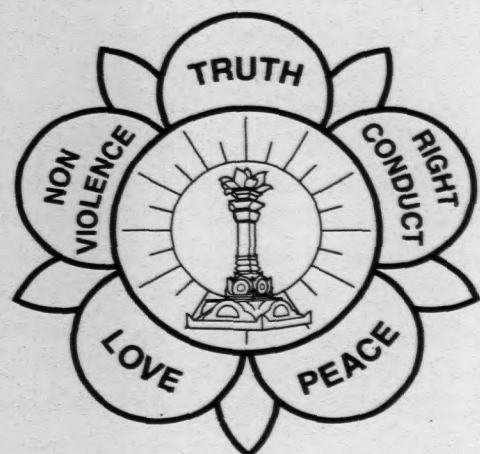




SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER, USA

Summer 2001

Volume 25, Number 4

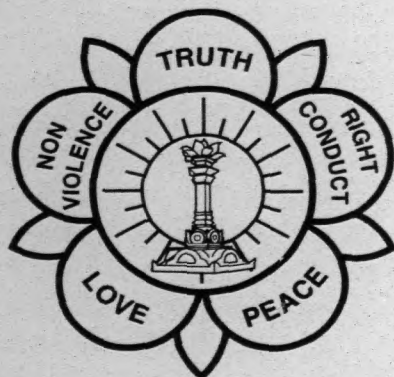
Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

*This publication is dedicated with Love and Devotion to
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

Sai's Message.....	Sathya Sai Baba.....	1
Swami's Responses.....	Sathya Sai Baba.....	2
A Miracle at Kodai	Nicolai.....	3
The Body and Its Significance.....	Sathya Sai Baba.....	4
"They Only Give"	Hal Honig.....	10
Baba Speaks to Students.....	Sathya Sai Baba.....	13
Announcements.....	Newsletter Volunteers.....	18
Swami Tells It Like It Is.....	Sathya Sai Baba.....	19
A Not-So-Old Devotee.....	Barbara Moses.....	23
"Education Is for Life . . ."	Dr. Hiramalini Seshadri.....	25
Children's Corner, Abe Lincoln.....	Sathya Sai Baba.....	28
Swami, Please Lead the Way.....	Carl Hirsch.....	30
Ask Me.....	Jack Pitilov.....	31
Sathya Sai Book Center of America.....	Book Center Volunteers.....	36

Sathya Sai Service Opportunities Newsletter is included in the center of this issue between pages 18 and 19.....**Judith Wechsler, Editor**

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



The *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA* welcomes photographs, drawings and literary contributions. Sorry, we are unable to return any of the above items, so please keep a copy for your files. We reserve the right of discrimination in selecting and editing any material for publication. Kindly send any of the above items to: **Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA**, in care of **Sathya Sai Book Center of America**, 305 West First Street, Tustin, California 92780-3108 or fax 1-909-337-5270

—**Barbara Bozzani, Editor**

Sai's Message

By bad thoughts, one is put to misery. By good thoughts, one will be pious. One beyond thoughts will be at peace. Do not forget these good words!

One's face is the index of the mind. All the thoughts are reflected in one's face. It may be misery, anger, hatred, etc. So people should not give scope for bad thoughts. With bad thoughts people face difficulties. Hurting and harming others are bad actions and, moreover, they will be reflected back. Bad thoughts are not normal to humankind.

When a stone is dropped in a lake, the waves spread. Similarly, in the lake of the mind, when a stone of thought is dropped, it spreads through all the senses.

Through the eyes, it results in bad sight. Through the mouth, it results in uttering unkind words. Through the ears, it results in hearing bad words. Through the hands, it results in bad activities. Our thoughts are responsible for our misery. Once a thought originates, we should discriminate whether it is good or bad. By good thoughts, like serving others and thinking of the welfare



"One's face is the index of the mind."

others, one will be pious. Pious means pious qualities. These qualities are present in every person. We don't get peace from the world, or from education or from a job. Peace originates from within.

When one goes beyond thoughts and offers everything to God, he or she becomes pious. All thoughts arise from the heart; the heart is the temple of God. When individuals recognize this, they will have good thoughts. Our thoughts are responsible for good or bad, so entertain good thoughts. Everything is a reflection of the inner being.

The food you eat and the habits you

pursue are responsible for what you think. Mind is a bundle of thoughts. These thoughts result in actions. For pain and pleasure, one's actions are responsible. Based on this, the saints have declared, "The mind is responsible for liberation or attachment."

—Sathya Sai Baba,

July 6, 1996

Swami's Responses:

When Knotty Questions Are Posed to Him

- To fight a man in the gutter, you yourself have to get into the gutter. DON'T!*
- Those who malign and try to tarnish the Divine will one day pay heavily for it. You don't have to fight them.*
- God does not need your defense or defense lawyers.*
- Instead of countering malicious propaganda and wasting your time, concentrate on strengthening your faith.*

Swami said on October 22, 1963:

The basement of my work is completed; now the structure will rise upon it. I go around the world alone with no paraphernalia and no publicity because I am established in my own glory, my own truth. I have an Atmic (Divine Soul) relationship with all, so I always succeed.

A Miracle at Kodai

It was spring of 1999, and this was to be my third pilgrimage to the lotus feet of our dear Lord Sai. All preparations were underway without any real hitches, so I looked forward to the journey with the usual anticipatory hopes for Swami's loving grace and, perhaps, even an interview. Little did I know what lay in store for me at Kodaikanal.

Arriving at Bangalore, I soon found out that Swami was already in the mountains, so I purchased a bus ticket via Madurai to Kodai. For those who have experienced this trip, I need not dwell on the extremes. Quite an ordeal, but thanks to Swami, I am a traveler who enjoys the bounty available to those who are open to the adventures.

I soon met some old Sai acquaintances and then befriended a German devotee named Irving, a school teacher from South Germany in the Bavarian Alps. He and I and Sasha, a Yugoslavian devotee, were to spend many hours together talking about Sai and all the wonders that he provided for our pleasure and introspection.

One morning during *darshan*, I found Irving seated behind me. We watched Swami walk through the women's side as he had already been through our ranks. Suddenly Irving cried out, "Nicolai, I am very ill. Help me leave now, please. I think I am going to faint!"

There was a *seva dal* (volunteer) just in front of us, so I quickly asked permission to take my friend out, which was immediately granted. Just as I was holding Irving upright, the *darshan* was over and hundreds of devotees were crowding the normal exiting pathways. Since that was Sunday and a special Hindu holiday, the crowds were enormous.

The *seva dal* realized our plight and pointed to the mandir. "Here, come this way." He directed us between the building and Swami's faithful old red mercedes. What I did not see was a square drain and a steel pipe at the bottom of it. With full force, I impaled my right foot on the metal.

The pain was instant! Then, Irving and I became a three-legged being—each *jiva* (individual) supporting the other. My foot, especially the wound, seemed to find every pebble and stone along the way through the vendor's stand and then to the men's sandal check-in.

Two *seva dals* put a cloth on the ground and started to treat my wound. Taking a pair of kitchen scissors, one of them began cutting away the ragged pieces of flesh and applied an antiseptic.

Suddenly, a Hindu man appeared. He was very tall, quite thin and dressed immaculately. He reached down with his two hands,

and held my leg up as the *seva dals* finished their bandaging. There was no pain; it had disappeared. I said, "Thank you, *Sai Ram*," and then looked up at his face. Never before had I seen such incredible peace and beauty. I was mesmerized, and to this very moment, I am still in awe. There was a glow emanating from his face, which I cannot describe.

He then reached into a little pouch around his waist and applied *vibuthi* (holy ash) on my bandaged foot with such gentleness and love. I watched his every move, yet somehow, I found it almost impossible to speak. "Thank you, thank you, *Sai Ram*. Please, what is your name?" He told me, although all I could remember was that his name started with a "p" sound. It would be a year before I was told again.

What happened next was quite extraordinary. As I was looking up at this beautiful, serene face, I noticed he had some red *kum kum* on his forehead. He had reached into his pouch and applied ash in some sort of pattern on my forehead. Although I never saw what he put there, a number of my friends commented on the uniqueness of the

pattern of bars as I limped home that morning. Next, he did what no Hindu man would normally do. He reached down with soft

loving hands, kissed me on both cheeks and then on my forehead. Again, I cannot describe the ecstasy. There are no words to describe the bliss I felt. "Thank you, *Sai Ram*," I finally said. He looked at me with such love and compassion that I could not speak.

Suddenly, Irving's voice called out for me. I looked to the right to acknowledge my friend, then quickly looked back.

No one was there. He had vanished! I sat there and tears of gratitude and love began to find their way down my cheeks. For the remainder of my stay at Kodai, there was no pain in my foot nor any infection.

A year after Kodai, I returned to Whitefield where I developed an infected sore on my right elbow. Even *vibuthi* didn't seem to help. Each day the wound became worse. One day, while waiting in line for morning *darshan*, I spoke to Vasudeva from the Toronto center. We had met previously, and I knew his son was a doctor, so I inquired about him. He replied that his son was not there,

*"Never before had
I seen such incredible
peace and beauty.
I was mesmerized,
and to this very
moment, I am still
in awe."*

but he indicated a devotee sitting nearby who was a doctor.

It was in the *darshan* line that I met Dr. M. Doraisingham who told me to obtain some antibiotics, and then come to his flat after evening *darshan*, so he could relate the genesis of how the photograph of Swami holding the *Hiranyagarbha* [lingam] came to be.

The early monsoon rains had begun. Thunder, lightening and rain were tattooing my senses when I arrived at his flat, where I was shown the miracle of the ever-expanding jasmine necklace over Swami's photo. Then, I took notes, and listened to his story about a young boy being brought back to life

in the doctor's presence. He finished his account, and asked me about my experiences with Swami. I decided to tell him about the miracle at Kodai. He listened attentively and then asked about the "p" sound. I again tried to pronounce the soft "p" sound for him. He looked at me and asked, "Was it Paramshiva?" [one of the names of God!]

A thousand shivers flashed through my inner being. Such perfect timing; it seemed as if the sore on my elbow was manifested just so I could meet this man who gave me the name I had been unable to remember.

—Nicolai

El Cariso Village, California

Man's duty is to sanctify his days and nights with the unbroken recollection of the name of God. Recall [the name] with joy, with yearning. If you do so, God is bound to appear before you in the form with the name you have allotted to him. He will be most beautiful and most appropriate. God is all names and all forms; He is the integration of all these in harmonious charm. God is designated in different ways, and adored by different human communities. They are all limbs of the one God that really is. Just as the body is the harmonious blend of the senses and the limbs, God is the harmony of all the forms and names that man gives him. Only those who are ignorant of the glory of God will insist on one name and one form for his adoration; and what is worse, condemn the use of other's names and forms. . . . I must warn you against such silly resistance. Do not go about proclaiming that you are a sect, distinct and separate from those who adore God in other forms and names. Thereby, you would be limiting the very God whom you are extolling. Do not proclaim in your enthusiasm, "We want only Sai; we are not concerned with the rest." You must convince yourselves that all forms and names [including the formless] are Sai—all is He. . . .

—Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. VI
Chapter 45 (older publication only)

The Body and Its Significance

Embodiments of Love!

Wealth, friends, property and even spouse, if lost, can all be acquired again, but the human body is not like that. Once it is gone, it can never come back, no matter how hard one tries. Human life is most precious, highly sacred, beautiful and invaluable. It is, therefore, the prime duty of every individual to take the greatest possible care of the body. The body is an indispensable vehicle for experiences. Without it, nothing can be done, not even a simple task. The human body is, therefore, more precious than wealth and material acquisitions. Life must be sanctified by making proper use of the body and engaging body and engaging it in sacred actions. Time gone will never come back. Once the Ganges River merges with the ocean, you cannot get back the sacred water of the river. Likewise, once life ebbs and the body is gone, it cannot be recovered—no matter what.

People are more valuable than all the wealth in the world. How does money acquire value? Who is the one who confers value on money, diamonds, gold, and land? It is man who is responsible for this. If man does not exist, wherefrom will all these get value? From nowhere. Human life is very rare and precious. That is why the *Vedas* declare, "Human birth is a rare gift."

Extraordinary things can be achieved with the human body. Human life is even more precious than the body. Yet, there are times when one must be ready to sacrifice

one's life in order to achieve important goals.

Understanding

Embodiments of Love! It is most important to understand the role and the value of the human body. It is the body that shelters the divinity within. The body is like an iron safe that is used for storing jewels and other such valuables. In this case, the valuables stored are good feelings, good thoughts, and noble virtues. If these valuables are lost, they cannot be recovered easily. It is virtues alone that lend value to human life; it is qualities like compassion, forbearance, and sacrifice that make human life precious. But man today does not have the faintest idea of what is meant by human values.

The human body is a clock marking time in the passage of life. It ticks away the seconds, minutes, days, weeks, months and years. People know that life is ticking away, but they do not bother to inquire about the real purpose of life. No one can say when the clock will stop. It is, therefore, most essential to make proper use of life while it is still available. The body is the vehicle for the journey of life. If the vehicle is not properly maintained, then one would have to face obstacles on the way.

Man must contemplate on the importance of virtues. He is ignorant about the answers to questions like: "What is divinity?" "What is unity?" "What is steadiness?" "What is selflessness?" Without knowing the answers to such important and basic ques-

tions such as these, people are grossly misusing the body because they are driven by greed and selfishness. God has not gifted the body for this. The *Vedas* declare that the body has been gifted to serve others. You must firmly resolve not only to take care of yourself, but also others. Unfortunately, people do not know the meaning of the word service. The essence of all the 18 *Puranas* are summarized as, "Help ever, hurt never."

What Is the Real Purpose?

Though God has given the body for service, people do not seem to understand what service means. They are immersed in selfishness. It is always selfishness and nothing else; every thought, every word and every action is driven by selfishness. Man has become a puppet in the hands of self-interest. How can a puppet be called independent? Selfishness must be rejected totally and selflessness must be embraced wholeheartedly. Then, the real purpose of the human body and human life is realized.

In addition to the body, the mind, too, must be used properly in order to derive bliss. There are three important entities in the body: the heart, the mind and speech. The *Vedas* refer to the heart as *Atma*. Swami has already told you that Ishwara* is represented by the heart. Likewise, the mind is the embodiment of Vishnu* and speech is the embodiment of Brahma.* Man is, therefore, verily the form of the divine Trinity. One is not able to understand why people do not recognize their intrinsic value and the divinity la-

tent within them. Only the one who knows oneself can know others. One must endeavor to understand the meaning of "I."

The Meaning of "I"

Everything is contained in the words that we speak. Once a devotee told Swami, "I want peace." Swami replied, "Why are you suffering so much? Do you know the meaning of the word 'I' in your prayer? It means ego." Similarly, "want" means desires. Remove ego and desire, and what remains is peace. Every effort must be made to conquer ego. People think this is very difficult but it is a big mistake to think so. Actually, it is very easy to get rid of ego. Why should you have ego in the first place? There is an easy method to remove it. You think that, "I," is associated with the name given to you at birth. You regard this name as permanent. In the process, you have forgotten your original name. It is the original name that is permanent, not the name given to your body at birth. The given name serves only as long as the present body exists. When the body perishes, the given name ceases to be significant. How long will the body last?

Composed of the five elements and devoid of strength, when this body will go, no one knows. Though a hundred years is said to be the life span, one cannot be sure when death will overtake it—perhaps in childhood, youth, middle age or old age. But certain it is that one day, death will come. He alone is intelligent who realizes this when alive.

Telugu poem

* Ishwara, Vishnu and Brahma are all names of God, in the divine Hindu Trinity.

It is this supreme knowledge that you must acquire. Who is this I? Who am I? This I, is not the body (*deham*), nor the mind (*manas*), nor the intellect (*buddhi*) nor the inner senses (*antahakaraṇa*). I is just I! This primordial I came along with the body; in fact, I, is your correct name. There are so many I's in this world. If you know yourself, then you will also know about all the other I's. This is the reason for the question, "Who am I?"

Mysteries of Human Life

Embodiments of Love! No one is making any effort to know about the mysteries of human life. There are many secrets associated with life. There are many treasures within you. All the power and potency found in nature are also latent in every human being. That which cannot be found within a human being cannot be found anywhere in the universe. Our ancients said to those who went overseas, "Oh Foolish One, why are you becoming a vagabond, wandering over various lands? What you are looking for is already within you. You are not able to recognize the treasures hidden within you."

Who Is the Individual?

The *Vedas* explained clearly the meaning of I. This I is also known as the individual (*vyakthi*). Who is this *vyakthi*? *Vyakthi* is that individual who is able to cognize the subtle and the hidden. He is the one who has realized that divinity is latent within him. He who does not know of the innate divinity does not merit being called a human being. You must understand the identity of the in-

dividual with God. Adherence to truth (*sathya*) and righteousness (*dharma*) would enable one to become a true *vyakthi*.

Educare

Always speak the truth and always tread the path of righteousness. God has gifted you the human form to enable you to follow such a sacred path. Therefore, every effort must be made to bring out the latent human values. One does not become a scholar or a learned person as soon as one is born. These qualifications are acquired over many years and after much effort. "Educare" is the name given to this process that brings to the surface the latent virtues and values. The secular instruction that is currently offered everywhere is education. Dealing as it does exclusively with the phenomenal world, it is artificial. As Swami often says, "Art is outside while heart is inside." Therefore, art is education, while heart is educare. There is no person in the world today who is truly learned in the sense of educare.

He has studied everything, and mastered all. Yet a fool he remains, not knowing about the Self. No matter how advanced the learning, or how high the position held, a mean person will ever remain mean. Too much scholarship promotes only argumentation. No matter what the attainments, the scholar one day has to die. Hence, seek that knowledge supreme which alone leads to immortality.

Telugu poem

It is this supreme knowledge that you really must acquire. What is it that is deathless? The primordial, I, alone is eternal and

immortal. It has no death. Mind, the form of *Vishnu*, is born of I, and it too has no death. The Trinity *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Maheshwara* are all ensconced within the human body. They are the embodiment of truth. Thus, when you say I, it really refers to the name of God, the God within you. It is, therefore, a mistake to identify I with the body, as is invariably done. It is that within; it is the name of truth when it manifests in a human body. People are only conscious of the inert body. The body is just gross matter. All that you can physically see in the external world consists only of gross matter.

Body Has a Part to Play

All that can be seen is ephemeral. We mistake the transient to be the truth. Indeed, the whole of creation will one day disappear; so it is also temporary. But the body has a role to play. Sight, for example, has been given so that you may see the external world. But you should not stop with just seeing. You must make an effort to realize that the body is just an instrument given to you for a specific purpose; you must understand that purpose. Adi Shankara has highlighted this.

Once, when Shankara was going along with his disciples, he noticed a man vigorously committing to memory the rules of *Panini Grammar*. Shankara went to that man and asked, "Why are you struggling so hard to master grammar?" The man replied, "Because I wish to become a scholar." Shankara's next question was, "What will you gain by becoming a scholar?" The man said, "I can get appointed in a royal court

and earn a lot of money." Shankara continued, "What will you do with the money?" The man had a ready answer, "Oh, I can keep my family happy." Shankara then said, "What happens after that?" The man thought for a while and said, "Well, I suppose I will die." Shankara pressed on, "What happens after death?" The man said, "I do not know." Shankara then advised that man, "Oh foolish man, always be chanting the name of the Lord. Your scholarship in grammar will be of no use when the call of death comes. It is God's name alone that can secure redemption." The body may live long, but some day it has to perish.

Give up the Body with Good Thoughts

When the end has come, and death has arrived to take you away. When relatives abandon hope, and get ready for your demise. When your spouse and children are crying piteously, is it possible to suddenly think of God?

Telugu poem

Is it of any use if you cry for help at the last moment? No! The proper thing, therefore, is to prepare for the inevitable right from the beginning by constantly remembering God. He alone can liberate you. Besides singing the glory of God, you must also engage in proper action. What kind of action? Action that would bring out latent human values. The body must be used only for performing good deeds. You must lead a virtuous life. In the end, you must give up the body with good thoughts.

“They Only Give”

Do you wonder how the transformation to the Lord's Golden Age will take place?

Perhaps some miraculous occurrence will suddenly raise the level of consciousness of one and all. Perhaps a handful of new leaders will appear, and people will be inspired to follow their examples. Perhaps some of Bhagavan's devotees will recognize their local needs and, very simply, apply his teachings to resolve those needs.

Let me tell you of one such recent example here in New York City:

Members of a small, new Sathya Sai Baba Center became aware of the fact that many disadvantaged, inner city teens do not have the computer knowledge so essential in today's job market. Many of our center members work in this field or have had college computer training. Office space was offered in the New York financial district and classes were soon organized to teach those in need. Students were taken from high schools and agencies that deal with at-risk youths.

It is hard to believe that, in this rich city of New York, there are an estimated 20,000 homeless teens who come not only from this area but from all parts of the USA drawn by the “glamour” of the city. It does not take long for these teenagers to feel con-

fused and depressed. It was from this population that our first classes were drawn. Later, an important new population was added—that of recent immigrant teens.

The classes are free; carfare is provided and food is served, including a home-cooked hot lunch. Other than our teachers, additional support is given by many teaching assistants who are easily accessible in the classroom to help and mentor throughout the period. From the moment the students enter, there is a warm, friendly, caring feeling; they soon feel very much at home. An Education in Human Values program has been integrated into the teaching of computer skills. For example, a “Thought for the Week” is skillfully woven into the lesson. EHV is presented in interactive ways which make it come to life as memorable and fun.

We were very surprised to find that a number of students, having completed the courses, volunteered to act as teaching assistants. This has been a highly successful addition. All those involved, experience an important increase in self-confidence. Some have joined with the Young Adults on their Sunday Sai Service projects and a few are attending our center meetings. This has happened very naturally with no pushing or preaching. Rather, it is a

natural progression as students follow the admirable example of their patient and cheerful teachers and teaching assistants.

Recently, one high school principal paid us an unannounced visit. He saw the food, the variety of people involved in the project and he saw something unexpected: his students helping as teaching assistants! "All our students want to come. I can see why. You have such good people here," he said. When there were school vacation periods, we were encouraged to hold classes. Would kids really come when regular sessions were closed? Very questionable, we thought, but we organized these special classes anyway. It was surprising to find that all the students came! They felt at home. They felt cared for. Though Swami's name is not mentioned, he is present everywhere through his values and leadership program, so they so they feel loved.

At the conclusion of each course, artfully designed certificates are awarded and special events planned such as: a dinner, a picnic, games, even a trip out of the city for a weekend in the country. All of

this helps to develop healthy mentoring relationships. In addition, special weekly evening classes were set up to give the students the opportunity to work on the computers and to receive tutoring in math

and English as well as help in putting together resumes and college applications.

At the same time, some non-Sai friends and college acquaintances heard of the project and volunteered to help in many ways: as teaching assistants, as tutors,

or as cooks for the lunch program. Some of them have also been drawn to our Sai Center. The foundation for this program rests on the solidly built unity and harmony of our center members and their friends. It is fast developing as new possibilities are beginning to take shape. For example, several cities have already replicated the program (in Cleveland and Miami). Other Sai groups are starting to implement this work elsewhere in the USA, as well as in other countries. A CD was produced* to encourage and guide this service elsewhere. It was shown at the World Youth Conference in Prasanthi Nilayam in 1999.

*Please note that a new and improved, instructional CD can be obtained sometime after summer, 2001. It will be available to those Sai devotees who are interested in starting a similar program in their area.

At the time of the [high school] graduation ceremonies, the principal invited me to attend. When I found a seat in the rear of the filled auditorium, the assistant principal asked me to come forward to a first row seat. After all the student awards were given out, the principal then described our unusual and successful computer program. He presented me with a school T shirt and a plaque that read "In deep appreciation for your invaluable help, time and assistance." In closing, the principal added that our group was remarkable, and that we had never asked anything of him or his staff. "These people set a fine example," he said, "They only give."

Following the ceremony, a number of teachers came over to add their apprecia-

tion of the good work accomplished. Other areas of student help are now being discussed for the next term.

What did we really do? We met a need as best as we could, keeping Swami ever-present in our thoughts. He has taken care of the rest. We made no speeches, we engaged in no proselytization. We did our duty to follow his teachings. We are very grateful for the opportunity that Swami has given us to serve! We built on the strength that comes from the unity and harmony of our Sathya Sai Baba Center members.

Baba has taken care of all the rest for he alone is the doer. And so we all are instruments for "Bhagavan's Golden Age of Transformation."

—Hal Honig
New York, New York

It is noteworthy that this group of volunteer teachers and their students now meet in the computer science department of a local high school where they have better facilities.

More happiness can be won by serving others than can be gotten by merely serving oneself. Just offer some service with a full heart to anyone in need, and experience the bliss that results. Everyone of you must be eager to help those who need it. . . . Of course, one has to eliminate the ego totally. Service helps you to eliminate the ego. Do not pay heed to what others might say when you engage in service activities. Let compassion and sacrifice be your two eyes, let egolessness be your breath and love be your tongue. Let peace reverberate in your ears. These are the five vital elements on which to live. God will not ask what service you did. He will ask with what motive you did it, and what was the intention that prompted it. God seeks quality—the quality of the heart, the purity of the mind and the holiness of the motive.

—Sathya Sai Baba
*Spiritual Directives/Advice
on Operation of Sai Centers*

Baba Speaks to Students

*With scholarship, one may subdue
savants in court.*

*Being brave in spirit, one may fight
courageous battles.*

*Being born a king, one might rule over
an empire.*

One might lavish gifts of gold.

*One might be able to count all the stars
in the sky.*

*One might be able to enumerate all the
living species.*

*One may have mastered all the eight
forms of knowledge.*

*One may have even landed on the
moon.*

*But of what use are all these
achievements,*

*If one is not able to control the mind and
the senses,*

And uphold eternal human values?

Land of Virtue

Students, Boys and Girls! What the world badly needs today is not wealth, affluence and prosperity, but students with exemplary character. The progress of the nation depends on such students alone. This is the fundamental assumption of Bharatiya (Indian) culture. Bharatiya culture is the epitome of truth that is eternal; it is impervious to the passage of time, and is not influenced by history. Ancient Universal Wisdom (*Sanathana Dharma*) is the core of Bharatiya culture. This culture is latent in everyone as human values. This land is

sacred in all respects. There is truth in the dust, righteousness in the wind and compassion in the sand. Love flows in the sacred River Ganges. To top it all, there is forbearance in the people of this land.

Bharat has been the home of such noble qualities and virtues from ancient times. The sages of yore crowned sacrifice and not people; they accorded righteousness a place of pride in their lives. They were committed to justice and embraced truth. It is such sacred practices alone that have protected Bharat through the ages.

The People Have Forgotten

Unfortunately, values declined in the course of time, and Indians of today have completely forgotten all about our ancient culture. People no longer remember their duties and obligations. In the prevailing situation, the basic principles of our ancient culture have become a vital necessity for one and all. Indeed, because of its fundamental nature, this culture is needed not only for the people of this land but for the whole of humanity. Which country can afford to negate truth? Which country can say that it has no need for righteousness? Is there a person who says that he or she does not want peace? Is there a human being who does not want love? Truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence are indispensable for all of humanity. They are vital for the survival of humankind. Neglecting to

uphold these basic values, Bharatiyas, in recent times, have slowly forgotten all about virtues and character.

Future Citizens

Students, Boys and Girls! You are the future citizens of this country. The glory of the ancient culture of Bharat can be revived only if you become the torchbearers. Today, falsehood, injustice, improper conduct and evil are rampant everywhere in the country. You must resolve to wipe out all such bad influences. Students of Bharat must make every effort to abide by basic human values and spread joy in society.

Human values do not come from somewhere outside. They are latent in humanity and come along with the person at the time of birth. Since they are already in you, there is no need to go searching for them; they are in you and follow you everywhere. If you cannot recognize the values already existing in yourself, how then are you going to understand your innate nature? If a person does not understand what truth and righteousness mean, how then is that person going to live as a human being? Therefore, begin by realizing that truth and righteousness are already in you. Bharatiya culture stresses the tremendous importance of these two values by the injunction, "Always speak the truth and follow the path of righteousness." They are the fundamental guiding principles of humankind. Without these values—truth, righteousness, peace and love—

education is empty. Without them, charity and donations have no value. Without them, sacred activities are pointless. The eternal values—truth, righteousness, peace and love—are the four pillars of ancient eternal wisdom. What else is to be communicated to this august body of students?

Those Who Failed

Students! Human values are your very life and you should never abandon them. Do not dissipate yourselves by struggling for worldly achievements and power. No matter how powerful you are, if you immerse yourselves in the world, you are sure to get drowned. Remember Ravana? He was most powerful. His strength was unmatched, so was his wealth. There was no comfort he did not enjoy. There was nothing he lacked. He was highly learned, having mastered sixty-four forms of knowledge. He even knew the language of the birds and the animals. Despite all this, he became a slave to just one bad quality, lust. And that one weakness brought about his total ruin. On account of desire, he lost his kingdom, his kith and kin and his own son as well. In the end, he lost his life.

There is also the example of Hiran-yakasipu, a scientist par excellence. Whereas modern scientists have journeyed merely to the moon, Hiranyakasipu traveled even to the stars in order to investigate them. Once, as a part of his studies, he was about to disturb a star. People feared that there might be terrible consequences, and respectfully

requested him to abandon his plans. Hiranyakasipu yielded and returned. This man who was so clever, smart, and intelligent hated God. Why? Because he was a slave to anger. Anger and hatred blinded Hiranyakasipu completely, and brought about his downfall. He, too, lost everything including his life. An angry man will never achieve true success. He will always face obstacles and be driven to sin. He will invite only contempt from others. This is what anger does to a person, and Hiranyakasipu embraced this vile quality. An angry man drags himself to doom; moreover, he is looked upon with contempt.

There is also the example of Duryodhana, who was just as bad as Hiranyakasipu. He grabbed the territory that rightfully belonged to the Pandavas, and exiled them to the forest. It was greed that drove him to such mean acts. Desire (*kama*), anger (*krodha*) and greed (*lobha*), are three great enemies of humanity.

The evil persons mentioned thus far had only one bad trait in each of them; but in this Kali Age (age of factions), all three evil qualities coexist in the same person. If one weakness alone led to such disasters earlier, what can happen to a person when all three are present? It is beyond one's imagination. Students must therefore exercise tight control over tendencies that can lead toward *kama*, *krodha* and *lobha*. Perhaps, it may not be possible to completely quell such tendencies; only the very great have been

able to wholly vanquish them. Even so, these bad qualities must be kept as far away as possible. If any undesirable thoughts come to you, pause and think: "Is it good or bad? Is it right or wrong?" If your heart says it is bad, then immediately drive the thought away. Such discipline would enable you to become an emancipator of this country.

Why Students Go Astray

Unfortunately, at the present time, neither parents, nor teachers, nor leaders give proper guidance and direction. This is responsible for students going astray. Students are intrinsically selfless, pure and unsullied. Basically, they are very good. If they have bad qualities, they are generally inherited from parents, and in the schools, the bad qualities multiply. When they enter adult life, the prevailing political environment wipes out all traces of good qualities. Politics is the root cause for the present plight of the country. It alone is to be blamed for the decline of values and virtues, and the concomitant growth of evil. Therefore, avoid politics. Instead, dedicate your life for the progress, welfare and development of the nation. No matter what, be resolute in serving the country. Nothing excels service and sacrifice.

Emulate Times Past

Students! In olden times, centers of learning were regarded as highly sacred. People in such centers prayed. In those days, people prayed for the welfare of one

and all: "May everyone be prosperous. May everyone be virtuous. May everyone be blessed with wisdom."

You should broaden your mind, and treat the body as most sacred. Always ensure that your words are truthful and unsullied. Do not permit your body to stray to the path of sin. Man's true nature is a combination of a pure heart, an unsullied mind and sacred speech. That is why it is often said that the proper study of mankind is man. A person is worthy of being called a human being when his or her thoughts, words, and actions are in perfect harmony. Speak the truth that comes from your heart. What you say, you must do.

Reference is made in the *Bhagavad Gita* (spiritual text) of leaf (*pathram*), flower (*pushpam*), fruit (*phalam*) and water (*toyam*). Your body is like the bilva tree, your mind is the bilva leaf, your heart is the bilva fruit and your tears of joy represent water. You should shed tears of joy, not tears of sorrow. Why should you ever be sad? Sorrow is the result of worldly attachments. Never give any room for sadness, always be happy, happy, happy! What is happiness? Happiness is union with God. Be always attached to divinity, and problems will not bother you. Due to bondage, as well as due to the vagaries of the world, pain and pleasure will alternately visit you. But you should learn to ignore them; they are just passing clouds, they come and go. They should never be allowed to enter your heart.

Instead, just let your heart be a witness. In fact, your heart is truly the Eternal Witness. By all means do what you must; do your duty; but remain aloof and detached. Abide by the advice of your parents. Absorb all their good teachings. Revere them as your preceptors and as God. Rishis of old declared: "Mother is God, father is God, your teacher is God, and your guest is God." In fact, in this world, all are divine. If you are good boys, you become God boys! You should therefore become good boys and experience the Atmic Principle. If your heart is devoid of divine feelings, your entire life will become empty.

But What Has Happened?

Lately, human values have been forgotten and spirituality has declined sharply. Spirituality has declined; ethics and morality have disappeared. Consequently, the absence of ethics, morality and righteousness have also vanished. Since there is no righteousness, there are no ideal persons to be found anymore. There is no idealism left. Clearly, restoration of human values should be the country's first priority. Then, the country would be seized with spiritual fervor. The rise of spirituality will automatically promote morality in society. The return of morality is nothing but the restoration of righteousness; when it prevails, everyone can easily lead an ideal life.

Students! You should all lead ideal lives. For that, you must strictly adhere to the path of righteousness. Inquire deeply

what the basis for righteousness is. Morality is its basis. Ceaseless contemplation of God is tantamount to following that which is right. What is the prime quality of fire? To burn is its natural attribute. If it does not burn, it cannot be called fire. What is the quality of ice? To be cold is its nature. If it is not cold, it cannot be called ice. In the same way, what is the distinctive quality of humanity? Truth is the innate quality of humanity. But unfortunately, there is hardly any trace of truth in the world today. That is why there are law and order problems all over the world. People open their mouths only to utter untruths. No one believes what the other person says. How can children grow up to be truthful in such an environment? There is no righteousness greater than truth. If there is no truth, there cannot be anything that is righteous.

Harishchandra faced innumerable obstacles and tremendous difficulties; but he stuck resolutely to truth all his life. Nowadays, people complain, "What can I do? It is so difficult to be truthful. If I do so, I might lose my job." So what? Let go of the job. Why so much fuss about a job? What you really need is spiritual practice (*yogam*), not employment (*udyogam*). People today are only concerned about job and money—it is nothing but job-money, job-money, job and money. People have become servants of jobs and slaves of money. Is this the way to live? You must become a slave of truth.

Today, we need leaders who are

righteous. Only a slave of truth can become a righteous leader. Without truth, how can one become the right kind of leader? The behavior of people these days is a matter of great shame. Truly speaking, you are the sons and daughters of righteousness, but what are you doing to uphold it? There are none to speak forthrightly like this, and that is why the country is plummeting to ruin. There is no need to be afraid of being truthful. Be bold and face difficulties squarely. Bear the suffering and march resolutely ahead. Students of such high caliber are a vital necessity in today's world.

Uphold the Tradition

Students! Life is meant to be a saga of bliss. Adhere to the path of truth. Install righteousness in your mind. Then, you will automatically experience and enjoy peace. You must be totally aligned with your culture. What is meant by culture (*samskru-ti*)? That which refines is culture. You should be refined and cultured individuals. Bharatiya culture is most sacred. Because of its spiritual basis it has, from ancient times, served as a beacon to all lands. Elsewhere today, situations are deteriorating. This country which was once the fountainhead of truth and righteousness is faring no better. It is a matter of shame that it has lost its old glory. You are the children of this ancient culture and civilization. You must uphold this tradition, so that you can hold your head proudly wherever you go.

Please turn to page 20

Announcements

Calling All Artists and Designers

It has been suggested that a new cover for the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA* would be appropriate. We have used the existing design for many years; now it's time for a change!

Those who wish to participate, please submit your ideas and drawings to the: ***Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA***, in care of **Sathya Sai Book Center of America, 305 West First Street, Tustin, CA 92780-3108**, or fax to the editor **1-909-337-5270**. Designs can be in black and white or in color and must include the name of the publication, ***Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA***, and a place for the date, volume, etc.

More Good Reading Material

Have you seen **Sai World, A Newsletter for Children and Youth** lately? It is filled with wonderful material for children of all ages. It is a quarterly (four issues a year), \$5.00 per year and can be easily obtained from: **P O Box 7722, San Diego, CA 92167**. There are puzzles, games, illustrations and fun stories based on good values.

Are You Moving?

If you are going to have a change of address, we must have that new address in our files as soon as possible, otherwise we can no longer forward your *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*. That's not because we are mean, or we don't want to. All our costs have increased, and to continue to ask the U.S. Postal Service for "Address Service Requested" has become financially prohibitive. [hasn't just about everything?]

We don't want you to miss any issues, so please keep us informed each time you move. It is truly our pleasure to serve you. **Send new address information to: *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA***, in care of **Sathya Sai Book Center, 305 West First Street, Tustin, CA 92780-3108**, or fax: **714-669-9138**. **Please include: your name as it appears on your Newsletter subscription label, your old address and your new address. Sai Ram.**

Every nation depends on three sections of its people for its progress—the producers, the protectors and the preceptors. All three are equally important and closely interdependent. This is the tripod on which peosperity rests. Love is the sitting place on the three legs. The nation can be happy and peaceful if all three sections work together in mutual love for the nation.

—**Sathys Sai Baba**, From: *Love Is My Message*
Compiled by: Ms Valentina B. Patacsil



Sai SERVICE USA

"Fill your heart with compassion and serve the poor and needy. Don't be stone-hearted and money-minded. When the hour of reckoning comes, will you be able to carry with you the wealth you have amassed? No. Serve the poor with love. That alone can redeem you. Service to the poor is service to God. Sacrifice your life for the cause of the poor. Service to the poor is My only motto. I have no other desires. I am prepared to sacrifice even My life to serve the poor. Do at least one-thousandth part of what Swami is doing. Of what use is human life if it is not spent in the service of the poor?"

• Sathya Sai Baba

Sanathana Sarathi, February 2001, p. 56

The Colorado Adopt-a-Town Project—A Service Odyssey

Never in our wildest imagination did we see ourselves re-roofing an entire house, but the "call of Sai" led our Southeast Denver, Colorado, Center to the point where we did just that and more. What started out as simply a desire of one Center to move from mostly individual service to more group projects turned into a massive quest for information and contacts and became a multi-Center adopt-a-town effort. And so on that cold day in October, we found ourselves in Saguache, one of Colorado's poorest towns, ripping up shingles on a house belonging to an elderly couple who didn't have the money to hire roofers or the energy to do the work themselves. On this visit to the town, we couldn't help thinking how far we'd come.

• Our spiritual journey to Saguache began in January 2000 when one of our members, who was investigating another project, did a computer search and came across statistics on per capita income, unemployment rates, and current industry for Colorado counties. Using this information, it was not hard to determine that the poorest county in Colorado was Saguache, about a 3½-hour drive from our Center's meeting place. Unemployment in the county was 14.6 percent, and the average per capita income of the 5,911 residents was \$12,561. Since the county was also geographically one of the largest in the state, government services there were spread rather thinly.

Continued on page S2

The Colorado Adopt-a-Town Project

Continued from page S1

During this investigative phase, we often felt guided by Swami. A member received a business call, and in the conversation the woman she was talking to "just happened" to mention that her sister worked in the Saguache County Department of Social Services office we were having difficulty contacting. One phone call and one day later, we had the report we needed. At another time, when we were struggling to obtain a list of the public health agencies in the state, two Center members decided to go to the state health department. "By chance," they walked into the right place and spoke to just the right person, who then gave them the needed information.

These Sai coincidences continued as we our research zeroed in on the project. When a Center member called the county Department of Social Services, not only did the director herself come on

In the next few months, we worked with Social Services employees, the sheriff, and the senior citizen community to organize a weekend of maintenance on seniors' homes in the town. During this time, we made two reconnaissance trips there so we could evaluate and select the work to be done and match volunteers to the tasks to be accomplished. Project organizers made up job sheets and assigned crew leaders according to their interests and talents. Center members planned meals to be cooked for community and Sai volunteers, and gathered and organized supplies for Saguache, as well as collected clothes and household items for the Welfare to Work thrift shop in a neighboring town. When we were finally ready, many of us felt that Swami had blessed us with just the right amount of goods to carry off the project.

On a sunny Friday afternoon in June, determined to serve God in human form, our group of 5

"We came to realize that with Swami's help we could surmount all obstacles."

the line but she "just happened" to have two other key county officials in her office at the time. The County, it turned out, was very interested in pursuing a collaboration with the Sai Center.

At the all-day meeting following this conversation, government officials and Center representatives looked at county needs and resources and decided to focus on the town of Saguache as a step toward serving the entire county. The Center's adopting this town would fill a real need, since it had no organized volunteers and most of the approximately 500 people living there were seniors with minimal physical and monetary resources. The program that came out of these discussions called for high-risk children and Sai and county volunteers working together to serve the town's elderly population. After the meeting, the Center agreed to commit to three or four visits in 2000.

children and 14 adults (2 of whom came from other Centers) left for Saguache. In a convoy of cars, vans, and trucks, we carried the food; lawn mowers, weed whackers, and other garden implements; and bedding plants. Also hauled to the town were minor plumbing and electrical supplies, household tools, ladders, window-washing equipment, and the items for the thrift shop.

That night in Saguache, our men slept in the local Methodist Church while the women camped out on the floor of the senior center in the Department of Social Services building. We got up early the next morning, eager to begin working.

Soon we were mowing lawns, pruning trees and shrubs, turning over and weed-whacking flower beds, and installing the bedding plants. We also washed windows, made plumbing repairs, and boarded up basement windows for safety. However,

Continued on page S6

Focus on Individual Service

When group service is not possible, or you want to do more, discover the joys of one- or two-person projects. Here are a couple that are unique.

A Yoga Teacher's Service

When you share yourself as a teacher, the highest part of you emerges and you begin to realize the vast inner reaches of your own self. When you remove the ego and allow the teacher to emerge, you experience bliss. When you feel bliss, considering it service is difficult. It is joy.

One of my greatest joys of the past two years has been teaching yoga classes for people with multiple sclerosis (MS). Each Saturday morning, I go to a rehabilitation center in a small North Carolina town, where I help my students learn meditation, breath control, asanas, and relaxation. In my classes, I constantly draw upon Swami's wisdom. As I offer guidance in asanas, I share His teachings on diet, repetition of God's name, and devotion.

People in the classes are highly motivated. They want to gain control over their body because they see the fragility of what so many of us take for granted. As Swami says, intensity in practice makes the difference.

I began sharing yoga and Swami's prescriptions for health with others after first experiencing their benefits in my own life. In 1992, while in Puttaparthi, I suffered from migraines, was on daily medication, and was weak and physically out of shape. At the time, although I knew nothing about yoga, I had a "feeling" I should pursue it, which I did as soon as I returned to the United States. As I studied traditional yoga philosophy and Swami's teachings, I found that they were synonymous. Yoga, along with His teachings, returned me to health and allowed me to be pain- and medication-free.

Continued on page S4

Sai Service, Canine-Style

I'm just a loud-barking old hound named Shadow, but each month I go with my human friends, Lenny and his wife, Sharon, to visit a nursing home called Eldercare of Franklin County, which is near where I live in Rocky Mount, Virginia. Recently, an elderly resident at the home said as we were leaving, "This place has gone to the dogs." That comment, accompanied by his smile, brought us all great joy and laughter.

The director of social activities at Eldercare calls dog visits "pet therapy." And, in a way, they are. People smile when they see me coming, and residents' faces light up as they pet me on the head.

We began visiting the nursing home because Lenny missed going to service projects like the one at a Long Island, New York, Sai Baba Center he used to go to. Center members there would visit a nursing home occasionally and sing songs to the residents, and Lenny really liked that. You see, he gets a sense of joy from helping seniors, especially those who are helpless. And he sees the elderly as a repository of wisdom and knowledge, and as such, people to be respected.

Since living here in Rocky Mount, however, group Sai service has not been possible, as we are an hour and a half from the nearest Center. So about a

Continued on page S5

All articles and photographs on group and individual service are welcome. Send contributions to the Sai Service USA editor, Judith Wechsler, 2965 Hopkins Road, Rocky Mount, VA 24151.

A Yoga Teacher's Service

Continued from page S3

Practicing yoga, I soon discovered, also opened doors for me to share Swami's love in ways I could not have imagined. Since I work at a hospital and yoga is health-related, I was able to teach it to many

"Swami gives us everything we need whether or not we have the foresight to ask for it."

people so that they too could experience its benefits. When I heard about a yogi who has MS and trains yoga teachers to work with those who have the disease, I decided to attend his training sessions. Watching Eric share his love with each student, I realized what service is. He gave each one something tangible to "hang on to." He gave each love. He behaved with awareness and intelligence, responding to the needs before him.

Swami gives us everything we need whether or not we have the foresight to ask for it. I did not know anything about the benefits of yogic discipline when I began my practice. Neither did I know anything about Eastern philosophy when I began loving Swami. But over the years, both have become an active part of my consciousness. He directs our lives to perfect fulfillment in spite of our ego interference.

With Eric as a model and Swami as an inspiration, I have started a new teaching experience. In my classes, I gently guide students to touch the inner self and to allow inner joy to manifest in their body. Together, we work to move awareness from the external to the internal.

I see immediate results as students' bodies change in response to this approach. People in the classes gain many physical benefits from yoga, which has a direct affect on the symptoms of their disease, improving their balance, flexibility, and strength. Fur-

thermore, they are exposed to a deeper experience of the self, as well as to an appreciation and acceptance of the body, and they learn about the importance of self-confidence.

At the end of each class, we all sit and recite three oms. Being able to participate in that closing ritual in small-town North Carolina is such a great blessing—a verification that Swami is in control, a reminder to follow the inner prompting. I am always so amazed when we share this sacred experience together. And then, I look up and smile at the ultimate teacher, who stands to the side watching.

Devotee

High Point, North Carolina

Sai Baba's "Prescriptions for Health"

Man suffers from two types of ills—physical and mental. One is caused by the disequilibrium of the three tempers: vatha [mobility], pitha [energy], and sleshma [kapha, solidity]; the other, by the disequilibrium of the three attributes: purity, passion, and dullness. A peculiar fact about these two types of illnesses is that the cultivation of virtue cures both. Physical health is a prerequisite for mental health, and mental health ensures physical health.

An attitude of generosity, of fortitude, in the presence of sorrow and loss; a spirit of enthusiasm to do good, to be of service to the best of your capacity—these build up your mind as well as your body. The very joy derived from service reacts on your body and makes you free from disease. Your body and mind are so closely interrelated.

Sadhana—The Inward Path, Chapter 9

Sai Service, Canine-Style

Continued from page S3

year ago, Lenny and Sharon started taking me to the nursing home. And my career as a Sai service dog began.

Each time we go to the home, my human friends put a leash on me and dress me up. I wear a scarf and frequently Sharon wears one as well. At times, Sharon and I each put on a hat—really a dust mask. The residents often laugh and get a kick out of this practice.

At the home, Lenny walks me from room to room, and I am the center of attention. I have a black heart made of fur on my left side. Blue tick coonhounds like me are known to occasionally have this marking. "It's something that God arranged," Sharon explains when the residents look endearingly at my large heart. "God put it there to remind people to love Him." It reminds me to love everyone else too.

The residents also seem to be able to identify with me, since I'm quite elderly myself and have to stop to rest sometimes when I am walking around the home. My human friends tell them how I have arthritis in my back legs and take glucosamine sulfate for it, which helps me.

Some of the residents now know me and eagerly await my visits. One 92-year-old woman says to me, "Shadow, you're so cute" and makes a big fuss over me. She is a joy to be with because she always has something positive to say and is so happy to see us. In truth, we also look forward to meeting her each time we visit. If we don't see her around, Lenny always asks where she is. And I like to lick her hand.

An 87-year-old woman also really likes my company. She speaks to me so soothingly and lets me rest near her feet. Her artwork is beautiful to look at, and, believe it or not, she paints with water paint markers like those even existed. You can often learn something new from people at the nursing home.

Last week, when I was at Eldercare, I couldn't stop barking. After a while, I got very thirsty from walking around and barking so much. So Sharon gave me water to drink from a cup, as she usually does at the home. (Everyone always thinks my drinking human-style is so funny.) After that, she fed me ice in the hall to quiet me. She was surprised at how much I liked it and promised that next time she would bring ice into the rooms and feed it to me there. No doubt, the residents will find it as uproarious as my human friends did.

Oh, by the way, if you decide to take your dog to a nursing home for pet therapy and give him water and ice, be sure to bring paper towels to clean up spills. The elderly can slip easily, and you wouldn't want to hurt anyone. And as a precaution, before you enter a room, remember to ask the resident, as Lenny does, "Do you want to pet the dog?" Never bring the dog into the room if the answer is no or if you see fear in the person's eyes. After all, you want the canine experience to be a good one—one that brings joy to the residents and brightens their day.

♣ Shadow
Rocky Mount, Virginia

Feel free to share this story with Bal Vikas children.



The Colorado Adopt-a-Town Project

Continued from page 52

we spent most of the day clearing debris from seven properties.

All that work was physically difficult for many of our Center members, maybe because our mean age is approximately fifty-five. At one point when we were alone, with just Sai volunteers, we stopped and chanted om for several minutes and experienced

the roofing materials were donated. More people from the Saguache community also volunteered, so we now had 25 people (including 5 children), enough manpower to complete the weekend tasks as planned.

However, on the day of the trip, we again had to call on Swami as new difficulties threatened to derail our plans. Heavy snow fell on that Friday. And

"Many of us felt that Swami had blessed us with just the right amount of goods to carry off the project."

an instant rise in mood and energy level. By late afternoon, we had gathered enough trash to fill three huge county dump trucks.

During the day, the children picked up rocks and sticks in preparation for the mowing and weed whacking. They all worked very hard and often talked about how much fun they were having and how nice everyone was. For many of them, this activity was the first experience of hard work as fun.

On Sunday morning we wrapped up the last-minute jobs, assessed future project needs, and tidied up the facilities in preparation for our return home. We felt that Swami had truly guided us through a successful activity from beginning to end.

Several weeks later, we made plans for our October trip to Saguache. However, it soon became apparent that our needs for this trip would be greater than our Center alone could provide. At Saguache, we expected not only to replace the one roof but to repair two others, install a wall protector around a tub, and do yardwork. Faced with such a heavy undertaking, we at one point were beginning to question our sanity. However, we invited the Boulder and Denver, Colorado, and Sante Fe, New Mexico, Sai Centers to join us and prayed to Swami. With His grace, we knew we could make this trip work. The turning point came when a large truck and all

in the afternoon, just as we were preparing to leave, the sheriff called to tell us we couldn't get to the roof we had planned to replace. The neighbors, he said, wouldn't grant us permission to cross their property to gain access, despite several weeks of negotiation with community members. Notwithstanding this information and the weather conditions, we left with a prayer in our hearts to Swami to overcome all obstacles.

We arrived in Saguache after dark, and several of us decided to have a meal at the local restaurant. While we were seated, awaiting the meal, one of our members who is a minister at a small Wyoming church, agreed to contact the neighbor and make one last attempt to negotiate permission to access the property. After she left, we prayed constantly to Swami. Twenty minutes later, she returned to the table. With His grace and a gentle refusal to accept no as an answer, we had the permission we needed. On Sunday, we completed all tasks by noon.

Upon request from the community, we agreed to return at Christmas to provide needy families with gifts. A volunteer from Social Services gave us a list of 17 families, including a Christmas wish list for each family member. We collected almost all of these requested items and distributed them at a Christmas party. The party ended our year of ser-

vice in Sagauche, but the effects of our work would extend long afterwards.

The Adopt-a-Town project was a great learning experience for us. The project showed us when our motives were pure and our timing was right and measured our willingness to sacrifice. It also expanded our self-confidence and opened doors to many new possibilities. We came to realize that with Swami's help we could surmount all obstacles.

During the Christmas party, we had talked with several community members who wanted to serve as local organizers for future projects. Although results are always up to Swami, it is our hope that eventually people in the community will be able to serve themselves without much outside help. In fact,

since our last visit, the Baptist Church gathered some of its members together and took on a painting project on its own. Children and adults in the community now have a new rapport with the senior citizens, and neighbors are now helping neighbors. Our efforts have, it seems, produced what Swami calls "a wave of service...catching everyone in its enthusiasm"—a wave that has begun to "eliminate the mounds of hatred, malice, and greed that infest the world."

♣ **Southeast Denver Sai Center Members**
Denver, Colorado

For more information on the Adopt-a-Town project, call Betsy Schatz, Service Coordinator, Region 9, at (303) 777-4331.

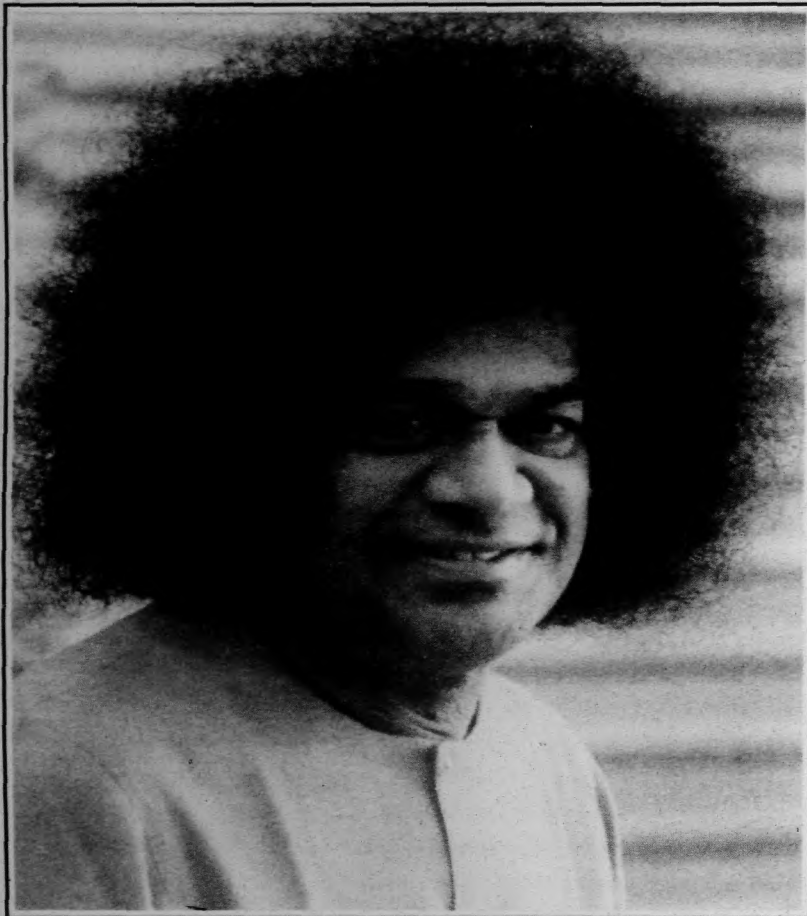
ENERGY SAVERS

- ❑ Choose light bulbs by lumen (light) output, not watts. When you go to the store, compare package information carefully. You may be able to find a bulb with less wattage that produces the light you need.
- ❑ Don't put a small pot on a large burner. If the bottom of the pot is smaller than the burner, some of the heat will escape.
- ❑ Save on gas when you use your car to run errands by doing as many of them as you can in the same trip and planning your route carefully to reduce mileage.
- ❑ When you use the dryer, remember that two small washing-machine loads of towels and linens are better than one. Wait to turn on the dryer until the washing machine finishes the second load and you can add it to the first.
- ❑ One evening (or more) a week, skip electricity-draining activities—such as playing electronic games, watching television, or listening to the stereo—and relax by playing board games, reading, or solving crossword puzzles. Or better yet, sing devotional songs or study Swami's teachings.
- ❑ When buying major appliances, be sure to choose ones that save the most energy, such as chest freezers and front-loading washing machines.
- ❑ Don't postpone cleaning out the refrigerator, leaving in food that's bad. Check regularly for spoiled food and throw it out immediately. Otherwise, you'll be using electricity to cool food you don't need.



Oneness Through Loving Service

Excerpts from a discourse presented in India at the Sai Organization's Fifth World Conference, held in 1990



"Some persons have a direct vision of the Divine. Some others, in spite of all their spiritual practices, are not able to get such an experience. What is the reason for this? "There are different kinds of rosaries. One is a *rudraksha* ["Rudra's eye" seed] rosary. Another is a string of lotus seeds. There are coral rosaries. No one can see the string that runs through all the different beads. Only in a rosary made of transparent crystal beads can the thread be seen. In the same way, in the hearts of all persons, the subtle thread of divinity is present. But only in a heart filled with pure love can divinity be perceived."

"Love, love, love. I love all, and I ask all to love. My greatest wealth is love. People speak about My powers and My miracles, but My love is My greatest miracle. All should share in this love. Only then will there be oneness."



"Through love, you must seek to serve all and enjoy divine bliss. When you embark on service in this spirit, the whole world becomes one single home."



"All Sai volunteers should, at the outset, cultivate the feeling that they are all sparks of the Divine. Only then will they be able to render service wholeheartedly."



"In carrying out sacred tasks in the service of the Divine, one Vedic prayer has indicated the spirit in which they should be done:

Let us live in amity.

Let us move together.

In harmony and understanding
let us live together.

Let us promote unity and friendliness.

If only we could have unity, how much joy we would experience! Unity is strength. To develop unity, you must have the consciousness of spiritual oneness."



"Treat all as the children of one God. Whomsoever you may serve, think that you are serving God. Then you will experience the Divine."

— Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XXIII, Chapter 35

Sai Tells It Like It Is!

Man should put a ceiling on his desires. Today, we find natural calamities taking place because man's conduct is perverted.

You are aware of the devastation caused by the earthquake in Gujarat. Thousands of people lost their lives. The reason for this is that man is entertaining excessive desires. God maintains perfect balance in his creation. In God's creation, the earth and the oceans are endowed with balance. But man is indiscriminately exploiting the earth by extracting oil. And every day tons of fish are caught from the oceans. This indiscriminate exploitation of nature results in imbalance in the earth which is creating havoc with human lives. Only when man is free from unsteadiness within, will he not be troubled by earthquakes.

Not only the people of India, but also the people of the entire world should strive to maintain balance. The five elements are nothing but manifestations of the divine. Man's life will be secure only when he realizes this truth and acts accordingly.

Some time ago, I sent truckloads of rice, grains and other supplies to the earthquake victims in Gujarat. Some people asked, "Swami, why should you take the trouble of spending so much money for sending relief material to Gujarat? You could just as well have averted the earthquake." I replied, "My Dear, man has to blame himself for the earthquakes. Due to excessive greed for

wealth, he is disturbing the balance of the earth—hence the earthquakes! That is the law of nature." Just as balance is essential for nature, so also love is essential for man.

Know that whatever God has created is for your own welfare. You should enjoy nature according to your needs. You should not rob nature of its resources to satisfy your greed. Here is an example:

Once a greedy person owned a duck which laid a golden egg every day. One day, he ripped open the duck's stomach thinking that he would get many golden eggs at one time. Today, man is also indulging in such foolish and greedy acts. Instead of being satisfied with what nature is giving him, he is aspiring for more and more, and in the process, creating an imbalance in nature.

Today, scientists are interested in new inventions. The advancement in science and technology has also lead to an imbalance in nature. As a result, there are earthquakes, and there is little or no rainfall. Science should be utilized only to the extent needed. Science has its limitations, and crossing those limits leads to danger. . . .

Make proper use of natural resources and do not put them to misuse. . . . Share all the good things you have learned with others. This is your foremost duty.

—Sathya Sai Baba
From *Mahashivarathri* Discourse
February 21, 2001

Declare that you are a Bharatiya; this is the level of self-respect that you must achieve. You must boldly declare, "This is my motherland, this is my mother tongue, and this is my tradition." You must enhance the prestige and the reputation of your country. You must be an instrument that spreads the name and fame of Bharat. Spiritual power will enable you to do all this, and righteousness is the basis for spiritual power—for it is the foundation. The close interrelationship between truth and righteousness is the feature of Bharatiya culture.

Students of a High Caliber

Embodiments of Love! Just recently, you have all taken a stiff examination with difficult questions. A few of them were so difficult that even some teachers did not know the answers! Nevertheless, all students scored over ninety percent! Two students even scored one hundred! The overall performance has been so good that Swami feels that everyone should have gotten a hundred out of hundred [loud applause]. Elsewhere, it is difficult to find students with such concentration and focus on spirituality. The discipline of students here is also of a high caliber. Swami does not want to praise students in their presence, but the facts need to be mentioned. The discipline found in the Sathya Sai educational institutions cannot be found anywhere in the world [applause]. You may find enforced discipline, but in our ins-

titutions, discipline is spontaneous, born of the heart—therefore sacred. Sai students bring credit to their alma mater, irrespective of where they go. The Sathya Sai Institute enjoys a great reputation all over the world.

An Even Higher Reputation

There may be a few shortcomings here and there; you must aim at perfection and eliminate these. You must earn an even higher reputation for your institute. One look at you, and people must be able to identify you, immediately, as Sai students. Your looks must be sacred, conduct impeccable and behavior exemplary. Your looks must ever be compassionate. Your words must ever be soaked in truth, and your feelings must ever be nectarine. You must always be happy and under no circumstances appear downcast. Smile! That should be your trademark.

Students! Soon many of you will be leaving the portals of this institute. Wherever you go, maintain your character and your sacred outlook. Bhagavan blesses that this shall be so. Right from the beginning, Sai institutions have been giving free education. Not a single paisa [penny] is charged as fees. There are no fees of any kind. It is all free, free, free! However, where you are concerned, this term "free" has no place. Who is giving free to whom? You are all mine, and I am yours [loud applause]. I give my children what I give. Is it proper to describe this as a free offering?

Appreciate this bond of unity between Swami and yourself. You and I are one.

Swami Is Always Giving

If you want new clothes, do you go to your father and say, "Father, you are making so much money; you are able to afford so many luxuries. How about new clothes for me?" You do not do that. You simply ask for the clothing as a matter of right, irrespective of what his earnings and what his status is. You have the same right with Swami. You do not have to beg Swami or praise him before making a request.

God is present in all beings. The same Divine Principle is present in you as well as in me. You must understand this fundamental truth. It is enough if you grasp this basic fact; there is no need for formal worship, ritual, etc. Fill your hearts with sacred feelings; there is nothing greater than that.

The Students' Real Job

You must all register steady spiritual progress, and share with others what you have gained. Every year, each student must induct at least ten others onto the spiritual path and train them properly. This is your real job, not the one that fetches a salary. Train as many people as you can to follow Sai's principles and teachings.

It is said that Bharat is economically backward. This is no doubt true to some extent. But there is a greater problem faced by the country. In fact, it is a danger—it is the decline of moral and spiritual values

among the people. It is this decline that is mainly responsible for the present plight of the country. If public morality and ethics improve, all-around progress would automatically follow. Hence, do not be concerned that the country lacks wealth. What is true wealth? True wealth is love for God. That is the wealth you must acquire. Develop all the love you can—never stop. If you wish, go for higher studies and seek high positions. But always use these advantages for helping others. Help ever, hurt never. Help everyone and not just the members of your family or community. Do not differentiate by saying, "These are mine, those others are not." Regard everyone as belonging to you. Such feelings alone can weld the whole of humanity into one tightly knit family—never forget this.

Some Small Inconveniences

During the Summer Course, you may have had to face many inconveniences. Swami knows all about them. In fact, these inconveniences are intended to be a part of your training. At home, you may have a room all to yourself, but here you have had to share a small room, sometimes with as many as thirty people. Swami knows how difficult this is. However, this is done deliberately in order to teach you adjustment and mutual understanding. These two qualities are most essential. If you have learned how to adjust with your roommates here, you can adjust with people anywhere in the world, and under any circumstances.

Next, food. You have come from different parts of the country and are accustomed to different types of food. Your tastes vary, but over here, you all have happily accepted the type of food served. There was not even a trace of any discontent, displeasure or disappointment. You must develop such contentment and joy in all aspects of life.

Speak Obligingly

You must always be humble, under all circumstances. Humility is the hallmark of a true Sai student. Such behavior would make you an ideal person and earn a great reputation for your institute. This is what would make Swami extremely happy. Swami does not want anything else. He only wants you to earn a good name. This is all that Swami wants, and you do not have to do anything special to please Swami. Swami is ever ready to do anything for you. Get a good name, and become leaders in society. Then, Bharatiya culture would be restored to its ancient glory.

Be polite, courteous and humble when speaking to elders. Never be rough or rude. Your humility should please the elders to whom you are speaking. At times, you may not be able to do what you are asked, but you can be courteous and noncommittal. As Swami says that you cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.

Cultivate this practice.

Besides this, always be immersed in divine feelings. If you happen to see a wicked person, do not immediately think of that person as being bad. The bad actions of that person are due to the body, but within that person is the same Atma (divine Self or Soul) that is also in you. This unity, this Atmic Principle is what you must focus on. Deal with this other person with the feeling that the Self in you is also present in him or her. This is the way to develop love for all beings. Also, do not bear ill will towards any country—be alike to all. Do not criticize the culture of other countries. Love your culture as your mother; in the same way, people of other lands also love their respective cultures.

One's mother and motherland are greater than heaven itself. Always love these two. If you live like this, you will without question become an ideal person. It is not dress that makes a person great. You may wear an ochre robe, but inside there may be bitter medicine. It is not externals but internals that are important. You must spiritualize your attitude, tendencies and mind. With my blessing that you will all develop a sacred outlook and find fulfilment in life, Swami wishes to bring this discourse to a close.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Valedictory Discourse, May 30, 2000



A Not-So-Old Devotee

In the year 2000, I celebrated twenty years as a Sai Baba devotee. As my mind travels back in time to my first journey to Prasanthi Nilayam, in the winter of 1981-1982, I feel somewhat like an “old” devotee. Things were quite different at that time. There was only one round building and no sheds had been built. There was no planetarium, no administration building on the hill, no canteen for Westerners.

The area around the mandir (temple) was surrounded by sand, that was endlessly swept by bent over, elderly Indian devotees. There was no shelter from the sun around the mandir. Pizza was just starting to be offered at the bakery on Wednesdays and Sundays, “Order in Advance, Please.”

In February and March of 1982, after the *Mahashivaratri* crowds had gone, there were only three rows, for *darshan*, on the ladies side. I had made a total of four trips to India between 1981-1985, staying several months each time I went. It would be as difficult now as it was then to describe those visits, it was all so “other worldly” and profound. But I can say, I was deeply and forever changed.

*“... it was all so
‘other worldly’ and
profound. But I can
say, I was deeply and
forever changed.”*

During those years, I experienced both sublime ecstasy and the depths of hell. Baba would come to me monthly in dreams, sometimes guiding, sometimes teaching, making me laugh, making me cry.

I remember one dream where Baba, as Shiva, was seated in a rocking chair where I, as a child, was sitting on his lap. As the Shiva energy flowed, he silently rocked me back and forth, back and forth.

Of those years, I say I was destroyed, right down to and including my very soul—atom by atom, molecule by molecule. I was destroyed! Then, another dream where Baba proclaimed, “Phase two, construction.” And I felt he painstakingly put me back together by the same method he used to destroy me—atom by atom, molecule by molecule. Baba says, *Only I know the agony of teaching you every step of the dance.*

My last trip to India was for Baba’s 60th birthday, November 23, 1985. I felt as if that was a graduation of sorts, not only for myself, but for many other devotees who were coming and going at that time. So here I am, almost fifteen years post-graduation and much has changed in my life. For the

past eleven years I have been happily married to a man who is a spiritually open-minded Southern Baptist.

I no longer attend weekly *bhajan* sessions and study circles, as I once did. But I do attend Baba's birthday celebration, hosted each year by the Greater Cleveland Sai Baba Center. By his grace, I am in Baba's presence every day. I talk to him of small things; I talk to him of great things. I see him in his ethereal form sitting on the edge of my bed when I am troubled.

Sometimes, he sits silently as I pour out my heart. Many times, his ethereal hand will reach out to pat mine with a reassuring, "There, there." If I am fortunate, he will address my concerns.

So, as this "old" devotee sits to reminisce about what is important after these twenty years, for me it is only a question of: Are my words, thoughts and deeds pleasing to my Lord? And how, oh how, could I ever live without our beautiful Baba in my life?

—Barbara Moses, Aurora, Ohio

Remember that elation is heaven, and despondency is hell. Always have some work to do, and do it well, so you can experience joy. It is like dust settling upon the glass chimney of an oil lamp that dims the light. The attachment to sensual objects and the pleasure they give us is the soot that sticks to the inside of the chimney that dims our light. Clean the chimney every day by repeating God's name, and your lamp will shine for you and for others.

Also have good activities and good companionship. That will help very much with spiritual thoughts and actions; the proper atmosphere is very important for the aspirant. That is why spiritual seekers, in the past, would go and dwell in the ashrams maintained by sages. While there, they had the unique chance of being immersed in good thoughts, good activities and good company. That is like keeping a pot of water immersed in water; the water in the pot will then not be lost through evaporation. But if the pot of water is kept in the open, so that the wind plays upon it and the sun shines on it, then very soon the pot becomes empty. Therefore, be careful that the successes you have won—in the promotion of virtue, in the conquest of good habits and the assumption of regular disciplines—are not frittered away by trite company, loose talk, cynical criticism or lackadaisical effort.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. I, Chapter 15

“Education Is for Life, not for Living”

A parable often retold by Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the story of a little boy who tore his father's world map into bits. The father was furious; the boy decided to make amends by putting the pieces back in place. Even as he tried, all his efforts failed to put the world together again. Then, he noticed that on the reverse of the world map there were bits of drawings of the human body—a nose here, an ear there, a foot, an eye and so on. An idea came to him. He reversed all the torn pieces, and put the parts of the human body together, so they formed the complete picture of a man. The boy turned the picture over and he had the whole world! Likewise, Baba says that in these troubled times, when the whole world is going to pieces, the only way to make the world united is by making each human being a wholesome person. There are no short cuts for doing it.

It was precisely with this aim that Sri Sathya Sai Baba, revered as a world teacher, began his educational mission in 1969 with the establishment of a women's college at Anantapur. Over the past three decades, the mission has grown to include the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) under which come the Anantapur campus, the Brindavan campus of the Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Commerce College, Whitefield and the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam. Besides that, there are dozens of

schools and colleges elsewhere in India and abroad following the Sathya Sai system of education.

The Ministry of Education [in India], has adopted the Sathya Sai system of education. Likewise, educators in Zambia, U.K., Thailand, Brazil, USA and many other countries around the world have taken up this program entitled, Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV). In fact, it has created so many ripples that a conference was organized—with Asia Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education, the Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Thailand, and the Flinders University, Institute of International Education, Australia—in the year 2000. The conference discussed the roles of teachers and parents in values education, and debated on values education for the 21st century, and the evolvement of a practical curriculum for values education. The youth also had their say at the conference.

Historically, SSEHV has its roots in the *Bal Vikas* program started by Sathya Sai Baba in the 1960s. Women, usually housewives, were the teachers, and once a week they would interact with children sent to them by willing parents. These sessions usually included retelling stories from the *Puranas*, devotional singing, and discussions on anger, envy, etc. They also enacted plays on nature and conservation.

This EHV program, with suitable modifications, was made an integral part of the curriculum when the Sathya Sai Seva [Service] Organization started educational institutions. With the establishment of the SSSIHL of which Baba is the chancellor, the EHV program has blossomed to its fullness.

Two-thirds of a student's education takes place outside the classroom. So, to ensure that there is no dilution of the EHV program, these institutions are residential.

Admission to the institutions is based only on merit. Beyond the primary school, there is segregation of the sexes. No fee is collected; even hostel accommodations are free. The students pay only a nominal sum for food. Except during vacations, when they are sent home, everyday is a working day; even festivals and holidays are converted into learning opportunities.

Academically speaking, these institutions compare with the best in the world in terms of qualified faculty and facilities. Classes and examinations are held very studiously; the results are enviable. Many of the alumni are accepted as scholarship students at the Indian Institute of Science.

Sports and games also get pride of place. But the main thrust of the Sathya Sai system of education is to mold the [character and] personality of the student. Baba says, *The end of education is character; education is for life, not just for [earning] a living*

The watchwords in the Sathya Sai Institu-

tions are "cooperation and harmony." The patience and orderliness needed for this are assiduously cultivated.

I asked a former student how all this is achieved. She smiled and said, "Standing silently and waiting patiently for one's turn—be it for a bath, breakfast, games, or going to class—that disciplined routine is a great teacher!" Time management is another concept learned by practice. There are no holidays to laze around; no whiling away over a pack of cards; no watching television, no gossiping. A key factor that ensures the success of the program is that the teachers lead [the students by example].

Practical training in living together as a community is imparted by self-reliance. Although there are cooks, electricians, plumbers at the hostels—the running of the mess, cleaning of rooms, maintenance of hygiene, electricity and water supply, keeping music and sports equipment in good condition—are done by the students. So a history student may thus learn how to change a fuse, a literature student may learn how to take care of overhead tanks; a physics student may learn how to cook, and so on. Within one hour, 500 students eat noiselessly in the dining hall and leave after all the plates and glasses are washed.

Sathya Sai EHV is infused into the teaching of academic subjects. For example, when the social studies teacher says, "Look at the mango tree, you throw stones at it and yet in return, it gives you delicious

mangoes. As for the sandalwood tree, it imparts fragrance even to the very axe that fells it. See their spirit of sacrifice! That is what we too should cultivate." The biology teacher while teaching about bacterial diseases explains how the loss of pain sensation leads to the mutilation of hands and feet in leprosy patients. As a spin off, he adds, "So pain and suffering also have beneficial roles in life." The chemistry teacher while teaching about subatomic particles says, "Just as electrons exist unseen in all matter, living or nonliving, so does divinity exist unseen in all things."

Another facet of the EHV program is the awareness module. For adolescence and youth these are biologically explosive times when hormones race through the system and cause intense emotions and feelings. The awareness programs help students understand themselves better. Fear, ambition, success, failure, inferiority complexes, birth, marriage, death—students thrash out all these issues with teachers; often the chancellor too participates and guides.

The epics of various religions, the lives of saints and the scriptures of various faiths are also studied. In these days of communal and sectarian strife, the message clearly set down in the Sathya Sai system is, "There is only one religion, the religion of love. There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one language, the language of the heart." The students live this precept out, for the festivals of all religions are cele-

brated. A student of this system is equally at home singing Christmas carols, chanting the *Vedas* or reciting *suras* of the *Holy Koran*.

An in-depth exposure to Indian culture and spirituality is another exercise that contributes to the success of the EHV program. Be it Adi Sankara, the Sufis, or Buddha, or Gandhi, the students are exposed to everything. To make these exercises more meaningful, the lessons are driven home through mime, theater, plays and concerts. Fine arts are also given great importance; it is art that uplifts and refines people. At the Prasanthi Nilayam campus, every Tuesday, the boys have a fine arts session, where everything ranging from Carnatic music, and Kathakali dance, to Bach, Beethoven, tribal music and dance are demonstrated and discussed.

The flagship of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning is the MBA course. Total Quality Management and Re-engineering, are the mantras of modern management, but they are suitably modified here. TQM translates as "Total harmony in the quality of thought, word and deed," and Re-engineering as, "humility combined with coordination of head, heart and hand." The cold market economics, usually taught at business schools, acquires the warmth of compassion and human values at this institute.

—**Dr. Hiramalini Seshadri**

Excerpted courtesy of *The Hindu* newspaper, September 12, 2000

Abe Lincoln and Self-Confidence

With self-confidence any task can be performed successfully. Swami will explain this to you:

Abraham Lincoln was born in an extremely poor family in America. His father was a carpenter. His mother used to mend dresses to find the necessary wherewithal to educate Lincoln. He was subjected to much teasing by well-to-do children in school for his style of dress and mannerisms. Once, young Abe Lincoln wept, saying to his mother, "Mother, I am put to a lot of shame in front of my fellow students. Please get me some good clothes." Taking him close, his mother said, "Son, first, you must know our difficulty. We are not very prosperous. Just feeding all of us is a problem. Because of this, how can you expect fancy clothes? Act according to your condition. Sooner or later, you will reach the level of your deservedness. Don't be deterred by other people's taunts. Live with self-confidence. Confidence is the source of all success." Thus, she encouraged him.

From that moment, Lincoln became a person of great self-confidence, and proceeded with his studies and activities with honest effort. Self-confidence was

his armor. Devoid of material wealth and conveniences, he was endowed with plenty of confidence. After some time, his mother passed away. In spite of her death, her words of wisdom were firmly established in him.

His father married again. His new wife was also quite affectionate towards Abe, and encouraged him to persevere in the path indicated by his mother. In due time, Lincoln completed his education.

Life was always difficult for him. He was not suited for working in his father's occupation, so he looked for a job. He thought that self-reliance was better than serving in some firm or other and started a business of his own. He conducted his business in the most upright manner possible, but his associates cheated him. There are people who cannot bear to see the prosperity of others: this is a fact of life from ancient times. Regardless of all difficulties, ["Honest Abe," as he was often called] carried on with the strength of his mother's advice, regardless of all difficulties. He had severe setbacks in business. He sold all his belongings and cleared his debts.

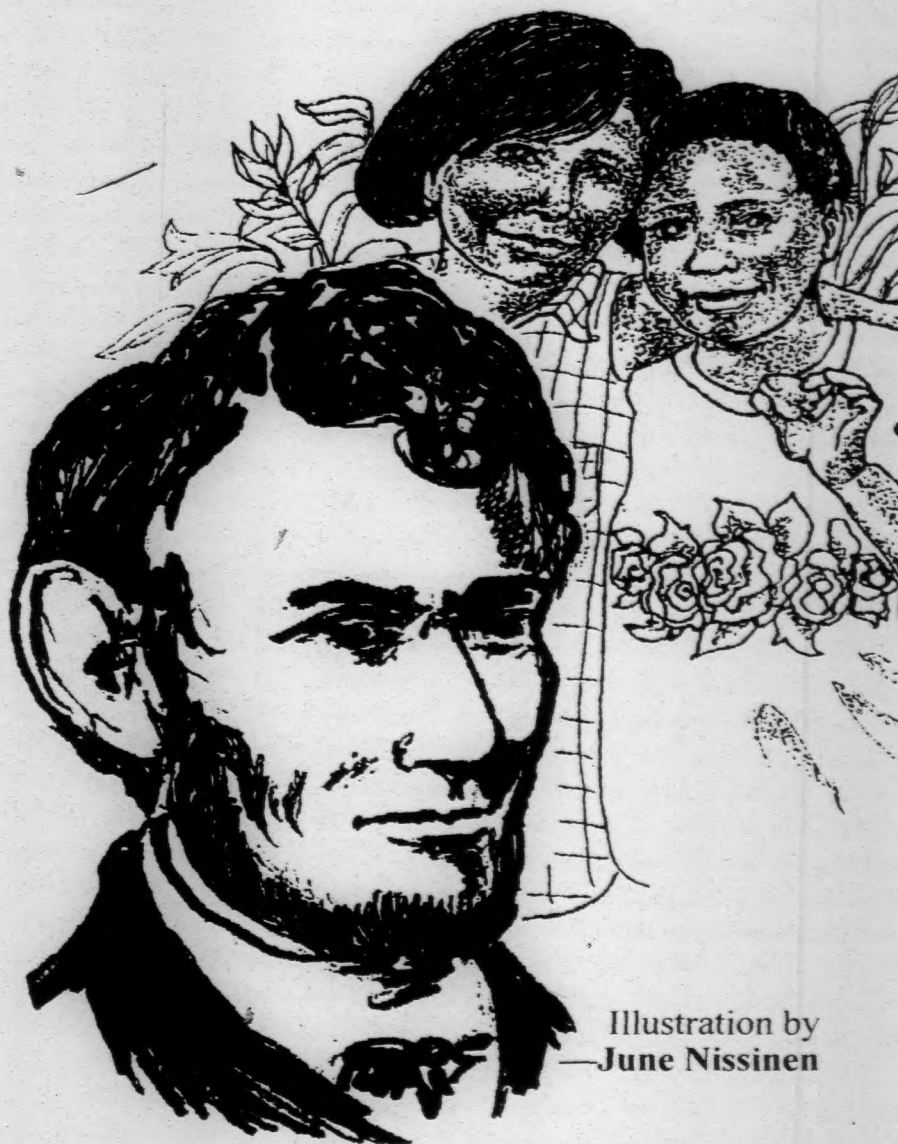


Illustration by
—June Nissinen

There is no disease like being a debtor. There is no charity greater than feeding the hungry. There are no greater gods than parents. There is no greater righteousness than compassion. There is no greater gain than the company of the good. There is no enemy greater than anger. There is no wealth greater than a good reputation. A bad reputation is verily death itself. There is no ornament better than the chanting of God's name.

Lincoln strictly lived in this fashion. Seeing his upright character, some of his friends felt that he could easily become a member of the U.S. Congress. They advised him to seek election and promised their help. Lincoln ran for election and eventually won with a thumping majority. In a short while, Abraham Lincoln rose to become [the 16th] president of the United States. At the moment of his success, he remembered his mother's words, and the importance of self-confidence.

The African American people of that time [were kept as slaves and] were treated in a very harsh manner by the white people. The African Americans approached Lincoln and told him that he should improve their conditions, and provide equal rights for them like those of other citizens. President Lincoln was of the firm conviction that all humanity was equal and any differences on the basis of color or race was improper. He promised them that he would do his best. He succeeded in the abolition of slavery. The African American people [and all citizens] of the United States of America still hold Abraham Lincoln in high esteem.

—Sathya Sai Baba

From a Discourse, Prasanthi Nilayam
November 23, 2000

Swami, Please Lead the Way

Twenty-two years ago Swami gave me an interview. He had his hand on my heart for much of the time. He said very few words, but among them Swami said, *Sometimes depressed*. I had focused my thoughts, during the interview, on a particular question. As I was so focused on what I thought was important, I just let those words go by without comment.

After a few years of spiritual pursuits, I had just started teaching. Being back in the world was a drastic shock compared to a life of little work and a lot of thought. Being at work felt very unspiritual, and my emotions were in turmoil. I was afraid at work; I was critical of my own efforts. I seldom thought of Swami, and I felt very alone. So in the interview, I wanted to know from Swami how I was doing as a teacher. I wanted to know from Swami, himself, for his opinion was the only one that counted. He said, *Good, good*. He answered my question, but he said so much more in the interview. I did not ask him about depression, even though depression had been with me throughout my life.

Constantly, for twenty-two years, I wished that I had asked him what he meant; and above all, how to deal with it. I have not had the opportunity to ask him in person since then, but I have been asking inside.

I wanted Swami to make it all right. I wanted him to take away the depression.

How would he do that? He would tell me how much he loved me. He had his hand on my heart for over a minute. He smiled at me. He made me holy ash, *vibuthi*. Did I feel it? No. He told me, *Good, good*, about how I was doing as a teacher. He had validated me. Did I hear it? Not really. All this time, all these years, even when I was a child, I insisted that someone show me they loved me; I sought validation from them. Inside, I believed that I did not deserve love, so I could never feel it. That is a stuck place to be in. Unless one has been in this mental position, one cannot imagine how totally impossible it is to get out, to walk away from the belief that I am not good enough. I suspect that many people have experienced this mental attitude to varying degrees and for varying amounts of time.

Part of the depressed thought pattern is to think that I must do something to earn love. Since I believe I have so many faults, the list of prerequisites to grace is endless. The myth is progress. The myth is that I have to be perfect before God will love me. Thus, I am always active, never satisfied, always sad because God doesn't love me. Poor me.

But I have a secret. The depression is comfortable. It is like a blanket that a child holds and caresses while sucking its thumb. Inside the folds of the blanket is a kind of security, and even a kind of peace. But it is

incomplete. It resembles the peace of a drug high, or the peace attained from the satisfaction of a food craving.

To put away the sad sense of self is a step that must be taken before any other.

For it is in that breathless moment that the true Self is born. How am I to learn to love myself? Swami, please lead the way.

—**Carl Hirsch**
Mullica Hill, New Jersey

Ask Me

*Ask me and I will help you
I will guide you along the way
Ask me and I will help you
I am with you night and day
Ask me and I will help you
I will lead you along the path
Ask me and I will help you
There is nothing you can't ask.*

*Sometimes your burdens are too heavy
For you to carry all on your own
Ask me and I will help you
You won't have to carry them alone
Your worries should not be yours
Give them all to me
I will help you
You have my guarantee.*

—**Jack Pitlon**
New York, New York

Plunge Wholeheartedly into Service

The human body is not eternal. It contains flesh that can decay and foul excreta. At the same time, present in this very same body are sacred feelings. It is for safeguarding this hidden treasure that you must take proper care of the body. Once the treasure has been tapped and duly made use of, the body can be given up. This is the way to live life. You must plunge wholeheartedly and most enthusiastically into service.

The ocean of life cannot be crossed either through penance, pilgrimage, the study of scriptures, or even ritualistic chanting of the name of the Lord. It is service rendered to noble souls alone that can set you free.

Why Protect the Body?

The real reason for protecting and safeguarding the body is on account of the powers and capabilities hidden in it. You do meditation. How? By using your body. You transact business and make money. How? By using your body. You become a great scholar. How? By using the capabilities of your body. The body is, therefore, very important. It must be properly used, and the virtues latent in it must be fully experienced.

Indulging the Senses

Do not make the mistake of imagining that the body has been given for enjoyment, comfort seeking, beautification, and pursuits of that nature. Indulgence in pleasure seeking, comfort and luxury, can be dangerous.

In one of the wars between Germany

and France, France suffered defeat. Reflecting on this, the then French commander in chief said, "We lost not because we lacked courage but because we had become soft by getting drowned in pleasure seeking." You can ruin yourself by indulging the senses. What does one gain from sensual pleasures? Nothing, because these pleasures are all momentary. God has not given this body for indulgence.

An Example

Sage Dakshinamurthy was once walking along the seashore. He was the very embodiment of intellect, and he always inquired deeply into the significance of what he observed. As he stood gazing at the ocean, he noticed that the wind blew some trash into the water. However, the trash was soon swept back to the shore by the waves. This happened repeatedly. Dakshinamurthy then asked, "Oh Mighty Ocean! Thou art fathomless. Why can you not accommodate these tiny pieces of matter that come to you? Why do you repeatedly throw them away? Why are you so selfish? What do you lose by giving in a little?" Dakshinamurthy then sat in meditation, whereupon he heard the ocean giving a reply. The ocean said, "Oh Sage! Within me there are innumerable treasures like pearls, corals, etc. If I permit this contamination, in the course of time, it will swamp and overwhelm me completely. I do not wish to become impure and ugly. Trash is not my ornamentation, waves are."

*For a village, beauty lies in the houses.
For the ocean, the waves are the ornament.*

For the sky, it is the moon that confers grandeur. For a woman, character is true beauty. And for a devotee of Shiva, vibuthi adorning the forehead is true beauty.

One must acquire that which adds real beauty. For a human being, virtue is real beauty. Today, man is spurning virtue and is, instead, turning to jewelry for the enhancement of beauty.

Justice and Truth Are in Hiding

Embodiments of Love! You have a long journey ahead. You must certainly care for your body. This does not mean you must develop body consciousness. Protect your body by all means; take full care of your health and use your body to do good.

In this world, life, wealth, youth, children and the all the rest of it are transient. In life, truth and reputation alone are stable. You must, therefore, tread a truthful path for that alone will earn you a good reputation. You must protect truth; without it you have no chance of becoming reputed. It has become fashionable for politicians to advise youth to protect the country. All this is hollow talk. What confers real protection? Truth (*sathya*) and righteousness (*dharma*) alone can provide true protection. If *sathya* and *dharma* are upheld, they in turn will duly protect the country.

The one who protects righteousness will be protected, but if one tries to annihilate it, that person is sure to be destroyed. Does it make any sense to talk about protection of the country after abandoning truth and righteousness? The country can be protected

only if right action is protected. People today have become indifferent to righteousness. There is no trace of justice, and truth has gone into hiding. Under these circumstances, how can the country be protected? Instead of uttering empty words, the speech-makers should demonstrate by their actions how the country must be protected. The words one uses must reflect situations and circumstances.

Another Example

An actor once came to the court of a king to give performances. That day, he had come dressed as a renunciate (*sannyasi*). The actor sang admirably, predicted the future of the country, and discoursed eloquently on spiritual matters. He also gave a scholarly exposition on the philosophy of Adi Shankara. The king was very pleased and offered a lot of gold. The actor said, "Oh King, a *sannyasi* does not accept gold. My conduct must be in consonance with my garb. I cannot accept this gift." The next day, the actor appeared in the court as a dancer. He danced beautifully and pleased everyone present. At the end of the performance the king offered a small gift of just a few coins. The actor said, "Oh King! This payment is meager and not enough." The king was astonished and asked, "Yesterday you refused a substantial gift, but today you are demanding more. What is the meaning of this strange behavior?" The actor replied, "Oh King! An actor will not be true to his profession if his words do not match the costume he is wearing. Yesterday, I played a renunciant and

therefore spurned wealth. Today, I am a dancer; dancers expect handsome rewards!”

Hallmark of Learning and Seeing

All of you are in the garb of students; you must, therefore, have the behavior and conduct expected of students. You must earn the respect due to students. You should be models of humility, for humility is the hallmark of true learning. You must always be humble, speak respectfully to elders, and ever adhere to the paths of *sathya* and *dharma*. True education is that which fosters noble virtues, keen intellect, truth, devotion, discipline and a sense of duty. Students have to patiently cultivate these qualities and attributes. If your behavior is not in accord with what one expects from the clothing you wear, you will lose respect.

Embodiments of Love! Swami is aware that all of you are highly regarded. Even so, Swami has to tell what needs to be told, so that you do not become complacent. Proper vision is most essential for a student. You must see only what you are supposed to see and not other things. Do not gaze at everything in the street like a crow. Do you think eyes have been given to you for seeing everything and anything? No, no, no! They have been given, so that you see just the things a student ought to. Look at your books and study them. See your parents; you may see your friends but not others. You should regard all others of your age as your brothers and sisters, and all older women as mothers.

In the ritualistic worship of the sun (*surya namaskaaram*), there is a passage to

the effect that he who has evil looks would be blinded by the sun-god. Therefore be warned, bad looks can be dangerous. When walking on the road look ahead, so that your safety is guaranteed. If for example, you are cycling and your looks wander, you are more than likely to meet with an accident. Always concentrate on the traffic ahead. Control of looks is so important that Buddha gave special emphasis to it. He called for good looks or *samyak drishti*. Bad looks would only lead you astray and into the path of evil.

Example of Socrates

Once, Socrates was walking on the road accompanied by his students. Socrates was walking with his head bent down, as he wanted to set an example to his students in the matter of looking. Suddenly, he bumped into a man coming from the opposite direction. This other person, who was an officer of the state, angrily demanded, “Who are you?” With humility, Socrates replied, “Sir, that is precisely the question I am grappling with. Can you tell me exactly who I am?”

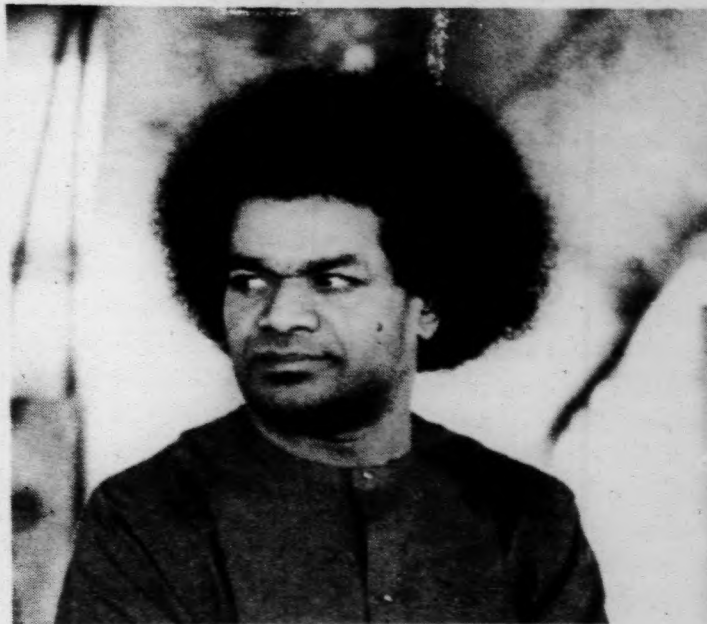
Socrates was strict not only in the matter of looking but also with respect to listening. He never listened to anything bad.

Keep the Senses in Check

You should not lend your ear to all that is being said. Similarly, thoughts must also be kept under tight check. Think only what you ought to and when you must. Excessive thought can lead to harm. Excessive thinking [plotting] is what the Kauravas did, and eventually paid dearly for it. They were always seized with evil thoughts, and spent hours

devising mean and wicked ways of harming the noble Pandavas. The Kauravas came to ruin because they have constantly had foul thoughts about the Pandavas, who were the very embodiments of righteousness, *dharma*. Therefore, always avoid bad looks, bad hearing, and bad thoughts. Do not ever utter unbecoming words. Always say good things and speak pleasantly. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly. Students must cultivate such good qualities, for only those qualities are their true ornaments.

Students, Boys and Girls! In this phase of life, there are many virtues that you must acquire; later, you must make good and active use of them. Only if you accumulate wealth now, can you spend it later. If there are no earnings now, what do you have to spend later? You must, therefore, firmly resolve to develop good intellect, good habits and good speech right now! Buddha repeatedly stressed the need for sacred looks, and never tolerated any violation of this maxim by his disciples. Bad looks encourage bad thoughts, which ultimately lead to ruin. Looks must be strictly controlled.



Students! All of you must earn a good reputation now, so later you can provide good leadership to the country. The children of today are the citizens of tomorrow. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. When you become leaders, you must make this country sacred. As the leaders, so the nation. If you are good, the country will be good. You will earn much

merit if you shape yourselves to be noble citizens of this great country of Bharat which has the reputation of being a land of sacrifice (*tyaaga bhoomi*), a land of noble acts (*karma bhoomi*) and a sacred land (*punya bhoomi*). It is to serve the country in this manner that you really must care for your body—not for any other purpose. Remember, the body once gone will never come back. Any other thing lost might be recovered but not the body—never. You must resolve to keep the body fit until the goal is fully achieved.

Embodiments of Love! Swami blesses that you will treasure all the advice given to you by elders, guests, and teachers. Make ample use of them in the years to come.

—Sathya Sai Baba,
Discourse, May 17, 2000

“You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.”

Sathya Sai Book Center of America
305 West First Street, Tustin, California 92780-3108
Phone: (714) 669-0522 Fax: (714) 669-9138

Book Center hours: Monday-Friday 10:00 to 4:00, Saturday 11:30 to 3:00

Newly Arrived Books

- Faith in God*** compiled by Vijay C. Amin and Neal V. Amin, is a compilation of 250 referenced quotations on faith in God from Sathya Sai Baba's discourses with a glossary and an excellent index for finding multiple listings on a particular topic.
336 pages.....BI-019 \$ 5.00
- Vision, Path and Progress*** edited and published by Chandrahas H. Shah, provides valuable discourses guided by the Light of Sathya Sai Baba on the process of individual and societal transformation as presented at the "Symposium on Spiritual Upliftment of Mankind" convened by the Sathya Sai Organization of USA centers of the northeastern region
106 pages.....BI-079 2.00
- Ocean of Love*** published by Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publication Trust, offers pearls of wisdom from discourses of Sathya Sai Baba, complemented by beautiful photographs spanning several decades, a tribute to Sai Baba's 75th birthday.
247 pages bound in hard cover.....BI-037 17.00
- SAI 2000 Standardization, Accreditation, Inspection***
published by the Institute of Sathya Sai Education of Thailand, provides well-organized, quality-assured guidelines for Sathya Sai schools based on the research of Stephanie Mews. The book also includes excerpts from Sai's discourses on education and a list of related publications.
151 pages.....BE-010 2.50
- Two Shivarathri Discourses by Sathya Sai Baba***
- Vision of the Atma***.....BI-007 (21-02-2001) 0.50
- Have Steady Faith in the Atma***.....BI-007 (22-02-2001) 0.50
- Both discourses are in pamphlets.

Sathya, Sivam, Sundaram, the Life of Sathya Sai Baba, Part I

by N. Kasturi, now available in Vietnamese, is a popular classic detailed account of Sathya Sai Baba's life through his early years, from birth in 1926 to 36 years old in 1962.

Vietnamese version.....315 pages.....VNBA-201	\$4.50
English version.....238 pages.....BA-201	4.50

Audio Cassette Tape

Sathya Sai Baba Discourses on Values, Gossiping and the Internet is a discourse given on October 15, 1999. Baba addresses the Divine Principle, scientific discoveries and more.

39 mins.....	T-C052	3.00
--------------	--------	------

Audio CD

Love Songs to God, CD Volume I produced by Ladd Bogdonoff with contributions from several artists, presents beautifully arranged English songs and prayers set to music.

1 CD.....	T-SCE67	7.50
-----------	---------	------

To receive the quarterly (four issues a year) ***Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*** regularly:

☐ ***Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA***/ one year subscription in the USA is \$5.00 / Canada or Mexico is \$8.00/ all other countries \$12.00 per year.

☐ **Audio Cassette Tapes** of the ***Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*** are available **in the U.S. only**/one year subscription is \$12.00 per year. (The tapes are offered free to the blind or visually impaired). Sorry, this offer is not valid outside the USA. ☐ I am blind and would like to receive the Audio Cassette Tapes. Please make your selections in the boxes above, and send a check or money order to the ***Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*** c/o Sathya Sai Book Center of America. 305 West First Street, Tustin, California 92780-3108

I have marked my selections and am inclosing \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt. # _____

City, State and Zip Code: _____

Have You Moved?

Please know that we will no longer be able to forward your ***Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*** if we have not received your change of address. Kindly notify us when planning your move. We look forward to serving you.

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

P. O. Box 660908

Arcadia, California

91066-0908

Nonprofit Org.

U.S. Postage

Paid

Arcadia, CA

Permit No. 71

DATED MATERIAL

© *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*—Summer 2001, Printed under the auspices of the **Sathya Sai Book Center of America**. All rights reserved. Reproduction—in whole or in part—without written permission is prohibited.