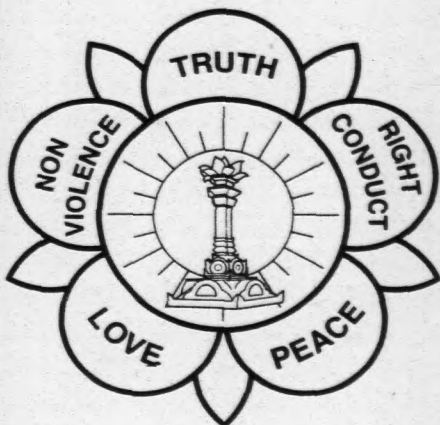




SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER, USA

SUMMER 1998
VOLUME 22, NUMBER 4
JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

Summer 1998

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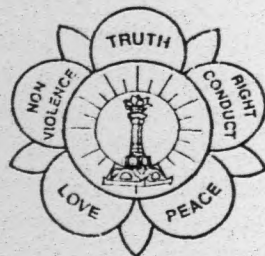
June, July, August

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.***



The *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA* welcomes photographs, drawings and literary contributions. Sorry, but we are unable to return any material which is sent to us, so please keep a copy for your files. We reserve the right of discrimination in selecting and editing material for publication. Kindly send any material to: **Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA, c/o Sathya Sai Book Center of America, 305 West First Street, Tustin, California 92780-3108 or Fax to the editor (909) 337-5270.**

—Barbara Bozzani, Editor



Sai's Message

God is omnipotent. He knows no distinction between the possible and the impossible. . . . Though He has no form, He can assume the form of the Universal Person, embodying all creation as His form. He is one, but He makes Himself many. Visualize all forms as His; the vitality of every being is His breath. Every bit in creation is He. . . . There is nothing distinct or separate from Him.

I have started the work for which I have come. I have collected the metal, the steel, the stone, the brick. I have dug the foundation trenches, and the superstructure will rise soon. There can be no interruption.

You will see thousands pressing along this road [to Prasanthi Nilayam],

hundreds on every rock of these hills. No one can stop this development or delay it. I will not give you up, nor will anyone of you give me up. The time will soon come when this huge building, and even vaster ones, will be too small for the gatherings of those who are called to this place. The sky itself will have to be the roof of the auditorium of the future. I will have to forgo the automobile and even the airplane when I move from place to place, for the crowds pressing around them will be huge. I will have to move across the sky. That, too, will happen, believe me.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. II

Take a Good Look

I have been blessed by being able to see Swami every year since 1974. And due to the nature of my work, which has been in the entertainment business, I am accustomed to watching—observing trends. Prior to my last visit to see Sai Baba, someone, a rather famous person, called and warned me:

"I don't want you to be surprised or disappointed, but Swami's different now. He doesn't have time or give attention like He used to."

Additionally, I have observed many followers from various Sai Centers complaining and hurt because they felt that Baba had been ignoring them. So, I pondered this before my departure, especially comments like, "Swami doesn't look at me any more."

This trip to India was shared by a group from Arizona. We were not special celebrities, just everyday folk. Some had seen Swami before, while others were new. And when our trip was over, I recalled the following:

One devotee from the group was a planner and could not believe just how well-organized everything in the ashram was. Another person was a doctor who marveled at the sophistication of Swami's Super Specialty hospital. A Catholic in our group who had many

questions and measured much by Jesus' miracles, had the wonderful chance of Swami standing right before him, opening His hand and *vibuthi* (holy ash) springing forth. A group member who felt somewhat spiritually isolated, found Swami before him, raising His beautiful orange robe off His feet, so that this person could do *padnamaskar* (touching the feet of a holy being), while Swami urged, *Go ahead*.

But that's not all. Baba took everyone's letters every day. The whole group was stunned. There was not a person who was even slightly disappointed. No one! Things could not have been nicer. The accommodations were excellent, too.

It is true that when we all look, we see different things. But what is most important, above all else, is to be able to look at Him. When someone says to you, "I'm so upset. Baba didn't look at me, He didn't notice me!" Maybe, you might want to remind them to think instead, "He gave me the supreme chance to look at Him."

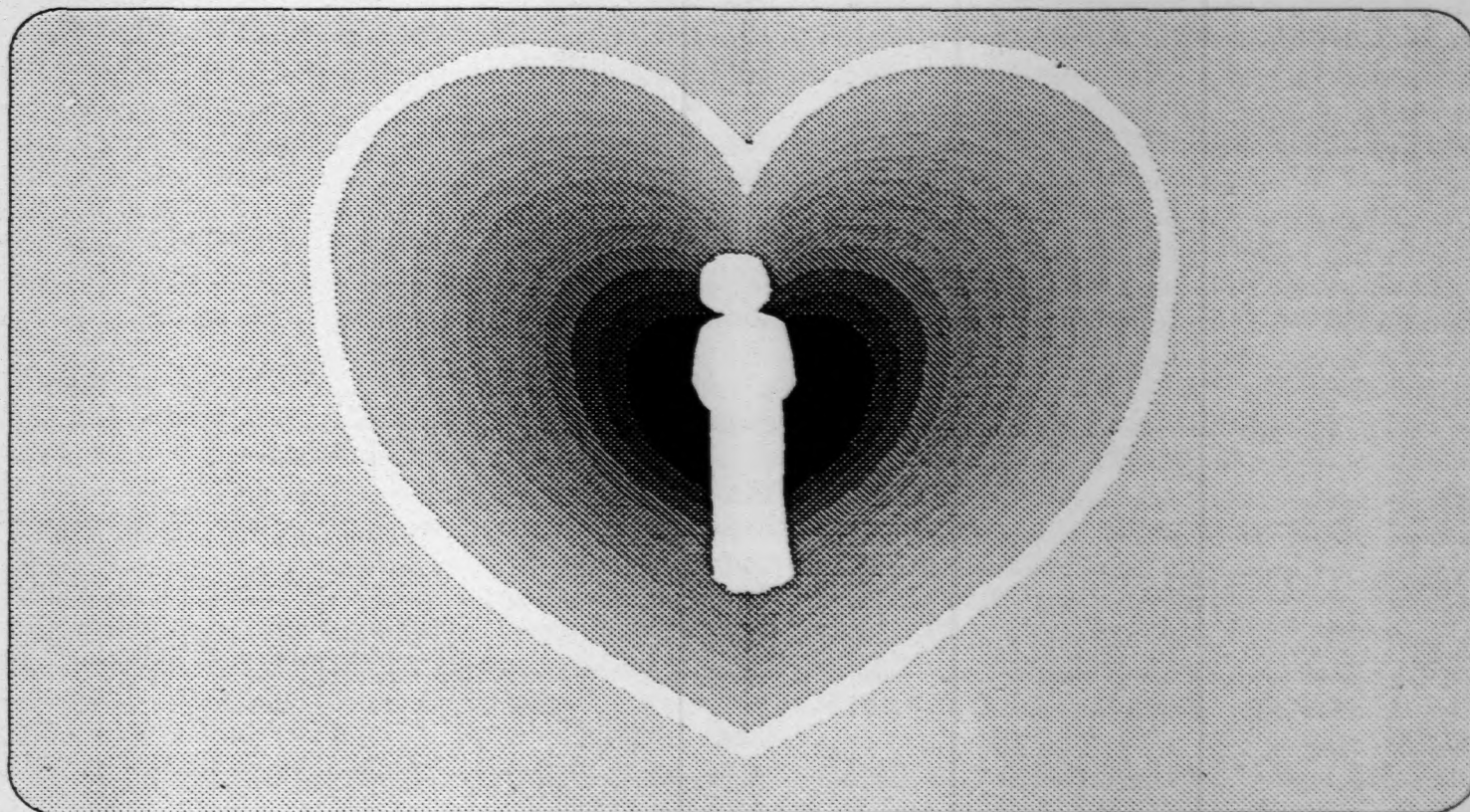
And that's what it's all about, isn't it? The opportunity to look at Him, to gaze into the eyes of Divinity. How very fortunate we are.

From the recollections of —**Estelle Tepper**
As told to —**Marilyn Osoff**



God is residing in the innermost recesses of your heart. You have to trace Him there and hold fast. He runs away but leaves footprints in His hurry to be beyond your reach. We have to recognize His footprints in everything of beauty, every act of goodness, every breath of gratitude, every sigh of compassion.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**
Thought for the Day, Prasanthi Nilayam



discriminates between the transient and the permanent, whose heart is full of Divine feelings and whose speech is soft and pleasing has nothing to fear in life. All qualities are related to education.

True education first involves desiring world peace. This is because each and every individual is a part of the world and the universe. When there is welfare in the world, individual welfare is possible. Therefore, every man who desires peace, prosperity and well-being must first desire the same for the world.

Secondly, the individual should not give any scope to narrow feelings in the heart. Narrow mindedness brings few results. Our feelings are responsible for our pleasure and our pain. Based on this principle, it is said, "As you feel, so it is. As you think, so it becomes."

Thirdly, true education involves unity and togetherness, coordination and equality. This sort of education is not

the body alone is not enough for life. It is not enough if only the stomach is filled, the mind, too, must mature and develop. Hence, we must also seek the health and growth of the mind. Only when the body and the mind are healthy, can people experience joy. Modern youth is concerned only with the appearance, beauty and health of the body. Man has many faculties and powers within him, physical, mental and spiritual. All powers are gifts from God. Youth today are misdirecting their inner talent and Divine power, misusing it, and consequently, they are suffering. They forget the values of coordination and integrity which are essential for the welfare of society. They do not recognize their own strengths. They believe only in the material, worldly and physical strengths, and forget their inner spiritual strength.

The main cause behind all faculties is the mind. When the mind is controlled,

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—**Sathya Sai Baba**
Thought for the Day, Prasanthi Nilayam

Baba Talks About . . .

Embodiments of Divine Love: The one who works hard and makes an effort will certainly accomplish much. The hard-working man will certainly acquire all kinds of wealth. He will never have to face a shortage. The one who chants the name of the Lord will not have worldly worries. The one who talks less will never be involved in conflict or controversy. Excessive talk has led man into conflict and discord. In order to be able to consider everybody as friends, sisters and brothers, one must talk less.

All Qualities Are Related to Education and Nature

The one who is always careful, who discriminates between the transient and the permanent, whose heart is full of Divine feelings and whose speech is soft and pleasing has nothing to fear in life. All qualities are related to education.

True education first involves desiring world peace. This is because each and every individual is a part of the world and the universe. When there is welfare in the world, individual welfare is possible. Therefore, every man who desires peace, prosperity and well-being must first desire the same for the world.

Secondly, the individual should not give any scope to narrow feelings in the heart. Narrow mindedness brings few results. Our feelings are responsible for our pleasure and our pain. Based on this principle, it is said, "As you feel, so it is. As you think, so it becomes."

Thirdly, true education involves unity and togetherness, coordination and equality. This sort of education is not

imparted by teachers. This is taught by nature itself. Nature is the best teacher. Nature is the first teacher of man; it teaches all forms of learning.

Equality and a Steady Mind

The beauty in sports lies in the fact that people forget their differences—of nationality, region, education and color, temperament and taste—while participating. The chief quality or virtue is to forget individual differences. Then, we must develop the spirit of equality.

Today, we participate in sports, games and exercises to develop our bodies and our health. Man is not merely the body. The strength and the health of the body alone is not enough for life. It is not enough if only the stomach is filled, the mind, too, must mature and develop. Hence, we must also seek the health and growth of the mind. Only when the body and the mind are healthy, can people experience joy. Modern youth is concerned only with the appearance, beauty and health of the body. Man has many faculties and powers within him, physical, mental and spiritual. All powers are gifts from God. Youth today are misdirecting their inner talent and Divine power, misusing it, and consequently, they are suffering. They forget the values of coordination and integrity which are essential for the welfare of society. They do not recognize their own strengths. They believe only in the material, worldly and physical strengths, and forget their inner spiritual strength.

The main cause behind all faculties is the mind. When the mind is controlled,

Divinity is attained. In any sphere of activity that we may undertake, unwavering faith is necessary. The unsteady mind achieves nothing. The steady mind can achieve anything. In order to have a steady mind, all the senses must be used correctly.

The Powers Lie Within

Youth in particular must know about the electric power present in the body. This power causes vision. We experience it through the eyes. We must use our sight, our vision, correctly in a pure and sacred manner. We must not have malignant feelings as the basis of our vision. The vision must not be polluted. We should not have bad thoughts within. The misuse of a faculty results in the loss of that particular power.

Then there is this magnetic power coursing through our bodies. It is mainly concentrated in our hands. Therefore, the hands must be used correctly for good actions. The hands must not be used to hurt anybody. You should never resort to violence.

There are also light rays in the body. These light rays—through the medium of electricity—spread all over. The music broadcast in Delhi can be heard anywhere, instantly, through a radio. This is electric power. This electric vibration in the human form is being misused. We do not listen to words that cause happiness. Criticism, slander, gossip and mocking words fill our ears; thus, the ears are used in the wrong way.

The next faculty is speech. The faculty of speech can be described as “laser power.” It is a combination of many powers. That is why we must speak with the utmost caution. Before we speak,

we must consider whether it will cause hurt, misunderstanding or pain to others. This laser power has reflection, reaction and resound. If you hurt others through your speech, others will hurt you through their speech. When we cause harm—through our evil thoughts, harmful speech or bad feelings—we, in turn, will be harmed. The harm that returns will be more than that which we cause. That is why it is said, “You cannot always oblige, but you can speak obligingly.” So speak good words.

We are misusing the infinite power latent in man. The weakness among modern youth is that one moment they praise a particular thing, and the very next moment they talk against it in an opposite manner. This habit is shameful. To live as a true human, we should have as a motto, “One tongue, one word.” In good and bad, in infamy and glory, through profit and loss, one must remain the same and maintain equanimity.

Have a Single Goal

But the youth of today are excitable, full of anxiety and temper. They have ill-will, and they follow the wrong path. They study a great deal, but they are unable to see the truth that virtues are not learned by studying. There are many scholars in the world. If we carefully examine the lives of great men, we will be able to see that they are great because of their conduct. The number of educated people is on the increase in every country. Many are highly reputed, but their names are remembered in text books, and not in the hearts of men. Only those persons with sacred and pure feelings are remembered by mankind.

A small example: In Calcutta there

were many great scholars, but the names of those scholars were lost in the passage of time. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was unlettered, but he is remembered for his devotion, charity and sacrifice. He had a single goal, namely God.

Danger, as Big as Mountains

You all have seen the student of the primary school [in the auditorium at Prasanthi Nilayam] who danced as Krishna on top of the snake. She is a small girl. Due to the fireworks display, the lower section where she was dancing caught on fire. The flames began to rise. The police, students and volunteers ran to put out the fire with buckets of water. But the child, with one-pointedness, single-mindedly danced without stopping. The child's concentration was on Swami. When the sight is fixed upon God, no danger can touch you. The place was surrounded by paper decorations; behind the decorations, 500 children were sitting. If there had been a big fire, what would have happened? Nothing! Dangers as big as mountains will melt like dew when there is God's grace.

Along with worldly feelings there should be a feeling of God. Culture must accompany education. What is culture? It is total understanding. No one understands the true meaning of, "Let all the worlds be happy," (*Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu*). Let there be well-being for all. This should be the standard of prayer; this should be the basic attitude.

Transformation and Saints

Ratnakara, a highway robber, heeded the advice of seven sages and began to chant the name of Rama. The con-

stant remembrance of the Lord's name filled him with the light and brightness of Rama's effulgence. Ratnakara then composed the epic, the *Ramayana*. What good fortune it was that Ratnakara, a highway thief, could transform himself into Saint Valmiki and compose the *Ramayana*. He had no education; he did not enroll in any university. But by composing the *Ramayana*, he became immortal in the hearts of people. That was because he wrote for God; he did everything to please the Lord.

The great sage, Vyasa, composed the eighteen *Puranas* (sacred poetic writings), and the *Bharata*. He taught the entire nation; he is remembered for his Divine qualities. Likewise, Potana is remembered for his *Bhagavatam* (a book on the glory of the Lord). He started with the lines, "What is said is *Bhagavatam*. The prompter is Lord Rama; the speaker, the spoken, the hearer and the heard is Lord Rama." He began his epic with such surrender to the Lord that, *Bhagavatam* is synonymous with Potana.

Education should not be from books alone; it should be instilled in the heart. It should brighten our minds and drive away darkness of ignorance. The darkness in the heart cannot be described.

When Uddhava, a messenger sent by Krishna, approached the *gopikas* (the cowherd women who were devoted to Lord Krishna), they gave him the following message: "Our minds are clouded and dark. Let there be the light of Krishna to dispel the darkness. Our lives are scattered and broken. Let them be gathered like flowers for a garland, and let the garland be given to our Lord. Our life force has withered in the barren soil of forgetfulness. Our Lord has taken

away His grace; His presence has been taken away from us. We have lost our greatest wealth; our lives are barren. We pray that the *darshan* (seeing a holy being), *sparshan* (touching a holy being), and *sambhashan* (hearing a holy being), may rekindle the life in these saplings.”

A worldly life is needed, but spiritual temperament has to be cultivated. The *gopikas* and *gopas* (male devotees of Krishna) of those days desired Krishna's presence for this reason. They said, “Krishna, we cannot live when apart from you. Our lives are meaningless without your holy name.” They prayed that they would have a relationship with Him in any name or form that He chose: “Oh Lord, if you take the form of a tree, let us be creepers entwining the tree. We don't want to be apart from you. If you are the mighty ocean, let us be the rivers that merge into the ocean. If you are the infinite sky, let us be small stars that adorn the sky. If you are a mountain, we'll be fawns that race on the slopes. Let there be no separation between You and us.”

Criticism Is . . .

Separation from God is the cause of all sorrow. When we forget the Lord, we begin to experience body consciousness. We keep lamenting that God has forgotten us, but that is not true. Who is the one who forgets? God never forgets His devotees, but devotees forget God. God never forgets; God is never away from the devotee. Only the devotee is away from God. You think God is away from you, but that is not true. God is always there, but you think that He has forgotten you.

All the negative thoughts in you are because of *you*, they are not from others. This has to be learned well.

What are the problems caused by modern day education? In any assembly or meeting, people tend to criticize each other's point of view. In any congregation, opposite factions use deplorable, vulgar language, at each other. Actually speaking, the one who criticizes is foolish. Only narrow-minded people criticize others; such people should be called “mean.” If you feel that the other person is wrong, take him aside and explain to him that what he is doing is wrong. If it is not possible to correct him, then ensure that you do not make the same mistake.

Nobody has the authority to criticize another. What good do you achieve by being critical? Even today, leaders spend their time in criticism. This only reveals their meanness. Criticizing others is the worst of sins. Only the narrow-minded indulge in criticism. Instead, develop your own goodness, and share it with others. Do not criticize others, you can be critical only about your own faults. For today's youth, such bad feelings, thoughts and habits are on the increase. They think only about their own self-interests; they have no concern for society; they have no Divine feelings for God.

If a person's desires are fulfilled, he is happy; if not, he criticizes others. Not just criticizing others, he accuses even God. That is not right. Youth must have the sacred resolve to live an ideal life. That is fundamental. They must question themselves, asking, “Am I born only to live by eating and roaming around? No! I must live an ideal life; I must ren-

der service to society. I must help to remove the ills of society." But before that, make certain that the same ills do not exist in you. If you wish to clean a dirty room, you must make sure that the broom is clean. Similarly, if you wish to correct others' faults, you must strive to be faultless.

One-pointed Mind

Today our games, deeds and words are a matter of business. That is not right. Games and sports are meant for the development of the spirit, for the health of the body, and for joy and happiness. We should work for those goals with unity. Do not be selfish. Do your duty well. God will take care of the victory or loss. It is said, "Human effort is our duty; success or failure lies in the will of God."

You desire to excel, to stand first and succeed in games and sports. For that you must put in much effort. You work with determination and dedication, devotion and joy. The same effort must be extended to all fields of life. It is narrow-minded to desire success and championship only in games and sports. You must have broad feelings, saying, "The success which I have achieved in games and sports, I must achieve also in life." Such should be your resolve, "Just as I have ranked above my fellow students, I must rank first in practicing ideals in my life. I must win the grace of God as an award."

Other things come and go, but the word *bahumathi* (awards) is a strange one. When the word is split, *bahu mathi*, it means many minds. With one mind, you face enough problems. You can well imagine your fate if you have many

minds, so do not be multi-minded. Having a one-pointed mind, you should reach eternity.

Uddhava approached the *gopikas* with a message from Krishna. He asked them to assemble in the house of Yashoda (the mother of Krishna) to hear it. The *gopikas* replied: "Uddhava, we do not have ten minds, we have only one mind, and that, too, has deserted us to follow Krishna to Mathura (Krishna's birth place). We do not possess the desire to understand the message of words. Kindly go back the way you came."

That shows us that the *gopikas* were single-minded. Uddhava went back to Krishna and said, "Krishna, I had mistakenly thought myself to be great; such was my pride and ignorance."

Swami sang about the gopikas

*Though the mothers-in-law criticize,
and husbands threaten,
gopikas make no reply,
nor lose their temper,
nor do they fear or flee.
Krishna's form was imprinted
indelibly on their hearts.*

Just as we print letters on paper, so Krishna's form was indelibly imprinted on the *gopikas'* hearts. It could not be erased. That was the true nature of their spirituality.

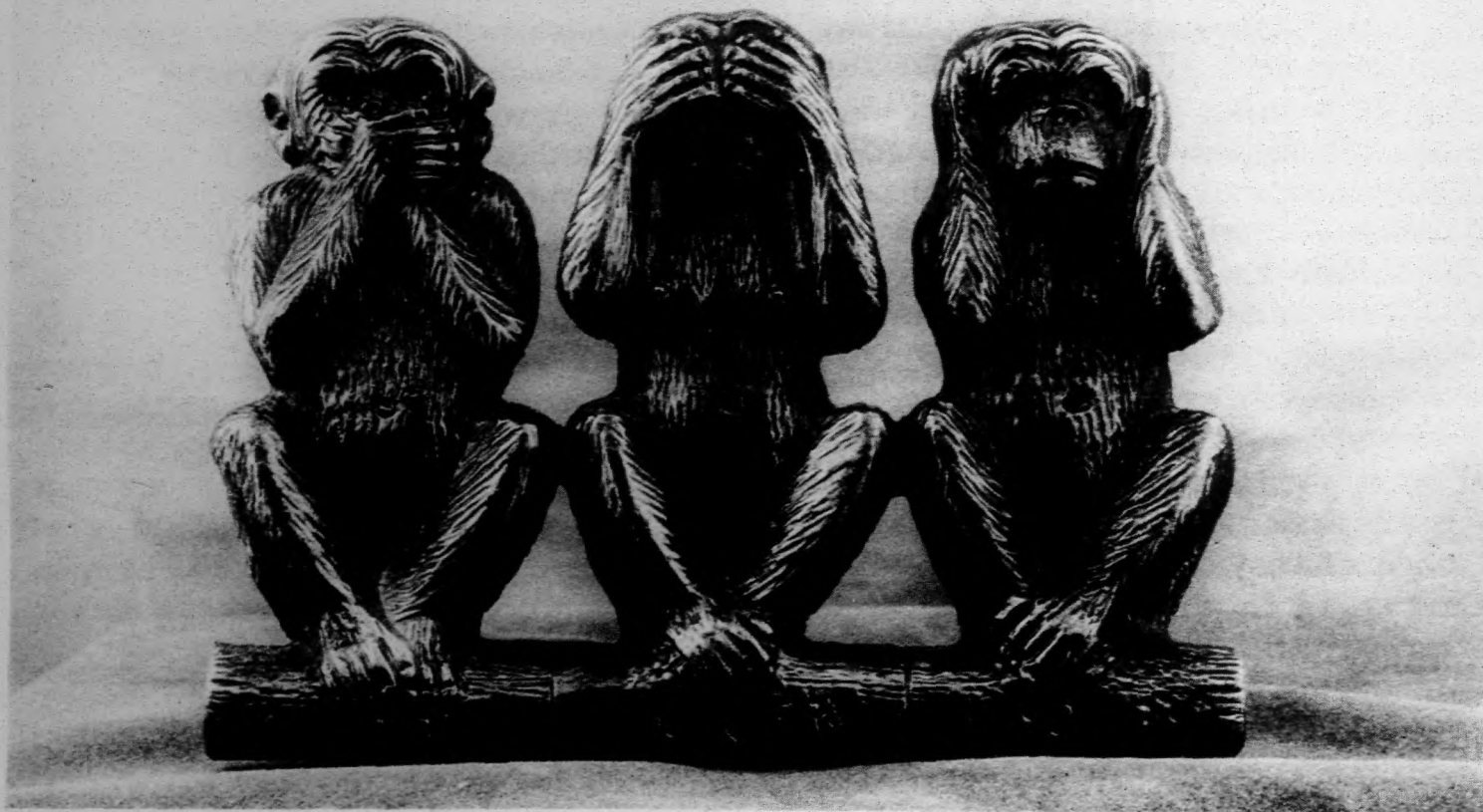
Human quality does not lie in collecting many feelings in your heart like a fish market. When a heart is like a fish market, whatever one says is foul smelling. Then all things seen are bad; all things heard are bad; thoughts and feelings are bad. Is this the progress of education?

Please turn to page 33

See Good, Speak Good, Hear Good

Intrigued by a small metal statue for many years, I was constantly drawn to it, so much so, that I kept it close to me in a readily available place. It's not an unusual piece; we've all seen its likeness—three monkeys—eyes covered in

me thinking about what others did as though I was the receiver of another's actions. I thought that if I did not look for evil in others; it would not affect me; it would teach me to be less negative. That perception didn't always work.



We've all seen its likeness, three monkeys . . .

one, mouth silenced in another, and ears held closed in the third. I've heard it said since childhood, "See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil."

Now that so many years have passed since my early days, I'm so transformed in my journey to God that I look upon the world in a different way. The monkey statue's message is an outward manifestation. In that interpretation it had

Sathya Sai Baba tells me instead to *see good*, and so a new understanding has emerged. Swami tells me to *look inside*, it is not the outside world that will change me, but my inner Self, my *Atma*. My innate, positive Self will transform me, and then it will affect the outer environment. Subtle, very subtle, but a reversal in my approach. Certainly, it is much to ponder.

Instead of "speak no evil," Baba tells me to *speak only good*, to use good words in a soft, sweet voice. How soothing it is to me as the speaker, how more gentle it makes me feel. I have learned that the way in which I speak, also, affects those around me. They become less strident, so I am now only the instrument.

Baba has taught me another positive approach. He says, *hear only good*. How negative I was, concentrating on hearing what others said, particularly their words that expressed anger, jealousy, greed, etc. I thought I was trying not to hear evil by avoiding gossip, slurs, intolerance, but that was not accurate, for again it always came from the thoughts and emotions of others. I was seeing them as the doers, and myself as the recipient.

I remember how amazed I was when my first spiritual teacher, Hilda, spoke to me of a positive item in a letter I had

written to her, a letter filled with negative thoughts. She had only seen good in what she read. I now realize that to hear good is from within and has nothing to do with the outside world. It is my own approach to what I hear, which determines that I hear only good. Swami looks at us, listens to us and knows our true reality, the *Atma* (indwelling Divinity). That is my task, my commitment in this journey.

In the same vein, I know that I cannot be consumed with how I can bring peace to others, until I am able to be peaceful myself. Thus, I am thankful to Sathya Sai Baba for teaching me to be more positive, to see good, speak good, hear good. Swami has added a new dimension. He also says, *Think good, be good, do good*. He states in no uncertain way that it is "me" I have to work on. That is my goal, with God's grace accompanying me along the way.

God's Truth

*I offer you the gift of Life
Peace, Harmony, Love
Carry it with you
Where ere you go*

*Flow as the rivers
Still running
Undisturbed by
Turbulence or man*

*Be as the air
Omnipresent
Despite the winds*

*Which seeks to disturb it
Or be the calm
Which seeks to soothe it*

*Rise above the
Strife of living
Above the lows and highs
And sit in that space
Of sea and air
Ever present, ever knowing
Ever Loving*

—Bea Flaig
Tucson, Arizona

When you are aware of Truth, and when you know what action righteousness dictates at a particular time, you should not play false to yourselves.

—Sathya Sai Baba, *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. XI, Chapter 19

Swami! Interview Pleease!

I first saw Sai Baba 21 years ago, when I was a young man of 24. I had the privilege of spending most of 1977 at the lotus feet, and visited Him annually for the following 10 years. Now, 1,000 or so *darshans* later, I still have not had a group or personal interview. This fact tends to elicit strong and varied responses in the hearts and minds of Sai devotees. These responses include sympathy, confusion, questions of what I may or may not have done in this life or the last, gratitude for one's own good fortune, anxiety about one's future prospects of physical contact with the Avatar, and so forth.

All these reactions have gone through my mind as well. In spite of my best efforts, the interview room has eluded me. When my father and I visited Swami, my father received an interview, alone, on the first day. I brought a group to Puttaparthi, and only a few members were selected for interviews. I was the president of a local Sai Center for four years. I attended every *darshan* possible when in Swami's presence. I joined a number of groups at the ashram. And I begged. . . .

It would be quite unfair to say that Sai Baba ignored me for those 11 years. I attended two summer courses, He spoke to me occasionally in the *darshan* line, signed a book; once, He tossed me a plum from the *prasad* (blessed food) tray in Whitefield. He blessed my wedding plans by manifesting *vibuthi* (holy ash), and He assured my wife and I that we would have ashram accommodations throughout our lifetimes. At a distance,

He blessed me with health, wealth, love and good work. Mostly, His secret gift was a terrible yearning in my heart for Him.

However, my precondition for a lifetime of devotion to Swami was the elusive interview. After 11 years, in 1988, I stopped visiting Puttaparthi and became closely connected with another teacher living in India. The physical attention was balm for my aching heart. I thought that perhaps my *sadguru* (true teacher) was not Sai Baba, because, I felt I was kept at arm's length from Him. I put the whole dilemma at Swami's feet. During the following 10 years, Swami kept coming in dreams at crucial moments, and I felt guided by His invisible hand. Much was learned in the university of life.

In December 1997, I received a book on the life of Lord Krishna, and found myself reading it passionately and wanting to see Sai Baba again. The life of Krishna has the same inner feel and quality as the life of Sai. I had been unconsciously avoiding reading books of Sai during those 10 years because of the painful yearning in my heart. I read now about how Krishna sent Uddhava to the *gopis* to alleviate their anguish by teaching them about Krishna's universal presence in their hearts. Something clicked. Maybe there was a solution to my suffering and maybe the interview was not it. I resolved to visit Sai Baba the following month.

The physical appearance of the ashram had changed. It was greener, more comfortable, and the devotion and

discipline of the devotees were remarkable. New structures were the awe-inspiring Super Specialty Hospital, Hillview Stadium, and the *Sai Kulwant Darshan Hall*. A sea of devotion, in the form of 30,000 devotees, was filling the ashram grounds daily. Swami, aged slightly, was majestic as ever.

However, this was going to be a tough trip for me. After three days, I began to make plans to shorten my visit from four weeks to two. The unfamiliar heat, an incipient flu and loneliness set in. The discipline of silence increased the pressure. I tried to change my airline ticket, but could not do so because it was a frequent flyer travel award seat. I was caught in the clutches of the Avatar. Swami provided timely compensation for my suffering by giving glances, taking letters, letting me touch His robe, showering saffron rice and kindnesses. I read a book a day from among the many writings of elder devotees graciously relating their experiences with Sai. I called my wife every two days from the new long-distance telephones in the ashram.

The emotional dam broke after two weeks when my sore throat robbed me of two nights' sleep. I went to *darshan* in a dispirited mood, got a corner, front row spot and sat. Swami came by and glanced at my face. From that moment onwards, I had no more throat pain. This miracle of love burst through my consciousness, and made me feel that Swami was loving me and doing the needful all along, in spite of His seeming preoccupation with everything but me.

I continued to read books and attend *darshan*, gradually appreciating more and more the precious opportunity of

seeing, touching and hearing the Lord. I thought, "I first saw Swami 21 years ago and He will be with us in this form only 22 or so years more! The first 21 years have passed in the blink of an eye." The purity of His teachings, beyond time and culture, struck a chord within me. I was also noticing Swami walk around in my heart as He does outside in the world. This sweet inner/outer identity felt so pure and uplifting.

With two days to go before returning home to the USA, I decided to make a final appeal for an interview. I had a corner spot on the front row again. The man beside me, a resident in the ashram, related what he heard Swami say to another ashram resident, *Those who will have an interview with this Avatar have been selected before the beginning of time*. Undaunted, I prepared my speech. Swami made a wide arc around my spot, and I said, "Leaving in two days, Swami," when He returned to the line. Swami simply said, *Yes, yes*. I was crushed.

I returned to my room and wept. I felt I was truly wasting my precious time with Swami by this fruitless pursuit. Furthermore, I had a sense that Swami was as pained as I, that He could not give me an interview. It would have been so easy for Him, just once in my 1,000 *darshans*, to just do it. Somehow, I felt maybe it was not correct for Him to acquiesce to my pleas. I wrote a note to Swami, and put it on my altar with the following wish, "Please do not let me leave Prasanthi Nilayam with this unhappy experience in my mind. After 10 years of wondering, please bind my heart to You. Somehow, please stay permanently in my heart." I had given up

the interview as a precondition for a lifetime of devotion.

Two *darshans* passed. The final morning, I was in the ninth lottery line and, miraculously, the second *darshan* row. Then, Swami selected a group for an interview, including the man in front of me. I slipped into the front line. As Swami walked toward my spot, I was weeping, and my mind was crying out, "Please stay permanently in my heart!" Swami stopped in front of me, placed both feet by my knees, and I held His feet and wept into His robe. The person beside me started to seize the same *padnamaskar* (touching the feet of a holy being) opportunity, but Swami discouraged him, giving me the fullness of the moment.

The most wonderful thing has happened since that blessed *darshan*. I can occasionally hear the voice of the Lord, the *Antar Vani*, in my mind. Sometimes He speaks through my thoughts, and sometimes I hear His voice. This usually occurs at the end of a meditation when I have an important question. At other times, there is simply sweet silence or a little bit of advice. In the threshold between sleep and waking, I sometimes see His form.

Meditation has also become less a technique and more of simply loving God. When the mind wanders to worldly matters, I just remind myself that there is nothing I would rather do than see His form or hear His name. I can happily sit for an hour with His inner *darshan*. Sometimes I remember that holy *padnamaskar* on my last day in Prasanthi Nilayam. Depending on the activity of the day, I may feel companionship with Sai, communion with Sai, or in meditation, identity with our beloved Sai.

Swami has promised us, over and over again, that this Avatar will give us devotion, vitality and liberation. I believe that this is something special. Once we have the grace of knowing Him in this lifetime, we can surrender to His way. It may or may not be exactly like that extolled in sacred texts and by the ancient sages, but it is magnetic and unwavering. His pull is enormous. The terrible ache in the heart finds relief in inner devotion in which nothing else matters. Therefore, may we look first to Him, surrender to His higher wishes for us, require no preconditions, and receive His inner gifts of grace.

—USA Devotee

Always find a quiet corner after my darshan, where you may enter the stillness and receive the completion of my blessings. My energy goes from me, as I pass you. If you proceed to talk immediately, the precious energy is dissipated and returns to me, unused. Rest assured that whatever my eyes see becomes vitalized and transmuted. You are being changed day by day. Never underestimate what is being accomplished by this act of darshan. My walking amongst you is a gift yearned for by gods of highest heaven, and here you are receiving this grace daily. Be grateful, these blessings you receive will express themselves in their perfect time. But also remember, to whom much is given, much will be demanded.

—Sathya Sai Baba

From, *Thy Will Be Done* by—Chandur Mirchandani

The Resurgence of Soul

This past year, TV, movies and books—the usual media for communication as well as education and entertainment—have been treating audiences to large doses of angels. What's going on here when usually our exposure has been to the misfortunes of crime, sex, violence and catastrophes of all sorts?

Well, if you ask me—which you didn't, but I'll tell you anyway—I credit the change to a resurgence of Soul.

One cannot define Soul or *Atma*. To define is to limit. "Soul is what makes us human," said the medievalists. They said, speaking abstractly, it makes you an individual. It is something inborn. Soul appears when we make room for it because it is not a concrete thing.

Today, we fill ourselves with more and more information, to become educated, well-informed and intelligent. But what happens is that there is no space left for the Soul to make its appearance, and that's the very art of Soul work—to nourish us at a deeper level.

The need to accomplish fulfills the pressure to get ahead. But the Soul does not need to "get ahead" or to "get smart." The Soul holds the mystery of life. It is honest; it is the presence of something unknowable, not something to be solved, defended or explained away.

Many problems for the past 30 or 40 years come from the lack of spirituality and not necessarily from psychological or sociological issues. They are about the loss of sacredness in the home, the workplace, the world. We have secularized the world and are suffering for it now.

We have become cold and hardened toward the suffering of our planet, and

the suffering of the homeless and damaged children. We are tired and feel helpless toward a portion of this dysfunctional society. We are becoming a narcissistic society, pulling gradually into ourselves. For instance, when asked to donate needed blood for blood drives, we simply are indifferent. Many of us are not that sensitive nor compassionate about people around us who need understanding or an attentive ear. Just look at the suicide rate among young people.

Television and movie scripts are coming up with powerful angel stories. Some are really worthwhile, but more than that, they are filling a gap in our spiritually deprived society.

We are here in this world as human beings, learning daily what to do, and we will find our Soul when we respond to a society that needs us so desperately. This is the response to the problem of loneliness that so many complain about. We would not have any room to be lonely if we responded to the needs of the world which surrounds us.

There are multitudes of needs: the forests, the oceans, people who are hurting, etc. These are what creates community, the ultimate solution to loneliness.

When we talk about the Soul, our own destiny and the world, they are all connected. The personal and the planetary are definitely fastened together—related, linked, joined, united—like a family. Strangers and foreign matters exist only in our minds and attitudes.

So welcome all you whimsical, delightful angels. It's about time we all got together to do solid Soul-searching work.

—Winnie Bolton, Mt. Angel, Oregon

“You Are Not the Body”

Jack O. Scher, the author of the article: “Swami Says, ‘You Are Not the Body,’” (*Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, Spring 1998) has stated that his mind continues to plead for the experience to convince himself that he is not the body. The purpose of this present article is to cite some of our daily experiences, which if properly analyzed as illustrated below, based on Swami’s teachings, would convince us that our reality is not the body but, the Self or Divine *Atma* as Swami calls us while commencing discourses [*Divyatma Swarupalaara* or Embodiments of the Divine].

—Dr. A. Adivi Reddy

Deep Sleep Experience

In the deep sleep state, we find that all the vital processes like respiration, blood circulation, digestion and metabolism go on unabated due to the presence of Consciousness or the real Self, despite the false self (composed of the body, the mind and the intellect) being defunct. By scriptural definition, reality is that which persists always without any change. According to this definition, therefore, the body, mind and intellect are unreal, because they were nonexistent before birth, and will cease to exist after death. Even while alive, the body, mind, and intellect of the dream state are different from those of the wakeful state; and they are altogether absent or defunct during sleep. But as Consciousness (*Chaitanya*), we always exist without any change whatsoever, irrespective of the birth and death of the vestures (*upadhis*), namely, body, mind, intellect, etc., and also, regardless, of whether these vestures are in the waking, dreaming or sleeping state. We know that birth and death, as well as all kinds of changes, are only for these vestures or equipments, and not for our reality, namely Consciousness which activates these equipments. Baba compares *Chaitanya* or Consciousness to an

infinite ocean in which all beings with different names and forms are like the innumerable waves and bubbles that ceaselessly appear and disappear in the ocean. When waves emerge from and merge into the ocean, it is only their name and form that undergo change. Their real essence, water or H₂O, is not at all affected in any way at any time. Similarly, it is only the names and forms of various beings that undergo all changes including birth and death; but their reality, namely Consciousness, ever remains the same.

False self versus Real Self

The deep sleep experience also indicates to us the difference as well as the relationship between the real Self and the false self. When the real Self or Consciousness temporarily withdraws its association from the false self or equipments, the latter becomes inactive. These equipments are allowed to take rest during sleep, so that they may feel refreshed and invigorated for the next day’s activities. However, the real Self never sleeps, but by its very presence “it” enables the vital processes to go on without interruption. To illustrate this relationship, Baba gives an example:

An iron ball becomes red hot in association with fire; but when the fire is withdrawn from it, the iron ball reverts to its original dull color and lack of heat. Here the iron ball represents the inert body, while fire symbolizes Consciousness, the real Self, which animates the body or the false self. Baba also compares the relationship of the body to its shadow. The body is not affected by whatever may happen to the shadow. So too, *Atma* is not affected by whatever may happen to the body.

Sat-Chit-Ananda, Our True Nature

In the deep sleep experience, the body-mind-intellect complex is practically in a state of blackout. Nevertheless, when we wake up, we recall the awareness of our existence and also the happiness that we enjoyed during sleep. This is because of the witnessing Consciousness being awake during the sleep of the ego or false self. Further, we have a clear indication that we can experience our true, nondual nature of Existence-Awareness-Bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*), if we wake up from our *maya* (illusion-induced) sleep it is like the ignorance of perceiving plurality while waking and dreaming. This is why a *jivanmukta* (one who is liberated while alive) is said to be in a state of *jagrat sushupti* (wakeful sleep), aware of his real Self and asleep to his false self. Thus the sleep experience reveals to us that our real nature consists of not only Consciousness-Awareness but also Existence and Bliss which go along with it. In contrast, our waking and dreaming states disclose to us the nature of our false self as a mixture of the real and the unreal, knowl-

edge and ignorance, pleasure and pain. In fact, the true nature of the false self is *asat* (unreal) *jada* (insentient) *dukha* (sorrowful). And the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* aspects enjoyed by the false self to some extent under some circumstances (despite its own contrary aspects) are mere reflections of the real Self, comparable to the borrowed or reflected light of the moon.

That our true nature is Existence-Awareness-Bliss is also evident from our day-to-day experience. Worldly life shows us undeniably that we cannot exist or live forever, that we cannot be aware of all things, and that we cannot enjoy eternal and unmixed bliss. In spite of this, how is it that everyone has the urge to have eternal life, total awareness and unalloyed bliss, as evidence of man's thirst for life, and his hectic efforts to have endless pleasure, ignoring the hard and harsh facts of life? It is only because these innate characteristics of our inalienable nature of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, which are lying repressed or dormant in our subconscious psyche due to *avidya* or ignorance, and are trying to express themselves through these urges. The only mistake, however, lies in our trying unrealistically to attribute to our false self these characteristics which belong to the true Self.

Dream Experience

While dreaming, the dreamer's mind alone creates the dream world and plays the roles of the seer (subject), the seen (object) and the seeing (predicate or verb). Baba and scriptures, too, affirm that the world in the waking state is also a dream. In both the dreaming and waking states, mind is the creator of the un-

real world. But mind itself is unreal, being something like an aberration in the infinite Consciousness, just like a ripple or vortex in a vast ocean. From this it is evident that Consciousness is the only reality and that the rest is all an illusory appearance which disappears in the state of deep sleep, *samadhi*, or in the Self-realized state. This is why the universe is considered as a cosmic dream or the play (*leela*) of Consciousness. Another way of understanding this truth is, just as a rope is mistaken for a snake in semi-darkness, so too, Consciousness or spirit is mistaken for the physical world due to *maya*. This *Vedantic* viewpoint is corroborated by the latest particle physics. For instance, the eminent nuclear scientist, and quantum physicist, Henry P. Stapp, unequivocally asserts: "There is definitely no substantive physical world in the usual sense of the term. What we perceive to be physical reality is actually our Cognitive Construction."

Meaning of "I" and "My"

Our daily use of "I" and "my" also shed some useful light in this regard. When I say, "my overcoat," or "my house," I know that the overcoat and the house are different from me. So also when I say, "my body," "my mind," and "my intellect," it is obvious that they are all things other than myself. But most of us overlook this fact and wrongly identify ourselves with these equipments. In this connection it is pertinent to remember that it is wrong to say, "my Self or my *Atma*," because you are the Self or the *Atma* and not separate from It. Moreover, the Self does not belong to anyone. The Self is in all, and all are in the Self; nay, there is nothing other than the Self.

Coming to the use of the word "I," we find that in spite of the differences in our names and physical forms, everyone of us refers to himself or herself as "I." Further, the ego or false, "I," of the waking state is different from that of the dream state, while it is entirely absent in the sleep state. Still, everybody says, "I was awake during the day, asleep for most of the night, and dreaming for some time." Hence the "I," in this statement is the unchanging Self or *Atma* that witnesses all three states, but not the apparent self which is absent in sleep, and which is not the same in waking and dreaming.

Moreover, the body, mind and intellect of everyone are found to undergo several changes from time to time, starting from infancy right up to the time of death. Regardless of these changes, a person refers to himself or herself as the same "I" throughout life. Further, all of us say, "I see, I hear, I eat, etc." If this "I" means the body and the senses, why can't they do these things when Consciousness leaves them at the time of death?

It is reasonable to conclude from this common and constant use of "I" that it denotes what Swami designates as, "Constant Integrated Awareness [CIA]" which is synonymous with the *Vedic* terms, *Prajnanam*, *Brahman* or *Atma*. In other words, this "I" which is constantly and commonly used by all, under all changing circumstances, indicates the changeless true Self or *Atma*, the universal "I," which is common to all and which stands as the eternal, changeless witness of all the changes which the false self undergoes.

Please turn to page 29

"What Do You Want?"

Swami often asks the question, *What do you want?* I have heard Him ask this many times of many different people. I've seen Him go around a whole room and ask each person, but He has never asked me. This question plagued me, and has actually become part of my spiritual discipline (*sadhana*). Every year, particularly before I go to India, I ask myself, "What would I say to Swami if he asked me, '*What do you want?*'"

When I first came to Baba, I thought about wanting good health, happiness, security, but found—by the grace of God—I had all of these. I've never been a materialistic person, so rings and things were not important to me, even if they came from Swami. Don't misunderstand, a gift from Him would be wonderful, but not enough to be an answer to this profound question. I decided to go for broke. I would ask for liberation.

I wanted to be free from the cycle of birth and death, and from sorrow and pain. However, on further introspection and with a little more knowledge, I realized what becoming liberated really means. Was I ready to give up family, health, wealth and reputation? Not yet. I wanted liberation, yes, but as Baba says, *slow and steady*.

The next time I asked myself this question, I answered, "Only You Swami, I want only You." In my mind, I heard Him reply, *But you have me. I am your very Self*.

Over and over I wondered, what would I say if Swami posed this question, *What do you want?* "To be close to

You forever." I could almost hear Him saying, *But I am as close to you as your own breath*.

And again, *What do you want?* "To experience I am One with You, and then serve." I thought this was the perfect answer. For, by this time, I was committed to service and felt, with the experience of Oneness, I could truly become the kind of instrument Swami wants us to be. At last, I would know we are all One. As I became more involved in service, the goal of becoming *Bodhisattva** appealed more than attaining liberation.

I stayed with this answer for well over a year. Recently, however, I realized that an experience of Oneness is just that, an experience which is impermanent and fleeting. It will become another memory, a beautiful one of course, but it will pass just like everything else. This was no longer the right answer for me.

If I were asked this question now, I might answer, "More love, more faith, and less mind." This would lead to the truth that we are all Divine, yet it leaves the timing to God. If I could give up wanting, how different my answer would be. I could simply say, "To be totally aware of each moment," for in each moment, I AM. The best answer would be, if I could surrender enough to say, "Swami, I want whatever You think I need."

It is clear now that the answer must come spontaneously from the heart. I have a sneaking suspicion planning won't work! But this sure is a good *sadhana* (spiritual discipline).

—Judy Warner, Faber, Virginia

**Bodhisattva*, one who has attained Buddhahood but foregoes entering Nirvana to help others.

1998, the Year of Peace or *Shanti*

Excerpts on Peace from Baba

Peace (*Shanti*) is the distinguishing mark of yogis, rishis and *sathpurushas* (seekers of Truth). It does not depend on external conditions. Peace will flee away from the selfish and the sensual; it hates the company of such persons. Peace is the characteristic of the inner Self (*Atma*); it is wonderful, unshakable and permanent.

Peace is full of spiritual uplift and the wisdom which is the natural accompaniment of bliss (*ananda*). Genuine peace is won by the control of the senses only. Only then can it be called *prasanti* (supreme peace). The experience of that stage is a "stream of peace." Calming mental agitation that surges like waves levelling the swirls and whirls—of likes, dislikes, love, hate, sorrow, joy, hope and despair—peace is earned and maintained without disturbance. Peace is of the nature of the *Atma*. The *Atma* is imperishable; it does not die like the body and the mind. It partakes of all these characteristics: It is universal, it is subtle, and its very nature is knowledge. Knowledge of the *Atma* destroys illusion, doubt and sorrow. Hence, knowledge of *Atma* (*Atmajnana*) confers the steadiest peace, and with it, holiness and happiness. . . .

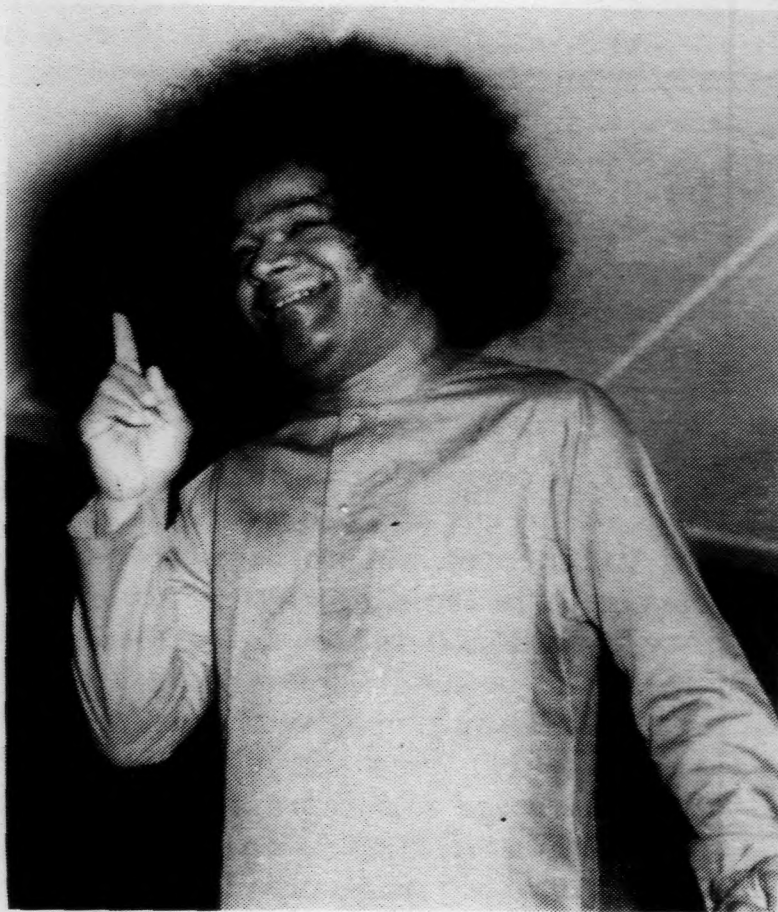
Bliss (*Ananda*) is the very nature of man. But the pity is, he is searching for it everywhere except where it is available. Bliss is not something lifeless and inactive; it is another name for "purposeful living." Peace is the authority under which the rule of bliss prevails; it lays down the limits and laws for all activities. Peace must be made so stable that

it is unaffected by the ever-wandering mind and the outward-bound senses. It can only be experienced personally through the natural state of the highest wisdom (*jnana*). It is the most precious treasure. He who grasps that which is deathless, that which cannot be destroyed, that which is not modified, he is the enjoyer of peace. He, too, has no death.

Peace is a shoreless ocean; it is the light that illumines the world. Having it is having all. It confers knowledge of this world and that. It leads to the understanding of *Brahman* (Universal Absolute), the very fullest of human life which *Vedanta* tries to teach.

Pure love can emanate only from a heart immersed in *shanti* or peace; for it is an atmosphere that pervades and purifies. *Shanti* is not a conviction arrived at by means of logic. It is the discipline of all disciplined lives. The mind of man is a blank sheet of paper when he is born. As soon as thinking, feeling and acting starts, the process of tarnishing the mind also starts. The body depends on *prana* (divine energy); it depends on the mind and on the desires that agitate the mind. Truth is befogged by the needs of fashion, convention, customs, etc. And when the individual is thrown into a crowd, his solitude is taken away.

Therefore, the mind must be made calm and quiet; then only can the body be healthy and the intellect sharp. The mind is projected at one time only on a single object, not on many. But it is still a conglomeration of thoughts, desires,



fancies, imaginings and the rest. In fact, the mind has inside it, in a nutshell, the entire history of creation. That is *maya* mold (the form for a mixture of fact and fiction. Fact is God, and fiction is variety) of man. The mind is the Kurukshetra [the battleground described in the *Bhagavad Gita*] where good and bad, right and wrong contest for supremacy. So the inferior, low mind has to be shaped and made better by the superior mind. One has to make his mind superior and stronger for the task of personal uplift.

That is the purpose of this *Prasanthi Vahini* [the book from which these words are taken]. Drink deep the waters of this stream, the waters of discipline indicated herein; immerse yourself in it and become cleansed. May its coolness refresh your sorrows and your pain, and quench the fires within.

Another disease has now begun to spread in the world to weaken peace. There are those who, parrot-like, purvey wholesome advice on morals, religion and discipline; but they do not practice even a single bit of it themselves. The so-called elders know only how to speak, not how to act. How can those who teach how to act [but have no experience], know how to speak about it? Words devoid of experience, are the illness which afflicts the world today.

This must first be treated and removed, for thereby peace is warped for mankind. To speak is easy for all. The real spiritual aspirant is one who acts and then speaks from experience. He who merely speaks but does not act is the one who brings about disaster. Such dangerous spiritual aspirants have multiplied, and they confuse the true path. Innocent and simple minded devotees who attach themselves to such are being led astray and being duped. Let the readers and the spiritual seekers watch first the conduct [of spiritual leaders] and then choose. If there is no observance of the advice given, treat them with the respect of a phonograph record, nothing more. The record is to be treated as a record only, not as Godhead, until you reach the stage when the truth that, "Everything is God," becomes patent to you. It is a great mistake to say, "All is God" in mere words and actually treat some as unholy.

The taste of peace must be enjoyed through thought, word, gesture and deed. It is only when peace is enjoyed in all these four that it becomes complete.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Prasanthi Vahini, pp 4-8

A Wake Up Call

We call ourselves "devotees." Are we really? Baba, with infinite patience is still teaching the same truths that He has taught for years. He tells us very simply, *Love all, serve all, and Help ever, hurt never*, also, *Be happy*. Baba constantly emphasizes five predominant basic values: Truth (*Sathya*), Righteousness (*Dharma*), Peace (*Shanti*), Love (*Prema*) and Nonviolence (*Ahimsa*). He has put these teachings into discourse after discourse. He has worded His teachings one way and then another way, on and on. But do we, the so-called devotees, practice those teachings?

Yes, WAKE UP, these lessons are for us, for me and you, and you, and you.

Baba has given us everything. He has given His earthly life for teaching us. He is in India for all to go and see and partake of His *darshan*. He gives us a place to stay and good food to eat while we are there.

Usually, He gives us *darshan* twice a day. What do you think about during those *darshans*? Are you focused on Baba, His teachings, His energies, or are you taken in by the little games people play? Do you run and push to get a front seat? Do you join in the small talk going on in the Sai Ramesh Hall, in the Poor-nachandra Auditorium or on the Temple grounds? If you are, you are wasting precious time. Wake up!

We are all wasting time at home and in the Sathya Sai Baba Centers all over the world. I believe that we must help one another to learn and live His teachings. We must be involved in service projects, meaningful service projects.

Sai Centers are not places for a display of ego. If something doesn't please you, discuss it calmly with center coordinators. In shorter words, we should develop better communication, discuss problems, try to peacefully settle differences. If that doesn't work, then pray and give the problem to Baba. He always gives the correct answer; maybe not when we, in our impatience, want or expect the answer, but answers are forthcoming. It is truly important for us to have consideration, respect and tolerance for all opinions. Tolerance will help us to settle any problems and help us to grow. We also need self-discipline and obviously some self-improvement. Baba says, *Without discipline, understanding, cooperation and unity, bhajan singing is a waste of time*.

How are we wasting time? Let us think of our daily lives as an elementary school classroom, and consider our Sathya Sai Baba Center as a college classroom. Can we make the grade? Are we passing or flunking?

Consider whether your thoughts, words and actions would please Baba. If He were sitting with you now, whatever the circumstances, would you be thinking, saying or doing as you are? What a wonderful opportunity Baba has given us; a special privilege—by way of His centers—to work on our own transformation through Love. Sathya Sai Baba has said, *Let every human being remake himself. Let us understand that we live not for money-making, not for fulfilling our wants, not for scholarly or intellectual capabilities, but for spiritual devel-*

opment. It is only in this world that spiritual progress can be made. Annihilation of ego and dissolution of desires can be had here and now, or else going and returning to this transient world is certain.

Baba has counseled devotees to be His representatives by living His teachings, saying, *Your life is my message, and They will know me by my devotees.*

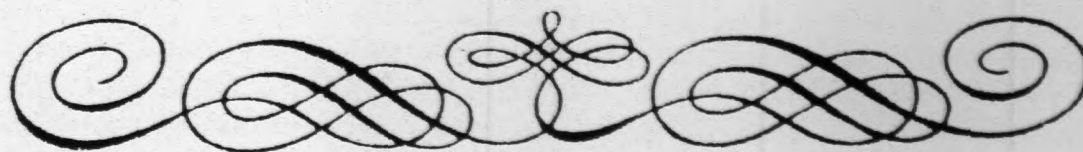
Let us make it so; what a very special gift. It is, indeed, time to wake up!

And let us begin by putting into practice these simple steps:

Transformation Through Love

- In ourselves.
- In our families.
- In our Sai Centers.
- In our communities.
- In our nation and the world.
- It all starts here!

—Adelene and Robert Grauch
Boynton Beach, Florida



You must have noticed that in Prasanthi Nilayam, you find during festivals and special occasions, the same faces appearing again and again. First they came with a bag of prayers for worldly advancement. When they listened to my discourses and conversation, year after year, they came out of the coils of worldly desire to win mental peace through a course of strict spiritual discipline (sadhana). So they come again and again to draw inspiration and win instruction for spiritual success.

Let me tell you what the first steps in sadhana are: Practice silence. Then you can more easily recognize the galloping of the mind after worldly happiness. Restrain its movements, turn inside into the calm lake of bliss that lies deep in the heart. Get over fear by centering your mind on the One, for fear can arise only when there is another.

An inquirer from the United States asked me recently, "How can faith become firm?" I answered, "When the truth is known, faith is rendered firm. When the truth is known that [a coiled thing on the ground] is a rope, faith in its harmlessness is made firm, and fear that the rope might have been a snake disappears."

Let people know the truth; they will then grow in faith, and faith will endow them with great energy and enthusiasm. The rest will follow, and righteousness can flourish in this land as well as in the world.

—Sathya Sai Baba
From a discourse in Brindavan
March 8, 1971

The High Lesson

I was getting lost. Somewhere on the rock-strewn valley floor in front of me, the path I was on disappeared. This was legendary Hunza in northern Pakistan, an arid and rugged land whose snowcapped peaks reach over 27,000 feet, narrow valleys gouge deep into the earth, and rivers of ice flow imperceptibly. It was one of those glaciers I was trekking toward, trying to reach it. But where was the path?

As I carefully picked my way through the rocks, I suddenly came upon an old man. I was surprised; this was a desolate and unpopulated valley, but he was sitting there as if he were expecting me. The old man looked as if he had been around when the rock he was sitting on was created. But then, Hunza is famous for people living well beyond the century mark. It turned out that he spoke a little English, so we conversed. The stranger, actually a mere 76-years-old, told me that he lived far up the valley with his wife and young children, and what's more, offered to show me the path to the glacier. With that, he started bounding up a steep rocky slope like a mountain goat, while I struggled to keep up.

In Hunza, water is brought down from the high elevation snowfields by channels cut into notches on the side of the vertical cliffs. The water flows in a trough about a foot wide adjoining a vertical rock face that rises about every five feet until it reaches the top cut, at which point the rock extends horizontally overhead. Between the trough and the cliff's vertical drop-off is a ledge less

than two feet wide. So, reaching the top of the rock pile, I was horrified to find that our path continued along the edge of the water channel. If you can imagine walking along the ledge of a skyscraper about twenty stories high, you'll get the idea. Did I mention that I'm afraid of heights?

The old man walked along the ledge as if it were a city sidewalk, and I followed, trying not to think of tripping. I found, however, that if I kept my gaze on the back of my guide's head, rather than looking down, I was less fearful. He probably had been walking this path for most of his 76 years, and his confidence was very reassuring. If he could do it without fear, so could I—sort of. Eventually, the valley floor rose to meet the height of the ledge, and the ordeal ended. It took quite a while to climb up the rocks and walk the ledge, so I realized that if I was to return by dark, I had to turn around.

Explaining to my guide that I had to leave, we shook hands to bid goodbye, and I turned to face the ledge, this time alone. Now there was no guide to provide confidence, and I was left with only my fear. Inching my way along, I clung to the cliff's face, wishing I had suckers on my finger tips, so I could cling tighter. I kept looking down at the jagged rocks below, and each time the fear grew like a monster in my gut. I wanted to freeze in place. Praying to Sathya Sai Baba for courage, I eventually made my way back to the rocky slope. What a relief! But then, I had no idea where the path was. Stumbling and climbing over

the rocks, I severely sprained my ankle. And in considerable pain, I finally limped out of the valley.

It wasn't until recently, years later, that the truth occurred to me. The experience was a perfect allegorical lesson:

We start on the spiritual path, which has been compared with climbing a steep mountain, and just when it seems that we might lose our way or turn back, the guru appears to guide us. Our Lord, Sathya Sai Baba is, of course, the ultimate guru. The Hindu scriptures also liken the spiritual path to the "razor's edge," just like that ledge. But if we follow Sai Baba and focus on His confidence and wisdom, we, too, gain confidence. We can take the perils of life with

equanimity, and we're less likely to fall off the path. What's more, He knows the way and will take us to the goal. But if we turn away from Sai Baba, the fears in our minds will magnify. Getting lost and disheartened, we may quit.

I've sometimes wondered if the old man was Sai Baba in another form, there to teach me to rely on Him. But regardless of who it was, I'm sure Sai Baba arranged the lesson. After I left Pakistan, I went to Prasanthi Nilayam for the first time and, although I didn't get an interview, Swami did stare at me quite a bit. Perhaps, He was checking to see if I "got it" yet. In any case, I'm sure He knew that I would eventually. Thanks, Swami.

—Tom Wolke, Chantilly, Virginia

"This Is Samadhi"*

On August 29, 1997, Jerry Bass went home. It was a journey of tears, courage and love that culminated in light and joy. As Swami said, *Your husband has merged with God, just as the river merges into the ocean.*

After two months of trials—three hospitalizations, five evenings in the emergency room, a brain biopsy—the final verdict was terminal brain cancer. He was told, he had three months to live!

We decided to go to our Swami; whatever His will was good. Our children, Jerry and I, left for India with tickets, passports and visas—all procured within ten days.

There was hope. Swami had recently taken our letter from our friend, David, with much love. Hundreds of people had prayed. Jerry told me, "You know, Carol, that I am not afraid of death, but I am concerned for the children."

While in Prasanthi Nilayam, Swami ignored us, taking the letters that we wrote from others but not from us directly. Within a few days of our arrival, He passed by the children and me without looking directly at us and said, *Wait. Wait.* We would wait, we would do whatever we needed to do. As time went on, I bought notebooks for the children, so I could home school them if needed.

**Samadhi* is a state of bliss, being balanced, having unruffled intellect; it is a discriminating reaction of equanimity in the face of heat or cold, grief or joy, pain or pleasure, rejection or rejoicing. *Samadhi* is eternal bliss.

Jerry was encouraged with any word or attention from Baba. He went to *darshan* daily and stayed for *bhajans*. He would wait in line for hours until it was time to go into the *mandir* (temple). Jerry would not sit with the medical patients, unless he was asked to do so by the volunteers, when he had a seizure. He was having intense seizures and headaches at that point.

After several days, Baba came up to him and looked deeply into his eyes. After *bhajans*, I waited for Jerry, so I could accompany him back to the room. He was all smiles and light as he described how Baba had looked at him. He told me to tell the Sai Center members, "Swami is coming closer and closer."

Days passed. Swami took a letter from Jerry and made him some *vibuthi*. But Jerry's body was rapidly deteriorating, his speech was almost unrecognizable. The children and I made him an alphabet board, so he could communicate by pointing to the letters. Yet he maintained his beautiful smile and sense of humor. "Life is a game," he said, and he was willing to play it.

One day, a few days before his passing, we went to the barber shop in the village, so Jerry could have a haircut and a shave. Afterwards, he looked into the mirror and gave a big smile at his reflection and said to the barber, "Swami won't recognize me!"

As time passed and walking became more difficult, Jerry turned down my pleading for him to accept a wheelchair. Yogesh, who had been helping Jerry, told me that in *darshan* Jerry sat like a yogi, graciously accepting orders from the volunteers to move. Jerry said that they were just doing their duty.

I watched this sweet man become soft like butter, with no ego remaining. He was totally love, peace and *dharma*.

Then one day, I awaited Jerry's return from *bhajans*. He was late. After a considerable time, I went back to our room thinking that I had somehow missed him. Jerry had had a major seizure, which knocked him down, and he returned to the room on a stretcher. The pain in his head had intensified and was now unbearable. The next morning, my sweetheart left his body. During the only *darshan* that he missed, Swami came for him.

Soon after Jerry's passing and the cremation ceremony, Baba granted interviews to me and my two daughters.

In this one incident, Swami united the whole ashram in Love. Usually, one does not know anything about our Sai sisters and brothers seated near us. However, almost everyone knew about Jerry. Many cried, helped us and prayed for us; they were even willing to give up their interviews for us. We were united in Love and support by our Sai family. So much kindness was given to us by our Sai family, I am truly grateful to them.

Our beloved Swami twisted us, melted us and transformed us through His beautiful drama. Sai Baba gave us so much Love in the interviews and at *darshans*. He said that He had been coming to our Sai Center, pulling Jerry to India. "But Swami," I said, "so many people have prayed. *I know, I know*, He told us, *But this is much better. This is samadhi*.

Jerry had merged into God, forever with his beloved Sai.

—Carol Bass
Ithaca, New York

Children's Corner, *I Want Peace*

*I want peace,
the boy announced
to God
one sunny day*

*God smiled at him
so sweetly
He smiled
as if to say*

*Erase the "I"
cross out the "want"
and "peace" alone
you'll win*

*Without desire
or ego
then peace you'll have
My friend*



—Susan Caffery
Poems for Children
from Sai Wonderland

Do you see what happens when you cross out those two words?

~~I WANT PEACE~~

What is it that remains?

Always remember that "I" is the ego, and "Want" is desire, so let's get rid of our ego and desire.

Know that Swami is watching, because He loves each of you very much.

"A Sixth Grade Sage," the children's story from the spring Newsletter, was Bea Flaig's true experience. Sorry, we didn't know. Consequently, we did not have her by-line on the article.

In India (continued from Sathya Sai Newsletter, Spring 1998)

When we reached India in September 1991, I had three burning questions for Baba, the first two involving where we should live and what I should do. My previous two decades had been nomadic in the extreme, and I needed direct guidance. The third question had to do with some personal issues about which I was clueless.

There had been so much attention from Baba in the three months between learning who He was and our getting on the plane. My experiences which included—personal feeling of bliss on June 9th, His appearing to me in Van Nuys on June 10th, His sending in our direction almost every well-known person in the American Baba orbit—even the trip to India itself. But then, the first *darshan* at Prasanthi Nilayam was disappointing. Instead of the royal reception I was expecting, I was totally ignored.

As the weeks went by, I became the pariah of the volunteers on the ladies' side. "What, no interview yet?" I felt leprous. Little did I realize that Baba was doing deep work, and the gift of simply being there was what I needed most. Baba was also giving me a big lesson in not paying attention to others' opinions of me. My daughter, Charlotte, and I quickly fell into the simple routine of daily ashram life.

I had been prepared for the worst—staying in the sheds—but during our entire time at Puttaparthi, we always had a room. Our first month there, we even had a room to ourselves, complete with

wooden bedsteads. It seemed, because we'd given up our home in the States to be with Him, He, in return, was making sure we always had a home with Him in India.

September, October, my birthday in November, all came and went with no interview. The ashram swelled as huge numbers of people began arriving for Baba's birthday and the opening of the new [Super Specialty] hospital.

Layers of myself, which I wasn't too thrilled to discover seemed to be peeling away like the proverbial onion we all hear so much about. Being there so long, all sorts of things were coming up. For example, I had always been aware that God had intervened on behalf of my children that day in Texas City for which, of course, I was very grateful. But eventually, at the ashram, I came to feel sorry for myself. God had saved my children's lives, but I felt left out. Dangerous thoughts to be having around Baba, but there they were. I was learning to be honest, no matter what.

One morning, our American roommate, Rose, decided that our roundhouse bathroom (Was there an ashram building by then that Charlotte and I had *not* occupied?) needed to be cleaned. It was filthy with years of dirt and dust, leftover *bindis* (the red dot that Indian women wear on their foreheads) stuck on shower walls, incense stems in every available crevice. Rose had brought cleansers from home, and without asking,* had hired a male *dhobi*

*Baba has relatively few rules at the ashram; but one rule is to not let people into your rooms whom you do not know. I would not have hired the *dhobi*.

(a laundry/cleaning person) to help us.

So there were in that bathroom, Rose, who didn't hear very well, the *dhobi*, who did not speak English, Charlotte who was six, and me. We all really got into it, and water was everywhere, walls, fixtures, floor. At one point, Rose looked around and asked, "Is Baba saying this is what our insides look like?" I was in a corner cleaning the area around the lavatory, scrubbing a wall—wet sponge, wet hands, wet me in wet clothes, bare wet feet on wet concrete floor—and replied, laughing, "Of course, Baba's behind EVERYTHING." Just then, ZAP! My hand made contact with live 220 wiring.

I'd grown up in prosperity and had no idea what substandard wiring looked like.

Just in case you're ever electrocuted, I'll tell you now, it's like being superglued to the current. No way can you let go.

I screamed, but Rose, who had her back to me, didn't hear. The *dhobi* didn't pay attention, and Charlotte didn't know what to do. Thankfully, she didn't come near me. Given the narrow angle at the lavatory, there was no way Charlotte could have reached up to turn off the light switch without coming into contact with me and being electrocuted herself.

All I could do was be with Baba. Suddenly the current released, and I fell to the floor.

Later that day, I went to the maintenance shed to inquire about 220 volt wiring (which is much stronger than our wiring in this country). The man with whom I spoke—who was wearing one of those green diamonds with which Baba seems to favor ashram helpers—verified that, yes, I should have died.

Watch what you ask for!

But even as I write these words, I have to add that I learned an even bigger lesson that day than my own personal safety. I learned to take everything to Baba—every concern, every worry, all of it—no matter how seemingly petty. It's really not ours to judge the quality of what we offer to and share with Him.

I have since learned that accidental electrocution is often a form of spiritual initiation.

Eventually, Baba answered all three questions. As regards the personal situation, He gave much guidance both while there and since our return. Something that helped a lot was the realization that nightmares—both sleeping and waking—are just another form of dreams. There have been resulting relationship healings as well, mostly starting in my own heart.

Where to go? We're back in Southern California, in the same building as we were in Easter 1991, despite many stops along the way.

What to do with my life? Although my previous writing experience had been print journalism and screen plays, while we were at the ashram, Baba involved me in rewriting and coproducing the ashram Christmas play. It was my first experience writing for the stage. The one real job He gave me during our stay, writing, seemed a confirmation of that career path (there have been others). As a postscript, this past year, I was accepted into a playwrights' ensemble here in Los Angeles.

Just recently, I came across a small journal from December 1991—the month before we were to return to the U.S.—in which I'd written down a dream from the night before. Baba, smiling, was

pointing at a motorcycle. Sai has a thousand smiles, and this one seemed to say, "I'm very pleased with myself, won't you join in my infinite happiness?" The morning I wrote the dream down, I took it to mean that Charlotte and I were to return home. Like a dripping sponge, I'd absorbed all I could.

But it was not until last week that I realized the dream was Baba's confirmation that it was Him on the motorcycle that day on the Texas City highway. His appearing where and when He did were important components of the event directly relating to my situation.

We experienced much evidence of God's presence while we were in India, including miracles such as Charlotte's healing from a head injury after Baba touched her, plus other personal attention from Baba, and synchronicity (which I think of as God's calling card).

Since returning, the miracles and the synchronicity of events have continued.

And the education of my older daughter, Em, (she has now completed two years of medical school) is a story in itself. All of this has occurred within the framework of my constantly changing relationship with Baba, a relationship which has run the gamut of emotions.

When we first got back, I adopted a cloak of artificial piety in my effort to be a good Indian woman. Interesting that I should adopt yet another ready-made identity, as I've done this all my life. Tell me who you want me to be, and I'll be it. But *Sathya* means Truth. Baba's been rebuilding me from the inside out with my own identity and authenticity. I am as I am.

Baba tells us that our lives are His message. To use an advertising term, we are all His "point men." All that the world knows of Baba is through us and our lives.

—Peyton Wolcott
Glendale, California



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 which 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.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Thought for the Day, Prasanthi Nilayam

What Is Loved, Body or Consciousness?

Let us consider a few more common experiences of ours. When somebody dies, we say, "He or she is no more." In Indian vernacular they say, "He or she is gone." Now if he or she were to be the body, it is there in front of the mourners, until it is buried or cremated. So "he" or "she" refers to the Consciousness which has left the body and not to the body *per se*. Similarly, we say that the wife loves the husband, or the son loves his mother. But after the death of the husband or the mother, their bodies are mercilessly burned or buried by the very persons who loved them. Why? Because what they had been loving was the true Self or Consciousness in those bodies, not the inert and mute bodies.

Self-effulgent Atma

We may consider another daily experience in this connection, by analyzing it as follows: What is the light which enables me to see various objects in the world? It is the light of the sun, moon or lamp. Now, by what light do I see these sources of light? By the light of my eyesight or vision. When I close my eyes, I do see visions in dreams or meditation. Who provides the light for such visions? My mind. I know my mind itself is illumined and directed by my intellect, which in turn is illumined and directed by my ego or false self. However, this ego is absent during sleep. Then who bears witness to the absence of my ego in sleep? It is the pure Consciousness or Awareness, the real Self. Therefore, I am the Self-effulgent, Being-Awareness-Bliss, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*,

that illumines and activates all the other vestures ranging from the ego to the senses.

Nondual Self

Based on all such daily experiences, everyone of us can conclude that: "I am not the body but the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* or Self, which is not confined to any particular body, thing, place or time, but is omnipresent and infinite." This might sound like considering the body non-self as something separate and distinct from *Atma*, the Self. But even as there can be no wave without water, there can be no body apart from the Self or Consciousness. Self, being omnipresent and infinite, precludes the presence of any entity other than Itself, being nondual or the One without a second. This principle of *Advaita* or nondualism, is not only taught by Baba but has also been practically demonstrated by Him as in the episode of the weeping saris which illustrates that even inanimate things do have Consciousness. [Details of this episode can be found in Dr. John S. Hislop's book, *My Baba and I*.]

No Birth and No Death for the Real Self

As Baba says, *Self or God is everything, everywhere, ever*. What we should recognize is that while names and forms go on changing, they do not have any separate existence apart from the all-pervading and interpenetrating Consciousness, just as the waves are not different from the ocean. This metaphysical declaration of the *Upanishads* is also corroborated by physics through the laws of indestructibility and conservation of matter and energy (or force), both of

which are interchangeable. To give a simple illustration, the names and forms of ice, water and steam are unreal, being interchangeable and perishable, while H₂O is the unchanging reality behind all of them. To put it differently, the names and forms that are superimposed on the all-pervasive Consciousness are unreal and perishable, while the Consciousness which is the substratum of the names and forms is real and imperishable. So to forestall the misery arising out of the inevitable diseases and death of the body and worries of the mind, we should identify ourselves and others with the eternal Consciousness, but not with the ephemeral body and mind. As rightly advised by an Indian saint:

*"To stand outside the body and mind
Is the way to peace of every kind."*

This indeed is the precious teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Verse 28, Chapter XIII which affirms:

"He sees [truly], who sees the Supreme Lord [Consciousness] existing equally in all beings, the Unperishing within the perishing."

Even if a person dies before realizing the Self through attaining such intuitive vision, he or she need not despair. As advised by Baba, such a person can drop his or her body like an old worn-out overcoat and put on a new one in the form of another body in the next life. This process of gradual evolution through repeated births and deaths will go on until one's final release from bondage of the body by Self-realization.

Uparathi is the process of turning the mind inward and purifying one's thoughts and feelings. By these means of self-control and self-regulation, one should try to get self-satisfaction. This comes when one lives up to the dictates of his conscience. Make your conscience your master.

—Sathya Sai Baba, *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. XXI, Chapter 15

However, unlike all other animals, man is endowed with the unique ability to accelerate his own spiritual evolution by means of *sadhana* or spiritual discipline. If at all there is any idolatry or original sin common to all mankind, regardless of their religious affiliations, it is this one, namely identifying oneself with the body, and virtually worshiping it by unduly bestowing all attention, time, effort and money on the body and its belongings. And this tragic and ubiquitous perversity is due to the lack of Self-inquiry. Hence, it is that Swami gives 75% value for inquiry and only 25% for all other kinds of *sadhana*. It therefore, behooves us to continue practicing Self-inquiry along the lines indicated, and to wholeheartedly repeat the formula: "Deham (body), naaham (I am not), ko-ham (Who am I)? Soham (I am He)." Prolonged and persistent practice like this would eventually result in the aspirant becoming well-established in the rock-firm conviction: "I am the eternal *Atma*, never the ephemeral body." With this conviction, he would then and there enjoy happiness, peace and freedom from bondage of the body. In Swami's memorable and reassuring words, *He who considers himself free is indeed free; and he who considers himself bound remains bound. Constantly think yourself to be free, the eternal, unlimited Consciousness-Bliss, and you will be free and happy.*

—Dr. A. Adivi Reddy
Arcadia, California

Bits and Pieces

The Mantra

I would like to recount a delightful little story which Professor Kasturi told me and my husband. Many years ago, when Professor Kasturi was with Baba at Benares, he was consumed by the desire to receive a mantra from Swami. Having mentioned this desire to Baba, he bathed himself in the sacred waters and fasted all morning in order to receive the sacred, mystical chant. But the morning hours passed, noon came, but no mantra! By that time, he shed tears of disappointment. As his disappointment grew, lunch time came, and Prof. Kasturi was seated next to Swami.

Kasturi, why aren't you eating? asked Baba, assuming innocence. "The mantra," began the miserable Kasturi, swallowing a sob. *What is the purpose of a mantra?* Swami asked. "To get closer to the Lord," Kasturi replied.

Baba looked at Kasturi's arm and then at His own; they were almost touching.

Well, Swami said with a smile in His divinely down-to-earth way, How much closer do you want to get?

—Peggy Mason, United Kingdom

Baba's Leela (a.k.a., Thank You, Mike)

As a new Sai Center, we held our first officers' meeting last April. We rotate homes monthly for our devotional meetings. An item of discussion was to buy and have framed a Baba photo for the center. It was computed at an approximate cost of \$40.00 or \$50.00. We looked at the photos from the Sathya Sai Book Center in Tustin, but nothing further was decided pending acquiring some \$'s for the picture. In my heart, I secretly held a particular photo of Baba but said nothing.

The next day Mike Michaels, President of the Sedona Sai Center, drove up to Flagstaff for lunch with my husband, Bill, and me. Lo and behold, he presented, as a gift to our new center, THE picture of Baba, framed, and instead of glass, plastic—which makes it lightweight and easily transportable from home to home—and far less breakable. Mike did not know of our discussion nor need for the Baba photo. *Om Sai Ram.*

—Judy Jung, Flagstaff, Arizona

Swami Works Fast

On December 22, 1997, we, of the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Encinitas, California, were having our usual *bhajan* and devotional meeting. We are very ritualistic about our altar set-up and notice all details. As usual, we put the photo of Swami's feet on the altar. After *bhajans* we noticed that *vibuthi* (holy ash) had formed all across Swami's toes. We took that as a great blessing.

Two months later, a center member returned from India. When she saw the picture and heard the story, she told us that on that same day in Prasanthi Nilayam, she offered Swami a letter asking Him to bless our center. He took the letter, and the *vibuthi* materialized that very evening! *Sai Ram.*

—Victoria Valdez DeFalco, President
Sathya Sai Baba Center of Encinitas

What's Up? Announcements

Your Attention Please

Om Sai Ram! Mr. Koji Takahashi, professing to be *Shakti Path* guru, from Sathya Sai Baba Center, Nagoya, Japan, is distributing books, organizing seminars, recruiting devotees, selling Sai Baba goods, and supposedly curing diseases, all for commercial purposes. Sai's name and photos are used for collecting Sai hospital donations. The Japanese guru claims to give *darshan* on behalf of Baba. Innocent devotees from Japan, UK, France, Switzerland and Mexico have been abused and cheated.

Devotees are hereby informed to protect themselves by not engaging in any activities with the *Shakti Path* guru nor its recruiting operation. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations, or any other legitimate Sathya Sai institutions, are not involved, and have never authorized any rights claimed by *Shakti Path* guru, Koji Takahashi.

—Sri Sathya Sai Central Office
Prasanthi Nilayam

Dates to Remember

These are holy days that are acknowledged and celebrated in Prasanthi Nilayam (see Spring 1998, *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA* for more details).

July 9, <i>Guru Poornima</i>	October 1, <i>Dasara</i> or <i>Vijaya Dasami</i>
July 26, Global Handicapped Day	October 19, <i>Deepavali</i>
August 14, <i>Krishna Jayanti</i>	November 7-8, <i>Akhanda Bhajan*</i>
August 26, <i>Ganesha Chaturthi</i>	November 19, Ladies' Day
September 4, <i>Onam</i>	November 23, Sai Baba's Birthday
September 20, Blood Donation Day	December 25, Christmas

Also, don't forget the fine **Sai Conferences/Retreats** going on across the nation; they are listed in the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, Spring 1998.

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values, USA National Conference

(Sponcered by the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Foundation)

This conference is to be held in **St. Louis, Missouri on August 14-16**. All participants must be educators and/or professionals related to education such as: social workers, councilors, psychologists, and therapists who are working or have worked with students k through university level. For more information about the conference contact: **Bea Flaig (520) 577-7196**

Do not fret against rules and regulations which the Sri Sathya Sai Organization impose on you; they are laid down for your own good.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Hyderabad, March 29, 1976

*Subject to confirmation

Progress?

Many people talk of progress, but morality and discipline are restricted to books. The heart is full of ill-will and the hands indulge in bad actions; those people ruin the person who helps them. They mock and make fun of their teachers. Is this progress in the field of education? Today, harm is done to those who help. The one who teaches is made fun of. This is not education. Do good to those who do good to you. Do good even to those who do harm to you. Doing good to those who do good to you is not great, but to do good to those who harm you is great. That is what students have to learn today. Do not hate anybody, love everybody. Come out victorious in the game of life. What is this victory? Victory means being an ideal person, so step right up, do good to others and serve society.

Students have much to learn: First, reduce your ego. Young people are hot-blooded. Because of the age, they tend to lose discriminatory power between good and bad. You have only one tongue; you must use it for one purpose. But to say a thing is right and then deny it is being doubled-tongued, like a poisonous snake. You are educated, virtuous, courageous; you are capable of sacrifice; you are unselfish and compassionate; live up to your qualities and earn a good name. If God is pleased, the whole world is pleased.

In circumstances—of loss, pain, blame, anxiety or difficulty—you may forget anything, but do not forget God, because, everything else is a passing cloud. The heart alone is eternal. Whatever you have to study, study it well, but keep in mind the welfare of the world.

At Work and in Society

We must keep thinking of what good can be done in the world, keep thinking of the welfare of the universe. We must desire the progress of society and render service. Education should be used properly. It should not be misused by merely going to an office, doing your tasks and collecting a salary. That is selling education. The selling of education is wrong; you may work in an office, but the work must be commensurate with your pay. Think how much you earn and how much work you do; use your discrimination. To collect a salary worth thousands, and to put in work worth hundreds is a betrayal. Such traitors are many in number in the world. They expect a lot, but they give very little.

That is why Bharat (India) has become a poor nation. To pay the salaries, India takes large debts from other nations. Who is responsible for this? You are responsible. This state of affairs can be avoided if you work in proportion to your salary. You should consider this action of shirking work to be treacherous. Only then will you improve yourselves.

The present day attitude is, "Let anything happen to the nation; what do I care as long as I get my salary." Thinking thus, people sit in comfort in air-conditioned offices. But instead, work until you satisfy your own conscience. This ideal should be practiced by all. If you get more salary, you should do more work. There is no harm in getting more salary, only your work should be in proportion to the pay received. Any course you study or pursue, you only have the fat salary in view. That is your only consideration, not, "How much work

can I do? How much good can I do for society?" Such pure thoughts are nowhere to be seen. Every student should think, "What good will society gain from me?" You should think along these lines, and not, "What will I gain from society?" The utterly selfish person will think that way. That is the reason the *Vedas* (the four *Vedas* are holy scripture) declare, "Not by penance, not by work, but by sacrifice alone can Divinity be obtained."

Dear Students, wherever you go, in whatever situation you are placed, you should do good for society, your parents, and those around you. First of all, be disciplined not only while you are here in the college or in the hostel, but your discipline should follow you like a shadow, wherever you go. Do your duty sincerely, only then will you be happy.

About Money and Trusting

If you earn plenty of money, but do not put in enough work, you will have only loss. The money earned thus can never really be enjoyed. It will go away either through sickness, theft, taxes or accidents. Sometimes you may lend money to someone who will not return it. If it is ill-gotten money, you will not have even the authority to ask for it back. So only the rightful amount will remain with you; the rest will leave you in some way or other.

Once, sage Agasthya wanted to build an ashram and a temple for God. The people who worked had no specific salary or wages. At the end of the day, they would be given some mud or sand; in the sand each worker would find gold in the proportion to the work he or she had done—never more or less. That is why it was called the Golden Temple. In those

days, the public's sense of duty, justice and righteousness was so high and pure that people were peaceful, prosperous and happy. Also, they never had famine.

Those golden days will never come back. For four rupees one could get a sack of rice. At night, in the summer, people would sleep in the open, or on the terrace with all the doors open. They had no fear of any kind. To attend weddings, women, fully decked out with ornaments, would travel on moonlit nights without fear. But today, even the jewels in a locker are not safe. What sacred times those were, and how they have changed! You can trust no one. They may come as friends, but while walking together, they may steal from you or even kill you! Money has become the root cause of all evils. This trend started at the end of the *Dwapara Yuga* (an inauspicious period of time). Before that, people believed that righteousness was the very basis of the world. But in the *Dwapara Yuga* the Kauravas and the Pandavas (two royal families) had a fight over property or money, and that turned into the Kurukshetra War [see Swami's *Gita Vahini*, or the classic, *Bhagavad Gita*]. Unfortunately, from then on, money has become the basis of the world.

For all of the injustice, crime and untruth, money is the root cause. For ego and pomp, jealousy and hatred, also, money is the root cause. All money received from people should be spent on the people. You feel that the business office pays you the salary, but who paid the office? The bank paid the office, but who paid the bank? It is the people's money; all money collected from the people should go back to the people. That is my will (*sankalpa*). People say that Sai

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with peace and joy. Never forget Love. filled with Love . . .)

Different Roads

Faiths are different roads converging to the same point. Belief in one God is the cornerstone of all faiths and religions. The goal of all faiths is one and the same—to merge back to our source, the Supreme.

Though the various faiths describe the same essence differently with the help of dissimilar symbols, and back it up using unlike theology, every faith speaks of union with God as the final and true destination of man; for God is the source of peace, bliss and blessedness. God is absolute Truth; God is absolute Beauty, absolute Goodness and absolute Joy. Union with God is considered to be synonymous with liberation. Because of that, there is unity and unanimity among the faiths.

In the light of these, it can be said that all the faiths are valid and authentic; all the faiths are Truth-bearers; all of the faiths are saviors of mankind. While the conviction in the practice of one's own faith is sufficient for man to attain Truth and be saved, there is a need for every person to respect other faiths as well.

It is said, "Light is good in whatever lamp it is burning. A rose is beautiful in whatever garden it may bloom; a star has the same radiance whether it shines from east or west."

—Vivek Kocharlakota, Shrewsbury, New Jersey

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Baba spends millions of rupees for the Water Project, but not a single paisa (penny) belongs to me. Whatever the people give to me, I give back to them.

I have no property of my own; I have only one big property. And what is that? My students are my property; if my students conduct themselves properly and ideally, that is enough for me. Just as the students took part in the sports and games with zeal and enthusiasm, winning prizes with joy; similarly, even in life, I want them to follow God's command, win His grace and live with peace and joy. Never forget Love.



One cannot put a value on Love; its value cannot be estimated. Hold onto Love until the end of your life.

—Sathya Sai Baba, January 14, 1996

Swami concluded with the devotional song, *Prema Muditha* (With a heart filled with Love . . .)

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