

July Aug 03



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Sathya Sai
Newsletter, USA ॐ





The Organizations named after Me are not to be used for publicizing My name or creating a new cult around My worship. They must try to spread interest in prayer, meditation, and other spiritual exercises that lead mankind Godward. They must demonstrate the joy derivable from devotional singing and repetition of the Lord's Name, and the peace that one can draw from good company. They must render service to the helpless, the sick, the distressed, the illiterate, and the needy. Their service should not be exhibitionistic; it must seek no reward, not even gratitude or thanks from the recipients.

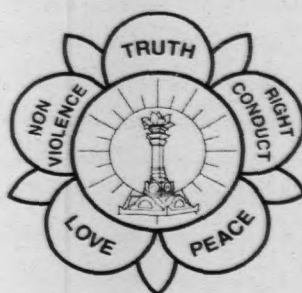
*—Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
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We Honor the Unity of All Faiths

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

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—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

Sai's Message

In all religions the common features are the importance of prayer, the need for worship, the principle of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, and the cultivation of love for all beings. These are the universal values upheld by each religion.

All religions are different paths leading to a common goal. Various analogies illustrate this point: ornaments may have different names and



forms, but the metal out of which they are made is the same—gold; cows may be of different colors, but the milk they yield is the same; clothes worn by people may have different names and forms, but the fact remains that different types of clothes are all made from cloth, even though they may appear in different shapes and designs....

Likewise, Hindus have their way of worship in line with their traditions and injunctions based on the Vedas; Muslims pray in their own manner following the injunctions of the Koran; Christians have their own mode of prayer based on the Bible. Zoroaster taught that prayer is essential for life, and that it purifies and rids our minds

of all evil tendencies. All our bad qualities are to be burned in the fire; that is the true sacrificial offering. He emphasized that good thoughts, good words, and good deeds are the three cardinal codes of true religious life.

Ultimately, what everyone seeks is the grace of God. Modes of worship differ only in their external form. What all religions teach is fundamentally the same—love, compassion, and equality. They teach that man should have equal-mindedness toward all and love all alike. They emphasize the virtue of forbearance. These are the teachings of the Vedas, Bible, Koran, and so on.

—Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Conversation of Grace

In What Ways Have We Been Served?

I recently had a conversation with a Young Adult whom I had formerly had the honor of teaching in Sai Spiritual Education classes. He is now involved in the field of investment banking, a task upon which Swami, in an interview, told him to focus his full attention. This he is doing. He works often twelve hours or more per day, and those with whom he works lead a "fast" lifestyle, but this young man does not drink alcohol or play at many of the pastimes of his coworkers. Neither does he have time for Sai meetings or *Seva* (selfless service) activities.

His biggest fear is to lose his relationship with Swami. It was never so clear to me that this was what Swami means by fear of sin.

As we were conversing, I became aware that I was gaining something, that I was having a conversation of grace. I admired his self-confidence and his purity and strength, thinking that I did not possess these qualities in such abundance. As we discussed self-confidence and how to have it, he said that for him self-confidence was Self-confidence. As he said this I could clearly visualize two separate circles, one for the small self and one for the greater Self (or Swami), moving together to at first overlap, then become one. It was a visualization of such clarity that it was visceral; it occurred in my body.

Later in our conversation we talked about *Seva*. I said that I thought it important for an individual to know from personal experience what it is like to be the recipient of *Seva*. If a person cannot perceive or acknowledge this, then there is danger that he or she will view *Seva* from a position of superiority or some difference of levels.

From this perspective service may become something other than the traditional concept of *Seva*. *One need not be aware of doing service to be doing it.* *Seva* can be a by-product of the goodness of one's very life and character. This is not to say that one should not perform conscious activities of *Seva*. One should. However, I was learning in that very moment that I was being served by *who he is*, by the purity and honesty of his words, by his character. I also saw myself and realized that whatever purity is in me has served and continues to serve others and that through this, contrary to my own negative thoughts, I was pleasing to the Lord.

This conversation was truly a moment of grace. I began to feel quite liberated in my attitude toward *Seva*—very open, excited, curious, and calm.

I asked myself, when had I been the recipient of *Seva*? It was easy to remember several teachers, and those who had helped me through major surgery, such as my wife and daughters. But I had never honestly

been able to see how my parents had served me, because of my anger toward them. Even though Swami had given me specific guidance in this regard, I could not in truth give up my anger. In a dream (twenty years ago!), I had asked Him, "Swami, how do I get closer to You?" He responded, *You do not like your mother. You see only her bad qualities. I see her good ones.*

Thinking through the answer as to when I had been served has led me to the beginnings of understanding gratitude toward my parents. Anger fills the mind in such a way that gratitude cannot coexist with it, and vice versa. It is the same with forgiveness, which also cannot coexist with anger. When I consider the times I have been served, gratitude arises automatically. It is a natural occurrence in the heart. Just as *Seva* is not a matter of one person in a superior position to another, neither is gratitude.

Now the feeling of gratitude expands. Awareness dawns that gratitude can be for

me a constant—well, at least a more frequent—attitude that takes place first in my heart, then in the mind.

I do volunteer work in a situation where a Christian worship service is part of the activity. The people involved have many serious needs, yet the most common phrase is, "Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord, for everything—everything." **The Lord is serving each one of us, all of creation, with everything that occurs.** Granted, it may not be easy to see it this way. It is, nevertheless, very rewarding to focus on life through this lens.

For us, *Seva* can be a pervasive attitude. It can hold hands, as it were, with gratitude. If in the perceived world, as God is serving us, then what are we doing when we perform *Seva*? Could it not be correct to say that we are truly being ourselves—our Selves?

—Carl Hirsh

Mullican Hill, New Jersey

Seva brings out all that is great in a human being. It broadens the heart and widens its vision. It fills one with joy. It promotes unity. It proclaims the truth of the spirit. It drives out all evil qualities. It must be regarded as a great spiritual discipline. ... All relationships of husband and wife, mother and child, employer and employee are based on mutual service. The world progresses because of this mutual service. If the principle of service did not operate, the world would come to a halt. Only by being filled with the spirit of service does one recall one's divine nature. Then one may experience the peace that passeth understanding.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Gems of Wisdom, p. 156

Atma Yearning for Paramatma

The Individual Soul Calling to the Supreme Soul

There is no scarcity of books promising to help man to discover himself; there is no dearth of discourses to guide his steps to the goal. You have read much and listened to many discourses. The body grows and even starts to decline, but the mind gets more complex and difficult to control; it waxes in restlessness. Despite this, *sadhana* (spiritual practice) either does not get taken up or, even when started, remains stationary and fitful. *Vedhana* (suffering) can be overcome only by *a-vedhana* (yearning for the Lord).

You must yearn to be free, to be rid of the chains that bind you now, such as the iron chain of poverty or the golden chain of riches. Yearn—as helplessly as a baby crying for its mother, as desperately as a calf mooing for the cow, as pitifully as a starving beggar praying for a morsel of food. Let the cry come from the depths of the heart, a heart that cannot bear the chain of attachments any longer. The Lord will not be drawn by noisy pomp or empty show. He will yield only to the claim of kinship, to the call of *Atma* to *Paramatma* (the individual soul to the Supreme Soul).

In South India, in the Tamil country, there was a certain servant of God named Adigal in the village of Thangalur. He had heard of the spiritual grandeur of Saint

Appar and developed a great admiration for the saint. So he built rest-houses in the saint's name and named his children after him so that they might grow up in the halo of his glory. He donated lands and houses, all in the name of the saint whom he had not seen. See how faith preceded experience here. Others require experience before they fix their faith, but the first path is more thrilling and lasting.

Seek a Guru Who Will See That You Do Not Sink

Have faith in the doctor and the drug; then the medicine will cure. Do not wait till the medicine cures the illness to develop faith in the drug and the doctor. If you wait until you learn to swim to get into the water, how can you get the thrill of a hearty swim? Plunge in boldly and begin beating around with the arms and legs—or use a dry gourd or inflated tire to buoy you up. That is to say, seek a guru who will see that you do not sink.

Well, one day by chance Appar himself walked into Thangalur, for he had missed his way and had to deviate. He noticed that everywhere in the town were Appar rest-houses and Appar charities, and he wondered how his name had preceded him.

Then Adigal ran forward to his guru, took him home, and prepared a grand feast for him. When his eldest son went to the garden to cut a few plantain leaves for the dinner, a snake bit him and he died on the spot. Adigal, however, was not affected in the least; he covered up the corpse, heaping dry leaves upon it, and proceeded with the formalities of hospitality for the long-sought guru. The guru, however, insisted that all Adigal's children sit around him during the meal, and he ordered the father, "Go call every one here." Adigal did as he was commanded. He called, and the dead son rose and came in to sit for dinner with the rest. When he realized what had happened, Appar exclaimed, "Your faith is greater than my *shakti* (power)."

When a house is to be certified as habitable, the engineer tests the foundations. The Lord too tests the foundations to see whether one's faith is true and deep. Shiruthondar, a devotee of Shiva, was similarly tested by Shiva, who appeared to him as an ascetic. When Shiruthondar demonstrated that he had no attachment to the world, Shiva revealed Himself and said, "Worship Me as your own Self." Then Shiruthondar demanded, "Reveal to me Your immanence in all creation, and then I shall worship Me, for then I can know that I am really You." Shiva blessed him, and he saw all as Light. The vision was the finale of his career in *maya* (worldly illusion). He

merged as light merges in light, without noise and without announcement. Even his body became a streak of light that rose up into the depths of space.

The Limited Cannot Know the Depth of the Unlimited

You clamor for further experience of My divine nature and ask that your faith might be strengthened thereby. To know the taste of seawater, putting a drop on the tongue should be enough; there is no need to drink the whole lot. It is your waywardness, your egoism, your pride that make

You are incapable of gauging Me. You can never grasp the strength of this superworldly bond that ties you to Me.

you doubt and deny what you have once tasted. Is not one experience enough? Well, let Me ask: how can the limited know the depth of the unlimited? How can the ant delve into the mountain? It is beyond you to know how or why I create things in My hand. Or consider this: you have no patience even to put up with the problems of a single family, though the responsibility is obviously yours. Imagine then what My patience must be, to listen to, tackle, and solve the problems of tens of thousands of families, with a *prema* (love) that is rare even among parents. No. You are incapable of gauging Me. You can never grasp the strength of this superworldly bond that ties you to Me.

The experience of that bond will come to you unawares. Your duty is to await the moment. Believe and be blessed. You now

worship Shiva or Narayana or Rama or Krishna, do you not? Tell Me how you got started. What experience did you have, before you began, of Rama's *dhaya* (mercy) or *shantham* (peace) or *prema* (love)? Or of Krishna's *karuna* (compassion) or *prema*?

Your Faith Is Not Yet Steady

When this *Mahashakthi* decided to leave the previous body (that of Shirdi Sai Baba) in 1918, Kaaka Saheb Dikshit was told that in eight years' time it would take birth again. Abdul Baaba was also informed that in seven years this *Mahashakti* would appear in Madras State. Three months after the *samadhi* (burial), [the form of Shirdi Sai appeared] before a house at Kirkee, making this declaration in answer to a query that the body had passed away: "The body has gone, but I will appear again." This was also said six months after the *samadhi*, when there was an appearance [of the form Shirdi Sai] at Dwarakamayi with the familiar tin can. Word was sent to Das Ganu and Mahlaspathi.

The statement made to Kaaka Saheb was that the manifestation would take place after eight years, not "as an eight-year-old-body." It was recorded so, because Kaaka Saheb relied on his memory and wrote it down only much later. The figure seven came true; for this body incarnated in 1926 after spending ten months in the womb. So, even the statement of eight years made to Kaaka Saheb is true.

Your faith in what you have seen and are seeing is not yet steady; you allow your ears to listen to all and sundry, and they

tempt you to deny the evidence of your eyes. What a pitiable state this is! While painting a picture of a thing you have not seen, you have every freedom to draw it as the whim directs you; but try to draw a picture of a peacock, a bird you have seen; then you will realize that it is a very hard job. So too, it is difficult to get a true idea of Me, whom you see, although you are adept at imagining Rama and Krishna to be of this form or that.

Hundreds of the images, idols, and pictures of the previous *shareeram* (body) are abhorrent caricatures, for you have no correct picture in your minds. Even while faith has sprouted as a tender sapling, someone whispers a story, and doubt attacks the plant like a deadly pest; for the mean and the small see everything as mean and small. They relish only the small and the mean! Search for the good, the noble, the elevating—and you will see only those around you. Do not seek like the crow for carrion and offal. If you have faith, the Lord who is the core of your being will manifest Himself; He is within your grasp, provided you extend your hand. Do not try to cover up your faults or hide your vices under a cloak of religiosity. Be sincere yourself. Be aware of Him, who is the eternal witness; He sees and knows all.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam, October 23, 1961



Sathya Sai Baba: Patron Saint of South African Soccer

Johannesburg, South Africa: The words uttered by holy men never fade. They live forever and travel from mouth to ear and inspire, transform, and enrich the lives of millions. The holy man in this story is Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh state, India, and the person who heard him is Molefe Oliphant—a football (soccer) administrator from another hemisphere.

Oliphant is the president of the South African Football Association. The name Sathya Sai Baba first figured in his life about five years back during a casual discussion on the soccer field. As he read more about His teachings, he ended up becoming a believer in the philosophy of Sathya Sai Baba. In fact, he began applying those values to change perceptions of soccer in the country.

“What really captured me are the five human values that the Swami preaches—truth, love, peace, righteousness, and nonviolence. To me these are the basic things that a man should practice to transform his life,” said Oliphant. “Everybody in football has been practicing these values directly or indirectly, and their support has enabled us to maintain stability in football.”

Oliphant is a devotee at the Sai Center in the Indian area of Roshnee. The center was started in the apartheid era to resettle all the Indian families in the region.

He stated that the message of Sai Baba was universal, irrespective of one’s religious or cultural beliefs, and that he always referred to Sai Baba’s teachings wherever he had the opportunity to speak. There was always an acceptance and an assimilation of these principles.

—South African News

A time honored proverb says Na Sukhaath Labhyathe Sukham—real and lasting happiness cannot be won through physical pleasures. Lasting happiness can come only by the discipline of the mind and faith in the Lord that cannot be diminished by good or bad fortune. Man has to use the power of discrimination given to him to fight the evil forces within him, and to foster the Divine elements in him by his own effort, by listening to the voice of his conscience. Man has to use the freedom to discriminate between right and wrong, good and evil.

—Sathya Sai Baba, Prasanthi Nilayam
Thought for the Day, March 5, 2003

A Taste of Divinity

The Path of Pure Love

Tens of millions of people have experienced the *darshan* of (the blessing of seeing) Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Several millions more yearn to see Him. Thousands have been blessed with interviews. I happen to be one who has had the beneficial grace of divine Baba and shared the joy of His *darshan* (vision), *sparshan* (touch), and *sambhashan* (discussion). When one has any of these experiences, one gains a lasting sense of satisfaction. The joy is very often an inexpressible feeling of euphoria or calm assurance that stills the agitated mind.

Sri Baba says, *Do not try to analyze Me or understand Me; merely love Me, for that will give you a taste of My divinity.* But many of us wonder what is inside this reservoir of divine enigma: Baba is in the form of a human being yet owns breathtakingly miraculous powers.

In Islam, Allah (universal God) is uncreated, has neither beginning nor end, and cannot be destroyed. It was a hair-raising experience for me to hear Bhagavan Baba mention during His birthday discourse in 1978:

There are none in the world who have been able to see Me. They are seeing everything and trying to understand everything, but they are not making the slightest attempt to understand the Divinity that is present within them. When we talk of God, we should know that God has no birth. Birth

is only for the body. A body that is born has to die, but God is above birth and death. He has no beginning, no middle, and no end. He is neither born nor can He be destroyed. He is present everywhere in the form of Atma (the God within).

God's Love

Religion reunites man with his source (*Atma*) and creates harmony in society. When you hear Baba affirm the invincibility of the *Atma* and its ever-present nature, you gain assurance that humanity can directly experience the infinity of the Creator, who is ever-present. Through Sai's words, you can also affirm Jesus' message that the supreme law of love supersedes all other laws bound by time, space, and other human-made barriers. The Muslims hold that Allah is most beneficent, merciful, and forgiving. Contact with Sri Baba reconfirms the reality of God's boundless love, care, and concern for human beings.

During my first meeting with Sri Baba at Dharmakshetram, Bombay, in 1976, I became conscious of His concern for the needy and the poor. In a group interview, a renowned music director was also present. Swami asked him where he was staying, and he replied that he had a suite in a five-star hotel. When Swami asked how much he had paid for the room, he answered, "Four hundred rupees a day." Swami exclaimed,

Four hundred a day! The embarrassed music director clarified that he did not pay for the room and that the film producer was footing the bill. *It does not matter who pays*, added Swami. He turned to Mr. Indulal Shah and inquired, *How many chapatis (flatbreads) can you get for four hundred rupees?* Mr. Shah replied: “1,200 chapatis, Swami.” Baba looked at the musician and quipped, *Four hundred poor people can eat three chapatis each*, and advised him not to be extravagant. This was not a speech for public consumption but advice given in a group interview.

Accent on Seva

When a devastating cyclone and tsunami (tidal wave) struck coastal Andhra Pradesh in November, 1977, over 25,000 devotees were at Prasanthi Nilayam for Baba's 52nd birthday. Swami converted His birthday discourse to one of appeal to the devotees to go to the relief of the victims and donate whatever they could to help the desolate and uprooted. He asked the *Seva Dals* (service workers) to proceed forthwith to the coastal areas and render rehabilitation work along with the doctors. This author was a witness to the instant response of the devotees assembled in the Poornachandra Hall. Less than five minutes after His appeal, devotees stood up, making spot announcements of their pledges. Before the end of the hour, the Sri Sathya Sai Cyclone Relief swelled, and by the same evening it reached an astronomical proportion.

Once, I had the blissful privilege of

traveling with Swami from Ooty to Bangalore. I had a chance to ask some personal questions during the leisurely five-hour journey. One of the observances in Sai gatherings is that men and women sit separately, whether for *darshan*, personal interview, or prayers. Out of curiosity, I asked Swami why men and women are made to sit separately, as Islam also observes the separation of men and women, although it has been distorted and carried to extremes by fanatics. Swami replied that in the Vedic period too, men and women sat separately for prayers, and that when you mix men and women indiscriminately there will be no prayers but mere “hysteria,” a lack of meditative concentration.

How the Lord Responds

During the same car journey, I put forth an innocent question: “Swami, if a devotee sends a letter or telegram to You to Your Bangalore address and before it arrives, you leave for Ooty, Bombay, or elsewhere, would this be redirected to You if it is marked urgent?” He said: *Telegrams and letters are mere carbon copies. If the thought in these is sincere and need-based, the letter or wire need not be delivered to Me. The moment the thought is shaped in the devotee's mind, it reaches me, and the necessary beneficial guidance is transmitted.*

Another time, a 55-year-old college principal friend of mine—a former pronounced leftist—accompanied me to Puttaparthi for Swami's *darshan*. After the interview, he said that he experienced the affection of his mother in Swami. A year

after the interview when I met him, he confessed that he continues to see the milk of human kindness and mercy in Swami, just as he experienced early in his life at the hands of his mother.

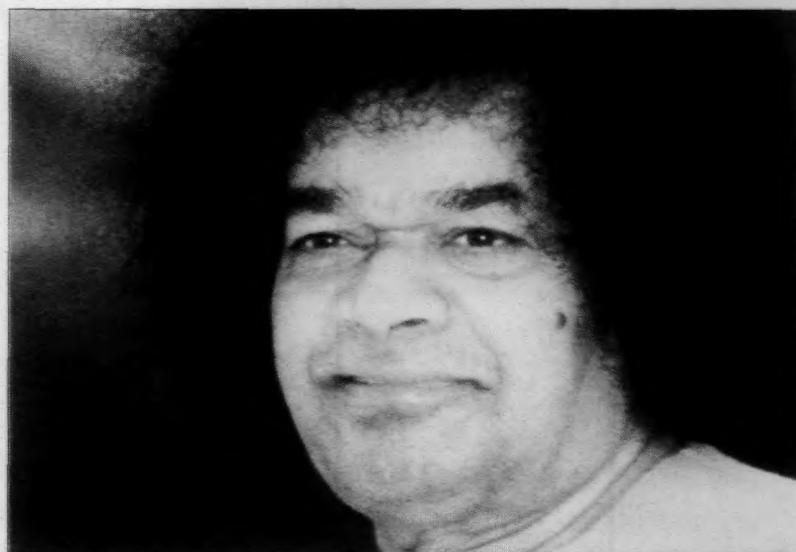
This author has been a witness to Baba blessing many Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, Parsees, and Buddhists, all of whom fall at His feet and get up with radiant faces. Muslims come from such far away places as Libya, Lebanon, Iran, and Iraq to receive His blessings. Hundreds of Buddhists from Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, visit Him, and see in Him the reincarnation of Gautama Buddha. Parsees hear the words of Zarathustra, and Jews experience God's holy covenant with Moses when they meet Sai Baba. Many Christians from Europe, Australia, and North America have felt the Holy Spirit in Sai Baba.

In the *Koran*, it is pointed out that "God does not discriminate between the original teachings of one religion and the other," (11:136) but merely confirms the purity of the earlier scriptures. It also teaches that the essence of the original teachings of all religions is the same, subject only to adaptation to local culture, geography, and other environmental

factors. Sri Sai Baba emphasizes that the *Vedas* and *Puranas* do not belong to India, or to any country, or even to any one religion. They are for all humankind as the voice of God.

In March, 1978, Swami convened a meeting of the principals of the Karnataka colleges to consider the need for imparting

spiritual education and moral values to students. The meeting was attended by the principals of religious denominational colleges of the Christian, Muslim, and Hindu faiths. One of the principals was a



learned traditional Muslim scholar, Mir Jaffar Ali, of Al-Amin College, Bangalore. As I happen to be a Muslim devotee of Baba, he told me that although he had spent a near lifetime of 40 years trying to improve the educational lot and character of Muslim students, he was impressed beyond belief by Baba's capacity to instill humility, implicit obedience, and disciplined conduct among young men coming from different backgrounds.

During the lunch provided to the conference participants, the students of Sathya Sai College, belonging to different strata of society from all over India, served the food plates and later cleared and washed the plates, as

opposed to waiters and attendants in other college hostels.

No Substitute for Action

Quite early in my relationship with Swami, I learned that devotion is no substitute for action. He has taught me the Sai credo of how to save yourself: *It is not merely bhakti (devotion) that I want; I want action motivated by bhakti.* This has added a new dimension to my work. Even before meeting Sai, I was used to long hours of hard work, which led to strain and exhaustion, as my efforts were not tinged with devotion. Today, though the pace of work remains uncurbed, the attitude toward work and especially toward the results of my efforts has changed. Swami counsels:

Throw off your present responsibilities and take up this new responsibility (action motivated by devotion) of saving yourself; then you will see the wonder. Even the other responsibilities will be discharged smoothly and to your satisfaction.

Baba reflects the viewpoint that the man who remains attached to God but lives and works in the world is a true devotee. Very often religions and holy men are derided for developing what Karl Marx called the "opiate state of mind," in which one loses control over one's actions. Such an attitude

should be rightly called escapism and not devotion, because thousands of selfless, dedicated workers of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal have proved over the last 30 years that it is possible for human beings to work selflessly and without thought of reward under the guidance of a divine force.

Through slow, steady, and guarded steps, Bhagavan Baba transforms His devotees and makes them—daily, weekly, or at regular intervals, according to His will—add a cubit to their understanding of Himself and their own selves better. His divine path gives us a sure foothold. There may be byways and meanderings on the high road to Divinity, but only the steadfast and patiently persevering devotee can reach the highway to Swami's perennial grace.

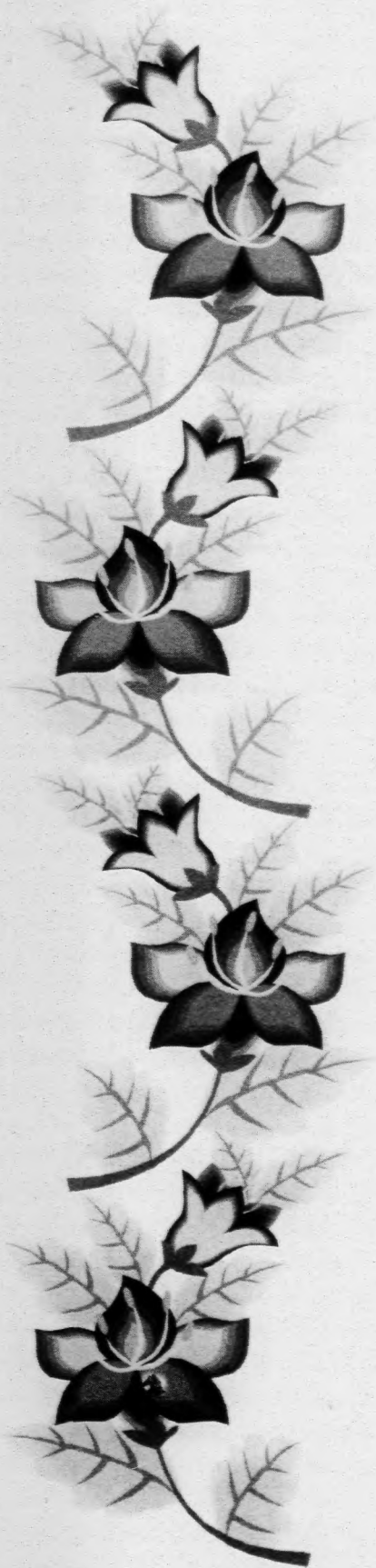
His myriad facets none can fathom, and each new experience of a devout heart confirms the inscrutable mystery of the Divine Master's magnanimity in recharging our life-force for service to humankind. In Baba's path, there is no chance of failure; it is a path where every milestone is a monument of victory—for it is the path of pure love.

—Prof. S. Bashiruddin,
Sanathana Sarathi, May 1987

The greatness of any individual depends upon the reform of his character. It does not depend upon his power, money, or position. Thus, you must try to first increase the good qualities or virtues in you.

—Sathya Sai Baba

First Darshan



*Incense, fragrant blooms,
and sweat
lay heavy on my aching frame,
sweetly trapped by tender crowds
beneath an eastern sun.*

*Finger cymbals, drums, and flutes
chant*

*Allah, Buddha, Jesus,
intoxicating in their wake
ten thousand thirsty souls.*

*Famished faces smeared with tears
hunger
for God's sustaining Grace.*

*A gripping silence settles upon
a tapestry of pilgrims;
a silence, short,
soon shattered by
an orchestrated rush of air
as twenty thousand longing palms
rise from hollow laps
displaying prayerful reverence as
Sai Baba greets the holy site.*

*—Jill Richards
Santa Barbara, California*

Swami and Islam

Sanathana Dharma and Surrender to God

As the drums of war sound loudly and the voices of peace seem to be getting dimmer, Sai Baba's message of the unity of all religions assumes more importance than ever before. Swami has spoken many times about the life of Jesus and the similarities between Christianity and *Sanathana Dharma* (eternal wisdom). He has also described *Sanathana Dharma* as the Mother of all religions. In the current atmosphere, it is now more important than ever to find the commonalities with other religions, such as Islam.

Islam literally means "surrender to God." The word Muslim means "one who surrenders to God." *Qu'ran* means "recitation thus" in Islam. Salvation comes from surrendering to God and His will. The *Qu'ran*, *Sura* 3.76, says that what matters most is the quality of one's surrender. The journey of reconciliation begins with the foundation, which is recitation of God's name and surrender to Him. Lord Krishna advised the same mantra to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Our beloved Swami keeps reminding us to chant [the divine name] day in and out. Thus we are all Muslims. The whole universe is Muslim.

Islam has seven core beliefs. They are: (1) Belief in God. (2) Belief in angels. (3)

Belief in the revealed books of God (scriptures). (4) Belief in many prophets. (5) Belief in a last day. (6) Belief in divine measurement. (7) Belief in life after death. Let us now see if these core beliefs relate to *Sanathana Dharma*.

Belief in God

The *Qu'ranic* word for God is *Allah*, along with 99 other names. Its root word is *elah*. *El* is equivalent to *Sri* for Hindus. *Ah* denotes femininity, the motherly aspect of God. Some add *Hoowa* to *Allah*. *Hoowa* is masculine, thus bringing us closer to the *ardhanariswara* (masculine-feminine) concept of Shiva-Shakti. *Allah* literally means "One and Only God." The *Qu'ranic Sura* 29.46 says "Our God and your God is one, and It is to whom we surrender." *Sura* 2.255 discusses the nature of God as omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, as a practical way of life. Islam further states, "...God is [the] only true reality, and there is nothing permanent other than God. Everything depends upon His will." We could be reading Hindu scripture here!

Belief in Angels

Islam has four main angels. **Angel Jibra'il or Gabriel:** This angel is the spirit of

truth and reveals spiritual knowledge to the prophets. The Angel Gabriel is similar to the Goddess Saraswathi, who is in charge of imparting Knowledge to worthy persons. **Angel Azra'il:** This angel of death corresponds to the Hindu God, Yama. **Angel Mika'il or Michael:** This is the angel of weather, similar to Vayu or Varun Dev of Indian scriptures. **Angel Isra'fil:** This angel announces the end of the world by blowing the horn. We may likewise consider Lord Shiva's cosmic dance to signify the end of the universe.

There are other minor angels, such as the one who keeps records of our deeds, similar to the Hindu record keeper, Chitragupta.

Belief in the Revealed Books

Islam teaches that God has revealed knowledge heretofore but that such revealed knowledge is polluted over time, and that the *Qu'ran* is the latest revelation of God. This fact of being "the latest" was true when it was revealed in the 7th century. Prophet Mohammad was "illiterate" in the ordinary sense of the word. Knowing that, when one experiences the poetic beauty and richness of the language of the *Qu'ran*, one can have no doubt about its divine origin.

Belief in the Many Prophets

The *Qu'ran* reveals that the prophets are sent to the world at all times, everywhere. Some are mentioned by their names, and some are not. The central idea is that God's guidance is available to all people throughout the ages.

Belief in the Last Days

Islam believes in the last day of the universe. It is called *qiyamah* or *kayamanh*, or the Day of Judgment, when our actions will be judged. There is a detailed description of the last day of the universe that sounds very similar to Indian scripture for the Dissolution Day. The *Qu'ran* affirms the same judgment day for all beings. However, on an inner significance, the Day of Judgment is when body consciousness is abandoned and the world appearance dissolves for each individual soul. The awareness of reality differs from person to person, as does the comprehension of time. In the true present-ness of time, everything happens at the same time. Thus the *Qu'ran* does not differ on its inner significance of the judgment day.

Belief in Divine Measurement

This is the *karma* concept, Islamic style. The words used are *qada* and *qadr*, which mean determination and measurement, respectively. *Qada* is essentially a determination of harmony with natural laws—harmony of thought, word, and deed. Under *qadr*, God has preordained all our challenges, tests, and opportunities. Our success lies in how we feel and respond to these tests by harmonizing life with natural laws. We are asked to put faith in God's tests. This is called *sabr*. Shirdi Sai Baba used the word *sabr* quite often. It literally means patience with God's judgment. *Qu'ranic Sura* 57.22-23 and 30.35-38 come close to stating the concept

of equanimity. Sura 6.164 clearly indicates *karma* and its payback.

As to the questions about non-attachment, doership, and giving up the fruits of actions, Prophet Muhammad said, *Tie your camels first and then put your trust in God.*

Belief in Life After Death

Like Hindus, Muslims are given vivid descriptions of heaven and hell with their varying degrees of rewards and punishments. Hindus have the cycles of various births and deaths. It appears, on the surface, that Islam affirms only one life on earth and the balance in hell or heaven after the judgment day. On a deeper inquiry, we find that there is a successive evolutionary process for the souls. Even souls who experience hell will go to heaven after the purification process. Islam also affirms seven layers of hell and heaven, each similar to the fourteen *lokas* of Indian scriptures.

It also confirms that the soul will have to pass through different stages in ascending order before reaching the final goal. The essence is that the impurities have to be removed in one or many life cycles or realities before immortality can be achieved.

The Five Pillars

The next important subject is known as the five pillars of Islam. These are (1) *Shahadah* – allegiance to God, (2) *Salat* – daily prayer, (3) *Zakat* – charity, (4) *Saum* – fasting, and (5) *Hajj* – pilgrimage. Let us examine the similarity of these five pillars of Islam with *Sanathana Dharma*.

Shahadah – Allegiance to God

Shahadah literally means “witnessing.” *Shahadah* is a prayer with specific words in the Arabic language. It has two parts. The first part affirms monotheism: there is one God. The second part confirms that Muhammad is the messenger of God. Regarding monotheism, Swami has stated that our heart is a one-seat sofa. Ultimately a devotee has to decide on one form. All Muslim scriptures affirm the truth that there is only one God.

The affirmation of Muhammad as the messenger is in the same vein of the guru tradition. You need a guru to take you to God. Muslims state here that by following our guru (Muhammad), one can reach God. Another important point here is that *shahadah* is repeated seventeen times a day—a constant *namasmarana* (repetition of the name of God). This is to affirm your faith in God constantly during daily chores.

Salat – Daily Prayer

Besides declaring faith in God and guru, daily ritual prayers are a part of the Islamic routine. Five times a day, with the prescribed words, God is called upon. This ritual requires coordination of thought, word, and deed. Thought is expressed by filling the heart with love for God. The word comes from recitation of the prayer. When the words *Allahu Akabar* (God is great) are pronounced, you have cut yourself off from the world and connected yourself with God. The deed comes from bowing down to the Lord, which also signifies surrender.

Personal request prayers are called *du'a*, and no particular words are prescribed for this form of prayer. After the rituals, many Muslims will do *dhi'kr*, or chanting prescribed phrases with a rosary to implant the reality of God into one's consciousness.

Zakat – Charity

Zakat literally means “to purify.” *Zakat* is prescribed to benefit the poor, to counter greed, and to make Muslims responsible for their obligations towards society. The theme behind *zakat* is that God is the creator and the true owner of everything. Whatever one receives is in trust from Him. Swami has often stated this concept of trusteeship of wealth.

Saum – Fasting

The ideals behind *saum* or fasting are similar to many religions that recommend this spiritual practice. Muslims are asked to fast during daytime in the ninth month of

the Hizari calendar. The purpose is to gain spiritual awareness and sense control. The controls over sensual pleasures such as food, drink, and conjugal relations, and the prohibitions on profanity, lying, and fighting, are prescribed. Reading or chanting of the *Holy Qu'ran* is encouraged.

Hajj – Pilgrimage

Many religions encourage their followers to do pilgrimages to their holy places, and Islam is no exception. The pilgrimage to Mecca represents a commitment to God, for the purpose of establishing a sense of immediacy with the founder-prophet. The ritual of pilgrimage is also a sacrifice of physical comforts in favor of the God we love.

—Purandar A. Amin
Arcadia, California

(to be continued in the next issue of Sathya Sai
Newsletter, USA)

Religion has as its aim the removal of hatred and enmity between the children of God, but we find religions engaged in conflict. Language is the medium of cementing friendships, promoting cordiality, and bringing people closer together, but alas, it has become a morbid weapon. Temples have become not abodes of peace but arenas of conflict. Brother fights against brother. The dawn of peace can be brought about only by remembering that there is only one religion, the religion of humanity.

—Sathya Sai Baba

We Ask , Swami Answers

On November 21, 2001, Bhagavan Baba answered questions put to Him by delegates attending the valedictory function of the Sathya Sai Education Conference. Here are some examples:

Q What is the difference between religion, spirituality, and educare?

A: It is surprising to Me that you have not understood how religion, spirituality, and educare are related to each other. Try to understand exactly what is meant by religion. First, you must know exactly who you are.* When you know that, then you will clearly understand what is meant by religion.

Q What is meant by spirituality?

A: People imagine that spirituality means good activities such as singing *bhajans*, performing ritualistic worship, going to temples and on pilgrimages, and so on. This is not true. **True spirituality is the recognition that the Self in you is the same Self in all others.**

Set aside the narrow aspects of religion and seek instead the Religion of Love. As for educare, that too is connected with love. **Educare means bringing forth [your**

innate love and true wisdom] from within [and sharing it with others, especially when teaching children].

Q What is it that is inside that must be brought out?

A: Love! *Bhakti* or devotion is the form of love for God. Hence it is said, "Love is God; live in love." If you intuitively grasp this, then you really do not have to bother about specific religions or for that matter even about educare.

If educare is made the basis of your lives, there will be no conflicts in the world; all will be united, and all will enjoy divine bliss. Conflicts of opinions arise only when physical and superficial differences are emphasized. Where there are differences, you will also find conflict. If all are to have the feeling of Universal Oneness and enjoy Bliss, then all differences must be set aside. It is a big mistake to transfer the differences and prejudices in our minds to religions and find fault with them. Avoid seeing the differences in religions. Instead, focus on the nature of your mind. If our daily lives are properly regulated, then doubts will not arise.

In principle, there is no difference between education and educare. However,

* Swami often tells us that we are the *Atma*. *Atma* or Self represents the Divinity within each of us; we should focus all our thoughts, words, and deeds on the divine *Atma* or Self, which is who we really are.

in practical terms, some of the knowledge we need is acquired from outside, while some is obtained from the inside. The first time you see anything it seems new, but once that information is implanted in the mind, it becomes old. It has been imprinted. That which has been imprinted inside need not be sought from the outside; it merely has to be recalled from within.

One must combine what is to be known from the outside with what is to be known from within. **Educare gives you knowledge of the world within.** This knowledge can then be used to temper the education you acquire relating to the external world. Truly speaking, education must be born of educare.

There is really no difference among religion, spirituality, and educare. Religion does not end with mere realization. Religion actually means Love! Realization can come only after Love.

.....
Q What kind of relationship should we have with people who do things that are bad or evil?

A: If you have latent bad tendencies and attitudes within you, then when you look at someone else who has done wrong, all the bad feelings within you will begin to surface. Likewise, if you are intrinsically good, then good feelings emerge from you when you observe others. Your impression of another person is not based on what that person is; rather, it is the feelings that are latent in you that surface and color your impressions.

You describe someone as “bad,” but in reality that person is not bad. It is your view of that person that is bad, and not him or herself. You describe someone else as “good,” but truly speaking, you cannot see the good in that person. Rather, it is your good feelings toward them being reflected back to you. Thus the good and bad that you tend to perceive in the outer world are really but reflections of your inner being. Everything outside is a reflection, reaction, and resound of what is within you.

All that you see in the world outside you is a reflection of your own inner personality. Hence, do not regard anyone as intrinsically bad. What moral authority do you have to label anyone as “bad”? You describe someone else as “bad” because of something bad within you. On the other hand, there might be a lot of good in that person, of which you are completely unaware.

A fool who does not realize his own faults exhibits diverse attitudes toward others—loving some, getting angry with others, being partial to or hating others, and so on. It is not the good and bad in others that you see. Instead, you always see only the reflection of the good and bad that is already in you. When you easily make such mistakes with fellow human beings, how much more easily do you make mistakes about the exalted nature of Divinity?

—Sathya Sai Baba
November 21, 2001
Prasanthi Nilayam

Many Paths, One Destination, Part II

A Harmony of Eternal Wisdom (continued from the previous issue)

And they brought young children to Him, that He might touch them, and His disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw this, He was much displeased, and said unto them, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." (Mark 10: 13-15)

Sai's focus on children is quite clear and reflects these words of Jesus. Again, this is true on only one level. For truth, as we all know, rises from relative and partial, to absolute. From our perspective, truth is multileveled and multilayered, though, ironically, ultimate truth is one.

Nevertheless, to get the inner message, we must go to the upper room—to the higher interpretation—which simply suggests that one must lose his acquired or attributed self, and become more childlike. That is to say, just like a small child, we must become pure in belief, beyond reproach, quick to forgive, quick to serve, full of faith, naturally loving, and naturally optimistic in order to realize our true identity with the One.

Similarly, without using the metaphor of the children, Prophet Mohammed provided this very same teaching, with a clear-cut emphasis: *Ye will not enter Paradise until you have faith, and ye will not complete your faith until ye love one another.*

I grew up in the Catholic Church and went to Catholic elementary and secondary

schools. This was fairly rare in my Chicago neighborhood at that time, where most residents were Baptists or did not attend church at all. For a much longer time than most, I had an altar in my bedroom with statues of Jesus and Mary. I even had what was referred to as "holy water" from time to time, which is similar in idea, though not the same in substance, to *lingam* water.* I was an altar boy and would occasionally go by bus before dawn to serve mass in the rectory. I also went on Saturdays to attend mass and then have a bit of *satsang*—spiritual discussion—with my eighth grade teacher, Sister Lucy, who, in hindsight, was clearly among my first spiritual teachers. I wanted to serve God and came very close to entering a Catholic seminary.

When I was about nine or so, I memorized part of a book about Jesus and His parable of the fishes. To this day I still remember how it began. . . .

"There was a cool breeze blowing on the boy's face as he hurried down toward

*A *lingam* is a spheroid symbol of Shiva, the formless divinity. *Lingam* water refers to water poured over or produced by a *lingam*, rendering it sacred.

the Sea of Galilee. . .” Out of nowhere, this quote came to mind when I visited Swami last year. I thought, *How delightful to be reminded of this*. Whenever I am there [in Prasanthi Nilayam], I feel like a sugar-starved boy in a candy store. I talk to myself, more than I do normally, and become rather playful with my thoughts and inner discussions with Swami. I often get overwhelmed with His glory and tell Him how happy and grateful I am just to witness and be near His physical form.

“You’ll Find Him in My Heart”

This rather childlike approach comes across in a small story that I encountered not too long ago:

“Tomorrow morning,” the surgeon began, “I’ll open up your heart...”

“You’ll find Jesus there,” the boy interrupted.

The surgeon looked up, annoyed. “I’ll cut your heart open,” he continued, “to see how much damage has been done...”

“But when you open up my heart, you’ll find Jesus in there.”

The surgeon looked to the parents, who sat quietly. “When I see how much damage has been done, I’ll sew your heart and chest back up, and I’ll plan what to do next.”

“But you’ll find Jesus in my heart. The Bible says He lives there. The hymns all say He lives there. You’ll find Him in my heart.”

The surgeon had had enough. “I’ll tell you what I’ll find in your heart. I’ll find damaged muscle, low blood supply, and weakened vessels. And I’ll find out what I can do to make you well.”

“You’ll find Jesus there, too. He lives there.”

The surgeon left. He sat in his office, recording his notes from the surgery: “...damaged aorta, damaged pulmonary vein, widespread muscle degeneration. No hope for transplant: no hope for cure. Therapy: painkillers and bed rest. Prognosis: ...” Here he paused, “...Death within one year.” He stopped the recorder, but there was more to be said.

“Why?” he asked aloud. “Why did You do this? You’ve put him here. You’ve put him in this pain, and You’ve cursed him to an early death. Why?”

The Lord answered, saying, “The boy, My lamb, was not meant for your flock for long, for he is a part of My flock, and will forever be. Here, in My flock, he will feel no pain and will be comforted as you cannot imagine. His parents will one day join him here, and they will know peace, and My flock will continue to grow.”

The surgeon’s tears were hot, but his anger was hotter. “You created that boy, and You created that heart. He’ll be dead in months. Why?”

The Lord answered, “The boy, My lamb, shall return to My flock, for he has done his duty: I did not put My lamb with your flock to lose him, but to retrieve another lost lamb.” The surgeon wept.

He sat beside the boy’s bed; the boy’s parents sat across from him. The boy awoke and whispered, “Did you cut open my heart?”

“Yes,” said the surgeon.

“What did you find?” asked the boy.

“I found Jesus there,” said the surgeon.

This story is about a young person's great self-confidence and a doctor's elevation to a higher level of healing awareness. It is also about God's incredible love for His children—and, when properly cultivated and purified, the sacredness of our own hearts.

In a similar passage, Mohammed both warns and instructs us: *Beware! Verily there is a piece of flesh in the body of man, which, when good, the whole body is good; and, when bad, the whole body is bad—and that is the heart.*

Emphasizing this same point, Lord Buddha once said: *Friends, I know nothing that tends toward loss as does an untamed heart. Indeed, the untamed heart tends toward loss. Friends, I know nothing that tends toward growth as does a tamed heart. Indeed, the tamed heart tends toward growth. Friends, I know nothing that brings suffering as does an untamed, uncontrolled, unattended, and unrestrained heart. Such a heart brings suffering. Friends, I know nothing that brings joy as does a tamed, controlled, attended, and restrained heart. Such a heart brings joy.*

Along these same lines, and sounding so much like Sai, Prophet Mohammed declared: *They will enter the Garden of Bliss who have a true, pure, and merciful heart.*

Although we cannot fathom the ways of God, we must always rest in the awareness

that He lives within the heart of each and every one of us, in whichever form of Him we project. Jesus said, *I and My Father are one.* Sai has said, *You and I are one.* There is no difference. We sing: *I am one with the heart of the mother. I am one with the heart of love. I am one with the heart of the father. I am one with God. Ave Maria. Kyrie Eleison. ...*

*Love in thought is truth.
Love in feeling is peace.
Love in understanding is
nonviolence. Love in action is
morality and right living.*

The Nature of Love

I was blessed with a related experience in the Summer of 1997 while attending the First World Youth Conference; Jesus appeared in my dream in a light form and merged into Swami's heart. Indeed, through His two central commandments, Jesus reiterated *Sanathana Dharma*, the ancient wisdom. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus said:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like it, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Sai exhorts us to love all and serve all. He also says that we normally express and experience love like a lamp or like the moon—both are limited in their effects, whereas the pure love that we yearn for is unsullied, all-pervasive, and divine. This is like that of *Surya*, the self-luminous sun,

which shines its life-giving rays selflessly on all, always—regardless of the recipients’ status or actions. Such love takes the form of caring, generosity, empathy, compassion, consideration, dedication, devotion, tolerance, and forgiveness.

Love in thought is truth. Love in feeling is peace. Love in understanding is non-violence. Love in action is morality and right living. Love is the basis of character. It is the greatest of virtues. Love liberates and activates. It never tires and it never fails. Love sees the best in others and is ever distant from anger. Love is God, and thus it knows no limits.

Prophet Mohammed once prayed:
O Lord, grant to me the love of Thee; grant that I love those that love Thee; grant that I may do the deeds that win Thy love; make Thy love dearer to me than self, family, and wealth.

Respond to Their Call

The “Sai Arathi” proclaims about Sai Baba, “He is always serving those in need; answering the prayers of devotees, giving grace to you and me—the Lord of the Universe is here.” Similarly, Jesus spent His public life in service to the poor, the sick, the ostracized, and the dispossessed. His teaching was eternal, universal, and without boundaries. While He lived, His life was His message. But when His physical body passed

from this plane, the lives of His apostles and disciples became His message. This also is not unlike our dear Swami, who declared to His devotees in a discourse some time ago, *Your life is My message.*

The highest tribute we can pay to the great ones who point the way to the one true destination is to positively respond to their call to “Follow Me.” Reverend Dr.

The highest tribute we can pay to the great ones who point the way to the one true destination is to positively respond to their call to “Follow Me.”

Martin Luther King Jr. exemplified this response as he approached his assassination. Discussing whether or not to be a “Good Samaritan” (story told in Luke 10:29),

Dr. King stated, “The question is not what will happen to me if I stop to help the sanitation workers. The question is what will happen to them if I do not stop to help the sanitation workers.”

As Jesus’ life proceeded, people increasingly accused, abused, and persecuted Him, and this has happened to Swami as well. On this plane of duality, whenever light approaches, we can be sure that darkness is not far behind. In fact, it is said that light can appear only in contrast to a background of darkness. Therefore, such attacks on goodness itself are to be expected and never to be feared. In the meanwhile, it is our task to cultivate nearness with God in the heart and stay ever focused on our relationship with Him. We must be ever prepared for any eventuality, any challenge, any affront along our chosen path to God.

Whenever we consider the exemplar that was Christ Jesus, let us not dwell on the experience we call the *crucifixion* but rather on the resurrection. Christ's so-called death teaches us the great lesson of the value of ultimate sacrifice, yet His glorious resurrection teaches us even more.

Align with the Great Ones

Until we are blessed to sit on the "right hand or the left hand," as apostles James and John once requested of Jesus, let us walk by faith and not by sight. Let us walk in the glorious realization that the Great Ones are naught but manifestations of "The One Without a Second"—and that we, too, are part and parcel of that One. In Sai's words:

There is only one religion, the religion of love. There is only one language, the language of the heart. There is only one race, the human race. There is only one God, and He is omnipresent.

Let us rejoice in our great blessing to be contemporaries of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Let us rejoice that we have easy access

to the teachings and to His beautiful, diminutive form; to be in the good company of so many dedicated disciples of God; to have the opportunity to love and to serve. Let us do the work and "give up the game," so that we can rest assured in the awareness of our own innate divinity.

In 1968, Sathya Sai revealed:

I know the agitations of your heart and its aspirations, but you do not know My heart. I react to the pain that you undergo and to the joy that you feel, for I am in your heart. I am the dweller in the temple of every heart. Do not lose contact and company [with Me], for it is only when the lump of coal comes in contact with the live ember that it also becomes a live ember. Cultivate a nearness with Me in the heart, and you will be rewarded. You too will acquire a fraction of the supreme love.

**"All I ask of You is forever
to remember me as loving You..."**

**—Prof. Hymon T. Johnson, Ph.D.
Goleta, California**

The Bible According to Children

*These statements are unedited answers to questions written by
young Sunday School students:*

- In the first book of the *Bible*, Guinness, God got tired of creating the world, so He took the Sabbath off.
- Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.
- Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread without any ingredients.
- The fifth commandment is to humor thy father and mother.
- When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manger.
- People who followed the Lord [Jesus] were called the 12 decibles.

About Finances

In the March-April issue of the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, there was some confusion regarding the collection of money within the Sai Organization. Please take a moment to review what Swami has said in clear and simple terms about money and its use and misuse:

I do not like collection of funds. But since some expenses have to be incurred, I have to allow it under very stringent conditions. Each Center has several members. Whatever expenses they decide to incur for the work of the organization, they have to collect among themselves without seeking help from outside the circle. They have of course to contribute according to their capacity and limit the work to the resources they can pool among themselves. Do not plan beyond your capacity and move about with lists from person to person to get funds. By doing that, the institution gets a bad name and you too will not be spared.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. VI, p. 31 (older edition)

Finances: Fees may not be charged for any Sai Center activity, nor may donations be solicited from members of the public. Centers pay no fees to the Sai Organization at any level. Officers of the Sai Organization do not use donated funds to cover personal expenses incurred in carrying out their duties. Centers may meet their expenses by allowing members to make voluntary, anonymous contributions. Special projects must be discussed and approved by the members and acted upon only after funds have been donated in the above manner. If

the amount is insufficient, the officers may either make up the deficiency among themselves, or cancel or modify the project.

These rules are in keeping with Sathya Sai Baba's injunction that Centers should have as little to do with money as possible, since it draws attention away from our spiritual focus.

—*Guidelines for American
Sathya Sai Baba Centers,*

published by the Central Council of
the United States

.....
Fund collection is as much opposed to this movement as fire is to water.

—Sathya Sai Baba,

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. VIII, ch. 6, p. 34 (older edition)

War and Prashanti

Peace Begins with Ourselves

Considering the events of the last few years, it would be difficult not to have some degree of concern around war and terrorism. I have wondered how there could be such turmoil in the world when everybody claims to want peace. For my part, I have sometimes become agitated and upset, and even joined colleagues in criticizing various individuals we deemed responsible for the situation. Just as I was getting about as far as I could from Swami's guidelines about seeing good and speaking sweetly, He brought me back to Reality with His usual impeccable timing.

While going through a stack of magazines to be recycled, my wife held up a copy of *Sanathana Sarathi* and asked if I had finished with it. It was from August 2002, and looking through it I realized I hadn't read it. I had been out of town when it arrived, and it must have gotten misplaced. The focus of this issue was an International Seva (Service) Conference held in July, 2002. In His inaugural address, Swami seemed to be presenting me with this challenge: The world I experience is my own responsibility, and if I don't like it—I should change. The following are some quotations from that discourse:

*Man is like an object before a mirror.
Nature is the mirror. What you see in this
mirror is only your reflection and nothing else.
Today man is leading a life of selfishness and*

self interest, so he sees selfishness everywhere in the world. Selflessness is nowhere to be found.

There is Divinity in humanity. Understand this. Today every field of human activity is polluted. Once man purifies his heart, he will find purity everywhere. The world outside is just a reflection of your heart. If you fill your heart with love, you will experience love everywhere. If there is hatred in your heart, the same is reflected outside. Whatever you see, hear, and experience outside is only the reflection, reaction, and resound of your inner being. All the good and bad that you come across in the external world are just your own reflections. So do not point an accusing finger at others.

The whole world depends on your conduct. If you are good, so too will the world be good. It is a mistake to think that there is evil all around you in the world. In fact, it is your own evil that is reflected outside. If your feelings are demonic, the world all around you will look demonic to you. If your feelings are divine, you will find divinity everywhere.

Embodiments of love! The reflection of your yearning for God is love. When you have this love in you, then the reflection of your words is truth, and that of your actions is righteousness. When you have love, truth, and righteousness, you will have harmony of feelings, words, and actions. Only then can you attain peace.

During the Seva Conference, the delegates presented recommendations, and two of them seemed particularly pertinent:

"Bhagavan has filled our hearts with joy and confidence. There is now no room for doubts or fear. We firmly believe that the transformation of humanity by Sai will happen. The world will become a better place. Dear

Bhagavan, we firmly resolve not to be disturbed by the happenings in the world. We will remain just as observers. We will not participate in pessimistic discussions, nor will we criticize others."

"We will remain alert for opportunities to serve others, starting with our parents and family members, our friends, our neighbors, and the needy of society."

This left me asking myself: You think you are becoming agitated due to events occurring around you, but what if it is the other way around? *What if it is actually your agitation that is causing the unrest in the world?* Swami has said that the Golden Age will surely come. Dr. Hislop reported Swami as saying that the Golden Age will be a time of peace and love

and that before Prema Sai is born [in 2030] the whole world will be at peace. (*Seeking Divinity*, p. 152). The message is clear: We cannot sit back and wait for Sathya Sai Baba to do it for us, because He is doing it through us. Wars and crimes are the result of anger, lust, hatred, envy, jealousy, and greed. It makes perfect sense that

if we want peace in the world, the best thing we can do is

**Tired of war and violence?
Purify your heart.** rid ourselves of those qualities and purify our

hearts. As soon as we turn our hearts to gold, we will experience the Golden Age. Remember, *The whole world depends on your conduct.*

Tired of war and violence? Purify your heart. This may be difficult to grasp, but I have a feeling that if we just do it, we will be amazed at the results. As Baba says, *"If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home. If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. When there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world."*

—Michael Steely,
Medford, Oregon

In the Bhagavad Gita it is said that a person who has controlled his senses and the vagaries of the mind and intellect will get Prashanthi (Ultimate Peace). ... So you must go even beyond intellect, to intuition, for purifying the heart. Only then will Prashanthi come. Otherwise it is Shanti or [ordinary, temporary] Peace. Swami says, Peace (Shanti) between two wars is the interval for preparing for another war for healing the wounds of the previous war! Ultimate Peace (Prashanthi) is higher than that, unaffected by ups and downs—no waves, no agitations, no appointments, and no disappointments. That is Swami's purpose: to convert the whole world into a Prashanthi Nilayam (Abode of Ultimate Peace).

—Sathya Sai Baba, *God in Action: Talks by Prof. N. Kasturi*,
Compiled and edited by H.M. Shivaram

Children's Corner: Many Are One

—June Nissinen, Illustrator
—Questions by Newsletter Staff

Sathya Sai Baba has said: *All religions are pathways to the same destination.*
What do you think that means?

Do you study the great religions
of the world in your Sai Spiritual
Education classes?

Can you name the
religions that each
symbol stands for?



After you have
answered the
questions, ask
your parents if
you can color
the picture.

Always remember, Sathya Sai Baba loves you very much!

Vision of God as *Purusha* (Name and Form)

Recite the Name of God to Build Faith in Divinity

You are, I know, rather bored by these evening gatherings taking place every day without a break. It is hard to listen to these discussions of spiritual subjects and the detailing of disciplinary rules. Some of you are saying you came to Prasanthi Nilayam for peace and quiet; but [instead] you are being subjected to a long ordeal of speeches and long sittings. Let Me tell you that discourses by these great scholars are valuable. The speakers here are blessed; the listeners too are blessed. The listeners are even more blessed, for they can very often follow the lessons being taught, while the speakers themselves may not be able to carry out the teachings.

There was a *pandit* (holy person) who led a disciplined life, sticking to a pre-arranged timetable: he woke from sleep in the early hours of the morning, recited the *Pravana* (Om) and later, after ablutions, drank his cup of milk at 7:00 a.m.—exactly. Some days the milkmaid arrived late. She lived on the opposite bank of the river and had to catch a ferry to cross over with the milk. The ferry boat might start a little too soon or at times reach her bank too late. The *pandit* became annoyed when she brought the milk late.

One day, he lost his patience and chided her for upsetting his schedule. “Why do you depend on that horrid boat to take you

across the river? Do you not know that if you only repeat the name of Rama, you could walk across the water without coming to harm? Rama will see to it that you will not get drowned.”

The next day, the maid repeated *Rama nama* (Rama’s name) and walked across the water. Her faith gave her the strength. She did not wait for the ferry boat. The *pandit* was flabbergasted, for he did not actually believe that it was possible for the repeating of *Rama nama* to work this miracle.

The *bhaktha* (devotee) must ignore his own identity and separateness, and merge with the ideal. What individuality does the servant have? He has nothing—not even a trace. The Master is all, and everything.

Focus on Awareness

If you stare at the sun for a second and then turn your gaze toward other things, you will find a dark patch over your sight that keeps you from recognizing your surroundings. Similarly, once you have a vision of the *Purusha* (God), who is more effulgent than a thousand suns, you will no longer recognize the multiplicity called *prakrithi* (nature). The world is blank, it is blocked; indeed, you will no longer recognize or deal with variety once you have had a vision of God as Basic Unity.

Take the example of the screen in the movie theater. When the film is on, you do not see the screen, you see only the play. When the show is over, you see just the screen, a screen that has no message—neither voice, nor name, nor form, nor color, nor creed. That is *Brahman* (Divinity). The entire screen was lost in the picture. *Brahma* is *Sathyam* (Truth); *Jagath* (Universe) is *Brahman*. That is *Chith* (awareness). Knowing this and dealing with both is bliss.

I was asked once how anyone can accept the two seemingly opposite statements: “The world is false, and the world is full of *Vishnu* (God).”

This was My reply: *The powers of man are limited by his experience and his knowledge. He is just a pinda (part) while the Lord is the Anda (Whole), the force pervading the entire Universe. The Anda-Pinda Lingam* symbolizes this Body-Limb relationship—the part of, and the whole aspect of man.*

The *Sadha-Shiva Lingam* represents the ever auspicious *Atma*, beyond all duality, immanent in all beings everywhere, not negated by time, and always *Shivam* (beneficial and auspicious). The *Jnana Lingam* is the sign of the attainment of *Jnana* (spiritual wisdom), the wiping away of the last vestige of the delusion of “I” and even the feeling of “I know.” Then you are the *Atma*—pure, whole, entire, and enduring—a condition best represented by the *Atma Linga* symbol.

*Lingam, spheroid object that is a symbol of divine creation; different *linga* represent aspects of divinity—read on.

You and the Guru

Each one of you has the tremendous power of the *Atma* (Infinite Consciousness) in you. Some are able to draw upon it; others just know it is there; others are unaware of the methods of tapping into it, or even of its existence. It all comes in time and grows into the father; the father becomes the grandfather, and he in turn ages into a great-grandfather. The spiritual seeker rises step by step toward the highest bliss by adhering to the instructions of the guru.

Say to the guru, “If you can help me, do so. If you cannot, do not give false hopes and mislead me. Confess your immaturity; I can then seek some other guide. Do not pretend to be a teacher when you are not even a good student.” Ply him with questions, examine his daily conduct, clear your doubts; then cultivate faith in your guru. Many gurus are guided by their students and followers, and are warned by their disciples not to state certain views in public. These gurus act according to the dictates of men in power or men of money. A real guru must be like the *Sadha-Shiva* lingam, full of bliss welling up from the consciousness of Divinity.

Become as a Child

As long as you are ignorant, so long as you are untrained and lacking in knowledge, you cannot taste bliss; you cannot attain it. You are still bound by the three-cord rope—the black cord of *thamas* (inertia), the red cord of *rajas* (passion), and

the white cord of *sathwa* (equanimity). Deny that you are bound, and the rope falls away. Hence, regulate your life in such a way that you do not harm your inner nature. That is to say, live in constant contemplation of your kinship with others and with the universe. Do good to others, treat all nature kindly, speak softly and sweetly, become as a child, devoid of envy, hate, and greed. When ego crosses the threshold of your family or group and takes hold of those persons, you must take the first step of crossing the threshold away from *maya* (illusion, incorrect perception).

Whoever has tasted joy will thenceforth crave for that only. How can the individual stoop to something less? How can the truth be grasped when you are steeped in falsehood?

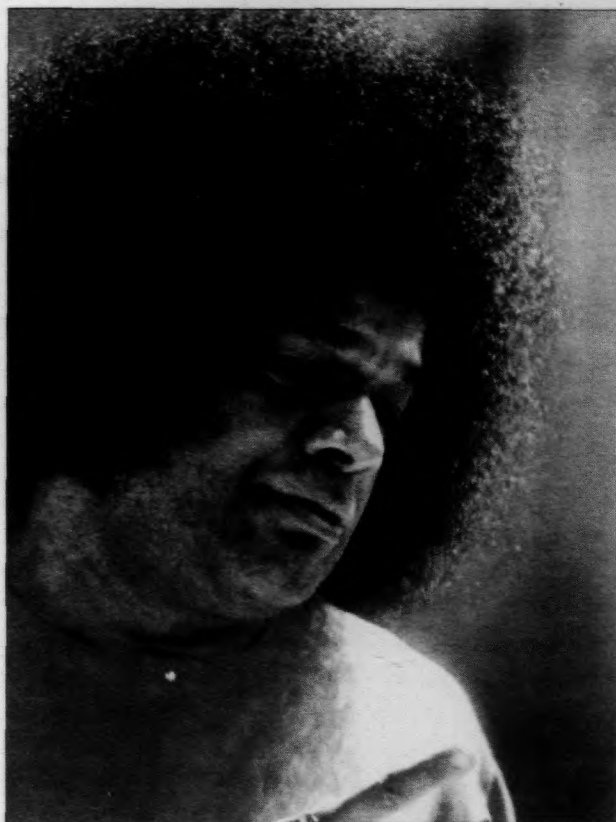
The Light Dawns

When Uddhava came among the *gopis* (milkmaids), they discovered that Krishna was roaming in their hearts without a moment's respite. They were seen scanning the dust on the roads to discover a footprint of Krishna's, so they could fall down and worship it! Radha was the greatest devotee

of all; she saw all the footprints as belonging to Krishna, even including her own! Really, is there anyone who is not He? Is there any form that is not His? Is there any name that

does not connote Him? Uddhava exclaimed, "I have no need of *Narayana* (God); I am content with the vision of the glory of the *bhaktha* (one who believes in and loves God)."

For all the sorrow and fear of today, the same prescription also holds true. See Him in the form of Shiva in all; then all will yield joy and peace—that is the truth. Then the light dawns, and all else is false.



Eat, but transform food into good deeds, good thoughts, and sweet speech. Move, but do not cause pain to others or add to their misery.

Love Destroys Ego's Roots

Egoism is a misconception and delusion. How can you get rid of it? The field looks like a dry wasteland with no sign of green, and you feel proud that you have

pulled out all the weeds by the roots. But when the rains come, the weeds sprout again. Love will destroy the roots of the ego. Plant it, protect it, foster it, and enjoy its fruits. Remove the weeds of envy, hate, and greed from your heart, or they will smother the seedlings of love.

Have faith; faith will grant you all that you need. How can you build your faith on a mound of sand? The deeper you dig in the sandy soil, the greater the risk of the sides slipping down and burying your faith in doubt and denial. Listen to the call from within; believe that it is the Lord's call.

The Lord condescends to grant you the chance to develop faith. Why did Krishna raise Govardhana Mountain and keep it aloft? It was to announce His Truth and His Nature, to instill faith, and to implant courage. It was just a sign, as is each of my acts. There is no task that I cannot accomplish; remember, there is no weight I cannot lift. You have faith in Rama and Krishna because of the books that describe a part of their achievements and the experiences of the spiritual seekers who attempted to delve into their mysteries.

You have not demanded direct proof of Divinity from either Rama or Krishna, have

you? Have faith first, and then you will get proof enough. Take up the discipline of the recital of the Name.

Why drag out your existence as a mere consumer of food, or as a moving burden encumbering the earth? Eat, but transform food into good deeds, good thoughts, and sweet speech. Move, but do not cause pain to others or add to their misery. Do not condemn yourselves as weak, sinful, conceited, wicked, outlawed, mean, or so forth. When you so condemn yourself, remember you are condemning Me, who is your inner Self. Live so that with every breath [you repeat the holy Name]; then every step you take, you come nearer and nearer to Me.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam, October 22, 1961

When you chant the Divine Name with love at least once, you will experience inexplicable and overwhelming bliss in your heart. The Divine Name melts even a stone-hearted person. Even ice takes some time to melt, but God's heart melts instantly when you chant His Name with love. So chant the Name of God. Even when you are traveling, you can chant His Name silently without attracting the attention of others. Everywhere and under all times and all circumstances contemplate on the Divine Name. There is no greater spiritual activity than this; the essence of all spiritual discipline is contained in this. In the Kali Yuga, chanting God's Name is the royal path to liberation; chanting the Divine Name is the only path to liberation in the Age of Kali.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Tamil New Year, April 14, 2003

Brindavan, Bangalore

Announcements & Subscription Information

The Sathya Sai Newsletter Staff is happy to announce another Sai Retreat!

The Mid-Atlantic and Northeast Regional Centers of the U.S. Sathya Sai Organization announce their **Weekend of Silence**, to be held at **St. Mary's Villa, Sloatsburg, New York**, during **September 5-7, 2003**. The participants will offer a program of prayers, meditation, devotional singing, and service. If you have questions regarding the retreat, contact: Peter Goldberg, 6 Copper Beach Lane, Ridgefield, CT 06877, or Tel: 203-438-7511, or e-mail: pig108@aol.com

A Previously-Mentioned Retreat with More Information: Central California Sathya Sai Baba Retreat will be held at **La Casa de Maria in Montecito** (near Santa Barbara), Friday, August 29 until Sunday, August 31. The retreat theme will be **"Peace Within, Peace Without."** **Jonathan and Rose Roof will be the guest speakers.** Jonathan is the author of *Pathways to God: A Study Guide to the Teachings of Sathya Sai Baba*, Volumes I and II. For more information about the retreat and registration, please contact:

Retreat Coordinator: Hemu Kalle, 805-388-9360, hemukalle@yahoo.com

Registration: Mamata Kalle, 805-388-9360, hemukalle@yahoo.com

Sainath Chandavarkar, 805-241-5205, chandavarkarc@vcss.k12.ca.us

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Heart Patient Awakens to Mystery Surgery

You may have heard of telepathic healing and psychic cures, but the heart patient who has undergone “divine surgery” is drawing huge crowds in Takdah.

Sharala Chettri, 25, was to leave for Puttaparthi on December 12 for surgery. Sharala’s parents claim they woke up to find their daughter already operated upon. Nobody was seen or heard entering the house in the night.

The Chettri home has been swarmed with believers and skeptics since then. People from across Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Kalimpong flock to witness the miracle and the blessed patient.

The Chettris, disciples of Sathya Sai Baba, believe the operation was a divine intervention. Sharala was diagnosed with a heart ailment last year. She was being treated by a doctor from Vellore who visits Siliguri once a month. He asked Sharala to go to Vellore for surgery. But neither her father nor her husband could afford the treatment. So they sought Sai Baba’s help.

“We decided to take her to Puttaparthi, as the surgery would be less expensive at the hospital run by Sai Baba,” her father, Kotwa said.

On the morning of December 12, 2002 when Sharala’s father went to wake her up, she did not respond to repeated calls. He pulled away the blanket and found her chest had a bandage, and there was a post-operative medical dressing, complete with gauze and leucoplast. Her wrists had marks like those made by I.V. drips for saline solution or blood. There were about 36 stitches from her chest to her abdomen.

Sharala, in part, came to her senses on Thursday night. She could not speak but gestured for a drink of water.

On Friday morning, the family found that Sharala’s dressing had been changed, and the old bandage was left on a table beside her bed. At that time she had not regained full consciousness.

“An x-ray will reveal whether a surgery has been performed or not. A metal wire is used to tie the sternum after a cardiac surgery, and that will be revealed in the x-ray,” a doctor said.

—*Hindustan Times*, Kolkata

December 14, 2002

Amitava Banerjee

Darjeeling, India

An x-ray may satisfy some skeptics, but most devotees will be aware of what really happened. This is another example of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Love. Let us all be joyful in the knowledge of the many ways He expresses that profound, unequalled Divine Love.—Ed.

Who Is the True Guru?

{Gu means darkness and ru means light. The guru scatters darkness using light, imparting the wisdom that roots out ignorance. Render unto the guru as much homage as is deserved, but not more. ... Do not seek human gurus, however great their reputation. They are not gu (beyond gunas or temperaments); they are still bound by the qualities they have developed. They are also not ru (beyond rupa or form); they are still in need of Form, so that they may conceive of Reality. Themselves limited, how can they communicate to you the Unlimited? Pray to the God within you—to the Maheshwara, the Vishnu, the Brahma, or Parabrahma Principle—to reveal itself. Accept that as the guru and you will be illuminated.

When the guru is himself struggling in the dark, how can he lead others on? When he is himself a beggar in search of moneyed men, how can he be free and strict as a teacher? When infatuation predominates, liberation is a will-o'-the-wisp. You may eat a tiny grain of sugar like an ant and be contented with the gain, but you must grow into an elephant that will eat with relish a whole bundle of sugarcane!

The Gayatri mantra is a prayer for the progressive upsurge of the intellect so that Truth may be grasped by the seeker. Subordinate the mind to the pure intellect, which is but a reflection of the God within. Then, you have the guru of gurus as a guide.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Guru Poornima Festival, July 18, 1970

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. X:15



Dates to Remember

Guru Poornima	July 13	August 31	A Day to Honor Lord Ganesha
Global Handicapped Day	July 20	September 8 ...	Onam
Krishna's Birthday ..	August 19	September 14 ..	Global Blood Donation Day

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Dasara Discourses 2001 Bhagavan blessed devotees with these discourses at Prasanthi Nilayam during the seven days of *Dasara*, October 20-26, 2001. Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, India.

Soft cover, 121 pages

BA-118\$4.00

Divine Discourses on Easwaramma Day, 1983-2001 These discourses on the day honoring Easwaramma, mother of Sathya Sai Baba, provide divine instructions to parents and children and clarify the role of parents. Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, India. Soft cover, 123 pages

BA-119\$4.00

Essence of Divinity by Elaine W. Gries The author chronicles her search for a true spiritual teacher, and her experiences after finding Sathya Sai Baba. Ms. Gries quotes Baba's discourses on various subjects and describes His major service projects.

Soft cover, 292 pages

BW-051\$8.00

Message of the Lord, as a Practical Philosophy This large volume helps readers understand not only the original *Bhagavad Gita*, but also the *Gita Vahini* and other related material in Sai literature. Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, India.

Soft cover, 696 pages

BI-101\$10.00

Sai Baba, the Scientist by Dr. Malayappa Jeevanandam This book discusses Swami's teachings that highlight various scientific facts, giving us a clear perspective on the connection between the spiritual and the scientific.

Soft cover, 198 pages

BI-064\$3.00

The Science of Medicine: Where Modern Medicine Meets Spirituality by Dr. Hiramalini Seshadri and Dr. Seshadri Harihar These two physicians explore the frontier where modern medicine and spirituality meet. The book documents the firsthand experiences of both doctors—due to the grace of Sai Baba—that have enabled them to work out strategies to benefit their patients. Soft cover, 271 pages

BI-066\$6.00

Sathya Sai International English Songbook This is a compilation of lyrics and musical scores of English devotional songs, written by devotees from all around the world.

Hard cover folder, 200 songs

BW-132\$12.00

Start the Day with Love by Katherine Schultz Freundt This children's book teaches the value and importance of prayer in a simple and fun way; it also has lovely illustrations in color. Hard cover, 20 pages

BW-184\$4.50

Nine Point Code of Conduct

Center members [and other devotees] are expected to do their best to practice the Nine-Point Code of Conduct in order to be examples of Sathya Sai Baba's teachings.

- Daily meditation and prayer.
- Group devotional singing or prayer with family members once a week.
- Participation in Sai Spiritual Education by children of the family.
- Participation in community service work and other programs of the Sai Organization.
- Regular attendance at the Sathya Sai Baba Center's devotional meetings.
- Regular study of Sathya Sai Baba literature.
- The use of soft, loving speech with everyone.
- Not speaking ill of others, especially in their absence.
- Practice placing a ceiling on desires. Consciously and continuously strive to eliminate the tendency to waste time, money, food and energy; utilize the time saved for service to mankind.

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