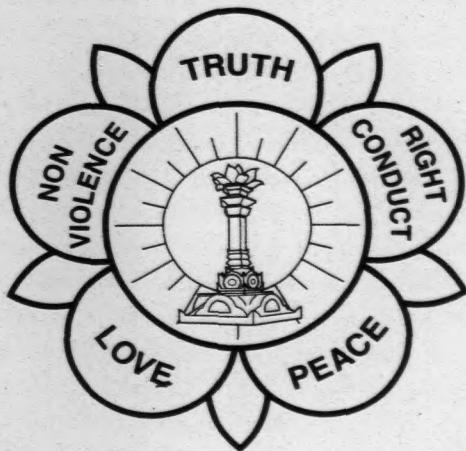




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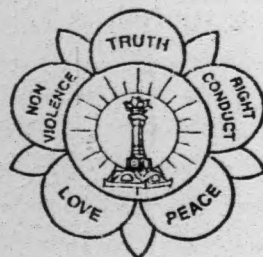
September, October, November

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

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***The Sarva Dharma symbol of the Sri Sathya Sai Organization depicts
the five qualities from which all human values emanate.***



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—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

Sai's Message

When the Golden Age dawns, there will be harmony throughout the world and Love will flow everywhere. Today, you cannot visualize such a state because there is chaos everywhere, fighting, scheming, hatred, evil, all the negative emotions are on the rise. Eventually, change will come. Today, the seeds are still in the ground, slowly germinating, as the teachings of the Lord begin to spread throughout the world and infiltrate the mind of man. Soon those seeds will begin to grow, and what emerges will brighten the world as the beauty of absolute Truth begins to reach many people. It is a process which takes time, and the new Golden Age will evolve gradually. Let the Divinity within shine forth and become one of the beacons to light up the world and hasten the arrival of the new age. It is there now for some, those enlightened souls who have already reached the state of God-realization. It is that awakened state that will lead to the new Golden Age.



Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

—Sathya Sai Baba

... And the Word Was God, Book I
Compiled by Ann Cleveland

What Is Love?

Sometimes I feel spiritually dry. Where is my love for God? The *Vedas* tell us that we have to want God as much as a drowning man wants air. This means we have to want Him passionately. We're also told that we must become dispassionate and witness this play of life. How do these two go together?

I remember how a few years ago I would cry with yearning to be with Swami. In some of my interviews, overwhelmed by His Love, I would sit in the room with blissful tears pouring down my face. However, I remember during my last teary interview, I had the feeling that Swami wanted me to control myself. I felt a bit annoyed, wondering why I shouldn't be able to express my emotions freely. After that, I seemed to have less emotional response around Baba. Sometimes I feel an intense sense of rapture welling up inside, but more often, I just plod on doing my *sadhana* (spiritual practice). I wonder, have I become indifferent rather than loving? Where are all my intense feelings? Will I ever feel the bliss of those early years again?

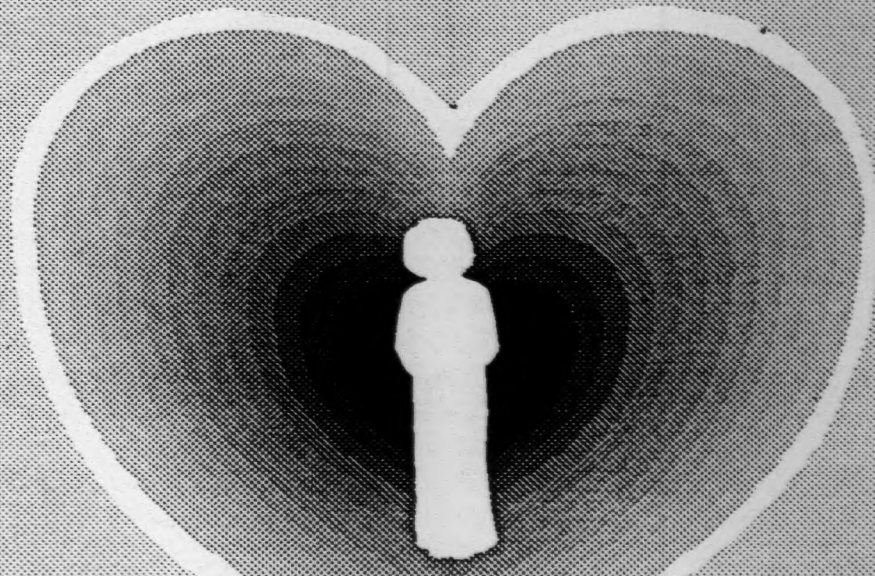
In discussing this with a friend, she pointed out that perhaps I was thinking of loving God as only a feeling. She told me that in Christianity, love is devotion; it is the determination of the will to give oneself to God, and to reflect that love in our daily lives. It was at that moment I recalled Swami saying, *Love is not an emotion*. Rather, love is a life energy within us that comes from the heart and is constant, unchanging and selfless. I was amazed to think that all we need to

do is to turn toward God. We don't have to feel any emotion; we just have to remember with our will to focus on Him.

I had always thought of love as a feeling. All I have known is human love, love that springs from the ego, from the emotions. Now I see that simply turning toward God, in whatever way we choose, is making a determination and that, in itself, is showing we love God. When I become enmeshed in a family drama, for instance, and all of a sudden use my will to make the choice to remember that all is Swami's play for the growth of those involved, I am loving God. There is no emotion here, just the use of my will and my choice to think of Him. What a wonderful discovery! Now I understand how much I love Swami because, by His grace, I remember Him a lot!

Sometimes Swami calls a devotee "Hysteria." Could it be that He is encouraging them not to be attached to the emotions and the senses? I admit, I love those feelings of bliss. At the same time, I am becoming less and less attracted to the dramas that unfold around me, and this has allowed me to have more equanimity.

I must confess that sometimes at *darshan* (to see a holy being), while waiting for Swami, I have found myself praying to have more feeling. "Swami, stir my heart," I beg. Thinking about that later, I realized that this was a selfish prayer, for what I really wanted was proof of my love (as feeling) for Him. That is not true devotion. It would have been better to focus on Swami and surrender the fruits to Him. That would



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this universe with Divine Love and put before us the model to imitate, the path to follow, and the goal to attain.

We revere the mother of Lord [Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba] this day. She brought to us the most precious gift of all: the gift of Light that brought with it volumes of knowledge, the ocean of Love and the fragrance of purity. We humbly thank her on bended knees, our hands joined in surrender, and our heads bent to renounce the pride that dwells in the ego.

We have gathered here today to follow the footsteps of the great one who will give us the strength to endure each pain, each obstacle, to rise above all pettiness, to hush the mind into the final silence of its death. We have come today to recognize the Truth as our Lord, Righteousness as our faith, Peace as our patience, and Love as our existence.

—Anonymous

"I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have Loved you, so you also should Love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have Love for one another."

—Jesus Christ

Holy Bible, King James version, John 13:34-35

*Easwaramma was the mother of the body of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

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have been an unselfish example of love as will. Sathya Sai Baba has said:

There is nothing wrong with you, "where there is a will, there is a way," is eminently true. . . . You are not weak and helpless. Every strength and power is within you. God vision is yours that very

instant when you will it with concentration. . . . Victory be ever yours.

The Love we devotees have been given is that we have the will to choose to turn toward our beloved Lord Sai.

—Judy Warner
Faber, Virginia

A Prayer Given at a Sai Center On Easwaramma Day*

We are indeed blessed to be the fortunate ones who sit in the Divine lap and share a mother [Easwaramma] whose love grows, nourishes and sustains, a mother who gifts us with her warm embrace no matter how many times we fail her. She is the mother whose tears of purity wash away all the doings of our past, a mother whose strength carries us throughout our lives, a mother who sacrificed her comfort of eternal bliss to come on earth to live in the temporary state of good and evil, a mother who will never leave any child lost. Yes! The mother who has come to fill this universe with Divine Love and put before us the model to imitate, the path to follow, and the goal to attain.

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Holy Bible, King James version, John 13:34-35

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Divine Discourse

The Role of Mother's Love

*No one brings with him money or
wealth when he comes out from
his mother's womb;
Nor does he take anything with him
when he passes away.
Even a millionaire eats not the glit-
tering gold, but rice with salt.
One may be proud of the wealth he
has earned,
But wealth that is hoarded does not
follow him at the end.
The honey collected by the honey
bees is usurped by man,
So, too, the wealth accumulated by
man is either stolen by thieves,
Or taken by the government at the
time of his death.
If you analyze well, you will find that
Atma or Self alone is eternal.
This is the Truth; what else can I
tell you?*

Embodiments of Divine Love

Since ancient times, people of Bharat (India) have adored the mother. The first dictum of the *Vedas* (scripture) is, "Mother is God, father is God, and the preceptor is God." But God in what sense? Only in the worldly sense. They are to be looked upon as God so far as your physical life is concerned. But from the spiritual standpoint, God alone is mother, father, preceptor, relative, friend, even one's education, wealth and all in all. Mother and father of the physical body are *grihavasi*, residents of the home; the preceptor is the *ashramavasi*, resident of the hermitage. It is only God who is *Hridayanivasi*, resident of

the heart. None other than God has the right to reside in your heart. You have to respect and adore your mother, father and teacher, and give them joy. But it is to the eternal God who is seated in your heart to whom you offer worship.

*God is nearer to you than your
mother and father.
To forget Him is sinful.
This word of Sai is the Path
of Truth.*

An Ancient Tradition

According to ancient Indian tradition, the sons prostrated themselves before their mothers and obtained their blessings before leaving to fight on the battlefields or do penance in the forest. The six-year-old boy, Dhruva, prostrated before his mother and, with her blessings, went out into the thick jungle. After hard and intense penance, he succeeded in obtaining the *darshan* of Lord Vishnu. Similarly, Arjuna bowed to his mother for her blessings before going into battle. She blessed him, saying, "May you win victory in the war!" So, too, Duryodhana prostrated before his mother, Gandhari, for her blessing before he left for the battlefield. She responded saying, "Where there is *dharma* (righteousness), there shall be victory." Duryodhana also prostrated before his guru for blessings. The guru said, "Where there is Krishna, there is *dharma*; where there is *dharma*, there is victory."

In those days, such blessings by mothers used to come true, because whenever mothers gave blessings, God

would say, "Amen!" But mere blessings of the mother alone are not enough; God's grace should also be there for success. A mother's blessing is like the negative pole, and God's grace or Divine Will is like the positive pole; both are needed for insuring victory.

Every son should try to please his mother. Without pleasing the mother, the son cannot achieve anything worthwhile. Without securing God's grace at the same time, one cannot be successful, even if the mother has blessed him adequately.

Some Background on the Gita

At one time, the Kaurava brothers felt unhappy for not having their mother's blessings, because being blindfolded, she could not give them the benefit of looking upon them. Even though Gandhari, the mother, had 100 sons, she could not see a single one of them. After the Kurukshetra war, Krishna went to console her. Dhritarashtra, the father, was full of sorrow; his wife, Gandhari, was not only sorrowful but angry with Krishna. She bitterly questioned him, "Krishna! The Pandavas and the Kauravas are the sons of two brothers; so why are you discriminating between them? You have insured the safety of all five Pandava brothers, whereas not even one among the 100 Kaurava brothers has been allowed to survive the war. What is the reason for your love of the Pandavas, and your hatred against the Kauravas?" Krishna replied with a smile, "Gandhari, because you are upset by your bereavement, you are talking without reason or rhyme. The whole fault lies within you only. Although you had 100 sons, did you ever look at even one among them? How can those who are

not fortunate enough to be looked at even once, by their very mother, get the benefit of being looked after by God?" Therefore, children should, in the first instance, have their mother's care and blessings in full measure.

Please Mother and Motherland

There may be bad sons, but never a bad mother. A son should always try to satisfy the mother who has such a soft and sweet heart. To the extent that *mathru-devi* (mother goddess) is made happy, to that extent *mathru-desa* (mother country) will also be happy. *janani* (mother) and *janma-bhoomi* (motherland) are both sacred and holy. To insure peace and progress, we should develop qualities that will please the mother as well as the motherland. Today, demonic qualities are on the increase; there is no fear of sin or love of God. On the other hand, fear of God and love of sin are on the rise. People do not hesitate to commit sin, but they want to escape the consequences. They do not want to do righteous things, but they want merit. As you sow, so shall you reap. We should step back from sinful acts and step forward to do virtuous acts.

When Kunti's sons approached her for blessings before going to war, she told them, "Children, where there is *dharma*, there will be victory. However, let me tell you something that touches my heart—the blessings given by mother Parvati to her son, Kumara, when he went to vanquish the mighty demon, Tarakasura; the blessings given to the son of Vinathi, when he went to save his mother from bondage; the blessings given by the mother to her son, Raghu, when he went to safeguard the sacrifi-

cial rite of his father—such strong, invincible, protective blessings of Divinity—may these constantly safeguard you as your bodyguards or protective amulets.” Therefore, such love and blessings of the mother are very necessary.

The Mother Appears

Swami has no special attachment for His parents. However, to set an example for others, I used to visit the *samadh* (tombs) of the parents of this body during my birthday celebrations in Puttaparthi. It is now 30 years since the mother of this body passed away. But even today, she makes her appearance before me and speaks to me in her same physical form.

Three boys sleep in my room, and even they have witnessed such scenes. One day after *bhajans* (devotional singing) and my meal, I went to my room in the Poorna Chandra Auditorium at 9:30 in the morning. Swami’s mother, Easwaramma, was physically standing near the door. I asked her why she was standing there. She replied, “Swami, I know you are omniscient, but I request that you kindly pay heed to one thing. Every student or devotee offers you a handkerchief for your blessing; kindly do not accept kerchiefs from anybody and everybody. Times are not good. Some people may smear poison on the kerchief. When you wipe your lips with such a kerchief, it may be harmful to you. So from now, please accept kerchiefs only from genuine devotees.”

I am telling you about such incidents, only to impress upon you the fact that a mother’s love and solicitude for her children are immortal, surviving even after the death of her physical body.

Again, Easwaramma appeared twice during the night. Even the boys who slept in Swami’s room saw her. They had never seen her before [when she was alive]. They were astonished as to how this old lady could enter Swami’s room during the night. The keys for the lift [elevator] were with the students. There are no steps for climbing to the room. Therefore, they were asking her, “How did you get here?” Just then, I got up and asked the boys to keep quiet. I asked her why she had come. She replied, “I cannot bear it without seeing you often. I derive great joy from that; so I have come just to see you. However, I wish to tell you something. Swami, everybody claims to be a devotee, but we don’t know who are genuine devotees and who are counterfeits or hypocrites. A true devotee will be prepared to do anything for you. But there are some who pretend to be devotees and exhibit fake devotion for selfish purposes. They fulfill their desires with your help and then forget about you. So, I request you to be cautious about this.” I told her, “You need not tell me about this, I am always careful.” Then she smiled and went away.

I am narrating this to show you, by concrete evidence, how immortal and wonderful is a mother’s love. She had given up her mortal life long ago, but her immortal love continues, even now, to hover around Swami. With great joy, she tells me, “I performed several types of worship and sacred religious vows for having you as my son. And they have all been fulfilled to my satisfaction. For 40 years I was with you. I am happy that my life is sanctified by your advent.”

Similar was the case with Swami’s grandfather, Kondama Raju [father of

Pedda Venkama Raju and father-in-law of Easwaramma]. He had four sons: His first son, Pedda Venkama Raju, was the father of this body. His second son was Chinna Venkama Raju, third was Subba Raju. The fourth one was Venkatarama Raju. As the family became too big, the four sons wanted to separate themselves. This body was eight years old at the time. The sons of Kondama Raju told him that since he was too old, it was not desirable for him to be alone, and that he could stay with each son for five months by turns. Then, Kondama Raju told his sons, "I don't want any sons or property. You may have all the property, but I want only one property for myself. Give me Sathya, that is enough for me. If Sathya is with me, I feel that everything is with me."

From then on, I was with Kondama Raju only. He lived for 112 years. He was a great devotee; therefore, he could recognize Swami's true Divinity. I was entering my ninth year. On one occasion, when there was nobody else with us, he bolted the door. I was inside cooking food for him as usual. I was very good at cooking; the neighbors used to come and take the curries prepared by me. Kondama Raju approached me after closing the door and addressed me as "Sathya." "What do you want?" I asked him. He clasped both my hands and said, "Think that these are not your hands, but your feet that I am holding now. I have one desire. I pray to you that at the time of my last breath, you should pour a little water into my mouth with your divine palm." I promised to do so. He lived for 19 years after that incident. Even after I shifted to the new *mandir* (temple in Prasanthi Nilayam), he used to come to

me every day, morning and evening. Every man will have certain inhibitions about displaying his feelings in the presence of others due to ego and self-esteem. So, Kondama Raju used to come at dusk and before dawn. I would lie down on the sand, outside the *mandir*. Just when he was approaching, I would fully cover myself with a bedsheet, including my face, so that he might not know I was awake. Thinking that I was asleep, he gently removed the bedsheet covering my feet, took *padnamaskar* (worship the feet of a great being), and then went back to the village. The reason for his doing this, unnoticed by others, was his ego-feeling that if others saw him [he was then 112 years old] doing *padnamaskar* to his teen aged grandson, they would make fun of him, and he would lose their esteem. After he went home, I would rise from the sand.

The *gopikas* (the cowherd women who worshiped Lord Krishna) used to sing about Krishna thus: "If somebody is really fast asleep, it is possible to wake him up. But if one simply closes his eyes and pretends to be asleep, how can anybody arouse him from feigned sleep?" Similarly, I used to pretend to be asleep when my grandfather came to take *padnamaskar*. This was one of my *leelas* (divine play) at the time.

Fulfill the Promise

Then the time approached for me to redeem my promise to Kondama Raju. Knowing that his end was near, I drove in my Morris 200 car to his residence.

Meanwhile, Kondama Raju called to Easwaramma and told her, "Swami is coming here for my sake. My last moments have arrived."

Please turn to page 30

Breath, Life and Soul

It has always been easier for man to take a stand on remote issues that do not involve him directly than to fight causes that are closer to home. As one animal rights activist put it, "To protest bullfighting in Spain, or the slaughter of baby seals in Canada while continuing to eat chickens that have spent their lives crammed in cages, or veal from calves that have been deprived of their mothers, is like denouncing apartheid in South Africa while asking their white neighbors not to sell their houses to blacks." Clearly, this shows that one's thoughts, words and deeds are at variance with one another. Only when they are consistent can the much desired inner transformation take place.

As the English philosopher, Sir George Trevelyan, explains, "One basic spiritual law is that for each step into higher knowledge, a man should take three steps in the development of his own character."

In a fairly recent discourse to devotees, Swami talked about the relationship of food to spiritual development, saying, *The United States has a great name as being the land of Kubera (the embodiment of wealth). The people don't fall short of food, and there are no obstacles to pleasure.* In spite of this, He pointed out the number of unfavor-

able deaths and separations (including suicides and divorces) as being the highest in the U.S. and Europe, attributing this to the food* that causes mental agitation.

In our predominantly meat-eating society, scientific data point to the fact that consuming excess amounts of meat, dairy products and highly processed foods is indeed largely responsible for the epidemics like heart disease, osteoporosis and cancer. Other major contributing factors are, of course, pollution in the environment, the widespread use of insecticides, chemicals in foods, the problem of alcoholism, cigarette smoking and mental stress.

Factory farming in the U.S. in the past several decades has led to deplorable conditions in which animals are raised for meat. Apart from being subject to untold suffering and pain, they are fed disease-causing chemicals and hormones which eventually end up in our bodies. One frightening example which is quoted in John Robbins'** book, *Diet for a New America*, 1987, concerns a government report which found that more than 90% of the chickens produced from most of the flocks have leukosis, which is a form of chicken cancer.

Our minds have become so programmed to accept all this as the normal state of affairs that we do not question

*It should be noted here that the word "food" as used by Sathya Sai Baba means all stimuli that is taken in by the senses, and it includes hearing, touching, seeing, smelling, as well as tasting and imbibing food through the mouth.

**The reader may be interested to know that Mr. John Robbins was the heir to the chain of Baskin-Robbins ice cream stores. He willingly gave up his inheritance to crusade for better eating habits in the United States.

the moral and ethical validity of the practices of the society in which we live. Food is recognized essentially as fuel for the body, and its role in the development of the mind and the spirit is altogether ignored.

Some Fundamental Thoughts

However, the *Vedic* belief is that the consumption of the more pure, *satwic* food, will calm and purify our thoughts. According to Swami, *In spiritual endeavors, there can be no stability or concentration when meat is taken.* Mahatma Gandhi has also said, "I feel spiritual progress does demand at some stage, that we should cease to kill our fellow creatures for our bodily wants."

Vedic scriptures declare that man goes through many animal lives before he takes human birth. About this Swami says, *Man is many animals in one. He has the jackal, the buffalo, the tiger, the elephant, all in him. Each of these incarnations has left a mark on his mental makeup, like a scar when a wound has healed. For example, unsteadiness and waywardness are acquired from his previous life as a monkey, while the trait of foolishness is a relic of his existence as a sheep.*

The mind is the sacrificial post, and the animal instincts that are still resident in the human character are to be slaughtered on the altar of the mind, says Swami. Referring to this as the "Inner Sacrifice," as opposed to the outer animal sacrifice that is practiced as a religious offering to the deity invoked, and which He strongly condemns, saying, *Spiritual unfolding involves eliminating one's qualities like anger, egoism, jealousy, greed and pride, replacing them*

with the qualities of love, compassion and kindness.

The Sanskrit word *ahimsa* means nonviolence. In Indian religious traditions, particularly the Jain religion (in which *ahimsa* is believed to have taken root), nonviolence denotes respect for all life forms—human beings, plants and animals—thus opposing wanton destruction of any of God's living creatures or creations. In Jainism, living forms include everything, both animate and inanimate—mountains, rivers, trees and plants—all have a life force within, which is consciousness, bliss and energy.

In India (a country which has the largest number of vegetarians), vegetarianism is based purely and simply on the principle of *ahimsa*. While every life form feeds upon another, the question may arise as to why man should be a vegetarian and refrain from eating animal flesh. The cat will kill the mouse for its dinner, or birds may dig worms for their breakfast; to do so is their way of life, duty (*dharma*). It is not a matter of choice for them. Animals hunt just to obtain food and do not take any more than they need. The lion is seen to roam harmlessly among antelopes, hunting them only for obtaining food. Free will means using our God-given consciousness to make responsible, ethical and moral decisions. Yet, man is the only living creature who kills for pleasure.

Swami says, *Animals have not come for the purpose of supplying food for human beings. They come to work out their own lives in the world. But we have taken to eating meat as a habit.* He adds, *Among things endowed with consciousness or chaitanya—plants, trees and insects—all have managed to treasure*

their dharma, unaffected by the passage of time. But man, whose intelligence sweeps from the inert and the infinitesimal to the superconscious and the universal, is the only living thing which has slipped and is sliding down.

History of Ahimsa

Looking back into Indian history, it will be interesting to note that the practice of *ahimsa* influenced policies of some of its important rulers. Repelled by the horrors of war, Emperor Ashoka, the greatest of India's rulers during the third century B.C., became a convert to Buddhism on account of its doctrine of non-violence. He also introduced many laws which encouraged compassion towards animals. These included the building of hospitals for animals, the digging of wells, and the planting of trees to provide them with water and shade. Animal consumption was restricted, and many animals were given special status and declared inviolable. Throughout India, Ashoka's famous edicts were inscribed with laws and moral precepts relating to the treatment of animals.

Akbar, the Muslim emperor who ruled over most of India between 1556 and 1605, was so fascinated with the Jain religion that he studied the principles of nonviolence and subsequently introduced laws to limit the slaughter of animals, in some cases even banning their killing altogether. These laws helped to bring about an awareness of the sanctity of life, and a change of heart on the part of these rulers and their followers.

Western History

If we examine the Western cultures, we find that the nonviolent ethic has been

confined to areas of civic disobedience, anti-war propaganda and pacifism. It derives its basis from Biblical injunctions like, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and "Turn the other cheek," thereby stressing nonviolence toward mankind in particular. The concept of no harm toward the earth and the animal kingdom was not featured in the philosophy.

Ahimsa spread from India to China, Japan and other parts of Asia through Buddhism, and eventually influenced certain movements in Europe dating back to the early days of Alexander the Great of the fourth century B.C. These movements which propagated vegetarianism did not gain the approval of the church authorities in those days, but continued to exist on a small scale in Europe until the fifteenth century A.D. The most notable among them was the Cathar Church which was founded in Italy in the 1140s A.D., and whose teachings then spread to France, Germany and England.

Later, St. Francis of Assisi, the great lover of nature and animals, influenced medieval piety and Western thought toward a reconciliation of the spirit of Christianity with the love of nature. The veneration of God found expression in the veneration of nature.

In the United States

The nineteenth century saw transcendentalists like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau profoundly influenced by the scriptures of the East. Through their philosophy, they drew attention toward the aesthetic values of nature and life forms, thus inspiring the present day environmentalists and conservationists.

Please turn to page 22

A Golden Age Diet

Diet is a subject that is a sensitive area for many of us. Yet, it is one of the most important aspects of spirituality. Suffice to say that in this day and age, spiritual endeavors without a proper diet are a most futile effort. Diet is a broad term and includes the intake through all the sense organs, but here we will deal primarily with food intake through the mouth which has a very profound effect upon all the senses. As Baba says, *The food consumed by man provides the source of origin, sustenance and development of the mind.*

Sathya Sai Baba goes on to say, *When you kill an animal, you give it suffering, pain, harm. God is in every creature, so how can you give such pain? . . . Animals did not come for the purpose of supplying food to human beings. They came to work out their own karma in the world.*

Ahimsa or nonviolence, being one of the basic human values that we all strive toward, must obviously encompass a vegetarian diet. In fact, Baba has very strongly stated that for one to be close to Him, one should not eat meat, drink alcohol or smoke.

Vegetarianism is often a misunderstood word. There are different types of vegetarians. Some people consider not eating red meat, but eating chicken or fish to be vegetarian. This is not so. For the purpose of clarification, one who does not eat any flesh, but does eat eggs and dairy products is called an **ovo-lacto-vegetarian**. One who does not eat meat nor eggs but does eat dairy products is called **lacto-vegetarian**. One

who does not eat meat, eggs nor dairy products but only eats vegetables and fruits is called a **vegan**. One who eats only fruits is called a **fruitarian**, and one who has no need to eat anything at all [living only on divine energy] is called a **breatharian**. Bhagavan has no necessity to eat. He eats a handful merely to please His devotees and to set an example for them.

Food is divided into three qualities or *gunas* which are the same qualities that comprise the entire universe. For a spiritual aspirant, a diet of *satwic* (harmonious, pleasant, subtle) food is preferred. Baba says, *Those who wish to use the body properly and insure that they entertain good thoughts, perform good acts and reap good results, should scrupulously follow two things: regulation of diet and regulation of living habits. You should not consume any and every type of food merely to appease hunger or the palate. You must eat only satwic food. Our thoughts are determined by the type of food we consume.*

Thus, we see that Swami expounds the value of proper diet and its effects on the mind. As we shall learn, the mind is, in effect, responsible for the body and actually for the universe. With this insight, one can realize the profound importance of a proper diet. Hence, if spiritual endeavor is our goal, then moving toward a less violent and more *satwic* diet is desirable. The more violent the diet, the more violence, anger, fear, suspicion and anxiety that we harbor in our minds which leads to disease and generally an unfulfilled life.

To make this transition may appear difficult considering the present point in time and the part of the globe in which we live. However, it is possible with some effort to move toward a more harmonious mode of living.

Here is a vegan recipe which is a favorite of ours, and we're sure it will be a favorite of many others:

Pasta and Tofu Balls

Tofu is pressed soybean curd, and is available in most supermarkets. It is an excellent source of iron, calcium, protein and contains no cholesterol.

Ingredients for Sauce

- 3 lbs. fresh chopped tomatoes
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste or puree
- 1 [or more] chopped onion
- 1 tsp. vegetable oil
- 1/2 to 1 tsp. Italian herbs, such as:
 basil, thyme, rosemary, oregano,
 marjoram
- 1 tsp. salt to taste
- 1/2 tsp. natural sweetener [optional]

Method

Saute the onions in vegetable oil until soft, add herbs and continue to saute. Next, add chopped tomatoes and tomato puree, bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover, let simmer one hour, stir regularly. Adjust flavor, add sweetener [if desired]. Makes one quart sauce.

Tofu Balls

- 1 lb. tofu
- 1 chopped onion

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba cautions us to do *namasmarana* (remembering or saying any of God's names) while preparing food. In that way, there will be no anger or negativity when the food is consumed.

- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 small chopped carrot
- 1/2 to 1 tsp. dried Italian herbs
- 4 Tbsp. tomato puree
- 1 Tbsp. oil for sauteing vegetables
- 2-3 Tbsp. flour
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper [optional]
- salt and pepper to taste
- 4-5 Tbsp. veg. oil for frying tofu balls

Method

In large bowl, mash tofu. Saute onions in oil until soft, add celery, carrots and saute several minutes more. Then add herbs, tomato puree salt and pepper, saute another few minutes. When mixture is ready, transfer to bowl, add flour and mix. Form into balls [If mixture is not firm enough add more flour.]

Add tofu balls to heated oil a few at a time until all have been browned. Makes about 18 balls, drain them on paper towels.

You're Almost Finished

Cook 1/2 lb. [8 oz.] of your favorite pasta according to instructions on pkg. Serve with warm rolls, fresh salad and/or fresh vegetables. Recipe can be doubled, but this amount should serve four. Enjoy!

Additional Idea

If you have sensitivity to tomatoes, an alternative would be to add olive oil, fresh herbs, salt and pepper to the spaghetti or pasta.

—R. & S. Beharrysingh
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Ahimsa *

Ahimsa means noninjury of human, insect, animal or bird.

At a mental level it means noninjury also in thought or word.

Weave this word into the fiber of your being and life.

Don't let your words or actions cause anger, frustration or strife.

Do not demean family, friends, or anyone you know or don't know.

Do not harm anyone at all; always let your love show.

It only takes a second to utter an injury to someone you love.

Ahimsa, a word to believe in, it has to come from God above.

You have to forgive and forget, and practice ahimsa right now.

If you fail, it is a lesson, learn from it, so it's not repeated somehow.

Watch all that you do, even your inflection as you speak.

Harm no one at all, in any way, if it is God whom you seek.

Ahimsa will bring to you, love and peace, as through this life you trod.

And then, filled with love and peace you can reach God.

—Charles Schenkel, Thomaston, Connecticut

Divine life is the very breath of all beings; it consists of Truth, Love and Non-violence (Ahimsa). For how can anyone be false to another when there is no other at all? Falsehood comes out of fear. When there is no second, there is no fear at all. No one is loved more than the Self. When all is the self-same Self, all are loved as the Self is loved. As for himsa (violence), who is to injure whom when all are but one?

**—Sathya Sai Baba, Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. I
Venkagiri, April 1957**

**Ahimsa means nonviolence, no harm. One is practicing ahimsa if one's activities do not cause pain of any kind, are not selfish, and if one's thoughts, words and deeds are pure.*

Your Body Is a Temple

This article is a postscript and sequel to my previous article, "You Are Not the Body," published in the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, Summer 1998. The purpose is to complement and supplement the ideas given in the earlier article, by a brief but comprehensive coverage of Swami's views on the subject. This will prevent any possible misunderstandings or incomplete understanding of His teachings in this regard. When He says, *You are not the filthy body nor the monkey mind*, His intention is to wean us away from our wrong identification with the undesirable, inordinate attachment to these transient equipments. Although the Self or the *Atma* is our absolute reality, we can neither deny nor ignore the relative reality of our apparent self. Just because our body, mind and intellect are unreal in the absolute sense, we cannot simply jettison them by wishful thinking; nor can we get rid of them by cursing them.

The keynote of Baba's teachings about all aspects of life—like eating, talking and money-making—is moderation or the middle path. For instance, He says with His characteristic play on words: Overeating endangers the mind (*Athi thindi mathi haani*). Moderate eating engenders happiness (*Mitha thindi athi haayi*). Excessive talk is harmful to the mind (*Athi bhaasha mathi haani*). Moderate talk results in happiness (*Mitha bhaasha athi haayi*)." And Swami goes on to say, *Too much money is like trying to walk with too large shoes; too little money is like walking with too small shoes. In either case, life's jour-*

ney will be rendered difficult. Swami wants us to avoid the two extremes of pampering the body through self-indulgence, or mortifying the body through excessive asceticism or torture in the name of spiritual penance or *tapas*.

It is well-known that the great Buddha tried the second extreme, and based on his experience, he learned and later taught his famous "Middle Path" of spiritual discipline.

That is why, while telling us, *You are not the body*, Baba also often quotes the Sanskrit scriptural declaration, *Deha or body is said to be devaalaya or temple; jiva or individual soul is none other than the eternal Deva or God*. People go to a temple to worship the God inside, not the temple itself. Similarly, Baba wants us to worship the God inside the body, but not the body itself. In other words, the body, mind and intellect are only the means to achieve the end, namely God-realization. They are the tools, and therefore should be kept in good trim. What is important is that these tools should be used for achieving perfection (*shreyas*) but not indulging in pleasure (*preyas*). Also, the body, according to Swami, is a boat gifted by God to man enabling him to cross the ocean of worldly life. Man should keep the boat of his body in good condition, and insure that he reaches the other shore of Divinity without allowing the water of worldliness to leak into the boat and drown it in the ocean.

Here are a few gleanings from Baba's teachings which shed more light on this subject:

The body is the temple of God, isn't it? Well, so what does the priest do in the temple everyday? First, he cleans the utensils and sacred vessels in the shrine. He sweeps the room and washes the altar. The senses are the utensils for the ritual worship (puja) of the God within. They have to be cleaned assiduously, kept free from dirt. Inner cleanliness is godliness. That is only possible through sense control and mind control, or what amounts to the same as spiritual practices, dedication of all desires and activities to God.

Your heart is like the lock, and your mind is the key. Turn the key to the left, it gets locked, turn the key to the right, it becomes unlocked. Similarly, turn your mind toward worldly matters, you become bound to the wheel of the cycle of births and deaths. Turn it towards God, and you attain liberation.

Your gross body is like the outer leather covering of a football; your subtle body is like the rubber bladder inside it. When it is inflated with the air of ego, the football of your body receives kick after kick in the game of life. If the air of ego is removed, it becomes deflated, and therefore receives no more kicks.

The body is a flashlight; the eye is the bulb; the mind is the battery; intelligence is the switch. Only when these four work together do you get the light of illumination.

If you want to find some precious stones, you will have to look for them in the midst of dust and rubble in the earth. But if you search for the precious stones in the open sky, you are not going to find them. This body is equivalent to dust, and in this body alone, you can find the Lord. Man's duty is to make such an at-

tempt by which he will find the jewel of the Divine aspect in this human body.

If you take a gold vessel and stud the outside with precious stones, and then use it to boil ordinary water, what you do is similar to the situation in which you find yourselves. The human body which contains the Divine jewel, is being used to fulfill base human desires and thoughts. Will there be a fool who will take a golden plow, till fertile land and, finally, put useless plants in it? Will there be a fool who will go round the city begging for food when tasty and nutritious food is available to him in his own house? In the same manner, while sacred peace and happiness are present in your own heart, is there any meaning in your going in search of them everywhere else except in your own heart? While we regard God as omnipresent, in practice, we are looking for Him everywhere except in our own hearts.

In this postscript, it is both relevant and interesting to add that my previous article, based on daily experiences common to all of us, arose out of Jack Scher's wish to have the experience to convince himself that he is not the body. And here is Baba, underpinning the role of daily experiences in helping us reach the goal of life as follows:

Trying to learn from the scriptures is difficult. One scripture often seems to contradict another. For example, I have told you that the daily experience is different from Truth itself. Now I'm telling you that only the person who bases his conclusions on daily experiences can reach the goal. Nothing experienced through the medium of the body is true, but in spite of the fact that daily experiences are of a transient nature, they are

based on something that is permanent. When a car moves along the road, the road itself does not move. At least we think that the road is not moving. But in a way, it is moving. Like the other planets, the earth is spinning very fast. The atoms within us are also moving. Whatever we see externally is a reflection of our inner being. Our experiences are only reflections. When we develop an inner search, our outer experiences become sacred.

In conclusion, man should utilize his body, mind and intellect to pass through the three progressive stages of devotion as explained by Swami in Chapter 42, entitled "*Bhakti**—Stage by Stage," in *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. XI. (Relevant extracts are given in *Uniqueness of Swami and His Teachings*,** published by Sathya Sai Books and Publication Trust (Chapter I of Part II). If those instructions of Swami's are followed, one can achieve the lulling of the mind in the first stage of *Bhoutika Bhakti*, when he directs his body, mind and intellect towards devotional practices centered

around God's name and form. In the second stage of *Ekantha Bhakti*, when his mind has withdrawn from all names and forms and focused on the inner Self, he will attain the stilling of the mind. In the third and final stage of *Ananya Bhakti*, he will find that the same Self which he experienced within himself during the second stage is resplendent everywhere. This results in the killing of his mind.

However, many of us become alarmed when Swami speaks about the ideal of destroying the mind. How can day-to-day life go on in the absence of the mind? This is our doubt. Well, what happens is this: When the ego or false self disappears along with the mind, the true Self takes over and does much better work, even more efficiently through the same body, without the fuss characteristic of the false self. This is the lesson that Baba wants us to learn from the *Murali*,*** the flute of Krishna, and from the lives of the mahatmas, the illumined souls.

—Dr. A. Adivi Reddy
Arcadia, California

When the mind of man is unattached to the ups and downs of life, and is able to maintain equanimity under all circumstances, then even physical health can be assured. The mental firmament must be like the sky, which bears no mark of the passage through it of the birds, or planes or clouds. Illnesses are caused more by malnutrition of the mind than of the body. Doctors speak of vitamin deficiency; I will call it deficiency of vitamin G, and I will recommend the repetition of the name of God, with accompanying contemplation of the glory and grace of God. That is vitamin G; that is the medicine.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sadhana—The Inward Path, p 8

**Bhakti* means absolute devotion to God. *Bhakta* is one who has devotion.

**The book, *Uniqueness of Swami and His Teachings*, is written by Dr. A. Adivi Reddy; it is available at the Sathya Sai Book Center. See page 36 for address.

****Murali*, Krishna's flute, was empty, so that God could play His Divine tune through it. So, too, God's devotees should be empty, so that He can fill them with His Divine teachings.

Food for Body and Mind

Dedication is to be carried out in various ways. Offer to God the food that is consumed before you partake of it, then it is rendered pure and potent.

There are three purities to be observed: purity of the provisions, purity of the vessels in which food is prepared, and purity of the persons who serve the prepared food. It is not enough if the provisions are pure and of good quality; they should have been procured by fair means. No unfair, unjust, untrue earnings should be used for one's maintenance; they are fouled at the very source. The source, the course and the goal must all be equally pure. The vessel must be clean, free from tarnish. The person who serves must not only be clean in dress, but clean in habits, character and conduct. They should be free from hate, anger, worry and indifference while serving; they should be cheerful, humble and full of love. While attending those who are dining, they should not allow their minds to dwell on vicious ideas. Mere physical cleanliness or charm is no compensation for evil thoughts and habits.

The spiritual aspirant who has to secure concentration must be careful about these restrictions. Otherwise, during meditation, the subtle influences of the wicked thoughts of the cook and the servers will haunt the aspirant. Care should be taken to have only virtuous individuals around. Outer charm, professional excellence, reduced wages—these should not be allowed to prejudice you in favor of dangerous cooks and attendants. Examine carefully their

habits and character. The food you eat is such an important constituent of the physical and mental stuff with which you have to struggle in the spiritual field. The purity of the mind must be supplemented by the purity of the body as well as purity in the important function of speech. These are the real austerities: physical, mental and vocal.

The body and the life in it are based and sustained by food, so food decides the level of attainment, high or low. Nowadays, emphasis is being laid on discipline and regulated behavior, without reference to food. However great and lean a person may be, however much he pays attention to the teachings of *Vedanta* and takes time to spread those teachings, if he neglects the strict codes laid down for food which are the very basis of the body and its functions, he cannot succeed if the purity—of the provisions, of the cook, and of those who serve—are not properly attended to.

People feel content when their stomachs are filled and hunger is appeased. The first temple they visit when dawn breaks is the restaurant, where *idli* (a small steamed dumpling made of rice and lentils, usually served at breakfast) and *sambar* (a savory sauce) are offered to the *Atma* (Self, God within). How can such gourmands have concentration? How can such purity be guaranteed in restaurants? Who pays attention to that? Then, people complain aloud that they do not have success concentrating, and they suffer greater confusion. The negative effect will be corrected when



the causes are corrected. When bitter things are cooked, how can the result be sweet?

Food and recreation are very carefully regulated in the holy scripture of the *Bhagavad Gita*, but little heed is paid to its teaching, nor is it considered essential. There are people everywhere who swear by the *Gita*, who expound it for hours, and who preach about it. But very few put its teachings into practice. The verses fill their heads, but they are powerless to meet their own problems with philosophical equanimity.

Bliss and peace can be secured only when food and recreation are cleansed and purified. Food to be *satwic* (pure, soothing, promoting virtue and inner peace) should be capable of strengthening the mind as well as the body. It should not be too salty, too spicy, too bitter, too sweet or too sour. It should not be taken while steaming hot. Food which fans the flames of thirst should be avoided. The general principle is that there should be a limit, a restraint in regards to consuming too much food-stuff. Food cooked in water should not be used the next day, as it becomes harmful, and fried articles should be consumed before they develop unpleasant odors.

Rajasic foods are the opposite of *satwic*, they are too salty, too sweet, too hot, too sour, too odorous. Such edibles excite and intoxicate.

Regularity of food habits—restraining the greed of the tongue, eating only *satwic* food, and engaging yourselves in *satwic* recreation—can free you from physical and mental ill health. With this regimen, you can bear calumny, loss, disappointment and defeat, boldly and with equanimity; then no depression can overwhelm you. I must tell you that when someone among you is subjected to suffering, it is a chance for you to demonstrate your intelligence, sense of values and equal-mindedness.

Harishchandra, an emperor who stuck to the truth in spite of agonizing travail—which he could have avoided by the utterance of a single lie—had a series of terrible disasters. He was plagued by poverty, exile, persecution by his creditors, the sale into slavery of his queen,

his son and himself. He was made to do demeaning work by his master as a toll collector at the cremation ghat in Banaras. Harishchandra never bent or broke; he stuck to his determination not to yield to the call of unrighteousness.

To obtain the four aims of human life—righteousness, prosperity, fulfillment of desires, and liberation from bondage—the basic requirements are a healthy body and a healthy mind. Disease means feeling uneasy, due to upsetting one's emotional balance which affects the physical as well as the mental condition. This happens for two reasons: faulty food and faulty activities. It is wiser to prevent disease rather than to run after remedies when the disease has taken hold.

A yogi is a contented, God-centered person; a *bhogi* is a person reveling in sensual pleasure; a *rogi* is a person ridden with illness.

People can live longer and healthier lives if they would only eat less. Regular prayers will give strength and courage to withstand illness. When someone offers you a glass of water, you immediately say, "Thank you." However, you should evince even more gratitude to God who watches you and wards off harm which threatens to overwhelm you. All activity must be dedicated to God; then it will provide a healthy body and mind.

Even a machine needs rest; it cannot run continuously. What then shall we say of the delicately organized human body? Go without food one day a week. Fasting for just one day is good

for the body as well as the country. On that day take only water, so all the dirt is washed away. Through diet alone, birds and beasts remain healthy. Only the healthy person can forget the body and dedicate his thoughts to God, deriving bliss therefrom. Illness is the result of idleness and catering to weakness; good health is the result of a tough, hard life. Contentment is the best tonic. Use the body as a boat to cross the ocean of life, with devotion [to God] and detachment [from the world] as the two oars.

No one is anxious to wear the same clothes year after year; death is but the casting off of old clothes. Even Avatars leave the body after the task is fulfilled, so how can human beings be spared from the inevitable?

Drink milk or yogurt, eat fruit and nuts; they generate constructive, spiritual thoughts. The mind is the puppet of the food which is consumed. The quality of the food determines the direction of the mental flow. Mind means desire; mind is also the creative principle. When fed a *rajasic* diet (emotional, active, out of control), the mind gallops into the world and plunges into desire; it brings people deeper into the morass. When fed a *thamasic* diet (dulls, blunts reason, induces sloth) the mind is callous, inert and useless for uplifting mankind. To summarize:

Rajasic food enrages the emotions.
Thamasic food induces sloth and sleep.
Satwic food satisfies.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Excerpts taken from

Sadhana—The Inward Path, pp 188-193

Baba often warns us to not watch television while eating. He says that the negativity which is seen on TV mixes with the food causing harm to all viewers, especially children.

Planting Trees and Ideas

Because of the advance of technology, several factories have sprung up, causing emission of harmful gases into the atmosphere and resulting in the ozone layer becoming thinner. If this goes on unchecked, it may have disastrous consequences. Scientists are trying to stop the breakup of the ozone layer but are unable to find a remedy. The cause of this situation is that more carbon dioxide is being let into the atmosphere. Normally, plants and trees absorb and assimilate the carbon dioxide and supply oxygen by the natural process of photosynthesis. But because there is deforestation to an alarming extent, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has considerably increased. The remedy for this situation is intensive reforestation, growing more trees everywhere, and protecting the existing trees without destroying them for other purposes. This relationship of man, nature and God is very intimate, which some scientists may not be able to realize.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Sanathana Sarathi, February 1993

There we have it, direct from Baba! Years ago, He said that man is responsible for the decrease in the ozone layer and gave a remedy: protect trees, and plant more trees. In this discourse, Swami talks more about man, nature and the balance between them that we must maintain; this discourse could be the focus of a good study circle/service project.

Trees and plants use carbon dioxide to make oxygen; humans and animals use oxygen to make carbon dioxide; we are responsible for maintaining the balance.

Trees have other uses. They prevent erosion. They provide shade and evaporative cooling. It has been said that in the summer, clusters of urban trees can cool air temperature by 10 degrees, reducing the need for air conditioning. Trees enhance neighborhoods. Have you noticed the difference between a new, treeless suburb and a twenty-year-old suburb with beautiful trees?

Here are some ways in which you and

your Sathya Sai Baba Center could get involved in helping the earth and its atmosphere. Everything is voluntary, of course.

Reduce your consumption of paper and paper products, thus saving existing trees. Plant some trees to spruce up your yard. If you don't know how to begin, your local nursery will be happy to help you. You may wish to contact a community organization or cooperative extension service of a local college or university.

Help out on Arbor Day. Some schools use Arbor Day to teach children about the importance of forestry and trees. If your child's school does this, take part in planning and organizing it. Arbor Day, an annual tree planting day, is generally observed throughout the U.S., often on the third or fourth Friday of April. Arbor Day started in the state of Nebraska* on April 10, 1872.

As a Sai Center service project, plant

*The nickname for the state of Nebraska is the "Tree Planters' State."

trees. Start in devotees' yards. Then, branch out [no pun intended] and help a local organization that is involved in planting trees. Or contact the American Forestry Association, whose Global Releaf Program would like to plant millions of trees. In many places, the Forestry Association can tell you where trees are needed, teach you how to plant them, and they may deliver the trees for you to plant at a prearranged time and place. Global Releaf Program, P.O. Box 2000, Washington, D.C. 20013, telephone (202) 955-4500.

Get involved with a not-for-profit organization like Trees for the Future, which is trying to help people of developing countries to start environmentally beneficial, self-help projects. For example, their goal for 1995 was to help plant over 6,000,000 trees, involving 13,500 families in 19 countries. Trees for the Future, 11306 Estona Dr., P.O. Box 1786, Silver Spring, MD 20915, telephone (800) 643-0001.

Baba has said in *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. XI, chapter 20, *A tree when it is axed might yet put forth leaves, but a heart axed by a bitter word can never sprout again.*

For Christmas, people buy cut trees and put them in their houses for a few weeks. Here's an alternative: Buy a live tree, keep it in the house for two weeks, then plant it outside. Twenty years ago, someone I know did this, and the beautiful fir now stands 30 feet tall.

The average American uses the equivalent of seven trees a year. That's more than 1.5 billion trees a year in the United States.

Baba has said, *Trees provide cool shade and sweet fruit equally to all, whether man has fostered them or harmed them. They teach this lesson in equal-mindedness.*

From about 1950 to 1980, the world's forested surface was reduced by 25%. Every year, over 25 million acres of tropical forests are destroyed.

Rain forests are being torn down to make furniture from teak, mahogany, ebony, and other tropical hardwoods. Help by buying furniture made of hardwoods from forests in North America that are harvested and replanted just like other crops.

Trees

I think that I shall never see

A poem as lovely as a tree.

*A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing
breast.*

*A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray.*

*A tree that may in summer wear,
A nest of robins in her hair.*

*Upon whose bosom snow has lain,
Who intimately lives with rain.*

*Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.*

—Alfred Joyce Kilmer

Written in 1913

Notes for Sathya Sai Service

Coordinators

- You could help this project by doing some research before discussing it at a Sai Center meeting.

- Find an organization that does tree planting in your community, find out what help they give individuals, and see whether your center could do a tree planting service project with their help.

—David Gries

Former U.S. Sai Service Coordinator

The idea of vegetarianism did not, however, take hold in Western society per se. Today, there are a few monastic orders in the Western world that practice total vegetarianism, the most famous being the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Their philosophy is based on the teachings of the *Bible* in which God proclaims, "I give you all plants that bear seeds everywhere on earth and every tree bearing fruit which yields seeds; they shall be yours for food." (Genesis 1:29, King James version).

Reincarnation and Karma

In order to view life as being sacred and all life forms as mutually dependent, man has to understand his relationship to the environment. The *Chandogya Upanishad* says that when man dies, he returns to the atmosphere and becomes one with the earth again, only to re-enter the plants which in turn become food for man, thus creating conditions for assuming new embodiments or new life. This establishes a connection between our body in this life and the embodiment we will assume in the next one. The impressions created through our actions in this lifetime determine the nature of our next life. Reincarnation is thus an integral part of the law of karma. By hurting the animal kingdom, we are incurring a karmic debt of enormous magnitude and bring retribution upon ourselves. Lord Krishna has stated in the *Bhagavatham*, "Those who kill animals without remorse are devoured by those animals in their next birth."

The great sage, Yajnavalkya, has stated that three ghastly crimes are committed by slaughtering animals for the sake of eating their flesh. These are:

1. The taking of innocent life.
2. The infliction of pain on the innocent animal during the process of killing it.
3. The crime of depriving the animal of its strength through slaughtering it.

Punishment for all three crimes entails 20 rebirths characterized by:

1. Premature and painful death.
2. Pain, suffering and unhappiness, including family feuds, anxiety and tensions.
3. Poor health in which the life of the person concerned will be wasted away.

What About Butchering?

All living beings place a great value on life. Anything that has life tries to stay alive (this includes plants), though the level of consciousness or awareness might differ from one species to another. No living creature would give itself up as food for another living being. Animals, birds, fish, and indeed all mobile creatures also feel the desire to live, just as humans do. They, too, would struggle, cry and feel the pain in being hurt, just as we would. The only difference is that animals cannot verbally express to us the agony that they feel. (It has been reported that pigs cry out in a manner similar to the way humans scream).

We may rationalize that it is the butcher who kills, and that we only eat, therefore we have not sinned. Swami responds by saying, *Sin has been committed by the one who eats as well as the one who kills.* The American philosopher and essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once said, "You have just dined, and however scrupulously the slaughter house is concealed in the graceful distance of miles, there is complicity." It is said that if slaughter houses were made of glass, most of the people in this world would

be vegetarians. We simply choose not to think about what we know goes on within the premises of those places.

There is an interesting story in one of Tolstoy's books, *Tolstoy: A Life of My Father*. In the story, the famous Russian author tells of his aunt being invited to dinner. His father wanted to teach the aunt a lesson regarding the truth behind eating meat. The story goes:

"Auntie was fond of food, and when she was offered only a vegetarian diet, she was indignant. She said she could not eat any old filth and demanded that they give her meat, chicken. The next time she came to dinner, she was astonished to find a live chicken tied to her chair and a large knife on her plate."

"What's this?" asked auntie. "You wanted chicken," Tolstoy replied, scarcely restraining his laughter. "No one of us is willing to kill it. Therefore, we prepared everything, so you could do it yourself." Needless to say, she was shocked and dumbfounded.

Native Americans

The American Indians, the natives of this vast country, lived in sacred harmony with nature and the animal kingdom. Though circumstances forced them to hunt for food in the wilderness, they

killed only the very old, defective and weak members of the species, thereby strengthening the species in question and contributing toward the balance of nature. The question of killing arose only for reasons of survival, never pleasure.

When the time came for the American Indians to surrender their land to the white man, the great chief, Seattle, spoke on behalf of his people. His only request was this: "I will make one condition. The white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man. Therefore, all things are connected."

When we begin to recognize this unity in diversity, sacred thoughts will begin to permeate our attitudes and actions. It would then become reprehensible to take the life of an animal, no matter for what reason, least of all for food. Depending on the life force of plants, fruits and grains, rather than meat, would become one's choice. Thus, vegetarianism transcends food alone; it leads to a new way of life. Let us now reevaluate our privileged role in God's circle of life and give a helping hand to our fellow creatures.

—Indira Pradhan, Ohio, USA
Sanathana Sarathi, May 1996

Man consumes as food many living beings, eggs, fish, cattle, sheep, etc. Because of the act of consumption, they are then born as human beings. But since they have not had the education which can reveal the God within, they vegetate or stay brutish. They do not have the appropriate ticket or passport for rising higher than the human status in which they have been hurriedly placed. Like most, they roll along from womb to tomb, bond slaves to the senses, and the ills that bondage inevitably brings in its train.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sadhana—The Inward Path, p 52

The Magical Threes

The other day, as I was reading, the word "three" kept repeating in my thoughts. I could not go on reading; my mind was no longer one-pointed. I stopped and began thinking of Swami and the number three.

Working with children and in teacher training, I have been emphasizing Baba's use of **three Oms** and **three shantis (peace)**. Swami's explanation of the three *shantis* is for the elevation of the **body**, the **mind** and the **soul**. Realizing this has been very good, for it helps me to remain focused.

I began to think of another series of threes that Swami mentions quite often, ***We are really three people: the one we think we are, the one others think we are, and the one we really are.*** This is a familiar saying of our dear Lord, and, once again, I think of the body, the mind and the soul.

Have we not heard these words, whether it be in song or in discourse **being, awareness, bliss (sat-chit-ananda)** or the immutable triad, **truth, auspiciousness, goodness (sathyam, sivam, sundaram)**.

Swami says that the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (EHV), is really **3 HV**, head, heart and hands. In an early discourse He said, *Cleanse the mind, the **Head**, offer the **Heart** with compassion and love, and use the **Hands** to selflessly serve.*

Of course, there are the three Sais: **Shirdi Sai, Sathya Sai and Prema Sai**. And there are the three wings of the Sai Organization: **Service, Education, and**

Devotion. The number three again seems to abound.

In *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Volume XI, Baba's discourses from 1982 mention many threes. Take for example, chapter 44, page 250 (both old and new editions), entitled, "The Triple Purity," in which Baba refers to, **Thought, Word and Deed**. Swami tells us, *The mind has no patience; it jumps to conclusions and converses always with the ego*. He tells of three ways in which to calm the mind:

Regulate breathing by watching the symmetry and balance of breathing. *This will lessen the eagerness of the tongue to wander into conversation.*

Do loving service to the diseased and distressed. *You will feel that your energies are more fruitfully engaged in serving humankind than in talking and discussing with your wandering mind.*

Spiritual exercise should be done in earnest and with regularity. *It can be repetition of the name, recitation of a mantra, chanting hymns or practice of yogic postures. The Gayatri Mantra can well be resorted to for this purpose. It is certain to yield quick results.*

He goes further and tells us three ways to develop a pure mind:

... by listening to constructive counsel

... through meditation and rumination

... and putting the good counsel into practice.

In Volume XI, chapters 23-24, Baba discusses **three levels of Love**, and the **three stages of Love**. (pages 238-243)

I could pursue this further with the

Lord's references of threes, but I shall leave the rest to you, the reader, to draw your own conclusions.

Numbers are many, and I suppose that a case can be made for some, but it seems to me that Sathya Sai Baba brings

threes to the forefront constantly through **thought, word, deed** and through **body, mind, soul**. With these magical threes, we are being given clues for living a spiritual life.

—Bea Flaig
Tucson, Arizona

A Prayer and a Smile

Faith is only one part of the equation of a spiritually mature life. Faith is similar to believing that we need food for our existence or we die. But prayer is different; it is the food itself.

You can eat nutritionally well-balanced meals, or choose junk food which will sustain you but not truly feed your muscle, bone and brain requirements.

I visited a friend in the hospital recently who made me think deeply about prayer. I didn't know it then, but he did not have too much time left.

We didn't exchange too many words because he wasn't able. But out of the blue he said, "You know, we really don't know how to pray." It took me by surprise because I was not ready for such a deep conversation. However, I managed to utter, "It's like feeling so overwhelmed with God's Love, and you don't know how to say, 'Thank you,' isn't it?"

He nodded in agreement and pointed to his heart whispering, "It's all in here." At that moment I felt that George had been in constant dialogue with Jesus.

Nothing else in life matters a hill of beans when you are going back from whence you came.

When I had awakened that morning, the visit was not on my agenda. Instead, it was uppermost in my mind to get to my volunteer job, at Silverton Hospital, on time.

It wasn't until after my shift that I remembered George was in the hospital, so I checked to see if he had been discharged. I was told, "yes," he was in, but he was sleeping off and on, and only family members could visit. But they told me that I could peek in, and if he was awake, I could spend a minute.

Our busy time on earth is actually living out our allotted years wherever and however that direction takes us. So, another part of the equation along with **faith** and **prayer** has got to be **truth**.

Once the Truth is clear, our choices are clear, then our prayers are meaningful and viable. To do less is an exercise in futility. Busying ourselves with the goodness of life should be a daily occupation; that's where we fail or succeed, constantly struggling to stay on course.

I believe that George's ability to say so few words, made those words all the more meaningful. The power of the silent language of prayer remains a divine mystery. But once involved in prayer, it takes on a life of its own, freeing us to smile, love and do good.

Three days later, I learned that George had passed away. His dearest friend told me that, toward the end, he had a blissful smile on his face.

—Winnie Bolton
Mt. Angel News, Mt. Angel, Oregon

Children's Corner

Garbage Can Pup

I found him in a garbage can on Saturday,
Crying and scratching hard, trying to get away.
Taking off the lid, I laughed as I picked him up,
Because his ears were so big and floppy—such a funny pup.
He wagged his tail, and I could see that he had had a bath.
And when he barked, his ears stood up, and that really made me laugh.

We ran and played awhile that day in a nearby park.
Sometimes he would hide, but when I called, he would answer with a bark.
Afterwards, we sat down and had a bite to eat.
I gave him food, petted him and rubbed his furry feet.

"I wish I could keep you, Floppy," I said with a tearful sound,
"But you see, my Mother has a job, and she would never come around.
It's not so easy for her, living in a small flat.
She's very busy, so I help her with this and that.
I guess I'll have to take you to the pound, because at least you will be fed.
Maybe some kid will choose you, I wish that I could," I said.

We walked a couple of blocks to the animal shelter.
My stomach hurt, my heart ached, and my thoughts went helter-skelter.
"He's a nice pup, Miss," I said. "I found him just today."
"I have no money for his keep, but I wish that I could pay."

"Yes, I know the rules; some you put to sleep."
"But he would just starve with no food out on the busy street."
"I named him Floppy, as you can see, he has such floppy ears."
Then I turned away, so she would not see my tears.
I only heard one small bark, as I bolted for the door.
One last goodbye from my pal, I didn't wait for more.

"Please listen," I prayed to Baba, as I sat upon the curb.
"He never hurt anybody," I cried. Then my eyesight blurred.
And even though there were tears, my mind felt very still.
I felt a great peace, knowing I had done Swami's will.

Brakes squealed, and a car stopped in front of the shelter door.
A pretty lady jumped out, and my tears began to pour.
"Oh, Baba, please," I cried. "I never asked for much."

"Just take care of Floppy, give him a home and such."

"Come on, Floppy," her voice sang as they climbed into the car.

"You're so cute, I'll take you home. It isn't very far."

"I got you for my son," she said, scratching his funny ear.

He jumped and wiggled so happily, she could hardly see to steer.

"Hey, Mom, wait," I finally cried. "I have to get in, too."

"Swami led you right to us, there's nothing you could do."

Well, that was many years ago, before Floppy and I grew up,
Living in the Love of Sai—me and my garbage can pup.

—Susan Caffery (a.k.a. Story Auntie) Prasanthi Nilayam



Illustration by
—Diane Wells

Bits and Pieces

In Sathya Sai Baba's interview room, a little spider crawled on a lady. When she noticed it, she was frightened and flicked it off her skirt. The spider landed on the floor, took a moment to recover, and then crawled back toward the lady. She watched the little thing with dread. Swami reached out, and put His hand over the spider. He asked her, *You don't like spiders?* When He opened His hand, the little spider had been turned into a beautiful gold brooch of a spider with a diamond body. "Oh, Swami, I just love spiders," the lady crooned. *No, I don't think so*, Swami replied as He closed His hand over the brooch. When He opened His hand again, the gold and diamond ornament had once again become a live spider, and it crawled rapidly away before the lady could show any new-found affection.

—Author Unknown

I must share what was, to me, two of the most important things I learned on a recent trip to the Lotus Feet of Sai. Some dear friends of mine, David and Faye Bailey and Faye's daughter Skye, were blessed with a number of interviews. During their last interview, two things happened, one humorous and the other quite profound. The first came because Swami had told David that he was to give many talks when the family returned to England. In the hope that he might find out what he was supposed to talk about, David asked Swami, "When I return to England, Swami, how am I supposed to talk?" Swami just smiled and said, *With your mouth.*

Skye told me that Baba, at one point, turned to the family and said, *So many people do not understand Swami's message. Love is everything; Love is the string that holds everything together. Even Swami is just a pearl on the string. All there is, is Love.*

When I heard that, I immediately understood the deeper meaning of what Swami had said to me on New Year's day. He spoke to my soul saying, *Go inside.*

—John Moore

Show no hatred toward any living being. Swami asked a man from Germany how his sleep had been. The man said that he had not been sleeping well in the ashram. It seemed that no matter what precautions he took, mosquitoes buzzed around his bed in the middle of the night. Swami said, *Not mosquitoes, only one mosquito, and not in the middle of the night. I was the mosquito, and I came to wake you up early in the morning, so you could do your spiritual practices. But did you show me any appreciation or kindness? No, all you wanted to do was swat me.*

—Author Unknown

There was a man who decided to use as a mantra, "I love you Sai." For days he would say to himself, "I love you Sai, I love you Sai," over and over again. One day he was called in for an interview. Without any preamble, Swami took his hand and said, *I Love you, too.*

—The Observer, June 1996

What's Up? Announcements

Did You Know?

Did you know that the **Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA** has been recording the text of the *Newsletter* on **audio cassette tapes**? This is probably not a surprise, but what may not be known is that we send the cassette tapes **free** to the blind who are interested in Sathya Sai Baba and His teachings. Just fill out the application for your blind friend or family member which appears on the half page in each issue (between pages 2 & 3) and write **BLIND** in large letters. Remember, don't send money.

Is Your Address Absolutely Accurate?

If there has been any change in your address—moved, are about to move, new zip code number, etc—please notify the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, c/o Sathya Sai Book Center, 305 W. 1st Street, Tustin, CA 92780-3108, Tel (714) 669-0522, Fax (714) 669-9138. (The Postal Service does not always forward third class mail). Accuracy counts!

Sai Retreats and Conferences

There are more weekend retreats coming up in September and October. (See Spring, 1998 *Newsletter* for dates and details). There are two more retreats/conferences that have not been mentioned before in this publication.

- First, is a Service Retreat entitled, "From i to I Through Service, Wisdom and Devotion," sponsored by the Northeast Region, and is to be held—for one day only—on September 12, in Bloomfield, CT. For information: Kevin Nelson, 385 Crestwood Dr., Cheshire, CT 06410, Tel: 250-7155, or Email: saikan@erols.com

- Second, is a silent retreat entitled, "See Always Inside," by the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regions, to be held October 16-18 at St. Mary's Villa, Sloatsburg, NY. For information from Mid-Atlantic: Al Levy, 143 Van Houten Fields, West Nyack, NY 10094, Tel. (914) 358-9487. For information from the Northeast: Murty Cheruvu, 3 Mockingbird Court, Hopewell Jct., NY 12533, Tel. (914) 227-8567.

New Airline Schedule To and From Puttaparthi

Via Indian Airlines effective July 16, 1998. This schedule will be valid for approximately nine months.

Mon. and Thurs. IC-970

Mumbai (Bombay) depart 11:00 a. m.

Puttaparthi arrive 12:20 p.m.

Puttaparthi depart 13:00 p.m.

Chennai (Madras) arrive 13:55 p.m.

Airbus A-320

Chennai (Madras) depart 13:35 a.m.

Puttaparthi arrive 14:30 p.m.

Puttaparthi depart 15:10 p.m.

Mumbai (Bombay) arrive 16:40 p.m.

Tues. and Sat. IC-969

Where Are the Nurses?

We thank the doctors who volunteered during *Guru Poornima*. However, more nurses were needed! Those dedicated nurses who helped displayed great devotion to the patients. If you are an RN, LVN, or health care professional and can volunteer any time during birthday celebrations (birthday is Nov. 23) please contact: Barbara Mofield, RN, 764 W. Saugerties Rd., Saugerties, NY 12477, Tel. (914) 246-1679.

"Keep ready a glass of drinking water and also put a tulsi leaf in the water." On seeing me, he asked me to sit by his side on the bed, and he said, "Even the sky may break into pieces; the ocean may become dry; but your promise will never go in vain. To fulfill your promise made 19 years ago, you have come here now, of your own accord. Don't dupe me with your mischievous smiles. Please pour the water from that glass into my mouth with your Divine hands as *prasad* (sacred food) after you take a sip from it. How fortunate I am! King Dasaratha had Lord Narayana Himself as his son, Sri Rama had Adishesha himself as Laxmana, and Narayana's conch and discus as Bharata and Satrughna. But what of that? When Dasaratha breathed his last, there was not a single son to pour water into his mouth. Swami, you are born in our Ratnakaram family which is sanctified by Divine origins and affiliations. All these are aspects of the Divine. Thus, God Himself has been born into our family in your form! Now, don't disappoint me; please grant me this boon." I told him, "That is the very purpose of my coming to you now." When I was about to pour the water into his mouth, he protested, saying, "No, no. You must first drink from the glass and then pour the remaining water into my mouth." So, I did as desired by him.

Then, he called his daughter-in-law and said, "Oh, Easwaramma! Swami's glory will spread throughout the world. The world itself will be transformed. Lots of devotees will gather here from other lands also; you must all be careful. Don't be misled by illusion (*maya*) in the belief that Swami is your son, Sathya, He belongs to all just as Krishna belonged

to all in the *Dwapara* Age." So saying, he laid his hands on my feet and breathed his last. He, too, keeps coming to me, now and then, in his physical form just like Easwaramma. Kondama Raju has said, "Swami, by your grace, I am liberated. No more birth or death for me, I have become immortal." He appears before me, and also gives his suggestions about being careful concerning the happenings going on, in and around Prasanthi Nilayam. At the same time, he adds, "Swami, I know that you are all-powerful. Nobody can harm you, but still because of our bodily relationship, I cannot resist telling you such things. Please treat this as my prayer, not as advice." Like this, both he and Easwaramma come and talk to me now and then.

Leaving His Body

Recently, when I was in Prasanthi Nilayam, someone had a serious heart attack. Then at 2:00 a.m., I left my physical body and went there in my spiritual body. Until 3:00 p.m. the next day, this physical body of Swami's did not come out. All the devotees worried that Swami had not come out [for *darshan*.] Then the boys who sleep upstairs as well as those who sleep downstairs, gathered around Swami's physical body and began crying. Apart from this, Chiranjeevi Rao brought Dr. Alreja into my room. Alreja is a staunch devotee of Swami's. For the last 40 years he has stayed in Prasanthi Nilayam. He examined Swami's body and, as he saw no signs of life, he, too, began weeping. Then, Chiranjeevi Rao said, "Swami occasionally leaves His body like this. We have seen such things previously." He advised the six students [attending to Swami's room] not to di-

vulge anything to anyone about Swami.

All six boys had passed MBA (Master of Business Administration) degrees in Swami's college, and after some training in New Delhi, they are working as technicians in Swami's Super Specialty Hospital. They are very good boys. They told Chiranjeevi Rao that they would not leave Swami's room. They could not contain themselves; falling at the feet of this body, they were sobbing.

Then, at 3:00 p.m. Swami returned, alive and in the body, and asked them, "What is all this drama?" In astonishment, the boys asked, "Swami, who is enacting the drama, Swami or us?" There is a boy called Srinivas among them who had passed engineering and also MBA. He said, "Swami, it is all your drama and *leela*!" Swami told them, "Devotees are waiting for *darshan*, so I am going now." As I had not taken even a sip of water since 2:00 a.m. the previous night, the boys pleaded with me to drink at least some buttermilk or porridge. I told them that I had no such habit; so I took my bath and went out to *darshan*. Such things happen, the boys are aware of this.

What Do the Parents Want?

These boys are direct witnesses to the fact that mothers' love is immortal. The life of a person who enjoys such mother's love will be blissful, indeed. However, mothers should also pay attention to the wholesome development of their sons. Many mothers become perturbed when their sons take to the spiritual path. It is because of their merit earned during several lives that these youngsters have such a spiritual bent of mind. The parents should not be wor-

ried about this; on the contrary, they should feel glad about it. After graduation, parents want their sons to occupy high positions and become great. But Swami's love for the boys is such that He wants them to become good, not great.

What Difference-Good & Great?

What is the difference between good and great? Good people see God even in human beings; whereas, great people see even God as man. For example, Ravana was a great person in terms of his talents and accomplishments, but he looked upon the Divine Incarnation of Rama as a mere mortal. Rama, on the other hand, recognized the Divinity of all because of his own goodness. Thus, unlike great people, good people have the conviction that God resides in the hearts of all beings, and that the entire universe is filled with Divinity as declared by the scriptures. Therefore, one should aspire to be good but not great. So called "greatness" is selfishness, and nothing but selfishness. A good person is always selfless. I advise everybody to become good, to respect their parents, show gratitude to them, and give them joy.

The boys also agree with me in this matter; however, sometimes they have their self-interest just like their parents. They want to toe the line like their parents. However, some of them want to stay at Swami's lotus feet and do Swami's service.

One of the Students

For example, there is one, Satyajit, among the boys who accompanied me to Kodaikanal recently. His parents were also present, when he prefaced his talk

with a request that he might not be misunderstood for divulging what was in his mind, because he could not restrain himself from giving vent to it. He said, "Many people who occupy high positions come to Swami, and they go away after their desires are fulfilled. Several businessmen have come to Him, get the benefit of His counseling, and then they go back to their places. Sick persons have come to Him, and after being cured of their disease, they, too, return home."

"So, also, many students come to Swami's colleges, receive free education and go back. In this way, those people are mindful of their own self-interests. But nobody thinks of Swami's needs. Now and then Swami falls down."

[Swami interrupted Himself in the middle of the boy's quotation.]

The boy has seen me falling down. Once I fell under a pillar. I didn't care about it, but the boys were alarmed.

"So, there should always be some boys to take care of Swami's body. In the company of two or three boys, Swami will eat a few morsels. But He goes alone for lunch after *Arati*, and He hardly eats anything when by Himself."

Swami Goes on to Explain . . .

When I am with the boys, I eat what they eat. While at Puttaparthi, I eat only *sangati* (a rice-ragi mixture) along with peanut chutney. When I go to Kodaikanal, I eat in the company of the boy students, so I cannot eat my usual *sangati*. The boys do not like *sangati* because they are not used to it. In order to give them joy, I eat rice along with them. But I don't relish rice as much as *sangati*. The result was that in 20 days of my stay in Kodaikanal, I lost weight.

Satyajit used to weigh Swami often. He used to take his own weight; then request me also to take my weight. I used to make fun of him, saying, "Am I a football which changes weight depending on deflation or inflation? However, he recorded my weight as 108 pounds before leaving Puttaparthi. In Kodaikanal, he again took my weight and got worried when it recorded less than 100 pounds.

Saying all that in his talk, Satyajit declared that he would not part from Swami, as he wanted to look after Swami's physical needs. I told him, "Don't say such things so stubbornly in a public meeting. Who knows the future? Maybe Swami Himself will entrust you with some other work." However, Satyajit was bold enough to make a statement that he would place his entire life at Swami's disposal. Indulal Shah, Chairman of the World Council, was also present when the boy spoke. Many people congratulated the boy.

More Concern for Swami

The next day, when Indulal Shah spoke, he confessed that he and other members from the Central Trust did not pay attention to that aspect of Swami's physical welfare which was pointed out by Satyajit, he promised that they would thereafter take necessary measures in that regard. Likewise, everyone will have their own ideas, but such motherly feelings will always be noble and unselfish.

Some time ago, Satyajit's mother was operated upon for a leg fracture while she was in Prasanthi Nilayam. He took my permission to go and massage her legs. While I was in Brindavan, he slowly approached me and started rubbing my legs. I told him that I had no pain

and didn't need a massage. He said that Swami would not tell anyone, even if He had pain, and that he, Satyajit, could massage very well because of learning after his mother's surgery. As he was massaging Swami's legs, he found that, after some time, Swami had disappeared; He was missing from there. Satyajit then went to the Puttaparthi hostel, and closed his eyes. When he opened his eyes again, he found himself massaging Swami's feet.

Having had such experiences he says, "How can I leave Swami and return to the world? I don't want the worldly life." Swami admonished him, saying, "You should not say such things; simply shut up your mouth and do your work." He passed [his studies] and again joined the MBA program when he already had a postgraduate degree. He replied that thereby he could be with Swami another two years, at least. There are many other boys with such feelings.

Some Have Deep Faith

Those who have had mother's love, will look upon God as mother. Several students who have studied in Swami's colleges, return home, take up jobs and live a routine, worldly life. Only a few students have the conviction that if they look upon Swami as their mother, father and their everything, He, in turn, will take care of their families. Without such faith, one will not be happy.

A gentleman named Reddi, brought a film on Prahlada and screened it for the benefit of Swami's students at Puttaparthi. When the child, Prahlada, was given poison at the insistence of his demonic father, he took it saying, "*Narayana, Narayana, Narayana* (God, God,

God)," and so the poison went to God and never affected the boy. When he was thrown from a high cliff; he cried out, "*Narayana, Narayana.*" Lord *Narayana* held him in His hands, and no harm came to the boy. He uttered the same thing when he was made to be bitten by snakes. The snakes were transformed into garlands. He was trampled upon by elephants, but when he cried, "*Narayana, Narayana,*" the elephants became Lord *Narayana*.

Satyajit had seen that cinema along with other students. He told me, "Swami, that was cinema *Narayana*; I don't want any *Narayana* other than *Sai Narayana*." This kind of noble attitude is the result of merit earned over several lives. Once I asked him to go and attend *bhajans* (devotional songs). He said, "Swami! I shall sit under the ashoka tree and do *bhajans*." In such matters, Swami does not use compulsion, so I told him to do as he liked. Like this, a few people have very high ideas and ideals. But there are some students who pretend to be great devotees while staying in Swami's college. However, once they get out with a degree, they turn out to be extremely wicked fellows.

You should develop wholesome vision (*samyak-drishti*) which leads to good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, ultimately resulting in liberation. The prerequisite is *samyak-drishti*. If you control your vision, you can control everything.

Satyajit follows Swami's commands and ideals; he does not look at anybody coming here. I asked him, "What is wrong in looking at others with good feelings?" He replied, "I don't want that feeling or that seeing; I want all my feeling and

seeing to be confined to Swami only." "Do as you like," I told him.

All the students who went to Kodai-kanal this year [1998] with Swami are of a high caliber. They are very fortunate boys. I used to take full care of all their needs. Such boys will do a lot of good in the world. When individuals are all right, the society, the nation and the world will be all right. The individual is *vyashti*; society is *samasthi*; their totality, creation, is *srishti*. The unity of these three is Divinity.

Without God's Grace

First and foremost, you should think of your mother as Divine; you should be grateful to her and give her joy. Only a noble mother will beget noble sons. That is why Kondama Raju told his daughter-in-law, "Easwaramma! You appear to be an ordinary woman, but God Himself has been born as your son. How fortunate you are! So saying, he saluted Easwaramma. Have you ever seen a mother-in-law or a father-in-law doing *namaskar* (salutations) to the daughter-in-law? Kondama Raju gave a new meaning to her name, saying, "Your name has become meaningful, because Easwaramma literally means *Amma* or mother of *Eswara*, God." Such wise people recognize Divinity. Whereas, the ignorant cannot recognize Divinity even after many experiences, just like blind people who cannot see the sunlight.

Persons with a spiritual bent of mind and love for the mother can achieve anything. Some sons disregard their parents after finishing their education and getting a job. What is the use of such an education, employment and money? All these are impermanent like passing

clouds. Without pleasing the parents and winning God's grace, all such things are useless.

About Sri Sankaracharya

In the life of Sri Sankaracharya, there is an episode which is relevant to the topic of the efficacy of the mother's blessings in one's life. Once, during Sankara's childhood, his father had to go somewhere; so he told his wife, Aryamba, "Tomorrow I won't be here for the daily worship. Let our young son attend to it." Accordingly, the next day, Aryamba asked her son to offer milk to the goddess Rajarajeshvari as part of the daily worship. The boy, Sankara, offered the milk to the goddess and prayed, "Oh, Mother Divine, it seems that you drink part of the milk offered to you by my father during daily worship. My father used to bring out the remaining milk from the shrine room, and give it as your *prasad* to my mother and myself. Today, in my father's absence, I am offering you milk. Please manifest yourself, drink some milk and give back the remaining portion as usual, as your *prasad* (blessed food) to us."

But even after prolonged requests, the Mother goddess did not comply with his prayers. Then in utter frustration, the boy brought a stone from the outside, and he told the idol that he would break his own head with that stone if she did not respond to his prayer. Sankara was only seven years old at the time. When he opened his eyes after the prayerful ultimatum, he was overjoyed to see that the Divine Mother had accepted the milk offered by him. But when the innocent boy looked in the cup, he found to his dismay that the goddess

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had not left even a single drop of milk as *prasadam*. So, he again prayed to her, "Mother, why have you gulped all the milk? What about *prasad* for me and my mother? Please return part of the milk into the cup. Otherwise, my mother will think that I have drunk all the milk. I cannot afford to incur the displeasure of my mother." The Divine Mother replied, "My child, can you give back the river waters after it has merged into the sea? Can you give back the fruit after it has been chewed and swallowed? So, I cannot give back even part of the milk which has gone into my belly." But the innocent boy was adamant. He cried, "I don't know all that! Mother, somehow you must give me some milk; otherwise,

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your love. But remember that this applies only at the physical level. At the spiritual level your entire heart should be given to God alone, because He alone is the indweller of all hearts. Mother and father are only *grihavasis*, home dwellers; teachers are only *ashramavasi* hermitage dwellers. Other than God, none else has the right to stay in your heart, so keep God always in your heart. You should love your parents, respect them and serve them. Acquire secular education for worldly happiness, and spiritual education for spiritual happiness. Follow the maxim, "God in the heart, and work in the hand." Then, you can achieve anything in the world. Sanctify your lives with love for the mother, father and others, remembering that God is the main source and inspiration for the principle of Love.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**, Prasanthi Nilayam
Easwaramma Day, May 6, 1998

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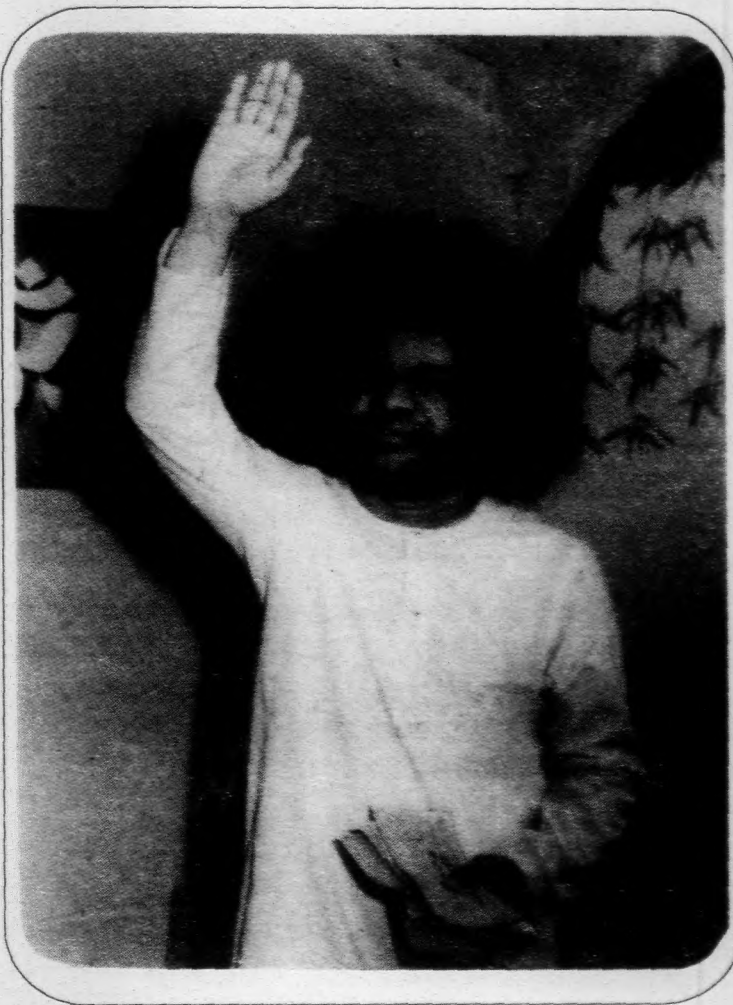
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my mother will have a bad impression about me."

The goddess was pleased with the devotion of the boy as well as his respect for his mother's feelings. So, she relented and placed a little of her breast milk in the cup and disappeared. Because Sankara drank of that milk of Mother Rajarajeshwari, he was transformed into an *Avatarapurusha*, a God-man. He became omniscient, gained mastery of all the *Vedas* and other scriptures even at the young age of 32 and became famous as the proponent of the philosophy of Advaita or nondualism.

Therefore, it is clear from this, that the mother is the embodiment of sweetness and love and the bestower of wisdom (*jnana*). You should enjoy the love of your mother, and please her with your love. But remember that this applies only at the physical level. At the spiritual level your entire heart should be given to God alone, because He alone is the indweller of all hearts. Mother and father are only *grihavis*, home dwellers; teachers are only *ashramavasi* hermitage dwellers. Other than God, none else has the right to stay in your heart, so keep God always in your heart. You should love your parents, respect them and serve them. Acquire secular education for worldly happiness, and spiritual education for spiritual happiness. Follow the maxim, "God in the heart, and work in the hand." Then, you can achieve anything in the world. Sanctify your lives with love for the mother, father and others, remembering that God is the main source and inspiration for the principle of Love.

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