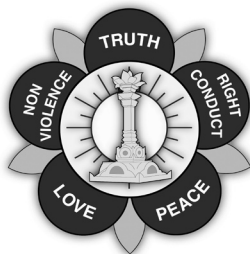


*In This Issue We Offer a
Recapitulation of the Glory of Lord Shiva*

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

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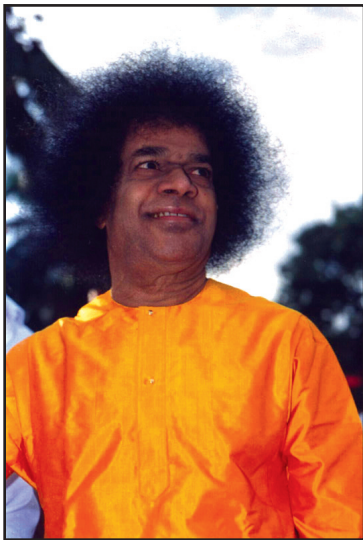


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—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

Sai's Message

You will be observing Shivarathri in the true spirit of the term only when you give up bad qualities and cultivate divine love. Merely observing a vigil on Shivarathri is not sufficient. You have to contemplate on God incessantly. Most people claim that they have observed jaagarana (vigil) on Shivarathri night by playing cards. Can this be termed meditation? If one abstains from taking food on account of a difference of opinion with one's spouse, can it be called fasting? No. Similarly, observance of sacred vigil on Shivarathri night is not achieved by playing cards the whole night through. You should spend this night by chanting the name of God.



You will benefit immensely if you keep awake and sing the glory of God. The moon is the presiding deity of the mind. The moon has 16 phases. On Shivarathri, 15 phases have already merged in God. By constant remembrance of God, even the 16th phase merges in God. Cannot you spend even a single night out of the whole year singing the glory of God? Sanctify this night by participating in bhajan (devotional singing). The bliss that you get from bhajan, the sweetness in the divine name, the happiness derived from visualizing the divine form, cannot be obtained elsewhere. Everything is possible only through love, so cultivate love and sanctify your life.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Shivarathri Night, March 14-15, 1999

“Keep This Lamp Burning...”

Swami looked at me and said, “In a month’s time, it will be Mahashivarathri.”

On the morning of Thursday, January 18, 1996, I saw Sri Swami come into our house and sit on a chair next to the altar. My husband and I stood close to Him and did our *pranams* (touching the feet in respect).

Swami looked at me and said, *In a month’s time, it will be Mahashivarathri* (Night of Shiva, the most auspicious night of the year for overcoming the mind). *I am going to light a jyothi* (divine light) *in the Bay Area,* and it will be in your house, Saraswathi!*

So saying, He got up from the chair and went near the altar. He put His palm on the table, and with a sharp movement, lifted His divine hand. There appeared a beautiful small copper lamp. It was very small, about three inches high, but the *deepam* or the flame, was extraordinarily big and beautiful.

Once again, Sri Swami placed His divine palm on the altar and materialized a *Shiva Lingam* (oval-shaped symbol of creation). He said, *Saraswathi, this lamp is called the Akhanda Jyothi* (eternal light). *I have lit this in your house. Keep this lamp burning all*

through the month until Mahashivarathri. Whoever so desires, let him or her light a lamp from the flame of this jyothi. This will spread a message, increase knowledge, and remove all ignorance and darkness not only from the home but from the mind.

Then He materialized a special *prasada* (consecrated food) and offered it to the *Shiva Lingam*. This *prasada*, made from rice, *ghee* (clarified butter), brown sugar, and sesame seeds, should be prepared and offered to Shiva every day.

As Swami was talking, a thought crossed my mind: how was I to explain this to various people? He seemed to sense it, and as if on cue, the front door to our house opened, and a few people started to come in. Swami beckoned to the first couple, who happened to be Mr. and Mrs. Suri.

Come and light your lamp from this flame, He said. *On Sunday, during bhajans* (devotional singing), *tell my devotees to light their lamps at Saraswathi’s house. This is the Akhanda Jyothi, which will also be lit in Chicago by two ladies by the names of Surekha and Sulekha. This light should be spread in America as well as the rest of the world. Keep*

*The *Bay Area* refers to locations near San Francisco, California; Sunnyvale is considered to be in that area.

this lamp lit for the entire month preceding Shivarathri and meditate upon it. Shivarathri is not merely for one night of bhajan singing and movie watching to keep awake. Lord Shiva needs tremendous devotion, and this should be built up over a period of at least a month!

I had never experienced anything like that before. As I jerked out of my stupor, it was a while before I realized that I had had a vivid dream. However Swami's words were so real, and the vision so true, that I could not but follow the path.

I opened my calendar and saw that *Shivarathri* was indeed a month from then, i.e., February 17. Sunday, January 21, happened to be the day that the Suris had *bhajans* at their home. I asked my husband if I should tell the Suris about my dream, so they could inform the other devotees about the *Akhanda Jyothi*. He said that we should not ignore what Swami said. With that, I resolved that whether others believed it or not was not as vital as my lighting the lamp, preparing the *prasada*, and meditating every day, following Swami's path to *moksha* (liberation).

On Sunday, January 21, people did come to hear about my dream; they poured in from all centers of the Bay Area to light their flames from that figurative lamp. The occasion brought a lot of us together, and made us all one. It brought wonderful experiences to those who took [light from] the lamp. Many had visions of Swami, and all in all it augured well for many families.

In narrating my experience to an older gentleman by the name of Sri Yadavalli Sastri Garu, I sought some explanation of the symbolism of the dream. He said that

it was no ordinary dream, but a blessed vision, because what Swami asked was so tremendous in scale and spiritual in scope.

The dream came on a Thursday morning, at *pradoshakalam*, a time auspicious for Shiva. *Surekha* means a good line or the right path. Swami asks us to follow this line every *Shivarathri*, to light this lamp and share its glow with others, so that they may do the same. *Sulekha* means the good letter or the right message, which Swami came and conveyed Himself. The lamp made of copper and the *prasadam* of rice, sesame seeds, and *jaggery* (unrefined sweet made from sugar cane) represents all that is beloved to Shiva, who in turn removes all that troubles us. Thus Swami asks us to worship Him for all these days and be blessed throughout our lives.

On February 28, I received the spring issue of the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, U.S.A.* As I opened the *Newsletter*, my eyes fell on the picture and message of Swami. It read thus:

Great understanding is emerging in the hearts of my beloveds. In time, the coldest hearts will once again flow in truth and light. A great unity of light is coming in all countries, gathering a band of light. A great unity of light is coming, because wonderful changes are taking place. We are one; have no fear. Be happy.

When I read this message, I felt so happy—that my dream was not merely imagination after all, that what Swami says is indeed the truth, and that this was a confirmation of my belief, my faith.

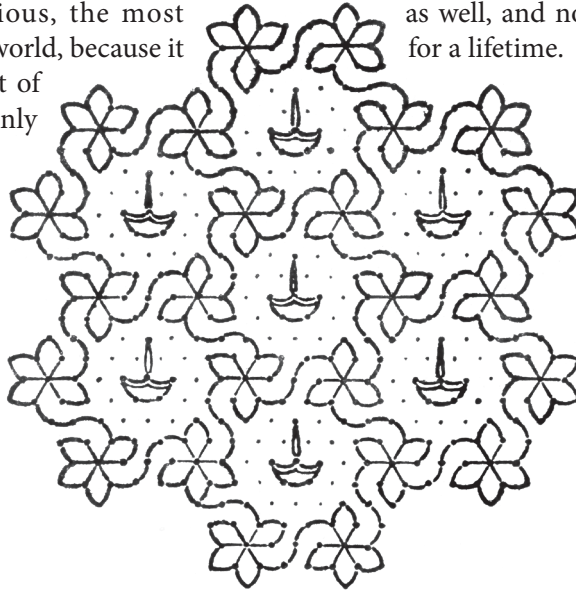
As if to further bless us, Swami sent us to Chicago to attend the wedding of my niece on March 10. As we were leaving to head back

home, the groom's mother pressed a package into my hands. I paid little attention to what I assumed was the traditional *haldi-kumkum*, or good-wishes parting token. On returning to San Jose, I emptied the contents onto the table, and out tumbled a three-inch lamp, exactly like the one Swami had lit in my dream—only this lamp was of silver.

Yet it was so precious, the most beautiful gift in the world, because it represented the light of knowledge, which only devotion can bring!

I recognize now that this entire evolution of events all started on January 1, when Vanaja sang the song *Akhanda jyothi jalaa*, *Sai mana mandira me* (Light the Everlasting Flame, O Sai, within the temple of the heart). The whole meaning of this comes to me now—that one should worship this lamp not only in the heart, but in the mind as well, and not just for a day, but for a lifetime.

—Saraswathi
Satyanarayana
Sunnyvale, California



The Holy Flame

The *jyothi* burning bright
Is beautiful to see,
Inspiring us to use our might,
To love and serve is the key.
So let us do it now,
Starting off today,
Remember God dwells within;
He's not that far away.

—Anonymous

Let Unity Be the Undercurrent Everywhere

The Ideal Family of Lord Shiva

*None there is who is all knowing;
Nought there are of heads empty;
Some there are who are of something aware;
Alone is He, the omniscient Shambashiva
(Divine Mother and Father).
(Telugu Poem)*

Embodiments of Love! The message of holy *Shivarathri* (new moon night in February or March; in 2005, *Maha Shivarathri* falls on March 9) is to spread the ideal and sanctity of this most auspicious day to one and all. The principle of unity is slowly declining among the people of the world. There is strife and discord even between two brothers of the same small family.

Divine Family Harmony

In the divine family of Lord Shiva, there are only four members—Lord Easwara, his consort Parvati, and the two sons, Subramanya and Vinayaka. This is an ideal family. There is no difference of opinion whatsoever between either husband and wife or the two brothers. Their family exists in perfect accord and harmony. Mother Parvati and Lord Parameswara set an example to the whole world in the matter of the most harmonious, perfect, and loving relationship between a wife and husband and between brothers.

The family is the most important functional unit in the world. If the family runs along sound lines, the world will also run

smoothly. If the unity among family members suffers even slightly, the world will face the repercussions. Unity gives strength to the lives of the family members. Therefore every family should strive to achieve unity and harmonious relations among its members.

Every family should strive to emulate the example of Lord Shiva's family. Today even if a family has only two sons, there may be no harmony between them. Similar is the case of husband and wife. This is not the case, however, with respect to Lord Shiva's family. The vehicles they ride, the circumstances in which they function, and the wealth they possess—in every respect, the members of this divine family set an example to the whole world.

For example, Lord Shiva's vehicle is Nandi, the bull. Mother Parvati's vehicle is the lion. The younger son Subramanya's vehicle is the peacock, whereas the elder son Vinayaka rides on a tiny mouse. They move about the whole world on such strange vehicles, which are antagonistic in nature, but still they lead a perfect and harmonious family life. Unfortunately one does not find such harmony in present-day families. Suppose

the younger brother's wife dons some new ornaments; the elder brother's wife becomes jealous. Similarly, in various situations in day-to-day life, one finds internal bickering in the family instead of peace and unity. Normally a lion and a bull are not good friends. The lion views the bull as prey and the bull fears the lion. In the case of Lord Shiva's vehicle, the bull, and Mother Parvati's vehicle, the lion, however, there is perfect harmony and absence of fear.

Look Inside

When do we have fear or anxiety? Only when some fault exists in us. When there are no faults of any kind in anybody, there is no scope for fear at all. Today people are exposed to fear and anxiety even in small matters, since they suffer from faults. These faults are responsible for fear, anxiety, restlessness, hatred, and anger. Hence if we are to live in peace and harmony, we must strive to remove our faults.

In fact you have no innate sorrow, for you are *anandaswarupa*, the embodiment of divine bliss. In spite of this exalted state, if you suffer from sorrow, it is due to your own evil traits. Sorrow has not suddenly descended on you from somewhere outside. The sorrow is the reaction, reflection, and resound of the evil qualities inside you. If someone ridicules you, understand that it is not the other person

but your own evil feelings being returned to you in the shape of ridicule.

Significance of Shiva's Form

Lord Shiva has no special ornaments on His body. His only ornaments are the serpents that He wears around his neck, His matted locks, the crescent moon, the cool water of the Ganga (Ganges River), and the *vibhuti* (holy ash) that He smears all over His body. This divine form of Lord Shiva is beautifully portrayed thus:

If the family runs along sound lines, the world will also run smoothly. ... Every family should strive to achieve unity and harmonious relations

Lo! Behold the Lord of the icy peak: crowned with the crescent moon and glistening matted locks, bedrenched by the heaven-descended Ganga, with a flaming eye in His forehead and venomous poison purpling His beauteous neck; wearing live bracelets of wriggling serpents and a cobra belt holding up an elephant hide, His sole garment; with pearly ash smearing His chest and a blinding spot of vermilion on the forehead beside the searing [third] eye, His ruddy lips stained by freshly chewed betel, wearing diamond-studded earrings of purest gold, dancing like stars twinkling in the sky—this is the vision-negating form, the fair person of the Lord, radiating effulgence Divine. (Telugu Poem)

Lord Shiva has donned this resplendent form in order to teach a renunciant outlook to the world, including His consort, Parvati. His other habit is to beg for alms:

*The opulent form [of Shiva] portrays
total detachment, begging bowl in hand,
seeking alms for a frugal meal at the
heavenly abode, Kailasa.*

(Telugu Poem)

Despite His strange attire and habits, however, Parvati does not develop any aversion or disgust toward her husband, Lord Shiva. She does not run away from Him saying, “How can I lead a family life with such a person?” She faithfully follows Him, submitting herself to His wishes and happiness. Both of them live in peace and harmony.

Harmony Within Opposites

Now about their sons. The vehicle of the younger son, Lord Subramanya, is the peacock—by nature an enemy of the serpents worn as ornaments by the father. Serpents hiss at the sight of a peacock. The two hate each other. Similarly, Lord Vinayaka, the elder son, rides a mouse, a natural prey of the snake. They are bitter enemies. In spite of such disparate natures, all the members of the family of Lord Shiva live happily in perfect peace. Each member, while discharging His or Her duties, provides happiness and joy to the others.

Even in the form of Lord Shiva Himself, one finds apparent contradictions. He has the river Ganges on His head and the crescent moon in His matted locks. These are symbols of coolness. In contrast to these, He literally

has fire in the third eye in His forehead. Thus there is cool water on His head and fire below on His forehead. These two are conflicting forces, yet they maintain perfect harmony and set an example to the world. Thus there is not even the slightest difference of opinion or a discordant note in the universal family of Lord Shiva. It is a perfectly ideal family, which the entire world should emulate.

In sharp contrast to this situation, today one finds bitter hatred between people. Hatred rules all fields of worldly endeavor. Even in the same family, one finds discord between husband and wife, between parents and children, and between brothers. Lord Shiva and Mother Parvati by their own example are exhorting the entire world to shed hatred and enmity, but who is listening to their teachings? Who is putting them into practice?

People chant the name of God with great devotion but fail to emulate the example shown by God. What is the use of worshiping God when you do not follow His ideals? How can you obtain divine grace if you go against the teachings of God? Due to food and habits, you develop various ill-feelings inside, but you should make attempts to control them. You should not allow them to manifest as hatred toward others, and you should never allow jealousy to grow in you. Today every human being is afflicted with the diseases of jealousy and hatred. In fact the root cause of all evil qualities in man is jealousy. Jealousy leads to anger. Jealousy and hatred can destroy a human being completely. You can truly enjoy great happiness by getting rid of jealousy and hatred.

In fact, you are an embodiment of bliss, your inherent nature. Sorrow is not your nature. You are an embodiment of love, peace, and bliss. Why then are you afflicted with sorrow? You flout the divine commands. Sorrow is the reaction of going against the divine will. The reaction, reflection, and resound of this calamity is the root cause for all sorrows endured by human beings.

Here is a small example. A person approaches and you think that he is your enemy. The moment this feeling of hatred arises in you, you start fighting with him. Instead, try to greet him saying, “Hello brother! How are you?” When you extend love to others, others in turn will extend love to you. On the other hand, if the moment you see a person, you move away, he will do the same to you. As the action, so is the reaction. Therefore, you must make sure that your actions are good.

In fact there are no bad people in this world. All are good. You say that all those who oppose you are bad people. If you do not exhibit bad qualities, how can the other man behave badly? Your own bad qualities reflect in others. Hence every person must cultivate good feelings and good behavior. One should conduct oneself in such a manner that one

does not go against the divine commands. Only then will one have peace and security in life. One may participate in a number of *bhajans* (gatherings for devotional singing), worship God in various forms, and observe ever so many religious vows—yet if one does not cultivate sacred feelings in one’s heart, what is the use?

Develop a Compassionate Heart

Cultivate the noble quality of a tender heart, and let love and compassion be reflected therein. If one has no such feelings, one becomes a demon, verily. For this reason, the heart is called *hridaya*. The etymology of the word is *hri* + *daya* = *hridaya* (storehouse of compassion). Among all living beings, the human being is the only one endowed with the quality of *daya* (compassion). That is why humanity is said to have a *hridaya* (compassionate heart). An ideal human being

is one with a compassionate heart.

Embodiments of Love! You in fact have such sacred and compassionate hearts. Why then should you drown yourself in sorrow, which occurs only out of the reflection, reaction, and resound of your inner feelings.



The Auspicious Form of Lord Shiva

You pick up a newspaper first thing in the morning. Inside you find unrest and news items of one person killing another—hatred, jealousy, anger, and so on. All this news leads to an unhappy and polluted atmosphere. When you get up from bed after a sound sleep, you need to maintain a peaceful mind. Only then will there be no room for unrest in your life.

Right from early morning you must lead a daily life full of peace and happiness. You may have sorrows and difficulties, but they are only passing clouds that come and go. They should not really bother you. Only when you take them to heart and cling to them do you suffer. If you ignore them, they will not bother you.

Where Do You Come From?

You get a letter in an envelope addressed to you. Normally, there will be a *from* address and a *to* address on the envelope. Without these addresses, the envelope gets sent to the dead letter office. You should, therefore, look for both your addresses—the *from* and the *to*. You must first inquire to yourself, “Where do I come from?” In pursuance of this inquiry, you must discover and assure yourself that your source is God. Since you come from God, you will have noble feelings.

Your *from* address is God, and your *to* address is human nature. If you remember these two, your life will proceed smoothly. Since your origin or *from* address is divinity, you should always obey the divine commands. Among all the living beings in creation, only the human being has been given this privilege. In fact this is the ideal set before

him by God. Further, in the *Bharatadesa* (land of India) such noble ideas are imparted from generation to generation. Yet in spite of all these ideals set before us, we are still unable to live in peace, since we are not following them.

You may follow any one or all of the nine forms of devotion—listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu (the Lord, protector and preserver of all), serving His lotus feet, praise, worship, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender. More than following any or all of the nine forms of devotion, the inner feeling or motive behind the forms of devotion is the most important aspect of one’s devotion. Your inner feeling must always be pure.

Of all the nine forms of devotion, friendship with God is the most important, for only when you cultivate this feeling can you reach the final stage, self-surrender. To do so, you must have a pure heart, which in turn is based on love and devotion. You must demonstrate pure and selfless love toward one and all. Such love is not a one-way street. Today people are prepared to receive love from everyone but hesitate to share their love with others. Instead, it should be a give-and-take policy. Love begets love, so you must also be prepared to receive love from others. Love is a gift of God. In fact you must rise to such a level that whatever is given by God, you must be prepared to receive wholeheartedly.

God also gives you a bitter pill at times, just as a doctor would. This is for your own good. Suppose you have an ulcer in your stomach. The surgeon opens your stomach with a knife and removes the ulcer. Do you

charge him with hatred toward you because he took a knife to your stomach? No, no. It is only in your interest that he has performed the operation. Similarly, at times God also will put you to some difficulties. Even those are only in your interest, only for your good. Both happiness and sorrow are God's gifts. They are His divine grace. Nobody can comprehend His divine *leelas* (sport).

Live in Unity

You must always live in unity. Whatever activity you undertake, unity should be the undercurrent. All people should live in peace and harmony. Yesterday morning, you sang some *bhajans* (devotional songs). How melodious and dedicated they were! How joyous they were! This result was only because all of you sang the *bhajans* as one voice. Particularly the three boys—Prasanth, Kavi Kumar's son, and Ravi Kumar—sang the *bhajans* in perfect *sruthi* (melody), *laya* (harmony) and *thala* (rhythm). The boy who played the flute provided them with excellent support. They all gave so much joy to the audience.

Where else can you encounter such joy and happiness? Where else can you witness such unity? Nowadays wherever you go, you hear a lot of noise and clamor in the name of *Shivarathri*. In fact you will not find anywhere

in the world this type of divine atmosphere surcharged with devotion.

Every activity undertaken in Prasanthi Nilayam is divine and in perfect peace and harmony. Everything is saturated with love and devotion. God is love, and love is God. God will be attained only through love. Hence all of you should act as *premaswarupas* (embodiments of divine love), living in

perfect harmony wherever you are. Never allow room for hatred.

Even if you come across an opponent, greet him with love. He will automatically respond with love, since the whole world is filled with reaction, reflection, and resound.

Suppose you find unrest in your mind. This is not due to external factors. Your own deficiencies and faults are being reflected in the form of unrest. If you wish to attain happiness,

live in happiness. The universal family of Lord Shiva, Mother Parvati, and their sons Subramanya and Vinayaka present the perfect example of this principle. Cultivate their example. Worship them.

A caution, however: *you may worship a picture as God, but not God as a picture.* Therefore worship the Easwara family by following their example. The message of this holy *Shivarathri* celebration is to live in unity and harmony with everyone. In particular,

Your own deficiencies and faults are being reflected in the form of unrest. If you wish to attain happiness, live in happiness.

the brothers in a family should never fight; they must be united, like the Pandavas. Only by their unity did the Pandavas obtain the divine grace of Lord Krishna. Anything can be achieved with unity.

As another example, take the five fingers of the hand. Only when the five fingers join together can one accomplish any task. The Kauravas were one hundred in number, but they were not united for a good cause. Ultimately what fate befell them?

Similarly, Vali and Sugriva, in the *Ramayana*, were brothers, but due to some differences, they developed hatred against one another. In the end, Vali met his end at the hands of Rama. The ultimate goal of *Shivarathri* is to develop unity among humanity, whatever be the obstacles, whatever be the difficulties, and whatever be the provocations. You should never make use of harsh words while speaking to others. Always speak sweetly and softly, with a loving heart.

Dear students and devotees! You have all assembled here with a pure heart on this auspicious day of *Mahashivarathri*. Wherever you are, you must always have a pure heart. When the heart is pure and sacred, you can undertake sacred activities. When the vessel is pure, the contents in the vessel will also be pure. Even if a vessel is made of gold, if poison is in the vessel, all its contents will be poisoned. On the contrary, even if a vessel is made of earth, any gold kept inside will remain pure. It is not the vessel but the material inside that is important. Always keep your heart as pure as gold and fill it with sweet love.

You are students of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. You are developing under the loving care of Swami. Swami does not expect anything from you. Education in the Sathya Sai Institute is totally free. Whatever your requirements, I provide them free of cost. Do you come across such educational institutions anywhere else in the world? Today, you will find people booking seats in educational institutions even before a child is born, paying a lump sum amount to the school in advance for reservation of first-year seats. Only in the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning do you not find such advance bookings. There is no advance reservation for anything in Prasanthi Nilayam. Wherever you go, you must live up to the ideals of your education. Whatever you have learned here, share it with all.

Love Is My Only Property

Embodiments of Love! Love is my only property. In fact, it should be the same with you as well. I do not seek anything from anybody. Live in love. Share your love with everyone. Only when you lead a life filled with love will it become pure and sacred. In fact at that point, every activity undertaken in Prasanthi Nilayam will be pure and peaceful.

Thousands of people have gathered here on the holy occasion of *Mahashivarathri*. Even so, do you hear any noise? No. Not even one child cries. No one sneezes or coughs. A most calm, serene, peaceful, and divine atmosphere pervades this hall. If you are not able to get peace in such a divine atmosphere, where else can you get it? Never

speaking harshly to anyone. Some people today pose themselves as devotees but take to evil ways. This is not a mark of devotion. In fact, such behavior goes against the concept of devotion.

Disharmony between thought, word, and deed is the characteristic of an evil-minded person. That is why it is said, "Those whose thought, word, and deed are at variance are wicked." You should not keep company with such people. On the other hand, you should keep company with real devotees who live up to this principle: "Those who maintain perfect accord between thought, word, and deed are great."

The most important trait of a devotee is good behavior. Without this characteristic, one is not a devotee at all but rather a great sinner. You are students of this great institution. Wherever you go, you must be recognized by your good behavior. Various past students of this Institute, living in foreign countries such as America, Japan, Germany, and so on, are recognized in those countries as students of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Thus, they bring credit to the Institution.

You need not give anything to Sai. Lead a life of character and good behavior. That is the only thing I want. That is the only thing that gives me joy. Not only the students but also the devotees must insure their own

good behavior. They must feel that they are the members of the universal family of Lord Shiva. Mother Parvati constitutes the body, whereas Lord Shiva represents the heart. When the body and heart join together as a dwelling, human nature or *prakriti* resides there. The human body represents *pravritti*, or external orientation, whereas the *Atma* (innate divinity) residing

in the body represents *nivritti*, or inward inquiry and detachment from externals. The unity of this *pravritti* and *nivritti* is human nature. Having been born into the sacredness of human nature, people have forgotten their innate divinity.

Lastly I wish to advise you never to give room for ego to dominate your actions. Wherever there is ego, therein lies danger. Therefore shed your ego and cultivate pure and selfless love toward one and all. There is nothing in this world that cannot be achieved with love. I conclude my discourse with the blessing that the divine vibrations of today's *namasankirtanam* (group singing of the name and glory of God) spread to the whole world and grant good qualities, good practices, and good behavior to all people.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
March 2, 2003

*Live
in Love.*

*Share your love
with everyone.*

*Only when you lead
a life filled with
love will it become
pure and
sacred.*

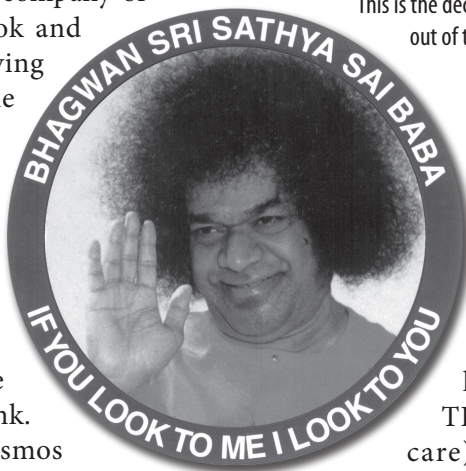
“If You Look To Me, I Look To You”

Later that evening, Baba’s drama continued...

Baba’s visible and invisible footprints are everywhere. He somehow is always around, in the smallest details of our lives—whether we have an awareness of His company or not. All we have to do is look and listen to recognize Baba’s loving presence. It is not only at the Water Projects and the Super-Specialty Hospitals that Baba is in attendance; He continually participates in the simplest moments of our lives.

This awareness filled my mind clearly as I gazed out on my terrace and noticed that the flowers this year came up pink. Last summer, all the pink cosmos had blossomed orange. All their seed packets had been clearly labeled “pink.” One could understand one or two orange aberrations—but a sea of orange blossoms? No pinks. No purples. No whites. Only orange. The plant catalog doesn’t even have orange cosmos. Something of this nature is inexplicable, unless you happen to be a Sai devotee.

Last summer was special, and Swami exhibited Himself everywhere in my life as my mom passed on at age 93. When I had experienced the explosion of orange on the



This is the decal, or one like it, that fell out of the author’s collection of pictures of Swami.

terrace, I knew immediately that it was Baba’s handiwork—His TLC (tender loving care). What amazing love on the part of Swami, to blanket my terrace with orange. All summer He calmed my grief with His orange presence.

In addition to Swami’s “gardening,” I was also stunned by Baba’s attention to detail at my mom’s passing. She loved Swami and continually talked to Him as a friend. Baba lovingly kept her alive for eleven years—astonishing the doctors. On Mom’s final night, her room at the nursing home contained that special scent one can experience during *darshan* (being in

the presence of a holy person). I held her fragile left hand, and as Mom slipped away, I squeezed the Baba medallion around my neck with my other hand. The loving glow surrounding her bed was blinding. The peacefulness of the moment had the extreme silence one only experiences before Swami comes out for *darshan*. It truly felt just as if Swami were giving *darshan*.

A few minutes later, I realized that Mom's final day was *guruvaar* (Thursday, day of the guru), Swami's day. I looked at my watch and it was 7:30 p.m., the very moment our little *bhajan* (devotional song) group sings *arathi* every Thursday. In a state of shock, I kept looking at my mom and my watch. What bewildering Sai timing. Imagine, Swami took Mom on His day during His *arathi*. Had it been any other day or any other time, it would have meant less. However with His impeccable attention to the details of that day and hour, Baba was saying loud and clear, *She's with me*. In such ways, Baba's countless hidden messages came through.

Later that evening, Baba's drama continued. At 9:30 I fell effortlessly into a deep meditation, and I clearly saw Swami taking Mom's arm and walking her around the ashram. She was so happy and smiling—getting a personal tour by Baba. After coming out of the meditation, I suddenly remembered that many months before I had written Swami to one day walk Mom around the ashram and show her where I like to sit during *darshan*. Can you imagine? I had completely forgotten; of course Baba remembers the tiniest of details.

As I was writing this little story and considering many of the events of the last year, I accidentally jostled my Baba picture collection, and a Baba decal fell out. Under Swami's photo is printed the quotation, *If you look to Me, I look to you*. Obviously this was no accident. Why did this one decal with that appropriate quotation fall out? Well maybe Baba is even watching as I type.

—Lorenzo
New York, New York

Love is my distinctive mark, not the creation of material objects or of health and happiness through sheer exercise of will. You might consider what you call "miracles" to be the most direct sign of divinity, but the love that welcomes you all, that blesses all, that makes me rush to the presence of the seekers, the suffering, and the distressed in distant lands or wherever they may be—that is the real sign! It is that which declares that I am Sai Baba.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
October 10, 1967

Beatle Magic

“Not satisfied, I pondered a bit more: perhaps I had made a mistake.”

After a hiatus of two years, I returned to Whitefield in 2003 to have Swami’s *darshan* (sight of a holy being). I was not expecting much, or wanting any real favors or mundane requests. I just wanted to be in His presence and thank Him silently for having saved my life when a storage shed had collapsed on me.

I stayed in the same guest house as was my custom—an easy walk to the ashram—for about \$5 per day. I had warm water from about noon on, whenever the sun was shining. I soon fell into the routine of morning *darshan* and afternoon *bhajan* singing. I don’t sing Indian *bhajans*, but I love the energy and rhythms vibrating throughout Sai Ramesh Hall.

Then came three straight mornings when Swami did not come out. Rumors began to circulate: a visiting high Indian official, a foreign dignitary, special interviews, and so on. Soon we were to learn the truth of the matter—Swami had had an operation to repair and replace the upper part of His femur, or thigh bone—we all had noticed how slowly He walked in *darshan*, and to and from His residence in back of the *mandir* (temple).

He has said to us that assuming human form meant that He too would be subject to the laws that He Himself had placed into effect. Swami’s life is an example to us all, as a loving teacher who for 80 years has given us parables, explanations, and reasons to motivate us toward the ever-beckoning light of eternal love, where each of us eventually must and will be.

Regardless of these words, there was an initial uneasiness among many of the devotees, for the Form was not available to our *maya* (illusionary) eyes. It would be over three weeks before Sai Baba would give *darshan* again to the hungry masses.

In the early hours before *darshan*, I normally would have a small chai (Indian tea) in the food stand straight across from the “Welcome” arch entrance to the ashram. I always admired how the two angels on the arch held the *sarva dharma* symbol, seemingly floating across the fresh sky with dawn’s first colors of blue and pink-orange, adding an awe-inspiring backdrop to a heavenly palette.

The usual cacophony of sounds and sights greeted my senses—the exhaust of auto-rickshaws, deep-throated rumbles of

diesel buses, large trucks laden with assorted cargo, and flower girls and peddlers hawking their wares. On that morning, however, I was absorbed with thinking of Swami, wondering about His pain (if any), and I too was missing His form.

I began to focus on the mantra being played in the next stall: “*Om namashivayam, Om namashivayam...*” Then I heard the voice of George Harrison, of the Beatles, singing one of my all-time favorites: “My Sweet Lord.” How sweet and so appropriate, for that was exactly how I felt at that moment. I drank in every measure: “How I want to see You, Lord, but it takes so long, I know... Mmm, My Lord...” Tears were beginning to fill my eyes as the song ended, after which “*Om namashivayam*” continued. I then pursued my activities for the day.

Three days later, I thought I would thank those responsible for playing “My Sweet

Lord.” Into the shop I went, but no one there had ever heard of “My Sweet Lord,” or of George Harrison, or of the Beatles! I was told to come back in the evening to talk to the owner, who knew his stock of tapes and CDs better than anyone else. Later, he too would give me the same reply.

Not satisfied, I pondered a bit more; perhaps I had made a mistake. Could the music have come from one of the other two music stalls nearby? So over to them I walked and inquired.

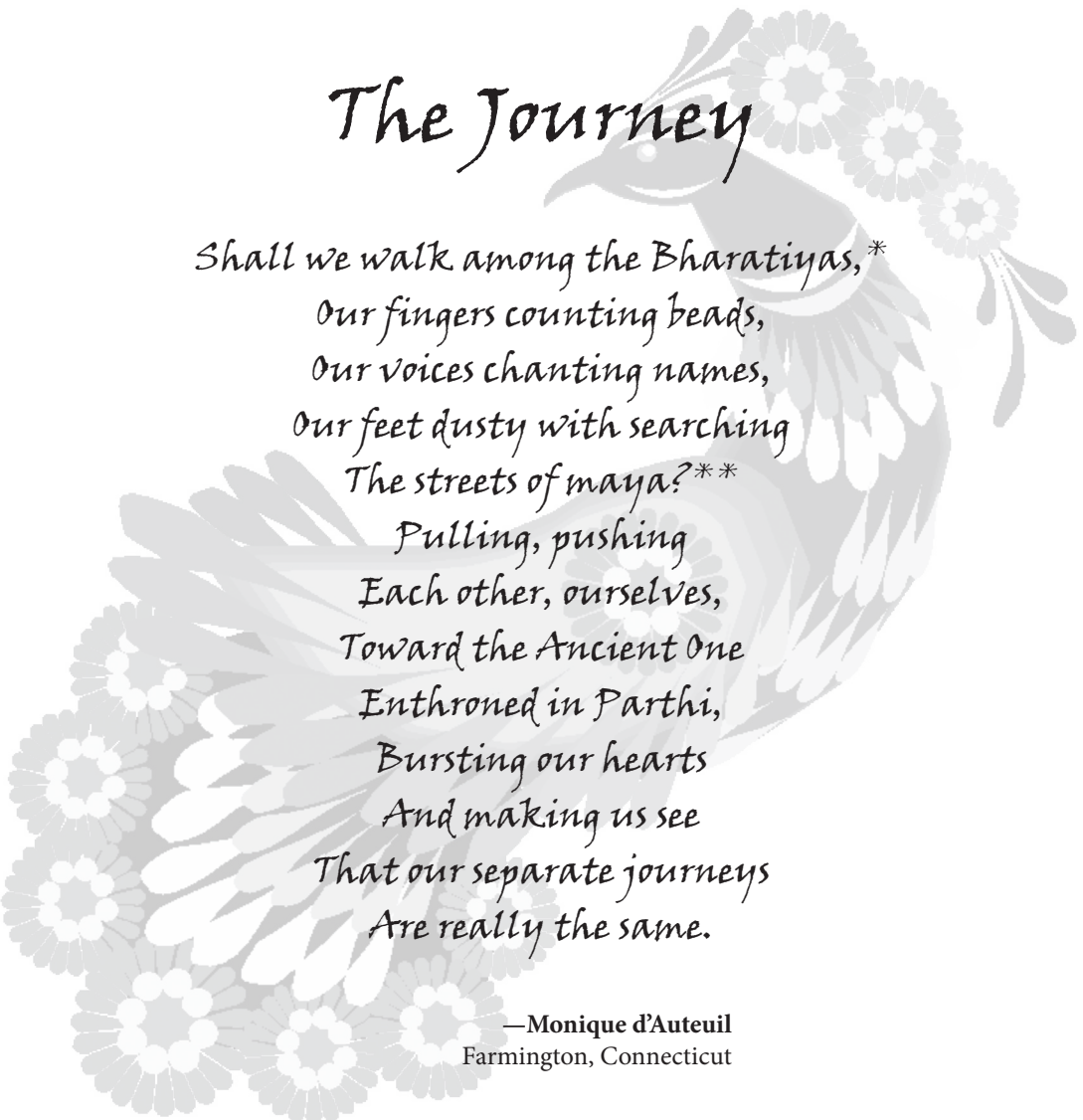
Same questions, same answers. Two of them were a bit humorous: “What are Beatles—bugs?” “George who?” I gave up, sat down at the food stall, ordered tea, and smiled over toward the ashram, thinking, Dear Swami, You got me again....

—Nicolai Billy
El Cariso Village, California

The chief duty of man is investigation of truth. Truth can be won only through dedication and devotion. It is dependent on the grace of God, which is showered on hearts saturated with love. Truth is more fundamental than the atom. Every atom and every star manifests the truth to those who have the eyes of wisdom. What is the special nature of man? If he lives and dies just as the animals do, how can his supremacy be justified? His supremacy lies in his capacity to become aware of his truth.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
December, 2003

The Journey



Shall we walk among the Bharatiyas,*
Our fingers counting beads,
Our voices chanting names,
Our feet dusty with searching
The streets of maya?***
Pulling, pushing
Each other, ourselves,
Toward the Ancient One
Enthroned in Parthi,
Bursting our hearts
And making us see
That our separate journeys
Are really the same.

—Monique d'Auteuil
Farmington, Connecticut

* Bharatiyas are the people of India.

*** Maya is illusion.



Museum Miracle

Seeing Sai in Everyone

The year 2004 on *Shivarathri*, I had an opportunity to serve as an overseas *seva dal* (service volunteer) at the Chaitanya Jyothi Museum. This edifice feels more like a temple than a museum. People can sense the auspiciousness as they watch videos of Swami, listen to discourses, gaze at pictures of the Avatar as a child, and contemplate His life as they survey three-dimensional images of Sai's earlier days.

Many people walk around with hands held up in *namaskaram* (a prayerful position, with palms together). It was my privilege to greet each individual with the words *Sai Ram*, over and over again. This was the only job I had ever had where *namasmaranam* (saying a holy name) was the biggest part of my duty.

At times devotion would draw someone to touch Swami's picture or a statue depicting His arm releasing a dove. I would then say *Sai Ram* again, more emphatically, and request them not to touch the exhibits. I was in bliss as I watched and greeted people.

As one lady approached, I noted, "How nice; she has a picture of Swami on her forehead." I raised my hands in *namaskaram* and bowed. However, when I looked again, there was no picture of Swami on her forehead. There was only *kumkum*, though I had clearly seen a picture of Swami just a moment before. The lesson that impressed me was: when your mind is steeped in the sweet *amrith* (divine nectar) of His name, then you are bound to see Sai in others!

—AI Macasaet

Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania

Shivarathri

Concentration of Mind on the Divine Is Real Sadhana

Nachiketha, son of Vajasravasa, prayed to Lord Yama (God of death) to teach him *Atma vidya* (realization of one's true Self). Then, Lord Yama said, "Oh son of immortality! Listen. First establish your link with the source from which you have come into the world." He also advised Nachiketha that since the body was perishable like a water bubble and the mind was fleeting, both of them must be discarded—meaning that no importance should be attached to either one and that efforts should be made to realize the fundamental truth.

"Nachiketa! You need not search for Lord Easwara, for He is very much present in you," said Lord Yama.

True Significance of Shivarathri

Dear Students and Devotees! You must understand the true significance and philosophy underlying the *Shivarathri* festival. First realize that you are not the physical body, which is perishable and impermanent. You must look at this objective world with *jnana chakshu* (the eye of wisdom), not with *charma chakshu* (the physical eye). Animals—insects, birds, and beasts—view this world with their physical eyes. If you also view this objective world with mere physical eyes, what difference is there

between you and those beings? You will then simply remain an animal and not succeed at realizing your true nature, which is beyond the physical world.

You must comprehend transcendental reality, which is beyond the body and mind. This ultimate realization is possible only with the help of the eyes of wisdom. The body is like a water bubble. It will disappear one day or another. You are not the body, with its birth, growth, decay, and ultimately death. Therefore Lord Yama exhorted Nachiketha to realize the *Atma thathwa* (inner motivating force), which has no birth and death.

What Is Atma?

The question then arises, what is *Atma*? *Atma* has no form. It is infinite, indescribable, and immeasurable. The *Atma* is attributeless, pure, the final abode, eternal, free, unsullied, enlightened, and the very embodiment of sacredness. This *Atma thathwa* is immanent in every individual—nay, every being—in the form of consciousness. Your life as a human being will acquire meaning and purpose only when you realize this consciousness.

Inquiries relating to worldly matters are meaningless and an exercise in futility. Lord Yama exhorted Nachiketha to realize *Atma thathwa*, the fundamental and transcendental

principle, and in so doing, he would gain knowledge of everything else.

The body has birth, growth, decay, and death. The *Atma*, however, has no such qualities; it is the eternal witness to everything in this universe. You have to realize *Atma thathwa*, that which was taught by Lord Yama to Nachiketha.

The Atma is eternal, without birth or death. It has no beginning, middle, or end. It is omnipresent—the eternal witness. (Telugu poem)

Look! Quite a few electric bulbs are glowing here. Though the bulbs are of different sizes, colors, and capacities, the electrical energy manifesting as light through

them is one and the same. Similarly, the same divine power is present in every living being and makes each one function. That power is *Atma thathwa* or the inner motivating force.

I often refer to the terms *sathya* (truth), *dharma* (right conduct), *shanti* (peace), and *prema* (love). *Sathya* is the electricity; *dharma* is the wire through which the electric current passes; *shanti* is the bulb, and *prema* is the glow. If you want to attain *atmic* bliss, you have to follow truth and right conduct. That is why the ancient sages of Bharath (India) instructed humanity to speak the truth and practice righteous conduct. In contrast to this noble principle, what happens today is that truth is being killed, and righteous conduct

is being imprisoned. This is not humanness. Speak truth and observe righteous conduct.

Lord Yama told Nachiketa, “This human body, which is like a water bubble, is bound to burst one day or another. Therefore realize the divine motivating force, which is real and eternal.” You must recognize it not by your physical eyes, but only by the eye of wisdom.

What Is Wisdom?

Next the question arises, what is wisdom? Is it physical knowledge, secular knowledge,

or knowledge relating to the objects of nature? No, it is none of these. Experiencing the principle of nondualism is

true wisdom. *Atma* transcends both name and form. Lord Yama, therefore, instructed Nachiketha to attain *Atma jnana* (divine wisdom).

Today people go mad in pursuit of spiritual knowledge. They adopt umpteen ways to practice bodily postures, and call this *sadhana* (spiritual discipline), yet none of these can help them to attain divine wisdom. What is important is love, the undercurrent of all forms of spiritual discipline. Realizing the perishable nature of this body, one must realize the indweller, who is none other than the eternal *Atma*.

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later, but the indweller has neither birth nor



If you want to attain atmic bliss, you have to follow truth and right conduct.

death. The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness. Truly speaking, the indweller in the form of the Atma, is verily God Himself.
(Telugu poem)

True and eternal divine wisdom is immanent in one's own body, but it can be realized only by the eyes of wisdom. You have to gradually give up attachment to the body and cultivate love towards the *Atma*. You think you are the body and develop attachment to it. So long as the process of inhalation and exhalation continues in the body, you consider it to be "yours." Once that process comes to a halt, you no longer sense what is happening around you.

The human body, though it is of a perishable nature, teaches one great lesson—namely, *Soham*: you are nothing but eternal, divine wisdom. When you inhale your breath, you make the sound *So*, and while exhaling, you make the sound *ham*. The inhaling process represents life, and exhaling represents death.

Give Up Body Attachment

If you wish to overcome life and death, you have to give up body attachment, which I am demonstrating right in front of you—day in and day out. This body that I have taken upon myself undergoes various types of

suffering. Just as you suffer from physical ailments, this body also suffers, but I do not attach any importance to this suffering. Several students and devotees have expressed anxiety and concern that I might undergo a lot of suffering while the *lingas** emerge from my body. No doubt your apprehensions are correct, but I do not feel any suffering. In fact, it is only when I identify myself with the body that I undergo any pain. Since I am not the body, I do not suffer pain.

For example, this is a handkerchief (holding a kerchief in His hands). As long as you consider this kerchief as yours, you pick it up, wipe your face, and carefully put it back in its

original place. Just because the kerchief is yours, do you hang on to it if it becomes dirty? No, never! You discard it at once. In the same manner, you must realize that you are different from the body and not attach any importance to its suffering. All objects that you consider to be yours have to be discarded one day or the other. When you do not consider something to be yours, you do not feel any pain about discarding it.



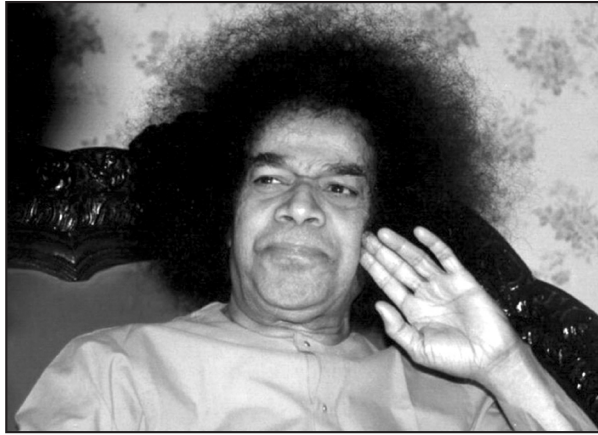
*If you are only pure love, all
your suffering will be removed.
Therefore cultivate pure and
selfless love.*

* A *lingam* or *linga* is an ovoid manifestation, a symbol of unending creation.

I Am Not the Body—I Am I

This body has undergone several types of suffering, the most recent being a hip fracture. The body is after all a conglomeration of senses. Whatever has happened, has happened only to the body and not to me. When you adopt this attitude, you will gain peace. For example, when you find an ant biting your hand, if you try to scratch it, you will get more pain. After all, why should you have to suffer so much on account of a small insect such as an ant crawling on your body? You suffer only because you are under the illusion that you are the body.

The eye sees something; what it sees may not be real, for all that you are looking at is bound to undergo change after some time. What the ears have heard may also undergo change after some time. In the same way, the food we eat undergoes change within a few hours. Nothing is permanent in this world, and you have to realize this truth. You have to inquire as to what it is that remains unchanged in the past, present, and future. If I teach you this truth by quoting long Sanskrit *slokas* (verses) and mantras, you might not be able to understand this simple truth. By relating this truth to your day-to-day experience, you will understand it more easily.



Some time back, when my hip bone got fractured, I was taken to the hospital. The doctors were planning on performing a major orthopedic surgery. I told them, “You can do whatever you wish to do. This body is yours. I am not the body. I am not under the control of the body. I am I.” The doctors performed major surgery on this body, but I did not suffer any pain. Whatever pain occurred caused only the body to suffer, not me. If you also adopt a similar attitude, you will

not feel any pain. Therefore reduce attach-ment to the body gradually.

What Is *Sadhana*?

All of you are undertaking some sort of *sadhana* (spiritual activity). What exactly is the real meaning of *sadhana*? *Sadhana* is not merely acquiring knowledge about the nature of the body. In fact, you have to forget about the body and concentrate on *atmic* bliss. How do you attain that bliss? It can be attained only through love. If you are only pure love, all your suffering will be removed. Therefore cultivate pure and selfless love.

Suppose you come across a person on the road who is hostile to you. If you hate him and move away, considering him to be your enemy, the distance between you and him increases further. On the other hand, if you greet him lovingly—saying “Hello! How are

you?”—then naturally he will respond with love. Thus when you both greet each other lovingly, hate has no scope for persisting anymore. As is your feeling toward others, so is their feeling toward you.

The same idea is contained in the Vedic declaration: *Yadbhavam thadbhavathi* (As is your feeling, so shall you become). Today people direct all their negative feelings toward others. You should not bear any ill-will against anybody. Whatever negative feelings you have, they are just passing clouds. They come and go.

The sun may not be visible while it is hidden behind thick clouds. The moment the clouds move away, however, the sun becomes visible. Similarly,

when your negative feelings disperse, what remains is pure love. You can achieve anything in this world with love. In fact you can gain control of the entire world through love.

People claim to be sitting in meditation, both morning and evening. What kind of meditation is going on? What benefit are they deriving out of it? How long do its effects last? Not even a moment. Remember, all worldly matters are like passing clouds; therefore, do not involve yourself much with them.

Once Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was walking through the market place, chanting the divine name. In fact he was dancing in ecstasy. Some people, upon seeing him,

thought he was a mad man. They snatched away his drum. He did not resent this. He started chanting the divine name while striking some cymbals. The irate onlookers took away the cymbals also. Even then he was not bothered.

He wondered if perhaps God did not like his beating of the cymbals. Concluding that his cymbal-clanging was not to God's liking, he resolved not to touch them any more. He consoled himself by thinking that whatever musical instruments were taken away from

him, were not to God's liking for God's will prevails ultimately. Such was his faith. From then on he gave up all worldly attachments and concentrated on

premathamwa (the principle of love), which no one could take away from him.

Principle of Pure Love

One has to aspire for that which cannot be taken away by others—that is, pure love. Any matter printed on a piece of paper cannot be separated from it. Likewise, your heart should be like a pure white paper with love imprinted upon it. Make the two inseparable. Cultivate such love.

Love is your sole refuge wherever you may be—in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain, or in the middle of the deep sea.

(Telugu poem)



*You can achieve anything in
this world with love. In fact,
you can gain control of the entire
world.*

Wherever you may be, divine love will protect you always. Cultivate this type of love. That is true *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). *Sadhana* is not something that is associated with money. *Sadhana* stands for the constant thought of God, nearness to God, kinship with God, and union with God. Unfortunately today people do not understand the real meaning of *sadhana*.

Students! You are reading big books written by elders, but mere reading will not help. When you read a book, whatever is contained in it will enter your head. That means both the book and the head become one. You should not stop at that. Whatever has been stored in the head must get into the heart, where it will remain forever.

Embodiments of the divine *Atma*! *Atma* is divine. Never forget this. Some people find happiness in physical *sadhana*. The pleasure they derive out of it is only physical and temporary in nature. All that is associated with time is bound to disappear one day or the other. You have to attach yourself to that which is permanent, eternal, and real. God's love is beyond all description; it is supreme.

On the other hand, physical love is momentary and is associated with physical relationships. Whatever is associated with the body comes and goes. Pure and selfless love, which emerges from the heart, comes and grows. You have to cultivate such love—and

it will never diminish. You need not beg for this from someone else, nor can you purchase it from the market, since it is not a saleable commodity. God is the only source from which love flows, and it is available only in His shop. Therefore find a way to reach Him.

Unfortunately people today do not aspire to have such pure love, in spite of being very near to the source of such love. They do not even realize that this gift is available right in front of them.



*The happiness arising out
of worldly things is only
momentary. Only God's love is
the eternal principle.*

People crave for worldly favors and objects, thinking there is great happiness in possessing them. No. Such objects can never give real happiness. The happiness arising

out of worldly things is only momentary. Only God's love is the eternal principle. Therefore love only divine love, which you cannot get anywhere except from God.

God has neither birth nor death. He has neither beginning nor end. He is present in all beings as the eternal witness.
(Telugu poem)

God's love is the only truth. It will never change. Worship the changeless truth and seek refuge in that truth. That is the only real *sadhana* for attaining liberation.

What Is Liberation?

What is meant by *moksha* (liberation)? Is it living in some palatial building with

air-conditioned rooms, located in heaven above? No, not at all. To get rid of *moha* (attachment) is true *moksha* (liberation). You have to give up body attachment in the first instance. Once you get rid of body attachment, you will naturally develop *vairagya* (nonattachment), which ultimately leads to liberation. Love is the only path that can lead you to liberation.

Perhaps, you might have heard the story of Mandana Mishra, a scholar of great repute. His wife, Ubhayabharathi, was also a great scholar. When Adi Shankara was proceeding on his victory march, he met Mandana Mishra and entered into a scholarly debate with him. It was decided that Mandana

Mishra would take to *sanyasa* (renunciation) if he lost the debate. Ubhayabharathi was chosen to adjudicate the contest. Would anyone today accept such a proposal, wherein the rival's wife acts as the adjudicator?

Adi Shankara had no hesitation in accepting Ubhayabharathi as the judge, for he knew that she adhered strictly to the principle of truth in both letter and spirit. She was impartial in her judgment of the debate and declared Shankara to be the winner. Mandana Mishra took to *sanyasa* (the life of a renunciate) in accordance with the terms and conditions of the debate. Ubhayabharathi, being his *ardhangi* (better half), followed suit, and also became a renunciate.

The Wisdom of Ubhayabharathi

Ubhayabharathi lived in a hermitage near the bank of the river Ganges. Many women became her disciples. Every morning, they used to go to the bank of the Ganges to bathe. Along the way, there lived a renunciate whom people considered to be a *Brahma jnani* (a knower of the formless reality). He had renounced the world to attain true wisdom. He, however, was very much attached to a dried bottle-gourd, in which he used to keep drinking water.



*A true guru is one who dispels
the darkness of ignorance and
lights the lamp of wisdom.*

One day he was lying down, using the gourd as a pillow, in case someone should wish to steal it. Ubhayabharathi took notice of

this and asked her disciples who he was. One of the disciples said that he was known as a *Brahma jnani*. Then Ubhayabharathi remarked, "Even though he is one of wisdom, he is so attached to the bottle-gourd that he is using it as his pillow." The so-called *Brahma jnani* overheard their conversation and became angry.

When Ubhayabharathi and her disciples returned from the Ganges, he threw away the bottle-gourd on the road, just to show that he was not attached to it. Seeing this, Ubhayabharathi at once remarked, "At first I thought he had only one defect—attachment. Now I realize that he has another defect—ego. How can one with ego and attachment be one of wisdom?" Her comment was an eyeopener

for the *sanyasi*. Immediately he fell at her feet and prayed to her to teach him true knowledge.

To visualize multiplicity is ignorance, and to visualize unity in multiplicity is wisdom. Ubhayabharathi imparted such sacred teachings and transformed individuals. As she understood the principle of unity, she ultimately attained liberation. On the other hand, her husband did not attain liberation as he remained immersed in worldly feelings.

Ubhayabharathi began preaching and propagating the path of wisdom. She became the guru of one and all. A true guru is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance and lights the lamp of wisdom. That which remains changeless in all the three periods of time (past, present, and future) is true wisdom.

People accepted Ubhayabharathi as guru because her thoughts, words, and deeds were in complete harmony. Those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones.

Annihilation of the mind is what you should strive for—having desire for God and nothing else. Avoid getting entangled in worldly relationships. That is true wisdom.

The teachings of Ubhayabharathi spread far and wide, and she became highly reputed for her wisdom. Even today there are many such people of wisdom. Without men and

women of merit and wisdom, how can there be light in the world? Wisdom cannot be acquired from individuals. It can be acquired only by developing love for God. A beggar who comes to our doorstep begs for alms saying, *Dehi*. He addresses the *dehi* (indweller) and not the *deha* (physical body). Thus you can learn a profound spiritual truth even from a beggar.

What Is True Knowledge?

One may acquire a high academic degree, such as a B.A. or an M.A., and attain an exalted position. One may amass wealth, perform acts of charity, and



Wisdom cannot be acquired from individuals. It can be acquired only by developing love for God.

attain name and fame. One may have physical strength and enjoy a long and healthy life. One may be a great scholar studying and preaching the Vedas. None of these can equal a true devotee of the Lord. (Telugu poem)

No doubt worldly education is essential for eking out a livelihood, but it cannot impart true wisdom. Only *Atma vidya* (knowledge of the Self) can grant you everlasting happiness. Secular education is essential, however, for taking care of your physical needs. You should not give it up altogether. Worldly education is negative, and spiritual education is positive. Both are essential for happiness here and hereafter.

Students! You should become masters in both forms of knowledge—secular and spiritual—like Ubhayabharathi. However, always remember that only *atmic* knowledge is the true knowledge. Once you acquire *atmic* knowledge, you will have acquired everything else.

Who Are the Real Devotees?

Last night I came to Sai Kulwant Hall at one o'clock. During this auspicious hour the divine *lingas* (oval symbol of God) emerged from Kailasa (the abode of Lord Shiva). The *lingas* emerge of their own accord at the divine will. I saw several students and devotees singing *bhajans* (devotional songs) with great devotion. Who are the real devotees, however? I observed that only a few people were singing with real devotion and a pure heart, constantly contemplating on the divine name.

Thousands of people participated in the *bhajans*, but not all of them were real devotees. Their bodies were present in the hall but their minds were not fixed on God. They mechanically participated in the *bhajans*. That is not real devotion.

Wherever you sit, whether it be in the prayer hall or elsewhere, if your thoughts are

fixed on God, then you are a true devotee, and you will attain His grace. If you feel sleepy, you can sleep—that is not objectionable. Even in sleep, may your thoughts be fixed on Divinity.

Is it not because of your love and devotion toward God that you came all the way to Prasanthi Nilayam to participate in *Shivarathri bhajans*? I can understand

your devotion. A true devotee does not need any conveniences. He does not wish any type of comforts. Wherever you go, keep the mind under control, and direct all your thoughts toward God. That is real devotion; that is what Ubhayabharathi taught to her disciples. If you cultivate such devotion, your lives will be sanctified.

Do not divert your attention toward physical comforts. Always chant the *Panchakshari* (five-lettered) mantra, “*Om Namah Shivaya*.” If you

merely chant with your lips, the mantra will merge with worldly sounds. On the other hand, if you chant the divine name sincerely, with full concentration of your mind, its effect will spread all over the world. Chanting of the divine name with full concentration of the mind is true *sadhana*.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Shivarathri, February 19, 2004



On past *Maha Shivarathris*, Sai Baba would “bathe” an idol of Shirdi Sai Baba in *vibhuti* materialized from an empty pot.

Sathya Sai Free Medical Camp

Serving Low-Income Neighborhoods in Corona, California

A free medical camp took place October 9, 2004 at the Home Gardens Elementary School in Corona, California. The Honorable Jeff Miller, Mayor of the City of Corona, along with the city council and chamber of commerce, invited the Sri Sathya Sai Organization to conduct the camp, in recognition of the selfless service of Sai devotees in the area.

Three schools in very low-income neighborhoods in Corona were originally suggested. The final decision on the location was left to our Beloved Bhagavan, and He selected the Home Gardens school, which serves a 95-percent Spanish-speaking populace. The need was great, and Sai devotees were there to help.

Ten weeks of planning and preparation went into the event, organized by a steering committee consisting of Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Dr. Hyma Reddy, Dr. Ramakrishna Thumati, and Mr. Harshad Patel, as well as other representatives from the Sai medical community and the Sri Sathya Sai Regional Council. Nosh Vadoli and Roopa Sharma were the two overall coordinators.

With Swami's grace, doors began to open. The city, public agencies, and the school district came together in a true spirit of cooperation. Seven low-income-area schools were targeted, and more than 20,000 flyers were sent out to homes, local Hispanic churches, and markets. In addition, the *Norco Daily Bulletin* and the *Corona Press-Enterprise*

newspapers published editorials promoting the camp.

Two local radio stations made several daily announcements encouraging the community to take advantage of the free medical care. Pastor Cerrano, head of the church-based Radio Impacto was delighted to help promote the event. Laidlaw Transit Services, Inc. offered free round-trip bus transportation between the seven targeted schools and Home Gardens Elementary. Many local merchants donated snacks, fruit, and drinks for the participants.

Registration counters were set up to process the patients expediently. Each counter had a Sai volunteer and a bilingual translator to converse with the Spanish-speaking patients. Many of the bilingual teachers at the elementary school volunteered to serve at the camp in order to create feelings of reassurance and familiarity among the recipients. The Wagner Institute of Phlebotomy also provided translators and phlebotomists to draw blood as needed.

Even before the camp opened, people from the area began lining up. A brief inauguration ceremony was held, during which the Mayor of Corona, the Honorable Jeff Miller, school district officials, and Drs. Michael Goldstein and Dr. Narendranath Reddy of the Sri Sathya Sai organization addressed the gathering. Buses began rolling in promptly at 8:00 a.m., bringing patients from the targeted areas. Children were

presented with colorful balloons printed with the words “Love All, Serve All.” Those balloons brought out many happy smiles!

In total, 42 medical doctors, nine dentists, and three psychologists provided loving and compassionate service to 680 men, women, and children seeking treatment. Free consultations were provided by doctors in family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, gynecology, cardiology, pulmonology, gastroenterology, endocrinology, dermatology, rheumatology, orthopedics, urology, ophthalmology, and dentistry.

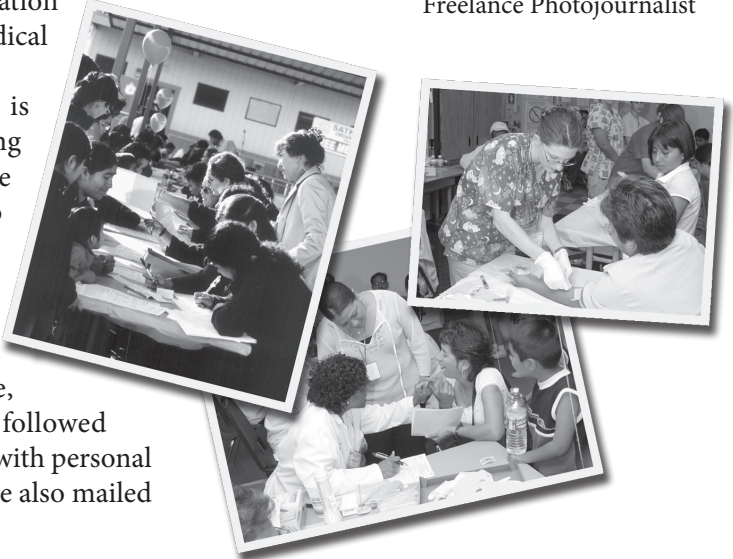
The clinic also offered services such as audiology, chiropractic care, psychology, physical therapy, pharmacology, nutritional counseling, and social services. Other free services included immunizations, blood tests, hypertension screening, blood sugar tests, EKGs, pulmonary flow tests, bone-mineral density tests, pap smears, and mammograms. Health brochures and information on Medi-Cal and other free medical services were also given out.

Providing follow-up care is a critical aspect of conducting a medical camp. Clinics were researched in advance to determine whether free and/or low cost follow-up services and medication would be available to patients referred from the camp. To insure proper care, each primary care physician followed up abnormal test results twice with personal phone calls. All test results were also mailed to recipients.

The response shown to devotees during the camp was overwhelming. Mrs. Linda White, principal of Home Garden Elementary, was extremely impressed by the dedication and commitment demonstrated. One woman attending the gynecology department had not had a pap smear for over 20 years. She was so grateful that she hugged her doctor, kissed her hand, and declared it to be a “blessing from God.”

During a checkup on a toddler, Dr. Hyma Reddy noticed that it was the child’s first birthday. Gifts were put together, a cake obtained, and a birthday party celebrated with all the gathered Sai devotees. The child’s mother was in tears, overwhelmed by the amount of love shown to her family. The medical camp was a wonderful opportunity not only to help the needy but also to demonstrate divine love to all.

—Victoria Hargreaves
Freelance Photojournalist



Sai Mathematics



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a game

—Bal Vikas Magazine

Significant Dates in India and the USA, January–April, 2005

January 1, 2005	News Years Day – “Happy New Year to everyone, everywhere.”
January 14, Friday	<i>Makara Shankranthi</i> , a time of rededication to spiritual life
January 17, Monday	Martin Luther King Day, honoring a crusader of equality for all
January 20, Wednesday	Inauguration of the President of the United States
February 12, Saturday	Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday, USA, honoring the president who proclaimed an end to slavery in 1863 and was assassinated in 1865
February 22, Tuesday	George Washington’s Birthday, USA, honoring the first president of the United States, considered to be the father of his country
March 9, Wednesday	<i>Maha Shivarathri</i> , a day to pay homage to Lord Shiva
March 25, Friday	“Good Friday,” commemorating Jesus’ being put on the cross
March 27, Sunday	Easter Sunday, celebrating Jesus’ victory over death
April 9, Saturday	<i>Ugadi</i> , Telugu New Year. “Happy, Holy <i>Ugadi</i> to everyone.”
April 18, Monday	<i>Sri Rama Navami</i> , commemorating the birthday of Lord Rama

Announcement: Airline Services to Puttaparthi

Beginning October 11, 2004, Indian Airlines has announced three weekly flights from Bangalore to Puttaparthi on every Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

Flight #	Departure	Arrival
IC-969	Bangalore 1330 hours IST	Puttaparthi 1400 hours IST
IC-970	Puttaparthi 1440 hours IST	Bangalore 1510 hours IST

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Seva Camp in Central California

United to Serve

The weekend of October 8-10, 2004 saw the culmination of months of planning by the six Sathya Sai Baba Centers of Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, Ojai, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Atascadero—all were united to serve.

How the Seva Camp Came About

At the annual planning meeting held at the beginning of each calendar year by six Central California Sathya Sai Baba Centers, one of the devotees suggested that we look into the possibility of a weekend service project rather than a weekend retreat. The idea was greeted with enthusiastic approval. As a follow-up, devotees from the Santa Maria Center contacted various community agencies in the area, with little success until they contacted a church in Guadalupe. From there, we were referred to the “Beatitude House,” which provides a free medical clinic one night a week, clothing, food, counseling, ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, and temporary housing—primarily to the migrant worker community. The house is rented by a couple, Dennis Apel and his wife Tensie Hernandez, for the specific purpose of providing these much-needed services to the community. It and they survive completely on donations.

Beatitude House needed a great deal of repair and maintenance, and Dennis later

said that he had been praying for some help. When he was contacted by one of the devotees with the possibility of our Sai Centers doing a weekend service project, Dennis said, “That would be the answer to my prayers.” We really felt Swami’s hand was guiding us, so we started to plan the weekend of work on the house.

The Seva Camp

“Beatitude House,” in the small, coastal town of Guadalupe, California, has been occupied primarily by farm workers and tradespeople. The house is a two-story Victorian structure that is over 100 years old, built on sand. Over time, a great deal of settling and deterioration have occurred.

Prior to the *Seva* Camp, about a dozen devotees from various Sai Centers worked on many weekend days, spending at least 100 hours over several months preparing the house and the garden for the *Seva* Camp weekend. Wallpaper was peeling; cracks in the walls needed stabilizing and filling; portions of the ceiling needed replacing; holes gaped between windows and their surrounding

walls; carpentry was needed; curtains needed stitching; and the front yard needed a major clean-up. Dozens of trash bags, quarts of cleanser, buckets of dry-wall compound, and boards of lumber were gathered for the cleaning and repair work.

Once the *Seva* Camp was upon us, about 34 devotees, some from other parts of the state, worked on the final scraping, cleaning, and painting of the interior downstairs rooms. Volunteers worked on the skirt around the bottom of the house, and also painted about 150 feet of fencing around the yard. They also dug and planted trees and flowers, and added other gardening refinements. Many devotees brought plants and bulbs from their own gardens as an offering. Devotees also bagged about 300 pounds of rice and beans into two-pound sacks, hemmed receiving blankets for babies, and prepared food for all the volunteers. The beans, rice, and baby blankets, plus boxes of diapers and baby clothes, were contributed by various Sai Centers in the region.

Devotees began arriving Friday, October 8 and stayed for the weekend in a motel in Santa Maria, a medium-sized city that is only 10 miles from Guadalupe. The motel owners are Sai devotees who graciously provided us with a room for *bhajans* (singing holy songs) and prayers in the evenings and mornings, as well as the use of their kitchen.

On Saturday, October 9 at 8:00 a.m., after *Omkar* (chanting) and breakfast, work on the house began. We were blessed to have two professional painters in the group, as well as many experienced handy people. One of the professional painters took charge

of the painting and made available much of his equipment. He also supervised aspects of the work, which included sanding, scraping, cleaning, painting, and the final cleanup. Many of the women focused on the pantry, the kitchen, and the garden, while the men worked mainly on scraping, sanding, and painting the exterior and interior of the house. We made an effort to keep the genders separate, according to Swami's direction.

Dennis Apel worked alongside us during the weekend. At lunch on Saturday, he told us how and why he and his wife, Tensie, had established Beatitude House, and described the services that are offered—all free of cost. Their lives reflect the values that Swami encourages us to practice. Dennis told us that what we were doing made those who were using the house “feel worthy.” He said, “To come to a nice clean place that looks beautiful, makes people feel that they are cared for, not just on a physical level but also on a deeper level.”

Saturday night, we invited Dennis, Tensie, and their two children to share dinner with us, and afterward they attended our devotional singing. Bob Bozzani spoke later that evening and commented on Dennis's remark that those who used the services of Beatitude House were “worthy of love.” He pointed out how that echoed Swami's frequent reminders to devotees that the end purpose of service is to experience and communicate a sense of oneness and togetherness, which is not limited to the physical act of service. Another devotee emphasized the same point with a quote from Swami's talk to His students. Swami tells His students repeatedly,

If service is done as a handout to someone in need, it is not a spiritual practice. It becomes a spiritual practice only when it is heart to heart.

Satsang During Seva Camp

Even though most of the time was spent cleaning, painting, or working in the garden, the feeling of an annual gathering of devotees at a Sai Retreat prevailed during the camp. The early morning and evening devotional singing and meditation added to the retreat-like atmosphere, and the sharing of spiritual experiences by devotees, catching up on news of other Sai Centers, and discussion

of spiritual questions with friends accrued in little snippets of time during the physical work sessions.

Satsang (spiritual activity) with fellow devotees is always inspiring, strengthening, and purifying. Although this was a different brand of retreat, it had a strong, uplifting impact on us because we shared great love and unity with the people of Beatitude House—hand to hand, and heart to heart. As we left on Sunday, we did not feel that this sense of community service was ending; we felt that it had just begun.

—Prepared by Devotees of the
Central California Sai Centers



A summary of the seva being done by Sai volunteers around the world, entitled “The Work Has Begun,” will appear in the next few issues of the monthly publication, *Sanathana Sarathi* (Sri Sathya Sai Books & Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam, P.O. 515 134, Anantapur District, India. E-mail: editor@sssbpt.org. Annual subscription, \$11.00).

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Love All, Serve All—Help Ever, Hurt Never is a series of six booklets on various subjects emphasized by Sri Sathya Sai Baba: *Service to Man Is Service to God*; *Love All, Serve All*; *Love in Action*; *Temples of Healing*; *Water—the Elixir of Life*; and *The End of Education Is Character*. These individual booklets complement the book entitled *Love All, Serve All*, and the DVD entitled *His Work*. The six booklets are paperback and enclosed in an attractive case. BW-093.....\$18.00

DVDs and VCDs

Annual Sports and Cultural Meet, 2004 is a three-volume VCD set of the athletic events from January 11-15, 2004, presented by both male and female Sai College students at the Prasanthi Nilayam athletic field. SCE-201\$12.00

His Work—The Work of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a DVD, highlights the broad range of humanitarian projects that have been initiated and inspired by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It includes clips of the super-specialty hospitals, schools, universities, water projects, and rural outreach programs—all FREE, to the recipients. SCE-300..... \$4.50

Shivarathri, 2004, a VCD, features highlights of the *Shivarathri* festival, February 18-19, 2004. SCE-205.....\$12.50

Christmas Celebrations, 2003, a VCD, includes footage of the Christmas celebrations in Prasanthi Nilayam from December 24-25, 2003. SCE-204.....\$12.00

Festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam, Jan-Dec 2003, is a 13-volume VCD pack that highlights all the major festivals held in Prasanthi Nilayam, from January to December of 2003. Playable on a DVD player or CD-ROM drive. SCE-200.... \$32.00

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