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BE
HAPPY

Sathya

Newsletter,

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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
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. VII, ch. 36*

*This issue was inspired to better understand anger,
and replace it with forbearance and forgiveness.*

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

Today man is not making proper use of his mathi (mind), gathi (effort), stithi (position), and sampatthi (wealth). As a result, he is losing the sacred energy that God has given him. Not merely this. He is subjected to misery and

grief because of his evil traits like kama (desire), krodha (anger), and lobha (greed). He has absolutely no control over his desires. When one desire is fulfilled, he craves for another. Anger is another evil trait that ruins man.

“One with anger will not be successful in any of his endeavors. He will commit sins and be ridiculed by one and all.” (Telugu Poem)

“Anger is one’s enemy, peace is one’s protective shield, compassion is one’s true relation, happiness is verily heaven, and misery [and anger are] hell.” (Telugu Poem)

Hatred is more dangerous than anger. It gives rise to many evil qualities, which get in the way of experiencing Divinity. Man is supposed to live for a hundred years, but his lifespan is cut short by these evil qualities. When these evil traits are totally subdued, man can enjoy a long and happy life. He will

not lose his life even if he were to meet with a serious accident. Man is tormented by the reflection, reaction, and resound of his own evil qualities. Desire, anger, and hatred are not human qualities; they are bestial tendencies. Man becomes a beast if he allows these wicked qualities to overpower him. He should constantly remind himself that he is a human being and not a beast. In this manner, he can keep a check over his bestial tendencies.

—Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
September 10, 2002, Prasanthi Nilayam



The Adventure Continues

The Awakening of a Hard-Headed Devotee

I wrote once of how my beloved Sathya Sai Baba came into my life. It is now a few years later, and this stone keeps rolling down the mountain, faster and faster. So strange—I have work, family, relationships, thoughts, desires—but like a ball connected to a rubber band, I keep zinging back to the paddle, my Baba.

Each day I start with thoughts of Him. Each morning I begin with the desire to live throughout the day as perfectly as possible, to be human in that special way—the Baba way. He is constantly teaching me. How fortunate I am that He continues in my thoughts throughout the entire day now—not every second, mind you—but in electric flashes of understanding and awareness.

Now it has become as important for me to love everyone with kind thoughts and words as it is to desire to go to India to see Him. And He helps me—oh how He helps me.

This morning, I start out with a desire to follow the rule, *All are alike; be alike to everyone*. My loving teacher arrives to help me at the speed of light. A few moments later, I am in a fluster and bluster, sputtering with anger at an unfair action of the person I seem to like the least in the universe. Ohhh, I'm mad with the thoughtlessness of this person's actions towards me! Baba then whispers to me, *All is fair. This action is a gift to you from Me*.

"Gift?" I silently shout back to Him. "You call getting stabbed in the back a gift?"

The problem is I know that He is absolutely correct. He loves me completely and without any exceptions. He only does what is the best for me, and I then start to get flashes—just like the old disco strobe lights on '70s dance floors—that He and I are one, and that everything is as it is supposed to be, so anger is an incorrect action for me.

I struggle, huff and puff, to think good thoughts, God thoughts, G.R.E.A.T. thoughts about this man who has angered me. I almost get there, then fall back muttering faint obscenities. I try again, sweat breaking out on my head as I hold back the dam of resentment and struggle again with creating good thoughts. "I think I can; I think I can." I love Baba; this person is Baba too. Can I possibly be able to think bad thoughts about Baba? No, I decide. Then I have to let go of this angry feeling.

On and on the struggle goes. It is a good thing that my wife, kids, and colleagues cannot hear the thoughts in my head; if they could, I would be locked away as a crazy person. Suddenly I go quiet. Ah, nuts, I think. I can't do this today. The phone rings. It is him; he's on the phone! My heart melts. Only love flows from my voice and from my heart. . . . What is happening? Who is talking

here? There is no struggle, no effort. ... I listen to myself talk sweetly, hang up, and I wonder as the seconds pass in silence. ... I shake my head in awe, take a breath, and the thought comes into my mind that I have too many desires. Gotta work on my desires. Am I feeling jealousy at the possessions of my neighbor? Baba whispers, *Yes, you are. Why don't you be happy for his good ... fortune instead?* You're right, Lord, I think to myself. Now let me start trying to think loving thoughts. ... The day continues, my life continues, my lessons continue...

*I reached the end of me
And I cried into the darkness,
With a shattered broken heart
And tears upon my face.
He held me in His arms,
He held me in His arms,*

*He sowed the seeds of love,
And they blossomed in my lifetime.
With a beautiful glowing smile
And a wondrous globe of hair,
He came into my life,
He came into my life,
His name is Sathya Sai.
And I loved Him a million lifetimes,
With flowing orange robes
And vibhuti fingertips,
He came into my heart,
He came into my heart.
Streams all run to the sea,
And a drop contains the ocean,
With a step a destiny
And a faith held tightly,
I will see myself in Him,
I will see myself in Him.*

—Michael Azevedo
Maui, Hawaii

Conceit, jealousy, rajasic exhibition of one's superiority, anger, craving to locate the weaknesses of others and their failings, trickery—all these are obstacles in the path of dhyanam or meditation. Even if these are not patently exhibited, the inner impulses, urging one along these wrong directions, are latent in the mind. Just as a room kept closed for a long time is found to be dusty and foul-smelling when opened, and just as it becomes clean and habitable after elaborate sweeping and dusting, so too the mind has to be cleaned by meditation. The spiritual seeker must, by inward observation, examine the mind and its contents and condition. By proper disciplinary habits, one can remove the accumulated dirt, little by little, systematically. Conceit, for example, is deep-rooted and unyielding. In the rajasic mind, it puts forth manifold branches in all directions and spreads everywhere. It might appear to be dry and dead for some time, but it will sprout again easily. As soon as a chance arises for its exhibition, it will raise its hood. Therefore, one must be ever vigilant.*

—Sathya Sai Baba
Dhyana Vahini, pp. 74-75

* rajasic - refers to mental and emotional traits that are feverish, craving ceaselessly active, and enflaming.

God Is the Indweller

You Are an Aspect of Divinity

The entire universe is under the control of God. God is governed by truth. Noble souls are the guardians of truth. Such noble souls are verily the embodiments of Divinity. (Sanskrit verse)

People undertake various spiritual practices to attain Divinity. One may be evil minded, yet with the blessings of elders and in the company of noble souls, one can easily get rid of evil tendencies and develop virtues.

The life of Ratnakara, the highway robber, bears ample testimony to this. His life was transformed as he came into contact with the *saptharishis* (seven sages). He gave up his evil ways, unwaveringly followed their teachings, and ultimately became the great sage Valmiki. He set an ideal to humankind and composed the great epic, *Ramayana* (story of Lord Rama).

Prahlada, son of the demon king Hiranyakasipu, constantly contemplated on Lord Narayana and chanted His name. As a result, he acquired the same divine effulgence of Lord Narayana Himself. Likewise, Charles Darwin resembled his master Henslow in all respects, as he continuously thought of him and followed his teachings. Similarly, our ancient sages and seers always contemplated on God constantly and adhered to His dictates. As a consequence, their faces radiated divine brilliance. Lord Krishna said the same in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "The eternal *Atma* (inner Divinity) in all beings is a part of My being."

He said, "Arjuna, it is My divine effulgence that shines forth in all." God is all pervasive. He is present in all elements and in all beings in the form of radiance.

What Causes Suffering?

When God is ever present within, why does man suffer? Some people say that they are facing hardships and leading a miserable life. It is foolish on their part to say so. God, the indweller, has absolutely no sorrow or worries. He is the embodiment of supreme bliss. Is it not a sign of foolishness to think that you are haunted by misery when God is installed on the altar of your heart? God says, "I am present in you. You are but a spark of My Divinity." Such being the case, how can one be affected by difficulties and sorrows? When you inquire along these lines, you will realize that the demonic and bestial tendencies in you are responsible for your difficulties and sorrows. You cannot experience the truth—*Mamaivamsho jiva loke jiva bhuthah sanathana* (The eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of My Being) (*Bhagavad Gita*, XV:7)—unless and until you give up evil qualities.

Though God is present within, people behave as if under the influence of a demon.

First of all, realize that you are a spark of Divinity and that no evil spirits can control you. God says that He resides in your heart. The heart is a single seat; there is room for only one, so only God should be seated in your heart and none else.

The Spark of Divinity

Today, people fail to comprehend that they are an aspect of Divinity. They remain unaware of the fact that God is within, deluding themselves that no one is caring for them. In fact, everyone is endowed with a heart that is divine and by nature full of compassion. God dwells in such a heart, but today people have become hard-hearted, having lost this natural compassion. Such a person cannot be called a spark of the Divine but rather a demon. The assertion, *A portion of Mine in the world of life is transformed into the individual*, does not apply in such cases.

A spark of Divinity is in the heart of everyone, but because of *bhrama* (delusion), humans fail to realize their Divine nature. In the first place, you should make efforts to overcome this delusion and realize that God is always with you, in you, around you, above you, and below you. Delusion causes evil feelings to arise in your heart and mind. These feelings are sheer imagination and have nothing to do with Divinity.

God is present in the heart of one and all. He does not have a particular form and

is not confined to a particular place. He is present in your heart and is all pervasive. With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe. This radiant, divine principle of the Self is called *Atma*. Krishna asserted that this *Atma* is a portion of His own aspects, so there cannot be any defect or imperfection in such a divine principle. Whatever defects you think you see are

purely the result of your imagination. God is the embodiment of virtues; hence, man too should lead a life of virtues.

*Love develops divine power
in you. There is nothing that
love cannot conquer
in this world.*

Evil propensities are impediments to the spiritual path. For a start, man should distance himself from all evil actions and undertake good deeds. Only then will he have the right to call himself a human being. Human life is highly sacred. The *Upanishads* describe human life as verily Divine. Man considers himself to be a weakling because he has forgotten the principle of the Self, which is beyond all attributes. His evil qualities, wicked deeds, and misconduct have brought him down to this sorry state.

Keep Noble Company

As one's company, so are one's thoughts. Hence, it is said, "Tell me your company, and I shall tell you what you are." Your friendships influence your nature. The highway robber Ratnakara became the great sage Valmiki because of his association with

the *saptharishis* (seven sages). Prahlada was the son of a demon, yet he was always in the company of noble souls. Good company leads to detachment, detachment makes one free from delusion, freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind, and steadiness of mind confers liberation.

Meaning of Navarathri

What is the inner significance of *Devi Navaratri**?
 People worship the triune goddesses Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswathi during these nine days. Who is Durga? She is the embodiment of all powers. Lakshmi is the principle of wealth and welfare. Saraswathi is the presiding deity of speech and wisdom.

The *Gayatri Mantra* begins with "Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah." *Bhur* means materialization. It represents matter, which is subject to change. *Bhuvah* represents the life principle, in other words, vibration. Savitri is the presiding deity of the life principle. You may have heard the story of Savitri, who restored her dead husband back to life with the power of her devotion and surrender. Saraswathi is worshiped as *Jnana Devata* (one with the quality of wisdom), since she confers good intellect and wisdom. This is described in the *Vedas* as *Prajnanam Brahma* (divine wisdom is God). *Prajnana* does not mean worldly knowledge but

**Devi Navaratri* is the nine-day Dasara festival celebrating the qualities of the Divine Mother.

Constant Integrated Awareness, which is changeless and eternal.

The divine mother has three names: Gayatri, Savitri, and Saraswathi. Gayatri protects those who sing her glory. Gayatri, being the presiding deity of our senses, helps us to master the senses. Savitri, being the presiding deity of the life principle, protects our life. Saraswathi bestows on us ultimate, changeless, and eternal wisdom.

*You should not
 merely be a human in form;
 you should become a human
 in practice.*

Gayatri, Savitri, and Saraswati are present in everyone, but people fail to understand and experience this divine inner presence. Consequently, people

give room to wicked qualities and indulge in evil deeds, thereby ruining their lives. Their bad habits are responsible for their downfall. First of all, people must develop good habits and transform themselves. How could Savitri bring her dead husband back to life? She transformed her vibration into divine vibration by contemplating on God incessantly. That led to the resurrection of her husband. When you develop divine feelings, nothing is impossible for you. Any mighty task can be accomplished through pure and selfless love.

The Weapon of Love

Love develops divine power in you. There is nothing that love cannot conquer in this world. Sages perform penance in dense forests infested with wild animals, without carrying any weapon for self

protection. The weapon that protects them is their intense love and yearning for God. They tame the wild beasts with their power of love and transform them into docile beings. Man's character gets transformed into good or bad depending on his company. Noble company bestows noble feelings, and bad company gives rise to evil traits. Your speech and conduct are based on your feelings. You deserve to be called a human being only when you develop good feelings. Form alone does not constitute a human being.

A true human being is one who embodies good habits, helps ever, and hurts never. You should not merely be a human in form; you should become a human in practice. Speak good, see good, do good, and be good. Divinity will manifest in you only when your conduct is good. God is not somewhere in a distant land; He is very much in you, with you, and around you, guiding you and guarding you. Develop divine feelings and listen to the divine voice from within.

The human body can be compared to a *veena* (a stringed instrument). You can enjoy the divine melody only when it is tuned to divine feelings. The divine melody will bestow bliss on you; it will make you forget yourself in ecstasy. On the other hand, profane feelings will give rise to discordant notes. Hence, let your thoughts, words, and deeds be suffused with sacred feelings.

Do not hurt others. One attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them. Hence, the *Vedas* teach, help ever, hurt never.

The *Vedas* emphasize the need to cultivate sacred feelings. In fact, the sacred feelings are within, but man has forgotten them. The human being is the repository of divine energy. Durga (goddess of energy), Lakshmi (goddess of wealth), and Saraswathi (goddess of wisdom) are present in the human being. Man is not poor in any sense. He is not weak or forlorn. He has all the capacity to ex-

perience divine bliss. Yet, in spite of being endowed with all these powers, man remains weak. This is the effect of evil company.

Education and Humility

You should not take it amiss, but the fact is that the modern system of education is ruining the lives of many. Modern education is leading to agitation instead of elevation. It is giving rise to evil qualities like anger, greed, desire, and jealousy. In fact, many people who are unlettered have the virtues of humility, obedience, love, and peace. Humility is the hallmark of true education. One may acquire high qualifications, but all knowledge becomes useless without humility.

Despite education and intelligence, a foolish man knows not his true Self, and a mean-minded person does not give up his

God is not somewhere in a distant land; He is very much in you, with you, and around you, guiding you and guarding you.

wicked qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom. What is the use of acquiring worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will grant you immortality. (Telugu Poem)

True education fosters truth, morality, integrity, and culture. Education should develop human values in you. You should respect elders and serve your parents. People talk of friendship, but we do not find true friends anywhere. Today friendship is tainted with wickedness and self interest.

Shun bad company; seek good company and perform righteous deeds the whole day long. Discriminate between the permanent and the ephemeral. This is what you are supposed to do.

Some people appear to be good and speak sweetly, but their minds are filled with wicked feelings. Beware of such people and keep them at a distance. It is because such people abound that present day society is in such turmoil.

Prahlada's Devotion

Prahlada was the son of the demon king Hiranyakasipu, yet his thoughts were always centered on Lord Narayana. He repeated His name always. His father and teachers tried their best to divert him from the spiritual path and to infuse demonic traits in him. Once Hiranyakasipu asked Prahlada what he had learned from his preceptors. Prahlada replied, "The teachers have taught me many things. I have learned the principles of *dharma* and *artha* (righteousness and wealth) and studied

sacred scriptures. In fact, I have learned the very essence of all knowledge." Hiranyakasipu was overjoyed to hear all this. He said, "Oh son! Let me have the pleasure of listening to that great knowledge." Prahlada said, "Oh father, the name of *Hari* (the Lord) will destroy all our sins. Of what use is one's education if one does not contemplate on Lord Hari and attain liberation?" Hiranyakasipu became furious on hearing this and pushed Prahlada from his lap, but Prahlada was not in the least perturbed. He continued to chant the name of Lord Narayana.

Hiranyakasipu in his rage subjected Prahlada to various ordeals. He made elephants trample upon him, and set poisonous snakes to bite him. Prahlada's unflinching faith in Lord Narayana protected him from all these dangers. Prahlada felt the mighty elephant to be as light as a feather, and the poison transformed into nectar by the power of his devotion. Such things can be understood only by experience and not by mere description.

Though he was young, Prahlada was firm in his resolve. Hiranyakasipu was overcome by fury. He roared, "Oh you fool, you speak very highly of your God; where is He?" Prahlada very calmly replied, *Father, never doubt that God is here and not there. In fact, He is present wherever you look for Him.* (Telugu Poem)

"If God is all pervasive, can you demonstrate His presence in this pillar?" Hiranyakasipu challenged Prahlada. "Yes, I can," came Prahlada's ready answer. Such

was Prahlada's faith and devotion. One can attain Divinity only with such confidence.

Where there is confidence, there is love; where there is love, there is truth; where there is truth, there is peace; where there is peace, there is bliss; where there is bliss, there is God. (Telugu Poem)

Hiranyakasipu at once hit the pillar with a mace. Lo and behold! Lord Narasimha* emerged from it.

What is the inner meaning? The body is like a pillar. One can have the vision of *Atma* only when one breaks the manacles of body attachment. You can develop *Atmabhimana* or love for the *Atma* once you give up *dehabhimana* or body attachment. It is only *Atmabhimana* that will protect you always. Learn the language of the heart. It can be taught only by Divinity and not by teachers.

Develop Unwavering Faith

Students! What you need today is unwavering faith in God. Faith alone can protect you. Under all circumstances, at all times, consider God to be the very basis of your life. Give up evil qualities like anger, greed, and jealousy. Anger can be compared to the demon Ravana's pyre. It keeps burning always. Desire is the cause of man's downfall. Therefore, eradicate desire and anger. You should manifest love and be embodiments of love. Love is God; live in love. If you have love, you can achieve anything.

Start the day with love, fill the day with

*One of the incarnations of Vishnu, Narasimha had the form of half-lion, half-man.

love, spend the day with love, end the day with love; this is the way to God. (Poem)

Hence, develop the spirit of love. Love is the most potent weapon and can win over anyone. What was the weapon that protected our ancients who lived in forests? It was not the hydrogen bomb or the atom bomb. It was love and love alone. So one need not acquire atom bombs or hydrogen bombs; it is enough if one has the weapon of love. You can conquer the entire world with the power of love.

People worship Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswathi during these nine days. Durga destroyed the demons. Since the weapons are no longer needed, people perform *Ayudha Puja***. When you pray to Durga wholeheartedly, she will protect you in all your endeavors.

Control Emotions and Share Love

You are unable to understand the principle of Divinity. No one in this world can help you the way God helps you. Therefore, surrender yourself to God and pray for His help. Also, devotion to God safeguards our ancient culture. People are haunted by misery and grief because they have forgotten God.

Control your emotions and develop love. Do not entertain evil thoughts. Nothing can confer the experience of bliss that the proximity of God gives. Love all, and all will love you. Share your love even with dogs, monkeys, and cats. You can see how they reciprocate your love. Man lacks

**The honoring of instruments, such as tools, involved in one's livelihood.

the sense of gratitude that even dogs have. We see many foreigners with dogs and cats as their pets. When you love them, they too will love you in return.

As you think, so you become. You are bound to experience the reflection, reaction, and resound of your feelings, be they good or bad. If you see bad in others, it is only a reflection of your bad feelings. It is a mistake to blame others while ignoring your own faults. Purify your feelings first of all. Love even those whom you consider to be wicked. In fact, nobody is wicked in this world. It is only because of delusion that you consider some as good and some as wicked. Develop *sathya sankalpas* (true and noble intentions) and follow the path of truth. Do not indulge in vain gossip. Instead, sanctify your time by chanting the



divine name. There is nothing sweeter than the divine name.

Embodiments of Love! The divine vibrations resulting from the *bhajan* (the song, *Hare Rama, Hara Rama*) you have just sung are spreading to all parts of the world. The divine name that you chant purifies the hearts of many. Hence, do not entertain bad

feelings. Do not use bad words. Use only sacred words. Sing the glory of God. By doing so, you render a great service to the whole world. Do not hurt others. Help everybody. When you help others, you will certainly achieve

positive results. Make proper use of your time. Chant God's name and make your heart sacred.

—Sathya Sai Baba
October 9, 2002

My desire is that whenever any slight misunderstanding arises among you, you must set it right among yourselves, exercising love and tolerance. You should not plunge into a passion over it, or let things blaze into a quarrel or a factional split. Recognize that you are engaged in the exercise of widening your hearts, of reaching the feet of the Lord through faith and reverence. Unless you cultivate love, tolerance, humility, faith, and reverence, how is it possible for you to realize God?

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. VII

Dreams of Hope

*Encouragement to Build
Up Faith*

With all the turmoil of current events, such as the war in Iraq, my mind has been very agitated in recent months—so much so that it was causing me to be angry and to lose sleep. Within the last several weeks Swami has given me two dreams that I feel are worth sharing with those devotees who, like myself, have been upset by current world events.

In the first dream, I was walking by a building where I heard laughter coming from a room I was approaching. The door to the room was open, so I poked my head inside to see what was going on. To my surprise, I saw a younger looking Sai Baba (from the years when He parted His hair on one side) standing on an elevated platform in front of a group of Tibetan monks. Swami was holding up a mask that had a stick attached to the bottom in front of His face and peered at the monks through the eye slits. The mask was brightly painted in fantastic, pastel-colored patterns. He would quickly remove one mask, smile mischievously at the monks, and then cover



“Swami is the reality
behind all the colorful
fantasy of the world...”

His face with another mask, much to their delight and joy.

This dream showed me several things. It showed me that Swami is the reality behind all the colorful fantasy of the world, symbolized by the masks. It also showed me that He is in complete control of a show that was

really quite humorous to a group of monks. Since monastic life has always been equated in my mind with an unsmiling seriousness, this scene was telling me not to take it all too seriously. It also showed that Swami is really on a level that is elevated above all the worldly stuff we get concerned about. (The younger Swami was to let me know that He is eternally young and a reminder to not get deluded, and therefore saddened, by the outward aging of His physical form.)

The other dream took place outside while I was standing near a dirt road. A group of devotees was waiting for Swami to come by. Swami approached, after a short time, surrounded by a small entourage of people. When He got near, Swami looked directly at me with giant, exaggerated,

soulful eyes. He did this because I have been feeling He hasn't paid much attention to me lately, and it was as if to say, "There, I'm LOOKING at you!"

Swami then walked over to a gigantic, ancient-looking machine. It could have been 30 to 40 feet high and was carved out of stone. It had two enormous stone gears, one at the top and one at the bottom with a vertical stone column connecting them. Swami seemed to be doing something to this structure from behind, but I could not tell what, because I could only see His back.

Suddenly, the stone gears began to creak and groan and very slowly began to turn. As they did so, water began to course through the gears, flow down the column and then out to the surrounding countryside. Now, one could assume this has some connection to Swami's water projects, but I feel it was symbolic of something much greater than that. To me, He was reactivating the ancient *Sanathana Dharma*, or Eternal Wisdom, which has been dormant for centuries, and thereby heralding new life to all the surrounding lands. (My wife also pointed out that it might be symbolic of internal spiritual gears dormant within myself that Swami is renewing or reawakening.)

To me, the lesson is not to take it all too seriously, and to have faith that Swami is indeed reigniting forces that will bring about the dawn of a Golden Age within ourselves, within our country, and throughout the world.

—William Lawrence
Ojai, California

I know that your hearts are filled with other thoughts [of the war and world conditions]...and of sympathy to the families of [those] who have been killed or wounded. ... It is your first duty to pray for the dead, and to pray for the happy return from the battlefield of the fighters. It is your duty also to search for your own faults and failings and to correct them soon. You must also discover and develop all your talents and become strong, self-reliant, and full-grown, in order to save your country and its culture. Above all, you must become firmly entrenched in faith; faith in the ultimate victory of Truth and Love, of Justice and Fortitude. You have not tried it, so you remain unaware of the potentialities of faith.

—Sathya Sai Baba
November 23, 1962
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. II, Ch. 45

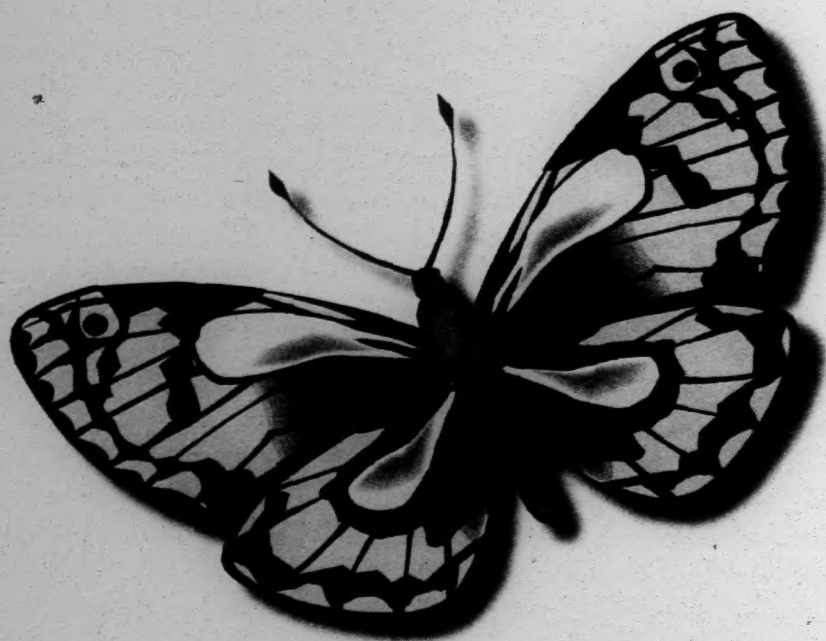
The Master Gardener

—Alora Knight

Gardnerville, Nevada

As I plant, it comes to me,
If I would reach my goal
To see my Father's glory,
Then I must search my soul
To see if in my heart and mind
Unhealthy seeds have grown,
Without my understanding
Just when they had been sown.
Has ego leached the richness
From the gifts that He has given?
Have I been blind to wonders
Of this world that I live in?

Have I given too much time and space
To frivolous pursuits?
Have I allowed unworthy thoughts
To firmly put down roots?
Soul searching isn't easy.
We're apt to turn away
When we discover areas
We'd have to say were gray.
Still, if we're sincere in our desire,
I know He'll understand.
It's then the Master Gardener
Will lend a helping hand.



Swami and Islam, Part II (Conclusion)

Sanathana Dharma and Surrender to God

After covering and comparing the basics of Islam to other religions (*Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA, July/August 2003*), we direct our attention to some other similar beliefs between Islam and *Sanathana Dharma*, the "Eternal Wisdom."

Creation, Soul, Conscience

Hindus say there was nothing in the beginning, and God willed to create. The first sound was *aum*. The *Qu'ran* confirms this with the idea of nothingness, and then God said, *Be*. This *Be* is the will and sound of God combined. Again, like the Hindu or Vedic faith, the *Qu'ran* says God is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient, with no beginning and no end—infinite. It further states no soul (*ruh*) was individualized in the beginning. It has also a concept similar to conscience, called *fitrah*. *Fitrah* is a natural, innate inclination to discriminate and to seek spiritual awareness. This is the soul's urging to seek God.

Concept of *Neti-Neti*

Hindus describe the ultimate reality as *Not this; not this*. The *Qu'ran* reflects this, saying, *He resembles nothing in this universe; He is nonconceptual, and if you begin to imagine Him, He is not like that*. Here we meet the formless God. This idea of *neti-neti* in Islam opposes any form of image worship or idolatry.

Illusions, Idols, and Islam

The most controversial issue in the eyes of non-Muslims is the breaking of idols by some followers of Islam. The *Qu'ran* describes the world as an illusion and a place of deception and play. For this reason, any imagery of God made in the image of this world will be a deception and not a true reality. Consequently Islam prohibits any kind of imagery that can obstruct the mind from going toward the formless God. However, as our beloved Swami has stated, idolatry has its place, as a foundation and a basis to stabilize the mind before moving toward the formless.

As we look for unity rather than diversity, we discover that Islamic and non-Islamic teachings are quite similar. The Sufi saint Jalaludin Rumi has stated that the seven circumambulations around the *Kaba'h* stone is a form of idol worship. The practice signifies that you are constantly coming back to where you started. You discover that your end is your beginning. From God we come and to God we return. The stone of the *Kaba'h* was installed as an idol of the god Hubal.

The *Qu'ranic* verses were received by the Prophet Muhammad, but they were compiled in the form of the holy book years later, after his death, leaving the interpretation of the scriptures in human

hands. For example, certain *Suras** encourage followers to fight the idolatry. Ordinary mortal teachers would interpret this on a grosser level as an injunction to destroy idols, but the inner significance is to fight against any images that divert our attention from God. This fits well with the *Yogavashistha* (dialogue between Rama and sage Vashistha), which says that even Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara (Shiva) are mere thought-forms of the Absolute Being.

Oneness in Islam

Tauhid is the word in Arabic for oneness. Swami encourages us to see God in everything. The *Qu'ran* encourages Muslims to see and find the signs of God in the world, to find the signs of God in the different forms of creation, in the beauty of nature, in the wonders of the universe everywhere, and in everything. *Shaytan* (Satan for Christians) means the one that pulls us away from God. *Shaytan* uses emotions, comparable to "evil tendencies" in Indian literature, to pull us away from God. The words differ but the essence remains the same.

Triguna and Merging in the Qu'ran

Comparable to the three *gunas* of Indian scriptures—*sathwas*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—Islam has three selves, namely, (1) the Animal self, (2) the Accruing self, and (3) the Restful self. The Animal self incorporates the basic instincts, such as desires for food, conjugal pleasure, and worldly comforts. Anything that pulls one

* *Suras* are any of the 114 chapters of the *Qu'ran*.

away from God comes under this category. This is something akin to the animalistic tendencies that Swami talks about so often.

One moves up to the next category upon conquering the basic desires. The Accruing self begins inquiry: Why am I here? What is the next life? What is after death? This leads one to spiritual practices such as prayers, study, meditation, and awareness of moral issues. At this stage, the heart begins to open. The second self is comparable to the human self.

The third and last is the Restful self. This is comparable to the state of equanimity in Hindu philosophy. In this state, one waits to return to God (merge with God). *Sura 21.35* says, *Every soul shall taste death. We are pulling all of you to a test of passing through bad and good conditions, and finally you shall return to us.* If we read "death" as "merging," all becomes crystal clear and therefore death becomes an end to the separateness from God. This brings us to the trials and tribulations of life.

Karma and Reincarnation

Indian scriptures exhort devotees to welcome trials and tribulations as opportunities to seek God. Swami calls them tests. *Qu'ranic Suras 29.2-3* teach the same message—that all our daily circumstances and troubles occur in order to provide us with opportunities to improve and prove our faith in God.

Generally, Muslims are not said to believe in *karma* and reincarnation. One life and it is over. This is a matter of interpretation, however. The *Qu'ran* states

that upon death, a soul is brought to Allah, who orders the angels to "take him back to the earth because I promised them that from it I created them, into it I return them, and I will resurrect them again." This could be interpreted that God returns the soul back to the earth and resurrects it again, giving it another earthly body. To us, this is reincarnation of the soul. In the *Qu'ranic* concept of the Judgment Day, this is the same as rewards and punishments for the deeds done in worldly life. The Judgment Day comes at the end of the dissolution of the world. In our interpretation, the dissolution of the world comes when we end the perception of the world, that is, leave this body consciousness. In other words, Allah will send us back to the earth until our illusion of world ends. The *Qu'ran* also states that our life will be judged by our beliefs when we leave the physical world and our thoughts at the time of death.

Jihad

No word causes more emotions than *jihad*. *Jihad* is commonly understood as a holy war. It literally means to strive or struggle for something. In the *Qu'ranic* sense, it means any act to further the cause of God.

Therefore service to the poor and needy, spiritual study and teaching, and controlling of the senses can be *jihad*. Fighting for the oppressed and weak is also *jihad*. Broadly speaking, this is our service ideal. Sai Baba has said that those who witness *adharma* (unrighteousness; neglect of morality and virtue) and do not take any actions are equally responsible for those acts. The *Qu'ran* prohibits unjust killing. *Sura* 5.32 says that if you kill a life unjustly, it is as if you have killed all life; here again is the concept of the oneness of life.

In 1995, I visited the Akshardham temple in Gujarat, where terrorists attacked recently and took 38 lives. In one of the stone carvings, I found a message and wrote it down, as it echoes the words of Swami so beautifully. Its author is unknown:

"Our prayers may differ in words and ways, but they convey the same feelings. Our pilgrimages may differ in place and form, but they carry the same sanctity. Our morals may differ in phrases and styles, but they preach the same message. Our religions may differ in symbols and means, but they reveal the same meaning."

—Purandar A. Amin
Arcadia, California

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says, There is nothing higher than Me. The Qu'ranic formula says the same. The Muhammadan upasana (path of approaching or "sitting near" the Lord) too is a form of the same spiritual practice, based on the same Truth. All upasanas reveal that ... man has accumulated ... a vast spiritual treasure that can save him from sorrow and bondage. The treasure is so vast and so deep that it has survived the passage of centuries, as vast and deep as it ever was, unaffected by the emergence of different modes or the influx of other forms of worship.

—Sathya Sai Vahini, pp. 211-212

Children's Corner

Let nothing touch you or scare you.
Everything passes by.
Only God is permanent.
With patience you can obtain everything.
Those who have God lack nothing.
God alone is enough.



He who gets angry has lost the battle before it even begins.

—*Bal Vikas magazine for Children 1-99, Italy*

Forbearance (Kshama)

The Grandest and Noblest Virtue

“True and selfless love manifests as sacrifice and knows no hatred. It envelops the entire universe and can draw Sathya Sai Baba near even to those who are seemingly far away. Love transforms the human into the Divine. In the phenomenal world, you come across many shades and derivatives of this Primordial Love. Love for your father, mother, brother, sister, friends, and so on, always harbors a tinge of selfishness. Divine Love, on the other hand, is totally free of even the slightest trace of selfishness. One must surrender to that Love, become completely submerged in it, and experience the bliss it confers.

“To acquire such Love, forbearance or *kshama* is essential. Forbearance is not achieved by book-reading or through an instructor, nor can it be received as a gift. This prime virtue can be acquired solely by self-effort, that is, by facing diverse problems squarely, enduring difficulties of various sorts, not giving in to anxieties, and bearing with equanimity suffering as well as sorrow. In the absence of forbearance, people succumb to various evil tendencies. Hatred and jealousy easily take root in a person lacking this virtue.

“Forbearance is the grandest and noblest among virtues. The troubles the country is currently passing through are largely due to the absence of this noble quality of forbearance. Without forbearance, humankind becomes degraded and starts declining, but if it has this quality then it can progress in leaps and bounds. Forbearance is thus the very breath of life.

“Everything must have a basis. For spiritual progress and advancement, forbearance is the true basis or foundation. When forbearance disappears, disturbance and decline set in. Great countries have lost their glory, prestige, and reputation in this way. Patience is therefore a virtue that must be assiduously cultivated, by individuals as well as nations, if troubles and tribulations are to be successfully faced. Without patience and the capacity for forbearance, one becomes spiritually weak. Without patience, the greatest of men get reduced to utter fools. The importance of forbearance cannot be overstressed. This virtue is best cultivated under adverse circumstances, and one must therefore gladly welcome troubles instead of regarding them as unwelcome.

“Jealousy, man’s greatest enemy, takes root when forbearance is absent. If you possess the virtue of forbearance, then none of these enemies can come anywhere near you. Cultivation of forbearance must therefore be an important priority. No doubt you will face many difficulties during life’s journey, but bravely march on, taking courage from the fact that once you have forbearance, there is nothing that you cannot achieve.”

The Times of India – Mumbai Edition

Friday, February 7, 2003

Keeping Time with Baba

"No Reason for Love, No Season for Love..."

"I have some terrible news," the voice on the other end of the telephone said. "Joan passed away today." Joan, my stepmother of less than a year, had died unexpectedly during what doctors had assured her would be a safe and routine heart procedure. Although she had a serious heart condition, the procedure, which was not even considered a surgery, was not thought to be life-threatening or even dangerous. Yet Joan's heart had inexplicably stopped beating, and doctors had been unable to save her. My thoughts quickly turned to my father and Joan's four children and extended family. My own grief seemed insignificant in comparison.

I could barely believe the news and felt deeply shocked, yet some part of me had known that this, or something like it, would happen—because Baba had warned me more than twelve years before. Long before my father and Joan met, Swami had appeared to me in a long, complex dream that had proven to be both symbolic and literal. I had written down this dream, and over the years, I returned to it again and

again. Some elements of the dream were clearly taking place at the time I had the dream, and other aspects came to pass shortly thereafter. At the time, I assumed the rest of the dream would soon become clear. But it never did. Yet, I knew that as a visitation from Swami Himself, all of the information in the dream must be significant.

In the preceding few months, I had felt an impetus to return to the dream again, awed that Swami had given me such a long-term glimpse into certain aspects of my life. In one part of the dream, I was very sad because an older woman in an elaborately beaded white dress, like a wedding dress, had just lost her husband. The figure in the dream was the older friend of a dear friend of mine. This older woman had been like a mother to my friend. A certain apprehension filled me as I reread the dream, because I had the impression it meant that my father would die in the near future, with his new bride left behind in her symbolic white dress.

Then I considered that the woman in the dream had many qualities in common with my father, and I feared that his wife might be the one to pass away. Either way, I wondered why Baba brought this possibility to my attention. I increased my prayers, thinking that perhaps He had revealed this situation so that I would ask Him to intervene. Baba has said that the ear-

nest prayers of a devotee will sometimes move Him to change a person's fate. At the same time, I have also read quotes from Baba saying that no matter how much we pray, we can receive only that which is our destiny to receive. With Joan's passing, I had to accept Swami's will and search for a deeper message in this experience.

When the bride in the dream told me that the great love of her life had died after they were together for only a short time, I responded that it was one of the saddest things I had ever heard. Yet she corrected me, "No, it was wonderful that we had such a true spiritual union." Years after this dream occurred, my father and Joan truly did share a joyful and profound love during their short time together. Our two families had quickly bonded in an outpouring of love. I came to realize that what I had missed in quantity of time spent with Joan had perhaps been compensated for in quality. In the brief time we shared together, in person and over the phone, a real

connection had been made. I had felt that, as with the motherly woman in my dream, Joan and I were becoming real friends.

Suddenly I understood more deeply something Baba said once in an address to

"In His infinite wisdom as the master of time, Baba had sent me a time capsule of a dream to comfort and instruct me at the appropriate moments."

teachers: what matters to Him is *quality*, not *quantity*. In His infinite wisdom as the master of time, Baba had sent me a time capsule of a dream to comfort and instruct me at

the appropriate moments.

On my long drive to Joan's wake and funeral, I asked Baba to travel with me and to comfort all the mourners. Of course, I know that Baba is with us all the time, but I asked for a sign of His presence. I wanted to *feel* Him there with me. As I sang along with a favorite tape of Sai *bhajans*, I imagined Baba sitting in the passenger seat next to me, keeping time to "no reason for love, no season for love, no birth, no death. . . ." The lyrics played over and over, exactly the reminder I needed. As the Buddhists say, "You were never born; you cannot die." Yet this was another truth I embraced that had not fully transformed my emotions, just as one part of me had known Joan might die, and yet I still felt shocked when it happened. No wonder Thich Nhat Hanh urges us to chant this truth throughout our whole lives in order to condition our whole beings to accept it.

When my grandmother passed away less than two years before, I made the same

drive from outside Boston to southern Connecticut. I had asked Swami then, also, to be with me. To my amazement, I had been accompanied all along the Massachusetts Turnpike by a bevy of G.O.D.'s own trucks! Yes, from time to time in the past, I had seen one or two of these "Guaranteed Overnight Delivery" vehicles on the highway—but never like this! I was literally surrounded for a time by my own personal escort, G.O.D.—in front, behind, and to either side of my car.

And just so I would later not dismiss this message from the Divine as mere coincidence, I also saw a truck marked RAMA. That sight made me laugh and cry at once, for I knew it could only be one of Swami's *leelas* (divine plays). I have not seen such a carrier before or since. Now, driving toward the memorial of another dear mother, I could only wonder how Baba might respond to my heartfelt prayer on this sad day.

The wake was scheduled to begin at 4:00 p.m., but due to the traffic I encountered, I

estimated I would not reach my destination until 4:30 or so. Just after 3:30, I reached the outskirts of New Haven. It was a gorgeous, sunny autumn day. The trees were a blaze of orange and gold, in stark contrast to my black attire and somber mood. Driving into the late afternoon sun, I was dazzled by the light. The sky was full of fluffy white clouds that suddenly took on the shape of angels. And then there it was: a small but brilliant sliver of vertical rainbow, coloring one small patch of sky. I glanced at my clock. It was 3:50. I kept my eyes on the gorgeous splash of colors as much as possible while also watching the road.

It was only much later that I realized that Joan had passed in New Haven, at Yale New Haven Medical Center. Commemorating both the place and the moment with Swami's perfect timing, the rainbow shone until 4:10, a precious reminder of God's covenant with us and of the beloved soul He had called home.

—Cara Gallucci
Hingham, Massachusetts

No one is competent to determine where a certain thing should take place. Life may end in a town, in water, or in a forest. Each one's life will end in the place, the manner, and the time prescribed for him or her. This is inescapable. This is according to the operation of Nature's law, based on pairs of opposites in life. There is a continual conflict between these opposites (pleasure and pain, birth and death, and so on).

—Sathya Sai Baba
August 1993

Kama and Krodha

Desire and Anger—and How to Control Them

Krodha (anger) proceeds from *kama* (desire), and desire is born out of *sankalpas* (thoughts and resolutions). Therefore, the *Bhagavad Gita* says that thoughts and resolutions are the root cause for desire and anger. Just as there cannot be a cloth without thread, similarly, anger cannot take shape without desire. The *Gitacharya* (one of great wisdom) has given a new name, *analam* (fire), for desire and anger. *Anala* means *agni* (fire). It has the power to burn anything that it comes into contact with. When such a powerful fire exists within our own system, how carefully we must conduct ourselves! We must take several precautions in life, not to be destroyed by this fire.

This fire-power destroys human nature and suppresses the Divine nature, making it demonic. Desire can never be satisfied. The word for fire has another meaning: insufficient. Whatever quantity of oil and firewood you put into the fire of desire, it will never be enough. Instead of satisfaction, there will be no satisfaction.

This world has several types of fire, but these fires have certain limits. Some fires subside in a few hours. Some others rage for a few days—no more. The reason is that there is a limit for everything in this objective world. All objects bound by limits

cannot exceed those limits. Whether an individual or an object, every circumstance is swept away by the constant flow of time. Similarly, the power or heat of the fire has its limits. On the other hand, the fires of desire and anger have no limit, or rule, or end. However much you enjoy, you still feel like enjoying more. How to control these insatiable fires? How to conquer them? Of course, there are methods for this purpose.

Conquer the Fire of Anger with Love

The *Gitacharya* advises us to conquer anger with love and desire with detachment. Where there is love, there cannot be hatred. Where there is no hatred, anger cannot enter. When you cultivate love, there is no scope at all for hatred. A spiritual seeker must install love in his or her heart. I have told you many times that the heart is like a single sofa and not a double sofa. There is no room for two in this sofa. In accordance with the Lord's promise—*Wherever my glory is sung, I shall firmly install myself there*—when God is installed in our heart, there is no room for others in our heart.

The phrase used here is "I install myself firmly," not "I reside." Therefore, keeping this statement in mind, seekers must give place in their heart only to One Divine

Power, One Divine Nature, One Divine Feeling, and One Divine Love. When you want to conquer anger with love, you must give the foremost place in your heart to love—forever.

Love forgives all blemishes and mistakes; it has such a great ability. *Love lives by giving and forgiving; self lives by getting and forgetting.* [Poem] Where there is love, there is no selfishness. Where there is selfishness, there

love does not exist. There is nothing in this world that cannot be attained by love. You can achieve anything with love. Therefore if you want to conquer anger, you must develop love.

There is also another method. If you can succeed in realizing that the same Lord who dwells as *antaryami* (the Indwelling God) in your heart, resides in everyone's heart, then there will be no scope or reason for hating anyone or showing anger to others. The same Lord permeates the entire universe, it is said. Therefore, first and foremost, we must cultivate love.

Love Is the True Divine Energy

When love (*prema*) is associated with our thought, it becomes truth (*sathya*). The same love when put into action, becomes righteousness (*dharma*). When love is understood, it becomes peace (*shanti*). This same love when associated with our feelings, becomes nonviolence (*ahimsa*). Therefore

love is truth; love is righteousness; love is peace; and love is nonviolence. Love is the undercurrent in all these four cardinal values. Love is everything.

Therefore, every spiritual seeker must make efforts to cultivate love. I have been giving a simple example to students: we prepare several types of sweets—*mysorepak*, *gulab jamun*, *jilebi*, *palkova*, *barfi*, *mithai*, *kheer*, and so on. Sugar is the main

ingredient in all these sweets; it is the only sweetening ingredient in all these concoctions. Similarly, sweetness must permeate all our actions, words,

and thoughts. It should be the undercurrent. This is the true Divine Force; this is God's power. That is why it is said, "Love is God; live in love." It is only by love that anger can be subdued easily.

Anger troubles us in ever so many ways. It causes various difficulties for us. It destroys our honor and prestige. It makes us forget our human nature. It gets into our system in a very subtle form and then gradually permeates our entire life. In the beginning, it makes a request for a small place to sit. It says, "Give me a place to sit down; then I can make room for a bed here." We should not give any place to such evil forces in our heart, for they will cause harm to our very being. Once we give room for anger to enter, it is very difficult to get rid of it later. If you make friends with anger by giving it even a penny, it is very difficult to get rid of it, even

by paying thousands of dollars later. Therefore you should never give a place to anger.

Before the car starts, the headlights become slightly red in color. Similarly, when anger begins to set in, our eyes become slightly red. Our lips quiver. The whole body gets heated up. When you notice such signs in your body, immediately take some precautions. Leave that place forthwith and go to a quiet place and sit down calmly and relax. Take a cool shower.

When anger is expressed in words, it leads to even more dangers. That is why it is said, *Your words must be devoid of any [harmful] emotions. Even the truth that you speak must be pleasing and cause good feelings.* First and foremost, you must develop love to keep anger under control.

Conquer Desire with Detachment

The second inner demon is *kama* (desire). Desire is to be defeated by detachment. Detachment does not mean going to live in the forest, leaving wife and children to fend for themselves. It does not mean giving up your property and other belongings and taking to renunciation. When we recognize a defect in an object, we naturally discard that object. Detachment implies that even while leading the life of a householder, performing all the actions thereto ordained, one should discard those objects and actions that are found to contain bad qualities.

For example, you prefer certain food dishes. These preparations are placed before you, ready for eating. Meanwhile, the cook comes in and pleads with you, "Sir! Please do not eat this thing. By mistake, an insect has fallen into this dish and died. It is now contaminated, so please do not eat this!" Immediately, you discard that dish, even though it is your favorite. Once you find that the material contains some impurity, you will not continue to partake of it.

You must earn a good reputation; then only will it bring glory to your human nature. You must do good, see good, and be good.

Roga (Disease) and Bhoga (Enjoyment)

Everything in this world is subject to change and is bound to perish. If you recognize this defect, you will never opt for such a transient and defective life. Food items that are prescribed for curing a disease cannot be a source of enjoyment. Can the food you eat for curing the disease of hunger be an enjoyment? Food is only a medicine to cure the disease of hunger, and it should be regarded as such. Some people prefer sugarcoated pills. Similarly, they wish to eat tasty food to cure the disease of hunger.

All that we enjoy in this world must be thought of as a medicine to cure us of the disease of desires. We consider that we are leading a most happy and prosperous life in this world and we take this as an enjoyment, but no objects can provide true and lasting enjoyment for us. The consequences of these

so-called enjoyments will be bitter sooner or later in life.

Charity Is Greater Than Wealth

There is a big tree, very beautiful and attractive, with countless branches, leaves, fruits, and flowers. One day, suddenly, it withers. All the leaves and flowers dry up and drop to the ground. What is the reason? Is it lack of water or fertilizer? No, it is nothing of the sort.

It is infested with a pest in its roots, and the disease has spread to all parts of the tree. As a result, the tree suddenly withered.

Similarly, when the diseases of desire and anger infect us, we crumble one day suddenly, despite our continuing accumulation of wealth. A wealthy man is considered to be a great man in today's world, but in the spiritual field, this is not the case. Spiritually, charity is considered to be greater in value than money. If money is accumulated without utilizing it for charitable purposes, there is no value in it.

There are four heirs to all our wealth. The first heir is charity; the second heir is the government; the third heir is a thief; the fourth heir is fire. If our money is kept in the care of the first heir, charity, the rightful heir, then the other three heirs will not have any occasion to quarrel. Even thieves will be happy with a person having a charitable disposition. The government will give income tax exemptions for money donated

to charitable purposes. Fire also hesitates to touch the wealth of a charitable person.

Thus when money is donated to the heir of charity, the other three heirs agree that they will not have any complaint with that heir. On the other hand, when money is accumulated without utilizing it for charitable purposes, then the thief will set his eye on it. He will wait for an opportunity to steal the money. The government also will

try to raid the house and take away the money. Even if these two heirs forget, a fire can erupt suddenly and destroy everything.

Therefore, the

Bhagavad Gita has established the fact that charity is greater than wealth.

Truth Is Greater Than Speech

The second declaration is that truth is greater than speech. A person may say anything, but his words, if not backed by truth, will be of no value. When a person speaks truth and maintains behavior based on truth, his or her value increases. It is also said that a good reputation is much greater than a long life. Long life without a good reputation is a waste. Such people are a burden on the earth and are fit only for eating and sleeping. You must earn a good reputation; then only will it bring glory to your human nature. You must do good, see good, and be good. That is your fundamental duty.

It is also said that a good reputation is much greater than long life. Long life without a good reputation is a waste.

You must never earn a bad name for yourself. It is better to live for a short period earning a good name, like a swan, than to live a long life like a crow. The *Bhagavad Gita* considers a person who earns a good name like a swan to be a sage of the highest order.

Now, about the body. It is said that good actions are more important than the body. A body that does not engage itself in doing good to others is no better than a living corpse. This human body is given to us for doing good to others, not for engaging ourselves in selfish activities.

Today, selfishness is making people into puppets and playing with them. Whatever one does, whatever one sees, whatever one thinks, whatever one speaks—utter selfishness lies behind these acts. In order to keep selfishness at bay, one must be engaged in selfless and sacred activities that help others. Then only will human nature acquire the purpose and meaning of the statement, *A human birth is rarest of all births*. Get rid of desire and anger with constant [vigilance and] practice.

Detachment and Renunciation

We must seriously think about how to get rid of these evil qualities of desire and anger. Here is a small example. Suppose one day we find a beautiful dog wandering in front of our house. We are hesitant to take that dog and keep it in our front yard

because we do not know whose dog it is. That would be stealing someone's property. However, we are tempted by the dog's beauty, so we offer it some food. Having eaten food from our hands, the dog comes again to our house the next day at the exact same time. We again give the dog some food because of our fascination with its beauty.

Gradually, our attachment to the dog increases. The dog gets used to coming to our house at the same time every day. After a while it develops a great attachment to our house and it refuses to leave.

However, beauty and happiness are only momentary. After a few days, the householder develops an aversion to the beauty of the dog. Therefore, he thinks of another practice by which he can drive away the dog. He concludes that the dog will remove itself if he ignores it and diverts his attention to another object. In other words, the same practice by which the dog entered the house can be adopted to drive it away from the house as well.

The Value of Sacrifice

If you want to have peace, you must travel from practice to wisdom, and from wisdom to meditation. From meditation you have to pass through the stage of renouncing the fruits of your actions. When you are able to thus renounce or sacrifice, you will ultimately attain immortality.

The *Bhagavad Gita* teaches the truth that in sacrifice alone lies your welfare [and redemption]. Since we have been fascinated by the beauty and happiness arising out of the twin qualities of desire and anger in various previous births and allowed them to flourish in countless ways, this habit has become deeply embedded in our hearts. Such deep-seated habits cannot be rooted out by mere words. They are so strong that they sprout again and again.

We have with pleasure and happiness welcomed these two evil qualities into our mind, and now we must drive them out with the same intensity of feeling using detachment and renunciation. We must adopt some practices for this purpose.

In the beginning, desire or lust appears to be very pleasing to man. It tastes very sweet, but gradually it develops sourness. Keeping desire at a distance at the latter stage is impossible. Therefore it must be kept away from the very beginning—with detachment. At times, both desire and anger together make an attack. Therefore they must be put

under control right from the outset. If we do not develop that controlling power, we cannot win God's grace.

For Everything There Is a Limit

It is said that oxen not bound to a yoke, a horse without a bridle, a car without brakes, and a life without sense control are very dangerous. Thus sense control is a necessity. Patanjali Maharshi* expressed this view in his maxim, "The mental impulses or agitations should not be allowed to freely roam about." They must be allowed to prevail only to the minimum necessary. By unlimited expression of mental agitations, one becomes mentally unstable. For



Discipline helps us to progress. Without limits, man becomes an animal.

everything, there must be a limit.

For example, our normal body temperature is 98.4°F. If the temperature rises to 99°F, it means you have a fever. When it is normal, it is an indication of good health; otherwise, it is an indication of disease. Similarly, our blood pressure

*Patanjali, a late second century B.C. Indian scholar and philosopher.

should be 120/80, which is perfectly normal. When it rises to 150/90, it is an indication of disease. Our normal heart rate is 72 to 75 beats per minute. If it exceeds this limit, it is an indication of disease.

Our eyes also are designed to perceive a limited amount of light; if the light exceeds that amount, the retina in the eye will burn away. The same applies to our eardrums. They can hear sound only within a certain range. Thus our entire life and being is like a limited company. If this limited company handles unlimited business, danger will arise at some point or another. Therefore we must set ourselves a reasonable limit on our desires, and spend our lives happily. This is called discipline. Discipline helps us to

progress. Without limits, man becomes an animal.

Internal vs. External Enemies

You should make efforts to control and conquer the formidable enemies of desire and anger. In fact, these enemies are not external. How can a person, subdued by internal enemies, conquer any external enemies? First try to subdue the internal enemies, then you can easily vanquish the external enemies. The *Bhagavad Gita* establishes the fact that desire and anger are the main enemies to reaching the goal of *moksha*, liberation.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Bhagavad Gita, Part II: Divine Discourses

Forgiveness

from: *A Course in Miracles*

What could you want that forgiveness cannot give?

Do you want peace? Forgiveness, offer it.

Do you want happiness, a quiet mind, a certain purpose,
and a sense of beauty that transcends the world?

Do you want care and safety, and warmth of sure protection always?

Do you want a quietness that cannot be disturbed, a gentleness that
cannot be hurt, a deep abiding comfort, and a rest so perfect it
can never be upset?

All this, forgiveness offers you. If you want peace,
you can find it only by complete forgiveness.

Announcements & Subscription Information

A Sai Retreat: From Friday-Sunday, October 17-19, in Miami Beach, Florida. For more information contact: Wayner Crowder (404)-753-5157 or email: wcrowd@aol.com.

Did You Know? In the May-June issue of your *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, we published the report that Mr. Indulal Shah has stepped down from his important post as International Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Organizations. Dr. Goldstein will now have the responsibilities as Chairman of the Prasanthi Council, which includes overseeing all the countries of the world outside India that have a Sai organization. Sri Indulal Shah has graciously accepted the position of International Advisor with whom the Chairman of the Prasanthi Council may consult from time to time on important issues.

On July 13, 2003, *Guru Poornima* day, Swami publicly gave Mr. and Mrs. Shah recognition for their many years of tireless work since the inception of the Sai Organization. It was a beautiful event with speakers who had worked with Indulal Shah praising his skillful handling of problems and policies, and his one-pointed devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

We would be remiss if we did not tell of Mrs. Sharla Shah's dedicated work in helping to form and organize the *Bal Vikas* (Sai Spiritual Education) and Education in Human Values programs for children. These are the noble teachings that in many countries are now being put into practice and imparted to our most important resource—the children. Mrs. Sharla Shah will continue as the National Education Coordinator of the Sri Sathya Sai *Seva* Organization in India. We have all derived great benefit from the unique and enduring contributions of these exemplary people.

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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Dhyanam and Dharana

Meditation and Single-Mindedness

The mind plans and executes innumerable deeds and roams over vast expanses, all in the twinkling of an eye! It operates with unimaginable speed. It conceives of an object and dallies with it a little, then it soon discards the one for another more attractive object, toward which it flees and about which it begins to worry!

The *sadhaka* or seeker of spiritual awareness has to be ever watchful of this tendency of the mind. When the mind flits from object to object, one must bring it back to the right path and the right object. That is the correct spiritual discipline, the path of *dharana* (one-pointed concentration) and *dhyanam* (meditation).

In short, the chief purpose of single-mindedness and meditation is to minimize the travels of the mind and force it to stay in one place. Holding it in that fixed state, one should continue the practice for as long a time as possible. Then there will be no limit to the peace and joy that one can have.

For example, when you meditate on a table, your thoughts dwell on the wood, the size and measurements, the style, the mode of manufacture, and so on. No other thought pertaining to anything else should be allowed. If the thought hovers round a cot, the idea of a table becomes hazy, and the cot, too, is imagined incompletely. Both

get confused. Thus, the state of mind must be single-pointed. So too, when the Lord's form is meditated upon, the mind must dwell upon the form of each part and its beauty and splendor. Then these ideas must be coordinated and combined into the complete picture.

Persistent performance of meditation will result in the emergence of a particular *rupam* or form. Contemplating on that form, looking at it, and seeing it for days on end, finally a stage will be reached when the form will disappear, and you will forget yourself. That is the state of *samadhi* (communion with the Divine; absorption in the *Atma* or innate Divinity).

...While practicing *dhyanam* or meditation, the mind should not be permitted to wander away from the target. Whenever it flies off on a tangent, it must be led back to the form meditated upon. Finally, if you so desire, all things can be subsumed in that form itself. Nevertheless, only one form must be meditated upon in the beginning. Do not change daily from one form to another. Again, during your practice, do not indulge in thoughts about things you do not like, or things that cause pain, or things that shake your faith. If any such thoughts peep in, learn gradually to welcome them as beneficial and seek to grasp the good in them, instead of the bad.

The senses do nothing by themselves. They are not independent. If the mind is brought under control, the senses too can be controlled. Some people undergo mere denial of the senses, in order to control the mind! They are ignorant of the real discipline necessary, which is the destruction of desire. However vigilant the guards may be, a clever thief can still steal in a hundred amazing ways. So too, however skillfully you may try to control the senses, the mind will drag them to its side and execute its desires through them. Note how the renowned sage Viswamithra, in spite of his austerities, fell before the wiles of the *apsaras* (celestial nymphs) sent by Indra (the God of heaven) to tempt him.

If the outer door, alone, is closed and the inner door is left unbolted, calamity is certain. On the other hand, if both the exterior and the interior doors are safely bolted, you can sleep peacefully, for no thief, however clever, will find it easy to enter and do harm. The seeker should, therefore, establish mastery over the external senses first. Then the mind, immersed in the continuous succession of *vishaya*, or subject-object relationship, must be controlled by means of *shanthi* (peace, equanimity) and *vairagya* (renunciation, detachment). When that is accomplished, one can experience real *ananda* (bliss) and also visualize the *Atma* in its true form. That is why Krishna once told Arjuna, "Those who aspire to have mastery over the senses must have full faith in Me."

The senses are always extroverted in nature; they are greedy for external

contacts. They drag the ignorant perpetually toward external objects. So the *sadhaka*, endowed with discrimination and renunciation, must place obstacles in the senses' outward path and suppress their outbursts, just as the charioteer, wielding the whip and the reins, controls the raging steeds. Uncontrolled senses cause great harm. Persons in the grip of uncontrolled senses cannot engage themselves in meditation, even for a single second.

Rupam, or form, is also fundamental. Even in the absence of a form in front of you, you should have the capacity to visualize it. This is not so difficult for those whose one-pointedness is correct. But some people practice meditation without first cultivating good habits and right conduct, which is a sign of incomplete knowledge. Single-mindedness must have *sathwa guna* (pure qualities that promote harmony and love) as its basis. The mind has to be purified by proper treatment of the character, through good habits. Single-mindedness (*dharana*) follows this purification process and does not precede it. All efforts toward *dharana*, without cleansing the mind, are a sheer waste of time. Many great men have ruined their careers by aspiring early for *dharana*, without cultivating the discipline of good habits.

Again, in *dharana* you must be careful not to have as your chosen object something your mind does not like, for however hard you try, your mind will not stay on it. In the beginning, therefore, focus on an object that is a source of joy. Sit [upright] and fix your eyes on the tip of your nose. Focus for one

minute at first, then three minutes, then six; after some time increase to as long as nine minutes. Thus, one's concentration gains strength gradually without undue haste. In this way, it can be extended for even a half an hour, with [practice and with] the passing of time.

Do not force the pace. The discipline must be developed slowly and steadily. With practice, the mind will become fixed; the power of *dharana* will increase. To attain single-mindedness and acquire one-pointedness, you must undergo exertion to some extent. You must fasten your mind on the Lord and ward off all other thoughts from the mental plane. By constant exercise of this type, your vision will become firmly fixed on the Lord residing in your heart. That is the goal and the full fruition of meditation practice.

Dhyanam is spiritual strength, the strength that will ward off the disease of *samsara* (worldly existence and impermanence). However, one must avoid the difficult obstacles in the path of meditation—specifically anger, pride, conceit, the tendency to discover faults in others, mischief, and so on. These operate not only on the surface but also subconsciously, like deep currents in the ocean.

The *sadhaka* or spiritual seeker must be vigilant not to lose his or her temper even over small things, for doing so will block one's progress. One must cultivate love toward all, and meekness. Then undesirable habits will fall away, since anger is the parent of all wrong behavior. Anger can turn any

person into bad ways at any moment and in any form. Therefore it must be sublimated first by systematic effort. The sincere seeker must also welcome gladly the announcement of his or her defects by anyone else; one must indeed be grateful to those who point them out. One must never entertain hatred against such pronouncements, for that is equivalent to hating the "good." The "good" must be loved and the "bad" discarded. Remember, the "bad" should not be hated but given up—avoided. Only such persons can achieve progress in meditation and spiritual wisdom.

... Regarding anger, the spiritual seeker must be vigilant even about the most minor matters that might be provoking, for if one is careless, one cannot progress in the least. Such persons must cultivate a humble, loving spirit; then the bad traits will disappear. Some seekers in fact become very angry when someone discovers and points out to them the bad traits they possess. This makes matters worse! One must cultivate always the inward look; by allowing the mind to wander outward, one cannot identify one's own faults. Pride prevents the inward look and confuses the examination of one's mind. To be desirous of achieving success, one must pay homage to those who point out one's faults. That is the way to progress quickly in the path of meditation. And one must endeavor not to house or entertain those faults any longer.

—Sathya Sai Baba

Dhyana Vahini, pp. 68-75

Food Safety Basics for Serving Large Groups

Baba has said that the first rule of service should be "*Help ever, hurt never.*" In keeping with this sage advice, here are some suggestions from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on how volunteers can keep large-scale food distributions safe.

When preparing meals for a large group, remember that there may be an invisible enemy ready to strike. It's called bacteria, and it can make you sick. But you have the power to fight back and keep food safe.

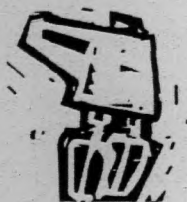


When You Cook

Most food needs to have an internal cooking temperature of 160°F or higher when done. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of food. Check the temperature in several places to be sure the food is evenly heated. Wash the thermometer with hot, soapy water after use.

Never partially cook food for finishing later, because you increase the risk of bacterial growth on the food. Bacteria are killed when foods reach a safe internal temperature.

When preparing food in the oven, set the oven to at least 325°F. Cook food to the safe recommended temperature.



All articles and photographs on group and individual service are welcome. Send contributions to the *Service Opportunities* Editor, Judith Wechsler, 2965 Hopkins Road, Rocky Mount, VA 24151, or e-mail her at jnwechsler@southlandtech.net.

When You Prepare Food

Wash hands and surfaces often. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, and counter tops. To prevent this:

- Wash your hands with soap and hot water before and after handling food, and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.
- Use clean cloths to wipe up kitchen surfaces or spills. Wash cloths often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next item. A solution of 1 teaspoon bleach in 1 quart water may be used to sanitize washed surfaces and utensils.
- Wash fruits and vegetables with cool tap water before use. Thick-skinned produce may be scrubbed with a brush. Do not use soap.



When You Plan

Select a reliable person to be in charge. The person in charge should contact the local health department for information about the rules and regulations that govern preparing and serving food to be consumed by groups. He or she should provide instructions to the volunteers, answer questions, and oversee the service of the meal, as well as its preparation (supervising kitchen work or distributing information/resources to home cooks).

Make sure you have the right equipment, including cutting boards, food thermometer, utensils, cookware, shallow containers for storage, soap, and clean cloths.

When you'll be serving outdoors, make sure you have a source of clean water. If none is available at the site, bring water for cleaning hands and utensils.



When You Store Food

Make sure to set the refrigerator temperature to 40°F and the freezer to 0°F. Check these temperatures with an appliance thermometer.

Refrigerate or freeze perishables and prepared food within two hours of shopping or preparing.

When You Shop

Do not purchase dented, cracked, or bulging cans. These are warning signs that dangerous bacteria may be growing in them.

Buy cold foods last. Drive immediately home, or to the site, from the grocery store. If the destination is farther away than 30 minutes, place perishables such as tofu or cottage cheese in a cooler with ice or commercial freezing gels.

—Adapted from *Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety*. United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The Bhagavad Gita refers to purity in three aspects: the vessel, the process of cooking, and the cook—all must be pure and clean. It is very important that the cook be a pure person. The person preparing the food should not only be clean and pure outwardly, but inwardly as well. That is why we say the food prayer, Brahmarpanam, Brahmahavir... (The food is God; the preparer of the food is God...). We offer all the food to God.

—Sathya Sai Baba
A Compendium of the Teachings of Sathya Sai Baba

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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.

*Established by the Sathya Sai Baba Council of America,
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