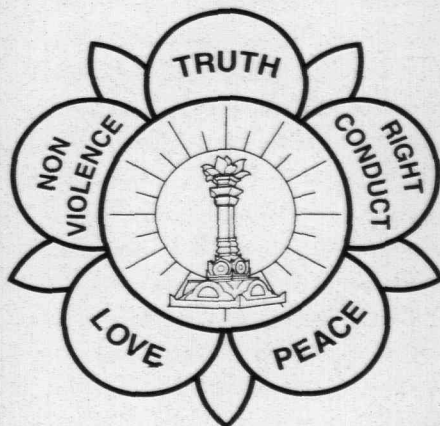




SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER, USA

SPRING 1999
VOLUME 23, NUMBER 3
MARCH, APRIL, MAY

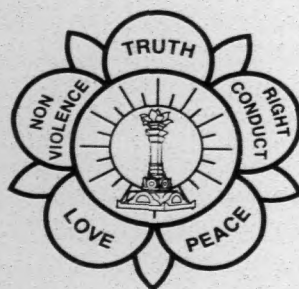
March, April, May

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

Sai's Message	Sathya Sai Baba	1
Example, Not Precept	Tom Roepke	2
Sai Answers Delegates' Questions	Sathya Sai Baba	3
Hands that Serve	Crystal Pearl	9
Legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr	Hymon T. Johnson, Ed.D.	11
Integration	Lucas Ralli	14
Our Wedding Ring <i>Leela</i>	Jody Cleary	15
Love for Lunch	Jorja Kelley	16
Sai Conferences and Retreats for 1999	Regional Presidents	20
Dates to Remember in 1999	Central Office, Prasanthi Nilayam	22
A Winter Storm	Leni Matlin	23
Soul in Prayer	Marie Penland Dooley	24
Children's Corner	Susan Caffery	25
Baba's Message on His Birthday	Sathya Sai Baba	26
"I Am Not Different from God"	Kay Brooks	32
Pacific Ocean	Lance Ward	33
Nine Point Code of Conduct	Charter of Sri Sathya Sai Organization	34
Sathya Sai Book Center of America	Book Center Volunteers	40

*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

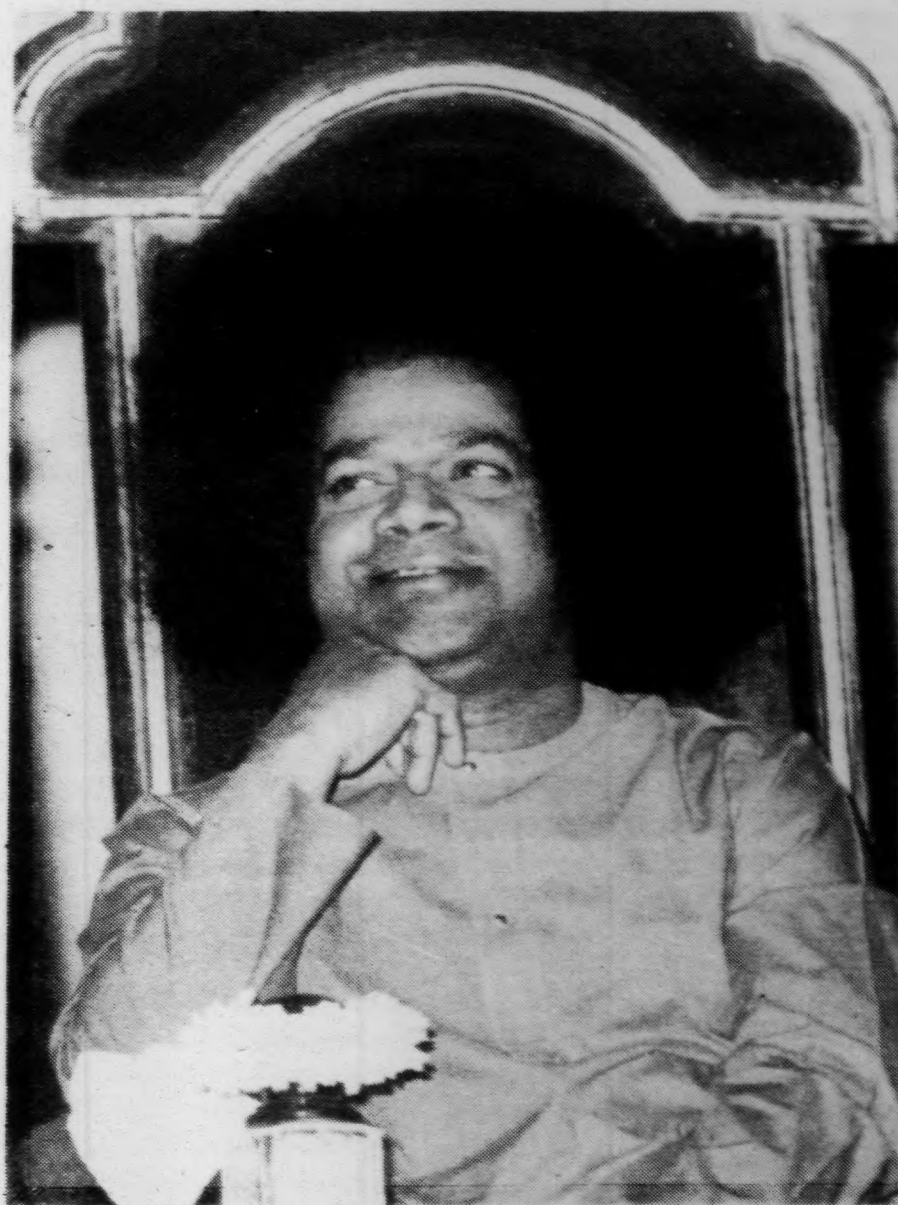
Q: Cannot an Avatar help humanity to control the natural forces and prevent, by His Divine Will, calamities such as: earthquakes, famines floods, drought and epidemics?

Baba: *This is precisely what I am doing by incarnating the indwelling God in man to overcome such calamities. There are two ways in which the Avatar can help people: an instant solution as against a long-term one.*

An instant solution would go against the fundamental quality of nature as well as the karmic law of cause and effect. Most people live in the material world of their desires and egos which is governed by this law. . . .

If the Avatar intervenes to instantly solve their problems, it would stop all action, development, even evolution. This solution can be ruled out as it totally negates the natural laws.

The other, more effective alternative, presents a long-term solution, whereby the Avatar leads the people to a higher level of consciousness and enables them to understand the truth of spiritual laws, so they may turn toward righteousness and steadfastly work for better conditions. That will lead them back to nature and the karmic law of causation. They would then transcend the cycle of cause and effect in which they are involved as victims, and thereby command and control the natural forces to be able to avert the calamities you mentioned.



—Sathya Sai Baba

My Baba and I, by Dr. John S. Hislop (pp 95-96)

Example Not Precept

Is the Best Teaching Aid

Sai Baba's teachings on the universal values (Sathya Sai Education in Human Values or SSEHV) can be implemented in any classroom, public or private, by individual teachers dedicated to the task. The fundamental essence of the SSEHV program is focused on each teacher's self-development. Educators putting Sai's teachings into practice in their lives generate the curriculum studied by students. Sai reminds us to be as we want others to be. The emphasis in SSEHV needs to be on the spiritual growth and transformation of teachers as a dynamic process, not the creation and delivery of lesson plans.

Lesson plans may be helpful, even necessary, but they cannot serve as a foundation for the program. Children need to experience the values exhibited by their teachers, rather than a series of lessons.

When human values are directly addressed within the context of the lesson, teachers who engage in spiritual practices are able to speak with an inner authority which children recognize. Teachers are then able to teach from experience, from wisdom gained through practice and grace. Without this quality of inner authority, teachers can be little more than curriculum dispensers, doling out portions of information on human values as depicted in story, song and verse.

Love, truth, peace, right action and nonviolence can be addressed effectively throughout the curriculum by teachers whom the children perceive as having inner authority. When we share examples of how this can be done, it is essential to remember that the quality of our being,

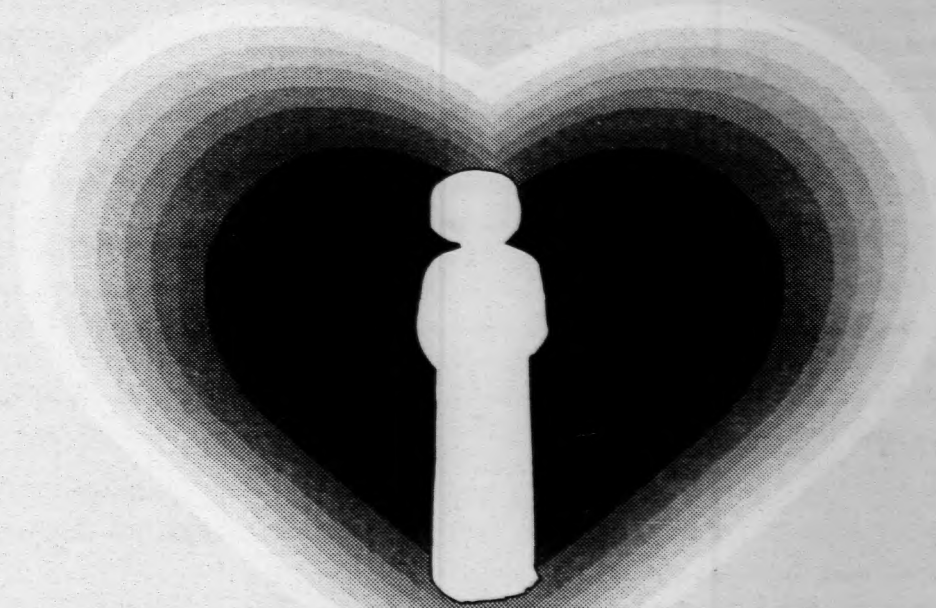
not the outer content of a lesson, is the most significant factor supporting the children's moral and spiritual growth. For example, in order to use the following approach in first grade arithmetic, teachers need the inner authority and strength of character that develops within us as we practice Swami's teachings in our lives.

Arithmetic is a content area that we can use to cultivate values in our children. In grade one, imaginative characters can be used to introduce each of the four basic operations. These characters can portray the unique qualities of each operation and reveal their relationships to one another.

Subtraction, for example, may be portrayed as a thin, blue gnome who kindly gives the gems he has collected to needy people as he returns home from the mine. To his surprise, his sack has fewer gems than he started out with when leaving the mine. On another day, he might have a small hole in his sack through which a few gems fall as he walks home. Again, he arrives with fewer than he had when he began his journey. If we name this thin, blue gnome "Minus," the term soon takes on meaning for the children. More importantly, they can begin to experience subtraction as an operation that involves giving away material or giving up attachment to lost objects.

In the primary grades, human values are effectively taught when spiritually striving teachers serve as living exemplars, and the content they present is filled with truthful pictures.

—Tom Roepke
Brooklyn, New York



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mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation." Once you control your mind, you will grow beyond the dualities of sadness and happiness. Welcome sorrow just as you welcome happiness. In fact, happiness that you derive out of pleasure is negligible, compared to happiness that results from difficulties. History is replete with examples of people who give testimony to this fact. All noble and ideal people had to undergo ordeals before they experienced happiness. Happiness is derived only from difficulties, but man wants happiness, not difficulties. This is quite contrary to the principle of spirituality.

People desire good results, but they do not perform meritorious deeds. They do not want the fruits of bad actions, yet they plunge into undesirable activities.

The following nine paths of devotion are recommended in order to experience Divinity latent in mankind: Listening (*sra-vanam*), singing (*keertanam*), remember-

Brahma is not limited to a specific name or form. It is also referred to as *Brihat* meaning all-pervasive. One has to follow the Truth to attain the Effulgent One.

Money, youth, spouse and children are all temporary. Only truth and a good name are eternal. That is why Brahma is referred to as Truth (*Sathyam*). Wisdom emerged from *Sathyam*. Truth and wisdom are all-pervasive. That is why the *Vedas* declare, "God is Truth and Wisdom; He is Infinite." The embodiment of Truth can be experienced by following the path of Truth. Truth transcends time—past, present and future.

Why Does God Incarnate?

God incarnates to enable people to understand and experience their latent Divinity, and the unity in diversity. The essence of spirituality lies in visualizing unity in diversity. This is the goal of

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—Tom Roepke
Brooklyn, New York

Sai Answers Delegates' Questions

Embodiments of Love

As long as one is egoistic, no one will love him, including his wife and children, though they may pretend to do so. So long as there is anger in an individual, grief is inevitable. Satisfaction eludes one who has desires. One with greed can never enjoy any comforts. Ego, anger, desire and greed are the root causes for absence of peace of mind.

Man feels that happiness and peace of mind result from spiritual practices but, in reality, it is not so. The mind is the root cause of happiness and sorrow. So, conquer the mind. Conquering the mind will lead you to a stage of equanimity wherein you treat dualities alike. Vedanta declares, "Mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation." Once you control your mind, you will grow beyond the dualities of sadness and happiness. Welcome sorrow just as you welcome happiness. In fact, happiness that you derive out of pleasure is negligible, compared to happiness that results from difficulties. History is replete with examples of people who give testimony to this fact. All noble and ideal people had to undergo ordeals before they experienced happiness. Happiness is derived only from difficulties, but man wants happiness, not difficulties. This is quite contrary to the principle of spirituality.

People desire good results, but they do not perform meritorious deeds. They do not want the fruits of bad actions, yet they plunge into undesirable activities.

The following nine paths of devotion are recommended in order to experience Divinity latent in mankind: Listening (*sra-vanam*), singing (*keertanam*), remember-

ing (*Vishnusmaranam*), serving at the Lotus Feet (*paadasevanam*), salutations (*vandanam*), worship (*archanam*), servitude (*daasyam*), friendship (*sneham*), surrender (*Atmanivedanam*). Love is the life-breath of all these forms of devotion.

How can one attain the principle of Brahma? Brahma means the all-pervasive Cosmic Principle. According to the *Puranas* (sacred poetical writings), Brahma originated from the navel of Vishnu. Who is Vishnu? He is the one who is all-pervasive. Vishnu and Brahma are synonymous with the *Atma* (indwelling Divinity). *Atma* is derived from the root word "*Ahas*," meaning daytime. *Ahas* dispels the darkness of ignorance. Therefore, the cosmic form is described as the Effulgent One. Brahma is not limited to a specific name or form. It is also referred to as *Brihat* meaning all-pervasive. One has to follow the Truth to attain the Effulgent One.

Money, youth, spouse and children are all temporary. Only truth and a good name are eternal. That is why Brahma is referred to as Truth (*Sathyam*). Wisdom emerged from *Sathyam*. Truth and wisdom are all-pervasive. That is why the *Vedas* declare, "God is Truth and Wisdom; He is Infinite." The embodiment of Truth can be experienced by following the path of Truth. Truth transcends time—past, present and future.

Why Does God Incarnate?

God incarnates to enable people to understand and experience their latent Divinity, and the unity in diversity. The essence of spirituality lies in visualizing unity in diversity. This is the goal of

human life. *Atma* (indwelling Divinity) is the same in all, irrespective of their names, countries or lifestyles. This *Atma* is referred to as "conscience" which permeates the body from top to toe. The goal of spirituality is to realize the oneness of *Atma* in all. Because of their attachment to the body, people are oblivious to their innate Divinity, so they visualize diversity in unity. This is due to ignorance. God incarnates in order to teach the underlying unity in diversity. Krishna declared, "The body, made of clay, has to be transformed into awareness." No spiritual practices are required to do so. Realize the truth; awareness is within oneself. But you are not making any effort to realize your own true nature. Ash covers the neglected live embers. The live embers can be seen only when the ash is blown away. Similarly, the *Atma*, which is inherent in mankind, can be seen only when the ashes of ego, anger, desire and body attachment are blown away by chanting the name of the Lord.

Body Attachment

Body attachment gives rise to ego in man. Success eludes one who is egoistic. Egolessness is true humanness. There is no ego in man at the time of birth, but it develops as he grows up. Feelings of "I" and "mine" are responsible for his bondage. Man will enjoy bliss only when he gets rid of ego and attachment. Bliss cannot be achieved through any other spiritual practice. Spiritual practices confer only temporary mental satisfaction. Only the awareness of *Atma* is true and eternal.

As the previous speaker, Bozzani, pointed out, each individual should question himself asking, "Who am I?" But it is

just the opposite. Each one asks, "Who are you?" which is information-oriented. No gain accrues from acquiring this information, which can be resolved by questioning oneself, "Who am I?" Once you know the answer to this, you do not need to undertake any spiritual practice. This is possible only when you control your mind.

Sage Patanjali has proclaimed the same idea, "Controlling thoughts and aberrations is true yoga." Yoga does not mean physical exercise. Yoga means to unite with the *Atma*. There is no greater happiness than being one with the *Atma*. But today, no one is making any effort to understand *Atma*, the final goal of life. The senses are above the body; the mind is above the senses; intellect is above the mind; *Atma* is above the intellect. As man is unable to control his mind and the senses, he is subjected to confusion and depression. As a result, he forgets the principle of *Atma*.

The body, which is made up of the five elements, is transient and may perish at any time. Attachment to the body brings attachment to money. Today, people value education and money more than anything else. Money and education by themselves are not bad. Good and bad lie in their utilization. Water by itself is colorless, but it assumes the color of the container in which it is poured. So is the case with money and education; their value depends on the nature of the person who acquires them. Good and bad are the reflections of the inner being; they do not exist in the persons. Defects lie in the vision not the creation. So, purify your vision and sanctify your heart to experience unity in diversity.

I have received letters from the delegates to this conference (First Overseas

Convention of Chairpersons Sri Sathya Sai Centers) seeking clarification of their doubts. What is the root cause of doubts? It is the absence of total faith.

Jesus had a disciple, Thomas, who doubted everything he came across, so he was appropriately called, "Doubting Thomas." On the path of spirituality, doubts do arise at times, even though one may have faith in God.

Questions from Delegates

"Did Jesus really declare that He was the truth, the path and that none were superior to Him?"

Inquire into the Truth yourself. Jesus was never egoistic at any point in time. Never did Jesus say that He was the truth, the path, the savior and the redeemer. That was the work of the compilers of the *Bible* that led to this mistaken notion. Today, we have 500 different versions of the [Holy] *Bible*.

There was one tax collector who recorded the conversation between Jesus and the fishermen. It was during one of those conversations that Jesus assured them that He would take care of them, but at no point in time did He mention with a sense of ego that He was the only One and the ultimate One to protect them. He did this only with a view to increase their confidence, and motivate them into action. Many scholars misinterpret this assurance and consider Jesus as the only redeemer, and that He would protect them from all difficulties.

At the time of the Divine Birth, three wise men visited Jesus in the manger. One of them, looking at the child, Jesus, remarked, "He looks as if He is a messenger of God." The second wise man exclaimed, "The child looks as though He is the son of God." The third wise man disagreed

with both saying, "He and God are one and the same."

Jesus was filled with compassion at the sight of the meek and the afflicted. The apostle, Paul, opposed Jesus in all matters from the onset. Jesus appeared in Paul's dream and questioned Paul, asking, "What harm have I done to you? Why do you criticize me so?" This caused Paul to ponder and realize that his ignorance and ego had blinded him to reality. Thereafter, he became an ardent disciple of Jesus. In every age, every noble soul has had to put up with criticism. People have always had mistaken notions about good and bad. If only we understood the truth in the *Bible*, we would come to the conclusion that there has been no fault in Jesus at all. Jesus always aspired to bring people into God consciousness.

At the time of the crucifixion, Jesus prayed, "Oh, Father! What sin have I committed? Why am I put to suffering thus?" Jesus never laid a claim to His association with God neither as a messenger or a son. It is only in order that people may realize their own relationship with God that such an interpretation was made.

When Mother Mary stood crying at the foot of the cross, an ethereal voice was heard saying, "All are one, my dear son; be alike to everyone." It may be concluded from that incident that the relationship between Jesus and God was that of Son and Father.

Jesus never proclaimed egoistically that He was the path, the truth, the only way. But every incarnation [of an Avatar] has proclaimed this Truth: Krishna declared in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Fix your mind on me; perform rituals for me; pay obeisance to me. If you fix your mind steadfastly on me, you shall certainly

realize me.” Only an Avatar can give such assurance and emphasize the *Atmic* principle. Jesus had never spoken those words. Hence, He was considered to be a messenger of God.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna declared, “I am the protector of all; I am that I am, the basis for all, and the creator of all, and the basis of all the four *varnas*.” What are the *varnas*? *Varna* means color, but it has been misunderstood to mean caste. “All the people of the four *varnas* were created by me,” said Krishna. Therefore, do not make any distinction based on color. The four colors are: black, yellow, white and red. The Africans and Bharatiyas (Indians) are black in complexion; the Japanese and English are white in complexion; while the Chinese are yellow and the Russians are red. What God has declared is broad-minded, not narrow-minded. Do not give room for any constriction of thoughts.

You may be a Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu or a Zoroastrian, but you must consider yourselves to be children of God. In the beginning, even the Romans were Jews, not Christians. It was only after the advent of Jesus that the term Christian came into use. Jesus said that He was a “persona” meaning that He was a spark of the Divine. This has been translated by the British as “person” which has been termed as *purusha* by Bharatiyas. Therefore, *purusha* or persona has originated from the Roman language. Persona means sacredness. Since man has Divinity inherent in him, he is called a person. This, in Hindu culture and holy texts—*Puranas*, *Vedas*, *Shastras* and *itihasa*—has been declared *purusha*. These are names of the one Divinity present in all. We experience the one Divinity in various forms. But today,

we have to realize the unity in diversity and experience it. Consider this to be the goal of the Sathya Sai Organization. You should not give rise to differences or hatred of any sort. There is only One who is present in all. If you are to realize this Truth, that in itself would be spirituality in practice. Practice is more important than publicity.

There are two microphones in front of me. There is one mike in front of the translator. The words that emanate from the mikes may differ, but the underlying sound principle is the same. Similarly, we must experience Divinity in various names and forms. Words that emanate from the heart are expansion-talk. Some people speak only from the lips in order to suit the situation. Such words are contraction-talk. Such contraction-talk is equivalent to death. People who indulge in such contraction-talk have no connection between their speech and their heart. When all that is in the heart finds expression in speech, it is termed expansion-talk. Those who speak from the heart speak the truth, and those whose speech does not come from the heart, speak untruth to suit the occasion. Your words should emanate from the heart. This is possible only when there is complete confidence in the Self. The one with total conviction does not give room for doubts.

The inquiry into the fact whether that which is applicable to others is applicable to the individual self also constitutes the search for Truth. One may ask why there should be a search for Truth, when Truth is all-pervasive. In each human there is the dual aspect of Truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, nonviolence and violence. There is an example to illustrate this:

Suppose you have pure 24-carat gold. After some time, you add copper to it. Later, you add silver, and later yet, aluminum and brass. When new metals are added to the gold, its true nature undergoes a change, and it loses its value.

Today, people are undergoing such changes. When one is a child, one is pure. As that person associates with others, he acquires violence and nonviolence, untruthfulness and truthfulness, unrighteousness and righteousness. This is the root cause for the cycle of birth and death. When you are one with the Self, there is no scope for birth and death. Body attachments, educational and monetary attachments reduce the Self to the present state of mankind. Thus, one forgets his true nature. One has to be cleansed by the process of refinement which will get rid of all the bad qualities, and regain one's resplendent, pristine purity.

People acquire evil qualities such as jealousy, hatred and ego. Devotees and aspirants tend to fall prey to jealousy and ego. Due to such tendencies they destroy their human nature. We have to foster our faith firmly. Do not let it be debased by evil tendencies. One should join good company and run away from the bad. Bad company is harmful: Run away from bad company; Join the good. Do meritorious deeds day and night. Ponder over the permanent and the transient.

Some may appear very pious through their words and deeds, but if you observe their behavior, it would be demonic in reality. Do not lose your purity by having faith in such people. Impure gold of this kind is on the rise; you must become pure gold. Even a small quantity of pure gold is better than a mound of debased gold. Quality should be preferred over quantity. Half

an acre of fertile land is better than 10 acres of barren land. Follow your own conscience, your master; face the devil; fight to the end; finish the game. This is the goal of life. If you respect and follow the words of those who have disharmony in their thoughts, words and deeds, you tend to forget your Swami, your true Self. Follow your conscience.

I never force anyone to do anything. What is the reason? The reason is that one has to follow the dictates of one's source, one's conscience. Force connotes external imposition. Source relates to the *Atma*, which is Love. So, cultivate Love. This is the answer to the first question. The next question is: **Why does Swami appear in the dreams of only a few and not in all?**

It is naive to think in such a manner. You cannot have such dreams when you would like to. You think of many people, but do they all appear in your dreams? No! It is a mistake to think that Swami does not have compassion for you just because He does not appear in your dreams. Swami's compassion is very much there for one and all. Dreams are nothing but reflections of the subconscious mind. Swami appearing in dreams is very auspicious. Now, I shall explain the different types of dreams:

Sometimes you experience nightmares and, at times, you experience dreams that fill you with happiness. All these dreams occur since they are accumulated in your subconscious mind. It is good that they find expression in dreams. Dreams are the reflection, reaction and resound of that which is within you. The same does not apply to the dreams in which Swami appears. Swami appears only in dreams when He wills it, and not when you want Him to.

The Mohammedan musician who performed yesterday had not seen me on any prior occasion. I asked him, "Son do you remember, you met with a car accident in America, and I appeared to you that very instant?" Hearing this revelation he exclaimed, "Oh, my God!" and wept with joy. That same night, I appeared in his dream, and told him that he would be coming to Puttaparthi for the ensuing birthday celebration. He came here yesterday.

There are certain confusing dreams in which your feelings play an active role. You may be seeing Swami but, at the same time, your feelings get mixed up and cause confusion. You may see yourself in Puttaparthi at one point and in America in the very next, so on and so forth. Those dreams are not willed by Swami. Those result from indigestion and improper food. Dreams which are willed by me are very clear and give no room for confusion or doubt. I come to you and convey what I want to in the most direct manner. The third question raised is: **"Everyone is undertaking spiritual practices, but I am unable to do so for lack of time as I am engaged in multifarious activities. I am unable to think of Swami and participate in service activities. What is the solution to this?"**

It is a big mistake to think on these lines. There is no need for a specific time and place to think of Swami. Discharge your duties sincerely with the conviction that everything is Swami's work. Work is worship, duty is God. You do not need to sit and chant *Sai Ram* repeatedly. Do all acts with the feeling that they are for pleasing God. That is the greatest spiritual practice. Instead of wasting time in meditation devoid of concentration, it is better to attend to your duties and household work.

Human society is bound by karma (action). Karma does not mean sweeping the road and serving the sick. Even your breathing process, blinking your eyelids, eating, sleeping and reading can be termed karma. Life without karma is impossible even for a moment. Life will be sanctified only when you do all karma to please God. Do not make any distinction between God and yourself, your work and His work. Work with the conviction that you and God are one. Then, even a small task will assume magnificence. Greatness lies in small things. No doubt, sweeping the road and visiting hospitals are good deeds but, in themselves, do not constitute service. Discharging your duties properly is true spiritual practice. If you neglect your duty and your work, and it is not commensurate with the salary you draw, then it would amount to cheating your employer. True service lies in discharging your duties properly. Hence, service can be done even in your office. Then, any work undertaken—without discriminating whether it is personal or divine—would become service. Never give the excuse of lack of time.

There is a small story: A devotee wanted to know his life's span, so he could set aside a considerable amount of time for spiritual practices. He pleaded with the Lord to let him know his life's span. God replied that he was given 80 years. The devotee felt happy, but he continued, "Out of 80 years allocated to me, 20 to 25 years are spent in studying and playing. The next 25 are spent in my household activities. The next 30 are spent planning for my future and for the well-being of my children. So, I am left with no time for spiritual practices. Oh, Lord, grant me 20 more years that I may think of You and attain You."

Please turn to *Delegates*, page 35

Hands That Serve

Are Holier Than Lips That Pray

It had been many years since I had been able to travel to India to see Sai Baba. Just to see Him is quite a thrill. I was very happy to receive His *darshan* (to see a holy being) and had many inward blessings. However, the *Bal Vikas* (now called Sathya Sai Spiritual Education or SSSE) class had sent with me drawings from the children's devotional service project. They had asked me to have the cover picture signed by Swami as a blessing for the children. For over three weeks, Swami ignored any effort by me to ask Him to sign the cover.

During those three weeks, I initially had been given much bliss at the sight of Swami in Brindavan, Whitefield, Baba's college outside of Bangalore. On April 5th, 1994, Swami traveled to the mountain resort of Kodaikanal, and our group moved there. Kodaikanal was extremely rainy and most of our group took ill. I was no exception, and I needed over a week to recover from a bad flu. In Kodai [as it is often called], I felt that Swami hit me strongly with His Shiva aspect [of discipline] and was giving me grace, in a sense, to clean out. He was answering a prayer for purification. I was very grateful for that.

In spite of the rain, mud and long periods of waiting, I enjoyed every *darshan*. I always had a terrific view of Him, and He even looked at me a few times. Still,

He neither took nor blessed a thing that I offered, not even the children's drawings. I began to feel that I might let the *Bal Vikas* class down. Once or twice, I was forward enough to say softly, as He walked by, "Bal Vikas, Swami." But outwardly, at least, He ignored me.

On Rama's birthday, I was very lucky to get a seat directly in front of Swami for the singing, a speech, and then Swami's beautiful discourse about Lord Rama. During the introductory talk, the speaker's throat became dry and he coughed. Swami immediately reached for His own goblet of water to give it to the man. The speaker refused to accept the water [undoubtedly thinking that it would be too bold to use the Avatar's goblet], and he was able

to continue his talk without any problems. Swami was showing us how we must share and serve others.

Finally, during our last week there, it

occurred to me that maybe Swami just wanted me to give the drawings to Him and not take the signed copy back home. As He walked by, I held them out to Him, so that the title page faced Baba. He walked by, paused in front of me, and looked at the cover. Next, He took it, looked at me again, and gave me a little smile. Needless to say, I was quite happy! Afterwards, I could imagine Swami up in

"Afterwards, I could imagine Swami up in His room looking through all of the beautiful drawings and enjoying them."

His room looking through all of the beautiful drawings and enjoying them.

At our last *bhajan* session, I was allowed to sit inside the small hall. I had a perfect view of Swami. Seated in front of me was a nearly blind woman. I could tell that she had trouble seeing Swami due to her inadequate eyesight. During the *bhajan* singing, she began to cry, and her friend next to her helped her with a tissue. Without even thinking, I reached into my bag and handed the woman a little package of tissues. Then, I continued to look at Swami and sing. At that moment, Swami looked directly at me and smiled. It was the only time that I saw Him smile during that *bhajan*.

When the singing ended, Swami walked right up to the woman in front of me and rubbed her head. Perhaps He wanted to let her know that He was with her in spite of her visual problems.

Through these incidents, Swami confirmed that service is the most important spiritual practice to cultivate. He tells us that *bhajan* singing, prayer and meditation are all helpful in calming the mind. However, He also teaches us that unless we engage ourselves in loving service to society, we are not meeting the criterion of becoming devotees.

—Crystal Pearl
Yucaipa, California

The only way to cleanse a hardhearted person is through service to humanity. It is necessary to realize that a person's life is meant to be spent in selfless service and in the service of the higher Self. Such a life of service is not meant to gain either name or fame, to allow expression of one's ego, or in the furtherance of one's own ends. Service done for one's selfish gain is not service at all.

The inability to identify the sanctity and divinity of service is what holds man back from a life of service. Therefore, service to humanity should be understood to be service to the Self, not only service to society. Society does not need your service, unless you realize that such service is indeed for your own spiritual good, not for the gratification of the ego. A life which is not spent in service is a life of darkness. Understand that society is the source of whatever pleasure you achieve in life. Society and nature are the fountain of your joy, wealth and enlightenment, and they deserve your service. An illustration:

When we drop a handkerchief, and somebody picks it up, we say, "Thanks." Don't we need to express at least that much gratitude to a sacred and divine society which has given us all our pleasures and comforts? . . . Service should be our primary responsibility and our main goal. We should not waste our lives in pursuit of useless attractions. Money and materials are not essential for service, but a loving heart is. We should fill our hearts with love.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Vision of Sai, II, pp 228-231

Sanathana Dharma* and the Legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"We cannot, in all good conscience, obey your unjust laws, because noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good."

—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Christmas Day, 1957

In His divine discourse to the young adults at their First World Conference for Young Adults in the summer of 1997, our beloved Bhagavan said, *I want you to be leaders to protect the world. Leaders, like lions—self-reliant, courageous, majestic and just.* He urged them to be His instruments of love. During His other discourses to them and at other times, Swami has often referred to the life example of great leaders who have served in this manner.

One such glowing example is embodied in the universal message of peace, love, nonviolence, and social justice that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brought to this nation just a few decades ago. A doctor of divinity, author of 10 books, recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize and hundreds of other awards, a loving husband and father, Dr. King clearly stood head and shoulders above the great majority of his contemporaries. Yet, as great as he was and as hard as he tried—like Mahatma Gandhi in India, and Nelson Mandela in South Africa—the color of his skin made him a second-class citizen which prevented him and his family from enjoying the benefits that were available to others.

One hundred and thirty-one years after the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, 45 years after the Supreme Court's decision to integrate America's public schools, 36 years after the historic March on Washington, and 31 years after Dr. King's controver-

sial assassination, the promises of equal justice and equal opportunity have yet to be realized for far too many people. Recent and continuing studies provide overwhelming evidence which verifies this statement, while also showing that the gap between the rich and the poor, the majority and the minority in this country has now become larger than at any time in the history of gathering such information.

In some ways, but of course not in all, we must admit that Dr. King's dream is as distant today as it was when he spoke about it 36 years and nearly two generations ago. Some say that his dream has now become a predictable nightmare, and he would be greatly saddened by the violence and injustices that are so prevalent in our country today. Dr. King said, "So, when Jesus says, 'Love your enemies,' He is setting forth a profound and ultimately inescapable admonition. Have we not come to such an impasse in the modern world that we love our enemies—or else? The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars—must be broken." Sai says, *Love knows no limits.*

Let us be increasingly honest about the objective conditions that we face today and realize that there is just too little true integrity when it comes to addressing issues of racial and ethnic prejudice and discrimination in our society today. There is too little heartfelt inspiration to provide solutions which really get to the

*Sanathana Dharma is the ancient wisdom, the eternal path.

heart of the matter. Dr. King said, "The ultimate measure of man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Sai says, *Righteousness is essentially social morality.*

It becomes clear for we devotees that our service also includes actively living the ideal of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. This can be done in a variety of ways. Sathya Sai Baba says, *Knowing the way is not enough. The path must be traversed to reach the destination. That journey is service to society.*

If we are truly serious about assisting in the daily task of Sai's divine mission, we must be faithful in doing the inner work that can strengthen and position us to become increasingly empathetic and courageous. If we are serious, then we must do more than honor Dr. King once a year with a day off from school or work. We will honor him every day of our lives through voices which speak the truth, and through actions which are consistent with the universal human values for which he stood and which he modeled, values such as: justice, sacrifice, dedication, courage, persistence, love, forbearance, compassion, peace, understanding, humility and nonviolence. If we are serious, each of us will reflect on the extent to which we adhere to such values—the same ones given to us by Swami—and then do our utmost to do even better! For it is only by placing these values into daily practice that we can ever hope to bring a just and peaceful world into existence. Swami says, *Love in understanding is nonviolence; respect and revere all creation.* Dr. King says, "True peace is not merely the absence of some negative force—confusion, tension, war—but the presence of some positive force

such as justice, goodwill, brotherhood."

To bring this lesson to a deeper place within us, let us reflect for a moment and seek to place ourselves in the mind of Dr. King. What was he thinking and how was he feeling, as he pointed to the cross that had been burned by the Ku Klux Klan in front of their family home with his three-year-old son by his side? What did he think and how did he feel as bullets pierced the window of his living room? How did he feel when a bomb exploded while he, his wife and children slept in their beds? What was the emotional cost resulting from repeated death threats on him and his family? What were his final thoughts as he was taken from the battlefield of life at just 39 years of age? Even a fraction of such uncommon courage—truth, right action, peace, love and nonviolence—is hard to imagine, and even harder to find. Sathya Sai Baba has said, *Forbearance is equivalent to truth itself; forbearance is the heart of righteousness; forbearance is the very essence of the Vedas (scripture); forbearance is nonviolence in practice. . . .*

When will humankind bring true honor to the human condition? We should realize, as Baba teaches, *Education without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, and politics without principles are not only useless, but are positively dangerous.* And as Dr. King said, "The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason but with no morals. We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character, that is the goal." Baba says, *A life without character is as barren as a temple without a lamp, a counterfeit coin, a kite whose string has snapped.*

To whom much is given, much is expected. And who can deny how much has

been given to us by our dear Swami? Principles without practice are pointless; therefore our love for God must be actualized.

Bhagavan Baba made this point when He said, *In the first place, man has to develop into mankind in the fullness of its integrated potential. At present, mankind, as such, is absent from the world. There is no synthesis between thought, word and deed. Man today thinks one thing, says something different, and acts quite to the contrary. So, what we have is the individual, confused and bombarded with contradictory thoughts, words and deeds.*

Social progress is often motivated from without, but it is always a function of those who make up the society, and particularly those in leadership positions—their clarity and courage, the strength of their positive convictions, their persistence, etc. So, why not invoke Ganesha, Hanuman and Arjuna to give us the needed courage and devotion to human duty, and to clear away the obstacles to fairness and justice? We must not dwell on the negative, yet we should never deny its apparent presence and its less-than-positive impact on our suffering sisters and brothers. Consistent with the teachings of Sai, we are enjoined to always focus on and accentuate the good. But this good also includes the good which will naturally result from our loving and courageous words and actions to bring greater justice and a better turn for all. Dr. King said, “Our world is a neighborhood. We must learn to live together as brothers, or we will all perish as fools. For I submit, nothing will be done until people put their bodies and souls into this.” Baba said, *Love is the manner of speaking; truth is the substance; righteousness is the language; and peace, the result.*

Fellow embodiments of love, allow me

to move this deliberation to its more appropriate level. Thirty-one years after leaving his body, this is not, and never was about a man named King. For he was none other than a messenger, a vehicle of Swami's instruction, as we all are. As great as he was, Dr. King is not and must not be our focus. In truth, all of this is about our Baba and us! It is about what we have come to understand about the meaning and purpose of life, and how we think about and act toward those who sit on the margins of society, how we use our will power, and how we actualize our Lord's teachings. It is about how high or how low a ceiling we place on our desires; how faithfully we follow the Nine Point Code of Conduct (see page 34), and how we subject ourselves to the loving will of our Father/Mother God through our daily practice of *dharma* at home, at work and at play.

Swami teaches us that the past is contained in the present, and that it is our thoughts and actions in the present moment that causes the future to unfold. While keeping history in the past, where it definitely belongs, it is always important to reflect upon the teachings that historical experience offers, and to use those teachings in our attending thoughts and actions in each moment.

Thus, it is quite clear that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., offered timeless lessons for us all. His life was as much a message about today, as it was about the civil rights movement of yesterday. Not only that! The message of his life is about our future world, our deepest values and innermost intentions and convictions, about how much time and what level of effort we are willing to spend on the larger good, putting truth into both inner and outer practice, from this day and this moment for-

ward. Dr. King said, "On some positions, cowardice asks the question, is it expedient? And then expedience comes along and asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? Conscience asks the question, is it right? There comes a time when one must take the position that it is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him, it is right." Baba said, *Love knows no fear, no untruth, no anxiety, no grief. Love is the giving of selfless service to all in need. Love liberates. Love activates. Love never tires.*

Realize that all we see are reflections from our own mental attitudinal projections; let us strive to see the *Atma* (indwelling Divine) in all and finish this game of mind-body existence once and for all. Let us walk the lion's path of truth and righ-

teousness, confident that love is all. No matter how rich or poor, whether we are leaders or followers, young ones or elders, by following the Master's teachings ever more carefully, we can all become kings among men and queens among women. And in this work, let us never fear, for our omnipresent Lord is always near.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality." Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said, *Many hesitate to believe that life will be happy and full of joy and that the Golden Age will recur. Let me assure you that this Divine Body has not come in vain. It will succeed in averting the crisis that has come upon humanity.*

Hymon T. Johnson, Ed.D.
Santa Barbara, California



Integration

People talk about the need for integration, but do they understand what it means? Integration means coming together on the spiritual level. When this happens, integration at other levels will follow. Without integration on the spiritual level, other forms of it are a charade, not real, of no lasting value.

It is best to stop talking about integration and start making your own effort to integrate with everyone on the spiritual level. In that position, all are one, so there cannot be any problems if you start with a pure mind.

Integration of the whole world community has a broader meaning, but even-

tually the same principle will apply. It will only be achieved when leaders become more loving and spiritual, and when they weed out the folly of the past. Integration will come. You can see it at all stages in Prasanthi Nilayam because love flows constantly, and people forget their egos.

The whole world should become a Prasanthi Nilayam, and you can play a part in bringing this about in your own area. Every beginning and every effort is important, however small. Integration will come in the course of time, and the whole world will be a Prasanthi Nilayam.

—**Lucas Ralli**, London, England
As received in meditation

Our Wedding Ring Leela*

We had hoped against all reason that Sathya Sai Baba, the living Avatar, might marry us in person. Failing that, perhaps He would at least make rings for us.

Since time passed and those ideas didn't seem to be what He had in mind, Ted (who Baba refers to as "That Boy") suggested that we begin shopping for rings. That process which should have been pleasurable, became a troubling matter for me, since nothing appealed. Neither grand nor modest, ornate nor plain—nothing was pleasing to me.

We felt that a wedding ring was a requisite. And yet, finding every selection to be boring and meaningless, how could I settle on one to wear for the rest of my life? When I realized that I was comparing every option to one that might have been manifested by Him, I knew I was defeated before I began. So, in my bantering style, I challenged Baba, Himself, to solve the situation. Was it not He who had created this ringless dilemma?

"I want a ring that is from You. One that signifies Ted's and my 'partnership' with You. And, by the way, I want a ring with a sense of humor. Solve that!" So, with the Avatar's pledge to answer within 20 minutes, I knew I was to have a ring with a name. And that the name was a characteristically humorous pun. It was to be, "The Ava-star of the Universe" ring. OK, very clever. Now what?

The following day, one of my work appointments ended early, and I co-in-Sai-dentally found myself near a jewelry store that I had intended to visit. They had a

dazzling display of rings to which I had my usual ho-hum reaction. Except for one, to which I felt immediately attracted, and I tried it on. It fit!

The stone was smooth, instead of sparkley; it had a luminous, iridescent blue color that glowed hauntingly. It seemed unearthly, almost mystical. Suddenly, like a magical crystal ball, light reflected from inside the stone's depths, forming a moving star, seemingly alive. It was a star sapphire from India. I was stunned and thrilled and knew it was intended to be my wedding ring, the "Ava-star of the Universe" ring.

Later, upon further inspiration, I decided to have diamonds inset, as if scattered stars in the heavenly firmament, all orbiting the Ava-star. There would be one for "That Boy" and one for me. And stars to represent Ted's two children and our families and friends. We were delighted with this, and knew it would confer a perpetual blessing on us and on our loved ones.

But what about everybody else?

One final stroke from the genius punster: One diamond was to be the "*Loka Sama-star Sukino Bhavantu*." This is an ancient Sanskrit chant which means, "May all the worlds be happy." Perfect!

It shimmers on my hand like the ethereal Presence, an eye, or "I," always watching. It smiles light on us all with beauty and grace, laughter and love—as we know He does—forever.

—Jody Cleary, Mrs. Ted Henry
Beachwood, Ohio

**Leela* is God's divine play. The author has said, "In my experience, the *leelas* have always been harmless, humorous, and unmistakably Sai mischief."

Love for Lunch

If you ever want to understand a particular subject, put yourself in Baba's hands, submit your will and volunteer to be used. Baba will guide you to new levels of enlightenment as you experience that subject personally. His guidance will begin the moment you ask, and He will speak through all with whom you come in contact. You will find yourself receiving more than you give, as your education in that subject continues.

I began discovering this firsthand in 1991, when I volunteered to present a workshop at the Sathya Sai Baba Southeast Regional Conference in Atlanta. I had just discovered the book, *Yoga of Action*, a compilation from Divine Messages of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Baba's words had great impact upon me, so my workshop covered three small chapters: "Grace of God" (p 9), "Service Opportunity, A Gift from God" (p 28), and "Ceiling on Desires" (p 41). So, with all these—grace, service, and Ceiling on Desires—little did I know that this would be the start of a great learning adventure!

At that time, I performed service through the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Ft. Walton Beach, Florida. Soma Calnaido, who was then our center president, started our "Love for Lunch" program for which we cooked and delivered meals to 10 or 12 elderly people on Saturday mornings. Our center was small; about three to five members participated in the Love for Lunch program on a regular basis. At the time, I felt the four or five hours per week was as much service as I could possibly give, since I worked full time. But, inspired by other devotees' accomplishments at the confer-

ence, I prayed Baba would expand my capacity for *seva* (service).

I also made Ceiling on Desires a goal to work on for the coming year. In Ceiling on Desires, Baba talked about saving—food, money, time, and energy—because wasting these is like wasting God. Baba says that by conserving them, we reduce the desires that keep us focused on *maya* (illusion) instead of reality.

Baba's message really hit home, because we were overspending, living from paycheck to paycheck, having difficulty living within our means. My husband and I never had enough money at the end of the month. We drove adequate but older cars, and lived in the same house we'd rented for 10 years. Basically, we felt poor because we had too many material desires. Admittedly, we had just paid off a large sum of money in credit card debts. Having learned that lesson the hard way, we were nearly debt free, though our credit rating was very bad. Still, it was clear we were mismanaging the abundance we had. I prayed for Baba to teach me to live within our means, and help me learn to conserve. I knew that from then on, Baba was taking charge of our finances. And here is what happened:

I lost my job in October 1992. At first, my husband and I suffered "financial shock" as part of our income disappeared. Fortunately, unemployment allowed us to gradually scale down, adjusting to about half my regular salary. During this time, we somehow managed to buy a new car at a bargain price when our old one deteriorated. Ironically, we were able to make the car payments each month.

Then, my unemployment ran out

after nine months, and we went into financial shock again, as we had expected it to last a full year. I began to seek work even more vigorously, but to no avail. Again, Baba required a new level of faith from us as we scaled down to live on just my husband's salary. Yet, during that time, with Baba's grace, our credit became so good we were able to buy a house at a bargain price, at a low interest rate, paying only a small amount more than we had when we rented. Again, we were able to make the mortgage payments.

We went for a long time without my finding work.

Needless to say, Baba was requiring yet a new level of faith from me, as well as from my husband. Financial pressure existed, as well as the temptation to panic; that year's taxes were due to the IRS, and our only daughter's wedding was coming up. A large amount of money was needed to meet those expenses.

Yet, Baba continued to pour His grace on us. When our center president and her family moved away, and our membership decreased to two college students: Carmelle, Frances and myself. Baba blessed me by allowing the center to relocate in my home until we gained enough people to elect officers and become an official Sathya Sai Baba Center again. We then held *bhajans* (devotional singing) every Thursday evening. With Baba's grace, my husband had begun attending the meet-

ings, meditating, and learning *bhajans*.

Looking back, the way Baba gradually transformed us is more visible. During the last few years, our Love for Lunch program, delivering food to the elderly on weekends, had grown until we were cooking and delivering meals to 40 people!

Before our president and her family moved—knowing that our membership would decrease to three—I prayed for guid-

ance, asking Baba if He wanted Love for Lunch to continue, or if we should perform a different kind of service. After all, Carmelle had Saturday morning classes and wasn't

available to cook, though she sometimes provided cookies and usually helped deliver the meals. Frances always provided the cartons of milk, an expense in itself, and assisted in delivery. That left the majority of the expense and cooking up to me; and I was still looking for a job. It was assumed that Love for Lunch would be discontinued.

At first I was protective and possessive, and could feel my ego rise up with pride, determined to accomplish the *seva* by myself if necessary, rather than let Baba's Love for Lunch be discontinued. But this ego attitude was destructive and would taint the service.

So, I prayed for guidance, relinquished control, and prepared to give it up. We told the people we were serving that the meals would stop at the end of the month, but

*"Then the unexpected happened.
Baba's grace allowed this project
to continue from week to week.
He required yet another level of
faith from me and my husband."*

that we would probably resume, when our center grew enough in membership to provide the service again. They were very understanding.

Then, the unexpected happened. Baba's grace allowed this project to continue from week to week. He required yet another level of faith from me and my husband. When my husband gave me our weekly budget allowance—for groceries, gasoline, household expenses, clothing, or any other personal or family essentials—I would buy the food for Love for Lunch first. Many times there was not much left for the rest of the week's groceries. I had to do without a lot of the extras I used to have. I'd spend more time at home to conserve money and gasoline. But we never went hungry, and I had grace and peace of mind, which are priceless. Needless to say, Baba taught me to be economical by shopping for bargains.

As our kitchen cupboards and refrigerator got leaner and barer, I started wondering how long before my husband would suggest we stop the lunch service. Then, I saw an article entitled, "Save \$500 a Year on Groceries by Allowing Your Cupboards to Thin Down," and I knew that Baba was reassuring me.

There were times when unexpected expenses would arise, and by Friday, I did not have a penny to shop for meals the next day. At first, I used to wonder if this was a sign that Baba meant we were to discontinue the *seva*. At those times, I usually sang *bhajans*—"I Surrender to You, Baba," or "Thy Will Be Done"—with an attitude of "so be it."

Then Carmelle would call to say she didn't have classes, and she would cook the main course, or could provide a salad or dessert, or would be able to participate

more than she anticipated. And then someone would call to ask for an alignment (energy healing), or ask me to drive for them, or clean their house, or I'd finally get paid for one of my short stories, or Soma would make a surprise visit and give a donation, and then the money would come for the next day's food.

The first week or two, Frances would call to ask, "Are we still on for this week? Okay, I'll bring the milk." Later, she would just show up with the milk on Saturday mornings. It's amazing to observe how everything fell into place. Even my husband, who began to feel somewhat pressured from time to time, had learned that his income was stretching farther than he thought possible. He had never asked me to stop the meals, though he probably thought about it.

Feeding 40 people, singlehandedly or with three or four volunteers, just didn't seem possible. But it was. Anything is possible! That's because Baba does the feeding, and His grace makes it possible. It's no more impossible than His feeding and clothing millions of people on His birthday. Our jobs as devotees are to be still, have faith, and to be willing to be used in His service. Perhaps our willingness to learn and to change, and our willingness to be used for His divine service are the very things which allow Him to heap His grace upon us. I don't know, but it doesn't seem likely that you can learn about service or Ceiling on Desires without reaping the benefits of Baba's grace. It's like a by-product of His education.

So, my education on grace continues to be service and Ceiling on Desires. Thank you, Baba, for your guidance. It's a precious and bountiful gift. Thank you for these words, which keep my ego in

check and make me pliable in your hands.

In *Yoga of Action* (excerpts on pages 28-30), Baba says, *You have no reason to feel proud when you are able to help another, for your skill or wealth or strength or courage or official position that gave you the chance to serve was the gift of God, whether you recognize it or not. You are only offering God's gift to another of God's gifts—namely, the poor, the illiterate, the weak, the diseased, the grieving, the brokenhearted—who seek your help.*

When you offer milk to a hungry child, or a blanket to a shivering brother on the pavement, you are but placing a gift of God into the hands of another gift of God. You are putting the gift of God in a repository of the Divine Principle. God serves; He allows you to claim that you have served. Without His will, no single blade of grass

can quiver in the breeze. Fill every moment with gratitude to the giver and the recipient of all gifts.

You are referring to the gift of food as annadana, the charity of food. But no one has the authority to give in charity what has been given by God, or be proud of it, or even to feel that he has given something in charity. God gave the rains, God fostered the sapling, and God ripened the grain; what right have you to call it yours and give it in charity? It is not charity (dana) that you do; you are only offering gratitude to God; you are sanctifying the grain you have harvested by offering the food prepared out of it to God (Narayana) in human form. Call it Narayana Seva. That will be more correct."

—Jorja Kelley

Ft. Walton Beach, Florida

Mrs. Kelley experienced all this some years ago, so we asked her for an update on the Love for Lunch program; it is as follows:

In 1994, we compiled our recipes, designed to feed 24-40 people, and made a *Love for Lunch Vegetarian Cookbook* for a service project. We published it on a copy machine on *Easwaramma Day* (the day honoring the Mother of Sathya Sai Baba). Little did we know that it would be hand-carried to India by a devotee from another center, and held and blessed by Baba in an interview on *Guru Poornima Day* (a time to honor one's spiritual preceptor), leaving nectar on it in the shape of the *gyotirlingam** with the trident.

Over the years, the volunteers who do the work may change, but Baba is always consistent. We now have a Service Coordinator, Lillian, who ensures that her two sons, Matt and Josh, ages eight and nine, participate. We continue learning new levels of faith, as Baba shows us what can be accomplished with only one or two volunteers. **However, 40 people continue to be fed.**

Baba says, *My work is my blessing.* I have found this to be true. When I do His work, I am greatly blessed beyond all expectations. *Sai Ram.***

—Jorja

**gyotirlingam*, the *gyoti* is the divine flame; the *lingam* is an egg-shaped object depicting the universal, cosmic oneness of all.

***Sai Ram* is a greeting or blessing, used by Sai devotees to invoke God's name. It is sometimes used as a call for help. *Sai Ram* is often practiced as a mantra to keep the Lord in one's thoughts.

Sai Conferences and Retreats for 1999

Mark Your Calendar

<i>Date and Region</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Information</i>
May 21-23 Southwest Region #9	Camp Chapel Rock Prescott, Arizona	Dr. Bala Krishnan 8738 E. Whispering Wind Dr. Scottsdale, Arizona 85255 (602) 502-2727
May 29-31 Memorial Day weekend Pacific Region South Region #8	Pilgrim Pines 39570 Glen Road Yucaipa, California (near Redlands)	Harshad Patel 1118 East Colorado Street Glendale, California 91205 (818) 952-9600, fax (818) 952- 9060
May 28-31 Memorial Day weekend Mid-Atlantic Region #2	Camp Akiba Pocono Mountains Pennsylvania	Marion Chew 2415 Jackson Pkwy. Vienna, Virginia 22180 (703) 573-0947, MWChew@aol.com
May 29-31 Memorial Day weekend Northeast Region #1	Russell Sage College Troy, New York (near Albany)	Mr. Raj Kaushik 7 Willard Drive Shelton, Connecticut 06484 (203) 929-9639
May 29-31 Memorial Day weekend Mid-Central Region Regions #4 & #5	Camp Wyman Eureka, Missouri (near St. Louis)	Kathy Feely 7490 Amherst Avenue St. Louis, Missouri 63130 (314) 862-1254, fax(314) 721-7574
July 2-4 Independence Day weekend Pacific Region South Region #8	La Casa de Maria 800 El Bosque Rd. Montecito, California (near Santa Barbara)	John & Shelley Harrison 2595 Cameron Street Ventura, California 93001 (805) 643-6674

September 3-6 Labor Day weekend Southwest Region #9	Bodhi Mandala Jemez Springs, New Mexico (near Albuquerque)	Elaine Hauseman 18 Rockridge Road Cerrillos, New Mexico 87010 (505) 471-4441
September 4-6 Labor Day weekend South Central Region #10	Camp Allen (northwest of Houston, Texas)	Rick Raines 16406 Willow Park Drive Tomball, Texas 77375 (281) 370-0833
September 3-6 Labor Day weekend North Central Region #5	Camp Hastings (near Chicago, Illinois)	Shirley Pike 161 Chatham Road, N.E. Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402 (319) 373-2434, voice mail (319) 399-6555 ext: 667
September 3-5 Labor Day weekend Southeastern Region #3	Venue not established, but it will probably be in Miami or Ft. Lauderdale, Florida	Diane Justice P.O. Box 52404 Atlanta, Georgia 30355-0404 (404) 261-2197
September 17-19 Northern California and Nevada Region #7	Camp La Honda Santa Cruz Mts., California (between San Francisco and Santa Cruz)	Suzy Mendenhall 37196 Talbert Terrace #381 Fremont, CA 94536 (510) 494-0999
September 24-26 Pacific Region South Region #8	Cedar Glen, California (near Julian in San Diego County)	Jim and Connie Fox 2737 Fairfield Street San Diego, California 92110 (619) 276-1356, fax (619) 276-3527
October 22-24 Pacific Region North Region #6	Oregon State Park Silver Falls Conference Center, Oregon (near Salem)	Lana Steele 1402 22nd Street N.E., Apt 531 Auburn, Washington 98002 (253) 735-9041

Dates to Remember in 1999

Mark Your Calendar

February 14, Sunday, *Mahashivaratri* is observed during the new moon, symbolizing a renaissance and rededication to spiritual life.

March 18, Thursday, *Ugadi* is the Telugu New Year.

March 25, Thursday, *Rama Navami* is the day to honor the birth of the Avatar, Rama.

May 6, Thursday, *Easwaramma Day* is recognized as the time to pay homage to the memory of the Mother of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

July 25, Sunday, *Global Handicapped Day* is a time for helping the handicapped and to remember that they could use our help throughout the year.

July 28, Wednesday, *Guru Poornima* is a time to pay respect to one's spiritual guide or preceptor.

August 25, Wednesday, *Onam* is when the people of Kerala commemorate the sacrifices of Emperor Bali.

September 2, Thursday, *Sri Krishna Jayanti* honors the birth of the Avatar, Krishna.

September 13, Monday, *Ganesha Chaturthi* honors Ganesha who is the remover of all obstacles and ignorance.

September 19, Sunday, *Blood Donation Day* remember to give blood at your local hospital, Red Cross, or blood bank. Check with your doctor first.

October 19, Tuesday, *Dasara* or *Vijaya Dasami* is a celebration of the victory of good over evil.

November 7, Sunday, *Deepavali* is the festival of lights commemorating the victory of righteousness over wickedness.

November, *Akhanda Bhajan* (date not yet established) *Akhanda Bhajan* is a continuous 24-hours of devotional singing dedicated to world peace. It is usually held the second weekend of November.

November 19, Friday, *Ladies' Day* a day to honor women throughout the world.

November 23, Tuesday, *74th Birthday* of Bhagavan Baba.

December 25, Saturday, *Christmas* is the day to honor the birth of Jesus Christ.

—Central Office
Prasanthi Nilayam

A Winter Storm

A little more than a year ago, December 2, 1997, I was leaving Santa Fe, New Mexico, enroute to the east coast. A storm had been predicted, and I wanted to leave, so I would not have to wait there for several days. I thought I could get ahead of the storm. Instead, mother nature had another plan. I was caught in a blizzard.

The interstate highway was completely iced over, and I had to carefully drive in the established tire ruts, between which was a huge pile of slushy snow. If my pickup slipped out of the grooves—so that the left or right wheels went into the slush—the loss of traction on one side would instantly cause the vehicle to spin out of control. Along each side of the highway, were many cars and their occupants stuck in snowbanks. They were waiting for an occasional tow truck to come by and rescue them. Of course, the giant eighteen-wheelers barreled along; nothing stops those guys. At one point, I noticed that my windshield was beginning to freeze over; there was an inch of ice covering both wiper blades, rendering them useless. The defroster in my 1984 Mazda pickup worked well enough in California, but it was not up to handling the blizzard.

I watched in horror as minute by minute, the ice kept working its way further down the windshield, until finally, there was not more than three or four inches at the very bottom of the windshield that I could peer through. I was driving hunched over the steering wheel as low as I could possibly get, and I could barely make out the road ahead. There was no shoulder to pull onto. There were trucks to my left, in front and behind me. I was

hoping to find an exit before the whole windshield froze over, but every exit I passed was just another snowbank. I was going about 20 to 25 miles per hour with my emergency lights flashing. I was surrounded by trucks going 60 mph. I knew that if I lost control, I would probably skid on the ice; the other drivers who could not stop, would destroy me and my vehicle.

I couldn't believe what was happening. I was terrified and kept yelling to Baba to do something. Hadn't I been through enough already? I'd spent an unscheduled two months in Santa Fe recovering from thoracic surgery. Had I gone through that awful operation just to die out here in a mangled wreck on the road?

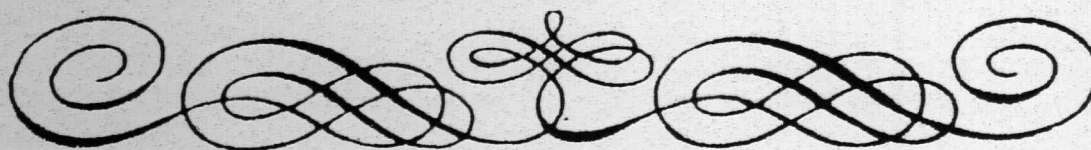
A double semi-truck passed me at a high speed and threw a huge wash of ice and slush onto the windshield and side window. Instantly, I had zero visibility—I mean absolutely nothing! At that point, I had no idea where the road was, let alone the ruts I needed to follow. I drove that way for about 20 or 30 seconds, without so much as a clue where I was headed—as blind as if I had my eyes closed. All I could do was yell, "*Sai Ram, Sai Ram,*" over and over again. Suddenly, all the ice on the driver's side of the windshield started to disappear. From one millisecond to the next, a large, clear space opened at eye level. Within the next three or four seconds, I watched the entire driver's side of the windshield completely clear! It didn't break up; it didn't fly or fall off. It certainly did not melt; in fact, it didn't move or go anywhere at all. It simply dematerialized, vanished. It just wasn't there any more. But that happened only on the driver's side;

the passenger's side remained completely frozen over. Both wiper blades were still covered with ice. I could barely believe it, even as I watched it happen. I was as stunned as I was relieved.

I don't know why Baba waved His divine hand, and saved me from imminent

disaster in that situation. He hadn't done so earlier, when I had to undergo a serious illness and major surgery. Sometimes, we cannot possibly know. That's where faith and surrender come in.

—**Leni Matlin**
Key West, Florida



Soul in Prayer

Good morning, my Lord.
No flowers I bear,
No gifts for a bribe,
To embellish the prayer.

I have asked for the moon,
I have begged for all things.
I have seen you gift others,
With lockets and rings.

You have petted and blessed me,
With joy in this house,
With children and loved ones,
And my "Sai-chosen" spouse.

On my loved ones you've poured,
All the boons that I've asked.
In your loving attention,
This old soul has basked.

You step into my heart,
Whenever I plead.
You place all before me,
I ever could need.

For all of the bounty,
For all of the light,
For beauty of morning,
For sleep-shrouded nights.

For laughter and music,
For color and form,
For rainbows and raindrops,
For sunshine and storms.

For father and mother,
Dear sisters and brothers,
For neighbors and friends,
And for all of the others.

Thank You Sai Baba,
And thank You again!
You are bliss. You are peace.
You are *prema*.* Amen.

—**Marie Penland Dooley**
Miami, Florida

**Prema* means love, love toward all, pure love with no blemish of attachment.

Children's Corner

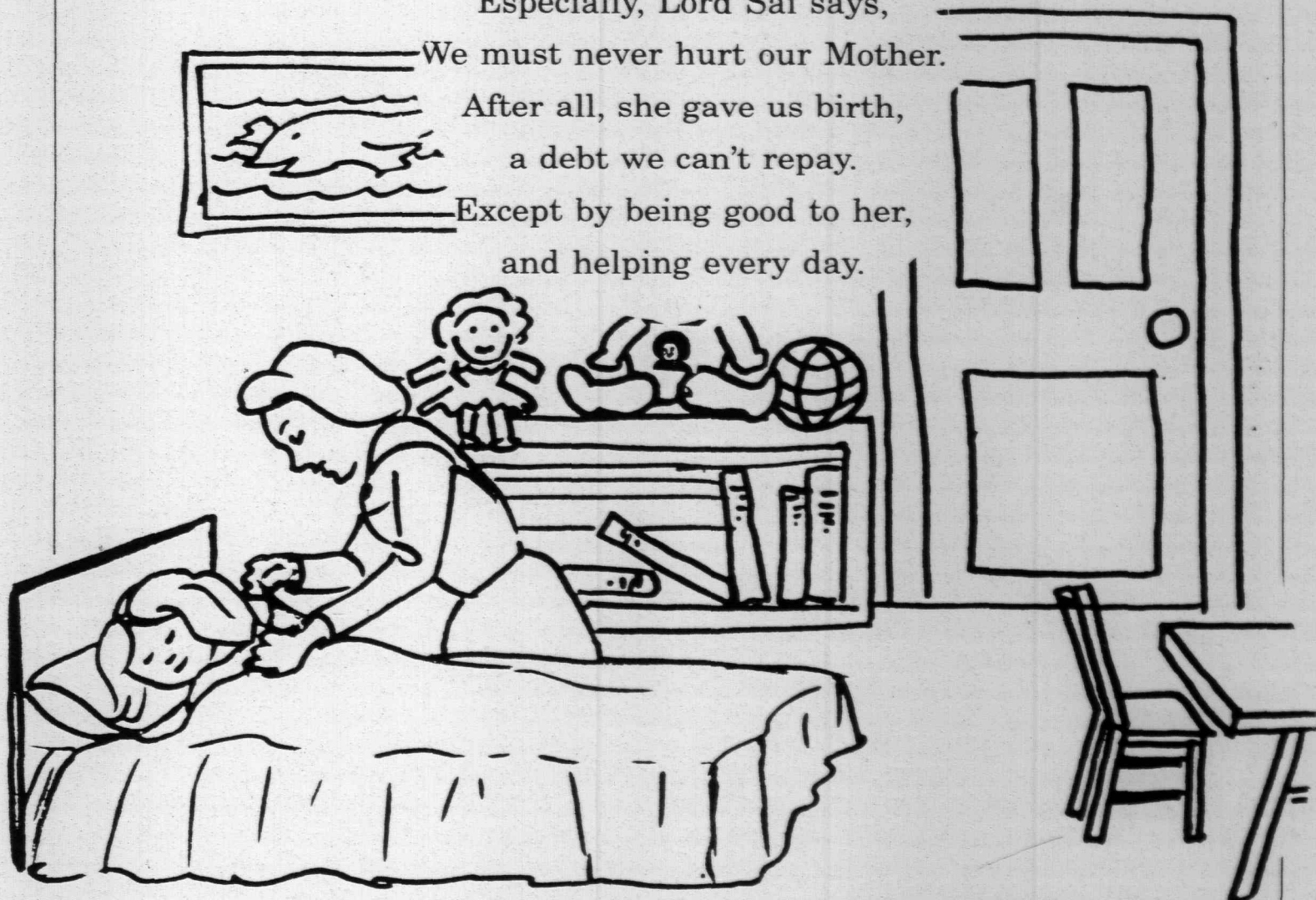
We must never cause pain
or worry to another.

Especially, Lord Sai says,

We must never hurt our Mother.

After all, she gave us birth,
a debt we can't repay.

Except by being good to her,
and helping every day.



Excerpted from *All About God* by
—Susan Caffery, a.k.a. **Story Auntie**
Prasanthi Nilayam

Don't forget: Easwaramma Day is Thursday, May 6; she was the beloved Mother of our very own Sathya Sai Baba.

And remember that Mother's Day in the USA is Sunday, May 9. What special thing are you going to do for your Mother that day? You could serve her breakfast in bed, do all the dishes, write a poem, sing a song, make a pretty card, or better yet, think up your own creative idea to show her that you love her.

Baba's Message on His Birthday

Embodiments of Love

Bharat (India) is the birthplace of spirituality, righteousness, charity, non-violence and peace. Adherence to these qualities as observed in Bharat is not found elsewhere. It is the birthplace of the seven sages, and the first poet, Val-miki. This is the sacred land ruled by the very embodiment of righteousness, [as represented by] Rama. This is the land where the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Song Celestial*, has been sung by Krishna. It is the land where the oneness of the individual soul and the cosmic soul was proclaimed. There is no other land like Bharat, the land of sacredness, righteousness and peace. Truth permeates the atmosphere; compassion pervades the dust. Forbearance dwells in the hearts of the people. Such noble, divine qualities are manifest in Bharat alone.

Divine Magnetic Power

God is all-powerful and all-pervasive; all is Brahman (the Universal Absolute). An inquiry into science and spirituality will reveal that both affirm the same Truth. The existence of God is visualized by science in the form of electric, magnetic, laser, radio, heat and light waves which are all-pervasive. This is the direct evidence for the existence of God. Divinity is present in the food you eat, the water you drink and the air you breathe.

There is no place in this world devoid of magnetism. What is a magnet? It is not merely that which attracts iron filings; everything in this world is suffused with magnetism. Mother is a magnet for the child and vice versa; similarly, husband and wife are attracted to each other. Grass is

the magnet for the cow; flowers are the magnet for the honeybee. When we investigate along these lines, it is evident that everything is governed by the principle of magnetism. Vedanta declares that which attracts is the principle of Rama. Magnetic power acts as a link between that which is apparent and that which is not apparent. The philosophers term it Divine Magnetic Power, whereas the scientists term it psychophysical and biocosmic power. Therefore, scientists as well as Vedantists experience the same divine power in different names and forms.

Transcendental Powers

In this apparent fleeting world, there are many mysterious powers unknown to man. These are referred to as transcendental and hidden powers; not all can understand them. Every creature is endowed with divine power. That is why I address you as "Embodiments of Divine Atma." Doctors are unable to comprehend all the secrets and mysteries of the human body. Take for example the tongue. There are 40,000 taste buds in the tongue. There are 25,000 buds that generate heat in the tongue. The eye, which is hardly an inch in size, can cognize 13 crore (one crore is ten million) types of light rays. There are millions and millions of cells in the body, and each cell contains your complete form. Is it not awe inspiring? Whose creation is this? This is the transcendental power of Divinity. It is foolish to consider that Divinity is nonexistent. Those who are unable to understand this transcendental power deny the very existence of God. Do not pretend to know what you don't know.

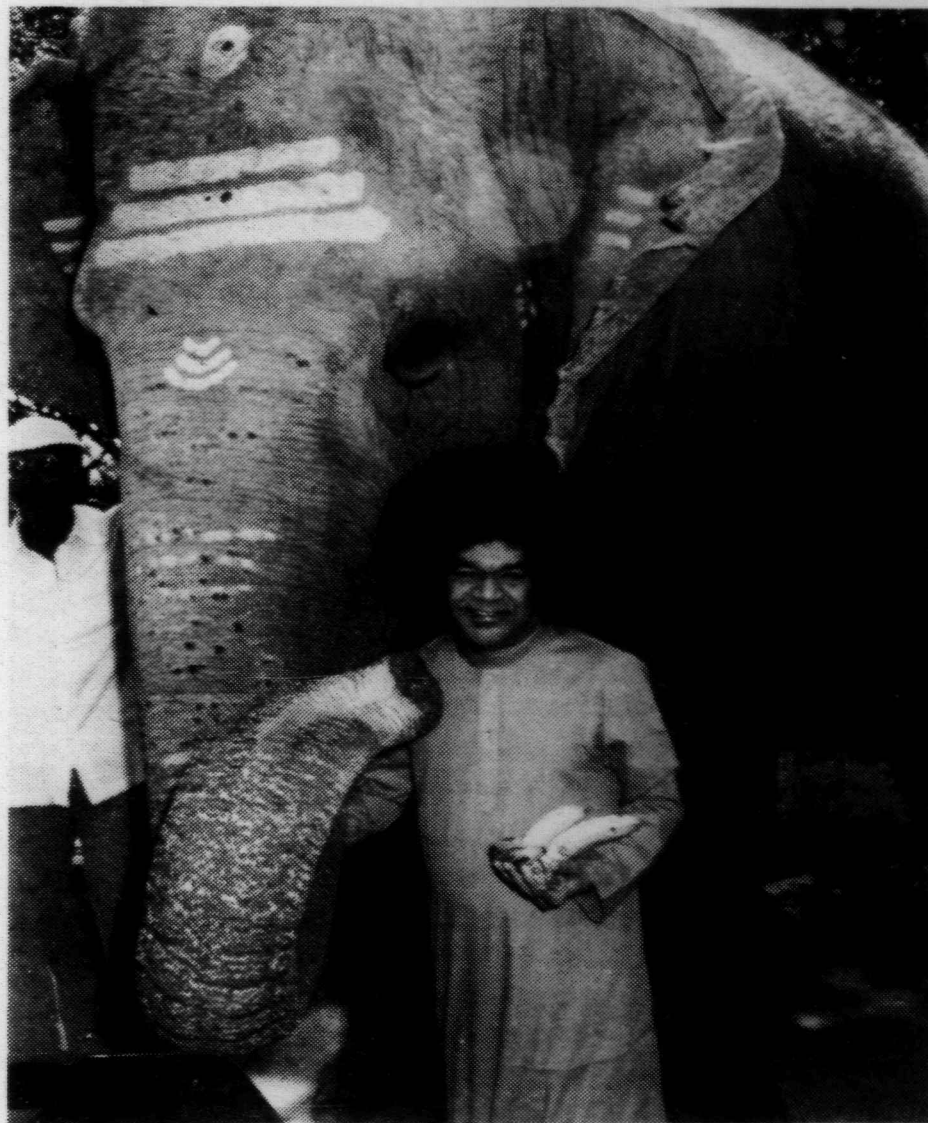
No one has the right to deny that God exists. Thoughts vary from head to head. Each has his own faith.

No is the reply of those
who say, "No,"
Yes is the reply of those
who say, "Yes,"
No and yes pertain to
you,
But for Sai, it is always,
"Yes, yes, yes."

People tend to deny the existence of all that is formless. The fact that radio waves are invisible does not mean that they are non-existent. The program that is being broadcast on the Delhi radio station can be heard anywhere, if the radio is tuned to that frequency. The human body can be compared to a radio; it has to be tuned to the formless God in order to experience Him. The human body is a computer which has many hidden secrets. The mind is like a television set; many names and forms are displayed in it. The body is a generator. The sum and substance of this is that all powers are latent in man.

Einstein showed that matter could be converted into energy and energy into matter. Energy is all encompassing. Newton said that energy can neither be created nor destroyed. However, energy can be converted from one form to another. Philosophers explain this in varied ways.

God has neither birth nor death,
He has neither beginning nor end,
He is present everywhere,



He is the eternal witness.

Modern scientists are not able to comprehend this truth. What they have known and understood is just a fraction of the totality. What is awareness? It is total understanding. Total understanding denotes knowing and experiencing the omnipresence of Divinity.

Referring to the Prime Minister and Liberation

The Prime Minister, Sri Vajpayee, who spoke earlier, has made mention of the efforts being made by people to attain liberation (*moksha*). What is the meaning

of *moksha*? Absolute detachment is liberation or *moksha*. What does this mean? Air mixes with air; fire mixes with fire; water mixes with water easily. Similarly, God is the very form of light; become light yourselves; you will become one with the cosmic light. God is formless. In order to merge with the formless God, you have to give up identification with the body. Concentrate on the principle of *Atma* (the indwelling divinity). When you are always attached to the body, how can you realize the *Atma*, the cosmic principle? Concentrate on the *Atma*; only then, your conscience will merge with the cosmic consciousness. This unification is known as mergence with the divine or *saayujya*.

What's in a Name?

The same *Atma* dwells in all beings. There is only one, but it has been attributed by different names and forms. Only one exists. Zero gains value only when the number one precedes it. World, sun, moon, life, sky and everything else is zero. Only "one" is the hero, that is divinity. Man, who is inherently divine, becomes zero if he forgets God.

God is not separate from you; you are God. Inquire and understand this truth. If your whole life is spent in research and experiments, when are you going to practice? Individuals may differ in names, forms and attitudes, but the *Atma* remains unchanged. Water is referred to by different names in different languages. It is called *neeru* in Telugu, *paani* in Hindi, *tanni* in Tamil, *vaari* in Sanskrit. Names vary, but water remains unchanged. Similarly, God has different names and forms, but the *Atmic* principle remains the same. This *Atma* is common in one and all and is termed conscience, which has originated

from consciousness. Whatever people are—theist, atheist, theist-atheist or atheist-theist—they have to admit this fact. Whatever their persuasion—worldly pleasures (*bhogi*), disease (*rogi*), equal-mindedness (*yogi*), detachment (*viragi*), or attachment (*anuragi*)—the *Atmic* principle remains the same in all.

The body can be compared to a colored balloon. Balloons differ in their color and size, but the air within them is one and the same. The same air is present inside and outside. The air within the balloon can be compared to conscience, and the all-pervasive air to consciousness. When more and more air is blown into the balloon, ultimately it bursts, and the air within (conscience) merges with the air outside (consciousness). Similarly, expand your love, so that the balloon of your body attachment bursts, and the conscience and consciousness is there.

Who Invited You?

The power of attraction is Divinity. A small example: Thousands have gathered here today. Who has invited you? Has anybody sent invitations to you? No invitations have been sent. Then, what has caused you to come here? Your love for Swami is the main cause. Nobody has brought you here by force; you all know that. In spite of repeatedly requesting that you not come, you still come here. It is divine love that is the attraction. This is the divine magnet.

Criticism and Magnetism

King Janaka resolved to give his daughter, Sita, in marriage to one who could lift the celestial bow. As Sita was the daughter of mother earth (*Bhujaatha*), she had the magnetic power inherent in

her, which enabled her to lift the bow effortlessly. It was only the divine magnet, Rama, who could lift the bow and string it. This divine magnet is present in one and all; the difference lies only in intensity. This intensity can only be developed through love. Cultivate the sense of unity that you and I are one. Experience the bliss of unity. God is in you; you are God. When you recognize this truth, there will be no scope for doubts of any kind.

Praise and censure are only reflections of the individual being. A virtuous person never criticizes others; it is only the mean who indulge in such unsacred activities. The color you see depends upon the color of the glasses you wear. Wear the glasses of love, and you will see love all around. Mistakes lie in your vision, not in creation. Do not attach importance to criticism. If someone criticizes you loudly it goes into thin air. If he accuses you within, it goes to himself. Is he criticizing your body? The body is inert. Is he criticizing the *Atma*? The same *Atma* dwells in both. That amounts to criticizing one's self. One who realizes this fact is the real seeker of truth.

Some do not recognize the hundreds of faults present within themselves, but they tend to point out the most insignificant faults in others. The bad in you is reflected as the bad in others. In the first instance, correct yourself; only then will your mind become pure. So, develop sa-

cred thoughts.

People have many powers within. Here is a small example: When I went to East Africa, Dr. Patel, a great devotee, gift-

ed a hairbrush made of iron. When I brushed my hair, it would automatically get attached to the brush. Even some of the boys have witnessed this. Today, I am making it public, so that you will understand the existence of the divine mag-

netic power in me that attracts. It is this power that has attracted all of you here. My love is my greatest property. (Then Baba sang):

Love is my form,
Truth is my breath,
Bliss is my food.
My life is my message,
Expansion is my life,
No reason for love,
No season for love,
No birth, no death.

More Potent than Atomic Power

The divine power has neither birth nor death. I do not feel elated when praised nor depressed when blamed. I treat these dualities of life with equanimity. I am happy both in pleasure and pain. There is only love in me. My love lives by giving, giving, giving. It never receives. That is the difference between my love and worldly love, which believes in receiving. That is why my love is ever expanding. A small seed becomes a gigantic tree with many branches and fruit. All of them have their

origin in the seed. Likewise, out of love, creation has emerged. Love everyone wholeheartedly. Only when love is manifested, will you attain self-realization. In the first instance, develop self-confidence. Self-confidence is the foundation. Self-satisfaction is the wall. Self-sacrifice is the roof. Self-realization is the mansion [of life]. Everything is contained in the Self. Self means *Atma*, the spirit. With this *Atmic* principle, acquire spiritual knowledge. The power in spirituality is limitless. The power of love far exceeds the power of the atom bomb. It transforms those who hate. Develop such sacred love, only then there will be harmony among all. One of the persons who spoke earlier said that violence is rampant everywhere. The wicked thoughts in people are responsible for this. Once mankind develops love, there will be no hatred in the community. That is why I tell the students repeatedly:

Start the day with love,
Fill the day with love,
End the day with love,
That is the way to God.

God is the primordial cause of creation, organization and destruction. The same divine power assumes different names and forms.

Division of Power

We have only one Chief Minister for Andhra Pradesh [the state in which Swami resides]. Every department is governed by a minister who is under the direct supervision of the Chief Minister. Similarly, the whole world rests upon three basic activities: Creation, Organization and Destruction. The creation aspect is governed by Brahma, organization by Vishnu and destruction by Shiva. This division of power is essential for the smooth functioning of

the world. The collective aspects of the three is God.

The word God comprises three letters of the alphabet, G O D. "G" stands for generation, "O" stands for organization and "D" stands for destruction. These three aspects, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva constitute God. None can deny the existence of God. If someone argues that there is no God, that God is nowhere, tell him that he has no right to question your conviction. God may not exist for those who deny His existence, but He does exist for those who have faith.

One may say God is nowhere. Take the letter **W** away from the word **where**, and join it to **no** which will make it, **God is now here**. All this is word building. Man is wasting his life with narrow-minded feelings. He is only concerned about himself and his family; that is contraction of love. Consider the whole world as one family; that is expansion of love. Different countries are like different rooms in the mansion of the world. Consider all those who live in the rooms as your brothers and sisters. When you develop such relationships with your fellow human beings, you will not hate anyone.

Embodiments of Love

Try to understand the principle of Divinity. In this world, there is none else other than God. Some may say that the world consists of matter and energy. Truly speaking, there is only one energy and no matter. After some time, whatever matter you see will be transformed into energy.

Students

You are the emancipators of Bharat and the world. You are the leaders and

the pleaders of the future. Let all the worlds be happy. Aspire for the welfare of all living beings. Everyone should be healthy and happy. When that happens, that is my true birthday. Many people have wished me "Happy Birthday." They should convey that wish to those who are not happy. Where is the need to wish me happiness, when I am always happy? Prahlada has said, "A father rejoices only when the son earns a good name in society, not on the day of his birth."

Who is *manava*? *Manava* (man) is the very embodiment of God. *Ma* means ignorance, *na* means without, *va* means to conduct oneself. So, *manava* means to conduct oneself without ignorance. You are awareness; act according to the name you bear. It is not enough if you bear the name; you should live up to the ideals.

Metals, Magnetism and Acids

There are divine powers in the food Bharatiyas consume. Bharatiyas partake of juices—tamarind juice, lime juice, apple juice, orange juice, onion juice—which contain acids. We also consume leafy vegetables which contain different metals. Human bodies have these three important components: metals, magnetism and acids. Everyone must have a balanced diet. The juices of oranges, tomatoes, limes and apples are very good for health. Leafy vegetables contain vitamins as well as iron; hence, they are of high nutritive value. The body should be healthy; with a healthy body, you can undertake any task.

The Omnipresent

You need not search for God anywhere. God is immanent in every inch and every

hair of your body. That is why, when Sita offered her pearl necklace as a token of appreciation to Hanuman (the monkey god), Hanuman bit the pearls of the necklace and threw it away, because it did not resonate with the name of Rama. On being questioned by Sita as to why he acted in such a foolish manner, Hanuman replied, "You go by the value of the pearls, whereas, I listen to the sound of the Lord's name. Any jewel bereft of the name of Rama is as good as a stone to me. Every hair of my body is suffused with the name of Rama." Divinity pervades every cell, every hair of the people of Bharat.

It is for this reason that many foreigners, such as Max Mueller, desired to be born and to die in this sacred land. Having been born in this sacred land of yoga (unity) and *thyaga* (freedom from attachment), it would be a pity if you do not adhere to these sacred values. Set an ideal for yourselves and others, and make everyone around you happy.

Birthday Message

This is the birthday of this body. Truly speaking, I have no birthday. Since all of you have assembled here, I am celebrating this day as a birthday. This is not important to me. The day when all of you are happy is my true birthday. I desire nothing but your bliss, love and sacrifice. My bliss lies in your being the embodiments of yoga and *thyaga* and experiencing divinity therefrom. I wish that you all live ideal lives in peace and security. On this auspicious day, fill your hearts with noble feelings and chant the name of God.

—Sathya Sai Baba, Birthday Message
Prasanthi Nilayam, November 23, 1998

"I Am God, I Am God, I Am Not Different from God"

"I am God, I am God, I am not different from God. . . ." These words echoed in the room after our Sathya Sai Baba Study Group had finished singing together the devotional song.

One of our group members said that she always felt self-conscious after singing those words. She said that she felt guilty, as if God Himself might come down and chastise her for having such blatant arrogance.

I thought about her words and recognized the fear and the old programming behind them. By saying, "I am God," we do not mean that we are bigger or greater than Him or anyone else. To think that would imply that we are separate, not part of the whole.

Instead, saying that I am God, truly means that we are one with all things, the great and the small, the seen and the unseen. It is saying, I am one with you; I am one with Him; I am one with all; I am one with this house, this community, this world. I am one with the unknown universe, with all that is manifest, all that is, was, and will ever be; and so are you.

In fact, the little individual I thought I was does not exist. We have just forgotten who we really are. Sai Baba is encouraging everyone of us to remember who we truly are.

In repeating, "I am God, I am God; I am no different from God," we are not placing ourselves above or beyond anyone else. We are simply acknowledging our true identity, our true state of "Oneness."

To separate ourselves, to say, to think

or to imply that we are other than what we are and always will be, that is true arrogance.

What About Manifestations?

One night I asked, "What about manifestations? If we are God, as Baba has repeatedly said, then what about our divine power to meet what we see as our own personal needs? What about praying for specific things for ourselves?" So much of the readily available "New Age" material, supports this. But is it truly right?

I slept and had a dream: I saw myself standing on a tall platform over a body of water. A beautiful, white crane flew toward me. I thought, I will test my powers of manifestation right now. I willed for the bird to come to me.

To my astonishment, the bird flew right to me. Delighted, I stretched out my hand and stroked its beautiful, soft, white head. I thought: It works! It works! I wished for it and it happened. It must be a good thing to do this.

Just as these thoughts went through my mind, the bird suddenly crumpled in front of me. I watched in horror as it fell straight down into the water below. I knew that the bird's life was quickly leaving its beautiful body. In a panic, I rushed down to try to rescue the bird and offer what assistance I could. By the time I got down from the tower and near the bird, it had already slipped beneath the water and was no longer to be seen.

I plunged my hands into the water in an attempt to find the once vibrant crane,

but it was gone. I was stunned. What was one moment alive, vibrant and beautiful, was the next moment lifeless and gone, reclaimed by the ocean.

So, I thought, here is the answer I sought. On one level, manifestation principles do work and can bring what one desires. But what it brings is only superficial and impermanent.

For true, long-lasting peace and wisdom, I must offer all to God, rely on His wisdom and grace, and leave all results to Him. I am to consciously use my powers, skills, and ability to be a channel of God's love, power and light. I am not to use my

abilities in ego-centered, selfish ways. To do so will not bring me true value.

I do not have the vision or the wisdom in each situation to know what is truly in my own best interest or in the best interests of those around me. Dedicating all thoughts, words and actions to God, and trusting Him to provide the results that I truly need, is the only way to insure that all is provided for in the most correct way. This is, for me, the path of truth, divine wisdom and grace. Thank you, Father, for showing me the way.

—Kay Brooks
Arlington, Texas



Pacific Ocean

I am the ocean making waves for mankind,

I am fish swimming inside myself looking for food,

I am invincible, I live forever, I cannot be conquered,

I am blue, for that is the color of my water,

The sand is my feet, the rocks are my toes,

I am disappointed that man pollutes my water,

What am I, you ask? Just call me the Pacific.

—Lance Ward, age 13
La Canada, California

Nine Point Code of Conduct*

This would seem to be an opportunity to review the "Code of Conduct" that all those who are devoted to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba are willing, even eager to practice. These nine points are an easy and practical list that all can follow, no matter how busy and involved we are in our daily activities. In fact, following these simple steps makes the work go more smoothly and actually provides more time. The nine points are:

1. Daily meditation and prayer.
2. Group devotional singing or praying with family members once a week.
3. Participation in Sathya Sai Spiritual Education (formerly known as, *Bal Vikas*) by the children of the family.
4. Participation in community service work and other programs by the organization.
5. Regular attendance at Sathya Sai Baba Center devotional meetings.
6. Regular study of Sai literature.
7. Use of soft and loving speech with everyone.
8. Not speaking ill of others, especially in their absence.
9. Set aside clothing and some nonperishable food and for the needy. Contributions can be made at your local food bank and some churches. Form the habit of not wasting food.

*Ceiling on Desires***

This is also a good time to review the program of "Ceiling on Desires." Again, there is nothing complicated about practicing these concepts in our daily lives. The four points consist of:

- Not wasting food
- Not wasting time
- Not wasting energy
- Not wasting money

* The "Code of Conduct" is taken from several versions including the *Charter of the Sri Sathya Sai World Organizations*. The list has been edited to conform with procedures in the USA.

** For more information on the "Ceiling on Desires" program, there is a pamphlet entitled, *Suggestions for Study Groups and Individual Use of the Ceiling on Desires Program* by Phyllis Krystal, available at the Sathya Sai Book Center (see page 40 for the address).

God laughed and said, "Oh, mad man, do you need 20 years to attain me? Even two seconds are enough. How long does it take to flip on the switch to get light? Not even a second. Granting that you need 20 years to think of me wholeheartedly, what is the guarantee that you will not use the time for other activities?" It is nothing but laziness. Slow and steady wins the race. Even a second spent in contemplation of me with a steady mind, will draw you to me. Time is God, do not waste time; time wasted is life wasted. Proper utilization of time is true spiritual practice. Consider time as the very form of God, and your life will be sanctified. Some people lament, saying that they do not have enough time to contemplate on the Lord. But once you give up laziness, you can easily tread the path of sacredness. Laziness is rust and dust; realization is best and rest. Fourth question: **"Being in a foreign land, we are unable to do Swami's work, and so we would like to come to Bharat (India) and participate in Swami's activities wholeheartedly."**

This is another sign of laziness. To do service activities, can there be a distinction between a foreign land and the motherland? God is omnipresent. Whether the service is done abroad or in Bharat, it does not lose its significance. It is utterly selfish to come to Prasanthi Nilayam to do service. You may come after retirement for service in Prasanthi Nilayam. You have your own duties to your children, their education and careers. If you were to come here without fulfilling these duties, you would begin to develop frustration. Don't come now; it is better that you stay in your own place and serve.

Swami does not expect any service from anyone. Many of my boys are here,

but I attend to my own work. They all aspire to serve me. A very fortunate few get this opportunity. Others, for this reason, should not get disheartened. Attend to your own duties; that is service in itself. I am 73 years old, my legs, hands and eyes are in perfect condition. I attend to my own work. So, serve those who are incapacitated and weak; that can be your service to Swami.

You may wonder if Swami suffers from leg aches as he moves around a great deal. Let me tell you, I have never suffered, nor will I ever suffer. Only when I take upon myself the suffering of others do I appear to be suffering; otherwise, this body does not have any suffering. I call upon Dr. Alreja to check my blood pressure. He always replies, "Swami! Normal, perfectly normal, 120 over 80." But, my blood pressure is 117 over 78. Then, I ask him to check my pulse; it is always 68, perfectly normal. No matter how much I may move about or speak, my blood pressure does not increase. Why is this body sacred? It is all due to the combination of purity, patience and perseverance. None of you ever need to serve me. You may perform your own duties and look after the welfare of your families. The fifth question: **"How are we to clear the debts of the consequences of our actions?"**

You consider the consequences to be debts. However hurtful the consequences may be, they can easily be remedied with the help of the medicine of love. There is nothing greater than love. Love God wholeheartedly; then, all the consequences of your actions will be nullified; all your diseases will be cured. If it does not happen, you should not have negative thoughts. If you were to pray wholeheartedly, it would come to pass. Some sit for

prayers in a *puja* room chanting *Sai Ram*; suddenly, the mind wanders toward the washerman. One inquires if he has brought the laundry. If you are really chanting the Lord's name wholeheartedly, why should the mind go to the washerman? Some others sit in meditation, but they, too, are easily distracted by the smell from the kitchen. If this is the nature of your spiritual pursuit, how can it be termed as a prayer to the Lord? All your spiritual practices are done with a wavering mind. Do them with a steady mind; then, you are bound to reap the fruits. You may undertake any spiritual pursuit, but love wholeheartedly. Love can eradicate any type of disease and act as a panacea for any affliction. You must, in the first instance, develop love. This can be possible if you believe that God is the embodiment of love. How can you develop love when you do not believe that God is the embodiment of love?

Love is the perfect medicine. If you were to put a plant in a tin and water it, the plant would die in due course. But if you were to plant it in soil and water it, the plant would grow into a fine tree. Similarly, God's name and form should be implanted in the soil of your hearts and nurtured with the water of love. This will insure good results. If you cultivate love, you need not undertake any other spiritual pursuits. The sixth question: **"In our *puja* (prayer) room, we have the pictures of Rama, Krishna, Eswara and Jesus. We also keep Swami's photograph amidst them. Is it OK?"**

Once you are convinced that God is omnipresent, why should you fear to keep any particular picture? You may worship Rama, Eswara, Jesus, Allah, Zoroastra or Sai. Develop the feeling that all are one. I often narrate a small example: In Bharat

there are various types of sweets; though their names and forms are different, the sugar in all is the same. You may worship—Rama, Eswara, Vishnu, Allah, Jesus or Sai—but you must realize that the undercurrent of divinity is the same in one and all. Then, the difference of name and form will not affect you in any manner. If you do not like other gods, you can remove their pictures, and replace them with those whom you like. If you do not like Sai Baba's or Rama's picture, you may remove the same. But this will not serve any purpose. What is essential is recognizing the divinity of unity in diversity.

Here is a small story: A student was to take a mathematics examination. He was weak in the subject. Since the exam was the next day, he prayed to Swami and went for the exam. He failed in mathematics. With that, he removed Swami's photo from the altar and put it in a cupboard.

The next day, he had the second part of the math exam. That day, he prayed to Rama. He fared even worse. The third day, he was to sit for the accounting examination. He decided that Mother Goddess would be more benevolent compared to the others. He did *puja* to Devi's picture. That day, he could not even understand the questions on the exam. He came back and put that picture in the cupboard, too. The fourth day, he had to sit for the second part of the accounting test. Realizing that Vinayaka (Ganesha) is the remover of all obstacles, he bought incense sticks, coconut and a garland for the picture of the idol. When he lit the incense, the smoke began to waft toward the cupboard in which the discarded pictures were placed. Then he thought, I bought incense for Vinayaka; why should I let the benefit of the

fragrance be experienced by these Gods—Rama, Sai Baba and Mother Goddess—who have betrayed me? He brought a piece of cloth to tie the noses of those who he thought had betrayed him; then, he sat down to pray. At that moment, Sai Baba, Rama and Devi appeared. He asked, “How is it that you did not appear when I worshiped you, but you all appear to me now that I have punished you?” Sai Baba replied, “Son, until this day, you had limited me to a picture. Today, you believed that the picture is a living entity, and you tied a cloth around the nose to prevent the fragrance from reaching me. The pictures will not help you; a picture will remain a picture. You may worship a picture as God, but not God as a picture. Today, you have begun to believe the picture is God and tied the cloth. So, I appeared before you.”

Nowadays, we perform all rites believing God to be a picture. It is only when we take the picture as God in form that all our desires will be fulfilled. It does not matter what form you may worship or what name you chant; realize that all names and forms are His. There is nothing wrong with any name. All are the forms of the same Godhead. You may even worship your own parents.

In such a case, how can you distinguish between various forms of God? At no point should you entertain doubts regarding God. God is God; never criticize the name or form. Have any picture and chant any name. Do not go about changing. Have the picture of your choice and worship. The seventh question: **“Swami, in the world of avocations, which type of spiritual activity pleases Swami most? I am ready to do that.”**

There is only one answer to that. I do not advocate any specific spiritual practice

(*sadhana*). Consider all people to be forms of divinity; have faith that God is in all. That pleases me most. Refrain from doing that which causes grief to others, even if it were to give you happiness. Do unto others what you do unto yourself. Help ever, hurt never. Do not harm or hurt anyone; do not develop ill feelings toward anyone. Even if people were to hurt you or curse you, do not refrain from loving them. That is what Swami expects from you. There are people who do not worship Swami. Some worship, and some criticize. I remain unaffected by both; I do not take note of any of these. I remain unaffected; I continue to Love all. Each one has to bear the consequences of his own actions.

If you do good, you will reap good results, and bad results if you do bad deeds. Realize this and act accordingly. . . . My love is the same for all; I desire that all be blissful. . . .

Even if you were to hate me, I shall love you; that is my nature; that is the divine quality. You may worship me today, and censure me tomorrow or vice versa. When drunk, one talks in a certain manner, when sober, in another. When you are deeply drunk with worldly desires, the mind oscillates from one side to another. But one who is filled with wholesome and unsullied love remains the same under all circumstances.

You may forget me, but I shall never forget you. I am always with you, in you, around you and above you. People who are in the divine proximity are extremely fortunate. It is the culmination of the merit acquired in many births. It has not come from this birth. Therefore, do not waste your energies brooding over this. What is Swami pleased with? I am pleased with whatever you undertake with a pure

heart. I only desire the purity of your heart. With a pure heart, you may undertake any type of service. Have total faith in Swami's words, implicitly obey His commands. I do not misguide you at any time. Whatever I say is for your own good; whatever I tell, whatever I do is for your own good, not for me. I do not do any work for myself, all is done for your sake. On any account, do not entertain the thought that I do not have love for you. Fortunate people have an opportunity to do sacred deeds in close proximity to the divine. Those who do not get that opportunity should not be jealous of others who have those opportunities. The most malignant disease of all is jealousy. Cancer may be cancelled, but jealousy has no remedy whatsoever. Jealousy will depress a person to such an extent that he will perish in the process.

The Sai Organization

Members of the Sai Organization should develop broad vision without giving room for jealousy, hatred or ego. Consider all as brothers and sisters, and immerse yourselves in bliss by doing service. Today, you have resolved to bring about transformation in the educational system. Education is essential; it can neither be stolen by thieves, burned by fire, nor diminished by sharing it with others. Education always grows; share this eternal wisdom with one and all. Put into practice all that you have learned. Teach good values to the children. Of major importance is to teach them not to study for money, affluence, friendship or physical strength. Money is here today, gone tomorrow; it comes and goes. Friends may turn to foes in a day. You are strong today, but you may be weak tomorrow. However, your virtues will never desert you.

Develop good, strong character that does not ever desert you, and develop sacred virtues. Enter society with noble virtues and help everyone.

Do you know why the hands are given? Is it for eating? No! It is for helping others. Charity is the ornament of the hands. Do you know why the throat and voice are given? Not to sing cinema songs, not to blame or criticize others, but to chant the name of God. That in itself is a beautiful necklace. Do you know why intelligence is given? Is it to become egoistic? No. It is to ponder the means of contemplating divinity and experiencing the divine. You must engage the limbs and the senses in sacred activities.

Delegates

Delegates from 180 countries have assembled here; they all occupy exalted positions. If you tread the right path, you can mold thousands of people. If one office bearer were to be spoiled, many people would go astray. Be good, see good and set an ideal; then, all will follow that path. Without practicing these concepts, if you were to tell others, it would be of no avail. Even if you are unable to do everything, practice at least one or two concepts. That is enough. I do not desire that you follow all the teachings.

Be ideal members of the Sathya Sai Organization and bring about proper development, and transform the nation itself. Do not desire for my name to be upheld; I do not desire for my name to be upheld. I do not require any name or fame. If I wanted it, the whole world would be at my feet now, but I do not want it. I only want to help you foster a sense of service among yourselves and entertain noble thoughts.

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ness in union with God, that is true happiness. You cannot lay claim to happiness by experiencing worldly comforts.

Leaving aside all differences, you must mingle with each other and undertake service activities. You should not form separate groups. Realize that pain inflicted on others is pain inflicted on me. If all are united, I shall be extremely happy. If you meet someone whom you have hated, greet him lovingly. You must conduct yourselves with love; that is real penance, real meditation, real repetition of the Lord's name and real spiritual practice.

One should give and take love for love's sake. If you continue this way, the entire nation will become happy. We can experience the kind of joy which has not been experienced in any other time.

When you greet others, do so wholeheartedly. Let there not be any disharmony in your thoughts, words and deeds. Talk sweetly and "smilingly;" that makes all

talk and happy work—should be your guiding force. Forget your differences and live in the present. This present is not ordinary; it is omnipresent.

Develop unity, there is immense strength in unity. In unity, not only you but the nation will have a chance to develop. Only Love brings about unity. In this manner, for the past four days you have debated and discussed. Keep away from all hatred, be happy, go back happily.

This is a big workshop. Your body, akin to a car, has come here. All the nuts, bolts, brakes, springs and seats have worn out. When you get back to your places transformed, people will observe the change in you and emulate you. I am teaching all this prompted by love, so that you will develop love.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Valedictory Discourse, November 24, 1998

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Goldstein said that Swami always gives and does not take anything. Except for one thing, I do not ask for anything else. That which I ask for is your love. I do not ask for anything else. Whatever you ask, I will give. But I aspire for one thing, LOVE. Therefore, give your love and accept everything. Strive for developing bringing about transformation in the system of education. Members belonging to the organization should discuss among themselves, and do what they consider good. They need not wait for orders from the center. In fact, the centers would be happy to know of such initiative. What else can give me more joy than the news that you do not have any differences, jealousy, in-fights, and you are conducting yourselves as brothers and sisters. Work in accordance with Swami's ideals; this gives joy to Swami. Happiness lies in union with God; that is true happiness. You cannot lay claim to happiness by experiencing worldly comforts.

Leaving aside all differences, you must mingle with each other and undertake service activities. You should not form separate groups. Realize that pain inflicted on others is pain inflicted on me. If all are united, I shall be extremely happy. If you meet someone whom you have hated, greet him lovingly. You must conduct yourselves with love; that is real penance, real meditation, real repetition of the Lord's name and real spiritual practice.

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