualities. Thought, word and deed are the three characteristics. One who harmonizes these three deserves to be called a human. The proper study of mankind is the study of man. There should be perfect harmony of thought, word and deed.

Sai Teaches Three . . .

This is what we call human values. We call it EHV (Sathya Sai Education in Human Values). But it is not EHV; it is three HV. The three H's denote heart, head and hand. When all the three work in harmony, you have the real spirit of work. You have observed in the morning discourse the inner significance of the name SAI (see page 17 for morning discourse). The first letter of the word Sai, "S," stands for service, the second letter, "A," stands for adoration, and the third letter, "I," stands for illumination. These three signify action, devotion and wisdom. Sai teaches these. The absence of any of these three cannot be Sai. The combination of *karma* (action), *upasana* (devotion to God) and *jnana* (wisdom) is the real *swarupa* (embodiment) of Sai. You chant the letters "AUM." This is the one-syllable word which provides the sound *Om*. A, U, and M together constitute *Om*. So also, the three letters S, A, and I. constitute *karma*, *upasana* and *jnana*. Therefore, in the Sai Organization you should wholeheartedly try to promote these three.

Today, people have made rapid strides in the physical and scientific fields. But day-by-day, they are sliding down in the field of morality. What is the reason for this? People think that it is the purification, the sublimation, of past lives (*karma*) that is responsible for the moral degeneration, but this is not true. It is the wrong desires in people that are mainly responsible for moral degeneration. People should use proper discrimination to decide what to acquire and what to discard. Everybody should apply a sense of discrimination to decide whether a particular object is necessary

or not and discard those which are not needed. But this is not proper discrimination. A thing which is not needed may be sought by somebody. The one thing which is acceptable to all is proper discrimination. What is it that is despised by none and accepted by all? It is only love.

Real Love

Love is sought by all. It is our duty to share this love with all. Instead of keeping love within yourself, you should share it with others. Love is not something that is sold in the market, or obtained as a gift, or supplied by any company. It is within you and has to manifest itself.

Today, love has taken the wrong path. You are not able to understand love. You say, "I love you; I love you." That is not love; it is only attachment. Love is another name for God. Love is God, live in love. Thus, God is called *Prema Swarupa* (the embodiment of love). The love toward spouse, offspring, friends or relatives is transient. That which is transient does not last throughout time. Love should spring from the heart. That is divine love. Everyone should manifest divine love. Such love has become rare in human beings.

People who direct their love toward the world get attached to it. At some point, love diminishes, and worldly attachment increases. It is ignorant to consider that which sometimes increases and sometimes decreases, as love.

Real Intelligence

At times, you feel that you are very intelligent, you are highly qualified and you have a knack for doing certain things.

What you consider as a knack is, in fact, not a knack but a crack. This is not intelligence. Real intelligence is that which helps us to discover the truth and hold onto it. We should hold fast to that which should be held. We should achieve that which is worth achieving. We should delight in that which is truly delightful. All the rest are passing clouds which are not permanent. Worldly pleasures are like a mirage. The mirage gives us an illusion of water where there is no water. We run after it in the hope of getting water but, however far we may run, we do not find water.

But love is in close proximity; it is nearer to you than your own mother. People have forgotten this principle. They ask, "Where is God?" God is everywhere; truth is God; sacrifice is God; love is God. You are the embodiment of love.

All is God's Work

Many people used to ask the great saint, Sri Ramakrishna, "Have you seen God?" Ramakrishna had intense love for the Lord, and he would forget himself whenever he pronounced the name "Krishna." Ramakrishna replied to such people, "Yes, I have seen God." They asked him, "Where and how could you see God?" He replied, "I see God, just as I see you." You can see God everywhere, but you are not making the right inquiry, the right effort to see Him. Ramakrishna then put a question to those people. He asked, "You always worry about your spouse and children, you are constantly worried about your property. Do you have the same intensity of feeling toward God that you exhibit toward your family and property? Filling the mind with all negative thoughts, how can

you ever have a positive vision, and hope to see God?"

You have a light bulb, but it does not give light unless you transform the negative energy into positive. So too, you convert all your negative desires into positive ones. Transform your work into worship. While doing any work, always feel that you are doing only God's work. If you think that certain work is office work, and certain work is Sai's work, then you are reducing work to a business. Spirituality is not a business; it is transformation of your inner Self. Offer your heart to God, and in return, accept from Him, His grace.

Quality vs. Quantity

The Sri Sathya Sai Organization has been set up with the objective of propagating the principle of love and promoting divinity in mankind. The objective is not to increase the number of devotees or followers. Self-realization is your goal. What is this Self? The Self is expressed by the letter "I." When you say, "I am," it is the single letter "I," but the three-lettered EYE is also pronounced in the same manner. The three-lettered eye denotes the body, and the one-letter, I, denotes the *Atma* (the indwelling divine). You often use the word, "I," but never ponder whether this "I" refers to the body or to the *Atma*. This "I" is not the body. You say, "my body," "my hands," "my face." If all these things are mine, then who am "I"? This is what is called Self-inquiry. This is real discrimination. You should discriminate wholeheartedly with a spiritual point of view. Then, you will have the realization of Self.

We have established the Sai Organization not to increase the number of

followers. Quality is important, not quantity. The International Chairman and the All India President have told you about the increase in the number of [Sai] Centers. The question is, if Centers have increased in numbers, then has your feeling of equanimity increased? Equanimity should have grown, but it has not. Growth of Centers is quantity growth, but equanimity is quality growth. I want quality, not quantity. Quality, not quantity, that is Bhagavan's desire.

In the Sai Organization there is a President, a Coordinator, and there are members. These posts have been created for functional convenience only, not for the realization of God. The same God is present both in the hearts of the members as well as that of the President. Names may be different, forms may be different, positions may be different, but Divinity is one.

Why the Suffering?

Why are people undergoing so much suffering today? It is because of the lack of equanimity. People compare themselves with others, and brood over the fact that others are better off. This causes difficulties, and adds to their misery. This feeling is nothing but jealousy. Jealousy is a disease.

Somebody says something that hurts your feelings, and that arouses anger in you. Anger breeds hatred. If someone says something to you, do not react to it. Instead, develop patience and forbearance; then, you can overcome anger and hatred. I often say, "My life is my message," so look to me. Many people extol me, and many others criticize me. Bhagavan neither rejoices over praise nor laments over blame. That is described as

yoga. Why should I be affected by criticism? If a person criticizes you, it is some defect in his or her mind, but not any mistake in you that is responsible.

For example: In the case of a marriage feast when sweets are served, some people refuse to accept the sweets. Does it mean that they do not like them? No. They like sweets, but if they are diabetic, they are advised not to consume sweets. So also, those who deny Baba are afflicted with a disease. They too want Baba. They also realize that whatever Baba does is only for the benefit of humanity, but still, they have a fear that their self-interest will be adversely affected if they accept Baba, so they deny Him. So too, the fault lies with the diabetes, not with the sweet. Even if such a person eats the sweets, the taste does not change, but he complains that it is unpleasant. It is because of his disease that sweets taste unpleasant.

More on the Organization

Within the organization members should not be jealous or have malice toward one another. Divinity is the same and is present in everyone. Light bulbs may be different in their colors or voltage, but the current flowing through them is one. This is unity in diversity. With years of experience in the organization, members have so far not understood the significance of unity in diversity. In the absence of unity, people are possessed by enmity. Thus, because of the feeling of enmity, suffering of the community increases. It is neither enmity nor community but unity that you should aspire to. When you achieve unity, the divinity shines, and you realize the objective of the organization.

Do You Hear?

*Oh Sai, do you hear me when I pray?
Do you really listen to what I say?*

*When my heart is so heavy, I cannot breathe,
Do you stay and listen, or do you leave?*

*When I am alone, with only me,
From so far away, how can you see?*

*When my burdens, no more can I bear,
Should I give them to you, do you really care?*

*It is hard to trust in unseen things,
Like God, and truth, and angels that sing.*

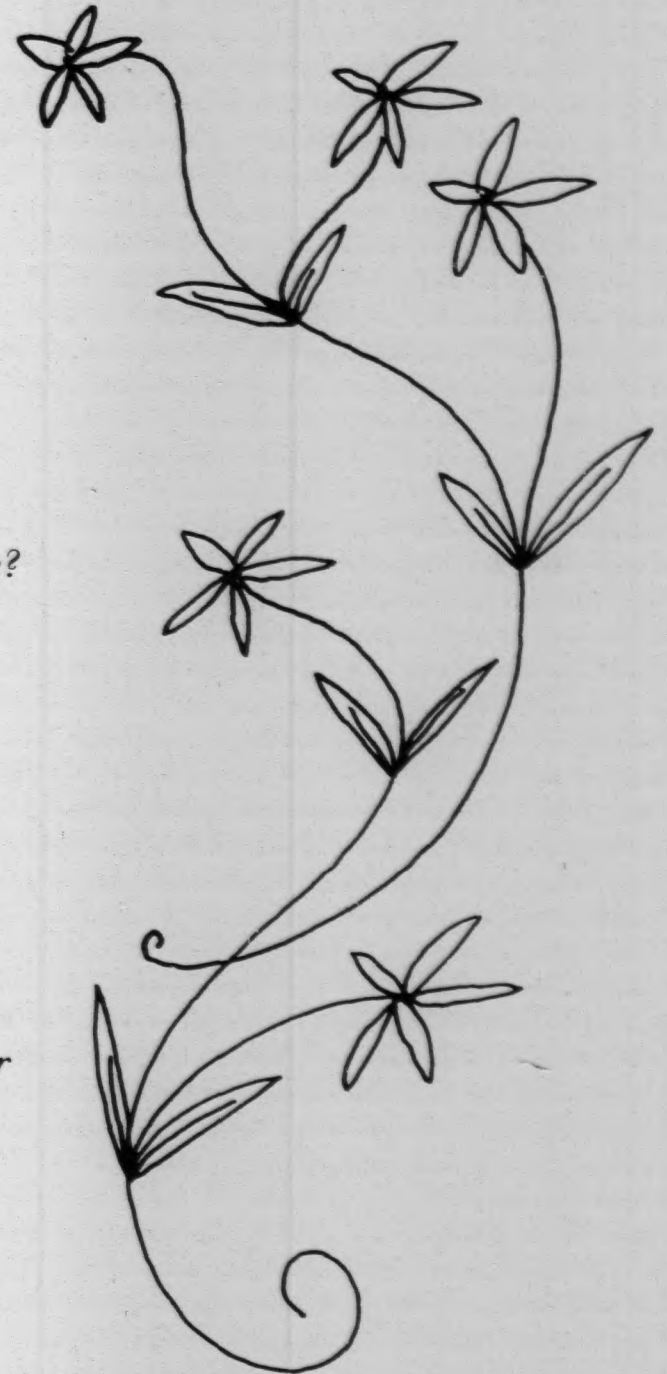
*But then, I know from deep somewhere,
As I look around, you are there.*

*In the beauty of flowers with petals bright, or
In the darkest hour of the night,*

*For what is faith but trusting pure,
In times of trouble, one must endure.*



*Why does it take so long to see?
You always hear, for you are me.*



—Joy Ziegler
Phoenix, Arizona

Sathya Sai, Master Teacher

My first trip to Prasanthi Nilayam, in December 1981, I enrolled in what I call, the "Sathya Sai Individualized Instruction Program." Looking back now, I see a series of events, all of which seemed quite random at the time, and I realize that each was part of an education program which is more precise, more systematic, and more carefully individualized than any to be found in the most scholarly curriculum outlines available to teachers anywhere. Despite the individual variations, many devotees will recognize the program which follows:

Unconditional Love

Oh, how I love you. How I care for you. Come, rejoice with me. You are ever dear to me.

At the first level, students become aware of the Divine Mother. We are assured of the love of our mother under any and all conditions. We are made to feel in our hearts and to understand with our minds, that we can never do anything which will cause the mother to withdraw her love. We may be given gifts, interviews, *padnamaskar* (worshipping the feet of a holy being), smiles, and many opportunities to interact with Sai in person. Or, we may find ourselves to be receiving many expressions of love from those around us. Only the Master Teacher knows how we will best learn to receive the love that is there for us in great abundance. We may even have to wait and observe others receiving unconditional love for a time before being willing to accept it for ourselves. Once rec-

ognized and accepted, love becomes the basis of everything which is to follow.

In our academic institutions, language is taught at the first level of instruction. On that foundation is built: reading, writing, speaking, listening, poetry, drama, and many other scholarly and aesthetic forms of language. The language develops and grows more beautiful and more readily accessible to the students as they progress. The same is true of Sai's love. Even though it may be expressed in different ways at different stages in our development, it is never absent, nor does it ever lessen. The student who feels that it does, needs only to move up to the next level and broaden his own receptivity in order to experience the constant and continuous expansion of his mother's love.

Discipline

Your primary aim should be to become masters of yourselves.

At an early level, Sai students will find themselves being instructed in the rules and regulations for behavior appropriate to the present situation. This stage is particularly essential to beginning students, for without it, they feel very insecure.

Discipline is a necessary phase for everyone at the action level. Obedience to law cannot be bypassed on our evolutionary journey. Sai's instruction of His children includes a strong emphasis on the discrimination between right and wrong, good and bad, *dharmic* and *adharmaic* (righteous and not righteous)

behavior. We must take great care never to falsely assume that we have grown beyond the need for such discipline. To assume a position which has not been honestly won, is not only dishonest but self-defeating. It is only when we become truly obedient to the ten commandments given by Moses and the nine points of human conduct given by our Father, our Baba, that we are ready to move up to the next level of instruction.

Devotion

Love yourself and love others. This is true worship.

At the stage of progress in which students become ready to give love as well as to receive it, they become devotees. Baba has frequently mentioned how few in numbers are his true, full-time devotees. However, He consistently teaches love for God and love for man, specifying in particular—love for parents, teachers, family, friends, the needy, the motherland, nature, and all creatures. Nothing or no one is to be excluded from our love. Even our enemies are to be included. Those who criticize and mistreat us need our love most, and we advance more rapidly toward our goal by loving them in addition to loving those who love us.

In the Sai school, we are given many opportunities to practice loving our enemies, and we learn to say, “thank you,” to the teacher for the assignment. The more faith the teacher has in his pupils, the greater will be the challenges.

Detachment

When total detachment has been achieved, love is seen everywhere and in everything.

At each level there are sub-levels.

Detachment has a large number of these, including all of the habitual thought patterns which each of us has developed in the process of making decisions over many lifetimes. All of our repetitive decisions have temporarily worked for us, getting us whatever we thought we wanted at the time. However, we now find that we are faced with a demand to go beyond temporary and illusory satisfactions. Having been secure in the love of parents, teachers, and friends, and having found comfort in knowing that we were following all of the rules and doing everything just right, we students suddenly find ourselves having to detach from these. We graduate from school, leaving teachers behind; friends go their separate ways; parents may move into the next level of their experience: and, the rules become less and less well-defined. Just as we feel that we have found something we can really latch onto, it dissolves in our grasp. Jobs are lost; spouses die; children marry and move away; and, yesterday’s “evers” become today’s “nevers.” The line of demarcation between good and bad, right and wrong, praise and blame, becomes blurred and finally disappears altogether. We find ourselves walking a tightrope with no safety line to hold onto and no net to fall into.

When outer sources of love are removed, we learn to depend on the love which we find within ourselves. When the security of being regulated from outside ourselves comes to an end, we learn to depend more and more on conscience, the voice of God within. When the love we have learned to give to others is no longer accepted, we learn to give love to ourselves, to nurture and care for our-

selves and gradually to find that it has been only our own love which has been reflected in the love we had previously identified as coming from others. At the top sub-level within this stage of growth, we finally are able to let go of the dualism inherent in feeling love for God. Baba has told us that this is the last attachment to go and the one which we may cling to with the least detriment to our realization of the Self.

Being-Awareness-Bliss

Your dawn of knowledge is approaching. Each day is your chance to achieve the greatest of all earthly accomplishments—to become yourself, God!

Finally, we come to the awareness of being love itself. It is no longer necessary to receive it or to give it when it is the very substance of what we are. Education is no longer needed. Growth,

progress, and becoming are integrated into awareness. We no longer look back to a painful or pleasurable past. We no longer anticipate a more fulfilling future. We are right now the sum total of everything we have been, and everything we can ever be. Awareness of what is. Happiness is no longer a goal. Bliss is infinitely more than happiness. Happiness is an interval between two pains, but bliss is unchanging, all-pervading, and never-ending. It is the graduation, the diploma, the honors. Our class song has been written by our beloved Exemplar, Sathya Sai Baba. He has instructed us to sing it every day. It is: "I am God; I am God; I am no different from God. I am *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, Being-Awareness-Bliss."

—**Joy Thomas**

Formerly of Cherry Valley, California,
Now, Prasanthi Nilayam, India



Only thoughts of God and intense love for Him bring peace. As worldly thoughts diminish, thoughts of God increase. Normally, the mind desires worldly things all the time. As the desires are cut out one by one, peace becomes stronger. . . Swami cannot give peace of mind; one has to work for it.

We do meditation and spiritual practices in this temporary body. Because this body is temporary, we have to use temporary things to realize the truth. . . .

Ask the question: "Who am I"? This is my body, my mind, my intelligence. But who is this "my"? My indicates ownership. That my is life. As long as life is in the body, there is this connection between my and the intellect, my body, my house, etc. But the moment that life is gone from the body, there is no my or sense of possessions. Life is God. Who am I? The answer is, I am God.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**

Conversations With Sathya Sai Baba
by John S. Hislop, Ed.D.

The Lord's Universality

A New York Experience

The Lord's message speaks to the hearts of all His children.

Though they be light-years apart in worldly experience,

His words and His ways are mysterious and wondrous.

In time decreed by Him, all will be reached, all will be touched.

In accordance with Swami's guidance, Dr. Michael Goldstein organized two public meetings, one in Los Angeles, one in New York. Here in New York, as in Los Angeles, plans were made to present a program that we could all be proud of. It was an offering to the One whose appearance here on this planet is a continual offering of love, the transformation for which He has come.

New York City's prestigious 1,500 seat cultural theater, Town Hall, was the chosen site for the Sunday afternoon program on April 14, 1996. Dr. Goldstein gave a brief introductory talk, welcomed the guests and introduced the principal speaker, the Honorable P. N. Bhagavati, Vice-Chairman International Human Rights Commission of the United Nations and former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. His fine, inspiring discourse was followed by the renowned jazz musician, Maynard Ferguson, who related his personal experiences with Swami. Then, his 14-piece orchestra played with such enthusiasm and exhilaration that all who were present reflected great and happy smiles.

The afternoon concluded with a film especially prepared for the occasion entitled, "Sathya Sai Baba: His Message and His Works." The total effect of the

program was to present the power and the glory of the Lord's mission in ways that were easily understood by the general public.

There were no obstacles of language of any kind to overcome. Everything that was heard and seen reflected the universality of Bhagavan Baba's divine message. It was clear, it was direct, and it was simple, thus accessible to all. No prior knowledge of any sort was required.

It is important to remember that the United States of America was founded by people who fled their native lands in search of religious freedom. Sai Baba's message of the Unity of All Religions acknowledges that we, as Americans, worship the one God in many different ways, through many different faiths. The presentation here in New York reflected respect of the commonality of origin which is Baba's teaching.

What greater gift can there be than to make available to people the knowledge of His presence on earth? With that thought in mind, for the last 15 years, bimonthly meetings have been held in my home in New York City for those who are new or relatively new to Bhagavan Baba's teachings. Certainly, on this auspicious occasion of a public meeting held with His specific instruction, I invited

many new people to attend. The results provided an interesting confirmation:

Mary is a middle-aged woman born and raised in the islands of the Caribbean Sea. With very little formal education, she earns a living in this city by cleaning apartments. Mary is very hard-working and despite many life tests, she maintains a dependable cheerfulness. When invited to come to the Town Hall, she accepted with delight, hoping that her son, whose activities are in need of repair, would join her. That was not to be. She came by herself. She left thrilled and uplifted by the most memorable experience she'd ever had. Mary has started to read about Swami who has become very real to her.

James is the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of a large, international corporation with headquarters here in New York City. A well-educated man with a highly developed sense of service to society, he is a busy, industrious leader with very little free time. James knew of Swami through his wife's growing interest, but he never attended any Sai function. In this case, he decided to make time to attend and see for himself. His experience at the meeting was very positive. His wife noted with delight that he purchased a book on Swami from the well-supplied bookstall in the lobby of the Town Hall theater.

Throughout this year, I have been serving as a mentor to Anthony, a local 16-year-old high school student. We have worked together on several community service projects, and he expressed an interest in attending the Sai Young Adults' meetings held here regularly. That experience has been healthy and uplifting for him and as a result, he wanted very much to come to the public meeting. His mother had given approval for his attending the young adults' group because she could see that Anthony was doing better work at school. Nevertheless, she expressed concern that he was getting involved with a strange Eastern teaching. She was clearly suspicious, having read about cults. I asked Anthony to invite her to accompany him to the theater and she accepted, not out of any interest in Sathya Sai Baba, but for her son's well-being. Mother and son both loved the meeting and were inspired by it. She later asked if it would be possible for Anthony to be enrolled in Swami's school! At the very least, she had the feeling that going to India to see Sathya Sai Baba would be an important life experience. Anthony is delighted to have full family approval for his participation in Sai activities.

The public meeting was directly responsible for this transition from suspicion to understanding and acceptance.

Mary, James, Anthony and his mother

Their backgrounds different, one from the other

Experienced His divine presence and love

His awakening call, resounding from above.

—Hal Honig
New York, New York

To Everything, There is a Season. . .

We traditionally think of the Fall season as a time of full maturity. At the same time, in nature we observe the process of letting go. Trees drop their leaves, certain animals go to sleep for the winter. All nature functions according to dependable cycles, beginnings and endings.

Since human beings are part of the universal cycle of natural progression, could it be that some of the painful frustrations and feelings of unrest in our lives are caused by our ignorance of these natural rhythms and our unwillingness to flow with them?

A short time ago, I moved into a new home in the peaceful foothills of Ashland, Oregon. I hope it will be my home for the "duration" and in preparation for the move, I did a lot of sorting and discarding. There was one box of favorite garments that I simply hadn't the heart to give up—the elegant lace gown I had made for my daughter's wedding, a lovely wool suit, purchased in Scotland 20 years ago, a very expensive blouse, a gift from my husband when I was several sizes smaller than I am today. For years, I have packed and unpacked them all, reasoning that some day I'd be a size 10 again and have occasion to wear them.

One day last Autumn, while watching the fading leaves fall from the magnificent trees in Lithia Park, I saw the possible answer to my human reluctance to let go. I realized that trees don't hang onto their leaves when those leaves have served their purpose in providing shade and beauty through the hot summer months. It is as if the tree instinctively knows that there can be no new growth

in the Spring unless the old leaves give space on the branches. So the leaves are freed from their attachment to the branch at just the right time, in a silent mutual agreement between the tree and the leaf. The leaves fall to earth to become part of the rich soil which will nurture the tree as it gets ready to bring forth the new Spring growth.

The lesson was clear and simple. I have been praying for "newness" in my life, while being unwilling to let go of the old. Why hadn't I accepted the fact that those cherished pieces of clothing had served their purpose? Was my reluctance caused by the doubt that there would not be comparable garments in the future which would bring me joy and sentimental value? Would I ever know, if I clung tenaciously to the old treasures, dear as they were?

That very day, I went through my special boxes and wrapped each piece of clothing lovingly in tissue paper. I thought of several friends who had admired the various articles and might yet get some joy from wearing them. What really amazed me was the feeling of freedom and lightness that came over me as I distributed my "gems" to surprised and appreciative friends.

Now, there is no more guilt over the fact that I can no longer fit into those things—no more false, unrealistic expectations that I might someday get into a size 10. As my "letting-go" adventure continues, I am extending it to no longer useful ideas, beliefs, assumptions that were right and appropriate for another time and place. It is now time to release

and replace them with a new philosophy, more compatible with my current, relaxed lifestyle. Oh! How sweet it is!

I see now many other applications of this principle of cherishing the moment, seeing the value of delays and seeming obstacles.

My father helped me through a long and painful bout with a crippling bone disease which had its onset when I was ten, and carried over until my mid-20's. His constant advice was: "Honey, grasp the moment. Your mind is not affected by the fact that you can't walk. Make the most of this time of physical inactivity. Use your imagination to visualize the life you want. Don't give up. Use this time wisely, and someday you'll be surprised to see how this experience has prepared you for what you came to do." Now I know why I listened to my father, and how grateful I am for his loving counsel. I learned to type, and to read and comprehend very quickly. In my years in the ministry, I would have been lost without

these skills. I see now that those seemingly "lost" years were a valuable part of my life's plan, and when the purpose of that experience was complete, I was able to walk and continue a normal life.

My good friend, Catherine Ponder, the prolific author of so many helpful books, once sent me this affirmation: "I now release and let go of everyone, everything, and every condition that is not for my highest good. Each goes on to his or her right place. We are free, and all is well between us."

Miracles began to happen in my life. There was more order, more love, more understanding of the reason for certain conditions and relationships. You see, my friend, you are wishing for everyone in your life what you are wishing for yourself—their highest good. You, and they, will be able to move through the cycles of life as normally and effortlessly as the leaves drop from the trees.

God bless!

—The Reverend Margaret Stevens

You are the eternal, if only you recognize your innate power. The body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect are only the clothing put on by man. Only when you understand the nature and significance of these additions, can you make proper use of them. You wear trousers, singlet (a man's jersey or undergarment), shirt and coat. Only when you know how to use each of these things correctly, can you use them in the proper way and get the benefit therefrom. Otherwise, you may make a bizarre use of them, like putting the singlet over the shirt, or wearing the pants in the reverse direction. Hence, you generally insure that you wear your daily attire correctly, so as to give a decent and attractive appearance.

Likewise, the body is our garment. It is only when we know how to wear the body and use it appropriately that we can get the best out of it.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Baba and the Universal Reality of Mankind, page 59

by Mata Betty

Sai's Message

Necessities of Mankind

Nature is Our Teacher

Embodiments of Love! In the vast universe—comprised of infinite beings with unlimited desires, never-ending aspirations, and hopes for attaining things which they do not deserve—sacrifice is essential. The tree does not partake of its own fruit. It yields fruit for the benefit of others. Rivers do not drink water; they fulfill life by providing water to others. Cows do not take their own milk. With a spirit of sacrifice, they give all their milk to others. In the same manner, people should make use of truth, morality and integrity—which are natural to them—for the sake of humanity. They should share feelings of unity and integrity with others. We are born to Mother Earth. The tree yields fruit. Clouds sustain life through rains. The sun, by radiating its light on the earth, provides life and sustenance to the organic world. The earth—through its natural fertility and with the help of the five elements that are natural to it—serves all of humanity. We are born in the womb of Mother Earth and living in the lap of nature, yet we are not able to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting the characteristics of nature.

Identification & Transformation

Today, we should not identify ourselves by claiming that we are Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, or Zoroastrian. This is not our true identification. You should introduce yourselves by saying, "I am a human being." All are human be-

ings. True greatness does not lie in one's caste or creed. All religions speak of the same divine effulgence. All religions teach only good. If your mind is good, how can you say that any religion is bad?

Human beings, instead of frittering away their divine qualities, should try to foster them for the welfare of mankind. One's happiness and peace rest on the happiness and peace of the society in which one lives.

Three important factors have a bearing on human life. First, there should be spiritual transformation. Second, there should be a transformation in society. Third, there should be transformation in the individual. When there is spiritual transformation, there will be social change.

The word "SAI" has three letters, "S," "A," and "I." "S" stands for Spiritual transformation, "A" stands for change in the Association, and "I" stands for Individual change.

With such transformation in all three levels, the whole world would be happy. The one common factor in these three is the principle of love. In this world, you hear everybody saying "I," They speak only about themselves. If you understand this "I" which is common in all human beings, you can know the relationship between the "I" that is within you, and the "I" that is common in all. Only then can you expect the desired change in society.

Every individual has certain evil tendencies which can also be called bad



"As goodness declines, so also, the water level in the earth declines. If you succeed in regaining your goodness, you will also regain the water resources that seem to be lost. . . . What is the reason for this sad plight? The absence of noble qualities in people is responsible for all the calamities."

—Baba

habits. The bad qualities in a person do not only ruin that person, but also ruin the family and other associates. Some of the bad qualities are smoking, drinking, eating meat and gambling. The day one overcomes such bad habits, one's individuality will blossom. The individual self seems to be lost because of such habits. For the blossoming of the individual self, one's morality should grow.

Then what is the social change for which we should aspire? For this, certain social evils are to be removed. Some social evils are: speaking ill of others, blaming others, making fun of others, and criticizing others for their good work. Because of such bad qualities in people, society has no peace.

You find people with different ways of thinking. No one person is acceptable to all. When you have a friend, you cannot see anything bad in your friend. But when the friendship does not last, even the good things about him or her appear to be bad. This is not satisfactory. Always entertain divine thoughts. Develop the quality of helping others. In order to develop this quality, you must have the real spirit of sacrifice and the true feeling of equanimity.

Your Reflection

Now the question is, what sort of spiritual transformation is necessary? Spiritual transformation means developing the qualities of kindness, mercy, love, forbearance and sympathy. Over the ages, this sacred land of Bharat (India) has given spiritual values to humanity.

Being born in this land of Bharat, being endowed with such noble ideals, and knowing full well your divine nature, you behave in a manner as if you do not

know anything. What is the reason for this? Because of your external surroundings and multifarious distractions, you consider even truth as untruth. Because people have no fear of sin or love for God, they have lost their human values. So today, Indians have lost their natural heritage.

In whatever direction you turn your eyes, you only see a haunting vision of horror and gloom. Therefore, we should bring about change. The Prime Minister said in his speech that if Indians have unity and integrity, all problems will be automatically solved. Who is responsible for all these problems and for all this restlessness and disorder? You are responsible. Your own feelings are reflected in other people, and you call them bad. It is only your own bad qualities that are reflected from the other person. Once we achieve unity, there will no longer be problems. So unity is our true strength.

Nature Reflects Our Qualities!

Today, all the good qualities, good thoughts and good habits in people are fast disappearing. As goodness declines, so also, the water level in the earth declines. If you succeed in regaining your goodness, you will also regain the water resources that seem to be lost. As there are no timely rains and the water tanks are drying up, you are facing enormous problems of food and water shortages. What is the reason for your sad plight? The absence of noble qualities in people is responsible for all the calamities. Develop sacred thoughts, and all your desires will be fulfilled. The reflection, reaction, and resound depend upon your actions.

Unity is Strength

Here I would like to mention one more point. I want to render a word of caution to all, since the Prime Minister is also present. With great sacrifice we attained our independence. In the struggle for freedom, people sacrificed their time, resources and lives. Ultimately, we achieved freedom but failed to achieve unity. What is the use of freedom, if we do not have unity? If the five fingers of a hand join together, we can do anything. But if each of the five fingers spread apart, what can we do with the hand? Therefore, we should be one. Cloth is made of a number of threads. As the threads are interwoven, the cloth is strong. But if we remove the threads one by one, the whole cloth will disintegrate.

So, unity is strength; it confers peace and prosperity. The five elements in creation belong to everybody. Every being has equal rights to the five elements. In our country, there are many rivers. There is no dearth of water, nor dearth of any resources in this country. You do not find so many rivers in other countries. You do not find such vast stretches of land in any other country. We have such fertile fields which confer the grace of goddess Annapurna (goddess of nature) on us. But, we are not able to utilize the water that is flowing in all the rivers. The Ganges, the Yamuna, the Godavari and the Kaveri Rivers all belong to one nation. So, if all the rivers are declared as national property, there will be no problem at all. But each state claims one or more rivers flowing through it as its own. Due to a lack of unity in this country, each state claims this or that is exclusively its own. States are fighting over the rivers and in the process, the water flow-

ing through these rivers is drained into the ocean. Everybody should speak in terms of "our property," not "your property" or "my property." If the Prime Minister makes an attempt to declare all the rivers as national property, it will do immense good for the country. It is unfortunate that if one state says, "Yes," to a thing, the other state says, "No." But all are brothers. All the states are like different rooms in a large house. All people should cooperate in this effort. There are situations when the government tries to do something with a broad mind but the people resist. In such cases, people should have faith that what the government is doing is for their good. Not only this, but people should not sit idly thinking that it is only the government's job to do all these things. Do your duty, discharge your responsibilities and become ideal citizens.

Dedication

Your body is to be dedicated for the service of humanity. Always say, "service, service, service." From ancient times, Bharathiyas (citizens of India) had developed the feeling of equanimity.

Charity and sacrifice are the ornaments for the hand. Truth is the ornament for the throat. Sacred sayings are the ornaments for the ears. It is unfortunate that we are losing such valuable jewelry which we should preserve. To safeguard our wealth, we need a watchman. It is the ego (*ahamkara*) in people that deprives them of the benefits of all this jewelry. Eliminate the ego, then this jewelry will be available.

Embodiments of Love! This world is so vast; you should cultivate broad feelings. Expansion is love. Contraction is not

love. Devotion does not mean only singing devotional songs or engaging in some good activities. Those are only the features of devotion to God or *bhakti*. True *bhakti* means feeling pure love and giving selfless service.

Today, in this country, there is a shortage of food and water. From the beginning, I have been saying that for one's health, the heart is important; for knowledge, the head is important; for the body, water is important. Mankind will be happy only when these three things are available, free of cost. Today, in this land, health, knowledge and even water are sold. Therefore, Bharat has lost its sanctity. Ask any child what they are doing. They will reply, "I am buying studies." To admit a child in a primary class in a convent school, one has to spend 50,000 rupees (approximately, in U.S. \$1,650). If education is to be bought in this manner, what value will it have?

As for health, the human body is prone to disease. To make people free of disease, the doctors should develop a spirit of sacrifice. Do not struggle for money, struggle to save lives. Money comes and goes. Morality comes and grows.

Serve the Villagers

Students, there are many of you here. Having completed your studies, you should dedicate yourselves to the service of society. Do not think in terms of earning thousands of rupees. Go and serve in the rural areas, help the villagers; then your education will be meaningful. If you do service in a village, an income of even 1,000 rupees per month will be more than sufficient. You can spend 500 rupees per month and save

500 rupees. But if you work in a town, even if you earn 5,000 rupees, the money will be spent in paying for electricity, water, rent, transportation, etc. In the city, you may earn 5,000 rupees, but you will have hardly 1,000 rupees left for yourself. This will spoil your health. In a village, you breathe fresh air, drink fresh water, and your health remains sound. So, all the students should dedicate their lives to social service.

Drinking Water Project

Before I conclude, I shall tell you one or two more points. The time is short and there is a lot of work to do. People from more and more villages are requesting that the Drinking Water Project be extended to their villages. Do not be disappointed or frustrated—whatever may be the circumstances—all the remaining villages will be included in the Water Project. To keep my promise, I will be ready to make any sacrifice. Much work is to be done. From tomorrow onward, the work will start again, and by this coming January, all the villages in Anantapur District will be included in this project.

Embodiments of Love, it is a matter of joy that this Drinking Water Project for Anantapur District has been inaugurated today by the Honorable Prime Minister, who comes from this state. So, all of you forget your conflicts and differences, and work with unity. That will make the whole of India happy, and confer bliss on mankind. For this, you should develop love and share it with others.

—Sathya Sai Baba

The morning of November 18, 1995
Prasanthi Nilayam

Deeper Meanings

Sathya Sai Baba can take words that we use so casually in our everyday conversations and, in His inimitable fashion, show us new and deeper meanings for those words. The following "Deeper Meanings" are continued from the Spring 1996 issue of the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*:

"**Sight** must become **insight**. It should be turned within and used to purify and clarify."

"The **universe** is your **university**."

"The aim of study circles should not be **information** but **transformation**, not **instruction** but **construction**."

"It is only through achieving real **internal unity**—of thought, word and deed—that we can broaden our minds and hearts to feel **oneness with community**."

"Education is for **learning how to live**, not for **earning a living**."

"Renounce the **momentary** for the **momentous**."

"**Committee** is just another excuse to **come to tea**."

"What is needed today is **cooperation**, not **operation**."

"People seem more concerned about the **news outside** than they do about the **nuisance inside**. It is important to get rid of the nuisance of ignorance, and thereby realize one's true nature."

"The difference between science and spirituality is brought out vividly by two simple equations:

Spirituality = spirit of love

Science = split of love"

"What is needed today is to pay attention to **love and spiritual advancement along with scientific progress**. It is the improper use of science that is leading people astray."

"Make all your **holidays** special. Make them **holy days**."

Swami tells His students, "Attach more importance to the **avoidance of remarks** than the **acquisition of marks**."

"The Sai power cannot be a subject for **university examination**; it is a subject for **universal examination**."

"When a near and dear **relationship with Sai** is established, one can delve a little deeper into the **Sai mystery**."

"Disease is the **absence of ease**, or **dis-ease**."

"When you are knocking on the door of the objective world; it can give you only **paltry pleasure**, not **permanent treasure**."

"Education which should serve to refine man's nature and **make him a hero** is failing in its purpose, because in his conduct, **man is a zero**."

"An education that does not develop **humanness** is an **utter waste**."

When a devotee came to Baba for blessings on his upcoming retirement from government service, Swami said, "**Retire?** I shall **re-tire** you." Barely had he

returned from his retirement party when notification of his appointment to another position arrived!

"Today, out of love for petty possessions, brothers are prepared to sacrifice their fraternal feelings, and carry their fight to the **Supreme Court**. Lord Rama's way was different. He regarded his brothers as part of his own being and would not cause them the slightest pain. Thereby, he took his brothers to the **Supreme State**."

To the college boys Baba said, "Each of you started as a **God-boy**, moved away from that point to a **good-boy**. Then, you became a **boy** when human values were given the **go-by**, after that it's **bye, bye**."

"God can be known only by **experience** and **not by experiments**."

"Be examples of **doing**, not **doling out advice**."

"For bliss, look for the **Divine**, not the wine."

"People today have made a business proposition of the worship of God; spirituality has been commercialized. Seek to be a **good-man**; you can then become a **God-man**."

"Philosophy is interpreted as the search for truth. However, truth is not something to be sought, you only have to be aware of it to experience it, to be it. Without is not **philosophy**, it is **full-loss-ophy**."

"**Love** will automatically make the **heart bright with light and delight**."

—Sathya Sai Baba

Compiled by—Suman Govindan
New Canaan, Connecticut



Reflections of an Image

This is a small episode from one of my trips to India to see Sathya Sai Baba. I had brought with me a camera which I had not used in about four years. It was an underwater camera, and the back looked exactly like the front because it was sealed to keep out the water.

One day, as I stood before the Ganesha statue near the temple at Prasanthi Nilayam—looking through the lens of the camera—I was amazed to see how magnified Ganesha was. He was huge! I quickly took the photo and thought no more about it. Later, taking some pictures at Hillview Stadium, I was again surprised at how massive the statues looked through the lens of my camera.

At some point, I realized that I had been holding the camera backwards and shooting pictures of myself! I felt as if Swami was laughing. Yes, everything we see outside ourselves is really a reflection of ourselves, for all are One.

—Suzanne Jansen
Idyllwild, California

Darshan

The day was clear and warm at Prasanthi Nilayam, with a cooling breeze keeping us comfortable as we sat expectantly awaiting morning *darshan* (to see a holy being). Observing the soothing pastel colors of the mandir (temple), the decorative sculpture, the ornate silver doors, the occasional puff of cloud floating over—I considered how, in spite of all the crowds, discomforts and inconveniences—I felt more at home here than anywhere on earth. Yet, at the same time, I was awestruck to be sitting where I knew that thousands of years from now, people would still be making pilgrimage just to be where Baba once walked.

Suddenly, the hushed murmuring and restless shuffling ceased, as everyone's attention became riveted on the beloved orange-clad figure of Swami emerging from the mandir. He stopped and slowly regarded the entire assembly, His gaze penetrating to the heart of each of us, His hand making the familiar "palm-up" gesture that seems to be uplifting our hearts and urging us to lift up our thoughts, and raise our consciousness.

He turned and walked slowly along the women's side, blessing them, taking letters, sending a few to the veranda for an interview, saying a few words to some, giving *vibhuti* (holy ash) to others. He moved along to the men's side, but as He came down the line, the crowd became increasingly unruly, holding things out for Him to take or to be blessed, calling out "Swami! Swami!," grabbing for His feet. They were shoving, jostling and trampling over each other to get to Him. He stepped several feet away and waved people back. He continued down the line, but maintained His distance, except to quickly take a few letters.

The next day, it was more of the same, and He went by much faster. That evening, when He came out during *bhajans* (devotional singing), He gave a long *darshan* on the women's side. To the men, He gave a lingering look from a distance, shook His head, and walked back. In that look, there was a lesson. It said to me, "I would like to come over there, but when you are out of control, what can I do?" I reflected how like my very self is this world that I perceive.

I would be deceiving myself to deny going there without the thought of receiving some special blessing or acknowledgement. Not expecting, of course, but certainly dreaming—maybe a pat on the shoulder, or a picture signed, some *vibhuti*, possibly a private interview for an hour or so, perhaps accompany Him in His car when He goes on a tour. Why not all the above? Why not dream big?

Why not indeed? What has my life been like? Hasn't my own behavior been unruly and undisciplined, my mind running wild? His look tells me, "I would like you to experience my presence with you, in you, above you, below you, around you. But with your mind and desires so out of control, what can I do?"

If we will maintain order—keep the discipline, put His teachings into practice—He will be with us, giving us special blessings wherever we may be. In fact, He is always with us whether we know it or not; He assures us that we are one with Him. It is one thing to overcome our doubts and to "believe." But, if we actually want to experience the bliss of His presence, we just have to do what He says.

—Michael Steely
Medford, Oregon

Baba—A Universal Teacher

The following interview with Sri C. Rommel, Consul General of India, was printed in the *Indian Express* newspaper on July 26, 1993. Sri Rommel has articulated an ideal response to recent events, as well as offering a wise and useful message for all Sai devotees. We learn from this article that we should not react to worldly events according to the impulse of the moment. Rather, all experience must be evaluated in the context of universal and lasting truth, and our only concern should be to keep ourselves on the spiritual path, to follow the master, to be ever-mindful that the reason for our presence on earth is to realize our innate Divinity.

—Michael Goldstein, M.D.

Today, there are over 150 million followers throughout the globe who are witnesses to Sai Baba's selfless role as an educator, healer, spiritual leader, and social reformer. He has a unique status as the universal teacher to guide mankind at this present critical time in human history.

His followers are not members of a sect or cult, but people from all walks of life, races, cultures and religions. They profess loyalty to different religions, and their loyalty is reinforced by faith in Baba's message of love and service.

Can a person who left his village school at age 13 have such profound knowledge of world religions and explain the sayings and stories with such Christ-like simplicity? Baba says, *Come, test, inquire, and experience*. His followers include eminent thinkers and scholars, musicians and writers, politicians and administrators, judges and jurists, doctors, industrialists, technicians and laborers.

Puttaparthi is now a beautiful university town. The university imparts free education and spotless character to its students. The Sri Sathya Sai education system is bringing human values to educational institutions throughout the

world and includes moral, ethical and spiritual values. Baba's Super Specialty Hospital has not only performed thousands of free heart surgeries; but, Baba has transformed millions of hard hearts into gentle, gracious, loving hearts with His extraordinary love and spiritual inspiration. (In addition, Baba's Drinking Water Project has made a social and spiritual impact on the people of Andhra Pradesh).

We devotees believe that Sri Sathya Sai Baba is an incarnation of the Divine Principle and nothing can happen to Him. He will leave the earth, as He has earlier assured us, by his own will, at about the age of 95 years.

A prominent Buddhist of Indonesia, Krishna Putra, has commented on the events in Prasanthi Nilayam: "What we should be worried about is our own self, because, most of us do not know what to do with the rest of our lives. . . ." So, why worry about the life of the Avatar? We better worry about our own life, and make it into a spiritual life under Sai's guidance, love and care.

—C. Rommel
Consul General of India
Media, Indonesia

Children's Corner

Playmates

Once upon a time, God had no playmates. It was very lonely having no playmates, even when you are God. Especially, when you are God!

One day, God decided to create playmates for Himself. Being perfect, God was very choosy about His companions, so He had to think of a way to make good playmates.

Then, He decided to build a school called, "Earth," where His future companions could become good by learning to give up very bad things, like: pride, lust, anger, greed, untruth and envy. He planned to visit His students from time to time, and teach them by example about selfless love and service. On His visits, He would leave His own books in different countries, so His students would always be able to learn how to become good enough to be His playmates.

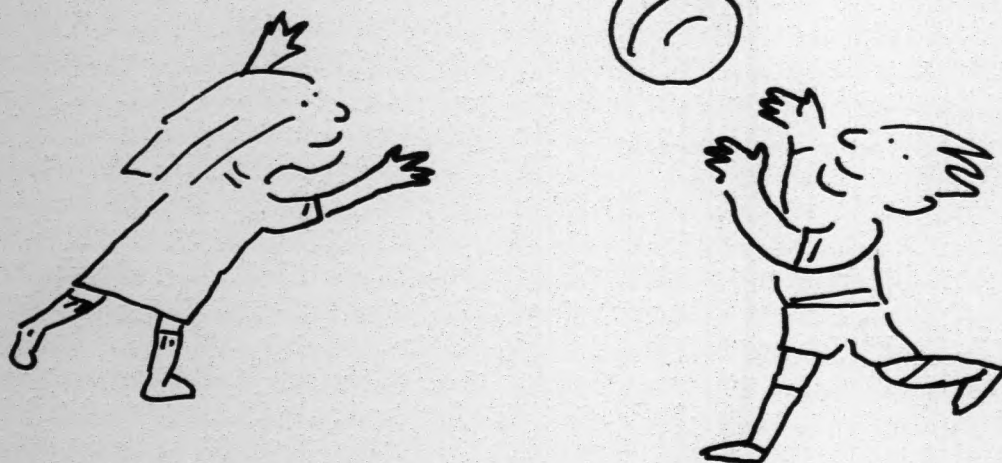
God created nature to help Him build the "Earth School." He gave nature a special skill called "evolution" to help Him create better and better plants, animals and students.

Because His new Earth School was so beautiful, God decided to make it difficult for His students when they were selfish and lived for themselves instead of for God. This would teach them selflessness and keep them from wanting to stay in His school forever without graduating. He was very anxious to have His students graduate.

After many hard lessons, some of God's students finally learned to live for Him instead of for themselves. They loved and served selflessly and were then good enough to be His playmates.

This gave God great joy! He gladly graduated His successful students, and now they are happier than children frolicking in a meadow filled with butterflies, because they get to play with God forever!

—Todd Steiner
Eugene, Oregon





Illustrations by
—Christine Panushka

“He gladly graduated His successful students, and now they are happier than children frolicking in a meadow filled with butterflies. . .”

A Call to the Soul

It was late October. I was going around the house replacing the screens with storm windows and turning on the furnace, making a mental note to replace the furnace filter. I already had that feeling of winter, almost thinking that if I looked outside, I would see the snow beginning to fall.

What will I do all winter, I wondered? My husband was just starting his second business and would be away from home more often than not. All those projects during the spring and summer that seemed as if they would never end had finally been completed. Maybe I'd find a job or even do volunteer work.

As I was pondering, a voice inside my head said, "Why not come here?" I knew that "here" meant India. I had been there twice previously in the winter of 1981-82 and the winter of 1982-83 to see Sai Baba. It was October 1984, and the invitation came as quite a surprise. I hadn't seriously thought of returning to India that winter, although I had given it a passing thought. "Why not come?" the voice persisted, and I guess I couldn't come up with any reason for not going. I had the time, and I couldn't think of a better way to spend the winter. Maybe I could even convince my husband to go; I was hoping this trip could be a shared experience.

But because of his heavy work load, my husband didn't see how he could get away. So, I went ahead and made plans to leave in January, making a reservation for one but hoping, somehow, that it would work out that we would be able to go together.

As the time drew nearer, I had to accept that I was going to have to go on my own. It became very clear that this was to be my experience, and I began to feel some resistance.

On both previous trips to India, I had traveled with a group or with friends. The thought of going alone was becoming more overwhelming with each passing day. Eventually, I reached the point of regretting that I had ever set the wheels in motion. It's not too late to cancel, I rationalized, but I had the feeling that this was something that I would have to see to completion. It was with great reluctance and a heavy heart that I boarded the plane at Hopkins Airport on that snowy, icy afternoon in January.

My itinerary included an overnight stay in Weisbaden, Germany. The travel agent had booked me into a luxurious hotel, and what should have been a beautiful and exciting experience was turning into a nightmare.

It was so ironic. All my life, I had dreamed of visiting Europe and staying in one of those wonderful hotels with all its old world charm. But instead of being able to enjoy it, I was intimidated by the grandeur and opulence, the doorman dressed in his splendid costume and having to dine alone in the elegant dining room while they prepared my room. The other guests in the dining room, enjoying the breakfast buffet, were fashionably dressed and sitting together in twos and small groups, as I sat alone in my rumpled travel dress.

It was close to noon when I was shown to my room. I layed down on the

bed that looked as if it belonged to royalty. Even though almost 48 hours had passed since I had slept, I was too overwrought to sleep at that time. I had to face the fact that I did not want to continue on to India and felt an overwhelming desire to go home. Go home? It was not as if I could jump on a bus and just go there. I couldn't pick up the phone and have a friend come and get me. I was in Germany with a ticket that continued on to India. The realization of this brought me to the point of near madness. I felt so trapped. I felt that I had to do something.

Traveling back to Cleveland would take as many hours as traveling from Germany to India—with layovers, baggage claims and taxi rides. I was already too exhausted to move, but I knew I had to make a decision. If I could get a return flight the next day, I decided to go.

Oddly enough, when I looked up the airline's ticket office in the Weisbaden phone book, it was located about 1,000 yards from my hotel. My legs were wobbly, but I walked there and almost fainted with relief when I was told, yes, there was a seat on the next day's flight to Cleveland. But because I was going cancel my original, special excursion ticket, my four-day trip from Cleveland to Germany and back to Cleveland, would cost the same as the round trip airfare, plus my three months stay in India. "Book me on the flight," I told the agent; "I will pay whatever it costs."

The miracle had happened, and I had a confirmed seat. But why didn't I feel relieved?

Stop it, I scolded myself. Of course you can go home. What's to stop you? YOU CAN GO HOME. So, I layed on the

bed, once again not being able to sleep, repeating, "You can go home" over and over again like a mantra and at the same time feeling it wasn't going to happen.

At 7:00 a.m. the next morning, after not having slept in 72 hours and having gone through such intense emotion, my legs literally buckled under me as I got out of bed. I had to be at the airport by 10:00 a.m. but I didn't know how I'd be able to go on. The voice patiently assured me, "You can handle much more than you imagine."

I took a long, hot bath and knew that I had to pull myself together. I had indulged my emotions long enough; and, somehow, I had to find the strength to do all that needed to be done. Just 24 more hours and I'd be home.

I arrived at Frankfurt International Airport at 8:55 a.m., and as I was putting my luggage through to be checked in, the voice said in a sweet, gentle tone, "After coming all this way, after what you've been through, how will you feel once you get back? Will you regret not coming?" My gosh! How would I feel? I grabbed back my luggage and sat down in a nearby chair to think about it.

I thought about home and feeling safe there. But where truly is my home? And once I was back in Cleveland, would I be disappointed in myself for not having had the courage to go on as planned? And yes, I had gone through so much.

I stood up with determination. I would go on to India and to Baba, I decided. Finally, surrendering to what I knew was right all along, I started to slowly feel better. I even giggled, saying, "I knew you would find a way to help me." I told the voice, "You always do."

While waiting for the plane to take

off for India I leaned back in my seat and for the first time in days, my body slowly started to relax. "Do you see now why I love you?" the voice asked tenderly. Then, excitedly, "I have a wonderful trip planned for you."

My three months in India were truly one of the most joyous, peaceful and meaningful adventures of my life, and I'm ever-grateful, I answered the call.

—Barbara Moses
Tampa, Florida



A Tale from the Ashram

Many people travel far and wide to go to India to see Baba. It is the chance of a lifetime, to actually get on a plane, arrive in India, and be at His lotus feet for *darshan*.

In some ways, life at the ashram can be confusing for foreigners. And, although every effort is made to help the assimilation process, sometimes things can be really difficult. It is also true that many come to Prasanthi Nilayam with friends or spouses who know a great deal about Baba, but the accompanying people may know little about Him. This takes me to one afternoon in the canteen.

A Western man with a puzzled look on his face, took a plate of food and sat down, alone, to eat. Just then, another gentleman from the West approached this lonely fellow and asked if he could join him.

The seated man smiled and said, "Sure," and he continued, "You know, I'm glad that you sat down to eat with me. This is my first visit to India. The place seems unusual and I feel some-

what isolated. Do you know what I mean?"

The other man spoke, "I certainly do. My wife brought me along. So, what do you think of this Baba?"

The first gentleman spoke with conviction, "I don't know, but I guess this is one guy who really knows what He's doing."

"You know, I get that feeling too," the second man replied, and continued, "Maybe, we're on to something here, you just never know."

And so it goes. Always remember that one person's perception may be totally different from another's. But Swami allows us the privilege of being who we are to discover the One that we are. Acknowledging our unity in diversity is exactly what He often refers to. The thing that matters is for us to respect all viewpoints, for ultimately, in very different ways and terms, we all will "understand." Like the man said, "This is one guy who really knows what He's doing."

—Anonymous

Announcements

Service Opportunities for Nurses and Technicians in the Overseas Medical Camp at Prasanthi Nilayam

During Swami's 70th Birthday celebrations, overseas devotees staffed a medical camp which included a tent clinic inside the ashram as well as a small emergency room and wards at the General Hospital. We were open for 10 days and saw more than 1,700 patients. About 35 patients were admitted to the hospital under our care.

Swami has given Dr. Michael Goldstein permission for overseas devotees to continue with the camps. At present, we expect to run two camps per year: One during the festival of Swami's Birthday (in November), and the other during *Guru Poornima** (in July). The next medical camp is to be planned for *Guru Poornima*, 1996, and will operate from **July 28 through August 2**.

Dr. Raghavendra Prasad is the medical director, and I am responsible for the nursing staff. We are planning to have two tents or rooms, one for women and one for men. We will not staff the hospital unless a clear need arises as Swami has instructed us to keep the camp small.

The nursing staff will assist physicians with patients and also will help to organize the environment and equipment. Our goal is to provide high quality medical care to overseas devotees in the traditional Western, allopathic method. Volunteers are required to be fluent in English and to submit photocopies of their credentials. The following information will also be helpful:

- A brief explanation of your education and degrees or diplomas, as these differ from country to country.
- Professional experience and dates of employment, including any experience in areas with limited medical facilities.
- Familiarity with India and the ashram, dates you will be there, and your address at the ashram [if your address is known].

If you are a nurse or a medical technician with nursing skills and would like to work during *Guru Poornima* or Birthday 1996, please send the above requested information to:

Barbara Mofield, R.N.
564 W. Saugerties Road
Saugerties, New York 12477, USA
Phone # (914) 246-1679

I will inform individual volunteers of further plans and developments as they unfold. I look forward to seeing you in India.

**Guru Poornima*, also spelled *Gurupournima*, and *Guru Purnima*. It is the day set aside to pay homage to one's spiritual preceptor.

Service Opportunity for Physicians

Sai Ram! The **Overseas Medical Service Camp**, conducted during Bhagavan's 70th Birthday, was very successful. Eighty physicians from 18 countries participated along with nursing and ancillary personnel. Almost 2,000 patients were cared for during the 10-day camp.

Dr. Michael Goldstein appealed to Swami for approval to conduct a medical camp at Prasanthi Nilayam during *Guru Poornima*. Swami graciously gave His consent to conduct the medical camp on a smaller scale during *Guru Poornima*.

Planning is underway, and the medical camp will be operational from **July 28, through August 2, 1996**.

I have been entrusted with the responsibility of serving as Medical Director for the Overseas Medical Services Camp. The willingness of physicians to participate is appreciated. For suggestions, so we may be better prepared, please contact me at:

Raghavendra S. Prasad, M.D.

1923 Greenwood Oaks Drive

Houston, Texas 77062, USA

Ph: (713) 480-1505 or Fax: (713) 480-2250

E-Mail: Prasad RS@aol.com

A Time to be Cautious

We wish to inform our readers that there is an organization which is trying to establish itself under the name of "SSC Nagoya" or "Sathya Sai Center, Nagoya," in order to promote its commercial operations. It is specializing in the sale of books, diamonds, talismans and other items which are claimed to have cosmic energy. They also deal in faith healing. The founder deceives innocent persons by claiming that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba speaks through him.

Baba has often told His devotees that they need no intermediary. Baba presents His message to each devotee on a one-to-one basis; **no third person is needed**.

And There are Others . . .

There are those who try to recruit followers at the Prasanthi Nilayam Ashram as well as other places, to promote their healing methods. May we remind you that the **Sri Sathya Sai Organization and devotees do not promote items for sale, nor do they request money for services rendered**. Do not be taken in by anyone who might try to offer such services.

Flights to Puttaparthi/Prasanthi Nilayam

Beginning July 25, Indian Airlines will have direct, **round trip flights** from **Madras to Puttaparthi** and from **Bombay to Puttaparthi**. These flights bring weary travelers within minutes of Prasanthi Nilayam, Baba's ashram.

Please do share this good news with others; the more often people use this mode of transportation, the longer Indian Airlines will maintain this convenient schedule.

Your travel agent should have information to fill in the details. Bon Voyage!

This organization is not for me; it is for you. A doctor administers a bitter pill to a patient, not because the doctor does not like the patient, but because that bitter pill can cure the patient of the disease. It is said that God is the doctor who cures you of emotional disease (*bhava roga*). You know nothing of the disease that you suffer from, but you always want sweet pills from the doctor. Sweet or bitter, whatever Swami gives, accept it as something that is beneficial to you. The way to achieve this unity in diversity is as follows:

*Beings are many, breath is one.
Bulbs are many, current is one.
Jewels are many, gold is one.
Nations are many, earth is one.*

That is the feeling with which we should work. All of us reside on the planet earth. The earth is the dwelling place of all. We are children of Mother Earth, strengthen this faith in yourselves.

Direct & Indirect Perception

Nowadays, people regard only those things as truth which have a form. Anything without a form is regarded with suspicion. They say, "Show me direct proof. Only then, will I believe." Why should it matter to me whether you believe or do not believe? My truth is always truth. One who insists on direct proof can only be described as a fool, not as somebody who is in search of truth.

Direct perception is not always important; there is an inner truth, an invisible power which cannot be denied. In the *Mahabharata*, the Pandavas spent 13 years in the forest, and they lived incognito for one year. For that one year,

nobody knew where they went. Similarly, people do not know where God resides. Therefore, to always insist on direct perception is a sign of foolishness. Here is an example:

You see a person whose height is six feet, weight is 80 Kg and complexion is white. All these are directly perceived by you. However, there are certain qualities like compassion, love or anger in that person of which he, himself, is not aware and which remain hidden from you. Is it not foolish to be deluded by his form and not see the good qualities lying within him? For everything that is directly perceived and experienced, there is an invisible basis. You are able to see this beautiful hall, but the foundation on which this structure rests is not visible to your eyes. Similarly, God is the basis, the foundation; and for the body, *Atma* (indwelling divinity) is the basis. A flower is visible to your eye, but its fragrance cannot be seen. Can you, for that reason, deny the existence of the flower's fragrance? Your body is like a flower which is visible, but the good qualities and values in you are like the fragrance of that flower.

Your body is like a rose, but there are thorns. There can be no rose without a thorn. When you pluck the flower, see that you do not touch the thorn. Similarly, several doubts may crop up in your mind; but keep these doubts at a distance and experience only the love—that is the flower.

Butter is present in every drop of milk, though you do not see it. In order to get the butter out of the milk, you must churn the milk with the churning rod of your mind. Churn the milk and get the butter of self-realization.

How can you realize the truth by engaging yourselves in the activities of the organization? When and how can you reap more and more benefits from the organization? We have to deliberate on these points in this conference and arrive at certain decisions. I do not think about numbers; I only think of the divinity in this organization. This organization is for your good, for your welfare. I gain nothing from this organization.

You are Embodiments of Love!

Having been called, "Embodiments of Love," you should develop that love. That sacred love is enough; no other spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) is more essential. Love all and do not differentiate and say, "He is mine." "He is not mine." All are children of God. All are related to God. All are sparks of the same divinity. Have this equal-mindedness.

In the coming two or three days, we should explore the means of attaining this equal-mindedness and decide on the path that we should follow. The resolutions that you adopt in this conference, at the 70th Birthday, are to be followed for the rest of your lives.

Mr. Krishnamurthy, the State President of Tamil Nadu, said in his speech today, "Swami, we want to serve you when you become Prema Sai." But if you take care of the present, then why do you worry about the future? Why do you think of something that will happen sometime in the future? The past is past, so forget the past. The future is not sure, so do not brood over the future. The present is very important. This is not an ordinary present; this is omni-present.

Past is the tree, future is the tree, present is the seed. It is out of the seed

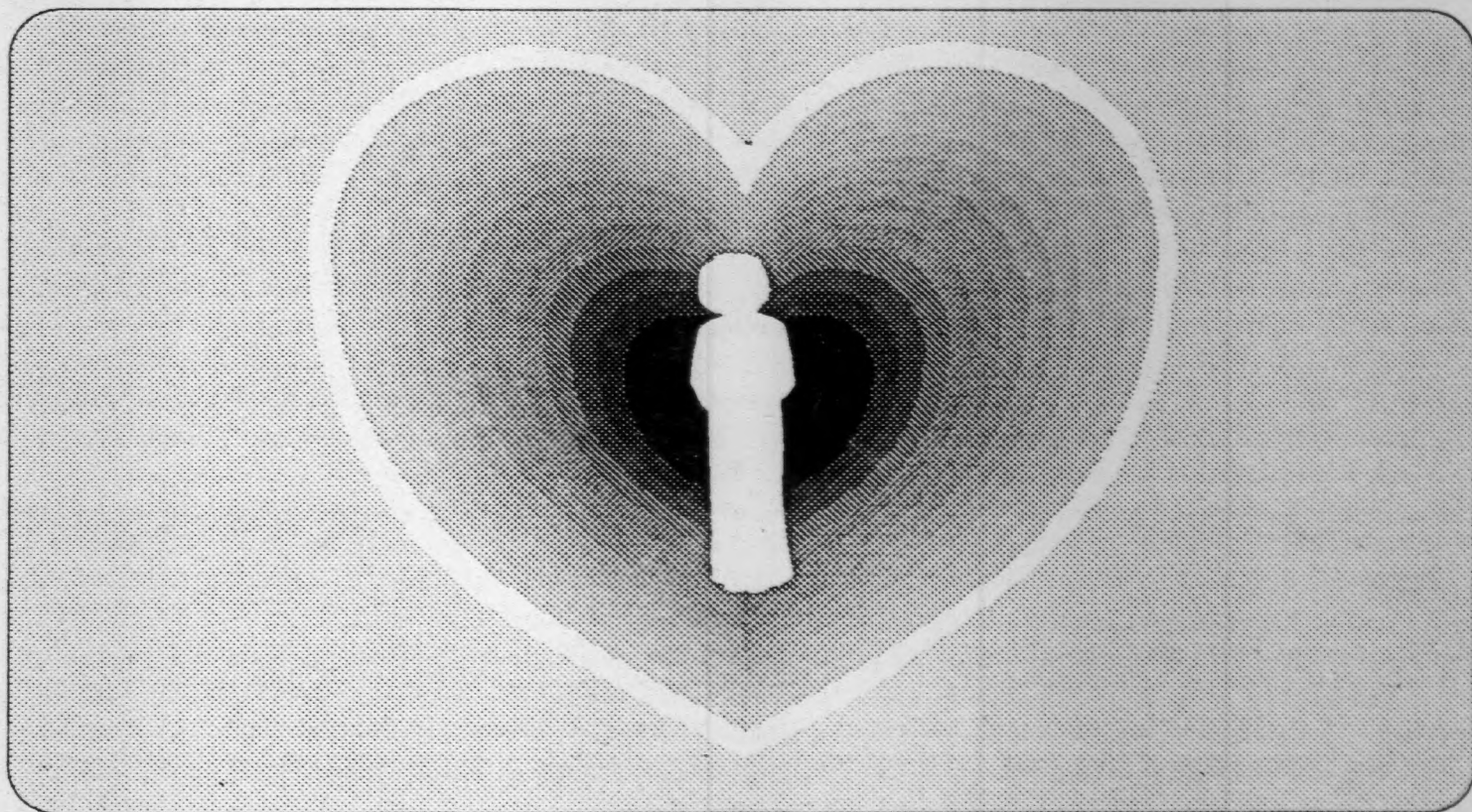
of the present that the trees of past and future come. So, act well in the present. You will not desire for the future. It will be all right. Do your duty well. Duty is God. Work is worship. When you know truth and conduct yourselves well, our organization will be ideal.

What is it that was inaugurated today? It was the inauguration of the process of inquiry of truth that leads to the realization of divinity. Earlier, we had initiated activities pertinent to worldly behavior. Today, the inauguration was for the realization of divinity through unity.

Passage of Time

Life comprises five elements, five principles, five senses, five sheaths (*pancha kosas*). *Pancha* is the word used to denote five. It also refers to 50 years of human life. It means that up to the age of 50, you have had enjoyment of the five elements. This is what is called youth. Youth does not refer to age, like when you get married and beget children. It means to engage in activities with all your faculties intact. Youth extinguishes itself fast. It comes in between [childhood and old age] like passing clouds. In ancient times, youth was not considered as proof of the age of the body. Youth refers to one's mental strength. At the time of the Mahabharata War, the age of Bhishma was 112, Krishna was aged 71, Arjuna was aged 74. Bhishma was the Commander-in-Chief. In those days a 112-year-old person was considered to be in his youth.

It is mental power that determines youth; it is also willpower. You will the power from God. Some call it free will. Only the Lord alone has free will, no one else has it.



cannot enjoy eternal bliss.

"This is Very Easy"

As the body consciousness goes, so the God consciousness grows. For this, you should exercise a ceiling on desires. The more desires you have, the more weak you become. If anger and lust increase, your life span is reduced. Therefore, Bhagavan says, "Less luggage, more comfort makes travel a pleasure." Life is a long journey. Your life becomes troublesome if you undertake this long journey with heavy luggage. There is no shortcut to this journey. You have to pass through many lives and travel quite a distance, so it is better to have less luggage. Your desires are your luggage. Putting a ceiling on your desires is the sacrifice from which you attain immortality. To develop a spirit of sacrifice, you

to experience the sweetness of love for God, so develop love, develop unity. This is very easy. There is no easier path than the spiritual path. It is more difficult to trample the soft petals of a rose in a garden than to have love for God in the spiritual garden. Because of your ignorance, you consider this to be difficult.

Holding a piece of cloth is difficult. How long can you hold it? After some time, your hand will start to ache. But giving it up is so very easy. So give up all worldly attachments, it is so easy. Hold on to love for God.

If health is lost, you can regain it; if money is lost, you can regain it; but if love is lost, it is not easy to regain. See that you preserve love. Then only, your life will be redeemed.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam, 11/18/1995

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It is mental power that determines youth; it is also willpower. You will the power from God. Some call it free will. Only the Lord alone has free will, no one else has it.

In that sense, it was said that youth is up to the age 50. You must do your duty until you attain that age. When you reach 60, it is called *Shanti Puja* in India. Thus, *Shanti Puja* (rite of inner peace) at the age of 60, implies that the six enemies of man are to be controlled. When you attain 70, you reach the stage of seven sages, seven seas, seven musical notes and seven colors. At that age, one should attain sagehood. The age of 80, means one who attains this age should become a celestial body. At the age of 90, you should become one of the nine planets. This represents power, so at that age, you become as powerful as one of the nine planets. At the age of 100, you should give up all the ten senses and overcome wrong identification with the body. As long as you have that wrong identification, [body consciousness], you cannot enjoy eternal bliss.

"This is Very Easy"

As the body consciousness goes, so the God consciousness grows. For this, you should exercise a ceiling on desires. The more desires you have, the more weak you become. If anger and lust increase, your life span is reduced. Therefore, Bhagavan says, "Less luggage, more comfort makes travel a pleasure." Life is a long journey. Your life becomes troublesome if you undertake this long journey with heavy luggage. There is no shortcut to this journey. You have to pass through many lives and travel quite a distance, so it is better to have less luggage. Your desires are your luggage. Putting a ceiling on your desires is the sacrifice from which you attain immortality. To develop a spirit of sacrifice, you



need intense love for God. There is nothing sweeter than love for God. It is sweeter than sweet, tastier than honey. It is permanent. The more you reinforce it, the more you get its sweetness.

The essence of this organization is to experience the sweetness of love for God, so develop love, develop unity. This is very easy. There is no easier path than the spiritual path. It is more difficult to trample the soft petals of a rose in a garden than to have love for God in the spiritual garden. Because of your ignorance, you consider this to be difficult.

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—Sathya Sai Baba
Prasanthi Nilayam, 11/18/1995

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