



SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER, USA

Love

Peace

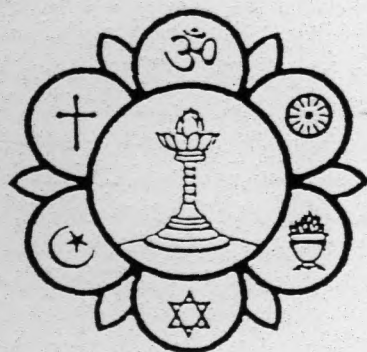
Truth

Nonviolence

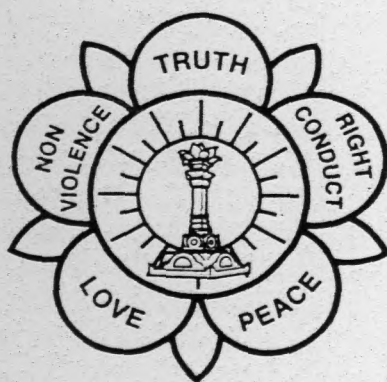
Right conduct

About the Sarva Dharma Symbol

The Sarva Dharma logo of the Sri Sathya Sai Organization depicts the six great religions of the world. It exemplifies the unity of all religions. The original symbol showed only five religious symbols because in India Christianity and Judaism are thought to be branches of the same religious philosophy. However, when some Jewish Sai Baba devotees asked Bhagavan for separate representation on the Sarva Dharma symbol, Baba in granted their wish. The original logo is sometimes still seen in the ashrams at Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam.



Some years later, a new version of the same design came into use. The symbol below is now more commonly used in the United States. It depicts the five qualities from which all human values emanate. Both symbols seem to be accepted and both are widely used. We just thought our new friends and devotees would like to know.



The staff at the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, is pleased to announce that the cover artwork on this publication was designed by Ms. Barbara Bates of San Diego, California. We thank Ms. Bates and all the other artists who contributed their time and talent to create a new design for the *Newsletter*.

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Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA welcomes photographs, drawings and literary contributions. We are unable to return any of these items, so please keep a copy for your files. We reserve the right of discrimination in selecting and editing all material for publication. Kindly send any of the above items to: *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA* c/o Sathya Sai Book Center of America, 305 West First Street, Tustin, California 92780-3108 Phone: 714-669-0522 Fax: 714-669-9138

—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

SAI'S MESSAGE

When you came into this world, I was with you. I am always within you and around you. I have protected you from many dangers, even when you did not recognize me. I act for your well-being alone. Father, brother, mother, sister, son, daughter, and all others remain with you only while the purpose exists—they do not remain attached forever. I take each one of them when their time is up.

Friends will be there when you have material possessions and then, they too vanish. When they have all left you and you are alone, I am there waiting for you, just as I was when you came into this world. Therefore, you must always try to please me,

serve me, and always be answerable to me alone.

—Sai Baba, Birthday Discourse, 1961



REFLECTIONS FROM REGION ONE

Twenty years ago, I followed my wife to the Sathya Sai Baba Center in Connecticut. She had been trying to convince me to go along for many years before I finally accepted. I did not know why or what made me go at that time until Swami told my wife that He had come into my dreams twice before I came to Him.

Before I came to Swami, I was completely engrossed in my work and social activities with never a moment to spare. Once Swami told me, *Work hard because work is worship, but you have to get balance in your life.* At the time, I did not understand what that meant. But as He always does, He gradually changed my priorities and my perspective on life. I still work hard (maybe I am a workaholic); however, I don't ever worry about it. I seem to have found a lot of time to do other more important activities including many hours tending to Sai Organizational matters in our region. Our social circus has all but disappeared, and we spend that time sharing what Swami has so generously given us. I have stopped reading extraneous material, and I use that time to read and learn as much as I can from Swami.

Our northeast region covers a large geographic area and is comprised of the great states of: New York, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. We have over 750 regular devotees; there are 600 children enrolled in Sathya Sai Education (SSE) programs region wide. During special celebrations such as

Swami's birthday or *Guru Poornima* the attendance can swell to four or six times the number of devotees.

As I reflect on my assignment in the organization, I feel that the challenge and opportunity for me and all the other officers and devotees is to create a mini-Brindavan in our part of the world. A Brindavan where every *gopika* and *gopala* is totally immersed in their love and devotion to Swami [and His teachings] 365 days a year—not just during retreats, special functions or center meetings. Our regional officers are holding meetings with center officers and members to figure out how to do this. How can we get everyone to become full-time devotees while crazily running around in this world? We know it will be a significant challenge, but when we get there, it will be a wonderland of love.

In such a Brindavan, every study circle will be inspiring because all will participate with vigor, preparation and practice; they will crave Swami's words. Every member, because of their love for Swami, will want to serve Him by sharing their good fortune, skills and time with those who have less in our communities. Every SSE student will see their parents as role models of His teachings. They will feel no pressure from the tough world they have to live in. This is going to happen. After all, He has said that the Golden Age will be here soon.

—Rajan Govindan
President of Northeast Region I,
Sathya Sai Organization

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SRI SATHYA SAI SCHOOLS

Bhagavan answers questions raised by the delegates of the conference.

*When things go wrong in ventures that
one undertakes,*

If one is undeterred and unshaken

*And welcomes everything with a smile,
giving up all worry,*

*The heart of such a one is filled with
wisdom.*

Telugu Poem

Q: What is the relationship among religion, spirituality and educare?

Baba: Embodiments of Love! It is surprising to me to note that you have been unable to recognize the relationship among religion, spirituality and educare. First and foremost, you must understand what religion is. Religion is realization. Only when you realize the truth about yourself, will you understand what religion is. Spirituality is not merely singing devotional songs, performing worship, going to temples or on pilgrimages or undertaking any other good activity. Spirituality is recognizing the oneness of all beings. Here is an example:

When we close our eyes we cannot see anybody. But the moment we open them, we can see thousands of heads in this hall. Where have these heads come from? If you enquire into the truth, you will recognize that your eyes notice all the heads. They have not come from anywhere outside.

To recognize unity in diversity is spirituality. The basic truth to be recognized is that there is only one *Atma* (Divinity within)

in all beings. The questions and doubts arise when you see multiplicity in unity. The entirety of creation has emerged from love. Therefore, there is no difference among religion, spirituality and educare.

Religion is realization of your true Self. Spirituality also is discovering who you really are. For example, you say, "This is my handkerchief, this is my plate, this is my hand and this is my body." Then who are you? There must be someone to say that they own the handkerchief, plate, hand and body. When you enquire into this truth, you will realize that you are separate from all these and in fact, you are the master of all these. That master is the *Atma*.

The next aspect is educare. How can you call yourselves educated if you do not understand what educare is? The word "education" is derived from the Latin root "educare." While education refers to a collection of worldly facts, educare is to bring out from within. Education is for a living while educare is for life. Education is for livelihood. Educare is for the ultimate goal of life. It is easy for us to recognize things outside ourselves and difficult to look within. There are many things inside us that are not manifest. When you join the three letters G, O, D, we get the word GOD. When you look at the letters individually, they have no meaning of their own. Our effort lies in putting together these letters to get the meaning. This is educare. Educare means to

bring out from within. The *Atma* is our innermost reality. That is what educate should bring out. Therefore, there is actually no difference among the three—religion, spirituality and educate.

Whatever we see in others is only a reflection of our own self. If we accuse somebody of being bad, it is just that our feeling toward that person is bad. Whatever impression we have about others is a reflection of our feelings toward them. Everything is just reflection, reaction and resound. Therefore, you should not find fault with others. You do not have the right to find fault, because your assessment of a person is limited to your experience with them. There are so many aspects of the personality of that person that you do not know. For example:

If you look at Anil Kumar, you will know only his dress, his complexion, his height and weight. But Anil Kumar is not merely what you see. There are so many qualities—love, compassion, anger—which are in him that you cannot see. Therefore, if you want to know a person completely, you should investigate into all aspects of their personality. In modern times, people go by physical appearance and judge people based on their external actions. This is wrong. Hence, the defect lies in the vision and not in the creation. When you put on red glasses, everything appears red, and when you put on blue glasses, everything appears blue. Only those foolish people who fail to recognize this truth resort to criticism. If even in the case of an ordinary human being your assessment is wrong, then how can you assess God?

God has many invaluable things in His store. But you come and ask, “Swami, give me a locket.” You ask Him for a locket because you do not know what precious gifts He can bestow upon you. There is no dearth of anything in His store house. Therefore, you should not ask God for anything specific. When the time is ripe, He will give what is appropriate to you. God knows and acts appropriately based on the right time, place and situation. This is why you find that sometimes, He comes and gives you a thing that is unasked for. It is therefore very difficult to understand God. An ignoramus, who fails to understand this principle, often misinterprets it. But you must not fall prey to such calumny.

Thus educate, spirituality and religion are not different from one another. Here is a ring, a chain and some earrings; all these are different forms of the same gold. If one realizes this unifying truth, then where is the scope for multiplicity? Therefore, God is One, though He may appear to you in different forms. The fundamental basis for everything is love. This is what you should aspire for. Do not worry about religion. There is only one religion, the religion of love. Educate means to bring out the divine love latent in people. That is why it is said, “Love is God, live in love.” Then there would be no conflict in the world, and all would live together happily. Only when there are differences is there conflict. Push aside those differences and live with the feeling of having oneness.

There is only one language, the language

of the heart; there is only one religion, the religion of love; there is only one caste, the caste of humanity. Religions are many but the path is only one, and we need to discover that path.

O heroic sons and daughters of Bharat! No religion is bad for the one who has a good sense of understanding. It is incorrect to see differences among religions. In our daily lives, we need to realize the limitations of education. What you read for the first time may look new to you, but when you read it again and again it is no longer new. Here is an example:

Once God wanted to grant liberation to a person and sent Yama, the god of death, to him. When Yama approached this devotee, he questioned whether the devotee knew him. But the devotee answered that Yama was a stranger to him. Then lord Yama told him that he would return to him only when he could recognize Yama. When Yama returned after three days, the same question was posed to him. Then the devotee answered that Yama was no longer a stranger to him, because he had already seen him. Everything appears strange and new before we are acquainted. But once we acquaint ourselves, we tend to shed those differences.

Basically, you have to get rid of the sense of differences and develop the sense of

oneness. Then you will know that religion, educare and spirituality are one and the same.

Q: What relationship should Sri Sathya Sai schools have with government?

Baba: Sri Sathya Sai education and government education are two separate entities. Nevertheless, Sathya Sai Schools should have a good relationship with the government. Sai belongs to everybody but government does not belong to everybody. Sri Sathya Sai Schools should obey all rules of the government, but with Sai, the only rule is love. In Sri Sathya Sai schools we follow all rules of discipline with love.

The government enforces its rules; therefore it is "force," but Sai's method is from the "source." One can pursue Sri Sathya Sai education along with government education. Sri Sathya

Sai education imparts human values. Follow these values and at the same time pursue government education. But do not split them into artificial divisions.

Everyday we have twenty-four hours at our disposal. At the most, we spend six hours—three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon—in schools. We still have eighteen hours at our disposal. Allocate six hours for your sleep, six hours for personal activities, and the remaining six

"The fundamental basis for everything is love. This is what you should aspire for. Do not worry about religion. There is only one religion, the religion of love."

hours can be utilized for spiritual pursuits and developing human values. Sri Sathya Sai Education imparts practical knowledge, while the government education teaches only bookish knowledge. But do not ignore book knowledge; the former grants us spiritual happiness, and the latter grants us worldly happiness. Government education gives us the means of livelihood, whereas Sri Sathya Sai Education leads us to the ultimate goal of life. The two constitute two sides of the same coin.

Q: As teachers, how can we understand the minds of students?

Baba: The teachers must first have a thorough understanding of their own minds before trying to understand the minds of the students. If the teacher's mind is good, the students will reflect it in their behavior. Since the teacher cannot see the student's mind, they can understand it only by observing the student's behavior. The teacher should observe and analyze the student's behavior along with that of their parents, their friends and their fellow students. Based on this, the teacher will be able to lead the student on the right path.

Sometimes, parents give too much freedom to the children, and the children in turn misuse this freedom to interact with their friends with laxity in behavior. At school, their freedom is curtailed. They must be taught to strike a balance between freedom and discipline. The teacher cannot interfere in the student's family affairs; parents give free-dom to their children out of their love. Nevertheless, the teachers must keep in

touch with the student's activities at home. But the sad plight of the modern age is that the parents are ninety-nine percent responsible for their children getting into bad habits by providing them with excessive money and freedom. The parents are misguided by imagining that their children will be hurt if their freedom is curtailed. But they feel dejected if the child gets perverted and runs into bad ways. The child must be groomed well right from the very beginning. Just as speed bumps control the speed of vehicles on the road to ensure safety, so restrictions must be enforced upon childrens' freedom for their safety. The child should be given freedom in areas related to right conduct and must be punished when he or she errs. When parents give freedom to their children, they should watch carefully as to how the children behave. It is then that the child will tread the right path. The first responsibility rests with the mother for the child to tread on the right path. Generally, if the daughter in the family is spoiled, the mother is responsible, and if the son goes astray, the father is responsible.

It is in order to ensure that unlimited freedom is not given to children that the institution called school has come into existence. It is there that teachers should strike a balance between freedom and restriction in students' lives. The teacher must advise the students regularly that their conduct will be responsible for the name they earn for their parents and the school in which they study.

Please turn to page 33

ALL-KNOWING

On September 18, 2000, I had to turn in an introduction of my "I-Search" to my English teacher. This project was to be a research paper on a debatable topic, and so I thought I would choose Baba's Divinity. I really was not exhibiting any doubts, but I just wanted to research Him, knowing that whenever I worked on this usually dreaded assignment, I would actually be looking forward to it! The series of events that followed have continued to affect me; they have been my "proof" of Swami's Divinity and of His omnipresence. Just performing the actual research work could never have accomplished what was to take place.

The first miracle occurred when my teacher forgot a conversation that she and I had. I told her that my project was personal, and that I would not like it to be shared publicly if that time arose. Well, she photocopied the first section of my report (we turn them in piece by piece), and she put it on the overhead project for the whole class to look at (as a "good" example of our assignment). Not only that, but a substitute teacher was watching all this, as she was preparing to substitute in the following classes and was learning the procedures. In addition, the principal was there to evaluate my teacher, so she also got a peek. As if that wasn't enough, Swami had my work used as the example in the remaining two classes. So altogether, almost one hundred people had a chance to read it and to read about Him.

I had also taken information from an article in, *The Independent* written some five

years ago by Miriam Akhtar entitled, "Sai Baba Wanders the Ashram in a Mercedes" and "Here lies Prashanthi Nilayam, the Ashram in Puttaparthi" The article goes on to say, "People from all over the world are drawn to seek spiritual guidance at the feet of the Avatar—God made flesh. . . ."

I can't tell you how nervous I was when I heard the teacher reading this quote from that article—out loud!

One day, we went to the library where the librarian, Mrs. Ward, was telling us what resources were available for researching our topics. She asked several people what their topics were, and she came very close to asking me. I was so nervous that I thought I would just say, "India," if she asked me. The days went on as I continued to researched Sathya Sai Baba.

In the meantime, I had told a friend about Baba. I was so desperate to talk to someone about Him, and since I thought no one at my school knew about Him, I felt I had to tell Danyell. She was very open to these kinds of issues and has since developed an interest in Baba.

It was nearly time to turn in our rough drafts; the report was due in a couple of days. I wasn't able to use the printer at home, so I decided to print it at school. I went to my homeroom teacher's class to print my report, but nothing came out. Then I went to my English teacher's class and tried to print it, but again, nothing came out. When I inquired, the teacher said to change the set-

ting and tell the computer to go to the correct printer, since the default was configured to go to another printer—but to which printer, she did not know. I was very worried about who might have received it, but went ahead and sent it to the print command; then I sat down for class.

About halfway through the class, Danyell came in and asked my teacher for permission to give me something. Luckily the class was distracted, as we were watching a movie. Danyell, the only other person to know of the subject of my report, brought the copy of my report that had printed on the librarian's printer. Then she narrated the unimaginable:

Evidently, Danyell happened to be running an errand in the library for her teacher and heard Mrs. Ward exclaim, "Where is all this paper coming from?" Danyell immediately asked her if it was an I-Search. "Yes!" came the reply. Not wanting to be specific, Danyell asked, "Is it about India?" "Yes!" again came the reply. "Oh, that is my friend's report," Danyell assured the librarian.

Then Mrs. Ward asked, "Who is your friend?" The two had a talk, and Mrs. Ward told Danyell that her parents were in India seeing Sai Baba during that very week for the 75th Birthday celebrations and World Conference of SSS schools (see page 4 for Swami's discourse on SSS schools). She said that the paper came out of her printer, and after reading the introduction, she was so shocked that she had to sit down to finish it. The fact that it was Danyell who was there to witness all this and be the intermediary be-

tween Mrs. Ward and me, I believe is remarkable.

But before I could even talk to Mrs. Ward, another strange thing happened. I went to my homeroom class after English. Almost two hours had passed since I unsuccessfully tried to print my document there. The bell rang, the class began to read; then the printer started printing something. My teacher asked if it was mine, and I said that it couldn't be. The pages kept printing, and after looking at it, I told her that, yes, it was my report! Two hours later, it started printing right in my presence. Baba was definitely playing with me.

This was just the beginning. After getting over the initial shock, Mrs. Ward and I started talking. I had known her for more than three years, but never knew, of course, that she was a Sai devotee. She even has a son in my grade. She told me that Baba performed her wedding twenty years ago. Some weeks later, I e-mailed a Sai devotee from central California, telling their family about the miracle. When I got back to school, Mrs. Ward informed me that the e-mail was sent to her parents' close friends, regarding what had happened. This shocked me even more to find out that the two families were good friends.

Later she told me that her mother is the editor of some Sai-related newsletter of which I had never heard. I told her that I go to the Arcadia Center. A few weeks after this event, she asked me if I was going to the Center on the upcoming Thursday. I innocently and ignorantly told her that soon, a

man (whose distinction I was familiar with) was going to speak at the center about his recent trip to Baba. I was uncertain just how to pronounce his name.

If you are like I was then, and you have not figured it out by now, you would feel a great shock to hear Mrs. Ward say, a little taken aback, "That's my father!"

So clearly, Baba kindly, and in a very interesting way, answered my question on the report, regarding His Divinity. He knew

that we were both the only known Sai devotees in the school, and He let us meet one another. He knew that I wanted someone to talk to about Baba at school, and He knew that I was oblivious of the fact that my school's librarian was in any way connected to Him. To me, that means only three things: Baba is all-knowing; Baba is all-seeing and Baba is all-powerful. And one more thing: Baba is very funny.

—**Saurabh Sharma**, Pasadena, California

A LOVING DEITY

More than forty years ago, when I was a graduate student, a fellow student from China who had left to escape the Communist persecution told me the following story:

It seems that in the far reaches of Hunan Province, China, there was a widow who was of advanced age and of much wisdom. This widow was of modest means, living in a small house. One day, she was approached by a Christian Missionary seeking to convert her to Christianity. She treated him with cordial hospitality and invited him in for tea to tell her about his Jesus. At the end of his presentation, she said that indeed his Jesus is a great being, and she asked if he had an effigy of Jesus. Elated, he dashed to his quarters and returned, posthaste, with a small statue of Jesus, for which she thanked him profusely.

He went away congratulating himself that he had made a new convert and saved a soul from hell. He did not return to the area for a few weeks because he was a circuit-rider in the territory. When he returned, the lady was standing in her doorway motioning to him to come.

"Come Reverend, come see what I have for Jesus." He came quickly, and she led him into her prayer room. She said, "See, I have given Him the place of honor."

When he looked, he saw five statues in a row with Jesus first. There in order of rank were: Jesus, Buddha, Lao-tse, Shiva and Kung Fu-tse. Upon seeing Jesus in the company of those pagan gods, the missionary grew angry; he took the statue of Jesus and hurried down the hill from her house, shouting, "You are doomed!" The lady, bewildered, stood in her doorway musing, "If one God is good, five Gods are better."

—**Randal A. Houdobre**, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Author's Note: My religious philosophies have been, nominal Baptist Christianity as a youngster, to a Marxist-Atheist as an undergraduate, to a strict Roman Catholic as a military officer, to my present state of respecter of all religious philosophies that are based on a loving deity.

SWAMI'S GUIDING HAND

Back in 1994, I lost a very large business deal through sheer ego and the greed of my business partners. I was very depressed in those days. Up until then, I had considered myself very successful. I played tennis at a high level, and I was a successful Financial Planner. I had no idea why I got involved in the deal; I had a lot at stake.

Later in 1994, I started meditating, hoping to understand what was happening in my life. I had a neighbor and a family friend who used to talk about Sai Baba and wanted me to join him for *bhajans* (devotional songs). I was born into a Muslim family in Pakistan, and I had no interest in singing *bhajans* and really did not know who Sai Baba was. One day I was sitting outside my house, when my friend stopped by and asked me if I was ready to go to the Sathya Sai Baba Center. For some reason I said, "Yes." As soon as I started going to the center, I had my first Swami dream:

In the dream it is raining, and I am riding a bicycle, blindfolded! All of a sudden, it stops raining, and I get off the bike. There is an intersection. Something tells me to turn right. As soon as I turn right, I see a two story building. There is a beautiful light coming from the chimney. Swami is standing next to it and singing very loudly. I ask Swami what He is singing.

The next day, in my meditation Swami replied, *Loka Samasta Sukino Bhavantu* (May all the beings in all the worlds be happy).

In April of 1995, I decided to give up

alcohol completely, and I prayed to Swami to let me be His devotee. Since then, Swami has blessed me with lots of dreams and continues to do so. What grace! Still, life continued to be very difficult. I kept going to the Sai Center and got involved in service activities. Until then, I had never thought about service and was leading a pretty selfish life. In early 1997, a new devotee started coming to the center, obviously looking for direction from Swami. He and I became very good friends, and he suggested we go to Puttaparthi. I was in a very difficult financial situation, but when Swami calls, who can resist?

We reached Puttaparthi on October 26, 1997. I really did not know what to expect. I remember clearly, it was two days later when we got front row seats for morning *darshan* (to see a holy being). Swami came and took my letters, and then He started looking at me. It seemed as if He was looking through me. Today when I think back, I know that was the moment when my life changed completely. Swami did something; I consider that moment a new birth and the most auspicious moment of my existence on this planet. Besides many synchronistic events in Prasathi Nilayam, I had an incredible Swami dream. Baba, in my dream, told me that He knows everything; He has arranged for everything. Then He made a sign, like He was writing something. As we all know, Swami has a sense of humor. He asked if my second business was law. I was involved in two lawsuits at that time.

One day I was shopping and bought a

piece of orange cloth (which looks like part of Swami's robe). When I was buying it, I prayed to Him to please bless the cloth for my meditation room. Sure enough, we got front row seats in the afternoon *darshan* and Swami, with His *vibhuti*-filled hands, blessed the cloth. What an enormous gift!

During *darshan*, Swami would come to me and act like He was about to take my letters, and then He would walk away without the letters. I couldn't understand then what I understand now. Swami was trying to tell me to break away from the deal. Every act of Swami's has meaning, and we must pay attention. That is the whole purpose of writing this article. When something is not working in your life, don't force it. The mere fact that it is a difficult situation is an indication that you must take a different direction. Swami's guidance is always there, but we have to pay attention.

Before we left Puttaparthi, I went to the Mandir (temple). As I stepped into the Mandir I had a very strong thought: *This is your home*. I just stood there and cried like a baby. Truly, Prasanthi Nilayam is our home.

I came back to Florida, and life continued to be very difficult. It seemed like I couldn't do anything right. I remember it was February, 1999. I had just come back to the house after watching a Sai Baba video. I was lying in bed, praying to Swami to end this

very difficult period in my life. All of a sudden, it felt like a lightning bolt hit both my ears. I really thought I was dead. I slowly moved my hands to see if I was alive. After that event, things started changing. In June 1999, I walked away from the deal after some very painful lessons. I decided to take my Securities Examination and become a Financial Consultant. I took the exam, a very difficult one, but I kept saying *Om Sai Ram* and passed the exam. Deep in my heart, I don't think I passed; it was Swami's grace that really helped me. I think Swami answered the last few questions. It truly is all Swami's grace.

All of a sudden my life changed. All along it was Swami prompting me to move in the right direction, but some of us tend to be stubborn. The purpose of writing this article is to help others see that if they are involved in something difficult—relationships, money, business, work and so forth—ask for Swami's guidance and then pay attention. His guidance and grace is always there. I simply don't have words to express my love and gratitude to Him for pointing me in the right direction. It is my great fortune that I am a devotee of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He is truly the One.

—Akhtar Z. Sattar
Tallahassee, Florida

The philosophy of all lands and in all times has been to discover: the truth of God, the objective world, and mankind, as well as their mutual relationship. Maya (illusion) causes all three. It is a clear, flawless mirror.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Vahini

LADIES' DAY, IDEAL WOMEN

Mothers—A Nation's Pride

*Was not Savitri, who brought her husband
back to life, a woman of India?*

*Was not Chandramati, who by her steadfast
adherence to truth put out raging
fires, a chaste woman of India?*

*Was not Sita, who demonstrated her purity
by entering fire, a daughter of this
land?*

*Was not Damayanti, who reduced the wicked
hunter to ashes, an exemplary
woman of this land?*

*This land of Bharat, surrounded by the
seven seas, enshrines in its heart
the holy principle of chastity.*

*This sacred land is the teacher of all
nations!*

Telugu Poem

From time immemorial, women of India, by their adherence to ideals, have bestowed joy on this land and so occupy an exalted position—which is higher than that of men. Women embody the aspect of Mother Nature, and the ancient sages found solutions to problems in life by recognizing this truth. What are the causes for misery, conflict and suffering in the world today? It is the absence of purity in the hearts of men and women. The behavior of men and women is responsible for the rise or fall of a nation. The country would not lack for anything if there were men and women with pure hearts. But today, hearts are completely polluted. Here is a piece of pure white paper, but what is

written on one side makes it appear dirty. So too is the case with a person's heart—dirty feelings pollute it. Today's newspaper becomes tomorrow's waste paper. The paper by itself does not have any smell. The same paper when used to pack jasmine flowers smells of them; it will smell of *pakodas* or even of dried fish if it is used to pack them. When the heart is purified, it shines with compassion. Bad feelings and bad thoughts pollute people's hearts.

Ideals of Womanhood

Ever since ancient times, women have maintained their pure hearts. Savitri was one such great woman of India. She brought her husband back to life by winning over the lord of death. There are many such cases of women who have revived their husbands from death, but history does not speak of a single man reviving his wife from death. Women of such exalted character have set ideal examples of womanhood in Bharat. Today's society is polluted because there is no encouragement for women to cultivate such high ideals. In modern times, the ways of life are so perverted that only evil thoughts, evil feelings and evil behavior rule the roost. In this situation, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations are encouraging women through opportunities in the organizational wings like *Mahila Vibhag*, to develop good ideals of character and propagate them to the world at large. If only the women rise up in society, the whole world will become sacred. The organization of women has achieved many great things, but men do not recognize

their good work. Women are capable of ruling nations and even the whole world if they make up their minds to do so. Men should not consider women as mere slaves. Today our country is on the downslide because we view our women very lightly.

There is nothing in this world that women cannot achieve. Recognizing the nature of such women, we must encourage them and give them equal opportunities in society. No such encouragement is being given today. Men do not tolerate women joining together for a good cause in an organization. Because of their own selfish interests, men are unable to recognize the good that women can do for society. Generally, women are selfless. Their hearts are full of compassion and love. They take a lot of pains to bring up children on the right path, a task that is almost impossible for men.

Teach Children Values

The mother plays a very important role in shaping the character of the child. Contemporary education is largely responsible for the gradual deterioration of childrens' behavior. In olden days, mothers initiated their children into studies by chanting sacred words like, *Om Namah Sivaya* or *Om Namo Narayanaya* (both are praises to God). Thus at a very early age, these sacred words got imprinted in the hearts of the children. But today's parents initiate their children into education, not by chanting holy or sacred names of God, but by rhymes like, "Baa Baa Black Sheep. . . ." Nowadays, children are being taught all types of wrong terminology. In earlier times, children used to welcome

guests in their homes with humility and reverence, whereas these qualities are missing nowadays. Today's children aspire for wealth, power and friendship but not for character. What is the use of wealth, power and friendship without character? Money comes and goes, but someone must teach them morality and righteousness. Earlier, children were taught sacred values. Today parents want their children to pursue higher studies and become great, whereas earlier, parents preferred their children to be good rather than great. When those parents wanted their children to be good, Bharat stood as an ideal to all nations of the world.

Ideal Parents Are Needed

Nowadays, students are not being taught good qualities. Instead, when they come home, mother immediately puts on the television and the father too joins the son to watch television. Earlier, the moment children returned home, parents took them to the *puja* (prayer) room and reviewed whatever was taught to them by teachers in the class. Nowadays parents want their children to pursue higher studies so that they might get a rich father-in-law. In those days, parents never wanted a rich father-in-law but a virtuous wife for their son. That is the reason why those days were prosperous and peaceful. What is the reason for chaos in the world today? As there are no ideal parents at home today, there are no ideal children. The first school is the home itself. If the home is good, when these children enter society, they will have good qualities there also. Today's students must recognize that whatever

knowledge, wisdom or good qualities they have learned, has been taught to them by society. So they have to ask themselves what they are doing for society after receiving so many benefits from it. Students receive lots of benefits from society, but they don't contribute anything good in return. Thus people are becoming ungrateful. We must be grateful to those who help us. What is the use of education if we cannot show gratitude and respect to our benefactors? All the education learned thus becomes useless. First and foremost, we must learn to respect society, because we are born, brought up, and remain a part of society until we die. Those days, mothers used to teach their children that they could lead an ideal life only when they respected society.

Subhadra's Blessing

Take for example the episode of Abhimanyu. He prostrated before his mother and sought her permission to go to the battlefield. Initially his mother hesitated to permit him and said, "The great warrior Drona has devised a difficult strategy in today's battle—*Padmavyuha* (Lotus Formation). Bhishma has joined hands with Drona. Your father and uncle are not here. Your wife is pregnant. We do not know what can happen on the battlefield. Therefore, I advise that you do not go to war now!"

He replied, "Mother, this is not what you should teach me; you should encourage me to pounce onto the battlefield like a lion and destroy the Kauravas. Instead, you are discouraging me. Is it right on your part to do so?"

I pray that you grant your blessings to me to be victorious in the war." Subhadra immediately realized her duty in that situation and blessed him, "My dear son, may you have a long life; may you earn a good name for the family; may you earn the blessings of your uncle and father; may the Lord be by your side and protect you on the battlefield!"

It is obligatory for the son to earn a good reputation for the family. But in these modern times, parents do not impart such good teachings to their children. Parents distribute sweets as soon as the child is born to celebrate the child's birth. But in ancient times, parents would celebrate the son's birthday only on the day he brought a good name to the family.

Mother, the First Teacher

A father does not feel the joy of begetting a son merely because the child is born. Only when people praise his son for his good deeds and achievements does the father feel joyful. Thus, we find a gulf of difference between the cultures of those days and of today. Since time immemorial, it is the mothers who have brought up the children. The lap of the mother is the child's first school. That is why even the *Vedas* say, "May mother be your god; may father be your god; may teacher be your god." Thus, first honor is always given to the mother. Let us take for example the names of the deities: Sita and Rama, Radha and Krishna, Parvati and Parameshwara; the feminine aspect of God comes first.

It is the mother who shapes the child's

SAI ON SCIENCE AND THE DIVINE PRINCIPLE

"Consciousness has neither birth nor death. It has neither beginning nor end. It is present in all beings as the eternal witness."

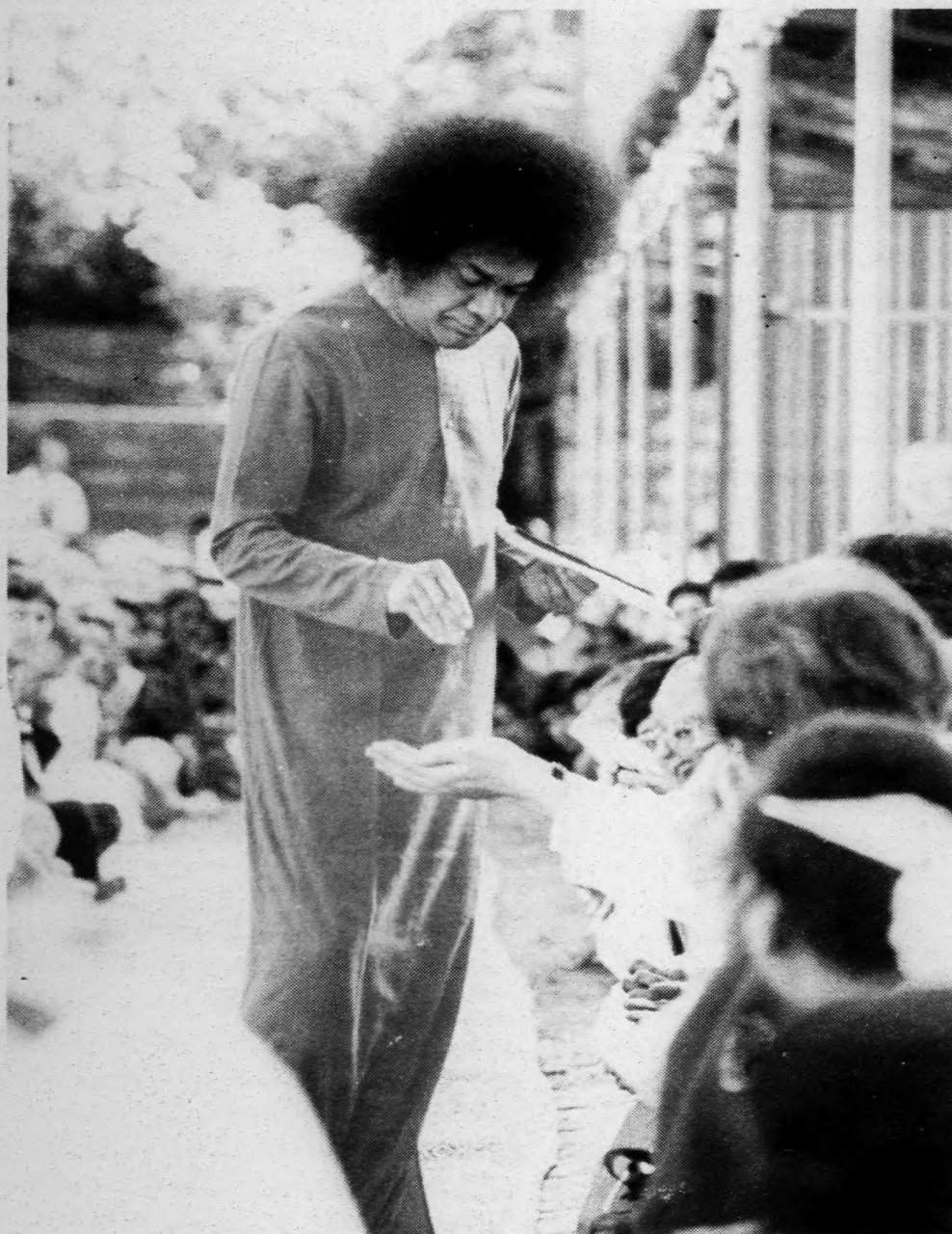
The great scientist, [Sir Isaac] Newton proclaimed the same truth. He was the one who discovered that the earth has magnetic power. It is not limited to a particular place, but is present everywhere.

[Albert] Einstein said, "Even matter, apart from all other forms of energy such as magnetic energy can be converted into electrical energy, which in turn can be changed into light energy and heat energy. In this manner, one may change the form of energy, but none can create or destroy it."

None can comprehend the Divine Principle. How can one explain the process of the birth of a bird, or that of a gigantic tree with all its branches and fruit contained in a tiny seed? How can one understand this? All of it points toward the existence of God.

Brahman (the absolute Truth, formless God) is subtler than the subtlest, vaster than the vastest. He is the eternal witness and pervades the entire universe in the form of *Atma* (Divinity within all), the seed of creation.

None can explain the process of a bird



coming out of the egg, or a tree sprouting from a tiny seed. One may interpret this according to one's own imagination, but these interpretations are not true. It is all the Divine Principle.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**
Birthday Discourse
December 23, 1968

DATES TO REMEMBER IN 2002

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Tuesday, March 12, *Mahashivaratri* is the observance of the new moon, symbolizing a renaissance or reawakening to spiritual life.

Saturday, April 13, *Ugadi*, Telegu New Year's Day.

Sunday, April 21, *Rama Navami* is the day to honor the birth of the Avatar, Lord Rama.

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

Sunday, July 21, *Global Handicapped Day* is a time for helping the physically impaired, and to remember that they need our help throughout the year.

Wednesday, July 24, *Guru Poornima* is a time to show love and pay respect to one's spiritual guide or preceptor.

Friday, August 30, *Krishna Jayanti* honors the birth of the Avatar, Lord Krishna.

Tuesday, September 10, *Ganesha Chaturthi* is the time to pay respect to Ganesha who is the remover of obstacles and ignorance. Ganesha also sets up obstacles for our protection.

Sunday, September 15, *Global Blood Donation Day* is a day to remember that all who are able should donate blood. Check with your doctor first.

Tuesday, October 15, *Vijaya Dashmi (Dasara)* is a time for worshipping Mother as God.

Sunday, November 3, *Deepavali* is a festival of lights commemorating the victory of righteousness over wickedness.

Saturday & Sunday, November 9 & 10, *Global Akhanda Bhajans* is a 24-hour singing of devotional songs throughout the world. Singing begins at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday and ends at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday.

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

Saturday, November 23, is the Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

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

—Central Office, Prasanthi Nilayam

Today, people are searching for shortcuts for everything, even spirituality. Actually, there is a shortcut to Divinity. There is no need to search here and there; God is residing in your heart. Turn your vision inward; you can see God instantly. Have full faith that this is the easiest path.

—Sathya Sai Baba, *Divine Discourse*, November 23, 1999

Sai SERVICE USA

Rich people and people in power have plenty of servants. But the distressed, the poverty-stricken, and the suffering have no one to serve them. Go to such people and be their friends, their kith and kin, their closest well-wishers....If you pour spirituality into the ears of those who are tortured by hunger, it will not be assimilated. First, quench the hunger. Give them God in the form of food. Give them God in the form of clothes. Give God in the form of peace to those who are afflicted with anxiety. Give God in the form of medicine to those who are suffering from ill health. Give God in whatever form will assuage fear, pain, and sorrow. It is only after this is done that spirituality can soak into the heart.

✦ Sathya Sai Baba

From a Discourse, November 23, 1982



Sheltering the Needy—Providing One of Life's Essentials

If you visited the Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Sai Center three years ago, you might have heard an announcement at the end of the devotional singing: "Don't forget, the sign-up sheet for Habitat is at the front." In those days, Center members occasionally volunteered at the Durham County chapter of Habitat for Humanity International, an organization that helps people who have minimal resources build their own homes. Although the need for this service is great, our small member base at the time prevented scheduling these projects more frequently. However, as the Center grew, our participation in-

creased, starting with the young adults, who inspired other members by their example.

Today, our Center normally sends volunteers to Habitat the third Saturday of every month. In the past year, we have assisted Durham Habitat in constructing three new homes. Since September, we have helped with Habitat's new project, a subdivision of 17 homes, four of which are expected to be completed by winter 2002.

During our last outing of the year—on October 20—we had a great turnout, about 10 volunteers. That day, our volunteers spent time putting vinyl siding on a house. They had to measure the

sides of the house, taking into account the windows, and then cut the siding and place it so it was even. Our group worked on the job the whole morning, from 8 a.m. till 12 noon, which is typical of the time spent at our Habitat outings.

Before each outing, we make sure to prepare our volunteers. We remind them about safety precautions and the need to wear appropriate clothing and boots while at work. Then we e-mail them directions to the Habitat site and cell phone numbers to use when lost or calling in sick.

After coming to the building site on outing day, our volunteers sign the Habitat registry and take a nametag. Then the foreperson, usually an AmeriCorps (domestic Peace Corps) volunteer, takes the group members to the work site and gives those who haven't brought their own nails and tools (such as hammers and saws) the ones they'll need. He or she also spends 10-20 minutes instructing the workers on how to use the tools. When our members first started at Habitat, they were relieved to learn of this instruction, which answered their concern over lack of past construction experience: "I have no idea how to use a saw." "I'm not good at working with tools." "I can't even hit a nail with a hammer!" After they realized that they didn't have to be experts to participate at Habitat, they were eager to begin work.

Each of our Habitat outings is unique. One day, some of our volunteers worked on clearing and seeding a backyard while the rest painted the inside of the house. Another time, our Center members built a staircase for a deck, as well as rails for the front porch. At this outing, some of our on-site members felt that the way the head carpenter acted reminded them of Swami. Although he didn't look at all like Swami—he was a big man—his gentleness, his immense patience, as he explained the details of staircase building, and the way he was considerate of other people around him seemed to exude Swami's presence.

Our volunteers always find being part of the building process energizing. Sometimes they share their past Habitat experiences with volunteers from other organizations (who occasionally join the Sai crew) and work side by side with these new acquaintances in friendship and harmony. Most of the time, our crew labors alongside the future homeowners in helping to build their house. It is so heartwarming to see the joy and happiness on those people's faces.

One time, a homeowner shared her thoughts and feelings. She mentioned how she, a single mother, had fallen on bad times and lost custody of her daughter because she couldn't provide a suitable home for the child. Finding Habitat and being selected as a homeowner greatly changed her life. Since getting her new home, she has been able to regain custody of her daughter.

Our members see the Habitat service as a chance to be part of something—an effort that can make a tremendous impact on a needy family. What could be more fulfilling than having the opportunity to provide a family with one of life's essentials!

As Swami says, "The joy you get while promoting another's joy is incomparable." We couldn't agree more.

✿ **Jay Simhan and Sudhakar Sreenivasan**
Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill Sai Center,
North Carolina

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

Sai Service USA continues on page 22 ⇨⇨⇨

SAI CONFERENCES AND RETREATS FOR 2002

<i>Date and Region</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Information</i>
May 24-26 Memorial Day weekend Southwest Region 9	Camp Chapel Rock Prescott, Arizona	Satya Satyanarayan 13236 E. Country Shadows Circle Chandler, Arizona 85249 (480) 802-7838 Sathindra@worldnet.att.net
May 24-27 Memorial Day weekend Mid Central Region 4 and North Central Region 5	Camp Wyman Eureka, Missouri (near St. Louis) * 25th Retreat Anniversary!	Kathy Feely 7490 Amherst Ave. St. Louis, Missouri 63130 (314) 862-1254, fax (314) 721-7574 kathy—feely@clayton.k12.mo.us
May 24-27 Memorial Day weekend Northeast Region 1	Russell Sage College Troy, New York (near Albany)	Murthy Cheruvu 3 Mockingbird Court Hopewell Junction, New York 12533 (845) 227-8567 Saicheruvu@hotmail.com
May 24-27 Memorial Day weekend Mid-Atlantic Region 2	Camp Pocono Pocono Valley Resort in the Pennsylvania Mountains	Raj Sanmugalingam 6517 Winnepeg Road Bethesda, Maryland 20817 (301) 530-0192 rgovinda@optonline.net
June 7-9 Pacific Region South Region 8	Occidental College 1600 Campus Road Los Angeles (Eagle Rock) California	Harshad Patel 1118 E. Colorado St. Glendale, California 91205 (818) 952-9600 Harold Stokes (949) 916-2333 Juan Moore (310) 325-0031
August, One Day Only Date Not Established Pacific Region North Region 6	State of Washington (near Seattle)	Deborah Lewis 12139 S. E. 188 Street Renton, Washington 98058 (425) 917-2265 Dlewis@cs750.com
August 30-September 1 Southeast Region 3	Simpsonwood Conference & Retreat Center	Wayner P. Crowder 1220 M. L. King Drive, S. W. Atlanta, Goergia 30314 (404) 753-5157 fax (404) 758-2327 wcrowd@aol.com
August 31-September 3 Labor Day weekend North Central Region 5	Camp Hastings Illinois (near Chicago)	Rao Garuda 16201 Shaker Blvd. Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120 (216) 751-6927 fax (216) 642-9213 raogaruda@aol.com
August 30-September 2 Labor Day weekend Southwest Region 9	Bodhi Mandala Jemez Springs, New Mexico (near Albuquerque)	Barbara Pepper 521 Richmond Dr., S. E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106 (505) 262-0694 (both phone & fax call before sending fax)
August 31-September 2 Labor Day weekend Pacific Region South Region 8	Camp Stevens Julian, California (near San Diego)	Ed Leroy 8550 Lemon Ave. La Mesa, California 91941 (619) 460-8473 fax (619)232-7219
August 31-September 2 Labor Day weekend Northern California and Nevada Region 7	Walker Creek Ranch Petaluma, California (by car, approximately 45 minutes north of San Francisco)	Prema Rao or Suzanne Slyman 16398 Sanborn Road Saratoga, California 95070 (408) 868-9117 premsai@aol.com
October 4-6 Southwest Region 9	YMCA Estes Park Colorado	Carolyn Bullion 952 St. Andrews Lane Louisville, Colorado 80027 *82 (303) 673-9531 saraelan@aol.com
October 25-27 Pacific Region North Region 6	Silver Falls, Oregon (near Salem)	Deborah Lewis 12139 S. E. 188th Street Renton, Washington 98058 (425) 917-2265 Dlewis@cs750.com

Message from the National Service Coordinator

Swami's Accelerating Mission Offers New Opportunities

Surprising events are bringing about unprecedented changes in our lives. As Swami's mission accelerates and the world shrinks, mankind is awakening in ways that seemed entirely improbable a short time ago. It is a painful experience.

In the beginning of September 2001, I was in Swami's presence with a group of Sai devotees, largely from New York. Almost every day, He asked us the same question, "When are you leaving?"

as increasingly long lines appeared at food distribution centers. Now after the devastating attacks on New York and Washington, the country is facing a hunger emergency and a homeless crisis not seen since the depression of the 1930s. Here in New York, over 80,000 mostly low-income jobs have been lost. Those affected are trying to hold on to whatever housing they have and are depending on food from the pantries and churches. On a

"Mankind is awakening in ways that seemed entirely improbable a short time ago."

"September 7," we answered. "Very happy," He said. One time after this interchange, He asked me if I did *japa* (repetition of the Lord's name), and when I said I didn't, His hand formed a wide circle and a big crystal and silver *japamala* (rosary) materialized. It was both beautiful and breathtaking.

What followed this experience was a brief lesson on the meaning and use of the *japamala*, on repeating the Lord's name with love and courage to gain strength in times of tribulation. A few days after returning home to New York, I was confronted with the September 11 terrorist attacks, which wretched Americans out of their complacency. But as disastrous as these events appeared, they allowed old international antagonisms to begin developing into new forms of cooperation. He works in mysterious ways, but one thing we can be sure of: Whatever is taking place will be good for us when seen in the proper perspective of time.

Earlier in the year, the country had been experiencing the first effects of an economic recession

recent Sunday, The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine served over 700 lunches. Six months earlier, the number was 200! The terrorist attacks have taken many suppliers of food out of service.

Not only is food scarce and the need great here in New York, but the situation is the same throughout the country. The hungry and homeless, the desperate and despairing, and the demoralized and depressed are there for all who care to see them. Federally funded food stamps are available, but too many of those in need are not aware of their eligibility. It is estimated that more than a million New Yorkers are relying on soup kitchens and shelters at this time. Other parts of the country are similarly affected.

The Sai service organization must address this need and set a good example by feeding, clothing, and assisting wherever it can, as best it can. But good intentions are not always enough to bring relief, as we can see from New York's experience with the great number of people who earnestly tried to serve in the aftermath of the September 11

attacks. Unfortunately, many who came to this city eager to help did not have the necessary skills to do the job. We must acquire the knowledge needed to help.

Regionally and nationally, the Sai Organization is urging Center volunteers to take courses offered by other organizations (such as the Red Cross) and local governments and relay information about skills gained through such means so that we will have a national computer registry of all those who have the appropriate knowledge should the need arise. This national preparedness effort is underway at the present time. Become part of this effort and be ready to help whenever and wherever there is a service opportunity.

Today, in the Sai organization we have too few volunteers to meet the challenges we face. It is urgent that we encourage our fellow Sai devotees

and all our friends to join us in regular efforts to assist in this emergency.

In the organization, we are now experiencing a major resurgence in our desire to dedicate our hands and our time in the way Swami wants us

**"The urgency of our times is bringing
His mission closer to fulfillment."**

to—by loving all and serving all. The urgency of our times is bringing His mission closer to fulfillment. We must increase our efforts with diligence and love, and we must do it NOW. We must serve with courage and faith and repeat His name, knowing that He is ever with us. It is He who guides us and protects us. Always.

✿ Hal Honig

WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

Unlike what many people think, water conservation does not mean cramping your lifestyle, but simply reducing the amount of water you waste. Here are some simple steps you can take in your daily life to conserve water.

In the Laundry Room

- ☐ If your washing machine has a load selector, use it to match water level to size of load.
- ☐ Pre-soak heavily soiled items, and always use a minimum amount of detergent.

In the Bathroom

- ☐ Limit your showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down, and rinse off.
- ☐ Use a glass of water to rinse your mouth after brushing your teeth.
- ☐ Check for leaks in faucets and pipes. A dripping faucet can waste 20 gallons of water a day.

In the Kitchen

- ☐ Wash your fruits and vegetables in a sink half filled with water.
- ☐ Use your dishwasher's "Rinse and Hold" setting instead of pre-rinsing dishes.
- ☐ Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator, not under running water.
- ☐ Instead of cooling water by letting it run, keep a container of cold water in the refrigerator.

—✿ Adapted from *Man, God and Nature*, a publication of the South Bethesda, Maryland, Sai Center's Environmental Committee.

continued from page 15

life. Even when she punishes the child for its mistakes, she does so with love to lead it to the right path. Today we need such mothers.

*In
this sacred land of Bharat,
patience is our treasure.*

*Among all the vows,
adherence to truth is the greatest
penance.*

*Sweetest of all feelings in our land is the
love of the mother.*

Telugu poem

There is nothing more sacred than motherhood. We need children who fulfill the aspirations of their mothers. We also need women who embody motherhood. In order to foster such lofty ideals, we have chosen the 19th of November to celebrate as Ladies Day.

About Easwaramma

The mother of this body was Easwaramma. She was not a scholar. She did not even know the alphabet. Yet, she always spoke of good things all her life. Her heart was filled with compassion. One day she approached Swami and said, "Swami there are so many rich people in this region, yet the children of our village have to walk all the way to Bukkapatnam to attend school. My heart grieves to see these little children walking for miles. Swami, could you please build a small school in our village?" I replied, "I don't have money!" She immediately removed the gold chain from her neck, gave it to me and said, "Swami, please sell it and build a school."

I told her, "Don't be hasty, it is only to

test you that I said so. I will definitely construct a school." On the following day the foundation was laid, and within a short period the school building was ready. Then I asked her if she was happy. She did not appear completely satisfied. I asked her, "What else bothers you?" She replied, "Swami, when children fall ill, their mothers carry them all the way to Bukkapatnam for medical treatment, and things may go wrong on the way. So please build a small hospital in the village." Thus, she always thought of the welfare and happiness of others. She used to say, "It is not enough if these facilities are available only in our village. They must be available to all the villages, and everyone should be happy."

Once I took Easwaramma to Brindavan. It was during the Summer Course. Students from colleges all over the country were attending the course; there were many foreigners also. She was very happy at the noble things taught to them in the classes and also during Swami's discourses in the evenings. One day I asked her, "Are you happy now?" She replied, "Swami, what more do I need? People of so many countries are getting benefitted. This is enough for my happiness." She had a broad-mind. Today, we see only narrow-mindedness everywhere. People desire that only their family and children should be happy. But Easwaramma was not like that. She wanted everyone to be happy. Even though she was not educated she taught noble qualities to everyone. Our country, Bharat, attained great fame because of such mothers. There

were men and women of character who brought a good reputation to the nation. One day after her breakfast, she was sitting in the hall; Swami was upstairs. Suddenly she called out, "Swami," three times. I told her, "I am coming, don't go!" Gokak, who was there, was surprised at my saying that. I rushed down. She held my hands and said, "I am completely satisfied with this Summer Course. It is not only students who are getting benefitted; even I have developed a broad-mind. Swami, I am going." She offered her *pranams* to me and passed away peacefully.

Everyone aspires for a peaceful death. People who have evil feelings will not die such a death. Easwaramma did not have even a trace of evil feeling in her. That is why she was always joyful. Even at the age of 96 she used to walk three miles from Brindayan to the house of the Gojimeni family. When I asked her, "Why do you want to walk such a distance? Why don't you go in a car?" She would reply, "Swami, I want to see them. I do not feel comfortable in a car; I do not need a car. I prefer to walk!" She always aspired to see others happy. Because of such mothers there was great progress and prosperity in society.

Swami's Robe

When this body was twelve years old, I was in Subbamma's house. I asked her to sew a long gown for me. She did not like the idea. She asked, "Why do you want to wear a gown? You can wear a *dhoti*." I replied, "No, the time has come to do it." She obeyed Swami's command and stitched a gown for

me. It cost two *annas* (pennies) at that time. When I put on the gown, she requested that Easwaramma come to her house to see me. She came, saw me and started shedding tears, saying, "Swami, did you call me here for seeing this form of yours?" I told her, "Don't grieve, I am setting an ideal for the whole world. When one wears the ochre robes, one's evil desires will vanish." They were satisfied to hear that.

Jayamma's Story

Today, Jayamma is translating the discourse. She used to look after Easwaramma during those days. Easwaramma stayed in Jayamma's house at that time. Jayamma would serve her day and night and listen to her telling about Swami. I do not know what Easwaramma told her. Jayamma did not want to enter family life, but her parents prevailed upon her to get married. The marriage was arranged. I was in Puttaparthi. Jayamma sent a telegram to Swami, which read, "I am going to hell today!" I tried to persuade her parents against the marriage, but they did not pay heed to my words. Her husband was a man of good character. Even Jayamma's mother was a very good woman. To be as virtuous as Easwaramma, was her earnest prayer to Swami. Jayamma's marriage was performed, but Swami did not go to the wedding. Her husband's name was Gopinath. He was noble and well educated. He had just then returned from America after his education. He was posted to a big company in Rajahmundry. When Swami visited Rajahmundry, he served Swami by arranging conveyances wherever Swami

wished to go. Gopinath's constant prayer was that he and Jayamma should find a place at Swami's lotus feet. Swami kept advising him not to be hasty, and that there was a long life ahead. When Swami returned from Rajahmundry, there came a telegram that Gopinath had expired. Jayamma immediately locked her house and rushed to Brindavan. She smeared *vibhuti* (holy ash) on her forehead and sat under a tree. Swami asked her why she had applied *vibhuti* on her forehead and not *kumkum*. She replied that it was ordained by Swami. She informed Swami that her husband was no more and said that she would not go away from Swami's lotus feet. Swami then sent Karunyaananda and Rama Brahmam to Rajahmundry to get all her belongings. Swami instructed Jayamma to teach in the college at Anantapur. Jayamma had won a gold medal for her proficiency in English. She had also learned Sanskrit at Maharani College but still was not satisfied. She revealed to Swami her desire to secure a doctorate. With Swami's blessings, she got the doctorate under Gokak's guidance. Jayamma has strong determination and she has continued to work in the institute since then. She used to come to Puttaparthi from Anantapur every Sunday until Swami instructed her to concentrate on her duty without wasting time. Jayamma promptly obeyed Swami's command. She had come to Swami as a four-year-old child when Swami resided in the old mandir. Wherever Swami went, she would follow with a towel in her hand. She grew up this way with noble feelings.

God is the embodiment of love; He is completely selfless. Those who follow Him therefore should be selfless too. When your hearts are filled with divine love, you will be able to perceive oneness in all of creation. When this unity pervades your heart, there will be no scope for hatred toward others. Eternal love will be established in your hearts with the experience of unity in all existence. Therefore, those who follow the Divine and inculcate divine love are truly fortunate.

God's Selfless Love

There is not even a thread of selfishness in Swami; Swami is completely selfless. When you inculcate this selfless love, you too become selfless, and your love exhorts others onto the ideal path. There is a trace of selfishness and self-interest even in the love of mothers, fathers and friends. However, divine love is untainted by selfishness. Why don't you crave for such selfless love? Today people go after physical and worldly pleasures and fortunes. All that is worldly constitutes the negative; only God's love is positive. When you attain this love, you can be truly powerful and perform ideal deeds. Let people think whatever they wish, you need not worry—inculcate divine love.

Be Pure and Fearless

*Fear of sin, and love for God have
vanished from the hearts of
people, leading to their decline of
humanness.*

*This is the cause for restlessness in the
world.*

Telugu Poem

You should not be misled by others' words and lose sight of the sanctity of divine love. Some people are like crows and say whatever they like. But you should exercise discrimination. You should be pure of heart and fearless. People who are jealous may concoct various stories, but that cannot harm us. Instead, it will help us. We should be ready to face any difficulty, because true happiness springs out of hardships. Censure becomes praise if we are determined. In fact, criticism adds to the sacred fame of the Divine. You should not be bogged down by criticism.

*For those who say yes, it is yes.
For those who say no, it is no.
No and yes are only for you,
But for Sai, it is always Yes, Yes, Yes!*

Telugu Poem

I never say no; I am always in bliss. We should welcome even death happily. Everything happens for our own good. Once you are born, can you escape death? Birth and death are inseparable twin birds. Until this day, I have had no desires except one: "All should be united!" You must recognize the oneness of the principle of *Atma* residing in one and all. Always contemplate upon the principle of love. You must have reverence for all and love your parents.

Be Happy Now

You may make mistakes knowingly or unknowingly, but brooding over those mistakes is not advisable. The past is past, forget

the past. The future is not certain. The present is very important. It is not an ordinary present—it is omnipresent.

So be happy in the present. Swami expects all parents to achieve fulfillment in their lives by molding their children into virtuous persons. They should always aspire for the goodness and well-being of their children. It is a good boy who becomes a god boy.

How did the term good boy get modified? During the British regime, they used to say good boy. Later it became good-bye. Thereafter, the word "good" vanished and "bye" has remained. In this way, with the passage of time, various words have become perverted. But what we should accomplish is being a good boy or good girl. Give up selfishness and you become selfless. Self is lovelessness, and love is selflessness.

Obey the commands of your parents and become ideal parents in the future. You should teach the same to your children, too. In order to teach these ideals, I have proclaimed the 19th of November as Ladies' Day, which is very auspicious. The importance of this day lies in propagating and realizing the sanctity of motherhood, which is founded on the principle of selfless love. Children should be fostered on the principles of piety and virtue. This day will be celebrated by posterity for eons.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Ladies' Day, November 19, 2002

Sri Sathya Sai Books
and Publications Trust,
Prasanthi Nilayam

UNITY IN CELEBRATING EASWARAMMA DAY

Easwaramma Day and Mothers' Day fall in the same week every year. What a wonderful opportunity to honor all mothers! Our mother Sai has taught us about love and unity, and we felt that a united approach would be appropriate. Keeping this in mind, about five years ago in 1997, three Arizona Sai Centers (Scottsdale, Mesa and Phoenix) planned to celebrate Easwaramma Day and Mothers' Day together, making it a time for service with the children and some adult devotees.

We opted to serve U-MOM, a family shelter for the homeless, and approximately twenty-five families participated. We organized some games and activities, and we helped the children make Mothers' Day cards. We also arranged for the children to present their mothers with a small potted plant. The children were thrilled as they were served pizza, cake and watermelon. Each child was also presented with an Arizona tee shirt. Many children were curious about Swami and His mother, Easwaramma, whose birthday we celebrate [on May 6]. We felt Swami's presence, as we followed His precepts of "Love All, Serve All," and practiced the essence of unity.

The next year, we wanted to do something different. The Director of U-MOM was very cooperative and willing to provide transportation for twenty-five children to visit the Phoenix Zoo. The zoo officials gave us a special group rate. Some Sai brothers and sisters volunteered to accompany the

children on this exciting visit to the zoo on Eswaramma Day. The trip was a great success. We then returned to U-MOM, where we served lunch. This time, to commemorate the childrens' trip to the zoo, we presented each child with an animal tee shirt. We cut the birthday cake and enjoyed it, as well as all the activities that followed. There was so much love and laughter with the residents of U-MOM that it truly gladdened our hearts.

In 1999, we decided to extend our services to an assisted care facility, a home for the elderly. This was followed by a picnic in a park with all the children from the Sai families. Again, this was a great experience as the elderly loved seeing the children, and it was a good opportunity for the youth to come together.

We visited the Weyrich Health Care Center and entertained the elderly residents in the Nursing Home section with lovely melodies and devotional songs presented by the youth and the children, after which we shared some cake and snacks with the elderly. We presented every resident with a rose, symbolizing motherly love. At that point, there was not a single dry eye. Tears of joy flowed down every face as the children presented them with Mothers' Day cards made with so much affection and care.

We repeated this whole experience in the year 2000 as well. We enjoyed going to the Nursing Home section and bringing joy and laughter to the residents and making a

difference in their lives. The bond between the youth and the elderly was truly an inspiring sight.

We then proceeded to the McCormick Railroad Park in Scottsdale for our Annual Easwaramma Day Picnic, thankful that the weather was nice. Young, old and the not-so-old all came together and played cricket, football, baseball, and even rode on the mini-train in the park. We felt truly blessed.

This unique combination of service to

others, as well as the fun and enjoyment of the picnics that followed, taught us the beauty and joy that come from harmonious love and unity. We hope that sharing these experiences will help us all to cultivate oneness and unity with all those whose lives we touched; as our beloved Swami would have us do, "Love all, and serve all."

—**Chellam Jeevanandam**

Service Coordinator, Sathya Sai Baba
Center of Scottsdale, Arizona

CONSIDER THE CHILDREN

*Consider the children wherever they are,
Little ones here and little ones far.
They each have a story. They each have a need.
Poverty knows no culture or creed.*

*Amin is lame, swollen and small.
John and his sister sleep out in the hall.*

*Shakila searches for scraps and fuel.
Mary is hungry and has problems at school.*

*Felike huddles in the monsoon rain.
Emily's a premie with a slow weight gain.*

*Anizio proudly milks his new goat.
William is cold, he has no warm coat.*

*Consider the children. Whose children? Where?
Kids over here or kids over there?
Give to the children, no need to tell why.
They are all ours in the family of Sai.*

—**Jean Salfen**

Pollock Pines, California

RADIO SAI GLOBAL HARMONY

On the morning of November 23, 2001, Swami's 76th birthday, Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, announced the inauguration of a 24-hour radio station broadcasting the voice and the message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba saying, "This 23rd of November is undoubtedly blessed because from this day forward, you can listen to the golden voice of Bhagavan and His message 24-hours a day through digital satellite on your digital radio." He reported that Dr. Noah Samara, Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. based WorldSpace Corporation, had offered a complete radio channel, to be named "Radio Sai Global Harmony."

In a separate speech, Sri V. Srinivasan, All-India President of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization, indicated that the digital radio broadcasts of Swami's message would radiate peace and harmony, the essence of the five values—truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence—furthering the emergence of a new society in the world.

Dr. Venkataraman then introduced Dr. Michael Nobel, member of the Board of Directors of WorldSpace Corporation. He is the great-grandnephew of Alfred Nobel, founder of the Nobel Peace Prize, and current Chairman of the Board of the Nobel Society. Dr. Nobel referred to Swami's message of peace and observed, "Though the cold war ended ten years ago, and the specter of a nuclear holocaust was removed; war has not ended." He remarked that Swami's beautiful message needed to be brought to the entire

world. At that point, he invited Bhagavan to press a button to begin the first satellite broadcast of the Radio Sai Global Harmony channel. The sounds heard via the new radio channel were institute students singing a welcome song in Telugu, after which Swami delivered His birthday message.

WorldSpace Corporation provided the satellite broadcast service. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., it transmits digital radio programming via satellite to developing regions around the world, including the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Its first two satellites, AfriStar and AsiaStar, were launched in 1998 and 2000, respectively. The company hopes to launch a third satellite, AmeriStar, in 2002. AmeriStar will provide service to Latin America and the southern Caribbean. Service in Latin America will not extend to northern Mexico or the northern Gulf of Mexico area due to the U.S. Department of Defense usage of the same frequency in that region.

For now, Radio Sai Global Harmony is broadcast in a multilingual format, on the western beam coverage area only of the AsiaStar satellite. This broadcast zone covers all of India and extends into the Indian Ocean on the south. The following areas are also within the broadcast zone: Nepal, southwest China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Krygzstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakstan, Bangladesh, western Myanmar, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the southern and eastern portions of the Arabian Peninsula including Yemen, Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates, and southwestern Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and

southeastern Ethiopia. Radio Sai Global Harmony is not yet broadcast on the western or southern beams of AsiaStar, nor on any of AfriStar's three beams. According to Mr. Eugene Rich, Director of Marketing Communications for WorldSpace Corporation, it is possible that in the future, coverage may extend to other zones within WorldSpace system.

Broadcasts can be tuned into by using portable digital radio receivers, which are equipped with miniature satellite dishes for reception, in units about the size of a small "boom box." Thus, for a relatively small cost, people in areas without electrical service or other forms of broadcasting services can have access to radio programming.

Note from the Editor: This programming will bring a great deal of practical and spiritual information to the countries and areas mentioned, and we are very happy about that. However, the bottom line is that the USA will not have the privilege of being part of that broadcast system. We can only hope that someday and in some way, the United States will be able to hear the wonderful discourses of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in our own homes via digital radio programming.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

About your Sathya Sai Newsletter

The *Newsletter* staff is happy to announce that Bhagavan has given His directions that this publication should come out six times a year (bimonthly). As all subscribers know, we have previously published four issues a year (quarterly). He further stated that the price if this periodical should be \$6.00 per year, which means that now you will be getting more for your dollar; isn't that unusual for these times!? Subscribers will be able to purchase the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, at the new price when their present subscription ends. Subscription information is on page 32.

Swami Is Always Giving

Most of us are aware of the monumental charitable projects that Swami has undertaken. His schools provide free education. His hospitals provide free medical care with the most sophisticated state-of-the-art treatment. His water project supplies safe drinking water to over a million thirsty people. Swami has undertaken the building of houses as gifts to poor villagers. Programs that provide a means of livelihood to the destitute and poor have been established in Prasanthi Nilayam. Throughout His life, amidst all the charitable projects and activities of service, Swami has continually done *Narayana Seva* (God's Service) such as feeding the poor, Himself.

Swami has never solicited donations. From time to time in the publications, *Sanathana Sarathi* and *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, there have appeared cautions to readers not to be misled by people claiming to collect money on behalf of Sai Baba. We wish to remind the

readers that in the United States, the authorized charitable foundation is the Sathya Sai Society of America, a charitable corporation. For more information, you may contact:

Sathya Sai Society of America, P.O. Box 660908, Arcadia, California 91066-0908

Spring 2002 Divine Mission: Leadership and You

Where: This conference is to be held in North San Diego, at Sorrento Mesa business area, California.

When: Saturday/Sunday, March 23 and 24 (weekend before Easter)

Topics: Leadership, Spirituality and You

Who: The conference is for adults, at least 16 years or older. It will emphasize the development of practical (outer) and spiritual (inner) leadership skills that can be used in all areas of our lives—family, work, social and spiritual groups, etc.

The featured speakers are, Ms. Berniece Mead and Mr. J. Jegadeshan ably assisted by other participants. Music, a play, a program presented by children and more will be included.

Registration and Cost: For more information or a registration form, call registrar Sandy Munoz at, 858-484-5665 (home) or send email to sandy.munoz@homecomings.com. The conference coordinator, April Skrobiza, can be reached at aprilskr@pacbell.net. There is also a website for the conference www.saiconference.org. The cost is \$10.00 per day and includes continental breakfast and lunch.

To Receive the **Bimonthly (six issues a year) Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA**

☐ **Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA/** one year subscription in the USA is \$6.00, Canada and Mexico are \$12.00 each.

☐ **All other countries** outside the United States are \$16.00 per year.

☐ **Audio Cassette Tapes** of the **Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA** are available **in the U.S., only**. Six tapes per year, subscription is \$18.00 (The tapes are offered free to the visually impaired). Sorry, this offer is not valid outside the US. I request the **Audio Tapes** for a blind person, address listed below:

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 enclosing \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt. # _____

City, State and Zip Code: _____

In some countries, the concept of kindness and respect for elders is not stressed. The teachers of Sathya Sai schools must advise the students in the right way. The teacher must advise the students that they are born as human beings, and that they are neither wild animals to strike terror in the hearts of people, nor are they domestic animals (docile people) to be afraid of others. They have no cause to fear, nor should they cause fear in others. In this manner, the teacher must lead the students on the right path. Life is a long journey and must not be dismissed in a trivial manner. It must be spent in the most auspicious manner possible. We should aspire for a divine life, not a long life. It is possible to bring about a change in students by such good advice.

You are *Acharya* and not merely a teacher. *Acharya* is one who first practices and then teaches the same to their students. So when you want to teach good principles to students, first you practice and then set an example. To illustrate the point: If you smoke, then students will emulate you and start smoking. If you try to correct them by saying, "Smoking is bad for health," the students will in turn ask you, "Sir, then why do you smoke?" The true characteristic of good education is good teaching. Good teaching brings about a transformation in students. It will make students confess their mistakes before the teacher. I know this very well. Sometimes I punish my students for their mistakes and am strict with them. Yet I love them and give them what they need. This transforms their hearts. They come and

pray to me, "Swami please forgive us. It is our mistake that we did not conduct ourselves according to your words. Now we have realized it. Swami, we will never repeat such mistakes again." Words that come out of true repentance melt Swami's heart, and Swami forgives them by saying, "My dear ones, whatever I do is for your good." All teachers can learn to emulate this example.

Q: What is the most important quality a good teacher must have?

Baba: This is a very important question. Teachers should practice what is good and teach the same to students. Teachers should lead an exemplary life. Here is an example:

When I was studying in the third [grade] in Kamalapuram, we had a teacher by the name of H. Iyengar. Students were very afraid of him and would often avoid meeting him. I had great respect for my teacher. One day Iyengar got angry because he observed me going into a lane when he was coming from the opposite direction on the road. Next day, I went to the class. I was the class monitor and had to get a bundle of sticks with which he would punish students. When he came to the class he was angry with me for not meeting him on the road. He asked me, "Why did you not meet and greet me?" I replied, "Sir, I did not see you. I was going to my friend's house to get my notebook from him." He shouted, "So you did not see me!" I replied, "No, I did not see you." He threatened to punish me. I told him, "Sir, I am speaking the truth. If you wish to punish me, you can do so." This answer melted his heart, and he shed tears. He called

me near and said, "Raju I knew that you would never commit such a mistake. It is my mistake to get angry with you. I have a request; would you please come to my house tomorrow evening?" As instructed by H. Iyengar, I went to his house. Iyengar had great love for me. He gave me *pakodas* on an aluminum plate. He said, "I made a mistake by thinking of punishing you. As an act of repentance, I want to cultivate friendship with you." Our goodness, our truthfulness, and our sacred qualities will transform any person. I said, "Sir, your position is much higher than mine. Friendship is possible only between equals." He replied, "You may look at it that way, but one's age and education are not important; what is important is one's heart. You have a good heart." He further enquired whether I was studying well. I told him, "Yes sir." He cautioned me that exams were fast approaching; he wanted me to study well.

I appeared for the examination; it lasted for two hours. However, I finished answering the paper within half an hour. I handed over the answer script to the examiner and went out. He kept watching me. He quipped, "Raju! You don't seem to have written anything!" I replied, "Sir, you will see it for yourself tomorrow. I have written everything correctly. I do not write or speak untruth." Next day, from the pile of answer scripts, he picked up my answers first. He checked my answers one by one and found that there were some answers that were not

"Our goodness, our truthfulness and our sacred qualities will transform any person."

known even to him. So, he wrote very, very, very, very good on my paper. In those days, the teacher retained the answer scripts. The next day he asked his wife to prepare some snacks and invited me to his house. He told me, "Raju, have a cup of coffee." I said, "Sir, I do not drink coffee. I don't have that habit."

"At least have a *dosa*," he requested. I replied, "But I do not have the habit of eating at odd times." Please eat at least for my satisfaction," he pleaded. To satisfy him, I partook

of it. Likewise, students have many opportunities to make their teachers happy. Though the students were afraid of our teachers, I was not. The reason was that I never committed any mistakes. I used to speak very sweetly. Because of this, my English teacher, Mahbub Khan, was very eager to come to my class. If any other teacher continued to be in the class after the bell, he would ask them to leave. In the class, all the other students would tease me by saying, "Raju, go to the front!" Mahbub Khan loved me very much. He used to caress my hair, fondle me and pinch my cheeks. He was 50 years old and had no children.

He would ask me to visit his house frequently; he was very devoted to me. At the age of 11, I left that school. Until that time, I used to lead the prayers at the school. Mahbub Khan was looking after the prayer arrangements, and he asked me to lead the prayers saying, "Your prayers melt our

hearts. You compose a prayer song and sing it." "How can I compose a prayer song?" I asked. He said, "You can do it!" I composed a song and sang it at the prayer meetings. In that song, I incorporated the idea of the unity of religions, even at that age.

After listening to that song, all were surprised. After some time, I left the school, declaring, "I am Sai. No one however great can ever understand me. Give up your attempts to keep me with you. I belong to the whole world!"

All were bewildered. They came behind me crying, "Raju, Raju." Without answering anybody, I went straight to Anjaneyulu's garden. I sat on a rock there and started preaching, "*Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam, Dustara Bhava Sagara Taranam.*" ("Contemplate on the feet of the Divine Master, who alone can help you to cross over the ocean of life and death.") The next day, the Telugu teacher and also Mahbub Khan resigned from their teaching posts. They loved me so much that they did not want to teach in the school without me. Many other teachers followed their example. A Muslim boy was asked to go up to the stage to lead the prayers. After coming onto the stage, he broke down thinking of me. He could not sing the prayer. Others also started crying. From that day onwards, prayers were stopped.

There is a bond of pure love between teachers and students. Students can win over any teacher's heart, and a teacher can win over students' hearts. If you want to be loved, you have to love others first. First and foremost, we should aspire for truth. The

basis of Indian culture is, "Speak the truth and practice right conduct." I was always very humble. Now also, I teach the same thing to students. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly. But sometimes, one needs to be strict. That is what I do; I can be harder than a diamond when the situation demands. Otherwise, I am softer than butter. Teachers understood this nature of mine. Teachers! If you want to take students into your confidence, you have to approach them with love. You have to point out their mistakes and lead them on the right path. Only then will they follow the right path and accept their mistakes. For the progress and prosperity of the nation, teachers should develop love for their students and mold their character. Then society will have many good citizens.

Q: How can teachers implement education in the case of children from slum areas?

Baba: In order to mold the character of such children through the education program, we have to visit their houses and help the people living there by taking up social service projects like cleaning and sanitation. Then they will develop the sense of cleanliness and keep their places clean. You can also accept the help of volunteer members in such service projects.

Even students from schools can be taken to those areas and told to involve themselves in service activities. Thereby the students will develop a liking for service activities.

Q: How do you motivate children in the education program?

Baba: It is not possible to make small children understand the essence of educate; they are too young to understand. It can be introduced at the college level. However, at school level, we can cultivate good thoughts and good habits among students. We can also inspire their young hearts by narrating the stories of great persons of their respective lands, and exhorting them to follow the ideals set by them. For example: The life of Harischandra is ideal in adherence to truth.

Q: How can we attract children of non-devotees to Sathya Sai schools?

Baba: This is a very important question. Our students are our spokespersons. We have to reform the students, so that they will attract the attention of their parents and bring about a good change in them. The parents may not know about Sai Baba, but when they see the good behavior of their children because of practicing the principles of Sai Baba, they will naturally change their minds. Students can also tell their parents that all their good behavior is because of their joining Sathya Sai schools. This will also attract other children to Sathya Sai schools.

Let us take for example the good practice of the students' chanting *Brahmarpanam* before partaking of food. Even the parents will be surprised at their devotion to God. If children explain to the parents the meaning of the prayer saying, "Food is given to us by God; therefore we must offer it to Him before partaking of it. Then the food becomes *Prasadam* (sacred) and will not be tainted by impurities." Then even the parents will learn to pray. This is the way to bring

the parents on the right path—through their children. Whatever we do, we must do it properly. If any guests visit our house, we must speak to them courteously. We must offer them seats, make them comfortable and tell them, "Please be seated; father will meet you in a few moments." Such behavior will make the guests happy and will naturally appeal to the good sense of the guests, whether they are devotees or not. This is how we have to train our students, so they will attract others and be an example to them.

Q: How do we deal with parents who do not follow Sai's teachings?

Baba: We must bring about a change in the parents through their children studying in our schools. For example: The parents of a student may be nonvegetarians. When the student goes home for vacation, he can bring about a change in the parents by narrating to them with humility, the sanctity of eating vegetarian food. The student can tell the parent, "Mother, I cannot feed myself by killing another being. This is not good for me. This body, which is made up of flesh, should not be fed with flesh. Our bodies must be fed with nectar and not with flesh. Eating of flesh will induce in me animal feelings. We should eat only vegetarian food, which God has provided for us." Thus we can teach parents through students. And in time, even the parents will stop eating nonvegetarian food. Many families have stopped eating nonvegetarian food after their children joined our institutions. Thus it is easy to bring about transformation in the parents through the students.

Q: How can we actively involve parents in the educare program?

Baba: It is very difficult to directly involve parents in the educare program. Hence, educare must be taught to the parents through their children. Parents do not know what educare is. What will they understand if you speak about educare to them? Since you understand what educare is, you should teach them about it through your actions.

Q: What is the role of technology like computers in education?

Baba: For me, technology appears to be “trick-knowlogy.” I don’t have any computers. Swami has been saying this for the past five years. Now computers are also getting virus attacks like human beings. You should become a composer and not a computer. When does a computer get spoiled? It happens when something goes wrong in the head of the composer. You may use this technology to develop science. First, set right the computer that God has given you. That is your head itself. Today, one uses a computer for every small calculation—that is ridiculous. God has given us a better calculator, our brain. Make use of its services. Of course, there are certain benefits accruing from computers. I do not deny it. You should use it depending on the need.

“But what has the computer done for our society? It has developed an easygoing nature in us and has caused unemployment. Unemployment leads to a rise in crime. . . . Instead of that, you should encourage domestic industries which will provide jobs for people . . .”

You are all fascinated by the computer because of its novelty. But what has the computer done for our society? It has developed an easygoing nature in us and has caused unemployment. Unemployment leads to a rise in crime. Therefore, we should discard such machinery, which renders many people jobless. Instead of that, you should encourage domestic industries which will provide jobs to people in the home itself.

Q: How can we go about starting the first Sri Sathya Sai school in a country?

Baba: It is not possible for all to start schools, as all may not have the resources to do so. But, they can start imparting educare through the *Bal Vikas* program. Gradually, it can be upgraded into a school. Here I have an important point to make:

The good work done by women in this field is highly appreciable. Men lag far behind in this aspect. Women somehow find time for *Bal Vikas* despite their daily chores. In this Kali Age (the worst of all eras), it is a good blessing for both women and children. Men too should come forward to participate in such work. Only then can the nation progress. Big schools and buildings can land us in worries when we lack resources. Let it be on a small scale.



Q: What is Your vision of the future of Sri Sathya Sai schools around the world?

Baba: There is no need to worry about what awaits us in the future. Do what ever you are supposed to in the best way you can. This will lead you to a brighter future. The future is not sure; it is not in our hands. The present is important. The present is not an ordinary present; it is "omnipresent." Take care of the present; the future will take care of itself. Did you ever think in the past that you could grow to the present state of attending this conference? When you do good work, that in itself will bestow good fortune upon you.

Q: Can children be recruited to higher classes in Sathya Sai schools directly, or only be admitted to kindergarten classes?

Baba: There is no hard and fast rule that children should be admitted only to the lowest class. Depending on the situation, you can also admit them to a higher classes. There is nothing wrong with that.

Q: Should *Gayatri Mantra* be chanted in western Sathya Sai schools?

Baba: You can do as per the dictates of your heart. If you feel its chanting bestows upon you benefits, you can do it. *Gayatri* is not a woman, nor does this mantra belong to any particular religion or country. It is only the name and the form of a deity. It represents the three aspects of materialization, vibration and radiation. These three are present in everyone, irrespective of one's country and religion. In this mantra, one prays for inspiration and stimulation of one's intelligence. I do not force anyone either to chant it or not to chant it. Mine is not force but only source—do whatever gives you joy.

I have answered your questions in brief. Purify your hearts and follow the divine command. You can pray to God, Allah, Jesus, Krishna or Zoroastra. It does not make any difference. Develop virtues and get rid of vices. Sathya Sai is absolutely selfless; whatever I say, follow it implicitly. It will be good for you. Attain happiness and share it with others.

—Sathya Sai Baba

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Let me tell you, it is only those who know the Sastras (a category of scriptures; the moral code of precepts and practical living) who can understand me. I am determined to correct you only after informing you of my credentials. That is why, I am now and then announcing my nature by means of miracles, they are, acts which are beyond human capacity and human understanding. Not that I am anxious to show off my powers. The object is to draw you closer to me, to cement your hearts to me.

—Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. II, chapter 23, p 118

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