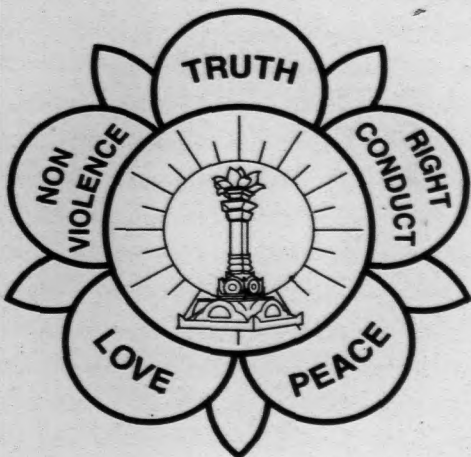




# SATHYA SAI

## NEWSLETTER, USA

*SPRING 2001*  
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## ***Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA***

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

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

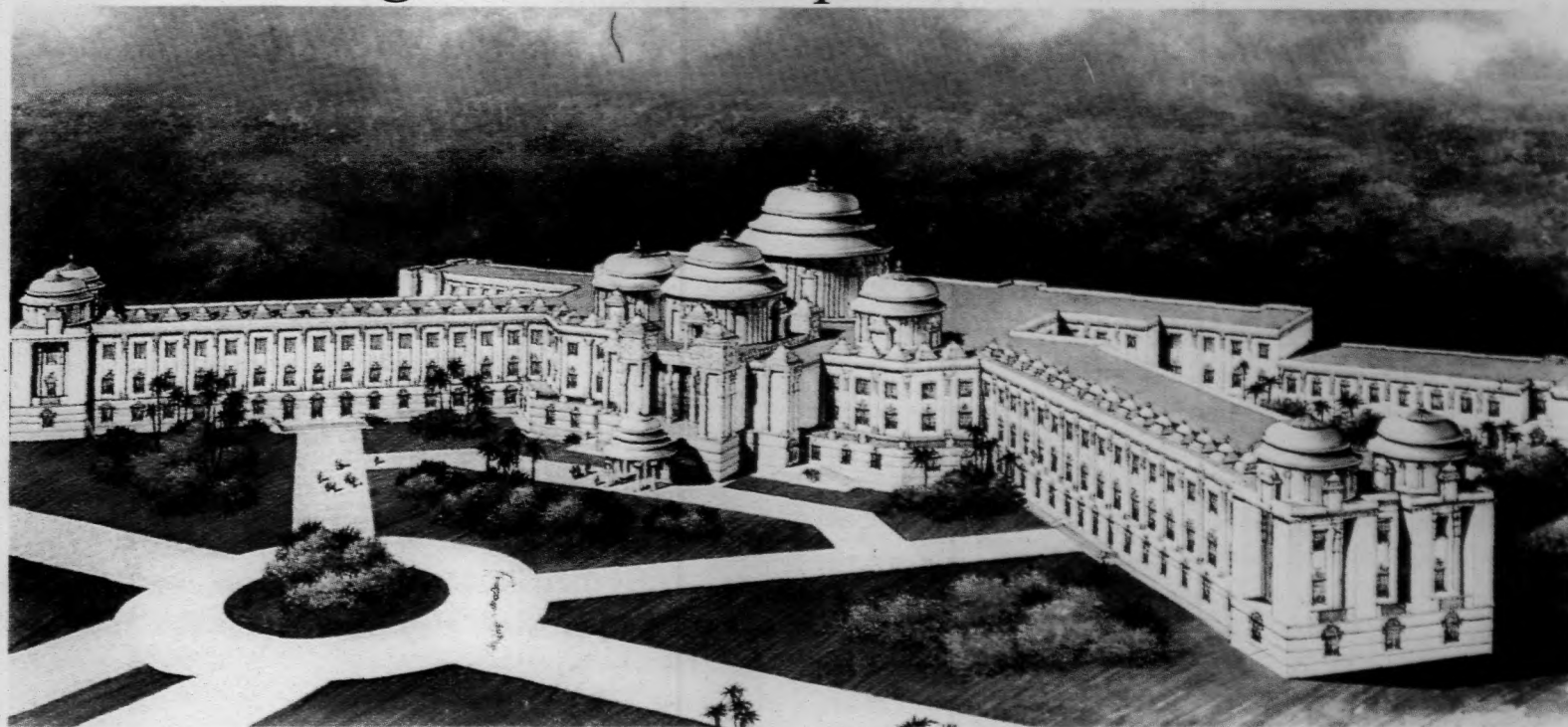


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**—Barbara Bozzani, Editor**



# More Blessings—A New Hospital



As you may know, our loving Lord has built a new Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences in Bangalore, Karnataka State. On January 19, 2001 in the divine presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Prime Minister of India, Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Chief Minister of Karnataka, Sri S. M. Krishna, along with other dignitaries were in attendance for the inauguration of the new Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. This is the second of the Super Specialty Hospitals, the first one being in Puttaparthi. The new hospital is larger and will accommodate many more patients.

## *Hospital's Salient Features*

The new Institute will provide all services—diagnostic, medical, pre-operative, surgical and post-operative—free, at no cost to the patient or his/her family.

This is the second such major hospital to be undertaken by Bhagavan and the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. The Puttaparthi

facility was inaugurated in 1991. They both provide the latest available standards of medical and surgical care. Both Institutes are also furnished with the latest equipment in radiology, nuclear medicine, blood bank and laboratory services.

The new 333 bed hospital includes 120 intensive care beds with all necessary equipment and services. It is spread over a sprawling 350,00 sq. ft. of floor area. The hospital is fully residential with its own staff quarters and canteen for staff and visitors.

The Institute is designed to be ecology friendly, with no adverse effect to the environment whatsoever. It will soon provide post-graduate training for physicians and surgeons. The Institute aims to achieve the highest academic and teaching standards in the field of medical sciences.

Excerpted from the brochure of the  
—Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

# *What a Lovely Thought For the New Year*

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A few years ago, when preparations were being made on the construction of the Super Specialty Hospital in Puttaparthi, Bhagavan seemed to have less time to devote to the students. Day and night he was busy with matters relating to the hospital. Every evening, immediately after darshan (to see holy being), Bhagavan would call a group of doctors for an interview. He would discuss with them matters relating to the hospital, even the minutest details, as this was to be a model for healing. Swami would come out of the interview room only after the evening bhajans (singing of holy songs) had begun, so the students did not have much of an opportunity to interact with him. Before the Hospital was in the planning stages, Baba would spend time speaking to the students and giving them guidance. But that was not possible at such an extremely busy time.

One very young student could no longer bear the pangs of separation from his mother Sai. He wrote a letter to Bhagavan and took it to evening darshan. The boy was sitting a few rows back. When Baba came closer, the boy got up and offered his letter. Bhagavan stopped, leaned way over and made special efforts to take the young boy's letter. To say the least, the boy was ecstatic.

Then darshan continued and, as usual, Sai Baba called a group of doctors for interviews. The students felt somewhat unhappy; they felt they had been deprived of the love of their Mother Sai. Then after about five minutes, to everyone's utter amazement, the

interview room door flew open, and Bhagavan emerged in all his glory holding a letter in his hand it was the letter that the boy had given to him.

Baba called the young boy to come near and asked him, *Boy, should I read what you have written to me, so that everyone may listen?* The innocent boy replied, "Whatever you wish Swami." Sai Baba read the letter aloud, so that all could hear. The letter went like this:

"Dear Bhagavan,

You have given so much to me and to everyone here. You have provided free education for all my brothers and me, and now I hear that you are constructing a big hospital that will provide the most modern health care facilities to every section of society—totally free of cost. Swami, I also want to be a part of your glorious mission, but I am just a small boy, and I do not know how I can contribute. My parents are extremely poor. In spite of that, they send me a little extra pocket money every month. I know that is due to their love and concern for me. For the last three months, I have not given my clothes to the *dhobi* (washerman). After all the other boys have gone to bed, I wash my own clothes; thus, I managed to save a little money. I have also resisted the temptation of toffee's, chocolates and all other things; I offer this hundred rupee note to you. I feel so ashamed and small, to give



you so little. However, even if this money can be used to buy a small brick for the foundation of the hospital, I will be the happiest child in the world.

Your Loving Son"

Bhagavan's eyes had the twinkle of a mother when her little son does something that makes her feel extremely proud. Holding the hundred rupee note in his hand, Baba said to the boy, *My dear son, to me this is not a hundred rupee note; this note*

*is worth millions and millions of rupees. Only those who are immersed in the Divine are dear to me and are my friends. If you want to be a dear friend of Swami's conduct yourselves in a divine manner. In such a case, you do not need to come here, I will come to you wherever you are. Just as the birds fly with the help their two wings, man should reach the goal of life quickly, with the help of his two wings, namely, love and service."*

—Author Unknown



*It is mere weakness to give the silly excuse that you have no time for service because you are so busy with your duties. Discharging your duties in a righteous manner is, in itself, a service. One should regard service as performing one's duties properly and working enough to justify the pay one gets. If a person works conscientiously, every minute of the day, doing the job that he is hired to do—that is service. . . .*

*You can please Sai only by performing your duties to the fullest, and serving society whenever and wherever you get the opportunity. Service is not limited to serving individuals; serving society is also important. Any action that benefits the country is service. One should experience divinity in giving service. For serving, you need not have anybody's protection or advice. Whenever you feel there is a need—serve. There is no distinction between acts of service; it is of no matter whether you are serving the poor or the rich. You should be able to serve anyone, any place and under any circumstances.*

*Misery, sorrow and pain are the same for everyone. That is why you should serve anyone in need without hesitation. In some places, people are living in highly unacceptable conditions. . . . If their surroundings are not clean, it will affect their health and the health of their children—it will ruin their lives. . . . Going once or twice a month to those places to clean is of no use. You should teach them to do these things for themselves—that is service.*

—Sathya Sai Baba

*Vision of Sai II, pp 231-233*

# Christmas 2000

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*Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat (India). Of all the sacred virtues, adherence to truth is real penance. The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling toward one's mother. Character is valued far higher than life itself. People have forgotten the basic principles of the culture of Bharat and are aping Western culture today. Bharatiyas are not aware of the greatness of their own cultural heritage just as the mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength.*

Telegu Poem

## *Embodiments of Love*

Boys and Girls! Since ancient times, this land has been the birthplace of sages, seers and saints who propagated the sacred culture of Bharat to the rest of the world, and Bharat earned name and fame. But such noble souls are forgotten today. You have to recognize that the reputation of Bharat is entirely dependent on its spiritual wealth and nothing else. Just think of the plight of present day Bharat, which once upon a time spread the light of divinity to the rest of the world. In this sacred land, many people of nobility and virtue had to put up with a lot of hardship and criticism, yet they remained firm in their resolve to set an ideal for humanity.

## *Jesus' Spiritual Power*

Today, you have to remind yourselves of the ideals Jesus stood for. For ages, many noble souls, endowed with immense spiritual power, have taken birth to propagate sacred teachings to the world. They struggled hard to make the

world a good place in which to live. But without understanding their noble intentions, foolish people tried to ridicule and persecute them. Right from his birth, Jesus had to face many trials and tribulations. When the name and fame of noble souls spreads far and wide, many people become jealous. *Asuya* (jealousy) and *anasuya* (devoid of jealousy) are sisters. The history of Bharat is replete with many examples that bear testimony to this truth. Jealousy has three children, desire, anger and hatred. The Divine Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara were born not having jealousy. The three wicked sons of jealousy, desire, anger and hatred, caused a great deal of suffering to Jesus, who strove tirelessly for the peace and welfare of society. Jesus was the epitome of compassion and the refuge of the poor, needy and forlorn. But many people tried to create trouble for Jesus, as they did not like his sacred teachings and activities. Their hatred for Jesus increased day by day. Even the priests turned against Jesus as they became jealous of his growing popularity, but the fishermen held Jesus in high esteem. They started following his teachings and became his disciples. Many people, out of jealousy, laid obstacles in his path and even tried to kill him.

## *Jealous of the Divine*

Jesus had twelve disciples. Judas was the twelfth and he ultimately betrayed Jesus. At that time there was only one Judas, but today there are many Judases. Today, the world is engulfed in unrest because of the rise in the number of betrayers like Judas. They are so mean-minded that they are easily tempted by money. Judas



betrayed Jesus just for a few pieces of silver. Even two thousand years ago, money became the primary objective of man. Because of their greed for money, people resort to evil and unjust ways to distort the truth and make false propaganda. That was the case then, and it is so even now. No one needs to be afraid of such false allegations. Why should one be afraid of the mistake that one has not committed? In the past, many evil-minded people were jealous of the divine personalities who attained worldwide fame through their teachings of truth and righteousness. Even today, there is no dearth of such wicked people.

These days, many people are jealous of Sai; his name and fame are spreading far and wide. Neither do they undertake any good activity, nor can they tolerate it if someone else is doing good.

### *Baba's Noble Tasks*

The Rayalaseema region of India suffered from scarcity of drinking water right from the time of British rule. There were many leaders and men of affluence, but none of them took up the task of providing drinking water in that region. **It was Sai Baba who quenched the thirst of lakhs (one lakh is 100,000) of people of Rayalaseema.**

The cost of heart surgeries run into lakhs of rupees. **Again, it is Sai Baba who has established a Super Speciality Hospital, where the expensive heart surgeries are done totally free of cost.**

Presently the field of education is corrupted by money to such an extent that one has to pay 20,000 rupees as a donation to admit a child in primary school. **Sai Baba is providing free education right from the level of K. to Ph.D.**

**No other individual or government, for that matter, has been able to provide free education or free medical care.** Those fortunate ones with a higher education have become so mean-minded that they have lost the sense to understand and appreciate the sanctity associated with these activities. Have any of them been able to accomplish even one-thousandth of what Sai Baba is doing? No, no, no! **It is only Sathya Sai Baba who has undertaken such noble tasks without a trace of selfishness.** Sai's heart is pure, his feelings are sacred, and he is totally selfless. **Sathya Sai Baba stands for three P's, namely, purity, patience and perseverance. There is no trace of selfishness in Sai Baba from top to toe. He is rendering totally selfless service.** Why are those with even a modicum of intelligence unable to recognize this truth? Why are they indulging in false propaganda? They are doing so because of their greed for money. Not merely that, but people of one religion are taking up conversion to another religion for the sake of money. Even those who wear ochre robes are falling prey to this evil trend. One swamiji becomes jealous at the prosperity of some other swamiji and instigates false propaganda against him.

*One does not become a saint or develop devotion just by donning ochre robes. One does not acquire merit merely by singing the verses of the Gita.*

Telegu Poem

Even some of the so-called sadhus (holy men) are indulging in this wicked activity. **We should not criticize anybody, but I am forced to tell you all this as the situation demands: Do not be afraid of any false publicity.**

**I have started yet another Super Speciality Hospital in Bangalore at a cost of Rs. 300 crores.** (one crore is 10,000,000). In this vast land of Bharat, do you find any politician in

power associating himself with such a noble cause? On the other hand, rather shamelessly, they go on speaking ill of others. People who try to put obstacles in the way of sacred activities are not human beings at all—they are verily demons. Even if the whole world were to be filled with such demons, Sai's resolve would never change.

### *His Glory Will Increase*

Some people, out of mean-spiritedness, are trying to tarnish the image of Sai Baba. I don't crave for name and fame. So I don't lose anything by their false propaganda. My glory will go on increasing day by day. It will never diminish even a bit if they were to publicize their false propaganda to the whole world in bold letters. Some devotees seem to be disturbed over these false statements. They are not true devotees at all. Having known the mighty power of Sai, why should you be afraid of the cawing of crows? One should not get carried away by all that is written on walls, said in political meetings or the vulgar tales carried by the print media. Let us firmly resolve to propagate the principles of truth, righteousness and love.

Sathya Sai Baba has no trace of selfishness in him. I am ready to spend crores of rupees to alleviate the suffering of the poor and the down-trodden. My resolve is to feed the hungry and impart education to poor children. There are many millionaires in this world who are so mean-spirited and narrow-minded that they set their dogs on the persons who beg for alms at their doorsteps. It is shameful to consider them as human beings.

These persons are unable to do even a thou-

sandth of what Sathya Sai Baba is doing for society, but they shamelessly indulge in false allegations. It would be far better if they follow Sathya Sai Baba instead, and set an ideal to the rest of the world. **I have no desires or ambition. There is no trace of jealousy in me. I am love personified. Love is my very life. Wisdom is the fruit that I grant. These two form the basis of my life.**

People who indulge in false allegations are bound to be ruined. Those who instigate such false publicity, too, will meet their doom. **Money should be utilized to undertake righteous actions. It should not be used for evil purposes. Serve your fellow human beings with love and compassion. Put them on the right path and make them happy.** I am not afraid of any false propaganda that people may indulge in. Why should I be afraid when I follow the path of truth, righteousness and love? Let people say what they want; I am not perturbed.

### *They Played Their Tricks*

Today, I am explaining to you in detail the principle of love that I stand for. During the time of every Avatar, wicked people played their tricks. During the time of Krishna, there were demonical persons like Kamsa, Sisupala and Dantavakra, who tried their best to harm Krishna. When Rama incarnated for the establishment of dharma (righteousness), he too, was subjected to hardships. He was exiled for 14 years, and Ravana forcibly took his consort away. Ultimately, what happened to all those who tried to create trouble for the divine personalities? **Those who accuse the divine personalities and cause them suffering are committing the worst of sins. If one cannot undertake meritorious actions, it is better if one keeps**



**quiet instead of indulging in such sinful deeds.** There are some people who claim to be devotees, but take to evil ways. They feel that their physical appearance will earn them respect. One having a good personality may not be good in all respects. The word, "personality," has its origin in the word person, which symbolizes sacredness. So one should lead a life of truth and righteousness. The principle of love is the same in everyone. All should stand united by the bond of love. Then the entire world will become one

*"... when one of our girl students was approached by someone asking her to concoct stories about Sai Baba, she became so enraged that, immediately, she took off her shoe and was about to slap that person, saying, 'Is this what your religion teaches? ... Fie on you! Get out!'"*

family. One who fragments love and develops hatred can never attain happiness in life.

### *Students Are Like Gold*

**I lead a life suffused with love from dawn to dusk. I am giving free education to thousands of students. Not merely free education, I am showing them by example the way to lead ideal lives.** When these students go out, some people try to pollute their minds with wicked feelings. Whatever others may say, our students are like gold. The very dust from their footsteps will prevent wickedness in others. The alumni, both boys and girls of our institutions, are leading sacred and exemplary lives. The women's

alumni association of "Messengers of Sathya Sai" is undertaking various service activities in different countries. They are even making their husbands take to the path of service. Our old students are working in numerous countries like Switzerland, America, Japan, China, Russia, etc. Some foreigners are trying to bribe them, asking them to make up stories against Sathya Sai Baba.

In Switzerland, when one of our girl students was approached by someone asking her to concoct stories against Sai Baba, she became so enraged that, immediately, she took off her shoe and was about to slap that person saying, "Is this what your religion teaches? Is this the ideal that your religion propagates? Fie on you! Get out!" But there are some traitors, like Judas, who are being bribed to level false charges against Sai Baba.

### *What Happened To Judas?*

Ultimately, what happened to Judas? He felt miserable for having betrayed Jesus for monetary gains. He shed tears of repentance. He hit himself saying, "Fie on me! I am a traitor. I betrayed my own master and God." **Betrayal of God is the worst of all sins. Such betrayal can never be atoned in any number of births.** So never try to betray God—love all. Salute even those who criticize you, because divinity is present in all. Do not give scope for anger and spoil your mind. Pray to God with love. Even in the past, all noble souls and incarnations had to put up with criticism. You may ask why such criticism should arise? Criticism will only increase their glory. Pleasure is an interval between two pains just as shadow follows light. One should not be afraid of the shadow. Light and shadow cannot exist separately. There is a principle of unity between them. So do not

react to any criticism leveled against Swami or any other elder for that matter. Just brush it aside saying you have nothing to do with it. If someone points out mistakes in you, you can certainly rectify them. But if someone levels false charges against you, you don't need to be worried over it—be happy. If the criticism is made in a loud voice, it goes into thin air. If it is made within oneself, it goes to oneself. Such being the case, why should you be perturbed? Let anyone say anything—remain calm. Consider whatever happens as good for you. With such equal-mindedness, carry on with your lives.

### *Be an Equal-minded Devotee*

**In the future, you are going to witness many more glorious events. There is nothing that Sathya Sai cannot accomplish. In fact, he can strike people with awe and wonder with his deeds. But his only aim is to make everybody happy.** *Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu* (May the entire world be happy). Those who aspire for the well-being of others will never be put to difficulties. No difficulty can ever shake them.

Once Buddha encountered the demon of jealousy, who said, "Buddha, I am going to swallow you." Buddha flashed a smile at the demon and said, "Oh demon of jealousy, I love you too." On hearing the loving words of Buddha, the demon immediately turned into a dove which symbolizes love and peace and flew away.

One becomes a devotee in the true sense only when one cultivates patience and conquers evil qualities—anger, hatred and jealousy—with love. Don't be elated by praise or depressed by blame. It is not proper on your part to love only those who praise you and hate those who criticize you.

Be equal-minded in both praise and censure. Criticism will only help you to progress. Do not harbor hatred toward those who criticize you. Accept anything good that comes your way. Ignore all that is bad. People may praise or criticize, but none can shake Sai. Sai lives in truth; none can shake truth at any point in time. Lead your lives with such strong conviction. Develop faith in God day by day. As faith increases, all the wickedness will perish. Do not give up the spiritual practices that you have been doing all along. Since Jesus bore all the difficulties with fortitude, he is being adored and worshiped to this day.

A young disciple asked Jesus, "Oh Master, when I am faced with any problems, how am I to solve them?" Jesus replied, "Oh foolish one, do not seek solutions for your problems. Love God, who is installed in your heart. Love even those who hate you because God is present in them, also. How can you ever have suffering when you love all? Your heart will be filled with bliss when you love everybody."

Arjuna asked Krishna, "Swami, is there anybody who is very dear to you?" Krishna replied, "Oh ignorant one, I have neither friend nor foe. I am present in your heart. I reside even in the hearts of those who criticize me. One who sees God in everybody and loves them is very dear to me. One who is intimately related to me not by birth, but by one's intense love for me, and having been with me for so long, it is rather surprising that you have not understood this basic truth. Oh Arjuna, you have made me sit in your chariot but not in the chariot of your heart." One should install God in one's heart. In fact, you don't need to install him; he is already there. **It is enough if you know the truth that God is present in your heart. Once you recognize**





# *His Gift of Love*

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In his Christmas discourse in December, 1997, Swami gave us what I thought was the most precious present ever. In the middle of his discourse, he stopped and said, *Whatever happens, say it is good for me*. As if for special emphasis, Baba repeated these remarkable words, *Whatever happens, say it is good for me*. These miraculous words roared through my brain, awakening every fiber of my being. For years I had been confused as to whether we do or do not have free will.

These words were like a clarion call; he was proclaiming that he has indeed given us his most precious gift of free will. I sat there quietly rejoicing. For years, I had pondered the question, do we have free will? In the past, Swami had made it very clear, he and he alone is the doer! Not a blade of grass moves without his will. We are mere puppets on his magnificent stage; we are not doers. I was always saddened in having to accept this knowledge. I had been proud of my accomplishments; they gave me pleasure and self-confidence. Without free will, I was forced to give up my belief that the success I enjoyed was due to my will, and the efforts that I had made. Now instead of feeling proud and self-satisfied, I had to accept everything that I thought I had achieved as his grace.

But later, there was a reprieve. Baba very carefully proclaimed that we really do, in fact, have free will. He said very explicitly, *Whatever happens, say it is good for me*. Clearly this means we have a choice. Our choice is whether to accept what happens, or to deny what occurs

and try to change it. Life felt so much more expansive, and my wish of having free will was finally vindicated. For so long, all my Sai friends had said that Baba, in so many ways, told us that we do not have free will. My mind was flooded with choices. I could choose to accept or not to accept. The very word "acceptance" implies choice. Swami very definitely had given me the Christmas gift of my dreams. He seemed to be saying that we were, after all, at least co-doers.

It has been a long time since he cleared the cobwebs from my mind. During that time, I have enjoyed the feeling that I am personally responsible for my own actions. Yes, karma can only make sense when we have the freedom to choose. Praise and blame would be meaningless, if we did not have the freedom to make choices. During that time, with a certain amount of pride, I wrote articles, and told family and friends about my discovery. Notice I call it, "my discovery." It was as if I was the only one listening, who recognized the enormous significance of his mighty words.

Now, in the darkness of my hotel room, while waiting for tomorrow's plane to bring me back to Prasanthi Nilayam, I suddenly see a new possibility in his wondrous proclamation. Suppose he was not really declaring that we have free will, but rather that we have no free will at all. Suppose, instead, he was reaching out to us with his enormous compassion and love, reaching out and tenderly trying to soften the blows of some of the pain and misfortune we will experience. Suppose instead of proclaiming, we have a choice,

he was trying to soothe our wounds and help make it less painful to accept the inevitable—the inevitable which is or has already been written. Everything that ever happens and will ever happen has been determined. We never have had a choice, never will have a choice. Free will is all a fantasy. We can only accept and experience what has been preordained for us; even the acceptance itself is without choice. Any variation from this truth is a dream, bound to end up in a nightmare because, in the end, we will have to realize that we never had, and will never have, any control of events.

On that Christmas day, our dear Lord, out of his unending love and caring, croons a lullaby to his children to ease our potential pain and anguish. *Do not fear while I am here. Whatever happens, say it's good for me.* His love song is meant to cradle and protect us, shield us from fear and misery. The lyric of his song may change to suit each individual's need. The extension of the words, *Whatever happens, say it is good for me*, are like saying that I know what each one of you requires and, because of my love, I want to help you understand that none of the things that are happening are real. I know that you do not realize this truth, and I want to spare you any and all suffering." So the clarion call, *Whatever happens, say it's good for me*, was the Lord providing us with a security blanket. He was in his mothering role, helping us to ignore and ward off the painful illusions of a false world.

Now in the dim of my darkened room, I see his proclamation of truth in a new light. The world is perfect only because he, the Lord, has arranged everything to be as he commands. Part

of his divine game is to create the myth and the desire for freedom from choice, control and free will. These ideas are simply obstacles that he puts on the playing field, so that we may learn to jump the hurdles. Self-realization means to finally surrender everything to his will. This surrender will eliminate duality, because total surrender

*"Suppose instead of proclaiming we have a choice, he was trying to soothe our wounds and help make it less painful to accept the inevitable."*

means that we turn to the ONE; we merge ourselves in the action of his play without hesitation. We are secure in our knowledge that he is guiding us all to exactly where we should be.

This new understanding of his words finally feels right to me. It is time to give up any claim to being a doer. When people ask the old questions like, "Baba says to use your discrimination, then how can you discriminate without choosing a course of action?" I see now that there is a fine line here. It is part of his game. Yes, there is an implied choice, but right action will require that we use the rules of life that have been given to us, the guidelines that have been laid out for us to follow. When we surrender, we follow our dharma; we do not create it.

Quickly my mind recites the old arguments: What is the role of intent? When a man kills another with a stone, the deed itself is predetermined; the man will die on schedule. But what is the intent of the killer? Is this also



predetermined? Is he innocent if it is an accident? Or is it a crime if it is premeditated? My guess is that everything is predetermined, and that the drama is set to catch those who suppose they have anything to do with the play's action. Those who surrender and witness are free. Those who claim to be doers, and to have the right to make choices are the ones who will feel the pain.

There is no pain when you submit to God's will. Pain is the price you pay for thinking that you can have control and affect the outcome. The real test is how long, how many lifetimes does it take for a person to surrender to the will of God? In truth, it is of absolutely no importance who or what you are as far as what role you play when in a human form. The scholar is the same as the sweeper, the rich man the same as the camel driver, the thief and murderer, the same as the priest or saint. None of the outward roles mean anything. It is up to each individual to understand who they really are, and then to surrender and witness the Lord's play. Swami's gift was not only to ease our pain, but he was really saying that nothing that happens really matters. Telling us that whatever happens, say it is good for me, was like saying, "Ignore all of the circus events and concentrate on the only thing that is really important. Know who you really are. Give up the game of charades and come home, the welcome mat is out."

Complete surrender is the gift that yields enormous relief. We are no longer caught in the old process of trying to explain all of the apparent paradoxes or dichotomies. We learn to see what

we thought were challenges, as playful attempts to trap us in the old way of thinking that we can change the process. When someone asks, "Why does God place so much suffering in the world?" We smile now, seeing through the snare of believing that anything can be less than it should be. If we hear the old catechism, "As you sow, so shall you reap," we shrug off these concepts that assume we have personal prerogatives. We celebrate in the knowledge that nothing is really real; nothing we say or do can make a difference.

We live our lives following the rules of loving and serving our fellow humans, but now it is easy because we know that we really do not influence events, and so we are not disturbed when things do not turn out the way we might have planned. In fact, we no longer plan at all. We simply wake up each day and wait for the program to begin. We wait for the will of God to unfold, because we have forever given up the ancient occupation of asking the question, "What can I do?"

Baba's greatest gift is a combination of telling us that we should accept everything because there is nothing we can do about it anyway, coupled with the enormous insight or revelation that will change both our attitude and perception, that nothing that happens really matters. Free of all concerns, we can sit patiently and focus on our love for the Lord. Then we can finally begin to live the life he has designed, where love is our form and bliss is our food.

—Jack O. Scher

Faber, Virginia

*Your first duty is to abandon. Abandon all your plans, even the best ones.*

—Sathya Sai Baba

# A Model for Service

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Recently, there was a tragic story that Baba related to a handful of his teachers and professors. Later, Swami spoke publicly of this misadventure. It was a true account, and our beloved Swami told it with compassion.

There was a widow with a son living in a village. She had no money and could not feed her child. So that the child would not continue to suffer and ultimately starve to death, she fed him poison and then took some of the lethal material for herself. As a result, the mother and child died. Sai Baba said that this tragedy must not happen in India or anywhere in the world.

Because of this disastrous event, Swami set up a plan whereby the teachers and older students would give Baba's *prasadam* (consecrated food) to villagers. In this way, an model for service was set for all of us to follow. Swami's plan was very specific:

The college girls of Anantapur prepared a nutritious, spicy rice dish which is popular among village people. This would be topped off with *ladus*, an Indian sweet, made from boiled milk, raw sugar and spices. While joyously singing devotional songs, the young women and their female teachers worked through many nights into the early morning hours preparing the food. It was then properly packaged and loaded aboard waiting trucks. Time was of the essence, so that the food would not spoil. In the early morning hours, the male college students and the men who are their instructors manned the trucks and headed off to the villages. Baba's further instructions were that only the teachers and professors were to approach the villagers' houses, and they were to wait at the door—not

enter their homes, thereby not disturbing the families' privacy. They were to speak softly with love and gentleness saying, "This is Sathya Sai Baba's *prasadam* (a holy offering), will you please accept it?" Since no one refuses *prasadam*, the recipients were not made to feel that they were accepting charity. Everyone gladly took the food packets which were ready for eating. Even the sick and elderly who could not go to the door were served. Swami's giving did not end there!

Along with the nourishing food, the professors gently asked how many males and females occupied the house. Then later, the village people were given saris for the women and dhoties for the men. These were distributed at central locations, such as a school, etc., while everyone sang bhajans. Afterwards, the school master or a village elder would do *arathi* (a ritual that marks the completion of a holy ceremony). Most of the villagers were thrilled with Swami's generosity; their reactions ran from gratitude to bewilderment. It was doubtful that anyone had previously done anything like this for the village people.

The breadth and scope of the service project is to be noted: The students and their instructors started working on October 31, 2000 and the service continued through November 10th. During that time, three lakhs or 300,000 *prasadam* packets and the appropriate clothing were given to villagers in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Over 130 villages and five towns were served. They began in Puttaparthi, at Swami's birthplace, where there now stands a temple. It should also be mentioned that the female stu-



dents and their women instructors prevailed upon Baba to allow them the opportunity to also do some of the giving. Of course, with Swami's infinite love, he allowed the women to participate—they were jubilant.

At the culmination of the project, Swami was waiting for the return of all those who had participated in the service. Indeed, he had established a new model for service projects that we can and should follow by speaking softly

and lovingly, and remembering to not make people feel that they are accepting charity, thereby allowing them to maintain their dignity.

Baba said to the assembled group, *Treat them as if they are your guests. Service should be done until such time that you can see the divine in everyone.*"

As told to the Editor by

—**Prof. Kailash Kumar**, SSS Institute of  
Higher Learning

## "You Called Me . . ."

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On June 27, 1999 I was driving with a teacher and three sixth grade children on a class trip to the Adirondack mountains of New York. We were driving caravan-style with my daughter in the car behind me. It was a good but uneventful day, until I asked one of the children in the back seat for the car map. I momentarily took my eyes off the road only to find myself heading for a cement pole and a guardrail at 60mph.

The tires blew, and the mirror from the driver's side snapped off and flew into the window hitting me in the face. The car was demolished.

But the amazing thing was that we were okay—not a scratch on the teacher or the children. I was grateful and surprised that we were all right. When the police arrived, an officer questioned the children as to how they were doing. One boy said, "I'm a little shaken, but it's understandable under the circumstances."

In fact, the children were able to continue the journey even though they were very excited because of what had happened to them. The teachers and parents offered much love and kindness. My pain was healed through their love.

When I arrived home, I sent Swami a note

thanking him for his help. It could have only been the divine hand that saved us all from an accident of that magnitude! As a single mom, it was especially important that I was able to return to work.

The next day, I went to work with only a few bruises, but it was not evident that I had been in a severe automobile accident. There was only a faint outline of the mirror on my cheek, and no pain. I was grateful.

Three months later, I went to see Swami. I was able to have an interview with 25 other devotees in September (9-9-1999). During the interview, I had a chance to thank Swami personally for helping me. He sweetly replied, *It was a big accident, I made it into a little one.* He gestured with his thumb and index finger to show that it was small. Then he said, *You called me and I came.* No Swami, I thought. I forgot to say *Sai Ram*, or *Baba* or *Swami*, it all happened so quickly.

Then, Swami lovingly reminded me of what I had said, *You said, "Oh my God!" And I came, I was there.*

—**Carol Bass**  
Ithaca, New York

# Virtues Of Women

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*This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women like Savitri, who brought her dead husband back to life; Chandramati, who extinguished wildfire with the power of truth; Sita, who proved her chastity by coming out of the blazing fire unscathed, and Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity. It is because of such women of character that Bharat has attained the reputation of being the land of plenty, prosperity and rich harvest.*

Telugu poem

## *Varalakshmi Vrata\**

Embodiments of Love! The ritual of *Varalakshmi Vrata* is supreme among all the rituals. Since time immemorial, Bharat has been enjoying peace and prosperity because of men and women of character. Bharat has accorded the highest position to the mother. Legend has it that once Parvati asked Easwara if there was any ritual which would confer upon women well-being, auspiciousness and prosperity. She desired that every woman should lead a long, happy and healthy life with her husband, children, grandchildren, friends and relatives. Easwara was pleased with Parvati's prayer, and told her about the *Varalakshmi Vrata*, which would confer all that a woman would ask for. This particular ritual is a boon for women. Women always strive for the welfare of their families. They always aspire for equality, integrity, unity and fraternity. Women are extolled as the embodiments of the eight forms of wealth. They al-

ways speak the truth, their hearts are filled with peace and their actions are righteous. Women, being the recipients of eight forms of wealth, confer prosperity and auspiciousness on the family, society and the world at large. You might have heard the story of Savitri, who, with the power of her character, overcame many obstacles to bring her dead husband back to life. Even in this age of Kali (the most difficult of all times), it is the wives' prayers that protect their husbands in times of danger. Many women, in the past, performed [the rites of] *Varalakshmi Vrata* with devotion and sincerity and became the recipients of grace.

## *Women of Character*

After the annihilation of Ravana, Rama wanted Sita (the consort of Lord Rama) to undergo the test of fire to prove her chastity, as Ravana had held her captive for ten months in Lanka. Though Rama, being omniscient, had no doubts regarding Sita's chastity, he did so only in order to dispel doubts from the minds of people. Evil-minded people are like crows. They are full of doubts and preconceived notions. Likewise, women of nobility and character are least perturbed by the criticism of evil-minded people. They do not give scope for any doubts. They follow their conscience and adhere to truth and righteousness. This is the teaching of the culture of Bharat, speak the truth and follow righteousness.

You may know the story of Anusuya, wife of sage Atri. God Himself put her to a test.

\* *Varalakshmi Vrata* is the sacred rite that grants prosperity and auspiciousness on family and society.



The Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara went to her in disguise and begged for alms. When she was about to serve them food, they said that they would accept it only if she served them naked. Immediately, she transformed them into three infants and fed them as per their wish. She could transform even the Trinity into small babies and play with them, only because of her purity of heart and the power of her chastity. Ultimately, Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati, wives of the Trinity, begged her to return their husbands to them. Anusuya, being compassionate, yielded to their wish. The Trinity blessed Atri and Anusuya, saying that they would be born to them in the form of Dattatreya. The name Dattatreya signifies the one who is adopted by sage Atri.

Sumati was also one of chastity. She was pure-hearted and totally selfless. One day, a sage cursed her husband, saying, he would die immediately after sunrise on the next day. She prayed to God with all sincerity and purity. It is only prayer that can atone men's sins and save them from a curse. Sumati said, "If my thoughts are pure and truthful, let there not be sunrise at all." As a result, there was no sunrise, and the entire world was engulfed in darkness. That is the power of women of chastity. All the demigods and sages approached Sumati and asked, "Mother, is it proper on your part to plunge the entire world into darkness for the sake of your husband?" Sumati replied that her husband was more important than the entire world. Only when the demigods assured her of the safety of her husband did she allow the sun to rise. Thus, since ancient times, women of Bharat have led an ideal life and proved to the world the

power of chastity. Not only in the bygone ages, but even in this Kali age there are many women leading exemplary lives.

The Sun God blessed Kunti with a son, Karna, before her marriage to Pandu. She forsook him, as she was afraid of what people would say. After her marriage to Pandu, Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva were born to her. At the time of the Kurukshetra war, Dharmaraja was not aware that Karna was his elder brother. It is only after the death of Karna that Kunti revealed the truth to him. Dharmaraja felt very sad having had his own brother killed. He felt that all this happened because his mother had kept the secret from him. Infuriated, he cursed the entire community of women, saying, "No woman can withhold secrets."

Since ancient times, the women of Bharat have upheld the dignity and honor of the family and the clan at large. It is only because of the grace of Varalakshmi that they could accomplish this. Varalakshmi is one who grants all the boons that women pray for. She confers on women all the eight types of prosperity. Noble women like Savitri, Damayanti, Chadramati and Sumati could work wonders only due to the grace of Varalakshmi. *Varalakshmi Vrata* confers all wealth, prosperity and bliss. However, due to the effects of this modern age, people do not perform such sacred rituals. That is why the houses where people live have become unsacred and unclean. In Bharat, there is a proverb, "You can judge a housewife by looking at the house." In those days, the housewife was considered *Grihalakshmi* (goddess of prosperity). They would keep their houses very clean and tidy. It was a reflection of their purity.

## Perplexing Pollution

Today, the food you eat, the water you drink and the air you breathe, are polluted. Man himself has become highly polluted as he has filled his mind with negative thoughts and feelings, which are nothing but worldly desires. No doubt, one can have desires, but they should be under certain limits. The letters that you write will appear blue when the pen is filled with blue ink and red when it is filled with red ink. Likewise, all—you see, hear and say—will become negative when your heart is filled with negative feelings. So first of all, fill your heart with love. Then, all—you see, hear, say and do—will be suffused with love. You will then find love all over the world; as is the feeling, so is the result. Today, the human heart has become a den of evil qualities like anger, hatred, greed, jealousy, pomp and show. Love alone can drive away these negative traits. Desire, anger, greed, jealousy, etc., arise out of body attachment and improper food habits. Therefore, one has to check body attachment and control desires. It is said that less luggage, more comfort, makes travel a pleasure. In order to have a comfortable journey through life, reduce the luggage of desires. One can have body attachment to some extent because the journey of life is undertaken with the help of the body. When one is living with family and friends, it is not possible to give up body attachment. One should lead a sacred life with the prayer *Loka Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the worlds be happy).

## Reflections of the Mind

All the powers you find in the external world are present in mankind. The human

body itself is a generator of electricity. The human mind can be compared to television and the heart to a radio. When a Delhi radio station broadcasts a particular program, you are able to hear the same program at the same time by tuning your radio to the appropriate frequency. Today, we have radios, but in those days, people considered their hearts as radios. Make your hearts pure and sacred. All that you see in the external world you can visualize on the screen of your mind. Therefore, the mind is a television. Thus, you see that all the powers are latent in man. All that you see outside is nothing but the reflection of the inner being. When you say someone is bad, it means you are seeing the reflection of your own bad feelings in him. Good and bad arise from within; they are not present outside. You can find your reflection in the mirror only when the mirror is coated on one side. Your heart can be compared to a mirror; let it be smeared by the chemical of love on one side. Only then can you see yourself.

## Discipline, Discipline

Here is an example: When sugar and water are mixed, it becomes syrup. The sugar and water become inseparable. Just as sugar is present in every drop of syrup, God is present in the entire creation. Easwara revealed the secret of *Varalakshmi Vrata* to Parvati in order to bestow peace and prosperity on all women. Performance of this ritual is easy, but you are all fortunate to have performed this in a sacred place and in the divine presence. Betel leaf alone cannot make a paan; it has to be mixed with an appropriate quantity of betel nut and lime. Betel leaf is green in color, betel nut is brown and lime is



white; together they form a red color. Lime adds taste to the paan, but when you use it in excess, it will burn the tongue. That is why it is said, "There will be no well-being without discipline." The normal temperature of the body is 98.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Fever sets in when the temperature crosses the limit. Likewise, the normal blood pressure is 120/80. When it shoots up to say, 150/90, it leads to disorder. Likewise, everything should be under a certain limit. Your speech and actions should also be within a certain limit. Act as per your capacity. Before undertaking any activity, inquire where, when and how it has to be done. If you do not adhere to such discipline, you will be inviting trouble.

### *Righteousness Protects*

All the rituals will yield good results only when they are performed with purity of heart and a steady mind. If you have the grace of God, you can accomplish anything in this world. When God can bring the dead back to life, can there be anything impossible for him? He can change sky into earth and earth into sky, but you should pray with purity of heart to attain his grace. Do not indulge in vain gossip. How can you expect God to fulfill your wishes if you speak ill of others?

Embodiments of Love! Our ancients performed these rituals with sacred feelings. However, today people have lost faith in such sacred rituals. They have faith in things that are transient and ephemeral. First of all, man should transform his heart. He should have the firm faith that God is the indweller of the heart. The body is the temple, and the indweller is God. Respect and revere all bodies as temples of God. Then the world will be free from all conflicts.

Today, as selfishness and self-interest are on the rise, the world is gripped in troubles and turmoil. In order to get rid of conflicts, man should cultivate moral values, undertake righteous actions and love everybody. Human life is a combination of morality, spirituality and righteousness.

But today, the whole world revolves around money. I often tell you, money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. Money is like passing clouds. No doubt, money is required to carry on your livelihood in this world. Understand that money is not the be all and end all of existence. Earlier, people believed that dharma (righteousness) formed the basis of the world. Now people consider that wealth forms the basis of the world. Understand that righteousness alone will confer peace and bliss on you. Righteousness alone will protect you.

### *The Kurukshetra War*

During the course of the Kurukshetra War, one day Duryodhana and Dussashana provoked Bhishma saying, "Oh Grandsire, you seem to be very dull these days. As a result, our enemies are growing stronger. It is time that you shed your dullness and show your prowess." At that time, Bhishma was the Commander-in-Chief of the Kaurava army. Bhishma promised Duryodhana that he would kill all the Pandavas before sunset the next day. Draupadi was highly perturbed when she came to know of this. She was a great devotee and one of chastity. In this age of Kali, people wonder how Draupadi, who had five husbands, could be called a woman of chastity. Her five husbands symbolize the five elements and the five life principles. Draupadi



# Sai Conferences and Retreats for 2001

| <b>Date and Region</b>                                                                     | <b>Location</b>                                                                                               | <b>Information</b>                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 25-27<br>Memorial Day weekend<br>Southwest<br>Region 9                                 | Camp Chapel Rock<br>Prescott, Arizona                                                                         | Satya Satyanarayan<br>13236 E. Country Shadows Circle<br>Chandler, Arizona 85249<br>(480) 802-7838<br>office (480) 413-8875          |
| May 25-28<br>Memorial Day weekend<br>Pacific Region South<br>Region 8                      | Pine Springs Ranch<br>Mountain Center,<br>California<br>( off Hwy. 74,<br>near Idyllwild)                     | Harshad Patel<br>1118 E. Colorado St.<br>Glendale, California 91205<br>(818) 952-9600<br>fax: (818) 952-9060                         |
| May 26-28<br>Memorial Day weekend<br>Mid-Atlantic<br>Region 2                              | Camp Green Lane<br>Green Lane,<br>Pennsylvania<br>(near Philadelphia)                                         | Raj Sanmugalingam<br>6517 Winnipeg Rd.<br>Bethesda, Maryland 20817<br>(301) 530-0192<br>lingam@earthlink.net                         |
| May 25-28<br>Memorial Day weekend<br>Mid-Central Region 4<br>and<br>North Central Region 5 | Camp Wyman<br>Eureka, Missouri<br>(near St. Louis)                                                            | Kathy Feely<br>7490 Amherst Ave.<br>St. Louis, Missouri 63130<br>(314) 862-1254, fax (314) 721-7574<br>kathy—feely@clayton.k12.mo.us |
| May 25-28<br>Memorial Day weekend<br>Northeast<br>Region 1                                 | Russell Sage College<br>Troy, New York<br>(near Albany)                                                       | Vijay C. Amin<br>108 Flaxwood Ln.<br>Minoa, New York 13116<br>(315) 656-7356                                                         |
| June 29-July 1<br>Independence Day weekend<br>Pacific Region South<br>Region 8             | La Casa de Maria<br>800 El Bosque Rd.<br>Montecito, California<br>(near Santa Barbara)                        | Linda Fazzari<br>720 Via Vista Verde<br>Santa Maria, California 93455<br>(805) 937-8841                                              |
| July 13-15<br>Southwest<br>Region 9                                                        | Sunshine Mountain Inn<br>Colorado<br>(near Estes Park)                                                        | David Feasby<br>1255 Snowberry Ln.<br>Broomfield, Colorado 80020<br>(303) 541-9534                                                   |
| August 31-September 3<br>Labor Day weekend<br>North Central<br>Region 5                    | Camp Hastings<br>Illinois<br>(near Chicago)                                                                   | Rao Garuda<br>16201 Shaker Blvd.<br>Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120<br>(216) 751-6927<br>fax (216) 642-9213<br>raogaruda@aol.com          |
| August 31-September 3<br>Labor Day weekend<br>Southwest<br>Region 9                        | Bodhi Mandala<br>Jemez Springs,<br>New Mexico<br>(near Albuquerque)                                           | Elaine Houseman<br>18 Rockridge Rd.<br>Cerrillos, New Mexico 87010<br>(505) 471-4441                                                 |
| September 1-3<br>Labor Day weekend<br>Pacific Region South<br>Region 8                     | Camp Stevens<br>Julian, California<br>(near San Diego)                                                        | Connie Fox<br>2737 Fairfield St.<br>San Diego, California 92110<br>(619) 276-1356                                                    |
| September 1-3<br>Labor Day weekend<br>Northern California<br>and Nevada<br>Region 7        | Walker Creek Ranch<br>Petaluma, California<br>(by car, approximately<br>45 minutes north of<br>San Francisco) | Ranga Jayaraman<br>6563 Ivy Lane<br>San Jose, California 95129<br>(408) 996-9525<br>RJayaraman@attglobal.net                         |
| September 1-3<br>Labor Day weekend<br>South Central<br>Region 10                           | Camp Allen<br>Navasota, Texas<br>(northwest of Houston)                                                       | Nandini Mahadevan<br>26 Windward Court<br>Woodlands, Texas 77381<br>(281) 296-9223<br>Nmahadevan@aol.com                             |
| October 26-28<br>Pacific Region North<br>Region 6                                          | Oregon State Park<br>Silver Falls Conference<br>Center, Oregon<br>(near Salem)                                | Deborah Lewis<br>12139 S. E. 188th Street<br>Renton, Washington 98058<br>(425) 917-2265<br>deborahlewis@sprynet.com                  |



fell at Krishna's feet and prayed that he would protect the Pandavas. Krishna told her, "Follow my command; I shall certainly protect your husbands." Draupadi said, "Krishna, who else can I follow other than you? You are our everything." It was nighttime. As the battle was over for the day, all were resting in their respective tents. Bhishma was feeling very depressed. "I have vowed that I will kill the Pandavas tomorrow. But how am I to kill those who are noble and virtuous, those whom I have brought up with my own hands all these years? It is the food of Kauravas that has spoiled my mind."

Thinking thus, Bhishma was pacing up and down in his tent. Krishna sensed Bhishma's predicament. Krishna always planned according to time, place, and situation. His is the master plan. He told Draupadi to follow him. As there was no electricity in those days, there were only small lamps burning in each tent. After walking a certain distance, Krishna asked her to leave her sandals as they were making sounds. Draupadi implicitly obeyed Krishna's command. Krishna immediately wrapped her sandals in his shawl and carried them with him.

Once they reached Bhishma's tent, Krishna told Draupadi to hurry and fall at Bhishma's feet at once. Draupadi did accordingly. Hearing the jingling sound of bangles, Bhishma thought it was a married woman and as was his wont, blessed her saying, "May you and your husband live long." After uttering this blessing, Bhishma noticed to his great surprise, that it was Draupadi. He had vowed to kill her husbands the following day. Krishna entered the scene with Draupadi's sandals in his hands. Bhishma realized that it was

Krishna's master plan. He extolled Krishna saying, "Oh Lord, your *leelas* (divine play) are most wonderful and most sacred in all the three worlds."

Krishna told Bhishma that he had come to Draupadi's rescue, as she was highly virtuous. Draupadi was always contented with what she had. She was obedient to her husbands and would find time to serve them. There was no woman greater than Draupadi.

### *Respect Women*

The title conferred on women such as *Grihalakshmi*, is very sacred. How can a woman with such an exalted title be inferior to men? Unfortunately today, men look down upon women and treat them as mere servants. The more you respect women, the more you will be respected. You should see that women do not shed tears. Otherwise, the family will face hardships. You can remove a thorn from the foot, but you cannot take back a harsh word which has wounded the heart. So never use harsh words. Talk sweetly and softly. The husband has the right to point out the mistakes of his wife, but he does not have the right to use harsh words and hurt her feelings. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly. The family will attain peace and prosperity once you observe these principles.

Usually, men have more of the element of anger in them. Once you get angry, the energy that you acquired from the food you consumed, over three months, will be lost. Not merely that, but the blood gets heated up, and it takes nearly three months to cool down. Such being the case, imagine what would be your fate if you lose your temper repeatedly.



## Krishna's Battle?

The story of Jarasandha bears ample testimony to this loss of energy. Many a time, Krishna challenged him to a battle, and when Jarasandha would become fierce with anger, Krishna would run away from the battlefield. Seeing this, many people doubted Krishna's ability to vanquish Jarasandha. On being asked the reason for his strange behavior, Krishna replied thus, "Don't be under the mistaken notion that I am running away away from the battlefield out of fear. I can kill him in no time, but I do not want to wage a battle with him. I am killing him slowly by arousing his anger time after time." Gradually, Jarasandha became very weak and ultimately met his doom. Krishna never considered it an insult to run away from the battlefield because he was acting according to his own master plan. Thus God, in order to accomplish his objective plays a few tricks. However, all his plans are for the welfare of others. He does not do anything for himself. God always does only good, which may appear to be bad to some people. The mistake lies in their vision, not in God's creation. God always helps and confers sacredness on all.

## More About Women

Easwara revealed the sacred *Varalakshmi Vrata* to Parvati, so that all women would perform this ritual and derive the benefits from it. When women perform the *Varalakshmi Vrata*, they get the blessings that they may live long with plenty and prosperity with their children and grandchildren. Varalakshmi protects seven generations of your ancestors; and seven generations after you. Noble women

like Savitri and Anusuya enjoyed peace and prosperity by performing this sacred ritual. The purpose of *Varalakshmi Vrata* is to atone for your sins, develop sacredness and, ultimately, lead you to divinity. Varalakshmi is to be extolled as Divine Mother. The culture of Bharat considers the word *Matha* (Mother) as most sacred. In times of suffering, one naturally calls out *Amma* (Mother), not *Appa* (Father). The word *Amma* is most soothing and sacred; it bestows immense strength. The first word that the child utters is *Amma*. That is why the culture of Bharat accords the highest place to the mother ahead of the father, teacher or God. None love you as much as your mother. Mother's love defies description.

Students! Respect your mother and be obedient to her. If the mother is satisfied with you, the whole world will be satisfied with you. If the mother is not pleased with you, you will become cheap in the eyes of the world. Do not be proud of your youth, beauty and sensory powers. Realize that soon, you will change through old age. If you neglect parents now, your children will neglect you.

Men should not discourage women from performing sacred rituals like *Varalakshmi Vrata*. They should provide all the necessary support. This ritual is beneficial not only to women, but also to men. Men should not behave in an arrogant way towards women thinking that they are more powerful. Truly speaking, women are more powerful than men. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that men have only three powers, whereas women have five. Women are ready to sacrifice even their life for the sake of their husbands. Savitri was ready to give up her life for the sake of her



fell at Krishna's feet and prayed that he would protect the Pandavas. Krishna told her, "Follow my command; I shall certainly protect your husbands." Draupadi said, "Krishna, who else can I follow other than you? You are our everything." It was nighttime. As the battle was over for the day, all were resting in their respective tents. Bhishma was feeling very depressed. "I have vowed that I will kill the Pandavas tomorrow. But how am I to kill those who are noble and virtuous, those whom I have brought up with my own hands all these years? It is the food of Kauravas that has spoiled my mind."

Thinking thus, Bhishma was pacing up and down in his tent. Krishna sensed Bhishma's predicament. Krishna always planned according to time, place, and situation. His is the master plan. He told Draupadi to follow him. As there was no electricity in those days, there were only small lamps burning in each tent. After walking a certain distance, Krishna asked her to leave her sandals as they were making sounds. Draupadi implicitly obeyed Krishna's command. Krishna immediately wrapped her sandals in his shawl and carried them with him.

Once they reached Bhishma's tent, Krishna told Draupadi to hurry and fall at Bhishma's feet at once. Draupadi did accordingly. Hearing the jingling sound of bangles, Bhishma thought it was a married woman and as was his wont, blessed her saying, "May you and your husband live long." After uttering this blessing, Bhishma noticed to his great surprise, that it was Draupadi. He had vowed to kill her husbands the following day. Krishna entered the scene with Draupadi's sandals in his hands. Bhishma realized that it was

Krishna's master plan. He extolled Krishna saying, "Oh Lord, your *leelas* (divine play) are most wonderful and most sacred in all the three worlds."

Krishna told Bhishma that he had come to Draupadi's rescue, as she was highly virtuous. Draupadi was always contented with what she had. She was obedient to her husbands and would find time to serve them. There was no woman greater than Draupadi.

### *Respect Women*

The title conferred on women such as *Grihalakshmi*, is very sacred. How can a woman with such an exalted title be inferior to men? Unfortunately today, men look down upon women and treat them as mere servants. The more you respect women, the more you will be respected. You should see that women do not shed tears. Otherwise, the family will face hardships. You can remove a thorn from the foot, but you cannot take back a harsh word which has wounded the heart. So never use harsh words. Talk sweetly and softly. The husband has the right to point out the mistakes of his wife, but he does not have the right to use harsh words and hurt her feelings. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly. The family will attain peace and prosperity once you observe these principles.

Usually, men have more of the element of anger in them. Once you get angry, the energy that you acquired from the food you consumed, over three months, will be lost. Not merely that, but the blood gets heated up, and it takes nearly three months to cool down. Such being the case, imagine what would be your fate if you lose your temper repeatedly.



## Krishna's Battle?

The story of Jarasandha bears ample testimony to this loss of energy. Many a time, Krishna challenged him to a battle, and when Jarasandha would become fierce with anger, Krishna would run away from the battlefield. Seeing this, many people doubted Krishna's ability to vanquish Jarasandha. On being asked the reason for his strange behavior, Krishna replied thus, "Don't be under the mistaken notion that I am running away away from the battlefield out of fear. I can kill him in no time, but I do not want to wage a battle with him. I am killing him slowly by arousing his anger time after time." Gradually, Jarasandha became very weak and ultimately met his doom. Krishna never considered it an insult to run away from the battlefield because he was acting according to his own master plan. Thus God, in order to accomplish his objective plays a few tricks. However, all his plans are for the welfare of others. He does not do anything for himself. God always does only good, which may appear to be bad to some people. The mistake lies in their vision, not in God's creation. God always helps and confers sacredness on all.

## More About Women

Easwara revealed the sacred *Varalakshmi Vrata* to Parvati, so that all women would perform this ritual and derive the benefits from it. When women perform the *Varalakshmi Vrata*, they get the blessings that they may live long with plenty and prosperity with their children and grandchildren. Varalakshmi protects seven generations of your ancestors; and seven generations after you. Noble women

like Savitri and Anusuya enjoyed peace and prosperity by performing this sacred ritual. The purpose of *Varalakshmi Vrata* is to atone for your sins, develop sacredness and, ultimately, lead you to divinity. Varalakshmi is to be extolled as Divine Mother. The culture of Bharat considers the word *Matha* (Mother) as most sacred. In times of suffering, one naturally calls out *Amma* (Mother), not *Appa* (Father). The word *Amma* is most soothing and sacred; it bestows immense strength. The first word that the child utters is *Amma*. That is why the culture of Bharat accords the highest place to the mother ahead of the father, teacher or God. None love you as much as your mother. Mother's love defies description.

Students! Respect your mother and be obedient to her. If the mother is satisfied with you, the whole world will be satisfied with you. If the mother is not pleased with you, you will become cheap in the eyes of the world. Do not be proud of your youth, beauty and sensory powers. Realize that soon, you will change through old age. If you neglect parents now, your children will neglect you.

Men should not discourage women from performing sacred rituals like *Varalakshmi Vrata*. They should provide all the necessary support. This ritual is beneficial not only to women, but also to men. Men should not behave in an arrogant way towards women thinking that they are more powerful. Truly speaking, women are more powerful than men. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that men have only three powers, whereas women have five. Women are ready to sacrifice even their life for the sake of their husbands. Savitri was ready to give up her life for the sake of her



husband. We do not find such spirit of sacrifice in men. Respect, dignity, sacrifice, contentment and prosperity—all these five virtues are present in women.

On the other hand, men stand for anger, stubbornness and foolishness. Names of the divine couples—Lakshmi and Narayana, Radha and Krishna, Parvati and Parameswara—indicate that women are given the place of priority over men. That is why, even on invitation cards, people write Srimati and Sri (Mrs. and Mr.) and not vice versa. Nature symbolizes the feminine aspect. Therefore, men must treat women with respect, so that they will be respected in turn. As women are

the embodiments of Lakshmi (goddess of prosperity), the world will attain prosperity only when women are given respect. You can see it yourself, where there are women of character, there you find prosperity.

You all know that many countries suffered destruction during the World Wars. But Bharat remained intact. That was entirely due to the presence of virtuous women. Bharat owes its greatness and grandeur entirely to its women. So respect women and make them happy.

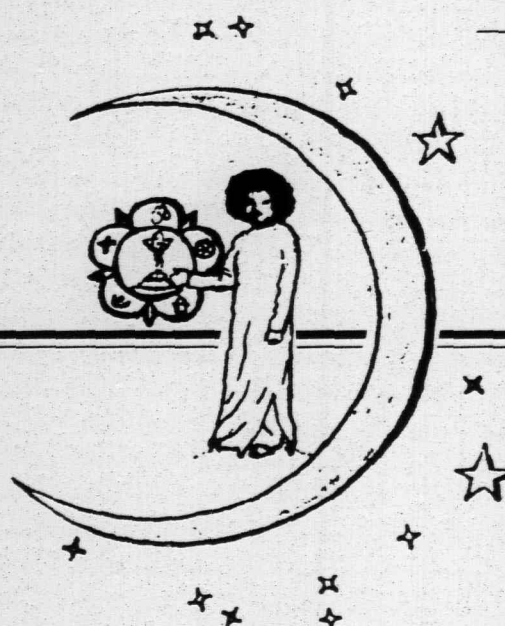
—Sathya Sai Baba  
Divine Discourse  
August 11, 2000

## Morningtime

*It is God's face  
in the sunlight.  
rising above the darkness  
that gives way to day.*

*It is God's face  
in the prisms,  
that rainbow  
beyond speech.*

*The sounds of birds  
waking each other,  
"Come on get up,  
there's work to do."*



*The smell of dew lifting,  
flowers opening,  
and air,  
sweeter than words.*

*It is God's creation.  
It is Baba's heart gift,  
morningtime,  
another mystical miracle.*

—Anonymous

# *Dates to Remember in 2001*

## *Mark Your Calendar*

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**Wednesday, February 21, *Mahashivaratri*** is the observance of the new moon, symbolizing a renaissance or reawakening to spiritual life.

**Monday, March 26, *Ugadi*, Telugu New Year's Day.**

**Monday, April 2, *Rama Navami*** is the day to honor the birth of the Avatar, Lord Rama.

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

**Thursday, July 5, *Guru Poornima*** is a time to show love and pay respect to one's spiritual guide or preceptor.

**Sunday, July 22, *Global Handicapped Day*** is a time for helping the physically impaired, and to remember that they need our help throughout the year.

**Sunday, August 12, *Krishna Jayanti*** honors the birth of the Avatar, Lord Krishna.

**Wednesday, August 22, *Ganesha Chaturthi*** is the time to pay respect to Ganesha who is the remover of obstacles and ignorance. Ganesha also sets up obstacles for our protection.

**Sunday, September 16, *Blood Donation Day*** is a day to remember that all who are able should donate blood. Check with your doctor first.

**Friday, October 26, *Vijayadashmi (Dasara)*** is a time for worshipping the Mother as God.

**Saturday & Sunday, November 10 & 11, *Akhand Bhajans*** is a 24-hour singing of devotional songs throughout the world. Singing begins at 6:00 p.m. on Sat., and ends at 6:00 p.m. on Sun.

**Tuesday, November 13, *Deepavali*** is the festival of lights commemorating the victory of righteousness over wickedness.

**Monday, November 19, *Ladies Day*** is a day devoted to honor women throughout the world and the contributions they have made to society.

**Friday, November 23, the birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.**

**Tuesday, December 25, *Christmas Day***, is a time to honor the birth of Jesus Christ.

—Central Office, Prasanthi Nilayam

*I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster. . . . I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect, or creed or cause.*

—Sathya Sai Baba, *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. V  
23.



# *The Earth Has Shaken!*

## *How Can We Help?*

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The people of the United States of America are saddened by the recent disasters that have happened in India and in El Salvador, Central America. We pray for the recovery, healing and future well-being for all people everywhere, especially those who have been victims of the disastrous earthquakes. The quakes were on such a large scale that it boggles the imagination. Please know that we are trying to help those who are in desperate need in both countries. At this time, there are no specific guidelines for helping our fellow human beings. The advice that has come to us is that each person can help in the way he or she sees fit.

Some of us can give money or material goods, and some of us cannot. But remember, Swami often says that love is the most powerful energy in the universe. And remember, we must never underestimate the power of prayer.

A member of my family called his source in El Salvador and was told that the very morning after the earthquake, Sai devotees were out at dawn helping the victims by offering fresh drinking water, food, and also digging through the rubble for survivors.

At the first reporting of the quake in India, Swami was reported to have announced that people should go forth and help. Word reached us, from a reliable source, that under Swami's divine supervision, 75 trucks left the ashram during the first days after the earthquake. The trucks were loaded with supplies for the devastated people of the state of Gujarat. Volunteers went along to distribute the items and help those who are in dire need.

—Editor

### *Announcement*

Bhagavan Baba has blessed and permitted devotees to commemorate the 7th *Vesak Buddha Poornima* (Full Moon Day) on May 7th. All Buddhists and other devotees with their families are invited to participate in this holy function. The *Easwaramma Day* festival will be jointly celebrated in sequence this year, 2001, as per the following schedule:

**Saturday, May 5th**, Darshan, *Narayana Seva* (offering food), seminar on similies of the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and Lord Buddha, devotional songs by Buddhists and a cultural festival

**Sunday, May 6th**, *Easwaramma Children's Day* (Easwaramma, the mother of Sathya Sai Baba), Darshan, First Exhibition on Easwaramma, and *Easwaramma Day* Discourse

**Monday, May 7th**, *Buddha Poornima*, divine procession, morning cultural program, devotional songs, chanting, afternoon darshan, devotional music, *Buddha Poornima* discourse and traditional Buddhist ceremonial prayers

—Ryuko Hira

Japan, Zone III Coordinator

# *Levels of Humanness*

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## *Embodiments of Love!*

You are trying to understand the true meaning of the word "service." Man is born to render selfless service. Selfless service alone can achieve unity in humanity; only through unity can humanity attain divinity. Hence, service is very essential to understand unity in diversity. People are rendering help to the forlorn and the weak. It is a great mistake to think that you are rendering service to others. In fact, you are doing it for yourself because the same principle of Atma (Soul), and the same principle of love exist in all. All people are essentially one; the differences lie only in their feelings. So people should change their feelings and try to recognize the truth that the same divinity exists in all. Only then can there be transformation in mankind. Hands do the work, mouth speaks and head inquires. All these parts of the body may be different from each other, but the divine power that exists in them is one and the same. Likewise, the same divinity exists in all beings. Once you understand this truth, the service you render will become divine.

## *The Root Cause of Ego*

One should not become egoistic, thinking that one is doing great service. Actually, service is meant to kill the ego. You cannot call it service if it is rendered with ego. First of all, ego has to be subdued. Body attachment is the root cause of ego; it will vanish as soon as body attachment is given up. The spirit of oneness will sprout when

the ego is annihilated. Just as hands, eyes, nose, mouth, etc., are the parts of the body, likewise, all human beings are parts of society. Society is a part of nature, and nature is part of God. Seeing the vastness of nature, one should not think that it is different from God. One should understand the fundamental truth that, divinity pervades all of creation. Like light bulbs, their colors and wattage may vary, but the current in all of them is one and the same. Likewise, names and forms of individuals may be different, but the principle of Atma that exists in all of them is one and the same. The service that you render will become meaningful only when you understand this truth.

You should not think that you are different from the one whom you are serving. This kind of dualistic feeling gives scope to evil traits like hatred and jealousy. In fact, all the evil traits—desire, anger, greed and so on—are of man's own making. They arise out of the head. Whereas noble qualities—love, compassion and forbearance—originate from the heart. The head sees unity as diversity; whereas, the heart proves that there is unity in diversity. Hence, head symbolizes the outward path, and heart stands for the inward path.

## *The Meaning of Service*

Never think that society cannot progress if you do not give service. Society does not depend on you. If not you, someone else will do the needful. God governs everything. In the first instance, try to understand the meaning of the word, "service." It is



possible to understand this once you understand who you are. You are a human being (*manava*). *Manava* does not mean the physical form; it is synonymous with the principle of Atma. Human beings are the manifestation of the five elements. The ancient sages had control over the five elements and thus, they could enjoy peace and security. But modern man is subjected to hardships, as he has no control over the five elements. Man will shine forth as the embodiment of Atma once he becomes the master of the five elements.

### *Four Levels of Humanness*

In humanness there are four different levels: 1. Super Mind 2. Higher Mind 3. Illumination Mind 4. Over Mind. Humanness will reach the stage of totality only when one attains the level of over mind.

There is current in the human body from top to toe; the body itself is a generator. Illumination mind which is related to the current in the body is very powerful. Prior to illumination mind, there is higher mind. Higher mind is that which transcends the five elements. To reach this transcendental state, one has to begin with the super mind. Super mind is related to pure body consciousness. The pure consciousness that pervades the body is called "body consciousness." Body consciousness becomes thought consciousness once it reaches the higher mind. The body consciousness works only at the physical level, whereas thought consciousness can travel any distance. That is why thought consciousness is called higher mind.

### *We Are All Generators*

Then comes illumination mind. When

one attains this level, there will be current right from the nails to the hair. A worldly person will not feel any pain when his nails are clipped, but after attaining the level of illumination mind, one feels the shock when one tries to clip the nails. This is the reason why the ancient sages and seers used to let their nails grow. Modern youth may attribute this to the lack of availability of nail clippers. But one need not have a clipper; one nail can cut the other. But the person with illumination mind will feel the shock when they are clipped. The thoughts, words and deeds of one with illumination mind are suffused with divinity. That gives rise to the very powerful phase three current in the body; such people will even have current in their hair. You can feel a shock when touching their hair.

Even an ordinary individual emits current all over his or her body. The electricity present within spreads all over the body because of the pumping of the heart. Doctors say that the lungs purify the blood with oxygen and send it to the heart. But actually, the life force present in the lungs becomes current through vibration. This current can travel for a long distance. Each time the heart pumps, the blood travels a distance of 12,000 miles in the body. How can we say this? When we join all the blood vessels in the body—arteries, veins and capillaries—they cover a length of 12,000 miles. Just as a generator can illumine a light bulb connected to it even at a distance of 100 miles, likewise, the current originating from sacred feelings in the heart can travel up to any distance. That is the power of the illumination mind.

## *More About Illumination Mind*

At the level of illumination mind, the mind undergoes a great change and becomes a subtle life force. The subtle force has three powers, they are related to life, mind and wisdom. No scientist, doctor or engineer can understand this. You can give rest to any limb of the body but not the heart. The heart continues to function even in your sleep. Which doctor or scientist can understand this? The eye looks so small but there are 13 lakh (one lakh is 100,000) nerves in it. Who has made it? All this is God's creation; God's creation is most mysterious, sacred and wonderful. All that is seen outside is nothing but reflection, reaction and resound of the inner being.

You go to a temple in order to have a vision of God. But when you stand in front of the idol, you close your eyes and pray. The inner meaning of this is that one has to see God not with the physical eyes, but with the eye of wisdom. You will get the eye of wisdom only when you close your physical eyes and turn your vision inward. That is the reason that people meditate with their eyes closed—to picture God within. The whole world is just the reflection, the reaction and the resound. You desire the reflection forgetting reality.

The gross body is made up of food. The mind, the intellect, the pure consciousness (*chitta*) and the ego (*ahamkara*) constitute the subtle body. It is the subtle body that experiences pain and pleasure. The illumination mind constitutes the causal body. The illumination mind transcends worldly thoughts and feelings. There is no trace of

desire, anger, greed, ego, pride or jealousy in it. The level of illumination mind is reached only when all worldly thoughts are subdued.

## *The Super Mind*

In order to control worldly thoughts, one has to reach the level of super mind. Super mind is nothing but superior mind, that which transcends the mind. The fundamental basis to attain super mind is to cultivate super love, which means to love without any desire. That is why I often tell you, "Love is God, live in love, start the day with love, spend the day with love, fill the day with love, that is the way to God." When you wake up in the morning, do not think of your mundane activities. Wake up with the feeling of pure love. But today, people do not have the feeling of pure love. The reason for this, as I have told you, is that parents themselves have no sacred feelings. If the parents awaken in the morning abusing each other, the children go a step further and fight with each other.

## *Lessen Desires*

At the time of birth, a child has no desires. But as he grows up, he entertains many desires which lead to bondage. Man should fill his mind with love for God. He should forget all his worries and concentrate on God. This is possible only through practice. Reading, writing, walking, talking, all these are learned through practice. Likewise, even on the path of spirituality, practice is essential. Start by practicing love. Share your love with more and more people. You will experience oneness. Once you start sharing your love with everybody; then the whole world will become one family.



After expanding your family in this manner, control your external thoughts and turn inward. Then you will attain the state of illumination mind where there are absolutely no thoughts and no actions. Even iron is melted by the power of electrical current. Likewise, the duality of good and bad is annihilated by the illumination mind. In spiritual parlance, this is called the state of *samadhi*. *Samadhi* means *Sama-dhi* or equal-mindedness. The illumination mind unifies good and bad and develops the spirit of oneness.

What is it that you have to do to attain this state? Serve all with love. Consider service to mankind as service to God. When it comes to rendering service, do not give range to differences based on age or financial status. Who is the richest person in the world? The one who has contentment is the richest person in the world. Who is the poorest person in the world? The one who has many desires is the poorest. It is said, "Less luggage, more comfort, makes travel a pleasure." You can have a comfortable journey in life when you reduce the luggage of your desires. Lessen your desires, and your power will be greater.

### *Super Consciousness*

The body has death but not the mind. The mind is responsible for everything. So fill your mind with pure, selfless thoughts; then, you will attain the state of illumination mind. Gradually, you will cross illumination mind and attain over mind. In Vedic parlance, this is known as the state of "mindlessness." Once mind has withdrawn, only the principle of super consciousness exists.

People have the capacity to attain any exalted position. Any task can be accomplished through practice. A small ant can travel hundreds of miles if it decides to do so. But an eagle, endowed with strong wings, cannot move an inch without making an effort. Love and service are like two wings to mankind; they can attain any exalted position with the help of these two wings. The lives of many noble souls bear testimony to this fact.

### *Subtle Secrets*

Today, people find it difficult to sit quietly and steadily even for a few minutes. But our ancients could keep their bodies steady in one posture for any number of days. People think that the body is able to move because of the circulation of blood and the nerves. But when one reaches the state of illumination mind, blood circulation stops. You may think that the body becomes redundant without blood circulating, but super blood starts circulating and makes the body function. When super blood is circulating, the body becomes superior in nature. In this connection, the Upanishads declare, "God pervades the body in the form of essence (*Raso Vai Saha*). Then all that one sees, does and experiences becomes divine. Just as sugar is present in every drop of syrup, super power (divinity) is present in every cell of the human body. But today, people consider themselves to be weak. One who understands the truth that everything lies within can, only, experience bliss. All that people learn from books is nothing but reflection, reaction and resound of the inner being. One's speech is decided by the

feeling of the inner being. Speech is resound and heart is the real sound. This real sound leads to resound. On the path to spirituality there are many such subtle secrets. Without understanding these secrets, people undertake various spiritual practices and waste their time. One need not undertake any spiritual practice once one understands the fundamental truth.

*No visit to any pilgrim center, no penance, no yogic practice will help you in crossing over the ocean of life (samsara) other than service rendered.*

Sanskrit Sloka

### *The Blissful Life*

When you serve others, the power in you will increase. The power of attraction is present in everybody. The more pure you become, the greater will be your power of attraction. All the powers that are present in the earth are latent in mankind. Some people come to me and complain that they are unable to control their minds. It is possible to gain control over the mind only through love. When you develop love, there will be no room for evil traits like anger and hatred. You will be able to love even your enemies; you will see oneness in all. That is the blissful life. The bliss sheath is the last of five sheaths present in mankind. Namely, they are: 1. food sheath, 2. life sheath, 3. mind sheath, 4. wisdom sheath and 5. bliss sheath. Today, people are able to go only to the mind sheath. Thereafter, one does not have the ticket, nor does one have the chariot to reach the bliss sheath. People are under the mistaken notion that the wisdom sheath is related to science, but in fact, it has nothing to do with science.

Science is related to the power of mind and machine, whereas wis-dom originates from the power of Atma.

### *The Noble Pandavas*

When the Pandavas were making arrangements to perform *Rajasooya Yaga* (a spiritual rite), Krishna approached Dharmaraja and asked if everything was ready. Dharmaraja replied that all the arrangements were finished and that he had allotted various duties to others. Then Krishna requested an opportunity to render some service. He used the word service and not duty because duty relates to duality, whereas, service relates to oneness. Dharmaraja asked, "Swami, what service can I assign to you? Instead, give us an opportunity to serve you." Krishna said, "I don't require the services of others; I will serve everybody."

God assumes a human form to serve and sustain humanity. Understand this truth; I am your servant, not your master. I come to you wherever you are to give *darshan*, I never say that you should come to me. It is said, "God stands at the entrance of your puja room ready to give whatever you ask for." God is always ready to grant the wishes of his devotees. God renders service to man, so the he may serve his fellow beings.

Dharmaraja asked Krishna as to what service he would like to do. Krishna said that he would like to remove the plantain leaves after everyone was finished partaking of food on them. By this act of his, Krishna demonstrated the ideal of service to man.

In youth, the human body may be compared to a tender plantain leaf. All the five senses are like the delicious items served



on the leaf. One should offer the food to God before partaking of it. First and foremost, the delicious items should be offered to God who is present within. You offer the food to God by [praying] and chanting. God is present in everybody; whomsoever you serve, consider that you are serving God.

### *God, the Formless*

God, by itself, has no form, but people mold it into the shape of a ring or a chain, thereby giving it a form. Likewise, many forms are attributed to the formless divinity. Divinity is pure, immortal, attributeless, formless, ancient and eternal. But people worship a form for their own satisfaction. That is why God incarnates. He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer, but you think that different gods exist for creation, sustenance and destruction. They are all like ministers of God; everything is under his control. So when you offer something to God, it amounts to offering it to all gods.

The formless God can be visualized in all beings. He is reality and all forms are his reflections. One is *paroksha* or indirect experience, and the other *pratyaksha* or direct experience. Infact, there is only one not two, but it appears to be two. You may find the projection of earthquakes, floods and volcanic eruptions on the cinema screen, but the screen is unaffected by all that. You may find a river on the screen, but the screen does not get wet. Likewise, all the multiplicity appears only to the extent of vision. The illumination mind sees only oneness. That oneness is the divine power; it is present in one and all. You search for God in various places as you are unable to under-

stand this truth. To know the truth, love all; then, you can visualize the unity in diversity and vice versa.

God declares, "The eternal Atma in all beings is part of my being." Do not get deluded by the differences in physical forms; treat everyone alike. Consider all that you see as your own reflection. When you cultivate this feeling of oneness, you will attain the level of illumination mind. When you are at the level of super mind, you think that you are different from others; this is dualism. It is said, "A man with a dual mind is half blind." Gradually advance to the higher mind where you will understand your true nature; then you will reach illumination mind. Once you experience this unity in totality, you attain the over mind—that is your goal. That is everything for you; all the spiritual practices are meant to attain this goal. Practices which are done with the physical body cannot improve the state of the mind. What is essential is the purity of the mind.

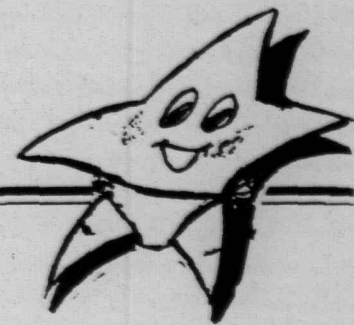
Cultivate good thoughts, they lead to good actions. Good actions lead to good company. Cultivate love, everything is based on love and love alone; man is born in love, sustained in love and ultimately merges in love. Love is the basis of human life. Do not forget such true love and get carried away by worldly or physical love which is not love in the true sense.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam, November 20, 2000

Bhagavan completed his discourse by leading a devotional song while the thousands who were present joined in.

# Children's Corner: *All Things Small and Grand*

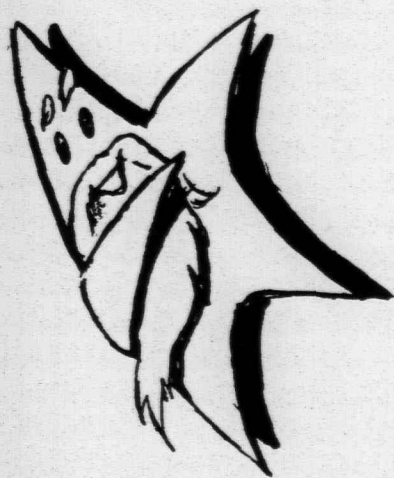


The stars and moon and planets too  
The meteors and the sun  
He has a universal view  
Our lovely Lord, the One.

Baby stars are from Him borne  
Old stars crumble in His hand.  
All things formless and of form  
All things small and grand.

He controls the universe,  
He is all space and time.  
Yet the wonder of it all  
He lives in your heart and mine.

—Susan Caffery  
Prasanthi Nilayam, India



Illustrations by  
—June Nissinen



**this truth, you will become God yourself.**

What you have to propagate in this world is love alone. Nothing exists other than love in this world. Love is God. Love is life. Love is everything. Cultivate love more and more. Let your mind not waver under any circumstances. A wavering mind becomes unsacred. That is why Thyagaraja once sang, "Oh mind, do not waver, and do not get deluded." You suffer because of delusion.

**Consider love as your very life. Love alone makes one's life sacred. One with love alone is a true human being. Love is man, and man is love. Man is God, and God is love. It is love that unifies all. So develop love.** Tread the path of truth and righteousness and lead a peaceful life. These four values are the life-supporting principles. There are no greater powers, no greater ideals and no greater supports than these human values: truth (*sathya*), righteousness (*dharma*), peace (*shanti*) and love (*prema*). Adhere to these four values and carry on with your lives.

## *God Will Shield You*

Embodiments of Love! Be fearless. Do not be afraid even if a thunderbolt were to land on your head. Death comes only once, not twice. It is bound to come one day or another, so do not be afraid of death. Be ready for anything. Do not be afraid to follow truth. Fill your life with love. Only then will your life be sanctified. No spiritual practice like saying God's name (*japa*) and meditation (*dhyana*) can redeem your life if you do not adhere to truth and love. Let anything happen, hold on to these values. These values alone can confer happiness and prosperity to the entire world. Develop love more and

more. Do not pay heed to the criticism of others because you are not committing any mistake. What mistake can there be if one loves God? Have unflinching love for God until your last breath. Do not give scope for conflicts or doubts.

Each one has to face the consequences of his or her actions. None can predict when and how, but one is bound to face them. But when you constantly think of God, you will never be put to sufferings. God will shield you from all suffering. He will always be with you, in you, around you, to safeguard you. Do not give leeway for evil feelings. **You may adore him as Jesus, Rama, Krishna, etc., but remember that God is one, the goal is one, truth is one and love is one. Have firm faith in this.** Do not fragment your love in mean pursuits. Understand the principle of unity and cling to it. Then, wherever you are—in the forest, in the sky, in the city, in a village, on the mountaintop or in the middle of the deep sea—God will certainly take care of you. No one has the right to deny your God. Due to the impact of the Kali Age, people are taking to evil ways in pursuit of money. They even go to the extent of killing others for the sake of money. For them, money is everything. One should not struggle to earn money. One should strive to earn the wealth of love.

Embodiments of love! I hope I am not causing you *baadha* (trouble) by speaking at length. In fact, this is not *baadha* but a great *bodha* (teaching). People who are fearful should be given the tonic of courage. Do not give room for any weakness whatsoever.

## *The Alumni Help*

The members of Messengers of Sathya Sai are rendering yeoman service to society. Some-



times, they even forego their food while participating in service activities. But that is not a good practice, as it will spoil their health. They wanted to donate their mite (little offerings) to the Super Specialty Hospital that is being constructed in Bangalore. Being ladies, they felt sad that it was not possible for them to take up any service activity at the construction site, like carrying bricks, etc. They collected 75 lakh rupees from their own small savings and sent the amount to Sri Sathya Sai Trust without informing me. Not merely that, there are many old boys of our college who are working outside. But they, too, belong to me. Some of them wait here for months without even taking food properly. In this manner, they saved some money to contribute for the hospital. The Sathya Sai old students sent 45 lakh rupees to the Central Trust. We don't want your money. We want your love. We want your welfare, progress and happiness. Wherever you are, lead ideal lives.

Some people are under the impression that the rich are contributing crores and crores of rupees for this hospital. We are not asking them, and they are not giving either. I am happy with even a mite offered with love.

Many people offered Jesus various gifts, but he did not accept any of them. But when an old lady offered him a small coin, he accepted happily and kept it with him until his last breath as the offering was made with love.

Similarly, what I want is love, not money. Like this, many more hospitals will be coming up in the future. I do not ask anybody for any help. It is my true will (*sathya sankalpa*), and what I am doing is good. If one undertakes any good work, it is bound to fructify. It is my goodness that attracts all the help. I am happy with even a mite offered with love.

## *No One Should Be Without Food*

Students! Boys and Girls! Take back the money that you have given us. Your love, progress and well-being are what I want. I will be pleased if you lead ideal lives with good conduct. Earn a good name showing that Sathya Sai students are well-behaved. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. Develop your morality and character. Be courageous. Share your love with others. People outside are not aware of the love and devotion that the students and devotees have for me. They do not even care for their health when it comes to serving me. They do not even care for their health when it comes to serving me. But I don't want such service. You should eat well. God is in you, so do not cause yourselves trouble. Make yourselves happy, then serve society. You have been going to various villages and serving the poor. There is no greater service than that. This wealth of service is much greater than crores of rupees. Go to every village, serve the poor and feed the hungry.

I have mentioned this to you recently. I came across a news item in a paper, which I happened to find. There was a poor mother who did not have the wherewithal to feed her child. Her husband was no more. Everyday she begged for alms in order to feed him. Some time back, there were heavy rains continuously for 15 days. Consequently, she could not go out begging. One morning, her son started crying, "Mother, I am hungry. Give me something to eat." -She felt helpless and shed tears. She thought, God has not given me the strength to feed you. In that moment of helplessness, she somehow managed to get some poison, mixed it in water, gave it to her son and drank it herself. They died. I felt



very sad that in this land of Bharat, which is known as Annapurna (goddess of food), but there are those who are unable to feed their own children.

### *Render Service To The Needy*

From that day onwards, **I have taken up a firm resolve. Children should be fed properly and given proper education.** I have made fixed deposits of one lakh rupees for such mothers and children. They will get an interest of one thousand rupees per month. Are a thousand rupees not enough to feed a mother and her child? But there may be some cheats who will try to exploit their innocence. They may try to convince them to invest one lakh rupees in a business for their own selfish ends. That is why the bank manager is given strict instructions in this regard, to give only the interest every month to the parent concerned.

It is not possible to educate the children if they are living in a different village. We wanted to keep them near, and asked the government to allot a suitable piece of land. But they have not given it to us. Why would they give any land to us when they cannot get any votes from us? That is why I have stopped asking them. We have got our own orchard. I have decided to use that piece of land to construct houses for these poor families. I do not want any fruit trees. I thought that instead of utilizing the land to grow fruit trees, it is better to utilize it for the sake of poor children who are like fruits themselves. We are going to construct houses with two rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom for every mother and her child. They can live lifelong in these houses and look after their needs with the interest they get from the bank. I will take the responsibility

of providing education to these children. We have got many students, both boys and girls; they will teach and train the children. Our boys and girls are ready to render any service. I do not want to praise my own students, but you cannot find students like them anywhere else. They

*“Every day, 30 to 40 operations will take place. For this purpose, 30 surgeons will be employed with good salaries. There will be eight to 10 operating theaters. At least 25 to 30 heart surgeries should take place every day.”*

are highly virtuous. I want my students to render service to the poor and needy and alleviate their suffering. Students, you do not need to pay heed to what others say. Take a firm resolve to serve society and sanctify your lives.

### *Opening The New Hospital*

Shortly, I am going to Puttaparthi. Very soon, the students' Sports Meet is going to take place. They need to be encouraged. The construction of houses for the poor have also started. Then, by the 19th [of January, 2001], I will be back here [in Brindavan] for the inauguration of the new Super Specialty Hospital, which is going to confer happiness on the entire state of Karnataka. All the heart patients in Karnataka should be cured of their ailment. Everyday, 30 to 40 operations will take place. For this purpose, 30 surgeons will be employed, with good salaries. There will be eight to 10 operation theaters. At least 25 to 30 heart surgeries should take place everyday. No patient should suffer from heart

failure. that is my strong determination. I don't want to make any distinction between states. All states are mine. All belong to me, and I belong to all of you. Do not entertain any doubt; do not give space for any weakness. I am ready to give whatever you require. Be courageous. Why fear when I am here?

Boys and Girls! Follow the commands of your parents and make them happy. Get married if they want you to, and lead a life of an ideal householder. I bless you all and bring my discourse to a close.

### ***"God-ment" Is Real Government***

In a few minutes from now, the Messengers of Sathya Sai, are going to present a drama. It is an ideal drama, unlike the dramas that you see on television. Today, the government is spoiling young minds through TV. There is no harm if good programs are shown, but the government is encouraging programs which are not good for the children. We do not want such a government. We want a government which will make the people tread on the path of the truth and righteousness. "God-ment" is the real government. There are people who are working for their selfish ends. Do not follow them. Selfishness has become their way of life. Let it not become your way of life. Do not join politics. Take the path of service. Go to each and every village. Serve everybody. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Brindavan, December 25, 2000

**Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Manifest a gold lingum on *Mahashivaratri*, February 21, 2001. The thousands who were present were jubilant and many had tears of joy. Whether one realizes it or not, this is a blessing for the whole world.**





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