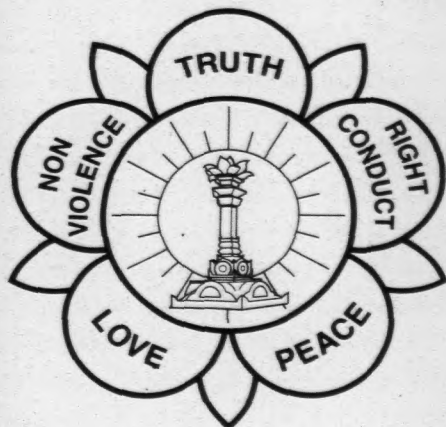




SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER, USA

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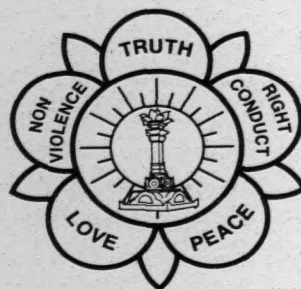
September, October, November

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

Sai's Message	<i>Sathya Sai Baba</i>	1
An Interview	<i>The Times of India</i>	2
Divine Love Is Powerful	<i>Sathya Sai Baba</i>	4
Violence and the Sai Devotee	<i>Hal Honig</i>	8
Who Is to Blame?	<i>Alora M. Knight</i>	10
A Miracle from Sai Baba	<i>Robert C. Petersen</i>	11
Swami on Health	<i>Dr. Raj Prakash</i>	14
Good Health and Goodness	<i>Sathya Sai Baba</i>	18
"Your Body, Too, Is Myself"	<i>Dr. A. Adivi Reddy</i>	21
Discipline for Children	<i>Rita Bruce</i>	25
Children's Corner: Plants Can Feel Too	<i>Stories for Children, Part II</i>	28
Thoughts on Nonviolence	<i>Zarineea Zolivea</i>	29
Announcements	<i>Newsletter Staff</i>	30
Sathya Sai Book Center of America	<i>Book Center Volunteers</i>	36

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

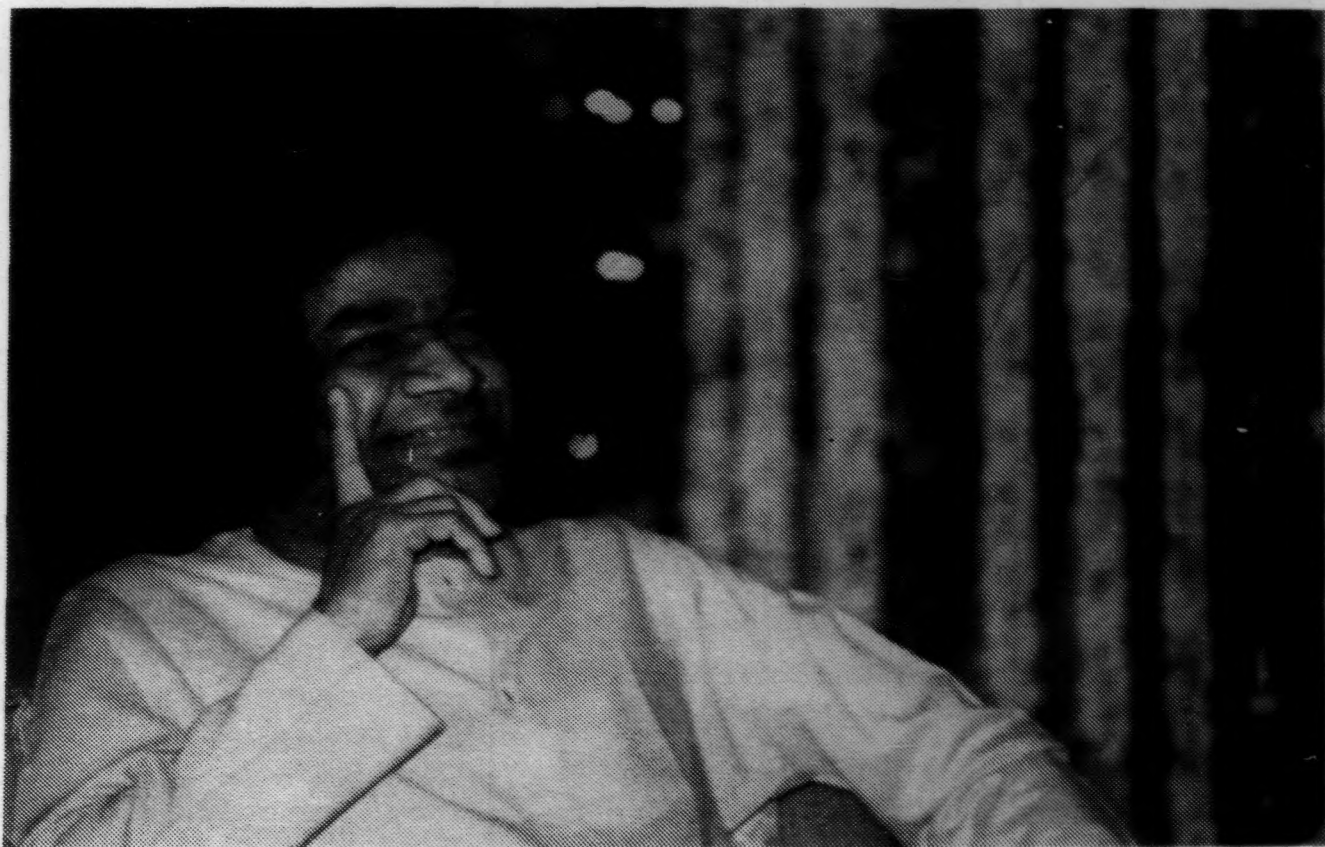


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—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

Sai's Message

Human life is a long garland. One end of the garland is birth and the other end is death. In between these ends are the flowers—clashes, agitations, doubts, lack of self-confidence and other such qualities—which are threaded together. The effect of these flowers in between are predominant. People look at and believe only these negative qualities, of restiveness, lawlessness and atrocities, but they do not recognize the underlying truth that without the thread, these flowers cannot be woven together. That thread is Brahmasutra, sacred thread, the law of Brahman (the Universal Absolute).



Woven about this thread are

“Obstacles add their own beauty to life.”

the flowers called obstacles, pleasures, sorrows, abuses, accusations, gains and the like.

Why have so many types and colors of flowers been strung together? It is only when the flowers are of various hues and types that the garland becomes beautiful. What is it that lends beauty to life? Difficulties lend one kind of charm; sorrows lend another kind of attractiveness. Obstacles add their own beauty to life. Joy is another source of beauty for the garland [of life]. All these are woven together by the thread of Brahman (the Universal Absolute). When man develops this kind of wisdom and equanimity, he can be said to have assimilated the essence of education.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1996

An Interview

This is an interview [Baba gave] to a group of journalists from Mumbai (Bombay), it was published in *The Times of India*, March 12, 1999. Swami had not given an interview to a journalist in the past 25 years. But recently, he spoke to S. Balakrishnan and a group of journalists.

Q. How do you relate yourself to Sai Baba of Shirdi?

A. *This body has not seen him.*

Q. Indians are increasingly turning to god men and god women. Is this a sign of growing insecurity within them? Or is it something else?

A. *This is basically a search for God. The divine is there within each person. The search is for this divinity. God realization cannot be seen as a sign of insecurity. It is a positive aspiration to be one with God. It is a good sign.*

Q. Even as mankind is relentlessly searching for God, he finds himself engulfed by more and more misery. What is the reason for this state of affairs?

A. *Attachment to the body is the root cause of all suffering and misery. Once this attachment ends, then one can experience divine bliss. There is no doubt about that. Since God does not have any bodily attachment, He does not attach any importance to the suffering of His body.*

Q. What is the best way to serve God?

A. *Serve the poor, the weak, the down-trodden and the underprivileged. There is divinity in each of us, hence, love and serve fellow human beings selflessly. Give those around you pure love. Religion can be best*

pursued through the axiom: "There is only one religion, the religion of love; one caste, the caste of humanity; one language, the language of the heart; one law, the law of karma and there is only one God; He is omnipresent." All of us should remember these simple yet profound truths. These truths lead us to God.

Q. Is there no escape from human misery?

A. *It is all karma. The need is to adopt the path of righteousness. One should surrender oneself to the Almighty.*

Q. Why do you perform miracles like materializing a ring, a medallion, a necklace, vibuthi (holy ash) and other objects? What are you trying to prove by performing these miracles?

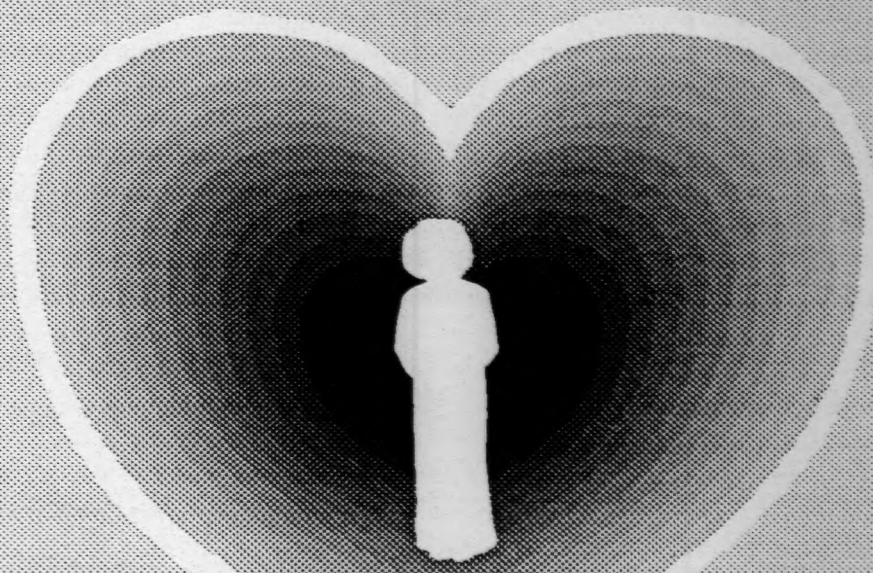
A. *Chamatkaar, or miracle, is a cheap word for what I do. A magician performs his tricks to earn a livelihood and worldly fame. But I materialize these talismans as my visiting cards, as evidence that divinity can transform earth into the sky and vice versa. To doubt this is to betray an ability to grasp the grandeur of the universe. I get a lot of satisfaction while gifting these talismans to my devotees.*

Q. The suffering millions flock to you. They want to pass on their problems and suffering to you. How much of this suffering can you take on?

A. *I am only performing a divine mission.*

Q. How do you spend your day?

A. *My day begins with granting darshan to my devotees, interviews to people, bhajans, attending to all projects taken up for human*



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no more now. I did not go at the invitation of the government.

Q. Do you have any plans to visit foreign nations and spread your message?

A. *No. Where there is sugar, the ants will come; the sugar does not go chasing after the ants. My first task is to clean up our own country, then go to other countries.*

Q. You wield enormous influence over the top politicians of the country. Why don't you impress upon them the need to inculcate values in public life? If this is done, India will be a much better place.

A. *Politicians have a choice to pursue good or bad governance; they do covet power with a frenzy. But I tell them, "Politics without principles, science without humanity, education without character and commerce without morality, are not only useless but can*

Q. You are the chancellor of the Sathya Sai University, and you attach much importance to education. Why do you think education in India has become a mechanical exercise?

A. *This is because education has been divorced from values. Education bereft of values is meaningless. The need is to restore values to education.*

Q. What are your views on different political parties in India?

A. *All parties do good work as well as bad; the problem lies within ourselves. We should insist on principles.*

Q. Who will lead the Sathya Sai movement after you?

A. *My devotees. God will continue to guide them.*

*—The Times of India
March 12, 1999*

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Q. The suffering millions flock to you. They want to pass on their problems and suffering to you. How much of this suffering can you take on?

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Q. How do you spend your day?

A. My day begins with granting darshan to my devotees, interviews to people, bhajans, attending to all projects taken up for human

welfare. The same cycle is repeated from post noon till evening. Although I know the contents of all letters which I receive, I read all of them for the trupti or satisfaction of my devotees.

I avoid milk, green fruits, dry fruits, sweets, ghee, butter, tea, coffee, etc. I take a skimpy meal of ragi (a kind of millet grain) and green grams (mung beans). For the past 60 years my weight has remained unchanged at 108 pounds. When the world sleeps, I go to my devotees, give them my vision, comfort them, console them and solve their problems. I willingly take on the sufferings of my devotees on myself.

Q. Have you gone abroad any time?

A. Yes, only once, to East Africa, that, too, because of the pure love of a devotee, who is no more now. I did not go at the invitation of the government.

Q. Do you have any plans to visit foreign nations and spread your message?

A. No. Where there is sugar, the ants will come; the sugar does not go chasing after the ants. My first task is to clean up our own country, then go to other countries.

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prove to be positively dangerous and harm people at large."

Q. Do you read newspapers?

A. I never read them. Even though I do not read any newspaper, I am aware of everything that is happening around the globe. What is necessary today is that the newspapers should be more careful and responsible in their reporting. Publishing of sensational and baseless news must be avoided. No negative and baseless reporting should be done, especially of those at the helm of affairs of the country, since it has a lot of repercussions abroad. If there are any doubts, then they should be cleared after free and frank discussions with the persons concerned. Truth should not be compromised under any circumstance.

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—The Times of India
March 12, 1999

Divine Love Is Powerful

Embodiments of Love

Without attributes, unattached to work, ever pure in mind, ever blissful, unsullied and formless, He [the Absolute] is accessible to all liberated souls.

There is one principle which is without attributes, formless, eternal and beyond thought, word and action. That is the "principle of love." The *Upanishads* (scripture) call this love "*Atma*." How can man understand this love, which has no attributes and is formless? This love is not an intellectual exercise, nor is it psychological, nor is it a reflection in the dream state. It is the life principle of all living creatures. Noble souls propagated this principle of love in various ways. Many elders, youngsters and scholars lecture on this principle of love and sing its glory. But no poetry, no composition, no language can describe divine love. That love cannot be described in thought nor word. It is beyond human comprehension and narration. Love has no form; it can be seen only in practice.

If one is to ask, "What is the form of love?" It can be said, "Love is God." Who is God? Where is God? What is His form? How to search for Him? This has been the continuous inquiry since ancient times. But none can describe divinity. The *Vedas* say, "Divinity shines with the brilliance of a thousand suns, beyond the darkness of ignorance." Divinity is beyond human understanding and expression.

How can one recognize divinity which is the embodiment of love? In this world, love assumes various forms as expressed by mother, father, brother, spouse, friends and relatives. In this world, you find selfishness and self-interest. But

divine love is absolutely selfless. Just as God loves all, you should also make efforts to love all. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, God says, "All are sparks of the divine." So, as He loves you, you should also love all and make all happy. But today, one does not find such love between human beings. Divine love does not expect anything in return. In order to cultivate such divine love, man should have faith that he is the spark of the divine and he should understand that the same God is present in all. Once he understands and develops faith in this truth, he can love everybody. Today, one does not find such love; it only means that man has no faith in these statements of God.

Just as a mariner's compass always points toward the north, likewise, under all circumstances, love is directed toward God. Time, space and individuals do not affect love. Love is the true sign of divinity. Understanding love amounts to understanding divinity. None can decide upon the form of God.

Like the Cinema Screen

When you enter a cinema theater, you find a white screen. Merely watching the screen does not satisfy you. Once the show commences, you find different characters projected on the screen. Without the screen, can you see the picture? No. But when the picture is projected, though the screen exists, it is not seen. The screen exists all the time—before, during and after the show. The *Vedas* (scripture) declare: "God is present within and around." Like the screen is for the picture, so the *Atma* (the Indwelling Divinity) is for creation. The screen of the *Atma* is present within and around all beings, and it is the primordial basis for all creation. Therefore, it is said, "Divinity per-

vades everywhere.” Divinity is present in the picture and around the picture.

Reality Is Everywhere

So who can decide the form of such divinity? On the screen of love, you find the picture of the universe. This love is present as *Atma* in all beings. What form can you attribute to the love present in you? It is not possible. How can a person who does not understand his true nature, understand God? So first and foremost, one should make efforts to understand one’s own higher Self.

The *Atma* has no definite name and form. The one Lord has many names. *Atma* is the fundamental principle, which is pure, steady and unsullied. It forms the basis for the entire universe. Without the basis of the *Atma*, the universe cannot exist. The *Vedas* declare: “He is a fool who, even after seeing this, does not recognize it.” The same principle of *Atma* is reflected in all beings. God is the basis for the entire universe. It seems rather mysterious when we inquire, “Where is God”? God is in the forest and also in the mansion. He is present in your heart and also in your speech. He is present everywhere. So never make an attempt to comprehend divinity. Instead, have faith in God, follow Him, worship Him and experience bliss.

In order to experience divinity, understand this example: The very nature of mother is love. Mother has a form, but love has no form. Mother herself is the form of love. Due to the presence of the *Atmic* principle, you are able to see its reflection in the form of the world. The whole world is nothing but a reflection, reaction and resound. *Atma* is the reality. But mankind has forgotten the reality and is seeing only the reflection. You cannot have a reaction without

an action; you cannot have resound without sound. Though the sound is everywhere, you are not able to hear it. Though the reality is everywhere, you are not able to see it. How can you see it? With unflinching faith and selfless love, think of God continuously. Then God will certainly manifest before you.

Build a Foundation

Today man chants the name of God and desires to see Him. But as he lacks steady faith, he is not able to experience divinity. Man has become blind having lost the two eyes of faith. Faith is most important. Self-confidence is the foundation on which one can build the walls of self-satisfaction. On the walls of satisfaction of self, one can lay the roof of self-sacrifice. Under the roof of self-sacrifice, one can lead a life of self-realization. You cannot have walls without a foundation nor a roof without walls. So self-confidence, the foundation, is very important.

Today, man pretends that he has love, but he does not know what it is. Our vice-chancellor described Swami’s love as that of a thousand mothers. But for the one who cannot understand the love of one mother, how can he understand the love of a thousand mothers? So first and foremost, try to understand and experience the love of your physical mother. This is the significance of mother worship during *Navaratri* (worship of the holy Mother).

Culture of the Heart

The culture of heart is the standard of life. What is this culture? It is the divine feeling that originates in the heart. All the materials and powers of the worlds are present in your heart. Men may vary in name and form, but the “cultural principle of the heart” is one and the same. God

resides in this heart. What is His form? The *Vedas* describe Him as “formless, without attributes, ancient and eternal.” No one can attribute a name to God. Had anyone existed before God, they would have named that one. But none existed before Him. Creation itself did not exist before God.

In the Beginning

For crores (tens of millions) of years, there existed only darkness. At that time, the sun and the moon did not exist, and there were no loving creatures. Nothing was seen. Then, it rained heavily for lakhs and lakhs (hundreds of thousands) of years. This resulted in the formation of oceans. From the oceans, rivers originated. Then, there was light in this world, and one could see the sun and the moon. Human habitation came into existence only after this entire process, which took place for tens of millions of years.

How do you expect man to understand divinity? First and foremost, man has to kill the *thamasic* (lazy) quality in himself. Though water has no color, it appears red when poured into a red bottle. Similarly, the *Atmic* principle, which is pure and unsullied, appears red in a person with *rajasic* (feverishly active, egoistic) qualities; dark in a person with *thamasic* (lazy, lethargic) qualities and bright in the heart of a person with *satwic* (pure, pious, calm) qualities.

Castes are Misunderstood

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna said that He created four *varnas* or castes. But people mistake these four castes—*Brahmin*, *Vaisya*, *Kshatriya* and *Sudra*. Here *varna* refers to the color, but not to the caste. The Russians are red-complexioned; British are white-complexioned; Japanese are yellow-complexioned; and the

Africans are dark-complexioned. The remaining colors are only the combinations of these four colors.

Constant Integrated Awareness

Students chant a prayer and offer food to God before they partake of it themselves. They think they are offering the food to Brahma (God). But where is Brahma? He is within. He gives immediate response.

This means, Brahma who is present in you, digests the food that you partake. Who is responsible for your blood circulation? Who makes your heart beat for 24 hours a day? It is all God's creation. Only some can understand this. In His creation, God has given human beings a special place. He has endowed them with Constant Integrated Awareness. The *Vedas* declare: “Brahman (Universal Absolute) is Constant Integrated Awareness.”

Discrimination or Intelligence

Once, King Vikramadithya convened a meeting of scholars. He asked them, which is greater among the two—*buddhi* (power of discrimination) or *medha shakthi* (intelligence)? The scholars came to a conclusion that *buddhi* is greater than *medha shakthi*. They said, *medha shakthi* was only worldly intelligence which is temporary; whereas, *buddhi* consisted of five aspects—*Sraddha* (steady faith), *Sathyam* (truth), *Rutham* (feelings that emanate from the heart), *Yogam* (science of controlling the mind) and *Mahatthatwam* (highest reality). All worldly achievements are based on *medha shakthi*, but not on *buddhi*. *Buddhi* is transcendental and beyond all the senses. It relates to the inward path; whereas, *medha shakthi* relates to the outward path.

The principle of love is the most important of all. Love is *Atma*; love is wisdom; love is truth; love is righteousness; love is peace; love is non-violence. Where there is love, untruth, violence and restlessness find no place. The human heart is a single chair, not a double sofa, or a musical chair. Once you fill your heart with love, wicked feelings have no place in it. Everything is contained in love. Love is the life principle; but man has forgotten this principle and is wasting his time in worldly love. The love between mother and child is maternal love; the love between wife and husband is attachment. It is only divine love that is true love in the strict sense of the term. Divine love applies to God only, none else.

Sage Valmiki composed the *Ramayana* consisting of a hundred crores of slokas. *Devatas* (demigods), *rakshasas* (demons) and *manavas* (human beings) came to know that whoever went through the *Ramayana* and followed it would be liberated. Immediately, people approached Brahma and requested Him for a share of the *Ramayana*. Brahma divided *Ramayana* into three parts consisting of 33, 33, 33 slokas each and distributed them. One sloka consisting of 32 letters remained. Then Brahma again divided these letters into three parts, consisting of ten letters each, and distributed them. Ultimately, two letters remained. These are the letters of the holy names of God—Rama, Krishna, Hari, Shiva, Sai and Baba—which were equally given to them. For all these names the primordial principle is love.

World Peace

Only through love can world peace be achieved, and nonviolence be practiced. Buddha said, "Nonviolence is the supreme righteousness (*dharma*).” He did penance for six years. He

approached elders and listened to their teachings, but he could not get any benefit from them. Ultimately, he inquired within and found truth. He said that sacred vision (*samyak drishti*) leads to sacred feelings (*samyak bhaavam*), which in turn leads to sacred speech (*samyak vaak*). Sacred speech leads to sacred action (*samyak karma*). Spiritual practice (*sadhana*) does not mean doing meditation or repeating the name of God (*japa*). Undertaking sacred actions is true spiritual activity. Krishna said, "You have the right to do action, but not the right to the results.” Human society is bound by action, undertake good actions.

Why the Human Body?

Today, man does not make an effort to know why the body is given. The body is given not for just loading and unloading. Food is required to keep the body fit to undertake sacred actions. As is the food, so is the head. As is the head, so is God. You should partake of sacred food, undertake sacred actions and join good company. To the extent possible, render service to society. Have good feelings in your heart, speak good words and do good actions. This is called, "unity of heart, word and deed.” Understand that this is the purpose of human life. Whatever actions you undertake, do them to please God. Divinity pervades everything, right from an ant to Brahman (the Universal Absolute), but man does not realize this and misuses his body. Body is the gift of God; to misuse it is a great sin. Sin and merit are not present in a far-off land; they are attached to your actions. Good actions yield good results. Therefore, make proper use of the body, mind and intellect, which are gifts from God.

Please turn to page 34

Violence and the Sai Devotee

The twentieth century draws to a close with devastating replays of the violence that marks man's inhumanity to man. So many of us thought the slaughter of millions during World War II had purged us of human debasement. Not so! Not so at all! The carnage continues unabated in many parts of the globe, such as in Kosovo, Africa and Asia. At the same time, the spiritual poverty in these rich United States cannot be missed as students kill one another with guns and bombs. Our history of enslavement, lynching, organized crime has created heroes out of villains. We celebrate violence and make it exciting and easy via mass-media marketing. Hatred and selfishness, the marks of narrowness of mind, are commonplace, and the consciousness of violence is accepted with shocking complacency.

At a recent count, there were 192 million firearms in the hands of private citizens in the U.S., and Handgun Control, a Washington lobbying organization, reports these facts: "In 1996, handguns were used to murder two people in New Zealand, 15 in Japan, 30 in Great Britain, 106 in Canada, 213 in Germany and 9,390 in the United States!"

This is the year dedicated to nonviolence. How desperately we need to practice this human value. Of the six billion people on earth, Swami asks how many display genuine human qualities? The number is small. Very small. Sai has come to inspire, uplift and transform the hard and impure hearts and minds of people. He reminds us that we are still going through the birth pangs of real humanness. His mission of transformation will most surely succeed, and we now live on the threshold of that success.

It is said that the pull of gravity is greatest before release into outer space. This century's violence precedes our entry into the Sai Golden Age. Let those who imagine themselves to be devotees feel the sense of urgency to act and bring about the fulfillment of his promise and his presence. The time to do this is now! The question is, "What do we do"?

Last fall, in several interviews, Swami repeatedly stressed that he doesn't seek quantity but quality. Spirituality is not just going to temples, churches and Sai meetings; spirituality is what you do after you leave these gatherings. His words are precious to us only if we listen carefully to them, and then reflect deeply upon them, and make them part of our lives by practicing them. *Practice is everything*, he said. When his teachings flower into experience, our lives are transformed and have the power to uplift others.

Swami repeatedly warns us to avoid the destructive influence of TV, films and bad company. He acknowledges that it is more difficult in the West because of the widespread technology that makes violence hard to escape in our daily lives. The internet makes dangerous information indiscriminately accessible. Video games focus on killing. The press highlights daily acts of anger and hatred. The consciousness of selfishness, of getting as much as possible, is present everywhere. We are addicted to violence. It has become our entertainment. The schools, the malls, and the homes, house the madness of the times, and the purity of innocence is lost. We are drowning in the emptiness of our own affluence.

The solution begins in the home. In the USA, our families, our children, are not largely lacking of bread on the table. The real poverty is that they are seriously lacking in effective love and attention. Love cannot be called love without taking the time to express it in caring, sharing and in common sense ways. We can control, to a certain extent, what children watch and with whom they spend time, but that is inadequate. I know of examples, of many devotees who, unknowingly, allow children to own and watch video games. Parents are told that all the kids have them, but they do not check to see exactly what these "games" are. This is not uncommon. Swami sets the example of carefully supervising every detail. No detail is too small. We must do the same.

First, the parents must set an example by what they watch, by the language they use and by the friends they choose. Then regular family meetings must be held. All must be present. It is sacred time spent in openly sharing details of the events of the past days. Exactly what homework is here? What exams, and what papers and what problems? The parents must do the same thing sharing all of their life experiences, so that a sense of oneness comes forth. *Understanding is easy*, Swami tells us, *It is misunderstanding that is difficult*. Certainly Swami's teachings must be brought in, but less in the quoting than in the example of practice. These meetings must be cheerful, happy traditions. Begin with a smile and smile often, for that is incomprehensibly touching. The smile opens the door to love. We must learn to talk less, much less, to listen with great care, with even greater care, and to withhold the judgment that frequently separates one from the other. All present will feel the unity,

the sense of belonging that we so often seek in questionable ways and places. The Lord's words are very precious, and the time we spend together regularly is very precious. Peace begins in the individual and in the family.

We must then go to our Sai Centers and establish peace and purity there. Emphasis must be placed upon resolving diversity of opinion with love. All the problem situations we run into are Swami's gifts, his lessons, his opportunities for us to overcome ego, and to put his teachings into practice. When we can accept difficulties as our lessons and welcome them as such, we achieve the spiritual growth we seek. Unity in diversity is our goal. Love alone heals the violence of thought, word and deed. We must act now. We are his messengers, his warriors of the heart. Have full faith in him. He will not fail us. He alone will lead the way.

These are his words:

I have resolved to enfold the people of the world in the fostering care of universal love. . . . For the world is my mansion and the continents are the halls therein. I have come to inscribe a golden chapter in the history of humanity, wherein falsehood will fail, truth will triumph, and virtue will reign. Character will confer power then, not knowledge, nor inventive skill, nor wealth. Wisdom will be enthroned in the councils of the nations. Do not be misled. It is not my purpose to strike men dumb by the display of miraculous might. I have come to confer the boon of blessedness, and the benediction of bliss as the rewards for genuine spiritual endeavor and to lead mankind into liberty, light and love.

—Hal Honig
New York, New York

Who Is to Blame?

*Among the latest and greatest of all tragedies
Are the young people who deliberately kill.
It may be their parents or classmates
Who fall victim to their misguided will.*

*How did it start, where did it begin?
What possible gain do they seek?
Death or confinement is the only outcome,
A future that is certainly bleak.*

*Whenever it happens, the questions arise,
What could have been their intent?
The wisest of all cannot understand
What kind of message was sent.*

*Even a child will know right from wrong,
Therefore, there can be no excuse.
Although the things that can be the reason,
Are drugs, drinking, neglect and abuse.*

*So though it is easy to center the blame
On those who committed the deed.
Who all were involved in directing their path?
Who planted the very first seed?*

*Like a small drop of water indenting a stone,
Words, too, can erode any mind.
So who is responsible for being a part
Of creating the murderous kind?*

*When Jesus said, "One of you will betray me,"
The disciples cried, "Is it I, Lord, is it I?"
How many today are free from the guilt
Of what their words and actions imply?*

*A contemptuous word, a racial remark
Can start a fuse that will burn.
If abuse or neglect then add to the fire
A life can then take a wrong turn.*

*Words and deeds are ours to command.
Who can truthfully say, "Not I."
Sadly, not many can make that affirmation,
And that is the main reason why*

*This world will continue to suffer the loss
Of people both young and old.
Who happen to be a target of hate,
A sad story, too often retold.*

*Who is to blame, what can be done?
The answer's abundantly clear.
If each person speaks with love, not with hate,
The reasons for violence would soon disappear.*



—Alora M. Knight
Gardenerville, Nevada

A Miracle from Sai Baba

With a Few Leelas Thrown In

In the early summer of 1988, I was in my home in the mountains enjoying a beautiful day, listening to the birds singing in the lush, green trees, when I had a sudden, sharp pain under my left jaw. Alarmed, I put my hand on my jaw and felt a rather large swelling. For years I had been experiencing some minor discomfort whenever I ate or drank anything acidic. But this time, the pain and swelling was intense and did not subside.

My wife, Marilyn, suggested that we immediately seek the advice of a doctor who specialized in eye, nose and throat problems. Meanwhile, the swelling and pain increased.

Fortunately, the doctor was in and agreed to see us. In thirty minutes, we were in the office of Raj Shintanni (not his real name), a distinguished looking gentleman from Bombay, India. After a brief examination, he informed us that I must go to the hospital immediately for x-rays and intravenous antibiotics. By the time the x-rays were taken, the swelling under my jaw was the size of a cut-in-two tennis ball and the simple act of swallowing was getting more and more difficult.

The doctor frowned as he read the x-rays. He explained that I had a stone about the size of a small almond enmeshed in my salivary gland, and it was a wonder it took this long to become inflamed and infected. He transferred me to the Intensive Care Unit at once, as surgery could not be done until the infection was cleared.

I asked him if it were possible for the stone to pass through the salivary duct. He chuckled gently and said, "Mr. Petersen, that is a physical impossibility. It would be like trying to force a

sixteen-foot-high truck through a three-foot tunnel—utterly impossible." I then inquired if it would be possible to excise the stone from the gland. The good doctor shook his head to indicate, "No." Then he said, "You see this place on the x-ray, it clearly shows that the stone is enmeshed in the gland. They are as one. Any attempt at cutting it out would cause irreparable damage. The only safe way is to remove the whole gland. Fortunately, you have another one and will be able to live a normal life."

I was connected to several tubes, one dripping a liquid antibiotic into my veins and another which delivered a nutritional liquid, since I could not swallow. Some time during the night, I noticed the doctor sitting beside me. I knew it was late, and I could not imagine why he was still there.

The next morning, the pain had subsided, and the swelling was reduced. My wife told me that the doctor had stayed late because he thought he might have to perform a tracheotomy on me if the swelling didn't go down. The swelling had come very close to closing the larynx and it might have become life-threatening.

After the third day, I was well enough to go home provided I took oral antibiotics, so that the infection would be completely gone and the doctor could schedule surgery.

Two days later, in the early evening, the problem recurred. Because I was unable to swallow the huge antibiotic pills the doctor had given me, the infection took hold again. I was depressed and frightened.

A new acquaintance, Ben—a recovering alcoholic, and ex-marine from Oklahoma—stopped by to inquire about my health. Seeing that I was in discomfort, he only stayed a short while. As he was leaving, he pulled out a soft cover book from his jacket and said, “I came across this book the other day and thought you might be interested in looking at it.” Although I was not in the mood to read anything, I thanked him for his kind thoughts. The title of the book was *Avatar* by Howard Murphet. Oh, another book about some Indian holy man, I thought, just what I need.

Most of my life, although I believed in a supreme being or a celestial force of some kind, I had an empty feeling in my soul; there was something missing or disconnected. I had read the works of Yogananda and appreciated his wisdom, but he was of another time and had left his body. Although I had seen holy men from India come to this country, the cynic in me wondered, why all the Rolls Royces? Why all the Hollywood and rock-and-roll stars? Money seemed to be connected to their visits. I rationalized that the gurus are not responsible for the doings of their followers but, on the other hand, “By their fruits, you shall know them.” I was confused. Years ago, I had attended some meetings at the home of a spiritual teacher named Hilda Charlton in New York City, and heard her speak of Sai Baba. She had spent quite a long time at his ashram in India. She talked about his ability to manifest solid objects out of thin air. That sounded interesting, but I had not seen this with my own eyes, so I remained a cynic, wanting to believe; but I was not ready.

I felt tired and weak and decided to go to bed, hoping that I would not have a crisis during the night. Praying that the swelling and pain would not get worse, I took the new book upstairs with

me. Once in bed, too weary to read any print, I opened the book at random to a full page photo of a dark, Afro-haired man with incredible eyes. The eyes that gazed from that page seemed to be alive. I stared at them, drawn into them; I could not take my eyes off his picture. To my own surprise, I heard myself say, “Sai Baba, I don’t need this stone in my neck. Please take it away from me.” I then fell into a deep sleep.

I awoke the next morning to the constant cawing of crows. I sat up in bed and rejoiced to discover all pain was gone. My happiness plunged when I felt an object tucked between my cheek and gum. “Don’t tell me, on top of every thing else, a crown came off an upper molar!”

Warily, I explored that area with my thumb and index finger. I pulled out a small rock, almond-sized and wrinkled. It almost looked like a small brain. I put my hand on my jaw and realized, not only was I free of pain, but the swelling was completely gone. Was it possible that the stone in my hand was the stone that was supposed to be entangled in my salivary gland and—not removable except by surgery? If this was true, how was it possible that I had no pain whatsoever, and there was no blood on my bed sheets?

I had experienced a miracle! I called Marilyn to make sure I was not dreaming. The book on my bed table, turned to its back showing a picture of Sai Baba with one of his hands turned down, blessing a devotee with holy ash (*vibuthi*) that flowed freely from his hand. I realized the source of my miracle.

My wife, in amazement, examined my throat and jaw and confirmed that all the swelling was gone. She suggested that we take the stone and go immediately to the surgeon to get his opinion, and cancel the date for the surgery.

The nurse led us into the doctor's office. I had the stone wrapped up in a small patch of white gauze. The doctor wore a slight frown as he looked at the stone, and then he examined my throat.

"Yes," he said, "that is the stone, and your gland is perfectly normal." He looked incredulous. I know I must have appeared a bit demented as I gleefully told the doctor about my miracle. But when I mentioned Sai Baba, he walked away from me and muttered, "I don't want to hear of such things." I was caught off guard. I thought that this man from Bombay would be impressed, and share my wonder. What I didn't realize was this miracle negated all of his long and expensive studies and practice of western medicine. The operation was canceled. As Marilyn and I walked out the door, he cautioned, "Don't worry, that is a chronic condition; it will come back again."

Marilyn quickly retorted in a rather loud voice, "No, when Sai Baba heals, he heals perfectly." She looked as startled as the doctor.

That was ten years ago, the stone never returned, I never worried, and Sai Baba continues to bless me. That was the beginning of a new journey. I wanted to find out more about Sai Baba, and why I was blessed with this miracle.

The next day, my wife related this story to a colleague at work, who immediately started to cry. It turned out, she was a devotee, and her

tears were of joy. She gave my wife additional pictures of Baba, and the address of a place in California where I could get literature and tapes of Sai Baba singing *bhajans*. There was a special cassette that appealed to me, and I sent away for it and some books on Sai Baba by Murphet. In ten days, the books arrived with a note informing me that the tape was no longer available.

Several days later, my wife was looking through my record collection. Something she never did because the record cabinet was low and required one to sit on the floor while flipping through the albums. She pulled out a wrapped, unopened 12 inch LP. On the album cover was a picture of Baba and the songs were the very ones I had sent for. Marilyn shrieked in disbelief. She had never seen this album before, nor had I. Of course, it was possible that years ago one of us bought it, but we had no memory of doing so. That was highly unlikely, as [before this incident] the name of Sai Baba did not interest either of us.

It was later explained to me by a devotee that Baba has a delicious sense of humor, and that this was an example of a *leela* (God's play).

As the years go by, I keep finding new *leelas* in this story, and there is no doubt that I will find more as time goes by.

—Robert C. Petersen
Woodstock, New York

Keeping the mind fixed on God and good ideas help one's health. Keep the eyes, ears, tongue, hands and feet under restraint. Don't read enervating or exciting things, don't attend films which exhaust or inflame the mind. Don't lose faith in yourself; you are the divine encased in a body. Contentment is the best tonic.

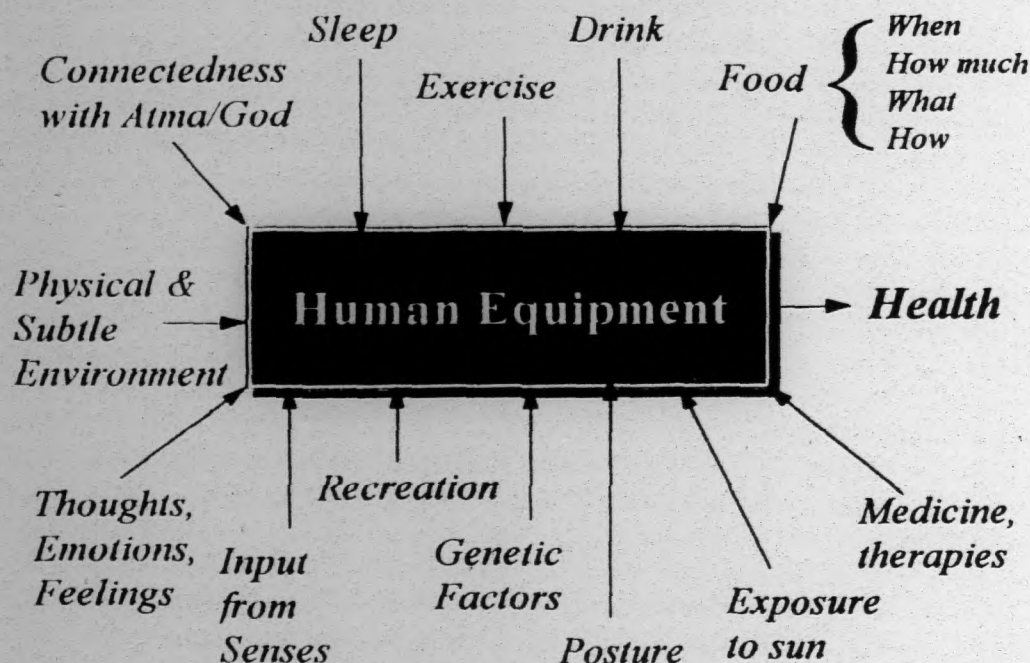
—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. VII, p 113

Swami on Health

Our Lord, out of his infinite mercy, has taught us all about how to lead our lives for the sake of achieving all the goals of life. We do seem to understand some of the basic principles of spirituality, for example, the five human values. Unfortunately, his teachings on the matter of health are not well-studied or understood, much less practiced. That is the motivating reason for

happens then if the body is ridden by several ills? For want of health, one cannot enjoy anything in life, be it family, wealth, fame or any achievements. It is only wise to understand what leads to good health and what destroys it.

The diagram, on this page, illustrates some of the factors that, in varying degrees, determine our health. Let's browse the factors quickly in counterclockwise order, starting from the top right corner.



Factors that Determine One's Health.

this article. In his discourse of October 8, 1983, Swami said regarding the importance of health:

1. *Health is wealth. One who does not have health cannot succeed even in the smallest of ventures. It is one's health that is of paramount importance and a necessity in this world and for the world beyond.*

It must be everyone's experience that even slight ache or discomfort anywhere in the body interferes with, or deprives us of the ability to concentrate on thoughts of God. What

Food is a major factor that affects our health as will be seen. When talking about food habits, one has to consider all different aspects of it—timing, quantity, quality and the manner of eating. Due to its enormous importance, this factor is the focus of the article. A number of Swami's quotations will be given. The importance of moderate **exercise** and quality **sleep** are well known. Various spiritual practices fall under the factor called **Connectedness with Atma/God**. Whether it is praying or singing devotional songs from the heart, or performing *japa*/meditation, or expanding the consciousness by feelings of love, or reducing body consciousness, all these practices help us to connect with our real Self, which is *Atma* or God. *Atma* is the highest source of all goodness, beauty, energy and strength. Good health is a sure result of living in the spirit.

The factor, **Physical Environment**, relates to purity or pollution of air, land, water. **Subtle Environment**, relates to the vibrations present

of the thoughts and words of people. The company we keep falls under this category. We all know very well how positive thoughts and feelings—love, faith, hope, joy—cause improvement in health, and how the negatives—anger, envy, depression and all—sabotage it. **Recreation** includes the pleasurable aspects of life, and it has to be preserved for greater well-being.

First, the oft-repeated and most simple advice from our Lord:

2. Baba says, *Be Happy.*

This is simple, but probably the most powerful advice that can ever be made for achieving radiant health. When there is happiness in mind, the body seems to be in the perfect state to utilize its cleansing and healing powers to bring it to sound health. The challenge is to get to that state of mind. Is it possible to achieve it without any other measure? The answer would be, “No.”

3. Baba says, *Bliss (Ananda) and health (arogya) go hand in hand. A sense of elation and exultation keeps the mind and body free from ill health.*

This quotation states that bliss and health are our true companions. One cannot exist without the other. One has to work with one's mind to be free from anxiety, tension, and depression. We need to know that the body predisposes the mind towards positive or negative states.

4. Swami tells us, *Illness is caused more by malnutrition of the mind than of the body. Doctors often speak of vitamin deficiency. I will call it the deficiency of vitamin “G,” and I will recommend the repetition of the name of God. That is vitamin “G!” That is the medicine. A regulated life and habits are two-*

thirds of the treatment, while the medicine is just one-third.

Ref: *Gems of Wisdom* p 176

Notice that Swami said that Vitamin “G” which is the medicine is only 1/3 of his prescription. Two-thirds of the treatment would be to correct our lifestyle.

5. Baba tells us, *Food is the start. The body is made from food. Without health, it is very hard to do anything. The stomach is of four parts: 1/4 part air, 1/4 part food, and 1/2 part water. Too much food is taken nowadays; there is no room for water.*

Ref: *Conversations with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*, by Dr. John Hislop, p 19

The question asked of Baba by Dr. Hislop was, “How does one develop devotion to God?” The answer is the above quote. Clearly, the right quantity of food is only 1/4 of one's capacity. In the opinion of the author, Swami means “appetite” when he refers to the stomach. We all know by experience that our capacity changes depending on other conditions of mind and body while the stomach remains the same. To restate the quote, water intake should be twice that of food and still there should be space for air. Eating so much food as to feel full would go against the Lord's advice.

6. Swami says, *Advice handed down by the seers of the ancient times is, “Eat in moderation and live long.” This advice is seldom heeded. Most of the people are overeating all the time. They are ruining their digestive systems by consuming heavy, rich foods.*

Ref: *Gems of Wisdom*, p 177

Here Swami relates to advice that has existed for a long time. To “eat in moderation” is not a modern day fad, but an age-old wisdom. To-

day, there is such a vast ocean of information in the area of health that one tends to get confused and lost. Baba is handing us this simple and most powerful advice to keep our bodies fit.

One reason behind the advice of eating in small quantities is that the process of digestion consumes a large amount of energy. When that energy is freed up, it is used in cleansing, healing, and strengthening.

7. Baba says, *My life is my message.*

His life is his message, and definitely so in the important aspects related to lifestyle and habits. In an interview with Swami Karunyananda, who had been a personal attendant of Swami's for a number of years, he told that Baba eats only a few morsels of *ragi*. *Ragi* is a nutritious [millet type grain] and is apparently more common among the poor people in India. We can ask, whether such a small quantity is enough for ordinary mortals like us.

8. *You may have a notion that, because one is divine, can he work so strenuously on such a meager diet? This is altogether wrong. In the upkeep of this physical body, I do not apply anything paranatural. So what I eat would be adequate for any person. You should eat food and not let food eat you.*

Ref: Baba: Sathya Sai, p 60

We may find it hard to believe that we can survive by eating so little, but it has to be true. In fact, not only will we sustain life, but we will be entirely healthy. Having learned from Swami how much to eat, let us now consider what to eat.

9. *All the different life forms on this earth have been classified into 8,400,000 species. All but one of these eats food that is not cooked. They eat food that is natural, so they enjoy peace and health. It is man alone who is subjected to the maximum amount of trouble in*

terms of his health. Diseases are on the increase because man does not like to partake of food, God's creation, as it is available in nature.

Ref: Divine Discourse, Oct. 8, 1983

The crown of creation, mankind, is the only one, among 8.4 million species, who eats cooked and processed food. It is noteworthy that if we eat natural foods, we will not overeat them. It is much easier to control the quantity when we eat good, natural food.

10. *What is available in nature, man transforms to suit his tastes, thereby putting an end to the very essence of life contained within. Because he exterminates the life-giving forces in the food available to him, man is subjecting himself to diseases at an increasing rate. Man should eat food as it is available in its natural state.*

11. *In fruit, there is nothing but vitamins. Vegetables also can give you much strength.*

Ref: Divine Discourse, Oct. 8, 1983

It is well-known that eating fruits and vegetables is good for health. But clearly they should be eaten in a natural state for the best results. The author would like to suggest that eating only fruits is an excellent breakfast. At least once per day, one should eat only raw foods.

12. *It is best to be vigilant about food habits. Coconut kernel, coconut water, sprouting pulses, uncooked or half-cooked vegetables, and greens are good for health.*

Ref: Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XI, pp 150-151

13. *Uncooked food, nuts and fruits, germinating pulses are the best. Use these at least at one meal, say, for the dinner at night; this will ensure long life.*

Ref: Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XI, p 149

Sprouting (germinating) pulses deserve some explanation. When any pulse, bean, or seed

is sprouted, its nutritional value increases. For example, vitamins multiply and proteins break-down into simple amino acids. Sprouts are classified under the biogenic* food category. Sprouts have life and they are capable of adding life. The process of cell construction in the body is encouraged by biogenic food.

There are a number of books written on sprouting, but a simple process will be presented here. Take pulses/beans (may be an assortment) and soak them in water for 12 to 24 hours. Change the water after 12 hours or so. Then put them in a jar with a ventilator cap up-side down. You can get these jars from your local health food store. As an alternative, you may put them in a cloth that can "breathe." After every 12 hours, rinse with water. Sprouts grow with the help of air and the small amount of moisture surrounding them. They are not to be submerged in water or put in soil. When the sprouts are half an inch long, they are ready to eat. However, you may wish to grow longer sprouts. Sprouting soybeans, however, need special care. Germinate soybeans separately from other beans and pulses.

Every morning and evening he processes the sprouts by soaking, changing water, rinsing and draining. Once the sprouts have reached the desired length, they should be refrigerated until eaten. The author has been working hard at practicing the many principles of food and lifestyle management suggested by Swami.

14. *When you have more protein, you can sustain yourself longer. When you look at the protein content of foods, that which is not cooked has larger amounts of protein. Take*

for example, soybeans. Soak them in water and, after they become palatable, eat them. They come to you in their richness. Because you are victims to your tongue and its fancies, you boil them and add all kinds of ingredients to transform and, in the process, deprive them of their contents, depriving yourselves of what they can give.

Ref: Divine Discourse, Oct. 8, 1983

Swami indicated that more proteins in the diet will tend to increase longevity. The importance of soybeans for protein content is well-known. However, Swami is directing that they should be eaten raw, that is, soaked in water. It is clear that sprouting soybeans is also good. Cooking and processing soybeans into such products as tofu and nuggets will compromise their nutritional value.

15. *Drink large quantities of water, boiled and cooled, not during meals, but sometime before and after.*

Ref: Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. VII, p 112

Remember that Swami said to fill ½ the stomach with water; it suffices to use a good filter. Boiling and cooling are not really needed. The author has an under-the-sink water filter along with a counter-top dispenser at home making filtered water readily available. Enough water is taken to work to last the day.

16. *Fast one day in the week. This is good for the body as well as for the country. Take only water, so that all the dirt is washed away. Do not crave for fruit juice or other liquids.*

Ref: Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. VII, p 112

Please turn to page 31

***Biogenic: resulting from the activity of living organisms, as fermentation.**

—Random House Dictionary, Unabridged

Good Health and Goodness

Health is the essential prerequisite for success in all aspects of life, and for realizing the four ideals that should guide humans, namely—moral living, prosperity [of the spirit,] fulfilling beneficial desires and liberation from grief. Everywhere, man seeks to live happily and peacefully, but happiness and peacefulness are not won from worldly activities. The body that yearns to be happy and secure is subject to disease, decay and death. However, the Indweller, the Self, within the body is not born, nor does it die. It is the *Atma*, God; the body is the temple of God. Hence, it is the duty of man to keep the temple in good condition.

Health is necessary for gaining this world and the next, for earning worldly and otherworldly progress, to realize the very purpose for which the Self has embodied in this human form, namely, to become aware of its source, the *Paramatma* (the Universal Soul). In order to attain this goal, the ideals—righteousness, prosperity, moral desire and the release from grief—have to be practiced with the help of a sound mind in a sound body.

What are the main causes of ill health? Millions of living beings grouped as species dwell on the earth. They sustain themselves by means of food secured from nature, and as provided by nature. It is only man who is an exception. In order to cater to his palate and other senses, he changes the composition and characteristics of

“Birds and beasts do not adopt such destructive methods. They eat things raw and consume the strength-giving vital essence....”

the things provided by nature and prepares—through the processes of boiling, frying and mixing—concoctions which have no vitality in them. Birds and beasts do not adopt such destructive methods. They eat things raw and consume the strength-giving vital essence. So they do not fall victim to the many ills that man brings upon himself. Plant a boiled seed in the soil, and it will not sprout. How then can it contribute

life to the living? The vitamins and proteins that are valuable ingredients are destroyed when they are cooked to please the palate. The billions of cells in the body are so interdependent that when one is weakened or damaged, all of them suffer. There is a limit and a balance which every limb and organ have to maintain. Insufficient or improper food will endanger that balance. An occa-

sional cough will help to strengthen the lungs and clear them of extraneous matter; but fits of coughing are signs of positive illness “Eat in moderation and live long.” This is the advice handed down through the ages from the seers of the past. This advice is seldom heeded. People fill themselves with such large quantities of food that they find it hard to rise from the table. They are ruining their digestive systems by consuming heavy, rich foods. The affluent are proud when they host costly banquets. Those who know that physical health is the greatest treasure take great care to eat only *sathwic* (pure, soothing) food.

Uncooked food, nuts, fruits and sprouted seeds are the best. Use these at least at one meal, say, for dinner in the evening. This will insure long



life. A long life is to be strived for in order that the years may be utilized for serving one's fellow beings.

Evil thoughts cause ill health; anxiety, fear and tension also contribute their share. All these result from the greed to have more things, more power and more fame. Greed results in sorrow and despair. Contentment can come only from a spiritual outlook. The desire for worldly goods has to be given up. One should not distinguish between "my work" and "work for God." All work should be worship. Whatever the reward, it is the gift of God; it is for our lasting good. If this attitude is developed, suffering and pain can toughen us, and help us to progress toward divinity.

It is through pain that pleasure is gained. Darkness enables us to appreciate the light. Death teaches us to love life. The diseases which torment are many in number, of these: hatred, envy and egoism are the worst. Even doctors cannot cure them. If one desires to be free from these diseases, do not seek to listen to vile and vicious stories. This tendency reveals a diseased mind. What is heard is imprinted, like a carbon copy, through the ear onto the heart. One is injuring himself or herself through indulgence in this evil habit.

Anger is another enemy of good health. It injects poison into the blood stream and brings about a profound transformation that damages the body.

Two women, who were neighbors, turned into bitter enemies because of a dispute over a very trivial incident. A cow belonging to one of the women, while on the road, dropped its dung in

front of the other woman's house. The owner of the cow ran to collect the dung, while the other woman claimed it belonged to her, since it lay on her doorstep.* Because of words, they very nearly came to blows. Just then, the other woman's baby wailed from the cradle. She rushed to feed the baby, and while the child was drawing its food, she shouted ferociously at her neighbor. Her anger poisoned the milk, harming her own child.

Another cause of ill health is vice and vile conduct. People believe that a wicked person need not be a diseased person, but most diseases are based on mental causes.

Doctors, too, have to deal with patients sweetly, softly and consider their profession as a calling for dedication to their fellow human beings. It is best to preserve one's health by good thoughts and good deeds. It is best to be vigilant about food habits. Coconut kernels, coconut-milk, sprouted seeds, uncooked or half-cooked vegetables and greens are good for health.

Try earnestly to live long without needing medical practitioners. When they give you one injection, they keep another ready to counteract its reaction. While trying to cure one disease, they may cause a dozen more. Moreover, the drugs they recommend may be spurious, since the manufacturers may be motivated by the desire to amass a fortune. Most illnesses can be cured by simple living, simple exercises and by intelligent control of the tongue. Live long, so that you can witness the career of the Avatar for the years to come.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XI, pp148-151

*Cow dung, when dried, burns easily. This excellent fuel is widely used in Indian villages.

"Your Body, Too, Is Myself"

Your body, too, is myself, says Baba. This is the third and concluding article of the serial in *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, reviewing Swami's expositions relating to the human body, so as to reflect the progressive dynamism which characterizes his teachings. This serial will enable us to understand, with the help of Swami's hierarchical or graded teachings, that the body is not simply a carcass but an abode of consciousness; not only an abode of consciousness, but a temple of God; and finally it is not merely a temple but verily, God Himself.

Your Body Is a Temple

To start with, by following Swami's injunction to *see always inside*, as per the Sai acronym, we convinced ourselves in the first article about the truth of his statement, *You are not the body*, based on some of our daily experiences. Lest we hastily dismiss the body as useless on this score, we next considered in the second article, Baba's declaration: *Your body is a temple*, and acquainted ourselves with how he wants us to make use of the body as a tool to realize our Reality. He reminds us that the *sava* (carcass or body) is given to us to realize that we are Siva (God). For this purpose we should worship Siva, but not the *sava*.

Your Body Is Myself

In the next step, he leads us to the logical culmination of seeing always inside, by penetrating deeper into the truth of the body in our bid to know its ultimate nature.

Succinctly tracing the genesis of the body of each of us, Baba reveals, *My apparel which I*

willed and folded around me became akasa (ether/space), which got transformed into vayu (air), which evolved into agni (fire), which changed into jala (water), which became Prithvi (earth), which grew anna (food), which developed into deha (body). So it is clear that deha (body) is myself."

This declaration of Swami's is comparable to the ocean saying, "The wave, too, is myself." It means that BABA (Being-Awareness-Bliss-Atman) is not merely the sustainer and animator of the body, but also the very substance of the body itself. This statement is based on the axiom that the effect is only the cause in another form, there being no essential difference between the two. He also puts the same truth at the cosmic level by saying that one and the same spiritual energy (*Chaitanya*) is seen in a gradual evolutionary process of radiation as *Chidaakasha* (spiritual universe), vibration as *Chittakasha* (mental universe), and materialization as *Bhutamakasha* (physical universe).

Here is the pen-picture of a genealogical tree depicted in Baba's divine words:

The moment the human body is born, Aham (I or ego) follows it. Atma (true Self) is the origin of Aham; so Aham is the son of Atma. From Aham, mind is born; so mind is the grandson of Atma. And from mind, speech originates; so speech is the great-grandson of Atma. In short, Atma, Aham, mind, and speech belong to the same family. So, you should have the conviction that the "I principle" in you is the dear son of God; mind is the grandson of God; and speech is his great-grandson. Once you understand that your Aham, mind and speech belong to the

divine family and act accordingly, your life will be sanctified.

This means *Atma* is the progenitor of the body.

In another context, Swami categorizes people from the perspective of spiritual evolution as follows:

Man is composed of body, mind, and spirit or Atma. He who forgets the mind and Atma, and thinks of the body only, is equal to a beast. If he ignores the Atma and gives importance to the body and mind, he becomes a demon. One who gives appropriate importance to the body, mind and Atma and makes use of them harmoniously, attains humanness (Maanavatwam). Finally, one who ensures that his body and mind are under the influence of the Atma attains divinity."

Accordingly, Baba exhorts us to assert first, "I am not an animal, I am a man," and next, "I am not a man, I am God." An animal-man finds happiness only in his body; an ordinary man's happiness lies in his mind; and the enlightened man's delight is in the Self (*Atmananda*).

Spiritual Hierarchy

When viewed superficially, these statements—that you are not the body, that your body is a temple, that your body is God Himself and that the body is a derivative of the *Atma*—seem to be inconsistent. But when examined in the light of Baba's dictum, *Spirituality is a hierarchy of Reality*, everything falls into place. Briefly stated, it means that different persons are at different stages in their spiritual journey to the summit of one and the same Reality; further, even the same individual would be at different stages at different times. They might all be compared to people who are climbing to the

summit of a mountain from different directions and who are taking photographs of the same summit from different altitudes, positions, perspectives and angles. If these pictures were to be pooled together, we would find them to be different from one another. Despite the differences, we have to agree that they all represent the same summit viewed from different positions and levels. Therefore, it is said that in spirituality, we progress from a lower truth to a higher truth, but not from untruth to truth. In physical sciences, old theories are discarded and supplanted by new ones. But in spiritual science, the lower truth is considered as a stepping stone to a higher truth in a hierarchical progression to the ultimate Reality. Thus for instance, Baba says:

A spiritual seeker starts as a dualist with dehatma bhava (identification with his body). Then he ascends to the stage of a qualified nondualist, considering himself as a Jivatma (individual soul). Finally, he reaches the non-dualistic state of identifying himself with Paramatma (Supreme Soul, Self or God). So the body, first dismissed as Brother Lawrence's "brother donkey," or as Peace Pilgrim's "clay garment" comes back, finally defined as "Father God."

Swami Vivekananda too, among others, subscribes to this hierarchical approach to Reality of God, when he said:

"The God in heaven becomes the God in nature; and the God in nature becomes the God who is nature; and the God who is nature becomes the God within the temple of this body; and the God dwelling in the temple of the body at last becomes the temple (body) itself, becomes the soul and man—and there Vedanta teaches the last words it can teach."

The truth that spirituality is a hierarchy of

Reality is reflected also in Christ's ascending order of proclamations: "I am the messenger of God," "I am the Son of God," and finally, "I and my Father are one." Again, the very same idea lies behind Zoroaster's progressive declarations: "I am in the Light," "The Light is in me," and lastly, "I am the Light."

According to Hindu scriptures, the progressive stages in man's approach to God are indicated by the following three statements:

1. *Tasyaivaham*, I am His. (God out of sight; so referred to in the third person).
2. *Tavaivaham*, I am Thine. (God face to face; so spoken of in the second person).
3. *Twamevaham*, I am Thou. (I am one with God; first person is used).

Yet Another Pattern Is . . .

1. Thou art my Master; I am Thy servant — servant ego.
2. I am the machine; Thou art the Operator — instrument ego.
3. Thou alone art; I am not—ego erased.

All Spirit, No Matter

This is why, in the process of seeing always inside as recommended by Baba, God who at the beginning of one's spiritual quest, is imagined to be distant and distinct from oneself, gradually comes closer and closer. Until, at last, God is found to be neither distant nor distinct from the seeker, but is experienced as one's own Self which includes not only all bodies and minds, but everything else. This is in consonance with Swami's two categorical pronouncements: *There is no padaartham (matter); all is Paraartham (Spirit) and I am everything, everywhere, ever.* Interestingly enough, this is

also in accordance with the finding of modern science that matter is only condensed energy, and that there is no essential difference between the two, viz., matter and energy. In this context, Baba's equation: Being + Matter (Becoming) = *God*, is also relevant. It means that "being" or pure existence (which is eternal, formless, nameless, and changeless) is the unmanifest aspect of God; while "matter" (having names and forms which are transient and changing) is the manifest aspect of the very same God. For those who imbibe and sincerely practice this idea of the divinity of everything, this very earth, according to Baba, becomes verity meta-morphosed into heaven because of realizing the omnipresence of God.

No Birth, No Death

Further, if we follow Lord Sai's command to *See always inside*, and probe deeper into his revelation: *Your body, too, is myself*, we have to conclude that the body too is immortal. And this gives us the clue or insight to understand his aphorism: *No birth, no death*. The meaning becomes more clear in the light of Swami's analogy that he is the ocean of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (being, awareness, bliss) and that all beings in the universe are like the waves, ripples and bubbles which constantly go on appearing and disappearing in the ocean. However, what we have to remember is that it is only the names and forms of the waves etc., that are subject to appearance (called birth) and disappearance (called death), but not their substance, namely water. Likewise, the names and forms of our bodies as well as the bodies of all other creatures go on changing but their substance, viz., *Chit* or consciousness ever remains the same. This means that birth and death are mere names indicating only the change

of state, but not of substance. Thus, nothing new ever makes an entry into the universe. And nothing old ever makes an exit therefrom. Physical sciences, too, through their laws of "Indestructibility of Matter," "Conservation of Energy," and "Persistence of Force," tell us the same truth.

Open Sesame

In summary, man at first wrongly thinks of himself as only the body-mind-intellect complex. When he begins his spiritual *sadhana*, he says, "I am not the body, etc., but I am the Spirit of Self which animates the body." Finally, he realizes the Self is all-inclusive, even the physical body is not exempted. In other words, the culmination of "seeing always inside," will be to see always the same divinity everywhere without the distinction of inside or outside—the nondual vision of Advaita or *Abheda*. A man recognizes

that the pillow case and the cotton inside the pillow are materially the same. Pillow cases may differ in shape, size and color, but the cotton inside is the same as the cotton of the pillow case. Similarly, a spiritually advanced person realizes that all the manifold names and forms in the universe are made of the same all-pervading consciousness or *Chaitanya* which is merely veiled by the various names and forms.

This indeed, is the significance of Swami's wonderful acronym: SAI BABA = See Always Inside, Being-Awareness-Bliss-*Atma*. To see always inside, is to pierce through the veil of names and forms, and be face-to-face with the underlying Reality of all, which is B-A-B-A, *Sat-Chit-Ananda-Atma*. May mankind be redeemed by making use of this marvelous open sesame gifted by Baba!

—**Dr. A. Adivi Reddy**
Arcadia, California

The world that we see is only a transient one; it is not a permanent one. This world is also full of things that are not quite good nor important. Students! Indian culture is based on nondual thought and nondual philosophy. This special feature of Indian philosophy is known to many people. There are differences between the other philosophies of the world and Advaita or nondualism which is prevalent in this country (India). In most Western religions, importance is given to the body, mind and intelligence. Among these, intelligence is regarded as the highest human faculty, representing man's Self or Atma. . . . Indian thought, on the other hand, considers body, mind and intelligence as distinct and additional to one's own inner heart. . . .

Various religions have some differences about the unknowable God, but they have not differed in essence about things which can be understood and practiced with some effort, such as: speaking the truth, doing good, not indulging in intrigue and respecting one's mother, father and teacher. Today, whatever has been taught in the name of religion and truth has been forgotten. . . . We are paying heed to things which do not have religious thought as their basis.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**
Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1973

Discipline for Children

Have you ever thought, if we don't tell our children NO, how will they ever learn to tell themselves NO? Stop and think about this, it is very important.

Swami says, *Parents have the primary responsibility to mold the character of their children.*

The character is molded through our examples, instruction, love and discipline. The subject of discipline has been continuously emphasized by our beloved Baba.

He says, *Ninety percent of the blame for spoiling the behavior and character of children, goes to the parents. They show too much unintelligent affection, and the parents give too much indiscriminate freedom to the children.*

Why is discipline so important? Because we would not even get out of bed in the morning without discipline. It is the function of the conscience that tells us to STOP, to stop sleeping too long, eating too much, crying too long, etc. It is the mechanism that controls our behavior. Would you put your child in a car without brakes? Can you imagine driving any car without brakes? It is the same with our behavior, discipline is the brake. The car is our body, our behavior. As of now, the children are driving their bodies without using the brakes of discipline. They are out of control. Their behavior is not according to Swami's teachings.

Now, what we are seeing in the western culture, is children having more control over their parents. The children are ruling the parents instead of the parents disciplining the children. This is the wrong order.

Sai says that, *The parents are to blame for three-fourths of their children's behavior. When parents allow the children to go astray, sometime or other, they will suffer the consequences. It has become fashionable in the Kali Age to let the children have their own way. The parents give a free rein to the children instead of controlling them.*

My parents generation experienced the greatest advancement in technology. They did not have indoor plumbing, nor electricity nor cars. Imagine what changes they have seen in the material or physical world.

But my generation has seen the greatest annihilation of morality. We have experienced the great revolution of immorality. Many of the values that existed for my parents are non-existent today. We have had to emotionally and psychologically accept what is, while longing for the family values that once existed. Divorce did not exist then; it was only done in extreme cases.

Swami says, *When materialism goes up, morality goes down. When morality goes up, materialism goes down.*

This is our dilemma. We became so proficient in making products that enhanced our physical lives that we focused on those, instead of realizing that we were losing our moral fiber. The fiber of struggling to overcome difficulties that sustained the pioneering spirit of the older generation has been lost. We live in such physical comfort that our children are pampered to death. And it is a death to their spiritual character. Spoiling them has made them weak. They do not know how to fight for survival. The sad truth is, we have failed them.

Because of the industrial and technological age, we became consumers of comfort and pleasure. We wanted our children to have everything. We watched the commercials on television, and purchased and purchased; we purchased things to make ourselves and our children happy. And when we finally got those pleasurable items, we realized that they did not make us or our children happy. The children only wanted more. Why? Because we did not teach them how to apply the brakes of self-discipline.

Swami says, *Waste of money is evil.*

We are programmed to be consumers. We have bought into the marketing strategy—hook, line and sinker. We work, work and work. Why? To have a higher standard of living? Do we really need as much as we have? When we keep purchasing goods, we are teaching our children, by our example, to continue the same behavior. The manufacturing companies love it.

Swami says, *Teach children not to receive something for nothing. Let them earn by hard work the things they seek.*

Love and discipline have been replaced by purchasing power. We buy items to tell our children how much we love them. We reward our children with gifts if they study, do a chore or correct a negative behavior. We are controlling them with rewards, physical rewards, not teaching them that self-discipline rewards the child by building self-esteem. It is the inner reward that is important.

They cannot take material possessions with them; only character can sustain them when they leave your home and face the challenges of the world. It is the same when we exit our bodies.

It's the same with the poor people. If we give them too much charity, they feel guilty because

they had not earned it. They lost their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Just think about yourself. Don't you all want to earn your own way. We seek independence, not dependence. Isn't it more difficult to receive from others than to give? But we are not teaching our children to give; thus we have a "me" generation, with very low self-esteem.

One night, Swami gave me an insightful dream. I could not fully understand what was the cause of the "me" generation. In the dream, Swami told me that my generation, the first to raise children with television is, unknowingly, programmed with the commercials on television. All of the commercials were targeted at the parents who had the money to buy items for the children and family. For example, the best detergent for diapers, the best baby food, the best products for cooking, etc. We have been subtly programmed, as well as every other household, leading to parent peer pressure as well as peer pressure for our children. If the neighbor's child gets a Barbie doll, which was seen on television, it forces the other parents in the neighborhood to do the same for their child. The same pressure is extended in countless ways: birthday parties, dance lessons, sports events and so on. There is nothing being programmed for the children to focus on giving to the parents.

In previous generations, parents had children to help them. They taught the children to support them: to help them grow crops, take care of the smaller children, do chores, assist in the family business and so on. The emphasis was on children helping parents. In this modern age of material comfort, the emphasis is on parents doing everything for the children. Do you ever see anything on television, in the commercials, films

or sitcoms that addresses the issue of children helping and respecting their parents? How are they to learn? How do we stop this avalanche of self-indulgence instead of selflessness?

Swami says, *Apart from educational programs, do not look at television at all, especially while taking food. Concentrate on the work at hand, whether it be eating or anything else.*

Since parents are responsible for developing the character of their children, it is their duty to teach them the joy of giving to others. No one else is going to teach them in our western society. We parents must take the reins.

How can we do this? When the children are very young, we talk to them about the joy of giving to others. The small child can bring the newspaper for dad to read, the diaper for the newborn member in the family, the napkin for grandma's lap, the cookie for a friend. This is character development. The emphasis must be on the children first helping their parents, other family members and friends, which will eventually extend outward to society.

The husband and wife should be the examples by giving to each other. The child will ob-

serve and learn. But example is never enough. Teaching them must also exist, by speaking Swami's truths and using discipline to influence the behavior that is desired.

If the child does not bring a napkin to the grandparents, then you have to tell him why he needs to help others. *We can only give love through serving others*, says Swami. It is the joy and love we give to others that brings true happiness.

A small child may not understand what you are teaching, but you are programming his subconscious with Swami's wisdom, and you are creating and developing his future behavior. If your emotions express joy while teaching this lesson, the child will respond to the emotion. If the child does not comply with the wishes of the parent, you will need to correct the behavior with some form of discipline.

Swami says, *Discipline means the observance of certain well-designed rules. Without such regulation, it is not possible to maintain humanness.*

—Rita Bruce
Fenton, Missouri



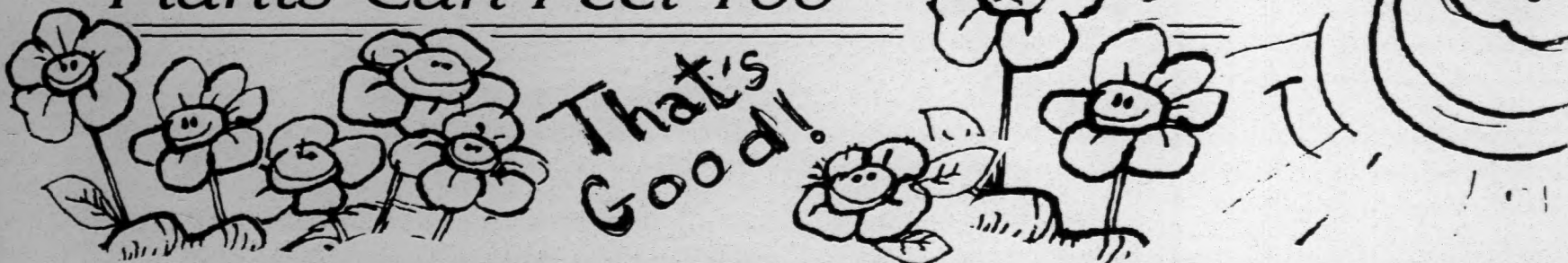
Children have unselfish love; they are innocent onlookers; they observe the actions of the elders, and learn their lessons from the home much earlier than from school. So parents have to be very careful in their behavior with the children and between themselves. . . .

The child should grow with the mother for the first five years of life. Many children do not know what the love of the mother is like. The mother should not hand over the responsibility during these years to someone else . . .

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol.II, chapter 34

Children's Corner

Plants Can Feel Too



Jagadish Chandra Bose was a great biologist; he showed the world that plants can feel. His father was a judge and educator who was also interested in science; his mother was a sweet and tender-hearted woman.

J. C. Bose was sent to school in Bengal, where he mixed freely with and played with, boys from poor families. The young Jagadish was interested in and wanted to know about many things like: Why does a glowworm give off light? Why does wind blow and water flow?

He used to breed frogs and fish in a pond. He would pull out a germinating plant and examine the root system. He also had a number of pets: rats, squirrels and nonpoisonous snakes.

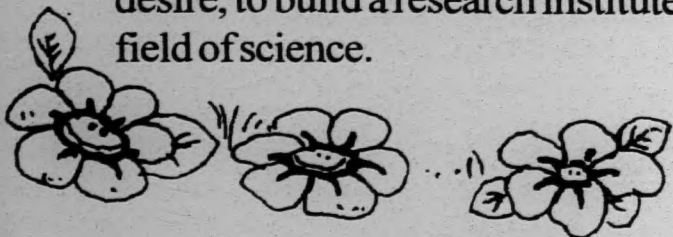
Jagadish had a servant who would tell him stories of heroic adventures. His mother, Abala, would tell him stories from the spiritual classics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha*. Even as a young boy, he loved and respected the ancient Indian culture.

When he was older, Jagadish was sent to England for higher education. Then some time later, after graduation, he went back to India and joined a college in Calcutta. He worked very hard, and saved his money to build a research laboratory for his own experiments. This remarkable young man even made his own research equipment.

At that time, electricity was his special interest. He showed that when electricity is passed through a plant, the plant would get excited or irritated. Dr. J. C. Bose invented an instrument to show the reaction of plants to electricity. He also demonstrated that when a poison is injected into a plant, it suffers and finally dies. He explained why some plants grow straight and others do not. Dr. Bose also invented an instrument that could show the plant's response to touch. Among his accomplishments, he was able to explain that plants have a "thirst" for light, and that they open and close with the rise and fall of the temperature.

Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose was loved by all. He was friends with the well known Indian poet, Tagore, and Swami Vivekananda was his spiritual adviser. Before his death, he fulfilled his one desire, to build a research institute. In his lifetime, he inspired many students to do research in the field of science.

—Adapted from, *Stories for Children, Part II*
For Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas



Practicing the Five Values

Thoughts on Nonviolence

The practice of nonviolence is essential to our spiritual growth. Yet in our society today, throughout the world, there is an avalanche of violent words, actions, books, videos, movies and television shows. Stage plays and even conversations are rampant with violence. Why is this so? It is because we have lost track of our values, and what our obligations are which should be to practice—in thought, word and deed—the five values that Sri Sathya Sai Baba has directed us to do. If we are practicing truth, love, peace and right conduct, then we will automatically be practicing the fifth value which is nonviolence.

For example, if we are propagating truth, we will be practicing love, which leads to right action, which will result in being peaceful. Consequently, we won't be able to be violent because everything we think, say or do will be loving.

How can this be accomplished in a world so full of hatred and violence? The answer lies in consciousness and motivation. If we really seek the truth, the answers shall be revealed to us. In the revelation, we can see what must be done; right action will follow.

Truth and nonviolence are not possible without a living belief in God, meaning a self-existent, all-knowing, living force which inheres in every other force known to the world, and which depends on none, and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without belief in this all-embracing living Light.

Human values are not a separate subject; they are the very purpose of your life. We have to behave in the same way and carry with us human values like the shadow of our body. . . . With human values we should develop the habit of service. Service imparts humility, and humility leads to humanity.

We must lead a good life within the confines of our homes; this sets an example for others to follow. Through good examples, a life of wholeness, purity and love then becomes manifest.

The following order might change, but as I see it, the first action to take is prayer. The second action is meditation. Third, is to always ask Swami for peaceful solutions to our everyday undertakings. Fourth, is to choose the right food; fruits, vegetables and whole grains are very important. Vegetarian foods are essential. If we expect to practice peace, how can we do so if we ingest food from an animal that has been slaughtered? The fifth action is to prepare the food in a loving state of consciousness. This is essential for proper assimilation. We should always remember to give thanks for all that the Avatar has given us. Our thoughts should be of constant thanksgiving. For truly, if we practice these steps, we will be able to implement nonviolence in our thoughts, words and deeds.

—Zarinea Zolivea
Monrovia, California

—Gandhi, II 112

—Sathya Sai Baba
SSEHV Teacher Trainer Workshop

Announcements

What Do You Say?

It would seem that either our editors, or some of our subscribers have gotten the last two values a bit confused as to the timings. They are all good people and understand the five values as outlined by the Avatar; it's the order in which the values are to be emphasized that has us all wondering. Is 1999 the year of nonviolence, and 2000 the year of love, or is it the other way around? The *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, started this year with the understanding that it was to be dedicated to non-violence, so we shall continue with that value as the theme. This is not to be stubborn, but to be consistent. If we're wrong, please forgive us. The important thing is to recognize that the values and all of Swami's teachings should be honored and practiced. If we *are* wrong, we trust that there will be no violent repercussions.

A Weekend of Silence

The Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions of the U.S. Sathya Sai Organization announce their "Weekend of Silence" to be held at St. Mary's Villa, Sloatsburg, New York, during September 17-19, 1999. The participants will experience the first code of conduct, "Daily Prayers and Meditation."

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Chain Letters

Once again, chain letters have come into focus, this time using the name of Shirdi Sai Baba. As usual, the letter hints at rewards for compliance, and disaster if one ignores the letter. This can create a feeling of fear and apprehension. And as usual, the letter is not signed. Not only is this activity reprehensible, but chain letters in this country are down right illegal!

He Is Always Giving

Did you know that in March of this year, Swami inaugurated the Sri Sathya Sai Vriddashrama at Whitefield which is to be a home for destitute, aged persons.

Continued from page 17

Swami does not put emphasis on fasting. For those who follow his directives on eating, it is not necessary to fast. But for the rest of us who fail at it, there are merits in fasting one day in the week. First, it gives a rest to the digestive system and allows for toxins to be removed. Second, one gets to practice control and develop willpower. After the fast there will be a fresh perspective and an increased ability to use good judgment while eating. Please note that Baba advises to only drink water during the fast and to eat nothing at all. Also, note that there is no recommendation to fast for more than one day. After the day's fast, eat simple food, eat sparingly.

17. Eat to live; do not believe that you live in order to eat.

Ref: *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. V, p 49

For most of us, a transformation in food habits is needed in order to follow our Lord's directions. It is definitely an arduous task. One has to first decide to be perfectly healthy, and as he said, *Food is the start*. Changing food habits is difficult since they are deeply ingrained in the system. But there is nothing that cannot be achieved by human effort and God's grace. Developing a strong will to live long and healthy for the sake of God's service is the first step.

The second step may be to realize that sudden changes usually don't last; the changes must be slow and systematic in order to become permanent. One must not forget that the path of spiritual practice is full of ups and downs and is full of learning. The keeping of a journal might be helpful during this process.

A shift in thinking is needed. It may be said that while eating, consciously, most of us compare the state of the stomach by the feeling of fullness. Thus, the frame of reference is a full stomach. This reference should be changed to an

empty stomach; then it will be easier to control the quantity. Before eating, we should try to achieve that state of an empty stomach and, when eating, see to it that the empty feeling is gone. Feeling full with food is the basic error that has to be corrected. If we keep reminding ourselves that the purpose of food is to live, to provide pure and rich nutrition, and to strengthen the body and mind, then we will reach the goal of transformation more quickly.

Other recommendations: Eliminating second servings is a good idea. The mind is still under control before we begin to eat, so it's easier to take the right amount in the beginning. More importantly, in the morning as we pray, "Oh Lord, think through me, speak through me, and act through me today," let's add, "eat through me." Yes, Swami can be you and live through you, if your prayers are deep and from the heart.

18. So the main idea here is to eat less. Eat in moderation, and all will be well. Excess food leads to mental derangement. Limited amounts will confer joy and happiness to you.

Ref: Divine Discourse, Oct. 8, 1983

People have varying notions about eating in moderation. Almost everyone will say that they eat moderately, while it may not be true. What then is the measuring stick? Well, the answer was given in quotation 5. The right amount is 25 percent of the appetite. The slogan, "Eat less to be healthy," could be changed to, "Eat little to be healthy." Eat little, can hardly be misinterpreted. By any standard, Swami's eating can be called, "eating little."

19. Eat at regular intervals, according to a well-established time table. Move about and fill the day with activity, so that food is well digested. Develop a biting hunger before sitting down for a meal.

Ref: *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. VII, p 112

This directive for eating at regular intervals has no contradiction with the previous thoughts on eating little. It is possible to do both.

Now, let's shift our focus on what we should not consume. Those who smoke or drink alcohol, even beer, must quit these habits. No quote has been included because the damage to health caused by these habits is well-known. In what follows, we have divine commandments against the consumption of meat and white sugar.

20. *By eating meat, one develops violent tendencies and animal diseases.*

In the literature that professes vegetarianism we find many different types of reasons. But Swami's reason given in the above quote is the most important one. Please note that "meat" includes chicken, and Baba has also advised against eating fish as it leads to dirty thoughts.

21. *The main cause of cancer is sugar. The reason is that chemicals are used in the processing of sugar. Part of these added chemicals is bone powder, which, when you take it in, might get lodged in any part of the body. You have two types of blood corpuscles, red and white. The white ones get blocked at a certain point, and that is the spot for cancer.*

Ref: Divine Discourse, Oct. 8, 1983

In the world, out of ignorance and fear, many reasons are attributed to the disease of cancer. But out of his grace, Swami unknots the puzzle. In the same discourse, Swami said that there may be supporting factors, such as smoking and pollution, but the primary cause is white sugar. Out of common sense, we can say then that white sugar is devastating for health. Before cancer develops, it must be causing a lot of other damage to health. Weight gain, tooth decay and diabetes are some of the results of consuming white sugar.

We may infer that the blockage, mentioned by Swami, may cause damage in a variety of ways.

It would be wise to eliminate, or at least minimize, white sugar from our foods. You may ask what the alternatives are for white sugar. Please note that synthetic sweeteners such as Nutra Sweet are not advisable. In general, we should refrain from the use of chemicals as much as possible. For the best health, stay as close as possible to nature. Raw sugar, also known as turbinado, is an excellent alternative to white sugar. The sweetening power of it is no different, only the color is slightly brown. [Note that brown sugar is not the same as turbinado or raw sugar.] In recipes, raw sugar can be substituted for white sugar using the same proportions. Raw sugar can be found in local bulk food, health food and grocery stores.

You may inquire about the process whereby raw sugar is made. The sugarcane juice is heated and passed through rollers turning at high speeds. The result is the separation of molasses and sugar crystals. The latter is nothing but raw sugar. It is this raw sugar that undergoes extensive chemical treatment to make the white sugar. Clearly, raw sugar is free from chemicals.

Honey is also a very nutritious alternative of white sugar. The only word of caution here is that honey should not be cooked or baked. Therefore, do not put anything on the stove or in the oven that has honey in it. It is okay, however, to add honey in a hot drink or food. Jaggery [found mostly in India] is another natural sweet food. In the following quote Swami mentions a benefit of consuming jaggery.

22. *The til [sesame] seeds reduce the ill effects of bile and phlegm. Jaggery improves the eyesight.*

Ref: Ganesh Chaturthi Discourse, 1998

23. *The head is on top of the body. But if you have a headache, it is not the head that must be dealt with. It is the stomach that has gone out of tune. It is this way with all the organs you have; the stomach is the key.*

Ref: Divine Discourse, Oct. 8, 1983

This quote speaks of the importance of the digestive system. Clearly, whether the problem is with the heart, liver, head, etc., it will be efficacious to fix the stomach. And food control is a great way of doing that.

24. *Coming to the more direct topic of physical ills, I must tell you, practice moderation in food, drink, sleep, and exercise. Good food taken in moderation at regular intervals; that is the prescription.*

For superior health, one needs to take care of not only the diet, but also sleep and exercise. Exercise improves metabolism and blood circulation; quality sleep restores and heals the body. It's noteworthy that Swami has recommended yoga *asanas* (postures or exercises) as exercise. The quality of sleep is positively determined by the condition of the stomach and mind at the time of going to bed. Meditating or calming the mind in other ways such as, reading

spiritual literature and having a light stomach are sure ways of enjoying a hearty sleep.

Diet is of tremendous importance. It tends to make up for lack of exercise and guarantees good nightly sleep. Food control is the first and foremost measure, period. Swami did repeat the need for correctly regulating food habits in the last quote. Eat good, soothing, calming (*satwic*) food and no more than 1/4 of the appetite at set times; that is our Lord's important prescription.

It is taken for granted that we continue to keep good and godly company (*satsang*), read scripture, and practice the spiritual teachings of our beloved Lord as much as possible. That helps with several factors shown in the illustration. But as Swami remarked in quotation 4, regulation of habits is 2/3rds of the treatment. We will not make much progress unless we correct our food habits. Following Swami's directions on eating will tend to make our bodies healthy and strong, and our minds clear and receptive, and thus better prepared for the experience of bliss and the realization of our innate divinity.

—**Dr. Raj Prakash**, Canton, Michigan
From a talk given at a Sai Retreat

Drop the delusion that you have become old or diseased, or that you have become weak and debilitated. Some people begin to count the years and grieve over advancing age and shiver like cowards, afraid of death. But remember, elation is heaven, despondency is hell. Always have some work to do and do it well, so that you get joy.

The dust that settles upon the glass chimney of a lantern dims the light. The attachment to sensual objects and the pleasure they give you is the soot that sticks to the inside of your chimney and dims your light. Clean your chimney by repeating the Lord's name every day, and the lamp will shine for you and for others.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. I, chapter 15

What is good spiritual practice (*sadhana*)? Service is true spiritual practice. Serve society. Treat everyone as your brothers and sisters. Only through selfless service, your life will be redeemed. Consider service unto others as service to God. Unfortunately, today man takes to service expecting something in return. He has become money-minded. Excessive wealth makes one egoistic. Ego leads to bad qualities. Excessive desires make one suffer. Desires are the birthplace of misery. As desires increase, misery, too, increases. A discontented man suffers two ways; he is not happy with what he has, and he is not happy over what he does not have. So be contented with what you have. Experience bliss and share it with others. If you have devotion, God Himself will confer bliss.

The Essence of Education

As our vice-chancellor said, when Rama asked Hanuman to go to Lanka, some doubted that he could cross the ocean. Then, Hanuman smilingly replied that as Rama himself had commanded him to cross the ocean, he would also grant the strength to do so. He leaped across the ocean chanting the name of Rama and reached Lanka. Having been commanded by Rama, Hanuman never doubted whether he would accomplish the task. Once God commands you to do something, he will certainly grant the necessary skill and strength. So act according to the command of God without a trace of doubt; you will certainly be successful.

Today, as science is progressing, doubts are also increasing in the human mind. The more intelligent you are, the more doubts you have. So do not aspire for more intelligence. Make proper use of the intelligence God has given you.

Happiness lies in union with God. God is the

embodiment of bliss which is eternal, unsullied, pure and nondual. It is most unfortunate if you forget God. Never give up Sai, make the best use of this chance which is given. Once you lose the opportunity to serve the lotus feet, you will not get it back. Sai grants you devotion, strength and liberation. Do not ruin yourself by listening to others. Do not believe anybody; believe your conscience and follow it. Once you follow your conscience, you will attain consciousness, or *Atma*. Develop self-confidence, worship God, attain divinity and be an ideal to the rest of the world. That is the essence of education.

Failing to Understand

The man who studies and studies without discrimination fails to understand himself. A mean-minded man can never give up his meanness, in spite of his vast learning. Why should one waste one's life in the pursuit of acquiring useless learning? It is better to acquire wisdom that confers immortality.

Worldly education leads to argumentation, not divine wisdom. Arguments are all a waste of time; they are a sign of ignorance. So never argue with anybody. Arguments will lead only to enmity. What we need is unity, purity and divinity.

Embodiments of Love

For the last seven days you witnessed this holy ceremony (*yagna*). Why is it conducted? It is for the welfare of the world. The name of God should spread everywhere. For example, Delhi is far away from here, but when you tune your radio to a particular wavelength, you can hear the songs that are being broadcast on a Delhi station. This is possible because of the presence of electric waves in the atmosphere. All over the world there are electric waves and magnetic

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In this train of society, youth are the long journey passengers. As the youth have a long way to go, they should work for world peace. Teach the principles of divinity. Instill divine feelings even in hard-hearted people. Sow the seeds of the holy name of God in every heart. Then the world will become heaven. Your happiness is heaven; your grief is hell. So be happy and serve everybody. Do not have the narrow feeling that only Bharath (India) should be prosperous; pray for the prosperity of the entire world because all are your brothers and sisters. Have broad feelings and sacred thoughts. Only then the dictum, "May all the worlds be happy," will be realized, and everyone will be happy. Share this immortal principle with everybody. The *Upanishads* address you as the sons and daughters of



Sow the seeds of the holy name of God in every heart.

immortality. You should lead your life befitting your name.

Thyagaraja said, "Oh mind tell me, is it money or proximity to the divine that confers happiness? He rejected money sent by the king saying that Rama (God) is his only wealth. "Thyagaraja" means mastery of sacrifice. Embodiments of Love! Do not have excessive desire for wealth. Lead a life of sacrifice, and have a peaceful life.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**

Discourse given September 30, 1998

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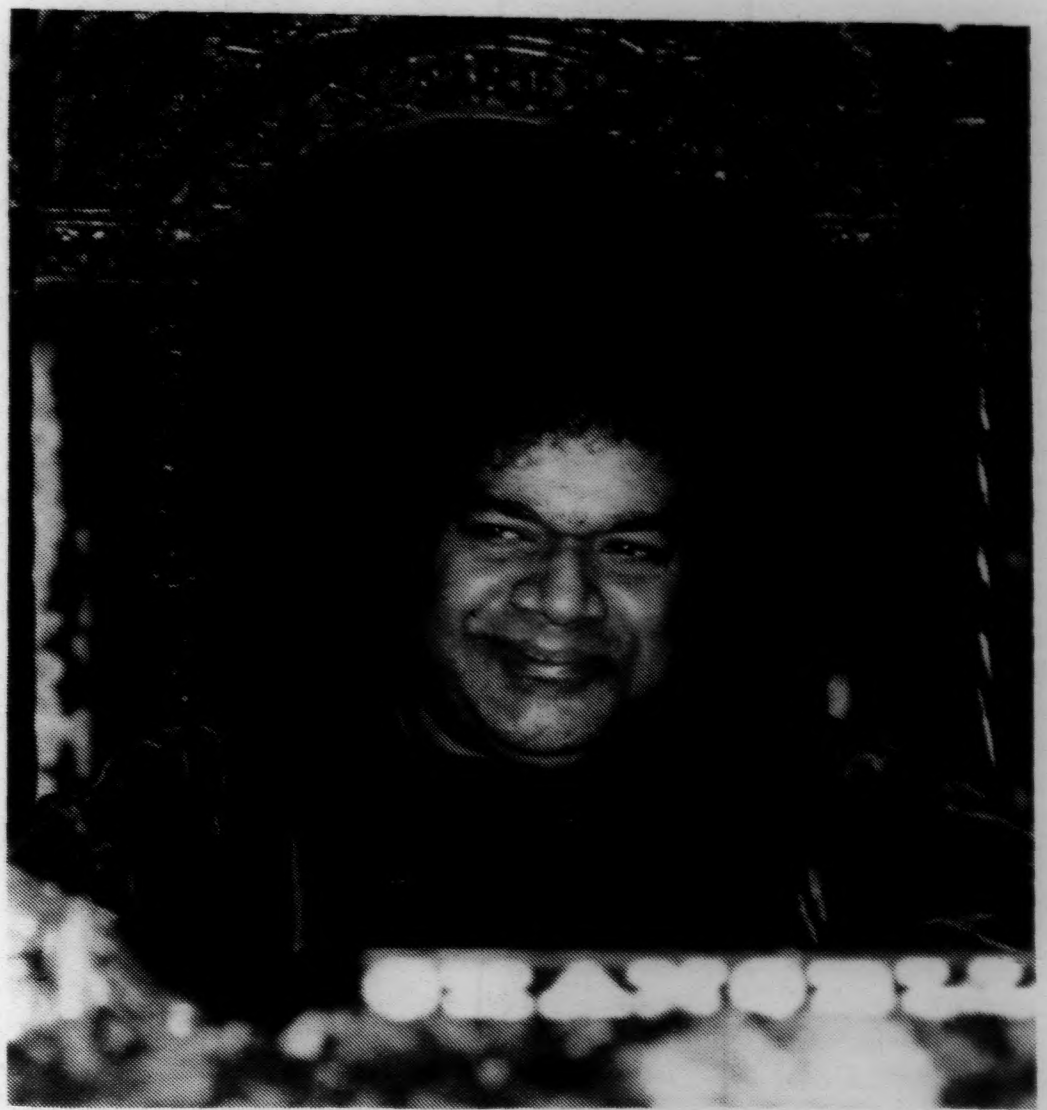
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waves. So the effect of mantras chanted during the ceremony will spread all over the world and purify the atmosphere. Once the mantra enters the air that you breathe, you will develop sacred feelings, because there is also a mantra in you. The body is a material instrument (*yantra*, *hridaya*), the heart serves (*tantra*), and the breath is mantra (*soham*). *Soham* means, "I am God". There is no greater mantra than this. Therefore, chant this sacred mantra, lead an ideal life and make the world an abode of peace.

In this train of society, youth are the long journey passengers. As the youth have a long way to go, they should work for world peace. Teach the principles of divinity. Instill divine feelings even in hard-hearted people. Sow the seeds of the holy name of God in every heart. Then the world will become heaven. Your happiness is heaven; your grief is hell. So be happy and serve everybody. Do not have the narrow feeling that only Bharath (India) should be prosperous; pray for the prosperity of the entire world because all are your brothers and sisters. Have broad feelings and sacred thoughts. Only then the dictum, "May all the worlds be happy," will be realized, and everyone will be happy. Share this immortal principle with everybody. The *Upanishads* address you as the sons and daughters of



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—Sathya Sai Baba

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