

May June 2003



# Sathya Sai

## Newsletter,



## *Where Do We Find Joy?*

*He who has subdued his mind will be the same in good times and in bad. Grief and joy are but aberrations of the mind. It is only when the mind is associated with the senses and the body that it is affected, agitated, and modified. When one takes an intoxicant, one is not aware of pain, is it not so? How does this happen? The mind is then detached from the body, so it is not bothered by physical pain or discomfort. Similarly, the Jnani\* too has immersed his mind in the Atma (the Divinity within each of us); he can establish mental peace and quiet by disciplining the mind.*

*The Jnani gets full bliss from his own Atma; he does not seek bliss anywhere outside himself. In fact, he will have no desire or plan to find joy in anything external. He is satisfied with the inner joy he gets. The greatness of a Jnani is beyond description, even beyond the imagination. . . .*

*The thief who has robbed us of the precious gem of Atma is no other than the mind; so if the robber is caught, threatened, and punished, the gem can be regained. The possessor of the gem is immediately honored by being installed as Brahman (the eternal absolute consciousness).*

**—Sathya Sai Baba**

*Jnana Vahini, pp 11-13*

(Page numbers may vary with different printings)

*\* Jnani is a person who identifies with the basic truths of the universe; one who has reached the summit of spirituality; one who has knowledge of the Absolute.*

May/June 2003

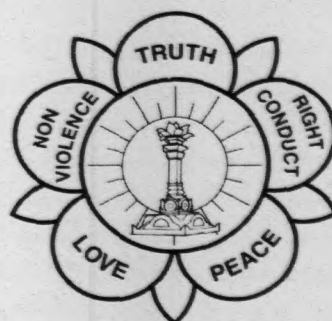
Volume 27, Number 3

*In this issue we celebrate "The Unity of All Faiths"*

# Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

|                                                       |                                  |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----|
| Sai's Message .....                                   | Sathya Sai Baba                  | 2  |
| One God: One Real and Safe Home .....                 | Sastry V. Pappu                  | 3  |
| Grow in Love .....                                    | Sathya Sai Baba                  | 5  |
| Different Roads to Reach God .....                    | Vivek Kocharalakola              | 9  |
| Those Were the Days .....                             | Esther Howarth                   | 10 |
| Many Paths, One Destination .....                     | Hymon T. Johnson, Ph.D.          | 11 |
| We Ask, Swami Answers .....                           | Sathya Sai Baba                  | 18 |
| A Day of Many Projects (Sai Service Feature) .....    | Judith Wechsler                  | 19 |
| Children's Corner: <i>Prayer of St. Francis</i> ..... | <i>Bal Vikas Magazine, Italy</i> | 22 |
| Significance of <i>Satsanga</i> and Magnetism .....   | Sathya Sai Baba                  | 23 |
| The Golden Rule .....                                 | Virginia Moore                   | 31 |
| Announcements and Subscription Information .....      |                                  | 32 |
| Shirdi Sai Baba (excerpted from a discourse) .....    | Sathya Sai Baba                  | 33 |
| Principles of Study Circle, Part 4 .....              | Jonathan Roof                    | 34 |
| Prasanthi Council .....                               | Michael Goldstein, M.D.          | 36 |

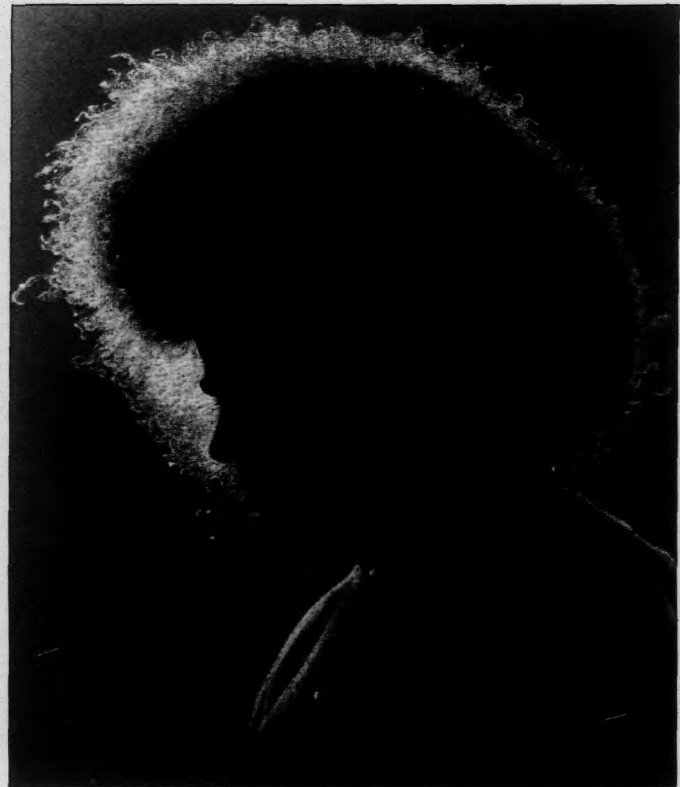


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—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

# *Sai's Message*

*Those who revel in religious wars should be asked, "Have you seen God? Have you become aware of the divine spirit? By what authority do you decry or deny a man of God? Are you struggling in darkness? Can a blind man lead another blind man along the road? It is an impossible task. Therefore, understand truth before you defame or deny Me."*



*Just as the air we breathe is of God's creation and available to all, so is the awareness of God and His power and mercy available to all. True seekers on the spiritual path must hold to this broad outlook and to the universality of this message. Then the conflict between disparate faiths and credos will disappear by itself, and peace and love will be restored on earth....*

*How happy the world will be once everyone knows that his or her viewpoint is at best only partial and requires the harmonious commingling with many other facets or viewpoints to become truth.*

**—Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

# One God: One Safe and Real Home

*Constellation of the Seven Rishis*

Swami says, “God’s presence can be felt in silence.” I observe silence two days a week—Thursday and Friday continuously for forty-eight hours—to purify my thoughts, fortify my faith and trust in Swami, and feel His presence. I consider this opportunity for spiritual practice Swami’s greatest blessing to me in my retired life. In fact, I intend to increase the number of days of observing silence, so as to purge the world out of my system—as Swami encourages everyone to do—in order to gain a clearer view of my true Self.

On Saturday, February 1, 2003, I was preparing as usual for my morning prayer and for breaking my weekly silence. My daughter rushed into the room to inform me of the unfolding news about the space shuttle *Columbia* catastrophe. She disclosed that seven astronauts on board the shuttle had perished in the disaster. My first reaction was to think of the “Constellation of Seven Rishis,”\* a name given to a specific group of stars in Indian astronomy and the scriptures. Intuitively and prompted by the fact that the crew came from a variety of religious

backgrounds, I concluded that the seven astronauts had all come “home” to the one omnipresent God.

The next day, just before my morning prayers, my daughter rushed up from the basement, where the television set is located, to convey the latest developments in the shuttle catastrophe. She exclaimed, “Swami must have heard Ilan Ramon’s desire to stay up there forever!”

What is she talking about? I mused. She continued that, according to the news, Ilan Ramon, the shuttle’s first astronaut from Israel, had written to his friend in his last e-mail about the “divine happiness” he was experiencing up there, and that he would like to keep floating for the rest of his life. I paused for a moment and asked myself why my daughter was bringing Swami into the picture! Then I recalled Swami’s words: “God is love. There is only one God, and He is omnipresent.” I felt reassured that Ilan Ramon’s God and every other person’s God is one and the same.

Then I began reading the *Sunday Eagle*, our local newspaper, and came across the report that the President of the United States of America—in his eulogy for the seven

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\* Seven Sages

astronauts—invoked a Bible passage (Isaiah 40:36) and the language from a modern song, “Safely Home,” by Steve Green. He said, “The seven souls ... did not return safely to earth. Yet we can pray that all are safely home.” Reading those words, I recalled spontaneously the letter in English that Swami wrote to devotees on August 30,

1975, which I retrieved from my files. The letter is reproduced below as a facsimile. In my view, the letter is a scripture by itself and can serve to inspire every human being, every day.

—**Sastry V. Pappu**  
Wichita, Kansas

After long searches here and there—in temples and in churches, in earths and in heavens—at last you come back, completing the circle from where you started, to your own soul—and you find that He, for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for whom you have been weeping and praying in churches and temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries shrouded in the clouds, is the nearest of the near, is your own Self—the reality of your life, body and soul.

This is your own nature. Assert it, manifest it. Truth and truth alone is one’s real friend and relative. Abide by truth. Tread the path of righteousness, and not a hair of your head will ever be injured.

Meditation is nothing else but rising above desires. Renunciation is the power of battling against evil forces and holding the mind in check.

With love and blessings,  
Sri Sathya Sai Baba

# Grow in Love

*The Value of Sanathana Dharma—Eternal Wisdom*

Embodiments of love! The reconstruction of humanity is indeed the reconstruction of the world. Only when people become better can the world be bettered. Only when the individual becomes good can society be happy. Progress in externals such as the political, economic, and social spheres, is not enough. The human mind has to be reformed. This cannot be accomplished through food only. The arguments of materialists—that human problems could be solved by insuring food, clothing, and shelter—reached their demise when the atom bomb was set off. Humanity can attain its full potential only when the three avenues of progress—material, mental, and spiritual—are all pursued with earnestness.

## A Universal Dharma

*Sanathana Dharma* (the path of Eternal Wisdom) enables one to attain this fullness. Truly speaking, very few have grasped the uniqueness and the importance of this religion. Nowadays, many elders and political leaders are afraid even to utter the word “religion” before the gatherings they address. Instead, they shape their lives according to a new mandate that has no religious orientation whatsoever. In fact, they

have not understood what religion rightly means. They do not attempt to discover the significance of the role of religion. Many speak from platforms on Hinduism and about the *Sanathana* faith, but very few understand its genuine core. *Sanathana Dharma* is the very basis of living. It concerns the entire personality. It embraces all faiths and has established worldwide influence. *Sanathana* means eternal, universal. Only a *Dharma* (path of action) that can win universal acceptance can be called *Sanathana*. The religions we are familiar with all derived from a person or prophet who is adored as the ideal. Islam has Mohammed; Christianity has Jesus; Buddhism has the Buddha. But *Sanathana Dharma* is not derived from or through a person. It is the primeval essence of all faiths. It is the essence of all the messages proclaimed by the prophets. It is welcomed by all, for it welcomes all. It is therefore deplorable that some Indians boast selfishly, “*Sanathana Dharma* is our religion.”

## Inherent in Human Consciousness

[Sir Isaac] Newton discovered after a series of experiments that the earth had the force of gravitation, but we cannot conclude

that the earth had no such force until Newton's discovery. So too, though the principles of *Sanathana Dharma* are inherent in human consciousness and have influence all over the world, the people of Bharath (India) have long practiced and experienced them and discovered their value and validity. They have earned inestimable bliss therefrom. Just as atomic science developed in one country and later spread to other countries, the *Sanathana* faith developed in India and spread to other countries. Even a material process such as atomic science cannot be confined to one place; in the same manner, spiritual science also must spread throughout the world.

*Sanathana Dharma* is destined to overcome today's rampant materialism, for it harmonizes the secular and the spiritual into a single way of life. It brings humanity and God together into closer kinship. It is based on the Divine, which is the reality of the Self. Therefore, it is not limited to one country, one individual, one period of time, or one sect. It demonstrates itself as a variety of procedures, points of view, disciplines, and guidelines, in accordance with the specific features of a region, an age, and an environment. It parallels the history of humanity on earth. This faith—though first explicit in Bharath, between the Himalayan range and the three seas—has become a world faith through its innate strength.

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*The life of Sai, the message  
of Sai, the ideals Sai holds  
forth, the lessons that Sai teaches  
the world—are all enshrined in one  
word: love.*

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The Divine is manifest in every human being. The religions professed may be different, the manifestations may differ, but the Self that *Sanathana Dharma* posits is the same in all. "The thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed Person" suggested therein is the divine Self, approachable through many paths, expressed through many forms.

The units of the Sai Organization have the responsibility of exemplifying and promoting the unity in diversity taught by *Sanathana Dharma*. The very purpose of the Sai Organization is to stress this unity. The essence of all religions, the goal of all paths, the destination of all spiritual effort, is this *Sanathana*, or universal eternal faith. *Sanathana Dharma* is like the ocean; particular creeds are but rivers that flow into it. This supreme *Dharma* is the vital air on which humanity depends for its very life.

## Cultivate Love for All

Our organization must constantly attempt to cultivate a love that transcends caste, creed, race, and class distinction. This sense of equality is its special feature. It is not enough if units of the Sai Organization undertake material, moral, and spiritual teaching. Emphasis on the *Atma* (inner divine essence) and the awareness of the oneness of the *Atma* is a primary responsibility.

Today (November 19, 1980) we are inaugurating the Third World Conference of

the Units of the Sathya Sai Seva (Service) Organization. No special teaching will be offered to the office bearers of these units during this session. The life of Sai, the message of Sai, the ideals Sai holds forth, the lessons that Sai teaches the world—are all enshrined in one word: *love*.

Many of you were perhaps hoping for a special message about the occasion of the inauguration of the conference. I do not attach any extra importance to a world conference, nor do I view any other gathering as less important. These conferences are held solely to satisfy your desire to express your love. An oil lamp needs pumping, off and on; the pin has to have its grit removed from time to time. So too, gathering together like this, you can exchange thoughts and make a few additions, changes, improvements, or amendments in your attitudes and habits of thought.

You are attempting through various means to live the ideals of Sai and to spread the love that Sai evokes in you. To what extent have these efforts succeeded? To what extent have they helped this *Sanathana Dharma*, the universal identification of the humanness and divinity of man? Along with listening to the expounding of these ideals, the ideals must be practiced in daily life. Only then can you declare that you have grasped the meaning and purpose of this conference.

Everyone must ultimately become aware of being the embodiment of love. Love can be expressed only as love, through love. Lovelessness is at the root of the anarchy that stalks the world today. Unchecked self-interest, misdirected activity, the wild antics of the ego, pompous living, and envious intolerance have caused this monstrous situation. Once you realize this, you must

be vigilant. Do not allow even a trace of ego, arrogance, or cruelty to pollute your actions. Peace and prosperity can dawn on the world only when you move among society with a

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*Peace and prosperity can dawn on  
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among society with a love that is  
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aggrandizement.*

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love that is free from the taint of self-aggrandizement.

## Get Rid of Selfishness

The question may be raised whether our organizations are free from this taint. They are not without it, for you are but humans. Even so, you should endeavor ceaselessly to get rid of selfishness and its attendant evils. When these bad traits are noticed in others, you become disgusted; how then can you tolerate them when they fasten themselves to you? During the discussions you hold, consider how best to keep afar from selfishness, ostentation, and cruelty. How best can you appreciate and emulate the equanimity and love manifested by your peers? Get rid of the desire to show off and to garner praise. These are but the evidence of childishness. Those who have the *Atma*

as their basis should never slide into this weakness.

## First, Be Good

Bear all burdens bravely, declaring, "I am a human being." Elevate yourselves to the level of the Divine, or at least try to live up to the standards expected of a human being. The thought in the mind, the word on the tongue, and the deed through the hand—strive to make all these three, one. People hope to lead good lives by doing good deeds, but one can never become good by means of good deeds alone. You have to *be* good, in order for your deeds and words to be good. First, endeavor to be a good person; then only will it be possible for you to do good. Be good; do good.

It is not possible to predict when and where or for what reason a person's life will blossom or expand. You may pray fervently to a tree that yields bitter fruit, but it will not produce a sweet fruit. However, when a branch of a tree that produces sweet fruit is grafted onto that tree, it can yield sweet fruits, even though originally it could not. This process of grafting is equivalent to *satsang* (keeping company with the divine) in human affairs—adhering oneself to God. Thus do service to your fellow human beings with pure intentions and seek good company always. Then you can transform yourselves.

Evil traits have developed [in you] through many lives, and generations cannot be wiped away in an instant. So mix with God-minded groups, cultivate good habits and attitudes, and involve yourselves in good activities.

## United in Love

Gathered here, people from many countries, speaking many languages, belonging to many races, are present—all single-mindedly united in love for Sai and from Sai, despite differences in nationality, race, creed, color, and dress. This is my real task, the consummation of the yearnings of the ancient seers and sages of this land. Develop this oneness, this unity in love; hold it ever before you as the real, the true.

Religions arise from the minds of men; they are not external. When men's minds are polluted, religion too suffers pollution. Those who deny religion can be said to have distorted or polluted minds. Religion is not related to practices and prohibitions proclaiming "Don't touch this!" or "Don't touch that!" Every religion teaches good principles and disciplines. When thereby the human mind becomes steadfast in the good, how then can religion be called bad?

Therefore acquire the love that draws all into the One. By this means, you can put to rest the fears and anxieties, the greed and the envy, the hatred and the haughtiness that

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*Seek not differences between  
one person and another.*

*Seek rather the ways and means  
to strengthen the bonds of  
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today infect the peoples of the world, and establish an era of peace and joy. *Let all the worlds be happy*: this is the prayer that emerges naturally from every human heart, the goal to which *Sanathana Dharma* leads. All must sing of this goal, live in the melody of that song, and merge, through that melody, into the highest bliss, the *Paramatma* (the Universal Absolute).

Embodiments of love! Seek not differences between one person and another. Seek rather the ways and means to strengthen the bonds of kinship, through

love. Factions and fighting emerge among members of the same faith because they have not learned to love. From the self-same mind, conflicting feelings emerge. Why? Love has not been nurtured and cultivated therein.

You have to sow love, grow love, and destroy the weeds of fear and hatred that have spread over the world. Make the world the happy home of love.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**  
Prasanthi Nilayam  
November 19, 1980

## Different Roads to Reach God

Faiths are different roads converging upon the same point. Belief in one God is the cornerstone of all faiths. The goal of all faiths is one and the same—to merge back to our source, the Supreme.

Though the different faiths describe the same essence in various ways with the help of different symbols and through different theologies, every faith speaks of union with God as the final and true destiny of humanity, for God is the source of peace, bliss, and blessedness. God is Absolute Truth; God is Absolute Beauty, Absolute Goodness, and Absolute Joy. Union with God is synonymous with liberation. Unity and unanimity prevail among the faiths.

In this light, it can be said that all the faiths are valid and authentic; all the faiths are truth bearers; all the faiths are saviors of humankind. While the conviction in and practice of one's own faith is sufficient for one to attain Truth and be saved, each person is called upon to accept and respect other faiths as well.

“Light is good in whatever lamp it burns. A rose is beautiful in whatever garden it blooms. A star has the same radiance whether it shines from the east or the west.”

—**Vivek Kocharlakola**  
Shrewsbury, New Jersey

# Those Were the Days

Not long ago on a Saturday evening, I was listening to an old Lawrence Welk program on PBS-TV. One of the songs popular in the 1970s was "Those Were the Days." Long after the program was over, I couldn't get the tune out of my mind, and this went on day and night, but the only words I could remember were "those were the days."

I decided to make up some words of my own that would be meaningful to me, by reflecting on the memory of a significant event in my life that I might put in the "those were the days" category. One event stood out vividly as being heaven on earth for me—evening *darshan* (opportunity to view Sai Baba) on the sand at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Here are my words to that tune:

*Those were the days, my friend,  
At Prasanthi Nilayam,  
As Sathya Sai gave darshan  
on the sand;  
We were all spellbound,  
As He glided around,  
Sai Ram, Sai Ram, oh yes,  
Those were the days!*

*The sky was pristine clear;  
Sweet bhajans we could hear  
As Sathya Sai gave darshan  
on the sand;  
On this sacred ground,  
At last the Lord was found,  
Those were the days, Sai Ram,  
Those were the days!*

*Those were the days, dear one,  
At Prasanthi Nilayam,  
As Sathya Sai gave darshan  
on the sand;  
Vibuthi\* from His hand,  
Flowing at His command,  
Sai Ram, Sai Ram, oh yes,  
Those were the days!*

*Holy was the air,  
Sublime, beyond compare,  
As Sathya Sai gave darshan  
on the sand;  
His Presence was divine,  
Those moments out of time,  
Those were the days, in truth,  
Those were the days!*

—Esther Howarth  
St. Petersburg, Florida

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\* Sacred ash

# Many Paths, One Destination

*A Harmony of Eternal Wisdom*

This writing dwells on the importance of embracing Swami's teaching that all the world's religions teach the same and ultimate truth. As devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, we should not rest solely within our own traditions. We should stretch to realize, firsthand, that true joy can result from our own efforts to illuminate and validate this harmony. While my focus will be on the major tradition of the country in which we now live—Christianity in the USA—it also includes other perspectives.

A wonderful passage from the book, *The Essential Unity of All Religions*, by Bhagavan Das, is put so well that I have used it in my philosophy classes my entire career. It provides a generic, all-inclusive framework that sets the stage for what will come:

*In life, cognition/desire/action, jnana/ichara/kriya, are always rotating. We perceive something; we feel a desire for or against it; we act to secure or remove it. New activity brings new knowledge, which engenders new desire, which*

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Not only Christ, but Rama,  
Krishna, Buddha, Jesus,  
and Mohammed repeatedly  
instruct us to lay claim to our own  
divine heritage.

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*causes new movement. Thus are the three life functions always circling round and round, inseparable though distinguishable.*

*The same three factors are the distinguishable but inseparable com-*

*ponents of religion.*

*We begin life as an infant, with desire (for nourishment) predominant. Then as a child, we seek seemingly aimless, restless activity.*

*Then we slowly develop intelligence and gather knowledge; we are connected, systematic, organized. We develop larger desires and ambitions, more complicated activities and enterprises. So in religion, the first stage is desire for nourishment of the soul, for something more than this life offers. Then comes activity, the way of works (karma marga), rites, and ceremonies, followed by a somewhat clearer notion of the other worlds and of God. This engenders more earnest desire for God, the way of devotion (bhakthi marga), yearning, fervor, ardor, worship, internal prayer and beseeching, passion, and com-*

*passion. Next, we enter the action of intense study and reflection—vichara, or mental exploration, intellectual diving, moving, searching all around, the internal aspect of yoga practices. This leads to the way of knowledge (jnana marga), illumination, and the finding of the Sought. After this, we manifest desire for the good of all—conscious philanthropy, and deliberate, appropriate, dutiful activity, all three in one.*

## What Is Unity?

Paramahansa Yogananda, the founder of Self-Realization Fellowship, referred to the birth of Jesus the Christ in this way:

*The Christ Spirit was born on earth in the physical vehicle of the infant Jesus; within His consciousness was the omnipresent God—the ever pure reflection of Spirit—which the sages in India call Kutastha Chaitanya. Very few people have this conception of Jesus. If you know Christ in reality, you will know how to bring His universal spirit into your own consciousness.*

Sathya Sai Baba has given us extraordinary teachings on the flawless life of Jesus Christ. These are easily found in many of His divine discourses and in books written by Peter Phipps and others. I should point out that the Christian Bible and, indeed, all the world's great and timeless scriptures are already imbedded within the hearts of each and every one of us. Yet, until we are blessed to access that particular software package, we must gain our awareness the old fashioned way—that is, by reading, listening,

and reflecting on those many rays of light that the sages of all religions have brought to earth.

Now regarding Himself, Lord Sai has advised us to talk less about Him and more about the timeless, eternal teachings (*Sanathana Dharma*), so I will do so here.

The message of love that Christ Jesus brought to earth was resplendent with the themes of unity and universality: *I and My Father are One.—The Kingdom of God is within you.—Before Abraham was, I Am.* Such mystical teachings were amplified by Origen, St. Jerome, Clement of Alexandria, and many others of the early Christian era. Today, however, this strain of Christian teaching is best found in the Gnostic Gospels. Also known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, these gospels first came into prominence after their discovery in Egypt in 1945. The word *gnostic* comes from the Greek word meaning “to know oneself,” or “to have intuitive insight into one's own reality.”

The validity of these gospels is no longer in question; nevertheless, adoption by the Christian church hierarchies would—by necessity—lead to a revision of church doctrine so fundamental that much of what has been taught over the subsequent centuries would have to be changed considerably. The church hierarchies themselves would have to be greatly reduced. One Gnostic Gospel, the Gospel of Thomas, presents these words of Jesus: *If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you, for the lamp of the body is the mind, and later, The mind is the guide, but*

*reason is the teacher. ... Acquire strength, for the mind is strong. Enlighten your mind; light the lamp within you.*

This strongly parallels the teachings of both Shankaracharya and Lord Sai, who remind us that the mind is merely an attribute of the Self. Sai Baba says that the mind can be compared to a key: *If you place a key in a lock and turn it one way,*

*it locks; if you turn it the other way, it unlocks.* Likewise, Chapter 6 of the *Bhagavad Gita* tells us that when the mind is controlled and focused on God, it can be our friend, but when it is un-

controlled, undisciplined, and turned too much toward the world, it quickly becomes our worst enemy. As a remedy, we are later instructed in Chapter 12:

*Still thy mind in Me, still thy self in Me, and without a doubt, thou shall be united with Me, the Lord of love dwelling in thy heart. If thou canst not still thy mind, then learn thou to do so with the practice of meditation. If thou lackest the will for such self-discipline, engage thyself in selfless service to all around thee, for selfless service can lead thee at last to Me. If unable to do even this, surrender thyself to Me in love, accepting success and failure with equal calmness as granted by Me.*

Sai Baba says that the mind can be compared to a key:

*If you place a key in a lock and turn it one way, it locks; if you turn it the other way, it unlocks.*

## The Kingdom Is Inside You

Another passage from the Gospel of Thomas quotes Jesus as saying, *If those who lead you say to you, 'Look, the Kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds will arrive there before you do. If they say to you, 'Look, it is in the sea,' then the fish will arrive there before you do. ... The Kingdom is inside of you and outside of you. When you*

*come to know yourself, you will know that you are the Son of God, but if you do not learn this, you will live in poverty.*

Similarly, the Prophet Mohammed from the Islamic tra-

dition said, *He who knoweth his own self, knoweth God.*

In another story in the Gnostic Gospels, Jesus said to His disciples, *Split wood and I am there. Lift up the stone and you will find me there.* This teaching on God's omnipresence reminds me of Hanuman, Rama's great devotee. When asked, "Where is Rama?" Hanuman ripped open his chest with his bare hands to reveal the place of Lord Rama within his heart. Later on in the Gnostic Gospel, Jesus adds, *When you become mature, you will no longer rely on outside human testimony.* This is so similar to Sai's teaching!

Not only Christ, but Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Mohammed repeatedly instruct us to lay claim to our own divine heritage. Paramahansa Yogananda once declared that

our greatest sin is ignorance of our oneness with God.

In describing His own divine mission, Bhagavan Baba is most clear on the point of the unity of faiths and the kingdom of God within:

*I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster. I have come to tell you of this unitary, universal faith, this path of love, this duty of love, this obligation to love. All religions teach man to fill his being with the glory of God and to evict the pettiness of conceit. They train him in the methods of detachment and discernment, so that he may aim high and attain spiritual liberation. Believe that all faiths glorify the one and only God, that all hearts are motivated by the one and only God, that all the names in all the languages and all the forms that man can conceive of denote the one and only God—and His adoration is best done by means of love.*

The metaphor of the lamp—already mentioned by Jesus—occurs throughout all the great traditions. Buddha used it to encourage spiritual self-reliance:

*Therefore, Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves; be ye a refuge unto yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp; hold fast to the truth as a refuge. Look not for a refuge in anyone beside yourselves.*

This, of course, reflects Sai's constant urging for us to *Go inside. Go inside.*

## Indirect Teaching

The great ones typically teach via subtle, indirect, nonliteral means. Yet, debate about taking recorded words literally sits at the heart of much misunderstanding and intolerance among religions today. Some quote their favorite passages from the Holy Bible, Quran, and other scriptures for the purpose of affirming only their own religion's pre-eminence. Bear in mind that Jesus did not found the organized religion we so loosely refer to as Christianity. This is also true of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, the Prophet Mohammed, and the respective religions that sprung from their lives and teachings. The bottom line is that each came to uplift humanity and to foster universal love and righteousness toward all. Each one came in the form appropriate for that reason and season.

The misuse of the Islamic teaching regarding *jihad* (holy war) and evidence that the Holy Bible has been tampered with time and time again is quite conspicuous and undeniable. This includes the manipulation of the Bible that occurred at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 A.D., during which efforts were made to anathematize\* Jesus' teachings on the transmigration of the soul, or reincarnation. Despite this, much of the King James Version of the Holy Bible has remained intact since then.

Let us now examine a gospel passage about Jesus' words about His indirect manner of teaching: *The disciples came and said unto Him, 'Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?'* In a clear reference to the various

\* Put a curse or a ban on

levels of spiritual awakening among His followers, Jesus explained, *It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given; therefore I speak to them in parables, because they, seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand.* (Matthew 13: 10-13)

This suggests, as we well know, that the Great Knowledge is delivered in doses appropriate to the receiver. Beyond the mere words, we must listen carefully for metaphoric or deeper meanings that can be found only within the inner reaches of our hearts. Eyes and ears alone will not bring us to higher levels of spiritual knowledge. Nonetheless, as we learn to focus our energies within the heart, and resound with His reflection at ever higher frequencies, we will surely receive the full message that He delights in sending. Jesus took birth to restore love, compassion, and charity in the hearts of humanity. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 and 6, from verse 43 onward), he stated:

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.' But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.*

Similarly, the followers of Allah are taught: *Do not say that if people do good to us, we will do good to them; and if people oppress us, we will oppress them; but determine that if people do you good, you*

*will do good to them, and if they oppress you, you will not oppress them.*

Speaking of His own apparent enemy, Rama expounded this same teaching two yugas (ages) earlier: *Verily I tell you, even if (the evil) Ravana himself came to me for sanctuary, I would accept him without hesitation.*

In like manner, when Rama later incarnated as Krishna, He reminded us:

*That one I love who is incapable of hatred, who returns love for hatred...He is dear to Me who runs not after the pleasant or away from the painful; who grieves not over the past, and lusts not today, but lets things come and go as they happen; who serves both friend and foe with equal love, not buoyed up by praise or cast down by blame; alike in heat and cold, pleasure and pain; free of selfish attachment and self will; in harmony everywhere; firm in faith. Such a one is dear to Me.* (Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 12)

## Service and Prayer

Sai's clarion call to "Serve All" was also a main teaching of Jesus; indeed, it is implicit in the call to love, for service is love in action—*nishkama karma* or *karma yoga*, the path of selfless service. Both Jesus and Sathya Sai emphasize selfless service. That is to say, all actions should be undertaken for love alone, in sincere humility that leaves no footprint and no evidence of one's ego-driven signature. Listen to Jesus' words:

*Take heed that ye do not your alms (another word for 'service') before men, to be seen of them; otherwise, ye have no*

*reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and the streets, that they may have the glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, Himself, shall reward thee openly.*

Jesus then instructs His disciples in the Lord's Prayer:

*Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy king-*

*dom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:1-13)*

## Love and Devotion

A few verses later, also in the Gospel of Matthew, we are given one of the most precious gems of Christ's teachings: *The light of the body is in the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light.* (Matthew 6:22) This is not about a one-eyed person; it refers not only to the third eye, the spiritual eye, but also to single-

minded dedication and focus—unwavering, one-pointed devotion.

This glorious passage also mirrors the Light Meditation, a fundamental practice that Sai provides us: *Bring the light, the jyothi, into your heart, and from that center expand it outward [in all directions] to include all the living beings in all the universe.*

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We must trust that we are fully capable of progressing from self-confidence, to self-satisfaction, to self-sacrifice, to Self-realization.

Even though this can only be achieved fully through God's Grace, we must do our part!

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Sai has said that love and sacrifice constitute true *bhakthi*, or devotion. Jesus was a supreme example of the quality of sacrifice. He gave His life that we might be saved from the recurring miseries of *samsara*, the endless cycles of

life and death caused by good and evil actions. Jesus said, *He that findeth his life, shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.* (Matthew 10:39) These words show us the full, magnificent, and multi-leveled nature of Jesus' teachings. At one level, these words ask us to reduce our focus on the ego, the lower self. On another level, they instruct us about the sacrificial depths of true devotion. On yet another level, they disclose the path from dualism to qualified non-duality, to the final assault into pure *advaita* (nondualism) and the experience of *samadhi* (realization).

About his experience of rising above the mundane world of mind-body consciousness, St. Paul wrote: "I die daily [to the world]."

This is similar to our beloved Sai's words: *If you give up all and surrender to the Lord, He will guard you and guide you.* Sai is declaring that He will do so and that this is the very task that has brought Him here!

We must "Think God, breathe God, love God, live God," and as we do, we will come to know what He has promised. *Dearest to Me are those who seek Me in love and faith, as life's eternal goal. They go beyond death to immortality.* (Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 12) Yes! We must have faith in what Paramahansa Yogananda referred to as "undreamed-of possibilities." We must trust that we are fully capable of progressing from self-confidence, to self-satisfaction, to self-sacrifice, to Self-realization. Even though this can only be achieved fully through God's Grace, we must do our part! This is why Christ instructed us:

*Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he that seeks, finds; and to him that knocks, it shall be opened.*  
(Luke 11: 9-10)

These masters enjoin us to live in our hearts, to ask from our hearts, and to rest in the assurance that God is ever there and ever beckoning us to join Him there—in joy and truth. For as we mature in discipline and discipleship, and become true devotees, God will give us what we need *before* we ask—something I am experiencing more and more. I dedicate my work to Him and find that He makes me more and more efficient, with little extra effort on my part. He and Ganapathi\*

\*Also known as Ganesha, who breaks down barriers and clears a path for our progress.

cause my efforts to flow and my plans, in His name, to come delightfully together in strange and wonderful ways. My mind alone, on the other hand, tends to think the same process should take so much longer and require so much more effort!

The magnet of love and devotion that we develop through selfless service and spiritual practice draws Him to us. In this way, we can be in *satsang*—"sitting near"—24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, forever! In whatever Form He has come, His very nature is always *agape*—loving kindness. He longs to receive each of us into His sacred heart.

—Hymon Johnson, Ph.D.  
Goleta, California

*To be continued in the next issue  
July/August 2003.*

*When [society's] governing principles are the language of the Heart, the religion of Love, and the caste of humanity, there will be no room for conflicts. Humanity is one, and the human race is just one—that is true religion! If anyone asks to what race you belong, say you belong to the human race. You must look only at humanness and avoid all dis-tinctions relating to community, caste, subcaste, or whatever.*

—Sathya Sai Baba  
November 21, 2001

## We Ask — Swami Answers

**Q** Can Bhagavan comment on the attitude of competition that sometimes prevails among Sai Center Members?

**A:** Be sincere in your *sadhana* (spiritual practices); avoid imitating others; let your sincerity rise out of your own genuine yearning. Do not be controlled by competitiveness or the desire to show off. If another Center holds *bhajans* (devotional singing) twice a week, while your Center meets only once a week, you may think, let us meet three times a week. Give up this type of rivalry or exhibitionism. People try to discredit other Sai Centers that are doing good work, for they cannot tolerate the fame earned by those Centers! Out of sheer malice, they try to harm or injure the others. As a result, their good work may suffer.

There is a better way of drawing favorable attention to your Sathya Sai Baba Center. A teacher draws a line on the board and asks students, "Who can come to the board and make the line shorter without touching the line?" The students are puzzled, but the teacher shows them the solution by drawing a longer line above. Then the original line becomes the shorter of the two.

In other words, let your Center do more acts of service, more efficiently, for more people. This is the proper way to carry out activities—not defamation or criticism, but work!

**Q** As Sai Centers get older, what pitfalls can be expected?

**A:** After Centers have begun working, the cordiality that prevailed previously sometimes disappears. Differences of opinions become exaggerated, tempers fray, misunderstandings occur, and factions raise their heads. Those who were unified drift apart. Members become distant from one another, binding themselves with a chain of likes and dislikes. Address the senses, and the spirit withdraws; address the spirit, and the senses withdraw. Detach from the cravings for fame and comfort, and you are free.

**Q** Is it recommended to have a change of leadership in Sai Centers?

**A:** You can suggest changes, but do so after mutual consultation and agreement. Avoid personal animosity and misunderstandings. Remember that the essential qualifications for members are faith and devotion. Remember also that the development of this organization will bring peace and tranquility to a world torn apart by chaos. The world can be better, and it can be saved only by spiritual progress through the efforts of spiritual organizations.

—**Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
*Questions and Answers, Instructions and Illuminating Guidelines, columns 12-15*

# SERVICE

## OPPORTUNITIES



*Understand the truth that you are born to serve society....Do not lead a selfish life, amassing wealth. Do not be satisfied by filling your own belly. Understand that there are millions of people in the world who are hungry and suffering. Your life will be sanctified only when you help the poor, the sick, and the downtrodden. That is true spirituality. Spirituality is a way of life; it is not something separate from life. That should be your way of life. To acquire a worldly degree, you need to study various subjects. But in spirituality there is only one subject, and that is love. Undertake service activities in a spirit of love.*

—Sathya Sai Baba

*Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 32, Part 2, Ch. 12

## A Day of Many Projects: An Example of Love in Action

What do you do when you want to get more Center members involved in service? If you're from the Atlanta, GA, Sai Center, the answer is hold a service retreat. The retreat is a day of service, during which 60-70 Center members fan out across the city to participate in five or six different projects, putting Swami's teachings into action.

"The retreats are a way of involving the whole Center in a day of work for Swami," says the event's coordinator. "They allow devotees who are not as active in service to get a taste of the joy that only service can bring."

For each retreat, Center members choose the project they want to attend, and on the Saturday or Sunday morning of the service, come—often

with their children—to the project site. During the past year of holding quarterly retreats, sites have included an inner-city park, a homeless shelter, and a halfway house for drug addicts.

At a recent retreat, a group of Sai volunteers visited the Rhodes Home, a nursing home for the city's indigent elderly. Many of the home's residents are nonresponsive, while others just sit or chat aimlessly. During the visit, Sai Spiritual Education students gave piano and violin miniconcerts and all the devotees went from floor to floor, hallway to hallway, and even room to room, singing old-time favorites. "When we sang 'He's Got the Whole World in His Hands,'" says one of the Sai volunteers, "residents who hadn't done anything

in years smiled or moved their eyes in acknowledgment. And one of the ladies was so happy she started crying."

A second successful project targeted youth at Another Chance, a home for teens from troubled, often violent backgrounds. For many of the teens, the six Sai young adults, who put on a peer pressure workshop there, were the first positive role models they have ever had. These Sai volunteers started with an opening skit, then drew the teens into the

"We realized early on that many

devotees *want* to do service but may just need inspiration and

workshop and made them guess what it was going to be about. "We got their attention by using techniques we learned from the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values program," says one of the young adults. Immediately after the workshop, the volunteers realized they had gotten through to the teens when a 15-year-old girl came up to them and enthusiastically asked, "When are you coming back?" The project's success was confirmed later that week by the volunteer coordinator at Another Chance, who told them how staff at the facility had noticed a dramatic change for the better in students who had attended the workshop. "And the kids are still talking about what you did," he added.

Retreat activities are a combination of existing service projects and new ones developed by the Center's service committee. The committee is responsible for project initiation, publicity, and postretreat evaluation.

Before each retreat, the committee meets weekly to ask, Where are the needs? How can we help? What are our strengths? Do we have the resources to carry out these projects? The committee's goal is to assemble a group of projects that will address real needs in the community yet appeal to the

varied interests of Center members. The selection process takes about six weeks and entails calling organizations, speaking with people at community and social service agencies, making site visits, and finalizing the choice of projects.

For the committee, publicizing the retreat in the Center means more than a simple announcement and a quick e-mail dashed off a week before the event. This approach, it has found, produces a disappointing turnout. So for several weeks in advance, its members make announcements at meetings, distribute brochures, send e-

a way to make that desire possible."

mails, and personally interact with devotees during other Center activities. "The committee tries to generate enthusiasm for each retreat without being overbearing," says one of its members. "We realized early on that many devotees *want* to do service but may just need inspiration and a way to make that desire possible."

Once involved, participants really see the benefits of service. In the early afternoon on retreat day, after finishing their projects, they gather at the home of a devotee to enjoy some spiritual company, have a late lunch, and discuss lessons learned. Some of them have found out how to cooperate better through joining together with fellow devotees old and young in a physical, sometimes strenuous project (for example, planting trees in a deteriorating section of the city). Others, while engaging in a more complex service (such as renovating part of a homeless shelter), have not only gained new skills but developed understanding and experienced a feeling of oneness from working alongside the very people they were there to serve.

Often the volunteers have discovered that the youngest among them can teach lessons in service.

## SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

During last Christmas season, one 8-year-old Sai Spiritual Education student was part of a retreat group responsible for cooking and serving a hot breakfast at a mid-town shelter for women and children. On that day, after the meal had been served, the volunteers began handing out gifts to the shelter children. During this process, one young mother asked if they had children's shoes because her little girl had none. The devotees told her that

they didn't have any shoes to distribute. But just then, the student stepped forward and said she wanted to give her own shoes to the girl. Everyone lit up as she took off her shoes and gave them away. Swami surely inspires the best in all of us through HIS Love.

—Atlanta Sai Center Members and  
Judith Wechsler, Rocky Mount, Virginia

*A life not spent in service is a life of darkness. Understand that society is the source of whatever pleasure you derive and whatever success you achieve in life. Society and nature are the fountain of your joy, wealth, and enlightenment, and they deserve your service. Just a small instance to illustrate the point: When we drop a handkerchief and someone picks it up, we say thanks. Don't we need to*



*express at least that much gratitude to the sacred and divine society that has provided us with all these comforts and pleasures?*

*Service should be our primary responsibility and our main goal. We should not waste our lives in pursuit of useless attractions. Money and materials are not essential for service, but a loving heart is. We should fill our hearts with love.*

—Sathya Sai Baba  
*Vision of Sai, Part II*

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](mailto:jnwechsler@southlandtech.net).

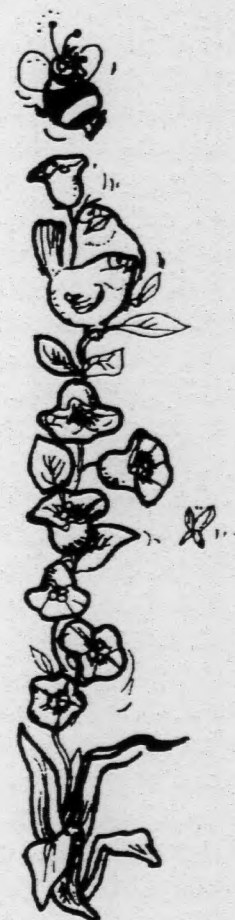
# Children's Corner



Oh Lord,  
Make me an instrument of Thy peace;  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is discord, union;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light.

Oh Lord,  
Let me seek to console, rather than be consoled;  
To understand, rather than be understood;  
To love, rather than be loved;  
For it is by giving that we receive,  
And it is by pardoning that we are pardoned,  
By dying that we are reborn—  
To eternal life.

—The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi  
*Bal Vikas Magazine for Children 1 to 99*



# Significance of *Satsanga* and Magnetism

*An Impromptu Discourse from Bhagavan*

## Adhere to Truth

Embodiments of Love! Everyone aspires to get rid of sorrow and enjoy happiness. In order to rise to the level of the Divine from the level of humanity, *satsanga* (company of the divine) is most essential. Life becomes meaningless if one does not engage in *satsanga*.

What is the meaning of *satsanga*? Many are under the mistaken notion that *satsanga* means keeping company with other devotees. *Sat* symbolizes the principle of Truth, which is changeless in all the three periods of time (past, present, and future). Therefore, *satsanga* means contemplating constantly on that eternal principle. What is the purpose of human birth? It is not merely to eat, drink, and make merry. The human body is meant for serving others, so dedicate yourselves to the service of society. God has endowed the human being with all powers. The human body is bound by the senses, which are responsible for both good and evil. Hence, it is the foremost duty of human beings to make proper use of the senses. Lord Krishna taught this principle to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

One who lacks sense control is worse than an animal, for even animals exercise some control over their senses. People do not make any effort to control their senses.

*Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Mada* and *Matsarya* (desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, and jealousy) are bestial tendencies. Today people cultivate such animal tendencies and become animals themselves.

A human being is neither an animal nor made of inert matter, but is in fact the embodiment of consciousness and bliss. It is a matter of shame that such a divine being cultivates animal qualities. First and foremost, people must control their senses. Spiritual practices that adhere one to God are the prescription for controlling one's senses: listening to stories of the Lord, singing to God, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His Lotus Feet, salutation to God in all, worship, service to the Lord, friendship with God, and self-surrender to the Divine. These are the royal paths to Divinity. Giving up the royal path, people conduct themselves like animals in a forest. First, they must get rid of their animal qualities. Only then can they rise to the level of the Divine.

## You See But Your Reflection

You see, hear, and experience many things in this world. All these things are nothing but the reflection, reaction, and resound of your inner being. All that you see in the outside world is actually a part of you. Consider this example. There is someone

who hates you. Actually what you are seeing is the hatred in you that has taken the form of hatred in that other person. In the same manner, adulation or denigration, good or evil, are reflections of your own self. Whatever you see in the outside world, whatever you experience, be it pleasure or pain, has in fact originated from within you.

What is meant by *prapancha* (the world)? It is the combining and recombining of *padartha* (matter). Every object in this world is transitory. How can such ephemeral objects give us everlasting bliss? Truly speaking, man has no misery at all. You blame others for your suffering and criticize them, but it is your own bad thoughts that make you suffer. This world is like an ocean consisting of the waves of *samyoga* and *viyoga* (union and separation). Everything emerges from you.

There is nothing superior to man in all the world. Hence, it is said, "Out of all living beings, a human birth is the rarest." Man is the most sacred and highly reputed among all beings in the world, but being immersed in delusion, he fails to realize his true nature. In fact, neither good nor evil exists in this world. We see, hear, and experience many things, thinking that it is the eyes that see, ears that hear, and mind that perceives all these things from outside oneself. In fact, it is not so. Everything is reflection, reaction, and resound.

## Sow Good Feelings

Embodiments of Love! You are engaged in service, singing *bhajans* (devotional songs), and undertaking various spiritual

practices, but what benefit have you derived from these activities? When good feelings emerge from you, you get rich rewards. After sowing a neem seed, you cannot expect to harvest a mango fruit. As is the seed, so is the tree. Likewise, as is the feeling, so is the result. Good and evil are based on your feelings; therefore, develop noble thoughts and spread the message of love to the entire world. Cultivate the feeling that all are brothers and sisters. Those whom you consider to be others are not others in the strict sense of the term. They are your own. All are the children of God. God is one. Society is the direct manifestation of God.

What is the difference between *jeevatwa* (the individual) and *Daivatwa* (God)? The individual is *vyashti swarupa* (the embodiment of an individual form) and God is *samashti swarupa* (the embodiment of totality). There can be no branch without a tree. There can be no child without a mother. A fish cannot survive without water. Similarly, the individual cannot exist without God. Both have an intimate and inseparable relationship. On this basis, Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita, "The eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of My Being."

Embodiments of Love! In this world, we see and hear about the dualities of good and evil, merit and sin. What is the origin of all these? They originate from human *sankalpas* and *vikalpas* (resolutions and negations). Good and evil are present in one's mind, not in the world. By cultivating sacred thoughts, one may encounter sacredness everywhere.

## The Power of Attraction

Embodiments of Love! All of nature is suffused with the power of attraction. The world attracts one and all. This power of attraction originates from the changeless and eternal principle of Truth, the basis of creation. This is transcendental truth, that which is present in the three periods of time, the three worlds, and the three attributes (*trikalas*, *trilokas*, and *trigunas*). It is solely one and not two. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names. All that we see in this world is none other than this fundamental truth.

He is a fool who sees yet does not recognize reality. What you see in front of you is not the world, but verily God. Out of ignorance, people fail to understand this truth and try to search for God in the external world. All that you encounter in the world are the forms of God. Though you see God right before your eyes, you think you have yet to find Him. How foolish this is! When you develop the firm faith that all are embodiments of God, you will certainly see God in everyone.

With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the

entire universe. There is nothing in this world that is not the manifestation of God. What is the form of God? God manifests in human form. Humans become deluded by the physical form and consider themselves to be mere mortals. All that we see is the form of

God; He is the embodiment of bliss. God is the embodiment of eternal bliss. He is wisdom absolute, the One without a second.

The entire world is suffused with bliss. There is no trace of sorrow anywhere—but you may not agree with me. You say, “Swami, You do not see sorrow, but we see it everywhere.” Whether you see it or I see it, there is only bliss everywhere. As you fill your minds with sorrow and forget bliss, you find only sorrow. But I don’t find

sorrow anywhere. I see only bliss, bliss, and bliss alone.

When we are embodiments of Divinity, how can we ever be afflicted with sorrow? You are afflicted with sorrow because you fail to realize the temporary nature of the world. Whatever you see and experience is only the reflection of God. Do not criticize anyone, for criticizing others amounts to criticizing God, the One whom you worship. *Easwara sarva bhutanam*. (God is the



indweller of all beings.) *Isavasyam idam jagat*. (The entire universe is permeated with God.)

## Good Deeds Yield Good Results

Embodiments of Love! You may be speculating about events that may take place in the forthcoming New Year (*Ugadi*). You worry whether the New Year will bring you happiness or sorrow. The year may be new, but what does it matter if you do not give up your old and mean habits? You aspire for good results, but are you performing good deeds? You expect others to be good toward you, but are you good toward them? If you act against the dictates of your conscience, how can you expect to be happy? Your deeds should be in accordance with your aspirations. Good deeds will certainly yield good results. Today people are immersed in *adambara* (pomposity). How can such people attain *ananda* (bliss)?

Embodiments of Love! Do not lead a pompous life. *Adambara* is the root cause of *asanthi* (restlessness, lack of peace). Give up *adambara* and strive to attain *ananda*. True bliss cannot be acquired from outside you; it dwells in your own heart. In fact, bliss pervades the entire universe. Your mental perversions are responsible for your seeing evil in the world. The mind alone is responsible for both your bondage and your liberation. Hence, purify your mind, for only then can you become a true human being. You cannot call yourself a human being if your mind is polluted. Perform meritorious deeds. Speak good words. Lead

a sacred life. In this manner, you can find fulfillment in life.

There is nothing evil in this world. Whatever evil you see is but a reflection of your own feelings. Everything around you is your own reflection. If you point at something and call it evil, it is only the evil in you being reflected outside you. Instead, never entertain evil thoughts. Fill your mind with sublime thoughts. Then your life will be sweet.

## Meaning of *Satsanga*

Embodiments of Love! You sing *bhajans* (devotional songs) and think that you are doing so in order to please God, but God does not need anything. In fact, you sing *bhajans* for your own happiness. Share your happiness with others. God is the embodiment of bliss; hence, He does not need anything from you. When God is the embodiment of eternal happiness, what else is required of Him? He is not interested in worldly and transitory happiness. When you sing *bhajans*, your heart becomes purified. Your worship and your *bhajans* are for increasing your own happiness, not God's.

Embodiments of the Divine *Atma*! It is enough if you lead the life of a true *manava* (human being), because *Madhava* (God) is in you. Unfortunately, people today lead the life of a *danava* (demon), filled with demonic tendencies from head to toe. Such being the case, how can one attain happiness? Purify your heart, experience bliss therein, and share your happiness with all whom you encounter. Sometimes evil qualities such as anger, greed, jealousy, and so on, overpower

you, but these are like passing clouds. Do not get swept away by such impulses. Hold fast instead to the true and eternal feelings that originate in your heart.

People chant the thousand names of Lalitha, the thousand names of Vishnu, and so on, but no benefit accrues from chanting any number of times while one lacks purity of heart. Better it is to fill your heart with the essence of all these thousands of names of God. Truthfully speaking, the heart is the center of all virtues, but people have not realized its sacredness. To be born as a human being is an immense blessing. One cannot describe in words the sacredness and the sweetness of human life. Bear this truth in mind and sanctify your life accordingly.

*Satsanga* leads to detachment. You should immerse yourself in *satsanga*. This does not mean joining the company of those who perform noble deeds. *Sat* (Ultimate Truth) is the changeless and eternal Divinity, the embodiment of everlasting bliss. To be in the company of *Sat* is true *satsanga*, which will confer on you everlasting bliss.

## Develop Love to Derive Bliss

Embodiments of Love! You will certainly experience everlasting bliss when you develop love. Love is bliss and bliss is love. Your life will be redeemed only when you develop love and experience bliss. You can experience all manner of happiness through love. It cannot be acquired from outside, nor can it be bought in the marketplace. It originates from within.

When you buy a particular object in the market, you will develop love toward it. But

such love is temporary, imaginary, and artificial. This is not the love that originates in your heart. True love is changeless: Love is God and God is Love. You may celebrate any number of festivals and holidays, but they cannot confer bliss on you unless you develop love. The bliss derived from love is beyond all description. It is infinite.

What is the difference between worldly love and divine Love? The love you have toward your friends and relatives is attachment. This is not true love at all. Divine Love is unchanging and is related to the heart.

## Divine Magnetic Power

Embodiments of Love! Without a doubt, love is in you, but you do not put it to proper use. You have to experience true and eternal Love, which develops heart-to-heart relationships. This type of divine Love is all-powerful. It has no limitations whatsoever; it attracts one and all.

Today I will tell you something very significant. This body of Mine is filled with the power of attraction—divine magnetic power—from top to toe. From *Sivarathri*\* onward, this magnetism has been increasing day by day, though it was present in Me always. Worldly magnets attract only iron filings, whereas this divine magnet attracts the entire world. You are under the mistaken notion that Swami has been experiencing pain in His legs and difficulty walking comfortably, but I have absolutely no pain. If I put one foot forward, it gets pulled by

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\*Mahasivarathri, the annual holy night spent in observance of the Eternal Absolute who attracts all of creation, which took place this year on March 1.

the other, due to the immense magnetic power in My feet.

As you are aware, even the earth is endowed with magnetic power. This magnetism only attracts and does not cause any pain. Swami has no pain at all. This attraction power in Me is increasing day by day. Whatever I touch with My hand gets stuck to it. Actually, such magnetic power is present in every person. God is present in the form of *hiranyagarbha* (the golden, cosmic womb of creation) in everyone. Hence, God is addressed as *Hiranyagarbhaya Namaha*. (Salutations to the Golden-Wombed One.) Pure gold does not undergo any change. It attracts everyone. Do not entertain the mistaken notion that only Swami has this attraction power and nobody else. In fact, it is present in you too. If you put it to proper use, it will develop more and more.

I have had no pain at all. I am walking around as usual, but sometimes it becomes difficult to lift the foot due to the earth's attraction power. Therefore, I am walking slowly. Unable to understand this truth, you imagine that Swami has pain in His legs. Let me reiterate that I have no pain whatsoever. I have no suffering, no worries, and no anxieties. I am always blissful. No one in this world can interfere with or affect My bliss. Only because of your worldly feelings do you think otherwise. If pain is present, one should look for a remedy. But when there is no pain, where is the question of remedy? No pain, no remedy.

In this world, everything has to operate under certain limitations. In the present situation, this body cannot travel much. The

attraction power grows stronger day by day. I try to lift My foot, but it is very difficult. Even when I use great force, it does not lift off the ground. It can be lifted only through My *Sankalpa* (Divine Will).

It is very difficult to understand the principle of Divinity. No one can understand the Divine *Sankalpa*. No one can estimate the Divine Power. People try to understand Divinity on the basis of their own feelings; in the process they end up with an erroneous estimation. People throw stones at trees that are full of fruit. Similarly, the noble and the pious are subjected to numerous hardships in this world. Divinity cannot be understood.

## Be Attracted to Divinity

*The stories of the Lord are the most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds. They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage. (Poem)*

Embodiments of Love! Follow the path of Truth. That is the ultimate goal of your life. Human birth is most sacred. It is not meant merely for eating, drinking, and enjoying worldly pleasures. You may discharge your worldly responsibilities, help others, and look after your family, but even this is not the ultimate goal of life. Love God; that is your ultimate goal. There is no possession greater than love. Only love can redeem your life. So develop love, *Bangaru* ("Golden ones"—a term of endearment)!

I address you as *Bangaru* because you are the embodiments of the golden source of creation. Your body contains a number of metals, without which your body could not

exist. You can confirm this fact with any doctor or scientist. The magnetic power that is present all over the world is also present in your body.

Some people do not understand the power of the divine magnet. They argue, "If there is attraction power in the magnet, why then is it not able to attract us?" How can a magnet attract a piece of iron that is covered with rust and dust? When the rust and dust are removed, the magnet attracts the iron immediately. Likewise, you must cleanse your mind of impurities in order to be attracted by Divinity.

You need not undergo any physical strain to do this. No spiritual practices are required. It is enough if you cultivate love in your heart. Only through love can you attain the principle of transcendental truth. You might have read various books on this principle, but nobody has really understood its meaning. Transcendental truth is the changeless and all-pervasive *Atmic* principle (truth of Divinity). Such sacred love is available only in God.

## The Truth of Divinity

Embodiments of Love! You will witness the divine glory of Swami unfolding in the days to come. He will attract the entire world. There won't even be a place for people to stand. You can see for yourselves what a great change has occurred during only the

past month! All are becoming attracted to Swami. Love is very powerful.

This is not a disease. This does not cause Me any suffering or unrest. This condition cannot be cured with medicines. Love is the only remedy. Even those who have been closely associated with Swami for many years have been unable to understand this truth.

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*Set an ideal to the world  
and work for the peace and  
happiness of all.  
Do unto others what you expect  
others to do unto you.*

---

What is the use of leading such a life? First of all, try to understand [the truth of] Swami. Once you understand that this plate is made of silver, you can estimate its value, but no one

can estimate the value of Divinity. No medicines can have any effect on Divinity. Love is the only remedy, and it should be properly associated with the eternal principle of Truth. Such divine love will spread to one and all.

You are born only for the sake of love. You cannot say that you don't need love. You have to attain Divinity through love. This is in fact the purpose of human birth. If you do not realize this goal, what is the use of being born as a human being?

Who is the Creator? Could you have taken birth of your own accord? No. It is the will of God. He has given you the body, and it should be sanctified in His service and adoration. You should set an ideal to the world and work for the peace and happiness of all. Do unto others what you expect others to do unto you. If you do not want to suffer,

try to alleviate the suffering of others. Share your comfort and happiness with others. Pray for the happiness of all.

## All Will Enjoy Bliss

Embodiments of Love! In the course of a few days you will witness the divine glory increasing day by day, conferring on you joy and bliss. All the unrest will soon be eradicated from the face of the earth. Today we find acts of violence everywhere, but all that is happening is, in a way, for your own good. All will develop sacred feelings; all will enjoy divine bliss. The entire nation will enjoy peace and happiness soon, and there will not be any difficulties or suffering.

You are fear-stricken, thinking there will be suffering. In fact there is nothing like sorrow or suffering. How can they ever afflict you? Always be happy and blissful. Conduct yourselves as the embodiments of the divine *Atma* and enjoy divine bliss. This is what I expect of you. Every individual should be happy. Every child should be happy. Let no one shed tears of sorrow. Difficulties may come, but they will ultimately lead to happiness. Very soon, everyone in this world will lead an ideal life.

Love cannot be acquired by force; it must naturally originate from the Source. Force leads to fear; it makes love diminish. Let divine feelings spring forth from you naturally. Share your joy with others. Even to hold onto a small tumbler, all five fingers have to be unified. A single finger cannot do anything by itself. In the same manner, you can attain Divinity only through unity. God is the embodiment of totality. One cannot achieve anything by oneself. Having originated from God, one should become God.

Embodiments of the Divine *Atma*! Today I decided to address you on the spur of the moment. May you develop love and lead a happy life! May you attain Divinity through love! Divinity is in every one of you, so make every effort to manifest and experience it. Once you realize your innate Divinity, you will see God everywhere. May you all attain peace and happiness, and work for the welfare and progress of the country. With these words, I bring My discourse to a close.

—Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

March 16, 2003

Brindavan, Bangalore

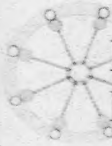
*Only those who have implicit faith in God, who deign to communicate only with the Lord and no one else, deserve the nectar of immortality. The physical body should be ever immersed in Satsanga—the company of the Divine, the thoughts and feelings ever immersed in contemplation of the glory of the Lord. That is the sign of the devotee.*

—Sathya Sai Baba

*Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 2*

# The Golden Rule

*"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."*



## BUDDHISM

Hurt not others with that which you yourself would find hurtful.  
(Udana Varga 5,18)



## HINDUISM

This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others which would  
cause you pain if done to you. (Mahabharata 5, 1517)



## ISLAM

No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that  
which he desires for himself. (Sunnah)



## JUDAISM

What is hurtful to yourself do not do to your fellow man. For this  
is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary.  
Go learn it. (Talmud, Shabbat 31d)



## CHRISTIANITY

Do for others what you want them to do for you; this is the  
meaning of the Law of Moses and of the teaching of the  
prophets. (Matthew 7:12)



## ZOROASTRIANISM

That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another  
whatsoever is not good for itself. (Dadisten-i-dinik, 94, 5)

—In Memory of Virginia Moore

*Let the different faiths exist; let them flourish and let the glory of God be sung in all the languages  
and in a variety of tunes. That should be the ideal. Respect the differences between faiths, and  
recognize them as valid, so long as they do not extinguish the flame of unity.*

—Sathya Sai Baba

# Announcements & Subscription Info.

**Change of Venue**—Again, the site of the Regional Conference for Mid-Central, Region 4 has changed. Swami keeps sending them *Leelas* (divine sport), but they know it is for the highest good! The final selection is as follows (we think?)—no, this is the real information:

| Date and Region                          | Location                           | Information                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 30-June 1<br>Mid-Central<br>Region 4 | Camp Wyman<br>(near St. Louis, MO) | Jack Feely<br>7490 Amherst Ave., St. Louis, MO 63130<br>(314) 862-1254 Fax: (314) 721-7571<br>jfeely@ta-stl.com |

**Do we need to tell you again?**—We're happy to tell you as many times as necessary. Perhaps this announcement should be made in all the Sathya Sai Baba Centers across the country; spread the word as best you can. Requests for funds are never made by or for the Sai Organization or the Sai Centers. There are two authorized, tax-exempt trusts in the United States of America; neither of them make requests for money. They are:

Sathya Sai Society of America  
P.O. Box 660908  
Arcadia, CA 91066-0908  
Tel: 909-337-7845 – Fax: 909-337-5270

Sathya Sai Baba Society  
305 West First Street  
Tustin, CA 92780-3108  
Tel: 714-669-0522 – Fax: 714-669-9138

*To receive the bimonthly (six issues a year)*

## Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

Please send a check or money order to: Sathya Sai Book Center of America,  
305 West First Street, Tustin, California 92780-3108 USA

- ☐ **Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA**, \$6.00 per year in the USA, \$8.00 to addresses in Mexico and Canada, and \$16.00 to all other countries.
- ☐ Audio Cassette Tapes of the **Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA** are available in the USA only. Six tapes per year, subscription is \$18.00.
- ☐ **I am blind** and would like to receive the cassette tapes at no charge.

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All subscriptions start with the **NEXT** bi-monthly issue.

It is not necessary to cut this out of your *Newsletter*. You may simply send your remittance and address.

# The Unity of Shirdi Sai's Religious Wisdom

In 1990, Sathya Sai Baba gave a discourse commemorating the birthday of Shirdi Sai, in which He disclosed previously unknown information about Shirdi Sai Baba, including the following:

The Saint of Shirdi's birth took place September 27, sometime in the mid-1800s, in the Indian state of Fathri Marathwada. He was abandoned at the time of His birth and laid beneath a tree as His mother followed His father into the forest.

A Muslim woman and her husband stumbled upon the child and took Him home to raise as their own son. After the death of her husband, however, the Muslim woman found that she could not deal with the boy, as he infuriated the villagers. Shirdi would sing Hindu songs in the Muslim mosque, and then perform Muslim prayers in the Hindu temple. So at age eight, Shirdi was taken to a Muslim *fakir*\* by the name of Bade Baba. The child remained with the *fakir* for nearly a decade. He first arrived at Shirdi between 1868 and 1872, and subsequently became the Saint of Shirdi, or Shirdi Sai Baba.

Before this discourse, not much information had been known about Shirdi Sai Baba's childhood. The following is an excerpt from Sathya Sai's discourse:

"It was the year 1918. Padhan's wife, who was living in her native village, had a dream in which Shirdi Sai Baba appeared to have passed away. Padhan was in Shirdi at the time. Upon waking up, Padhan's wife started crying over the passing of Shirdi Baba in her dream. At that moment she heard a loud voice in her house declaring, 'Don't say that Shirdi has died. Joy and sorrow, profit and loss, are the same. Hence, there is no such thing as death for Baba.' That is what the voice declared.

"While trying to find out where the voice came from, she received a message from her husband, conveying news of the passing of Shirdi Baba. This occurred on Vijaydasami Day, October 15, 1918."

Shirdi Sai Baba is known to be the first of a series of three Sai Baba incarnations. Sathya Sai Baba is the second Sai Baba incarnation. The third will be Prema Sai Baba, who will be born in the year 2030. It is said that Prema Sai Baba will usher in 1,000 years of peace, as described in the book of Revelations in the Holy Bible.

**Excerpted from *Sanathana Sarathi*, November 1990**

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\* A *fakir* is a Muslim or Hindu religious ascetic, commonly considered to be a wonder-worker; a person who lives an austere simple life.

# Principles of Study Circle

With the selection of new center and regional officers this Spring, we have the responsibility in the American Sathya Sai Organization to review our programs to make sure that we are acting properly and effectively. We must periodically examine whether we are meeting our objectives in terms of service, devotion, and study, since all three aspects are required to effect the transformation of man. Each person must become aware of the Divinity that resides in his or her own heart. To do so we must guide our actions by the compass of devotion, power our actions with the fuel of selfless service, and identify and recognize our destination by the acquisition of spiritual wisdom.

Our organization has made great strides in creating a devotional atmosphere with song and ritual. We have come a long way in acting on Sai's instructions to serve others with love and compassion. The time has now come to heed Swami's call to know our own reality. Without understanding the nature of the *Atma*, our inner Divinity, even our service and devotion suffer. We risk the danger of abandoning the very goal of spiritual striving on the doorstep of victory. For all the devotion and service activities are aimed at our self-transformation, our realization of our unity with each other and our oneness with God.

Within the structure of the Sai Baba Centers, the study circle is the tool that Swami has given us for self-understanding.

Study Circle practices across the country have been uneven and some circles have suffered from lack of proper guidance. The time has come to formulate guidelines that will constitute a baseline of expectations. Certain principles are fundamental to the process, such as the following:

**1. The principle of equal participation.** Each person around the circle is given an opportunity in turn to speak on the study circle topic. No individual is accorded more time or offered less respect than another. Although some participants may be more knowledgeable or eloquent on a particular topic, all have an equal right to express themselves. The gains made by the least knowledgeable are as valuable as those made by every other participant.

**2. The principle of acceptance (non-argument).** All members of the circle are made to feel welcome to express themselves in an atmosphere free from the fear of contradiction, with each person expressing his or her own ideas without refuting what others have said. Each member is made to feel that what he or she says will be respected and considered. Argumentation is to be avoided, for it leads to the dominance of some at the expense or disappearance of others.

**3. The principle of opportunity.** Each member is offered the chance to present a topic to the group and encouraged to do so. Although no one is compelled to be a presenter, most participants consider it a

divine prompt if they are encouraged to lead. Leadership boosts self-confidence and assists people in applying themselves to the discipline of study. Often, participants benefit more by what they hear themselves say than by what others say. When we put Swami's teachings into our own words and use examples from our own lives, we are more likely to feel an obligation to act on those words.

With time and encouragement, members' study and presentation skills can develop strongly. Let us give members a chance to grow, just as we foster and have patience with participants' early efforts in song and service.

The role of the presenter is to focus the discussion by asking a question for consideration or otherwise directing discussion to a point of applied spiritual practice.

**4. The principle of compassionate leadership.** Conducting a study circle is more art than science. Each person requires compassionate encouragement. A person must be responsible for keeping the group on time, on task, and within guidelines, while

acting in a loving manner. This person may be the center devotional coordinator or a study circle chairperson. The position will typically last for a term of office and ideally be someone other than the discussion presenter. The chairperson's role is to:

- Encourage the fainthearted as well as to limit (lovingly!) those who might otherwise dominate the discussion.



- Encourage presenters to keep their summaries of study material short and to the point (15 minutes is more than adequate for most presentations).

- Counsel presenters to avoid long readings and to limit the use of terms not understood by all present, or to explain the meanings of any unfamiliar terms.

- Help the group select study materials that all will consider authoritative and interesting. The teachings of Sathya Sai

Baba are the primary source of study circle material for the Sathya Sai Centers.

—**Jonathan Roof**  
Tucson, Arizona

The time to formulate study circle guidelines for the centers has arrived. Do you have suggestions? Do you agree or disagree with the above principles? This is your chance to voice your opinions. Please respond to the National Study Circle Coordinator, Jonathan Roof, PMB 318, 3661 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719, or e-mail at jonroof@aol.com.

# Prasanthi Council

(for Overseas Sathya Sai Organizations)

To all Overseas Sathya Sai Baba Centers

April 27, 2003

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Sai Ram to all of you! Our Divine Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, has lent His Sacred Name to the Sri Sathya Sai Organization for the spiritual upliftment of His devotees, and to provide mankind with an example of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, and Ahimsa. Thus, God Consciousness will be enhanced in the world.

With the blessings and approval of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Prasanthi Council is hereby convened. The Council will have the responsibility of serving and managing the Sri Sathya Sai Organizations outside of India. The members of the Council are: G. Venkataraman, C. Sreenivas, William Harvey, Leonardo Gutter, and Michael Goldstein. This Council will be responsible for the formulation of plans and agendas, policies, guidelines, and decisions that constitute the governance of the Sai Organization outside of India. In addition to the above, the Council will be a resource for intervention in difficult circumstances where the sanctity of the Divine Name or the welfare of the Sai Organization can be affected. The Zone Chairmen and Central Coordinators will continue to be responsible for the implementation of those plans, policies, guidelines, and decisions that are agreed upon.

We are all spiritual aspirants seeking to experience the Divinity within and the selfless love that flows from that Divinity. Therefore, a spirit of unity and cooperation must prevail in our Organization at all levels. The objectives of the Prasanthi Council are congruent with the objectives of all Sai devotees and Sai Organizations:

- To create an environment conducive to deepening the faith and spiritual commitment of all.
- To encourage spiritual authenticity and discipline in our practices and procedures.
- To contribute to the spiritual illumination of mankind by the propagation of the Divine Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba through our own exemplary actions.

We are very grateful to Sri Indulal Shah for the legacy he is leaving to us. His tenure as International Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Organizations spans from the inception of the Organizations to the present time. His extraordinary efforts have demonstrated excellence, dedication, and faith in Swami. His accomplishments cannot be surpassed.

We pray that Bhagavan Baba's Grace will empower the Prasanthi Council to serve the Sai Organizations outside of India with love, that the Sai Organizations will be empowered to serve the Sai devotees with love, and that the Sai devotees will be empowered to serve their respective societies with love.

Ultimately the goal of all is to "Love All and Serve All."

Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council

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Covina, California 91724 USA

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Fax: 626-339-6569

## The Vahinis

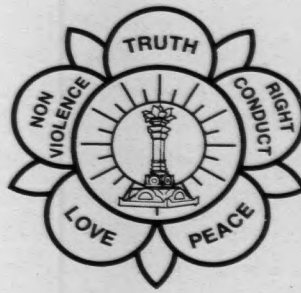
The *Vahinis* are a series of books containing the spiritual wisdom of the ages written by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sai Baba honors all religions, and He has written about a variety of subjects from a spiritual point of view: righteousness, meditation, wisdom, peace, divine love, and the ancient *Vedic* teachings such as the *Bhagavad Githa*, the *Upanisads*, the story of Rama and more. In these texts, Baba has gifted us with modern day implications of these ancient wisdoms, and has made His words within reach of our understanding.\*

**Bhagavata Vahini** This is an epic of the Mahabharatha War which was a war of righteousness against evil forces. Baba explains that this war represents the inner turmoil that we all experience. He indicates how the inner battle can be won, and we emerge victorious.

**Dharma Vahini** In this volume, Sathya Sai Baba clearly explains how to live in a *dharmic* (righteous) manner. The moral codes are outlined for men, women, and even children. The codes of conduct are applicable no matter what a person's status, or situation in life.

**Dhyana Vahini** Here Baba counsels, consoles, and encourages the faltering spiritual seeker to march forward and attain the goal of living a joyful life of high standards and good values.

**Githa Vahini** This stream of divine teachings was given by the Avatar, Krishna, to His devotee, Arjuna, just before the launching of the Mahabharatha War. The war, as mentioned above, was a very real battle, but it is also symptomatic of today's complex life-style. Baba teaches that the inner war is caused by lack of control over the senses, mind, and desires. He describes methods for winning self-control over negative characteristics and thus attaining inner peace.\*\*



\* While Baba has written these books within the understanding of most of us, there remain many Sanskrit words and phrases that are not always explained by the translator. Because of this, we suggest the small *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* available at the Book Center for \$3.00 plus tax and shipping.

\*\* For a complete list of the *Vahinis*, and *Sathya Sai Speaks*, and other books about Baba, please contact the Sathya Sai Book Center for a free catalog. The address, phone and fax numbers are always on the last one or two pages of each issue of the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*.

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