



SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER, USA

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Love

Peace

Truth

Nonviolence

Right Conduct



It is my hope that you will develop your self confidence, strengthen your faith in Divinity and discharge your daily duties in a spirit of absolute surrender. Just as a torch light is superfluous to see the moon, which can be visualized with the aid of its own light, God, the embodiment of Love, is perceived only through Love. Thus, in order to realize Him, we should enrich our hearts with Divine Love.

*– Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1979
Pages 169-170*

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Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

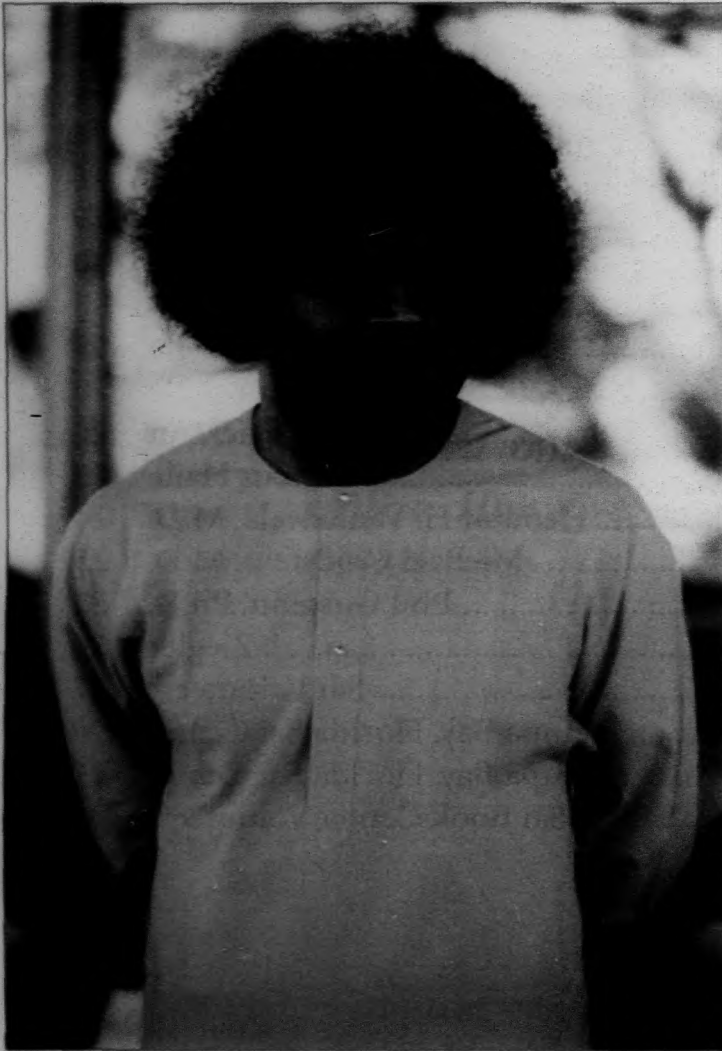
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—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

Sai's Message



Gift of Darshan

Never underestimate what is being accomplished by the act of darshan (opportunity to see a holy being). My walking among you is a gift, yearned for by the Gods of the highest heaven, and here you are daily receiving this grace.

Always find a quiet corner after My darshan, where you may enter the stillness and receive the completion of My blessings. My energy goes out from Me as I pass by you. If you proceed to talk with others immediately, this precious energy is dissipated and returned to Me, unused by you. Rest assured that whatever My eyes see becomes vitalized and transmuted. You are [being] changed day by day.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Steps to Attain Supreme Bliss

People look for shortcuts in everything, even in spirituality. But surprisingly, spirituality does have a shortcut. There is no need to wander here and there. God is residing in your heart. Turn your vision inward. You can see God instantly. This is the easiest path. Have full faith that Divinity resides in you. If you keep reminding yourself constantly that you are a part of Divinity, you are bound to become Divine yourself. On the other hand, if you harbor the feeling that you are something apart from the Divine, you shall remain far from Divinity always. There is no need for you to give up your vocation; keep doing your function in society, but always remember that you are essentially Divine.

God Himself intervenes when His devotees are in distress in the performance of their functions in society. [You may] know the story of Gora Kumbhar and Kabir. When confronted with impossible tasks, they were helped by God in person, who completed their task of making pots or weaving cloth. God is capable of taking any form that He wills. Hence, He is known as the *Viraat Swarupa* (Cosmic Form). The *Purusha Sukta* (in the *Rig Veda*) says, *Sahasra Seerasha Purusha, Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad...* (“thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed...”), while describing the *Viraat Swarupa*. The *Viraat Purusha* (Supreme Being) has innumerable limbs.

Become worthy of His love. You can achieve everything. This is possible only through *Nishkama Prema* (selfless love). By cultivating such selfless love, you become Divine yourself, and this Divinity is nondual. Hence, it is said, *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* (perception of nondual Divinity is true wisdom). Cultivate your faith and make it firm. There should be no ups and downs in this faith. If you allow such vacillations, you are likely to lose whatever faith you have. A firm faith results in your attaining *Brahmananda* (Divine bliss).

The happiness experienced with the body is human (*dehananda*). The joy felt in the mind is *chitthananda* (intellectual pleasure). When the mind is transcended, joy is felt in the heart. The joy experienced by the heart is *chidananda*, which is immeasurably greater than the joy of the mind, which is immeasurably greater than bodily happiness. You are needlessly losing your opportunity of attaining the level of Divine bliss (*Brahmananda*). Step by step, you have to rise through these levels of happiness until you attain *Brahmananda*. In this way, you merge your personal bliss into the universal bliss of *Brahmananda*, which is eternal.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 23, 1999

How to Make God Happy? Practice!

Drama ready?

"Still practicing, Swami."

Ve-e-e-ry, ve-e-e-ry happy!

Even though Sai Baba was speaking to me about the 1995 Christmas play we were rehearsing in the Poornachandra Hall, I knew He was telling me He was happy with our efforts and *sadhana* (spiritual practice).

Now, ten years later, I can still ruminate over the words, *Very, very happy*, and feel deep devotion and bliss. Those sweet words from the Lord's mouth give me so much encouragement and strength to stick to my resolve. Isn't that our goal—to please Him and make Him happy?



Bob Bozzani once shared that making Baba happy is how we say "thank you" to Him, by putting His teachings into practice.

In Swami's Ugadi discourse, April 9, 2005, the last sentence reads: *It is essential for every human being to put the ideals set by Rama into practice in his day-to-day life.* Swami goes on to say, *There is divinity in every human being. As he is unable to recognize his innate divinity, man is forgetting his humanness itself. What is the use of being human only in form but not in practice? Human birth will find fulfillment only when man practices human qualities.* (Sanathana Sarathi, May 2005)

"What is the use of being human only in form but not in practice? Human birth will find fulfillment only when man practices human qualities."



There had been many examples of this at Christmas in Prasanthi Nilayam. For instance, I was playing the role of "childminder." We had marched the 150 children to the Poornachandra Hall after practicing in the hot shed. Since we were rehearsing below Sai Baba's private living quarters, we were conscious of discipline and did not want to disturb Him.

I thought to myself, "The children have been practicing for several hours, and we will be taking them to *darshan*. O Swami, please, they will need to go the bathroom." As I was making this silent prayer, suddenly the double doors opened to the foyer and the *seva dal* said, "Swami says you are to take the children to the rest room now."

Happily we escorted them in pairs to the sitting room and enjoyed freshening up before *darshan*, taking in all the details of the back of Swami's residence: a telephone and papers on a table, a few books, and a mirror at the doorway for Baba to examine Himself before giving *darshan*! Of course, the greatest satisfaction was His immediate response to my prayer!

Let's practice these acts of selfless love and watch how quickly He responds, and we might even hear His voice inside saying, *Very, very happy!*

— Mahri Kintz
Idyllwild, California



SAI PUBLIC MEETING IN ST. LOUIS

September 11, 2005

On September 11, 2005, the Sathya Sai Baba Organization of America, Mid-Central Region, held a Public Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, about Sathya Sai Baba, His universal teachings, and His humanitarian works. The program was held at the 1904 World's Fair Pavilion, a magnificent open-air shelter in the center of Forest Park. The 1,300-acre park, considered the "crown jewel" of the city, was a picturesque setting worthy of a public program about Sathya Sai Baba, the Divine Crown Jewel of the universe.

Of the 500 people attending the program, over 350 were guests who previously knew little or nothing about Sathya Sai Baba. On this sunny, hot, 90-degree St. Louis day, the Pavilion provided pleasant shade. Guests welcomed the comfort when gentle, cooling breezes made their presence known, and devotees felt the pleasing breezes as if Sai Baba were making His presence known too. Cold bottled water, served to attendees

throughout the program, offered physical comfort that added to the spiritual comfort the speakers' words provided.

Before introducing the speakers, Dr. Jack Feely, Mid-Central Regional President, asked the guests to join in a silent prayer for those who had lost their lives, been injured, or lost loved ones during the tragedy of 9/11 four years earlier. He asked that they also include in their prayers those who lost so much in the recent hurricane along the Gulf Coast of the USA.

Dr. William Harvey

Dr. William Harvey, a member of the Prasanthi Council, was the first speaker. He focused his talk on the life and teachings of Sathya Sai Baba. He began his presentation by explaining to the attendees, "It is our belief that when viewed from a cosmic perspective, there are no accidents, and that everything happens for a reason, though it is often not obvious to us at the time. Hence,

we can assume that everyone present here today is destined to be here and to be a part of this event.” After sharing some of the miracles he has witnessed, he added, “Yet, I consider that the even bigger miracle that Sai Baba performs is His ability to turn people Godward—Godward in the sense of inspiring them to begin to recognize and accept that an all-powerful,
 all-knowing, all-present, and all-loving Unseen Force controls their destiny and the events that occur in the world.” Concluding his talk, Dr. Harvey said, “More and more, I am coming to realize that loving God means loving God’s creation—all people and things in this wonderful world.”

Dr. Anu Diwakaran

The second speaker was Dr. Anu Diwakaran, a pediatrician who works with children of underinsured families at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital in St. Louis. She described how her work reflects Sai Baba’s teachings. She said, “When one visits the newborn nursery, each and every baby is perfect and beautiful. One tends to focus on how similar they are, how fragile, what soft skin, what perfect little fingers and toes. Their ethnic background, their family’s financial status or level of income, their religious background—none of these details matters. But as the children grow up

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 IN THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS.”

in a world where the focus is on differences, not similarities, attitudes are caught and taught, so instead of continuing to see what unites us, we start to focus on what divides us.” She added that Sai Baba teaches us that our own illusion causes us to see the diversity of the world. Sai Baba says, *When you make an attempt to fix your attention on the divine*

aspect that is one and not many, then the diverse names, forms, and figures will no longer trouble you.

Grass-Roots Effort Sets a Gold Standard for Future Meetings

Months of preparation by the planning committee evolved into a significant grass-roots effort by devotees in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Personal letters of invitation went out to 49 professors of philosophy and theological studies of the major universities and colleges in the area, followed up with telephone-message reminders. Press releases went to the major TV and radio stations, along with the major newspapers. Quarter-page ads promoting the meeting were placed in a widely distributed, spiritually-oriented newspaper. That same paper accepted a 700-page manuscript about Sathya Sai Baba and His teachings. A devotee spoke about Sathya Sai Baba and the upcoming public meeting to a gathering at a local Rotary Club, which is part of a worldwide organization of business and

professional leaders providing humanitarian community service.

One month prior to the public meeting, 100 laminated posters advertising the program were placed at strategic locations such as health food stores, coffee shops, and yoga studios. Attached to each poster was a clear plastic pouch containing take-home cards with concise information about where and when the meeting would take place. Devotees checked the posters regularly to replenish the information cards. During the week prior to the meeting, 50 devotees participated in a "poster blitz," traveling in teams of two along designated routes in every direction of the St. Louis metropolitan area. During this blitz, they placed over 500 nonlaminated posters in every appropriate store, shop, or public area for which they were given permission.

Individual letters were sent to city and government officials, providing information about Sai Baba and His humanitarian works. The letters contained a personal invitation to the meeting, with encouragement to visit a local website designed specifically to supply more detailed information about the event and directions to the site.

Devotees transformed the majestic 100-year-old World's Fair Pavilion into a gloriously inviting public sanctuary with classical music playing in the background and 500 chairs set up to accommodate any and all guests. Teams of devotee ushers and information-providers had rehearsed their roles, which were designed to make every attendee feel comfortable and welcomed. Gift packages containing the DVD "His

Works" and the booklet "His Message," along with contact information about the local Sai Centers and a list of community service projects, were assembled for distribution after the program.

The Mayor's Proclamation

At the conclusion of the meeting, an Official Proclamation issued days before by the Mayor of the City of St. Louis, Missouri, was introduced. The part of the Proclamation read aloud to attendees contained the following words:

"WHEREAS, The City of St. Louis is pleased and honored to recognize Sri Sathya Sai Baba for all of His humanitarian work and extends best wishes to Him for good health, peace, and happiness as He continues His journey along life's path.

"Now, therefore, I, Francis G. Slay, Mayor of the City of St. Louis, do hereby proclaim September 11, 2005, as: 'SRI SATHYA SAI BABA DAY' IN THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS.

"In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the seal of the City of St. Louis, this 11th day of September, A.D. 2005."

At the reading of the Proclamation, unanimous applause arose from devotees and nondevotees alike. The final words of this most successful public meeting—successful due to Sai Baba's grace—included a wish for all attendees to have a happy Sri Sathya Sai Baba Day in the City of St. Louis.

—**Dr. Jack Feely**
Regional President, Mid-Central Region

Divine Message from Bhagavan

Given to Charles Penn, November 23, 1979

Your mission has begun. These are My words to you, My devotees! Each of you has a unique and valuable part to play in this lifetime. Only those whom I have called can serve Me.

My mission has now reached that point in time when each one of you has work to do. This planet has a purpose in the great galaxy in which it is held. That purpose is now unfolding before your eyes. I call upon you to radiate the devotion within you, so that its unseen power will envelop all who come into your orbit. To successfully perform your part, always remain centered on Me. Allow yourself to impart that purity of heart within you toward all human beings and all living creatures, and do not reach for the fruits of your work. This part of My mission is performed in absolute silence.

You are My instruments, from whom My love will pour. Be always aware of the moment you let your ego descend upon you, for that is when My work ceases. When you have overcome your negative unmindfulness, you will again become My source. The multiplication of My love will be felt throughout the world. I have prepared you for this work over many incarnations. I have drawn you to Me.

I have made great steps in My mission over these past incarnations. My work is ceaseless, and so your work too is without end. Know that I am within you and without you. There is no difference. Rid yourself of petty matters forevermore. You are now Me, and I am now thee. There is no difference.

My *darshan* will pour forth from Me, to and through you. You may be unaware of this constant action. Be ever pure of heart and soul, and humankind will, in your lifetime, benefit from your unique qualities. Others, too, will join Me in this mission when I draw them to Me.

The time is approaching when all humanity will live in harmony. That time will be here sooner than one expects. Before it arrives, be prepared for whatever is needed to reveal to every living thing the true purpose of existence.

It is not what anyone alive can imagine. It is not something that one can try to aspire to. It is beyond all comprehension. *I can say that its beauty is magnificent beyond all dreams.*

And as each one of you perform your silent work, I will embrace you to My heart, and henceforth your souls shall be lifted up and your eyes will reveal My presence within. This I say to all My devotees, from the Lord's mountaintop where all the universe becomes one: Be about My work, My beloved devotees. Your breath will carry the scent of blossoms from heaven. Your example will be that of angels. Your joy will be My joy.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

From *Finding God*, by Charles Penn, pgs. 177-180

All Are Bound by the Law of *Karma*

Many of these stories have been told before by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. However, His telling them again at *Shivarathri*, 2005 moved the assembled devotees to tears and laughter.

Every human being, insect, bird, beast, and animal—nay, every living being in this world—is bound by destiny. No one can escape from the result of *karma*,* good or bad. It is natural for every living being to obey the laws of nature and the law of *karma*. For example, bats hang from the branches of a tree head downward. That is their nature, how they are born to live.

All Have *Karma*

Human beings in this world tend to think they are undergoing suffering for no reason. They feel, “I have not done anything wrong! Then why am I undergoing this suffering?” But the fact is otherwise. Whatever pleasure or pain a living being undergoes is certainly the outcome of the *karma* performed by that person. Every human being performs *karma* and consequentially enjoys its fruit. Nevertheless, it remains unclear to people whether [their circumstances are] a natural consequence of their actions or due to an unknown [or random] reason. Not only human beings, but even bacteria, birds, insects, beasts, and animals experience the consequences of their *karma*.

In support of this inevitable law of *karma*, I would like to narrate some incidents that happened long ago, just to demonstrate

this truth. These incidents explain how certain events took place.

Promise to Subbamma

There used to be a great devotee by the name of Subbamma in Puttaparthi. She was very rich. She had no children. Whatever she had, she used to give in charity to one and all with the feeling, “I am only sharing my God-given wealth with my fellow human beings.” She led a pious and noble life with a sense of equanimity. She had, however, one desire. She used to pray, “Swami! At the time of my departure from this earthly sojourn, will You quench my thirst by pouring a few drops of water into my mouth with Your Divine hands?” I promised her that I would do so.

Six years after I gave that promise to her, I had to go to Chennai to fulfill an engagement in a devotee’s house. This was during the Second World War. Once an hour, there used to be an air raid precaution siren, and the streets would empty in no time. I stayed there for three days and started My return journey straight to Bukkapatnam from Chennai in a car.

**karma*: actions and their results; tendencies inherited as a result of actions and habits from previous lives

Meanwhile, Subbamma fell seriously ill and was taken to Bukkapatnam from Puttaparthi. That was her parental home. There she died. Her relatives started making certain sarcastic remarks, such as, "Sai Baba gave His word to her that He would pour water into her mouth at her last moments. Did He come? Where has He gone?"

Subbamma's brothers and relatives made all the arrangements for having her body cremated. In those days, it was not easy to procure firewood to cremate a dead body, especially in the villages. However, they procured some firewood and made everything ready. Meanwhile, passing by the house of Subbamma, I noticed the people gathered there. I inquired, *Who is going to be cremated?*

The washerman, Subbanna, was there. He replied, "Swami! Subbamma is dead." I inquired again, *Is that so? When did she die?* "Three days ago, Swami," he replied.

I went into the house where her body was kept. Her relatives were about to take her body out for cremation. Her sister saw Me and started wailing. She said, "Baba! She longed for Your arrival. She yearned for You to pour water into her mouth before she breathed her last. In the end, she died without her wish being fulfilled."

I told her that there was no possibility of such an eventuality and asked her to fetch

some water in a tumbler. I put a tulasi (holy basil) leaf in the water and removed the cloth that covered her face. Ants were crawling all over her body. I called her name softly, *Subbamma!*

She opened her eyes and saw Me. She held My hands and wept. She asked, "When did You come, Swami?" I replied, *I came*

just now. I wiped her tears gently with a towel and told her, *Subbamma! Look here.* I then poured a few drops of the sacred water into her mouth and said, *Now close your eyes peacefully.*

They were wondering, "How can this be? Subbamma died three days ago. ... How is it that she opened her eyes just now and spoke to Swami? ..."

Subbamma drank that water from My hands and breathed her last. Thus, I fulfilled My promise to Subbamma.

While this strange phenomenon was taking place, all her relatives and attending doctors witnessed these events with awe. They could not believe their eyes. They were wondering, "How can this be! Subbamma died three days ago. There was no breath in her body. How is it that she opened her eyes just now and spoke to Swami? Perhaps it is a divine miracle of Sai Baba!" Subbamma constantly worried during her lifetime about Swami always being on the move visiting various places, and that perhaps her last wish would not be fulfilled. But I kept the promise that I had made to her long before.

At last, the dead body of Subbamma was cremated by her relatives according to their family custom. She was a Brahmin lady. I

had started out for Puttaparthi in a bullock cart that had been kept ready for My return. The brother of griham ammayi ("mother of this body"—Easwaramma) and I sat in the bullock cart. His name was Chandramouli (maternal uncle of Swami's physical form). We saw smoke emanating from the cremation ground where Subbamma's mortal remains were being consigned to the flames. Chandramouli inquired, "Swami! You were with Subbamma's dead body until now. Why did You not wait until the cremation was over?"

I told him, *Chandramouli! I am not a person who goes back on his word. I gave My word to Subbamma that I would be present by her side during her last moments and pour water into her mouth. That I fulfilled and advised her to depart from this world peacefully. I kept My promise and am now returning to My abode.*

Showering Grace on Subbamma

Chandramouli felt very happy. In fact, Subbamma was held in high esteem by the entire village. She was the head of the village, being the wife of the *karanam* (a village official). All the property of the village was held in her name. However, since she had come into the fold of Swami, she had no other interests in life except Swami. Right from early morning until bedtime, she was constantly engaged only in Swami's work.

On certain occasions I used to retire into the caves of the nearby hills without informing her. Poor lady! She used to go around the hills searching for Me. She used to pack *upma*, *dosa*, *vada*, *idli*, and so on (an assortment of savory foods), in a *tiffin* carrier and come in search of Me. When she finally found Me, I used to ask teasingly, *Subbamma!*

What did you bring for Me?

She used to reply, "Swami! I brought the things that you like to eat."

Then I used to tell her, *Give Me a dosa*. She then served *dosa* on a

plate and handed it over to Me. I used to tease her further saying, *Subbamma! I don't like this dosa. Give Me some idli, upma, vada, and the other things*. Poor lady! She used to serve Me all those items. From morning until evening, she used to prepare such things and wait for Me, and still she was anxious to know what else I might need. Once I told her, *Subbamma! You need not fear. I don't need anything. I have put all these questions to you, asking for this and that, only to make your devotion and surrender known to the world.*

Subbamma then requested of Me, "Swami! I am happy that I have been able to serve You food. I am also happy that You ate these items with love and affection toward me. I will be happy if You can kindly put a small quantity of this food in my mouth with Your Divine hands." Then, I took a small piece of *idli* from the plate and put it in her

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pour water in her mouth.
That I fulfilled.*

mouth with a little *chutney*. She felt extremely happy. Thus, Subbamma experienced great bliss in the divine proximity of Swami up until her last breath.

Chandramouli, who was a witness to My showering of love and grace on Subbamma on a number of occasions, observed, "Swami!

How compassionate You are toward Your devotees! We don't have words to express Your love and compassion toward devotees, especially Subbamma." True! Words fail to describe Swami's love and compassion toward Subbamma. The devotion of Subbamma toward Swami surpassed even that of [the great saint] Prahlada.

People by now realized that Swami had fulfilled the promise He had given to Subbamma. They felt that Subbamma's life had been sanctified. Taking a cue from her example, several elderly people used to visit Me with the request, "Swami! Please give Your word that You will pour sanctified water into my mouth with Your divine hands at the time of my departure from this world."

I used to tell them, *My dear ones! Not all people can get this great boon. If you are destined to get it, you will certainly get it. I*

will come at the appropriate time and pour sanctified water in your mouth.

Promise to Kondama Raju

Kondama Raju (grandfather of Swami's physical form) used to observe people coming to Swami with such requests. He also



developed a yearning for this *prapti* (sign of deservedness). One day, he approached Me and requested, "Swami! You are born into our family, our lineage. You have upheld the honor and glory of our lineage. But I also have a request to make to You. I wish and pray that my birth in our family should be sanctified. I therefore request that you please pour some holy water into

my mouth with Your Divine Hands during my last moments of life."

I assured him that I would certainly fulfill his request. He felt very happy, for he knew that once Swami had given His word, He would certainly stick to it. Kondama Raju lived for 112 years. Every morning, he would walk from the village to the new *mandir* (temple) to have My *darshan*. One day I asked him, *Why do you walk all the way from the village to the mandir and back? There may be cattle on the way, and if they charge*

at you, you will fall down and get injured, won't you?

He used to answer very boldly, "Swami! When You are protecting me and constantly standing by my side, what animal could harm me?"

One day early in the morning, he came to the *mandir* and had My *darshan*. He returned home and lay down.

After a while, he told Easwaramma (mother of Swami's earthly form) to go over by the Sathya-bhama temple* and see whether Swami was coming that way. She went there,

returned, and told him, "Yes, Swami is coming in His car." Swami had a small car then.

Kondama Raju said [to his daughter-in-law], "Easwaramma! Get a tumbler of water and put a tulasi leaf in it." She did so accordingly. He held the tumbler in his hand and waited for Me. He knew that his end was near, and that I had come there to fulfill My promise. No one else knew this. I found him holding the tumbler. He said, "Swami! I am ready."

I replied, *I am also ready.*

*Kondama Raju built this temple dedicated to Sathyabhama, consort of Lord Krishna—a rarity in India—years prior to Swami's birth. The story is related in more detail in the biography, *Sathya Sai Baba: Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram, Part I* by Prof. N. Kasturi, pgs. 3-4.

As I poured the water into his mouth, he passed away peacefully. Before passing away, he said, "What a great fortune it is to drink water from Your Divine Hands before departing from this world! Even King Dasaratha (father of Lord Rama), who performed great penance and sacrifice, did not have such good fortune. My life is redeemed."

Saying thus, he closed his eyes.

With this incident of Kondama Raju, it was once again revealed to the whole world that Swami would certainly keep His word, come what

may! The lives of Subbamma and Kondama Raju were thus redeemed. I manifest My divine *leelas* (play, sport) in many ways to fulfill My word, and I go to great lengths to fulfill My promises. However, some devotees act contrary to their words.

Other Experiences of Young Sathya

I was taken to Kamalapuram for higher education. The elder brother of this body, Seshama Raju, was very intent on My pursuing higher education. Therefore, he took Me along with him to Kamalapuram and had Me admitted to the school. In those days, I struggled very much to pursue education due to lack of funds. Often times, I had to manage with empty pockets. Hence, I used to make use of My poetic skills to earn a few coins to meet My personal needs. In the same village, there used to be a businessman

I manifest My divine leelas (play, sport) in many ways to fulfill My word, and I go to great lengths to fulfill My promises.

by the name of Kotte Subbanna. He used to run a provision shop in which some Ayurvedic medicines were also sold.

Once, a new Ayurvedic medicine called Bala Bhaskara was introduced for sale in his shop. It was a new and very efficacious medicine. It could fetch Subbanna a good profit if popularized. He therefore requested Me to shoulder the responsibility of creating an advertising campaign for his new medicine. I agreed to his request but asked for some more information about the medicine. Then I composed a song about the efficacy of the medicine and gathered a few children of My age to go round the nearby villages with placards in their hands, singing the song composed by Me. The song ran thus:

*There it is! There it is! Oh, children!
Come, come! There is the medicine
Bala Bhaskara. Be it an upset stomach
or a swollen leg, be it joint pain or
flatulence, be it any ailment, known or
unknown, take this Bala Bhaskara for
an instant cure!*

*If you wish to know where it is available,
there is the shop of Kotte Subbanna.
There in that shop can you pick it up.
Come here, boys! Come here! It is an
excellent tonic, prepared by the famous
physician Gopalacharya himself! Come
here boys! Come here!*

(TELUGU SONG)

By the time we completed our advertising tour of the nearby villages, all the stock of medicines in Subbanna's shop was sold out. He felt very happy. Then he called Me and offered me a pair of knickers and a shirt that

he had had stitched for Me. But I flatly refused them, saying, "Subbanna! I did not compose that song for the sake of new clothes. I don't need them. I won't touch them. Please take them back. If you thus offer some money or articles in return for My services, I will not set foot into your shop."

He realized My sincerity and strong feelings. From then onward, he used to say, "Raju! I don't want anything in this world except Your love."

Swami's Father Brings Him Home

Another incident happened while I was studying in Kamalapuram. I attended a scout camp in a nearby village called Pushpagiri, where a big fair was being held. I was away from the house for a few days, and there was nobody to fetch water from a distant well for household purposes. Hence, the wife of Seshama Raju had to shoulder that responsibility. By the time I returned from the scout camp, Seshama Raju was angry that there was nobody in the house to help his wife.

He was engaged in drawing lines in a notebook with the help of a wooden ruler. As soon as he saw Me, he shouted at Me, "Hey! Come here. There has been no one in the house to fetch water for the last few days. Your sister-in-law had to attend to that job also, besides her normal domestic chores." So saying, he took the ruler and beat Me angrily. The ruler broke into three pieces. My hand was swollen, giving Me a lot of pain. I did not give a reply or reveal the incident to anybody. I tied a bandage on My hand using a wet cloth.

The next day, Seshama Raju's son died. Seshama Raju sent a telegram to Pedda Venkama Raju (Swami's father), and Venkama Raju rushed immediately to see Seshama Raju. He started out from Puttaparthi, came to Bukkapatnam, and from there traveled to Kamalapuram. *Griham Abbayi* ("father of this body") asked Me why I had a bandage on My forearm.

I tried to explain it away very casually, as if nothing had happened. I told him there was a slight pain due to a blister on the forearm, and therefore I had put a bandage on it.

But there was a lady belonging to the Vysya community (merchant caste) in the neighboring house, who used to make her living by preparing *dosas* and selling them. She tried to reason with *Griham Abbayi*, saying, "What! Venkama Raju! I know you are sufficiently well-off so as to get Raju educated at your place. Why should you put Him to so much trouble by keeping Him under the care of His elder brother at such a distant place? You do not know how much suffering the poor boy is undergoing here. He has to fetch drinking water from a distant place carrying two big pitchers with the help of a *kavadi* (type of yoke) on his young shoulders daily." Thus, she narrated several incidents where I had to undergo physical strain and suffering.

Griham Abbayi was deeply moved on hearing My plight and immediately called Me and said, "My dear son! You get ready immediately to come along with me. We shall go back to Puttaparthi." All the family members loved Me. He therefore lamented, "I have come to know that the injury to your forearm was due to your elder brother's beating. I myself never beat You. You are undergoing so much suffering here. Come! Let us go back to Puttaparthi."

At the time when this incident took place, *Griham Abbayi* made a

comment that still rings in My ears even today: "Sathyam! If one is alive, one can make a living even by selling salt. I can no longer put You to such an ordeal. Can I not provide for Your living even with my meager income?" So saying, he shed tears. From then onward, he did not send Me to stay with anyone. My formal education ended with high school. I did not attend any college. Nevertheless, I have been continuing My Mission as a *Sathya Bodhaka* (Teacher of Truth), making Puttaparthi My headquarters.

I composed a beautiful poem depicting the glorious history of Puttaparthi, which reads as follows:

*Encircling that town, the sacred river
Chitravathi flows in all its pristine
beauty. Around that town are beau-
tiful mango groves, symbolizing*

*I love such boys who earn good
names. In fact, I give Myself
to such boys. I will give you
whatever you want.*

auspiciousness. Standing guard on the four sides of that town are the deities of Parvati and Parameswara, constantly protecting it. Firmly installed in the midst of that town is the effulgent Lord Vishnu, in all His splendor. That world-famous town is Puttapuram or Puttaparthi, with its fresh-water tank built by Chikkavadiyar, which stands as an everlasting monument to the glory of Bukkaraya (a 14th-century king).
(TELUGU POEM)

Social Welfare Projects

I built a residential colony in commemoration of the great love and devotion Subbamma had toward Me, and I named it Karanam Subbamma Nagar, which is next to the *gokulam* (dairy). I also purchased cows and engaged some people to look after them. Some of these people were accommodated in a few of those houses in Karanam Subbamma Nagar. Thus, I took steps to see that the name of Subbamma is remembered forever by devotees.

A few years ago, I started another project by the name of *Deenajanoddharana*

Pathakam, for the purpose of adopting some orphan children and providing them with food, clothing, and education, so that when they grow up, they will be able to lead lives of honor and dignity. I am looking after these



boys with complete love and care. You must have seen them coming for *darshan* every Thursday and Sunday. I also built living quarters for these boys, so that they may abide comfortably in those houses. Besides their normal education, they are now acquiring proficiency in extracurricular activities also. Thus, there are so many service activities that I have undertaken right from My childhood. If they all were to be narrated

now, it would go on for hours altogether.

Dear students! I have great love for you. I wish for all of you to grow up well and earn a good name. I love such boys who earn good names. In fact, I give Myself to such boys. I will give you whatever you want.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Shivarathri Discourse, March 9, 2005

An Invitation

Dear Beloved Lord,

You have said, *The World is My Mansion*. We in the United States of America pray that You will come to visit us here. We are in one room of Your mansion.

The very thought of seeing You in this environment is thrilling beyond words. Your visit would mean so much to many who cannot travel to India, and others who long for your *darshan*. We send our sincere prayer to You that this journey will become a reality.

Those fortunate souls who travel with You will be equally welcome in our homes and hearts. We look forward to accommodating and serving You and Your entourage. That would be the greatest privilege of our lives—of many lifetimes.

—Robert and Barbara Bozzani
Pasadena, California

Dear Devotees of the Lord,

Please know that we have permission to do this. All devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba are invited to send invitations to our Beloved Lord. The *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA* is pledged to publish as many of the invitations as possible. Our Sri Sathya Sai Baba does read each issue of the *Newsletter* that bears His name. He often makes comments and gives Divine Commands as to what should or should not appear in this publication.

Of course you are welcome to send invitations to Him directly, but we would appreciate receiving a copy of the invitation for publication. It is hoped that you will sign your names to these precious documents (invitations), but if you wish to remain anonymous, that is your privilege, especially in lieu of the fact that Sri Sai Baba knows everyone's name, background, lifestyle, and all that we do, say, and think, as well as our *karma* and past existences.

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My Dear Children,

Awake! Awake! Awake! There is no time for slumber. You have been asleep and dreaming for thousands of lifetimes. If you do not awaken now, this chance may not come again for thousands more.

Come with Me. Separation is no longer the order of the day. I separated Myself from Myself so that I could love Myself more. The experience is finished. I want all of Myself to return and merge into Me, the One Self.

I gave many of you the advantage of an unhappy childhood, including conflict and separation from your mother and father. In doing this, I removed you from the temptation to become attached to human parents or a specific family situation; that left you with only one option, to “attach yourselves to Me.”

Why do you not avail yourself of this opportunity instead of continually seeking these relationships that can never satisfy you? Even if your childhood had been as idyllic as you would have liked, it is not your mother’s love that you need. Ultimately, it is not even the love of His Name and Form that you long for.

Your deepest innermost urge is to return to yourself—to love yourself, to become Being, Awareness, and Bliss—which is all you will ever be.

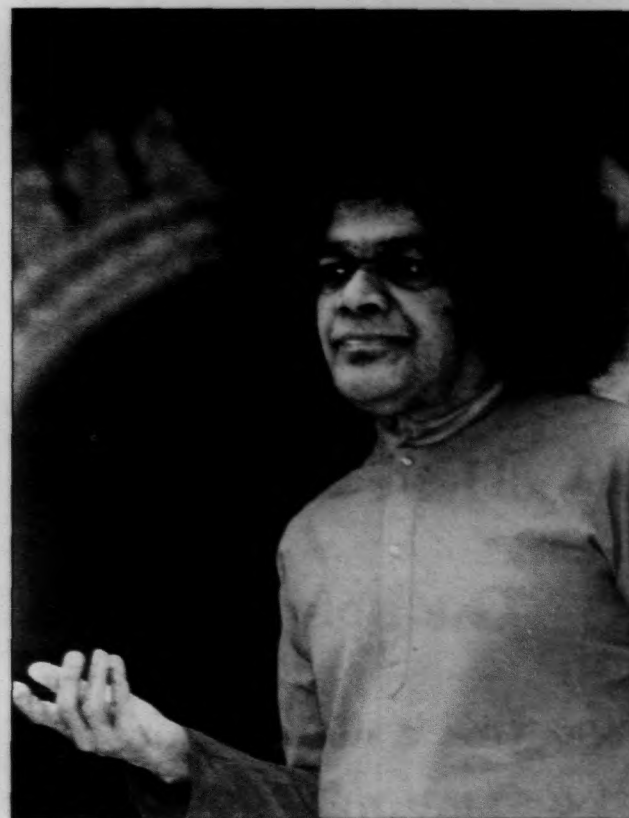
Let go of the past; stop trying to get from each other what you still think you missed in childhood or marriage. You will never find anyone who is enough—not even Me!

Love yourself, know yourself! Only you will ever be enough. Can you not love yourself, because I love [you] over and over again? Did I not move heaven and earth to bring you to Me?

I have asked all devotees to repeat the mantra, “I am God, I am not different from God.” Now I ask you specifically to follow that instruction, as it will be more helpful than any other one thing you can do.

Now remember, I love you.

Love yourselves.



—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Early 1995, Puttaparthi (letter to students)

Children's Corner

Our Body is the Lord's Temple

We all have a duty to recognize this great truth:

The splendor of the Lord is in man himself!

You find a diamond in the earth, not hanging on a tree. In the same way, you can find the Lord within yourself, not outside you. Therefore, the body is not an ordinary thing. It is God's temple, a vehicle carrying the Lord.

If our world is like a town, then the Lord travels about the town, riding inside the vehicle of the body. Therefore, it is not correct to disregard the body or neglect its care.

Some people do not understand that having a body allows us to carry out our sacred duties. We must take care of the body in a way that shows respect for the temple of the Lord. This means keeping it clean—and letting the God inside us shine through us with happiness and love.



We must realize too that God is in the five elements of nature—earth, fire, water, air, and space. The body is made up of these five elements, so we need to take care of these sacred resources along with our body.

You can picture your heart as the home of God, and that He travels with you every day, wherever you go.

You might like to draw a picture of yourself with God in your heart.

—Adapted from *Bal Vikas Magazine*, Italy

The Importance of Developing an Inner Relationship with Baba

Those of us who have not yet developed an inner relationship with Baba would benefit greatly if we did so now. Baba has told us for many years that one day His form will no longer be accessible. Then what? If we keep looking outside ourselves for His help, love, and knowledge and it is no longer “out there,” we will feel lost or even devastated.

Baba got the point across to one devotee who finally had the opportunity to ask Him, in person, why it had taken Him so long to come to his assistance. Baba replied that the devotee had thought of Baba half way around the world, and that it had taken Him a while to come and help. Had the devotee called Baba right in his own heart, he would have been there at that moment. Many of us are still limiting Baba to His form.

Those of us who do not experience Baba’s constant presence within—His sweetness, love, and continuous awareness of us—don’t know what joy and comfort we are missing.

Baba’s form signifies different expressions to different individuals, such as Father, Mother, Guru, and so on. He can be any or all of those to us, day and night, if only we

realize His presence right in our own hearts. After all, He is omnipresent. That means there is no place he is not. He is in you and in me, in the criminal and in the saint, in the sun and in the wind. There is nothing He is not aware of, and no one He can’t work through to help us or to teach us a lesson.

So how do we go about realizing Baba within? There are many ways. A few examples might help while you discover what works for you. Also remember to ask Baba to please bless with success your sincere efforts to experience His constant presence in your heart.

You might start by visualizing Baba in your heart and addressing Him within. Keep your focus on your heart as you thank Him for the blessing of knowing that He is there, for the delicious meal, for helping you get home safely, for His companionship. When directing your gratitude to the Divinity within, you can feel that connection, that love, as your spiritual heart opens and expands. We can talk with Baba while focusing on the heart, the way we would talk with a wise parent, our closest friend, or in whatever role we wish Him to fulfill at that moment.

We can do everything with Him. For example, we can say, "Baba, lets go for a walk." Then we can share and enjoy with Him the song of a bird, a beautiful flower, or laughing with Him when we see puppies romping or whatever makes our heart sing.

Laugh with Him, cry with Him, have fun with Him. Pretty soon, it becomes a way of life you never want to give up. You will experience such love, companionship,

help, joy, and comfort that you never thought possible.

And when that dreaded day comes, and Baba's form is no longer accessible to us or no longer on earth, we can know that our Baba is still in our hearts, with us, and closer than His form could ever be. After all, He is—and will continue ever to be—omnipresent.

—Karin Erickson
Prescott Valley, Arizona

There Is a Tree

There is a tree
In Puttaparthi,
Beneath which pilgrims abide.

It's a place that is quiet,
Away from the riot
Of traffic and commerce outside.

Pilgrims meditate there
To give spirit some care
And commune with Sai Baba, their Host.

May these seeds from that tree
Help remind you to see
That it's love that the world needs the most.



—Marcus Haile
Wrightwood, California

Hurricane Katrina and an ER Doctor

The Biggest Evacuation This Country Has Ever Seen

Hemant H. Vanakawala, M.D., is an emergency room doctor, and a member of Texas-4 Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), which is part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency team (FEMA). Dr. Vanakawala tells us:

Our medical team was the first to arrive at the New Orleans Airport and set up our field hospital. We watched the population grow from 30 health care professionals taking care of six patients to around 10,000 patients in the first 15 hours. These people had had no food, water, or security for several days. They were tired, frustrated, sick, wet, and heartbroken. Patients were brought in by any available type of transportation, with most arriving by helicopter.

The entire remaining population of New Orleans funneled through our doors. Our little civilian team, along with other DMAT teams, set up and ran the biggest evacuation this country has ever seen. The numbers of those in need of help became absolutely staggering.

Our team had been working the flight-line overnight, as the New Orleans Airport turned into the busiest helicopter base in the world. At any given time, we had at least eight to ten helicopters unloading on the tarmac, filled with ten to forty survivors at a time. It was a nonstop process 24 hours a day. We all did our best to work with the roar of rotor blades, the smell of jet fuel, and thousands of eyes looking to us for answers and hope.

On our busiest day, we unloaded just under 15,000 patients arriving by air and ground. At that time we had about 30

medical providers and 100 ancillary staff. All we could do was provide the barest amount of comfort and care. We watched many people die. For them, we were able to provide only the most basic medical care, black-tagging the sickest people and culling them from the masses, so they could pass away in a private, separate area.

I cannot begin to describe the transformation in my own sensibilities from my normal practice of medicine to the reality of that operation. We were short of wheelchairs and litters; we had to stack patients in airport chairs and lay them on the floor. There they remained for hours—too tired to be frightened, too weak to care about their soaked clothing, too desperate to ask what was going to happen. We did not practice medicine, nor was there anything glamorous or routine about what we did. We moved thousands of patients daily from the flight-line to the terminal and baggage areas, loading them onto baggage carts and trucking them to the baggage area. There was no time to talk, no time to cry, no time to think—because the sick, injured, and frightened kept coming.

Our only salvation came when a team from Washington arrived. They were able to streamline the exodus of patients. Only when the thousands of survivors had been

evacuated, the floors soaked in bleach, the putrid air allowed to exchange for fresh, and the number of soldiers outnumbered the patients, did we start to feel a sense of catching up to the needs of the hour. I met so many people there, people who had worked at Ground Zero after 9-11, in tsunami relief efforts, and on tours in Iraq—and every one of them said this was the worst thing they had ever seen. That feeling was unanimous among these battle-worn veterans of every kind of disaster you can imagine.

For those of you who want to help, the next step is to help the survivors who may

arrive in your communities. If you are not medically trained, you can still go to the shelters, hold hands, and give hugs and prayers. If nothing else, it will remind you of how much you have and how grateful we all should be. These people have nothing. Not only have they lost their material possessions and homes, but many have lost their children, spouses, parents, arms, legs, vision, security, and self-esteem. Talk to these survivors, hear their stories, learn what they have been through, and look into their eyes. Godspeed to them all!

—Hemant H. Vanakawala, M.D.

Dear Brothers and Sisters

As Sai devotees, when natural disasters take place, our task is defined, and it cries out for a response. Such is the catastrophic impact of Hurricane Katrina in the southern USA, and the trauma of Hurricanes Rita, Wilma, and so on. Many of our Sai brothers and sisters in the affected areas have already rendered assistance and are continuing to help.

The USA Sai Organization, under the leadership of the President of the Central Council, Phil Gosselin, the Central Coordinator, Vijay Desai, and Zone Chairman, David Gries, have surveyed our resources and the opportunities where we might be of service. They have constituted a committee of devotees in the regions within and surrounding the stricken areas. The committee will coordinate the efforts of those who are willing and able to serve.

In addition to dedicated Sai workers, it will be necessary to purchase goods and material to distribute to the needy people whose lives have been uprooted by these unprecedented disasters. A fund has been established under the supervision of the Central Council President, Central Coordinator, and Zone Chairman, named above. Those devotees who wish to donate may do so. The information is given below: Checks may be made out to Hurricane Relief, Whitefield Inc., a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization. Mail to: Whitefield Inc. c/o Vijay Desai, 108 Flaxwood Lane, Minoa, New York 13116, email: vijaydesai918@aol.com.

—Michael Goldstein, M.D.
President, Prasanthi Council

Announcement

A REMINDER: There is a website designed to aid Hurricane Katrina victims through the auspices of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), at <http://www.fema.gov/katrina>.

—Phil Gosselin, Ph.D.
Central Coordinator, U.S. Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organization

"You Are Not the Body"

I have often heard Sai Baba say these words in His discourses. He addresses His students and devotees as *Prema Swarupala* (Embodiments of Love), not embodiments of the body. During the 30 years I have been a devotee and student of Sai Baba's teachings, I have read hundreds of times in the *Sanathana Sarathi* and the *Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA*, these same words—*You are not the body*. Swami also cautions us not to limit Him to the form, but to know Him in all things—all life. I did not incorporate this teaching into my life, and thus Swami gave me a great lesson on the body versus the indwelling spirit.

My CPA (Certified Public Accountant) is a quadriplegic. He dove into a lake when he was a young man and broke his neck. This injury caused him to be confined to a wheelchair. He could breathe on his own and had partial use of his hands. He could move his shoulders and bend his elbows.

He married his nurse. They had children, and he started a career as a CPA because it was a sitting job. When I became a client, I was amazed at what he had achieved. I was also amazed at his attitude toward life and other people. I would go into his office, and he would greet me with a smile. He was always very well groomed. Often he would say to me on our initial greeting, "Joy, it's a beautiful day. Life is beautiful, isn't it?"

He had long, thin metal sticks that would attach to his arms. These became his fingers as he worked on the computer. Through the years we became friends, and I never ceased to marvel at his joy and wisdom.

I made my yearly tax appointment and arrived at the appointed hour. I was ushered into his office by his secretary of many years, Lulu. She was a divorced mother of five. David had hired her not for her expertise in financial dealings—she had none. He hired her because she needed a job to support her family. And then he taught her the job.

I sat down across from David at his desk. He grinned at me and said, "Before we start your taxes, I have a story to tell you."

"Great," I responded and leaned back on my chair with anticipation.

"My wife died six months ago," began David. "She had a brain tumor that was untreatable." I was stunned to silence. He went on, "I was visiting her in the hospital shortly before her death. I asked her if she was afraid to die. She replied that she was not the least bit frightened, because she loved God and felt that she had lived a good life. However, she confessed she was very much afraid for me. I needed a tremendous amount of personal care, and who would help me? How would I continue?"

"Looking deep into my eyes, she asked me to promise her that I would marry my

secretary. Of course, I was shocked to say the least. I tried to protest, but my wife was very persistent and eventually extracted this promise from me.

"Soon after this conversation she passed away. I didn't have time to think of our promise and continued to work and console our children. One day, months after my wife's death, I for some reason remembered our conversation and the promise. I was at work and retold the story to Lulu, finishing with the comment, "Silly isn't it, Lulu?"

"No, your wife discussed this with me," replied Lulu with force. "It is not silly. You are the gold standard by which I have judged all men since our meeting. That is why I never remarried. There is no man who comes anywhere near to you as a person."

"So," David continued, "Joy, we were married two weeks ago. We just got back from our honeymoon!" My delight was obvious as I congratulated David.

While driving home, I relived the story over and over. I could hear Baba's words, *You are not the body*. This was proof to me that the real attraction is what is inside of us—not the outside appearance. David's attitude, good nature, sense of humor, love of God, and genuine happiness spilled out from inside of him. Two women fell deeply in love with David and married him. Yet physically he offered little.

By the time I reached home, I was crying happy tears for my friend and tears of learning for me. Sai Baba gave me a great lesson, and I remember it often. Beauty shines forth from the inside out. We are not the body but the indwelling spirit, the God-Self. We are so much more than the body.

—J.F. Ziegler
Gilbert, Arizona

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Center Opening and Newcomer Program

Sathya Sai Baba Center of Tampa Bay, Florida

The Sathya Sai Baba Center of Tampa Bay in Florida celebrated the opening of a new hall for all of its meetings and activities. The opening ceremonies were spread out over three days, April 22-24, 2005, and included traditional *Vedic* opening ceremonies as done in Puttaparthi. The presiding priest was B. Raja Gopalan, who has spent considerable time performing *pujas* in the *mandir* at Puttaparthi. Swami was officially welcomed at 7:00 a.m., Saturday, April 23rd, with *Poorna Kumbham* and *Vedic* chanting.

The highlight of the weekend activities consisted of an open meeting for newcomers on the evening of Saturday, April 23. Over 200 people attended the program—a standing-room-only crowd. The hall was outfitted with beautiful decorations, interspersed with Swami's messages displayed in a most elegant fashion, reminiscent of and up to the standard of the devotees' efforts in Puttaparthi. The program consisted of an opening half hour of devotional singing in both English and Sanskrit.

The first speaker was Wayner Crowder, President of the Southeast Region of the United States. He spoke on "The Importance of the Sai Organization in the Role Leading to Self-Realization." The second distinguished speaker was Dr. Jose Gomez, Service Coordinator of the Southeast region, who spoke on the "Power of Love." The final

speaker was Rita Bruce, author of four books about Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who spoke on, "Transformation and the Sacredness of Womanhood."

The SSE children of the center presented the play, "Why is Man the Acme of Creation?" based on a short story by Sai Baba. The powerful and heart-softening film, "His Works," was shown prior to the dinner program. The highlight of the evening consisted of a special musical program by Swami's former students, who came from various locations just for the program.

The reaction of the newcomer crowd was overwhelmingly positive. A westerner who had no prior knowledge of Sai Baba approached one of the Center members with the following comment, "It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience! The love and peace that radiated within and from the Center's altar room was powerful and awesome." Several commented on the powerful vibrations and strong feelings of love generated during the program. The presence of the Lord was felt by all, and no one wanted the evening to end. Devotional singing resumed even after the formal conclusion of the program and then continued well into the night.

—Sathya Sai Baba Center
Tampa Bay, Florida

Sathya Sai Free Medical Screening Camp

Serving Low-Income Neighborhoods in Saint Petersburg, Florida

The Sathya Sai Baba Organization of America, Tampa Bay Center, conducted a free Medical Screening Camp on Saturday, June 11, 2005, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the downtown Salvation Army facility, near several low-income neighborhoods. The emphasis was on sharing love and treating visitors with compassion and care. The offered services included medical screenings, individual physician consultations, and preventive health education classes.

The Medical Camp was planned and prepared for in a record time of four weeks and three days, and organized by a steering committee consisting of: Dr. Geetha Kamath (Chief Medical Officer), Dr. Axay Kalathia (Medical Director), Dr. Jay Kamath, Arati Lal (Camp Coordinator), and Nitesh Patel (Camp Coordinator).

With Swami's grace, the project gained momentum very quickly. The local as well as neighboring physician communities, pharmaceutical companies, public health agencies, the Mayor's office, community social workers, and Tampa Bay Sathya Sai Baba Center volunteers came together in a true spirit of cooperation. In preparation for smooth operations, the physicians as well as the volunteers were oriented prior to the event and familiarized with the Sathya Sai Organization's Medical Council Guidelines.

Flyers were distributed in the Camp neighborhood to houses, public parks, churches, bus stops, soup kitchens, thrift stores, grocery stores, homeless shelters, and social service organizations. Three senior Tampa Bay Center devotees—Esther Howarth, Bob Bonbrake, and Bill Verzi—were forerunners in the advertising campaign. Banners were hoisted outside the Salvation Army Headquarters and St. Vincent de Paul soup kitchens. Deborah Johnson, Supervisor at the Salvation Army, was ever ready with a smile to help in any way possible. She had her staff distribute flyers among local public and social service agencies.

On the day of the camp, 29 physicians and nurse practitioners and 65 professionally-dressed volunteers showed up ready to serve. They all had love in their hearts, exemplifying Baba's words, "Love All, Serve All."

The volunteers gathered at the Salvation Army Cathedral. The camp commenced with a prayer to Swami by Rita Bruce, followed by a short welcome speech by Dr. Geetha Kamath. Visitors started coming in at 8:20 a.m. The forecast for the day was for 90% chance of rain and thunderstorms, but Swami had other plans, as the rain miraculously stopped a few hours prior to the event. The rest of the day was picture-perfect and sunny.

Screenings were provided for blood sugar, cholesterol, obesity, dental, vision, hearing, head and neck cancer, breast cancer, respiration, and HIV. Physicians' one-on-one consultations included internal medicine, family practice, oncology (breast cancer exam and consultation), pulmonology, gastroenterology, dermatology, cardiology, gynecology, psychiatry, diabetes, adult and pediatric nutrition, and smoking cessation. A rotating schedule of health education classes were presented throughout the day, including anger management, depression, smoking cessation, digestive health, healthy heart, diabetes awareness, weight management, breast cancer awareness, and women's issues.

One visitor was visibly moved when he said, "Everyone seemed to care and treat me well—not like a bum off the street."

A total of 114 visitors came through the camp, and they were overwhelmed by the love and attention they received. The visitors were treated with smiles and respect. They were personally escorted throughout their visit at the camp. Visitors went through screenings, personal consultations with medical specialists, and educational presentations. The communities' free and low

cost clinical resources were researched in advance to ensure proper follow-up care for the visitors. The visitors who needed follow-up care were counseled by social service workers and

representatives from Pinellas County Social Services Homeless Mobile Unit, and the Johnnie Ruth Clarke organization, sponsors of a local low-cost clinic. They were informed about 211, a local health care information phone line. Two visitors had to be sent to the local Emergency Room after their blood sugar and blood pressure screening revealed abnormal levels.

The reception by the participants was overwhelmingly positive. People went out of their way to express how much love, genuine care, and attention they felt. One visitor was visibly moved when he said, "Everyone seemed to care and treat me well—not like a bum off the street." Many of the recipients reported never before experiencing such an event.



The Mayor's representative, Beth Eschenfelder, paid an official visit, and she was very impressed with the camp operations. She talked about the city getting actively involved with the camp next year. She was also very interested in finding out about Sai Baba and His "Organization."

Before the visitors left, they were asked if they would like to know more about the Sathya Sai Baba Organization. In a special room, a video of Sri Sathya Sai Baba called "His Works" played, and Rita Bruce, a long-standing devotee, was present to answer any questions about the Organization. It was the attendees' choice to view the video, and no encouragement was needed. They came in freely, sat down, watched the video, talked to Rita, and communicated their feelings. The committee did not expect many to come, but as always, Sai surprises us. About half of the clients who participated in the medical camp inquired about the Sai Organization. The comments were that they felt much love, everyone treated them well, and no one ignored them. This was repeated over and over again. Many of them were homeless but definitely not heartless. They may not have had a physical home, but they all had a spiritual home in their hearts.

As a parting gift, all visitors were given a "goodie bag" (a canvas bag inscribed with the Sai Organization's name, the slogan "Love All, Serve All," and the *Sarva Dharma* symbol that names the cardinal values of



Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct, and Nonviolence). The bags contained personal hygiene items, first aid kits, nutrition drinks, and food bars. The camp concluded with a closing assembly in the Salvation Army Cathedral and a thank you prayer to our beloved Swami.

The Medical Camp was a very spiritual experience, not only for the visitors but also for all the volunteers. Everyone left that day with an elevated feeling of bliss and a true understanding of Swami's message, "Love All, Serve All. Service to Man is Service to God."

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For a complete listing of available books by and about Sathya Sai Baba, please contact the Sathya Sai Book Center at the addresses or numbers above.

Faith is a cardinal virtue, and faith in God is a prop in life. Though God dwells in everybody, unless one has faith in God, he cannot become divine. Some people might say that they will believe only after they experience. But that is like putting the cart before the horse. In spirituality, faith always precedes experience.

*— Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1979
Pages 175*

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