

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

Dedicated with Love and Devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

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Only Talk

If you give up all and surrender to the Lord, He will guard you and guide you. When you complain, “Oh! He has not guarded me,” I reply, “You have not surrendered.” The Lord has come just for this very task. He is declaring that He will do so, that this is the very task that has brought Him!

Of course, you only talk of surrender, of placing all at the Feet [of the Lord], but you withhold a great deal. Your minds are wayward, like monkeys that skip and jump from bough to branch. Give them to Me; I can make them steady and harmless. When I say, “Sit!” they will sit. When I say, “Stand!” they will stand. ... But it must be a complete handing over—no reservations.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks 3, February 3, 1963

Surrender and the Mind

In the previous issue, we opened the topic of surrender and found it so rich that we were compelled to continue plumbing its evocative depths in this issue too. —Editors

People often come to Swami and say, “Swami, I have surrendered to You.” Swami remarks that simply saying so does not amount to

surrender. In worldly parlance, surrender implies the existence of two persons or entities—the one who is surrendering and the one who receives the surrender. Swami says that with God, there are no two entities like this, for the two have become

one! How is that possible, when the individual surrendering still has his physical body? The body may be there, but it becomes irrelevant and insignificant if the MIND has been surrendered to God.

Swami says, “When people tell Me they have surrendered, I ask them for their minds,

and they reply that they have given their minds to Me. But when they go away from My presence, they do just what they please, as if they had a mind

of their own. Where then is the question of their giving their minds to Me?

“It is more like temporarily lending their minds to Me and taking them back when they want! That is not what surrender is all about.” And to explain what

surrendering the mind really means, Swami tells a beautiful story from the *Ramayana*, which goes as follows:

Soon after entering the forest, Rama told Lakshmana (his brother), “Please locate a spot that seems good and suitable to you, and build there a small hut for all of us to

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—Barbara Bozzani, Editor

live. You can decide how the hut should be. I shall be gone for a while. Have the hut ready before sundown.”

So saying, Rama went off on some work of His own. After a few hours He came back and was greeted by His wife, Sita. Rama then told her, “I asked Lakshmana to build a hut for us. I don’t see him here. He must be around somewhere. Please go and see how the hut is coming up. Sunset is approaching, and the hut must be ready before that.”

Sita then went in search of Lakshmana but soon came back excited and running. Rama asked, “Sita, why are you running? You seem excited. What is the matter?” Sita said, “Lord, I don’t know what the problem is, but Lakshmana is out there sitting under a tree, crying bitterly! And there is no hut in sight.”

Rama seemed most puzzled. “Crying! Why? What happened?” He asked. Sita replied, “I don’t know what it is, but something is surely wrong.” Rama then said, “Come, let us go and find out.”

Upon finding Lakshmana, Rama asked, “Lakshmana, what is the problem? Why are you crying? Did I say something wrong? All I asked you to do was to build a hut.” Wiping his tears, Lakshmana asked, “My Lord, is that what You said? You asked me to locate a place that *I liked* and to build a hut to suit *my fancy*.”

Puzzled, Rama replied, “But what is wrong with that? After all, I was going away, and I could not be here to make these decisions.” Lakshmana answered, “That may be so, but what about me? How can *I* decide what is a good spot, what is a comfortable

hut, and so on, when my mind is surrendered to You?!”

Rama was relieved and also mightily pleased by this. Turning to Sita, He said, “Do you see My beloved brother? That is what true surrender means! He has no mind of his own. For him, everything is Mine and Mine alone, and there is no such thing as what is good for him or what is pleasing to him. He does not exist apart from Me!”

That, then, is what surrender is really all about. As far as we are concerned, what it boils down to is that one must accept whatever happens entirely as God’s will, whether it seems favorable or otherwise. (1)

Whoever Surrenders, God Accepts

God is so merciful that He will come ten steps toward you if you but take one step toward Him. Vibhishana, the brother of the evil demon, Ravana (who had abducted Sita), inquired from Hanuman (the great monkey warrior) whether Rama would accept his homage and take him under His protection. Vibhishana said, “I am the brother of His worst enemy, whom He has vowed to destroy; I am a member of the demonic race. I am unacquainted with the Vedas, the Sastras, or the rituals.”

Then Hanuman replied, “O you fool! Do you think Rama cares for ritual exactitude, family status, or scholarship? If so, how then could He accept me, a monkey?” That settled the matter. Vibhishana was assured of Rama’s grace.

Later, Rama arrived at the tip of the Indian peninsula, and was preparing to launch an invasion of Lanka, aided by the

monkey armies. Vibhishana, who had been banished from Lanka by Ravana, entered Rama's camp and was promptly apprehended and brought before Rama. Vibhishana immediately declared his surrender to Rama.

Rama took aside the elders of the monkey hordes and asked them whether he should accept Vibhishana into the fold. Of course, Rama did not need any counsel from anyone. He was never influenced by others. But still, just to bring them into the process, He consulted them and made a pretence of not having made up his mind yet.

The monkey elders, led by Sugriva, suggested that Vibhishana should be treated as an enemy and immediately done away with. The only exception was Hanuman, who of course had already observed that Vibhishana was no enemy.

After listening to their thoughts, Rama replied, "I have heard all of you. I know you all mean well and are concerned about My safety. Now please listen to what I have to say. Firstly, about My safety, perhaps you do not appreciate that I really do not need to invade Lanka to exterminate Ravana. Using but a miniscule part of My infinite power, I can destroy the whole world from wherever I am. I don't need anybody's help for that, including yours."

"Now let us turn to the matter of Vibhishana. He has *surrendered* to Me, and it is My *duty* to offer him protection under all circumstances. It does not matter if he feigns surrender; the very fact that he has said, 'I have surrendered to You,' is enough for Me. Nor need he have come here physically; even

if he had surrendered from Lanka, I would still be obliged to protect him. Indeed, even the mere thought of surrender on his part would put Me under obligation! There is no need to express surrender in words. ... It is My duty to protect anyone who has surrendered to Me, even if it be at your cost, or for that matter, at My cost, too!"

Someone then suggested that perhaps the only treatment Vibhishana deserved was to be thrown back into Lanka. Rama replied, "Yes! That is exactly what I plan to do! I am resolved to crown him as emperor of Lanka, after the demise of Ravana!"

When Sugriva then suggested that Vibhishana should not be promised a throne, because there was a chance than even the demonic Ravana might fall at the feet of the Lord and thus earn a pardon for all his iniquities, Rama replied, "In that case, I will take hold of both hands of my brother Bharata (the current ruler of Ayodhya) and beg him to make Vibhishana the Emperor of Ayodhya, our ancestral domain. We both, Bharatha and I, would thereafter spend our lives happily in the forests!" (1)(2)

That, then, is the Lord! Whoever surrenders, God accepts—on the spot, without reservations.

—Compiled from:

(1) *Message of the Lord as a Practical Philosophy* (Prasanthi Nilayam, 2001), pp. 368-371, and

(2) *Chinna Katha 1*, pp. 19-20



"Lord, Thy Will Be Done"

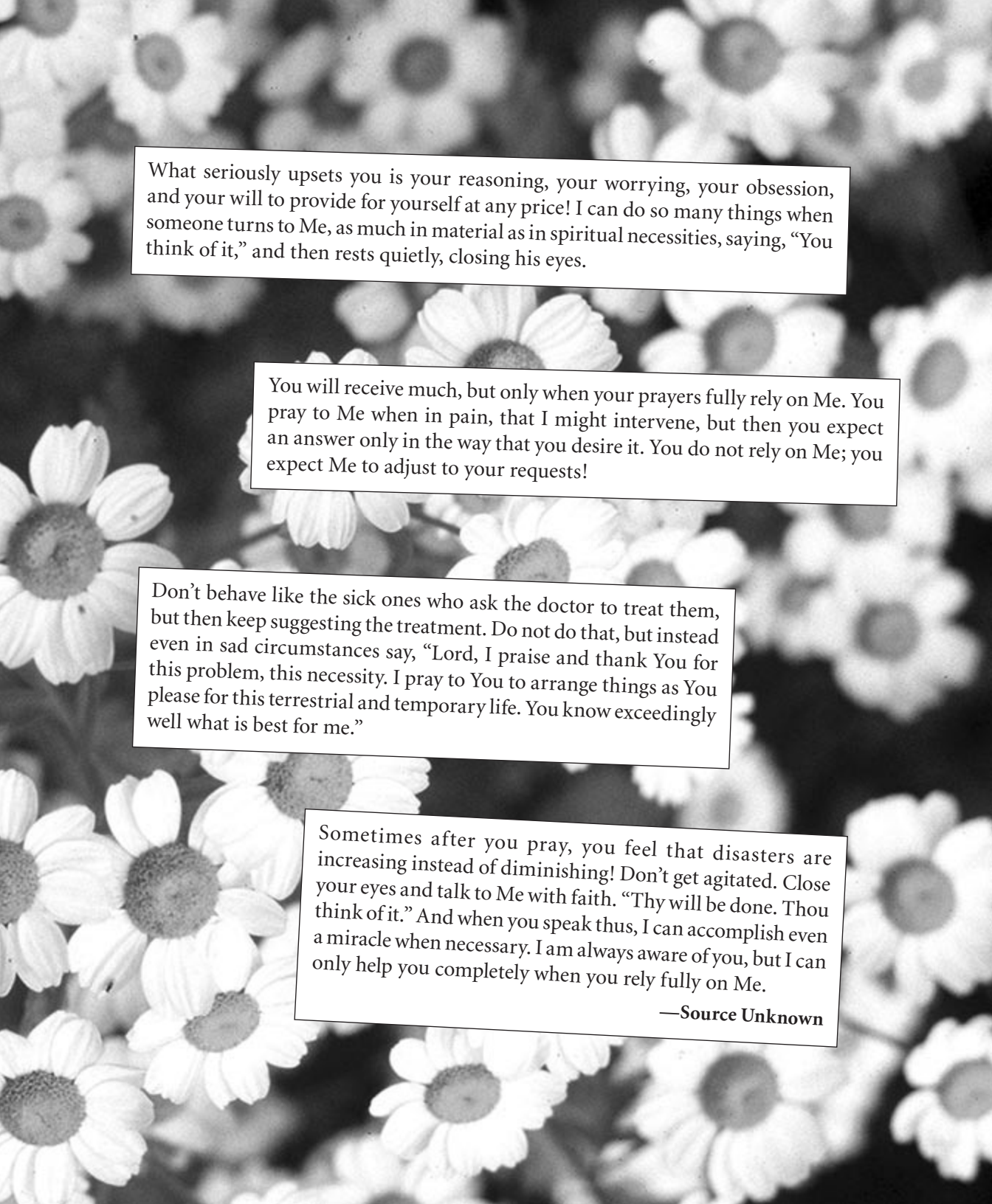
Instruction in How to Surrender

Why get agitated? Let Me take care of all your business. I shall be the one who will think about these things. I am waiting for nothing else than your surrender to Me. I intervene only when you know how to completely surrender; then you do not have to worry anymore, about anything. Say farewell to all fears and discouragement. By these, you demonstrate that you do not trust Me. On the contrary, you must rely blindly on Me.

To surrender means to turn your thoughts away from all your problems. Leave everything unto My hands, saying, "Lord, Thy will be done. You think of these things." That is to say, "Lord, I thank You for having taken everything into Your hands, and I know that You will resolve this for my highest good."

Remember, thinking of the consequences of a thing is contrary to surrender; that is, when you worry that a situation does not have the desired outcome, you thus demonstrate that you don't believe in My love for you. You thus prove that you don't consider your life to be under My control and don't believe that nothing escapes Me.

Never think, "How is this going to end? What is going to happen?" If you give in to this temptation, you demonstrate that you don't trust Me. Do you want Me to deal with your situation, yes or no? Then you must stop being anxious about it. I shall guide you only if you completely surrender to Me. Know that when I must lead you along a different path than the one you expect, I will be carrying you in My arms.



What seriously upsets you is your reasoning, your worrying, your obsession, and your will to provide for yourself at any price! I can do so many things when someone turns to Me, as much in material as in spiritual necessities, saying, "You think of it," and then rests quietly, closing his eyes.

You will receive much, but only when your prayers fully rely on Me. You pray to Me when in pain, that I might intervene, but then you expect an answer only in the way that you desire it. You do not rely on Me; you expect Me to adjust to your requests!

Don't behave like the sick ones who ask the doctor to treat them, but then keep suggesting the treatment. Do not do that, but instead even in sad circumstances say, "Lord, I praise and thank You for this problem, this necessity. I pray to You to arrange things as You please for this terrestrial and temporary life. You know exceedingly well what is best for me."

Sometimes after you pray, you feel that disasters are increasing instead of diminishing! Don't get agitated. Close your eyes and talk to Me with faith. "Thy will be done. Thou think of it." And when you speak thus, I can accomplish even a miracle when necessary. I am always aware of you, but I can only help you completely when you rely fully on Me.

—Source Unknown

Fill the World with Love

The Three Paths of SAI

There is no disease worse than greed, no enemy worse than anger, nor any misery worse than poverty. There is no happiness greater than wisdom. (TELUGU POEM)

Among the many diseases prevalent in the world, the disease of greed (*lobha*) has grown beyond bounds. There is no disease worse than this greed, which undermines humanness and turns man into a monster. The second disease is anger (*krodha*). There is no enemy worse than anger. It is possible to overcome external foes, but it is very difficult to subdue this internal enemy. Anger is man's worst enemy; it can destroy all human qualities and make a man forget his real nature.

Further, there is no misery equal to poverty. Poverty does not merely mean lack of wealth; you have poverty of the mind, poverty in wisdom. This poverty also causes misery to man. Man is ravaged by these three: greed or miserliness, anger, and lack of wisdom.

On the other hand, there is no greater source of happiness than wisdom or higher knowledge (*jnana*). Wisdom is not confined to worldly knowledge. There are also other kinds of knowledge: bookish knowledge, superficial knowledge, and so on—of which the most valuable is practical knowledge.

Understand the Purpose of Life

Everyone should strive to acquire that knowledge by which he can get rid of greed, anger, and material and spiritual poverty. It is to achieve this purpose that you are

participating in [Sai organization activities]. At the outset, you have to consider what the purpose of life is. Is it for involvement in endless work, or for eating and sleeping, or for indulging in gossip, that the Divine has conferred this human birth?"

The gift of intelligence is being used for many trivial purposes but not to understand the goal of life. Society today is riddled with discord and disorder. The progress of civilization has undermined morality and decency in all walks of life. Obsessed with worldly values, men have lost all concern for moral values. Selfishness reigns supreme everywhere, and even in the spiritual field, people seem more interested in themselves than in the welfare of society and the promotion of public good.

[Sai organization members] appear to be concerned about the functioning of their centers. Why were these centers started? The primary objective of the Sai organization is to raise the human consciousness to the divine by eliminating all animal tendencies. People do not seem to be aware of their true nature. Only those who understand their true selves can help elevate others. The Upanishads give the clarion call to mankind to wake up from ignorance and go forward toward the supreme divine destiny of Self-realization.

The Three Paths of Sai

You have to engage yourselves in service (*seva*). Service does not mean merely rendering help to others of one kind or another. True service means participating in social activities after ridding yourself of egoism and possessiveness, and manifesting your qualities of compassion and kindness. The aim of service is the refinement of your own good nature rather than giving aid and relief to others. A Sanskrit saying declares that greater than penance or pilgrimage, meditation or worship, is service to good people.

In rendering service, there should be unity of heart, head, and hands (three H's). Only then does service become sanctified. The significance of the three letters in *SAI* should be understood: *S* stands for service. *A* stands for adoration. *I* stands for illumination. These three represent action (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), and wisdom (*jnana*), respectively. Sai teaches all these three, and the three concepts are all equally important. Sai is a combination of the three spiritual paths of action, devotion, and wisdom. Just as the *Om* or *pranava* sound is made up of the three letters *A-U-M*, Sai stands for these triple forms of spiritual discipline. In the Sai organization, this threefold exercise has to be properly understood.

Sai service workers have to develop the love that is inside them, share it with others, and fill the whole world with love. True love should be distinguished from attachments of various kinds. True love is a synonym for God. Love is God. Live in love. The love of God comes from the depths of the heart. Sai

service volunteers should understand this love and render service in the right spirit to all mankind.

Fill the World with Love

People ask how they can experience God. The answer was given by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, when he told a questioner that if he were to love God with the same intensity that he loved his wife and children, he would be able to experience God.

Perform all actions as an offering to God. Do not make any distinction between your “official” work and your work in the Sai organization. Spirituality cannot be divided into compartments. The Sathya Sai organization was set up solely to enable its members to manifest their innate love in all their activities. You should manifest the divinity within you. That is Self-realization, realization of your oneness with the Divine.

The setting up of Sai centers is not an exercise in numbers. The emphasis should be on quality, not quantity. The international and national presidents of our organization mention how their *samasthalu* (centers) have grown. But has *samathvam* (oneness, fellow-feeling) grown to the same extent? Fellow-feeling should grow. To the contrary, divisiveness is growing.

I want quality, not quantity. Promote harmony among members. You cannot avoid making such distinctions as president, coordinator, member, and the like. But these distinctions are functional and have no place at the spiritual level. God is present equally in all, from the president to the ordinary member. You should recognize this oneness.

Positions, names, and forms may vary, but the Supreme Truth is one. This spirit of oneness should be fostered. Then there will be no jealousy or discord. Where there is oneness, there will be no trouble.

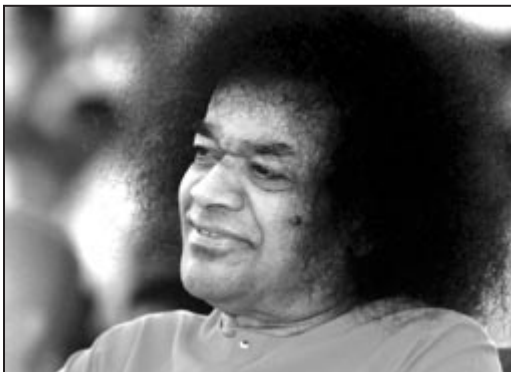
Foster the Spirit of Oneness

Society today is racked by jealousy and hatred. Jealousy is a disease that gives rise to hatred. Develop forbearance and good-will. That is the cure for jealousy. I have often declared, “My life is My message.” Often many have extolled Me or derided Me. I do not get elated by praise or depressed by criticism. I treat everything alike. “Equal-mindedness is oneness with the Divine.” (VEDIC MAXIM)

What do I lose when someone criticizes me? That is his opinion, and it does not affect me. Those who criticize Baba are suffering from a disease, like those who reject a sweet because they suffer from diabetes. The fault lies not in the sweet but in the person who is unable to enjoy it. They know that Baba is engaged in beneficial activities, and they want Him. But because some of their selfish interests are not served, they turn against Swami. That is a malady. When you see the facts in this light, you will realize the truth.

Today you have to cultivate a serene equanimity that rises above these trifles.

The development of equanimity is more important than the growth of a center. You should recognize the divinity in one and all. “The one Supreme Spirit dwells in all beings.” (VEDIC MAXIM) Bulbs are many, but the current that illumines them is one. Develop this spirit of oneness. Unity will lead to divinity. Many who are working in the



The body is like a rose, in which the spirit is present as invisible fragrance.

organization do not recognize the need for unity, but lack of unity breeds enmity and groupism.

The organization exists not for my sake but yours. When Swami administers what may appear as bitter medicine, it is for your own good. God is the physician for the ills of human

existence. You may not relish the taste of His medicine, but whatever Swami does, says, or gives is all for your good.

Above all, unity is the foremost need of the hour. “Nations are many, but the earth is one.” All are denizens of the earth. All are children of Mother Earth. Recognize this truth.

In the realm of the spirit, it is foolish to ask for proofs in the form of direct external perception. What is spiritual is subtle. It has to be experienced within. The Divine is present within us, incognito. Does the external form of a person reveal anything about his internal qualities? He himself may not be aware of all of his qualities. He may

be full of love or hatred, but can anyone outside perceive this? Without knowing his qualities, is it proper to judge him by his physical features?

You see this magnificent hall, but you do not see its foundation. Likewise, God is the basis; nature is the superstructure. The spirit is the basis; the body is the superstructure. The body is like a rose, in which the spirit is present as invisible fragrance.

“I Am Always Blissful”

[Members] should consider how the Sai organizations can improve their service activities. I have nothing to gain from the organization. I am always blissful. There is no need to wish me happiness. I am always happy. Embodiments of Love! Develop love, so that you may deserve this appellation.

[A person] asked that when Swami reincarnates as Prema Sai, could he be given the privilege of serving Swami? *Ayyaa!* Take good care of what you already have! Why hanker after something in the womb of the future? The present is very important. Past is past. Don't worry about the future. Take care of the present, which will determine the future. Do your duty now. Duty is God. Work is worship. This is the way to run the organization along ideal lines. What [must be] inaugurated ... is the search for the supreme truth about the divinity within.

Youth Is Not Related to Age

People refer to the seventieth birthday [and so on]. The body is made up of five elements, five sheaths, five life-breaths, and five senses. Up to one's fiftieth year, one may

be described as experiencing youth. The period of one's youth should be dedicated to purposeful activities. Youth is not related to age. Bhishma, who was 112 years old, was the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava forces. Will power determines one's age.

When one reaches sixty, it is an Indian custom to perform a peace ceremony (*shanti puja*) for the purpose of subduing the six internal enemies (lust, pride, jealousy, anger, ego, and hatred). On reaching seventy, a person attains the state of the seven sages, the seven oceans, the seven musical notes, and the seven colors. The seven colors come from the sun's rays. The sun's rays are eternal. The seventieth year symbolizes the attainment of the saintliness of the *saptarishis* (the “seven sages” who make up the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear). On attaining the eightieth year, you must become [like] one of the eight planets (*ashtagrahas*)*. On reaching the ninetieth year, you have to acquire the strength of the nine planets (*navagrahas*). On reaching the hundredth year, one should merge in the ten sense and action organs (*indriyas*) and get rid of body consciousness.

Acquiring the love of God should be the primary aim of members of the Sai organizations. The spiritual path is the easiest to follow. Giving up worldly desires is easier than clinging to them. Hold fast to God.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Speaks 28, November 18, 1995

*Swami has explained elsewhere one's 80th birthday as mastering the eight directions.

A Time for Reflection and Renewal

In this age of Kali, we are told that spiritual practice is in some ways easier than at any other time in human history, and in other ways more difficult.

It is easier, the sacred texts say, because in this Age, less rigorous effort is required of us in meditation, ritual, and penance than in previous Ages. In those ancient times, one had to work very hard to distinguish oneself in spiritual merit, from among all the many aspirants who were also striving for higher understanding. Now, so few work diligently toward the goal of higher realization that less effort is required for the aspirant to gain the Lord's approbation.

However, this Kali Age is also the most difficult age in which to put forth the spiritual effort required for success. When all those around us show such little regard for spiritual discipline and maintaining the standards of a spiritual path, we are apt to follow their example and pursue an easier direction in life. Our modern culture places little value on spiritual disciplines and goals. In fact, modern culture, especially in the West, extols just the opposite. It praises the pursuit of unbounded wealth, selfish desires, and personal self-aggrandizement. Many in our culture have not even heard of the goal of Self-realization and have no

interest in spiritual paths of any sort. In such an environment of public apathy, it is very difficult for an aspirant to maintain the disciplines of spiritual practice.

Today, it is easy for us to view the world and criticize the moral decline that we see taking place. But, unfortunately, the decline in practice is evident even within our spiritual organizations. Few closely heed the rules and directives of their spiritual paths. We may claim that we are different in the Sai fold, but do we diligently follow the teachings and instructions of Sai? Sri Sathya Sai Baba has given us a recipe for our spiritual progress, but in many cases we only read the recipe, without cooking the dish. How can we gain satisfaction on our path without following through on His instructions?

The Sai spiritual recipe calls for us to bake a sweet cake, of our divine Self-realization, for the Lord. The main substance of the recipe is the flour of service. Service helps us overcome the consequences of our past karma and enables us to put our thoughts and devotion into action. It teaches us to serve the same divine spirit that lives within all beings.

However, the rigorous service required for our transformation would be difficult to maintain if it were not sweetened by the

sugar of devotion. Devotion gives sweetness to our efforts and draws down upon us the grace of God. But a third ingredient is still required in this heavenly recipe: for the mixture to rise, it must be leavened with the “yeast” of wisdom. We must study and learn the nature of our spiritual destination and how to attain it.

The three ingredients of this recipe must be mixed well and baked in the heat of *tapas*, spiritual effort, to produce the divine cake that we seek. The three aspects of service, devotion, and wisdom represent a continuum on the path to Self-realization that Swami has set for us. He has said, “All three stages are really integral. Just as a flower by stages becomes a ripe fruit, similarly, through *karma* (action or service), *upasana* (devotion), and *jnana* (wisdom), the final stage of Self-realization is reached.”*

Some may argue that any of the three paths alone are sufficient to take us to the goal. However, it is well recognized that each path climbs the same mountain, and thus to attain the highest level in any one of the paths one must ultimately master all three. This is a lesson that appears mostly forgotten.

Instead, in this age it seems that many aspirants consider Swami’s path to be a smorgasbord. They pick and choose only the ingredients of the recipe that they find tasty, without regard to the completion of the dish. Eating only sweets (e.g., attending only devotional singing), they do not realize that they could do more to benefit their spiritual health. Even when the flour of service is added into the sweetness of devotion, there

is still minimal benefit to be derived until the mixture is leavened and baked. Without the leavening wisdom of Self-knowledge, which is derived from study and practice, one may easily miss the goal of divine realization. And yet, the practices of reading Sai teachings and attending study circles are avoided by many within the organization.

Even one who comes very close to the goal of Self-realization may not recognize the destination without study and spiritual discrimination. Like a man on a train who cannot read the destination signs, he may pass right through his disembarkation point, without ever knowing how close he was. Some may say, “But how could I miss such a grand goal while being so close?” In truth, Atmic consciousness lies within us all even now. It is our most fundamental nature, and yet it resides unseen within us every day. We cover over the subtle divine consciousness with the residues of ego and selfish desire, and so we miss what is closest to us. We only clean away the dross covering our inner divinity when we practice service, devotion, and wisdom, all three.

We live in a historic time that saints and sages have prayed for, through countless generations. We live in a time of unprecedented opportunity for achieving spiritual goals. Never before has so much information and opportunity been available to spiritual seekers. Truly, this is the Golden Age for spiritual aspirants, but never before have so few sought out and practiced the spiritual knowledge available. Now that we hold the opportunity in our very hands in the time of the Avatar, why do so few value

**Sathya Sai Speaks* 23, June 3, 1990.

it? Why do so few, even in our Sai centers, earnestly follow the three-fold path that Sai has laid out for us?

Are we so attached to small ego identifications that we view the Sai Baba center only as a social, religious, or cultural center, without realizing its true spiritual purpose? Sai Baba centers are not a place for narrow loyalties. They are not a place to practice politics or meet business contacts. Why are many unwilling or unable to grasp and practice the grand and universal principles that Sai has presented to us for our own Self-realization?

Now is the most beneficial time in history for all to strive for attaining Atmic consciousness. The opportunity has never been greater, and such an opportunity may not come again for countless generations. Now is the time to realize the universal nature of our inner divinity. And we must strive to make available the pursuit of that divine vision to others in our communities. Let us renew ourselves at this time and strive more diligently to realize our divine nature. And let us share the universal vision of Sai with others in our communities.

—Jonathan Roof

President, Sathya Sai Council USA

A Few 2007 Retreat Dates - USA:

Region 1 (Northeast) May 25-27, 2007, at Russell Sage College, Troy, New York. Theme: “Sai ABCs.”

Contact: Murthy Cheruvu, (845) 227-8567, saicheruvu@hotmail.com.

Region 2 (Mid-Atlantic) May 25-28, 2007, at Camp Canadensis, Pennsylvania. Theme: “Our Life Is Your Message: Find Us Ready, Lord!” Speaker: Jonathan Roof. Contact: Piyush Ghayal, (973) 519-2142 (cell), (973) 328-4002 (home), vrall1@verizon.net.

Region 4 (Mid-Central) May 18-20, 2007, at Camp Wyman near St. Louis. Speakers: Sam and Sharon Sandweiss. Contact: Jack Feely, (314) 862-1254.

Region 7 (Northern California/Northern Nevada) September 22-23, 2007. See <http://www.saicenters.org> for complete details and online registration.

Region 8 (Southern California) May 11-13, 2007, at Cottontail Ranch in the Malibu/Calabasas area. Theme: “Making My Life His Message: Swami in Daily Life.” Speakers: Sarojini and Shyam Kanagala from Dallas, Texas (Anil Kumar’s daughter and son-in-law). Registrar: Leslie McMurray, (818) 640-2549, lmcmurray@mcmurray-law.com.

Region 9 (Southwest) “Amrith” Retreat, May 25-27, 2007 at Camp Chapel Rock, Prescott, Arizona. Theme: “Unity of Thought, Word, and Deed—Pathway to Divinity.” Speaker: Dr. Choudary Voleti. Contact: Mukesh Shah, (602) 373-6983.

2007 Festival Dates - India

May 6, Sunday.....	Easwaramma Day
May 21-22, Saturday & Sunday.....	Buddha Purnima Celebration
July 26, Thursday.....	Ashadi Ekadashi
July 29, Sunday.....	Guru Purnima
August 27, Monday.....	Onam

After the Tsunami

Sai Co-Therapy in Sri Lanka

After the tsunami of Southeast Asia on December 26, 2004, millions of people endured great suffering. Almost a quarter million people perished, and the world was moved by a tidal wave that brought forth compassion and love on a global level.

Responding to the cry of anguish, the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee initiated a disaster relief effort to provide desperately needed medical treatment, counseling, and associated services. A team of eighteen from the United States, Canada, and Sri Lanka—medical doctors, psychotherapists, emergency medical technicians, nurses, medical support staff, drivers, translators, and service coordinators—traveled to Batticaloa, Thambiluvil, and Thirukovil, the hardest hit areas on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka.

The team entered the flooded land via an inland route. Circumnavigating land mines, we traveled for twelve hours, ultimately reaching the destroyed coast highway, of which remained only a thin thread of sand and stone. Hours south of Batticaloa, the group met with surviving students and teachers from two schools destroyed by the tsunami. Continuing on their journey of love, the relief team ultimately reached the inland refugee camps that housed over two thousand displaced citizens.

Upon arriving, children and adults were gathered and medical treatment provided where needed. Grief counseling began with disaster survivors who desperately needed help. The team members prayed to be divine instruments of Swami's love, grace, and infinite compassion. We envisioned oneness with Swami, and that His divine healing energies might flow to the surviving citizens of the communities to heal the broken hearts and minds traumatized from loss of loved ones. We spoke with, counseled, and consoled fathers and mothers who had lost children, wives who had lost husbands, husbands who had lost wives, and all who had lost beloved friends and relatives. All had lost their homes.

The hands and feet of the Lord are everywhere. Though the physical form of Sathya Sai Baba is in Prasanthi Nilayam, His true residence is in the heart of all beings, throughout all creation. When we acknowledge the oneness of love, we allow divine healing to flow between us and those with whom we are working. A compassionate, empathic healing grace springs forth. Divine oneness in love uplifts us, transforming tears of grief into smiles and happiness through the grace of a transcendental peace of mind. If all beings experience this state of oneness, our beloved Bhagavan will be established fully

and consciously in the six billion plus human forms on Earth. Everywhere we are, is with the Avatar.

The Subramaniyam Family

Bala and Devaki Subramaniyam had four girls, ages six, seven, nine, and eleven, and a boy of thirteen. The tsunami took their four girls, and the family was lost in grief. Bala, drinking his sorrows away, confessed that he was getting up the courage to commit suicide that evening. Devaki was devastated and crying uncontrollably. The son, Krishna, was extremely depressed. They had isolated themselves in their tent in the refugee camp. Having lost their home, which had been within 200 meters of the shore, they had also lost their land, because new government regulations forbade home-building within 200 meters of the ocean, for the future protection of citizens. Bala and Devaki, feeling abandoned by God, did not know where to turn.

For an hour we sat with this family, counseling them, consoling them, and holding their hands as they wept tears of sorrow and emptied their hearts to us. Inwardly we thought of Swami. Emptying ourselves, we prayed for our beloved Bhagavan Baba Himself to hold their hands and convey through words and expression the love and healing that would bring relief to this distraught family, which was but our Self in another form.

We are all children of the same
Divine Father and Mother,
awakening now to our natural
birthright of oneness in God and
unconditional love for each other.

Very slowly, their cloud of sorrow began to lift. We were concerned that it might descend again, bringing another bout of suicidal depression. We asked if they would like Sri Sathya Sai Baba's *vibhuti* (holy ash). They said yes, and we provided them with the vibhuti, which they immediately ate. Visibly, their depression lifted more. Then Bala stated, "If I could adopt a daughter who has lost her parents and raise her as my own, then maybe life would be worth living again." Devaki's tears ceased as she said, "I would

like a baby daughter to take care of as my own." Some hope had come into the air! We assured them we would pray for them and ask God to answer their prayers.

As the sun set over the hills, an orange hue appeared in the sky, its gentle, golden color brushing the land surrounding the encampment. Before taking our leave, we asked Bala not to drink so much, though we knew his sorrow was unbearable. He promised that in preparation for the adoption of a daughter, he would drink less and less, and altogether cease. We parted for the evening, feeling that they would live at least through the night. We promised to see them again the next day.

The following day, we found Devaki and the son, Krishna, at their tent alone. Devaki began to cry, reporting that Bala was at the fields harvesting rice, and all she could think about were her beautiful daughters, whom she had loved so dearly. For, if one of them became

sick, the other three would refuse to eat until the fourth was feeling well again, and if one became sad, they all became sad. Mostly they all laughed and played together happily in this village that the local residents all described as paradise prior to the great wave.

The bereaved mother cried and cried, holding our hands and pleading for the faith to believe in God again. During the tsunami, she had been in the temple of Muruga (Subramaniam), and Muruga, the destroyer of evil and protector of the devotee, seemingly had not protected her family. “How could this be?” she asked us. We had no answers but assured her that God, who is All Love, did not intend to hurt her (or her family), and neither did her beloved Lord Muruga.

We tried to reassure her that despite so much loss, the entire world had responded in a compassionate outpouring of love and caring. And though our cultures, religions, languages, nationalities, and races might be different, our hearts are the same. We are all children of the same Divine Father and Mother, awakening now to our natural birthright of oneness in God and unconditional love for each other.

Devaki grew calmer as she pondered these thoughts, and we invited her to attend devotional singing at a temple near the

entrance of the refugee camp that afternoon. She agreed to come.

Later that day, a doctor on the medical team spoke with the son, Krishna, for some time and assured him that his parents loved him very much, but their pain, like his, was too much to bear at times, and so it might seem as if they had forgotten him. She reassured him that his parents loved and needed him now more than ever. He cried like a baby in the arms of this doctor, who consoled him as if he were her very own son. When our inner parent is the Father/Mother God, then we can answer the need, when called upon, to minister as that Divine Parent to children of any age.

Smiles of Hope

Prior to the devotional singing, we spoke with Bala, the father—still anxious and distraught but calmer than the day before. He remained to listen and sing with the group of 100 or more from the refugee camp, including many children. Soon, Devaki came along too. All sang for over an hour. Afterward, we met again with the couple, and Devaki was all smiles! She had sung along with the song dedicated to Muruga, and she understood that God loves her, and she really does love God.



Through tears, Bala prayed his hopes that God would give him the opportunity, through adoption, to raise a daughter again as his own, and he thanked us for being with him in his time of need. We took the garland of flowers from Swami's photo and gave it to Devaki, to place in her tent on an altar. She smiled again and thanked us for our loving support of her family, saying, "We will be okay now."

As we left the camp that evening, a boy playing in the distance came running toward us, smiling with happiness and joy. We didn't recognize Krishna at first, but with a newborn enthusiasm and warmth, he thanked us for helping him and his family and, holding our hands, said goodbye. Tears came to our eyes, for we had never witnessed such a transformation of an entire family in such a short time. Thank you, Lord, for hearing the prayers and answering Your children's needs!

Many other families were seen during the course of our twelve days in Sri Lanka, though none so severe. In all, more than 1,400 men, women, and children received counseling, and 108 people received medical services.

Bhagavan Baba is the Master Counselor to us all. Once, when asked how to do counseling, He simply replied, "See Me in everyone." When we arrived on the scene of the refugee camp, people's faces showed only tears and fears.

When we left, they were smiling, much happier, with God's love and grace readily apparent in their demeanor.

In all the world, everything happens for a reason, a part of a greater plan, a divine purpose that is unfathomable, that only God can understand. The roots of all circumstances lie buried in actions and reactions deep in the past, long since forgotten. Only God can truly say, "I know." For all others, such are the times that test the fortitude of our faith and the degree of surrender of the small self to the true Self in all.

Regardless the reason, a new global consciousness of sharing and caring, compassion and sacrifice—out of love even greater than duty, has been born on earth. It is a consciousness of pure, selfless, and unconditional love that will wash over everyone, drowning the petty ego-self, until all live as one, the living embodiments of truth, the living avatars of love.

Lord, You are the doer. You are the deed done. You are the one done unto. And You are the one who bears all the fruits thereof. Thank You, Swami, for all Your love and grace. Thank You, Lord; You are our refuge.

— Allen Levy, PhD, LCSW
On behalf of the Sathya Sai
International Medical Relief Team

The world is one vast society. Every individual is part of it, bound to it by the love that draws man to man as kith and kin. The love is there, deep in our hearts, but it remains unrecognized, ignored, doubted, denied, and argued away. It is the secret source of all sympathy and service; it creates the urge to live in and for society. It is the universal love that flows from one spark of the divine to all sparks. When the eyes shine, illumined by the highest wisdom, they see all as the One.

— Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 12:3, Feb. 4, 1973

Would You Give the Shirt Off Your Back to Another in Need?

Golf Shirt Seva for the Homeless

The service project that evolved into *ShirtOffYourBack.org* started from a casual conversation with a stranger in summer, 2005. A woman and I, each waiting at a restaurant for our tables to be readied, started talking about our husbands' golf interest—hers having played for years and mine having just picked up the game again. In the course of the conversation, she mentioned that her husband had in his closet over 300 golf shirts. I was stunned. How could anyone have that many shirts?

Prior to meeting the woman at the restaurant, I'd been considering starting some sort of personal service project, one that could focus in a targeted way on a specific type of clothing or service. I was praying to Swami to guide me.

I had had some limited experience with collecting specific clothing items. Recently I'd worked on an overseas service project that offers job training to destitute young women in southern India.

This job training program included the provision of several outfits of office clothing, but it did not provide any clothing accessories. I contacted friends, told them about the training, and asked for their help. Twice I went to India with an abundance of purses, sweaters, scarves, and costume jewelry for the trainees. I found

from the experience that many people respond eagerly when asked for specific help.

One evening I was discussing with my husband, Michael, the idea of starting a service project. When I mentioned the 300-golf-shirts conversation, he said that people who regularly play golf tend to buy a shirt when they play at a new or special course, and they also receive shirts when playing in a tournament or as holiday presents from family and friends. Over years of playing, shirts can accumulate in a golfer's closet. He commented that golfers don't usually play in worn-out shirts.

Just days before we talked, Michael and I had been at a homeless shelter participating in a Sai center service event, and I'd noticed the poor condition of many of the residents' clothes. Golf shirts are made of absorbent, good quality fabric, making them ideal to wear on hot summer days. Golf shirts would be a perfect clothing item for the homeless. Swami's idea of collecting golf shirts was planted.

We named the golf-shirt drive "Shirt Off My Back" (later the name was changed to *ShirtOffYourBack.org*), and I designed a flyer asking for 'gently-worn' donations of men's, women's, and children's golf or polo-style shirts. When he went to play his regular rounds of golf, Michael took flyers to distribute. Soon he was

returning home from golf with bags of shirts, all with different logos imprinted on them.

While researching golf, I learned that there are 26.4 million golfers over the age of twelve in the United States, and over \$6.2 billion a year is spent on golf-related equipment and apparel. For me, this research translates into a lot of golf shirts stuffed into dressers, closets, and basement boxes—and probably a lot of spouses wanting to get rid of shirts, or golfers willing to part with their shirts for a worthy cause.

Due to Swami's grace, a local suburban newspaper heard about the project and ran a story with my telephone number. The following are examples of callers who made donations during the next few months:

- Two women, one in her seventies and one in her thirties, both recent widows, donated their husbands' shirts.
- A man going in for surgery called and later remembered to drop off fifty shirts when he was back on his feet.
- A teacher at a parochial school had several shirts and planned to find out if the school's student council would take up the golf-shirt drive for men's, women's, and children's polo shirts as a service project.
- A woman held a shirt-collection drive at her church and called to arrange pickup up of the boxes of shirts.
- Two people successfully approached their respective country clubs to sponsor a shirt drive among members, which resulted in shirts to donate.

- An ad-specialty company donated several large boxes full of new shirts, book bags, totes, calculators, and desk items. All these items were in turn given to the Interfaith Clothing Center during its Fall school-supply drive.
- A company changing its business logo donated seventy-five new shirts that bore the old logo.
- A local business club invited me to speak about the project at the club's weekly luncheon, and members brought along shirt donations.
- A business association I belong to, the Maryland Association of Health Underwriters, took on the service project in early 2006 and continues today to collect golf shirts at its three chapters' meetings in the state.

Two simple questions needed to be answered almost immediately: (1) what to do with the donated shirts, and (2) what to do when donors asked for tax deduction receipts. In an interview, I heard Swami say (paraphrasing Him), *Do not spend money to ship clothes far away; instead help others in the country where you live.* The donated shirts have been given to various Maryland,

Washington D.C., and northern Virginia charities, including the Community for Creative Nonviolence in D.C. (the largest homeless shelter in the United States, with



1,350 beds); a local veterans retirement home for Katrina-displaced vets; the Interfaith Clothing Center; and three homeless shelters—Manna House, the Baltimore Station, and Echo. In addition, volunteers traveling by car to help Mississippi and Louisiana Katrina-hurricane victims have taken shirts.

Following Swami's position to have as little to do with money as possible, I didn't want to collect money or spend money to start a not-for-profit organization, just to be able to give out tax receipts. So I spoke with the directors at two of the shelters receiving the shirts. I was given a supply of blank receipts to use when receipts were requested. By having tax receipts to give to the donor (with a copy to the shelter), we simply became a conduit between those wanting to donate shirts and those needing the shirts.

By the end of January, 2007, the volunteers have collected and distributed over fourteen

hundred golf shirts. With warm spring weather just around the corner, golfers will be dusting off their clubs, practicing their golf swings, and more likely to give away last year's golf shirts. It's time to start another golf-shirt drive at area golf courses and country clubs.

The project was donated a website, www.ShirtOffYourBack.org (which has a brief description of the project). If it is Swami's will, the website will be updated in the future to include golf-shirt projects started by other Sai volunteers around the country.

ShirtOffYourBack.org has been a wonderful experience for me. I deeply thank Swami for allowing me to be His instrument of service and along the way to meet so many loving, kind, and generous people from all walks of life.

—Susan Sullivan-Rakoff
Washington, DC

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Sathya Sai Center Seva

Local Centers Serve with Loving Hands and Hearts

Throughout 2006, members of U.S. Sri Sathya Sai Baba centers kept actively involved in offering loving helping hands in their communities. Our beloved Bhagavan's selfless service was displayed through projects with other organizations, homeless shelters, nursing homes, food banks, children's homes, rehabilitation centers, food pantries, tutoring programs, and also with individuals and families in need. Service projects at the local center level included the following:

Region 3 (Southeast)

Jacksonville, Florida On the third Sunday of every month, the center provides food supplies and cooks a balanced meal for 350-500 residents and visitors of a homeless shelter in downtown Jacksonville. Twelve to twenty devotees normally participate. The center members also visit two nursing homes on the second and last Sunday of every month, interacting with the residents through music, devotional singing, and serving ice cream.

Cocoa, Florida The center helps to support a women's domestic shelter. In March and June of 2006, the center donated food gift certificates, bags of food, family-interest DVDs, and personal items.

Tampa, Florida In February 2006, center members held a service orientation at a children's home. The members are currently working on a tutoring program.

Orlando, Florida The Orlando center engages in two monthly service projects. On the third Sunday of every month, members visit and serve dinner to the children of the Russell Home for Atypical Children. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are also made for the home. The devotees visit the residents of the Terra Vista Rehabilitation Center on the last Sunday of every month and spend time with them chatting and singing. On special occasions such as Mother's Day and Father's Day, gift bags are taken to the residents. In addition to these two projects, canned food is collected at the center every Sunday and distributed to those in need, and clothing is collected and taken to a nonprofit thrift store organization.

Region 6 (Pacific North)

Wedgwood, Washington The Wedgwood center has extensively rebuilt and reorganized its center storage facilities to house emergency food supplies, which they repackage for distribution in the event of a local emergency.

Eugene, Oregon The Eugene center has three monthly projects. The devotees prepare and serve food at a local soup kitchen, make three to four quilts to be distributed to local shelters, and make "care bags" that include toiletries, food, socks, and hats for the homeless. Seasonally, the center does a fall cleanup of a halfway house.

Beaverton, Grants Pass, Portland, and Eugene, Oregon; and Seattle Eastside and Seattle South, Washington These centers also assembled and distributed “care bags” and “hygiene kits,” made quilts, and distributed food regularly. The center also distributes books and school supplies throughout the year.

Region 9 (Southwest)

Southeast Denver, Colorado The center’s main focus of ongoing service is providing food for the homeless, which is achieved in two ways. Young adults in the center prepare and distribute 150 burritos every Sunday morning to homeless persons in downtown Denver. In addition, devotees prepare and serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner once a month to the residents of a local women’s shelter.

Some of the center members were involved in providing support to a family that was a victim of domestic violence. The family needed assistance, such as transportation, car maintenance, translation of legal documents, and assistance with a move to a new home. The family’s needs were identified and communicated to the center, and members’ efforts were coordinated with other interested parties in such a way that the family’s needs were met in a timely manner.

The devotees also participated in one-time projects in conjunction with other organizations, including sorting food and clothing collected for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and sorting clothing collected for citizens of third-world countries.

Colorado Springs, Colorado The center provides sandwiches and rice weekly to the needy on Saturdays.

Albuquerque, New Mexico The Albuquerque center has been involved in feeding the poor and homeless in the downtown area. Three times a month up to 150 homeless persons are given egg salad sandwiches in the spring and summer months, and bean and cheese burritos in the fall and winter. The center also collects canned goods and distributes them to a local food bank. Some of the members also crochet scarves and hats to hand out during the cold winter months.

Sedona, Arizona This small center supports the Look Smart Program in Cottonwood, Arizona, a branch of the old town mission. The devotees ask for donations of school supplies, clothing, shoes, and so on, enabling families to provide their children with everything they need to start school. The center also purchases backpacks and school supplies, and donates money for shoes and other needs.

Tucson, Arizona The center has an ongoing monthly project preparing over four hundred burritos for delivery to Casa Maria’s Soup Kitchen. The devotees visit the residents of the La Colina Health Care Center nursing home weekly. Additionally each week, members mentor elementary and middle school students to help them with their studies.



Sunday mornings are for making burritos in Denver

An ongoing collection of eyeglasses is delivered several times a year to a facility that recycles them for the needy. The devotees also fill a community food bank box with nonperishable vegetarian food, and the young adults deliver it to the facility.

At Thanksgiving, center members donated nonperishable vegetarian food, and money to purchase a grocery store gift card and/or gifts for a designated family in need. Christmas carolers visit from five to six nursing home facilities to sing Christmas carols and extend love and cheer to the residents.

This past year, center members partnered with Casa Maria Soup Kitchen and donated men's hats, sweatshirts and toiletries to the homeless that visit the kitchen.

Through the Prima County "Adopt-A-Roadway" project, the center signed up for the responsibility of cleaning one mile of roadway every two months, beginning in October and ending in April, when the weather becomes too hot. The county placed a roadway sign with the name, "Sai Baba Center of Tucson" on their assigned stretch of road.

Mesa, Arizona The Mesa center continues to work with other centers in the Phoenix area to provide breakfast to the homeless at the Andre House Hospitality Center in Phoenix, feeding approximately 350 people on the fourth Sunday of each month. In addition, the devotees have been providing a literacy

program at Thomas Pappas School for the Homeless. Several members teach English, on a one-on-one basis, to parents and children of ethnic backgrounds, in order to assist them to assimilate into society. Values are also imparted through "Living the Values" and by the love and caring shown by the devotees. They have had up to ten students.

Region 10 (South-Central)

Centers across Region 10 are involved in tutoring children in middle and elementary schools with reading and math skills. Tremendous progress has been made in Houston, Texas, at the Hartman Middle School, where children are tutored in order to help them pass state-monitored academic tests. Computer learning classes are also conducted in Austin and Dallas to both adults and children.

All centers across the region cook and serve western vegetarian meals to the homeless, totaling about 1,413 meals each month throughout the year. Center members in both Dallas and Ft. Worth drive the visually-impaired to the "Lighthouse" center for a social evening interacting with others, playing bingo, and enjoying light refreshments. The devotees have become family members to many of the blind residents. They also assist them by taking them shopping and helping them with essential chores.

During festival seasons, all Region 10 centers participate in the "Meals on Wheels" program to deliver food to the homebound. In addition, several devotees around the region distribute clothing to shelters and homes.

—**Victoria Hargreaves**
Ventura, California



*Preparing bagels for
breakfast in Dallas*

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values

A Review of SSEHV Programs in the United States

When the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) Foundation became a legal entity in 1983, a group of professional teachers in the USA began immediately to create a book of SSEHV lessons for children. This first Sathya Sai curriculum book became known in Prasanthi Nilayam, and it was published there as *Lesson Plans for Education in Human Values, International Edition*.

In order to make the program clearer and more accessible, it was refined with the inclusion of more lessons, music, and activities. In early 1985, this new complete USA SSEHV curriculum book was then published. In time, an SSEHV community manual was published, as well as a book, *Sathya Sai Discourses on Education*. SSEHV was now considered a foremost program in the field of character development, combining human values within academics.

The SSEHV Foundation continued to serve in the capacity of an institute, with an advisory board consisting of fifteen professionals in the field of education. With the additional emphasis that Swami now places on SSEHV, we must become more knowledgeable of the basics of the program. Very soon, as part of the Sai global approach to education, the SSEHV Foundation and its advisory board will become the USA Institute of Sai Education.

SSEHV work has continued through the years. More than sixty SSEHV trainings have been conducted throughout the USA by Sai professional teachers, for interested public and private schools, as well as in community arenas. The trainings are always followed up by additional work with the teachers involved in the program, through assessments, observations, and in-depth trainings.

Today the SSEHV program takes place within many different settings. These include individual classrooms in elementary, middle, high school, and university levels; pilot projects; mentoring programs; after-school programs; United Church Neighborhood Houses; Montessori schools; and parent classes. An estimated 8,243 children have been through the SSEHV program, in classes that are conducted daily, once a week, or once a month. As examples, let us cite different venues where the SSEHV program has been used.

SSEHV in the Public Schools: New York City, NY

In 1984, the SSEHV program was introduced in the classroom of a teacher who had just returned from a sabbatical researching values education programs in foreign countries. What was seen in India—the approach of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values—far outdistanced all other programs. As a

result, SSEHV was used in her class that year with much success. To the surprise of all, the program was able to reach children known for their poor academic skills and even more for their misbehavior. We knew that SSEHV was working when the end-term tests showed that the students had increased their math and reading level by one or two years.

The SSEHV program's emphasis on human values, love of one another and oneself,

"...We learned not only how to add, subtract, read, and everything, but how to love and care and share."

and everyone's innate goodness, resulted in raising self-esteem so that the students also made progress in

academics. The program continued each year with a different class, showing success with all children.

Other teachers soon became aware of what was happening to the SSEHV students. A voluntary SSEHV workshop for teachers was held after school, joined by teachers from other schools. The district office began to take notice and appointed the SSEHV teacher to work in the district as curriculum coordinator for character education.

The SSEHV training began with five teachers in each of the sixteen participating elementary schools, and two teachers in two middle schools. About twenty-two hundred students participated weekly in a direct SSEHV lesson, and throughout the week the "human value of the week" was integrated into academic subjects. In addition, the SSEHV coordinator was able to join with the math and science coordinators in presenting how SSEHV could be integrated into those disciplines.

The drug and health education coordinator became interested, and the SSEHV lessons were integrated into that program too.

The SSEHV program continued for five years, proving with success that academic excellence and moral and spiritual character development go hand in hand!

Comments received: "...We learned not only how to add, subtract, read, and everything, but how to love and care and share."—" [The EHV program] taught us how to trust one another and not be jealous."—"It doesn't matter what race you are, how much money you have, or what you have; the only thing that really matters is who you are inside."—"Most everybody has learned the same things—like responsibility, consideration, thoughtfulness, and self-control. Some people may have gotten more out of it than others, but at least some went into everybody's mind." (6th grade children)

"We have seen gratifying results from the SSEHV program. The (SSEHV) newsletter is a reflection of the kinds of values the children in the participating schools have been developing, and how such values influence their behavior and attitudes toward their fellow human being." (Dr. A. Gimondo, District Deputy Superintendent)

"If everyone in the world were to share love, we would all be in peace and harmony.... If you share love with someone who is lonely and sad, you will make that person feel loved and wanted." (Ivonna, Grade 5)

"A song isn't a song until you sing it! A bell isn't a bell until you ring it! Love isn't love until you give it away." (Class 3-216)

SSEHV in the Public Schools: Chicago, IL, Elmont, NY, and San Diego, CA

In 1990, Education in Human Values (EHV) was introduced to two public elementary schools in Chicago, Illinois; one in Elmont, New York; and eleven in San Diego, California. In San Diego, EHV was implemented as the character development component of the after-school daycare program several times a week. This project involved sixty teachers and paraprofessionals, and fifteen hundred students from diverse cultural, ethnic, academic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Teachers received ongoing training and support through an onsite visit by an EHV trainer every six weeks.

Synopsis of Research Findings Research took place on this project from October 1990 to June 1991. The research design was a qualitative case study including questionnaires, formal observations of teachers doing EHV lessons in their classrooms, and interviews with the teachers and principals. The purpose of the research was to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and its implementation. The findings were very positive. Seventy-five to ninety-five percent of the teachers responded positively to all areas of the questionnaire.

Comments received: “[The EHV program] helps me to be aware of fairness and honesty and all that. I’m more positive and stress things more positively.”—“I feel more and more committed to the values of this program as I do the lessons.”—“I am more aware of being a positive role

model because of these lessons.”—“This program affects my relationship with students in a positive manner.”—“Group singing stimulates positive feelings and relationships between students.”—“I feel stronger about the importance of teaching human values.”—“This program can effect character development.”—“It helps you to become closer to the children, and in turn, you get to know yourself better.”—“A month ago there was more fighting.”—“Kids sang together holding hands, whereas before, they’d be putting each other down, and they haven’t been doing that.” (EHV teachers)

“You have, I believe, the broadest, most encompassing vision of moral education that I have come across. ... You point to moral content, substantive moral values. ... These substantive values—truth, love, peace, right action—are the goals that inspire and guide educational action. You have restored them to their rightful place and given them new meaning by placing them in a developmental framework. ... This methodology touches the mind, the heart, and the will. It has real power, I believe, to transform those who experience it.” (Thomas Lickona, Ed.D., author, *Raising Good Children* and *Character Matters*, Developmental Psychologist and Professor of Education, State University of New York, Cortland; Director, Center for the 4th and 5th Rs [Respect and Responsibility], in a review of Sathya Sai EHV Curriculum)

SSEHV in the Community: St. Louis, MO

After numerous SSEHV presentations to community organizations in the St. Louis,

Missouri, metropolitan area, United Church Neighborhood Houses chose SSEHV as their after-school and summer youth program at its four locations throughout St. Louis. Neighborhood Houses is a social service organization that focuses on low-income children, families, and the community at large. In the fall of 2002, a team of seasoned trainers conducted SSEHV training for the program's teachers, center directors, and several of their administrators. Ongoing refresher trainings are conducted regularly, and to date, over fifty staff members have been trained. Approximately five hundred children have benefited from SSEHV since its implementation at Neighborhood Houses.

In 2004, Neighborhood Houses recommended their successful SSEHV program to Purdue University Extension in Indiana. As a result, twenty PUE staff and their partnering community youth organizations staff and volunteers were trained to teach the human values program to one hundred children in their summer youth program.

In May 2006, SSEHV was implemented at the Good Samaritan Center for the Homeless in St. Louis, Missouri, for over fifty formerly homeless mothers. In March 2006, twenty-five Good Samaritan case managers

and staff, and a team of volunteers, were trained in SSEHV. The training included a testimonial speaker from Neighborhood Houses. In June 2006, additional community volunteers received training, including persons from the University of Missouri, St. Louis, and the St. Louis local public television broadcasting station (PBS). Starting in September 2006, SSEHV classes began for approximately seventy-five to one hundred children of the formerly homeless women. In January 2007, a team of local Sai young adults attended an SSEHV teacher training. This was the first exclusively young adult SSEHV training in the USA. After the training, the young adults decided to observe the existing SSEHV projects in St. Louis and be mentored into working with them.

Comments received: "The SSEHV program has proven to be priceless. I have had the opportunity to observe children pre-Sathya Sai and post-Sathya Sai. Children not previously exposed to the Sathya Sai program often times exhibit the inability to tolerate others' opinions, differences, or choices. However, after being introduced to Sathya Sai human values, not only do the children learn to tolerate others' differences, opinions, and choices, they learn how to disagree peacefully. The program is so skillfully designed that anyone can teach the disciplines and character traits intended by each lesson. [The] Sathya Sai [program] appeals to all senses, allowing no



*SSEHV students in
St. Louis, Missouri*

child to be left behind. Whether children are auditory learners, visual learners, or kinesthetic learners, the program reaches them all. The program is packed with both positive character traits and human values. Each lesson is linked with a culminating life-applicable lesson. The lessons not only enhance the children's ability to learn, they permit the teacher to be creative as well. The lessons are designed so that they can be comprehensively mastered by the children." ... [After describing the five teaching techniques, the counselor continues:] "In conclusion, a life-applicable lesson is introduced by the teacher, allowing children the chance to see how they can link the character trait or human value into their personal lives. The Sathya Sai program is truly invaluable. I am proud to teach the Sathya Sai program to the children at Dignity House and our affiliate agencies." (Wanda M. Brownridge, Counselor, M.Ed., PLPC, United Church Neighborhood Houses, Dignity House)

"We used the Sathya Sai curriculum in our pilot session of 'Purdue University Extension: Freedom through the Arts' last summer, as the basis of our multi-faceted program for inner-city youth and their families. We will continue to use it as the core of our program as it becomes a year-round, out-of-school initiative. We have found that the curriculum helps our youth develop the kind of personal core that empowers them to resist the lure of the toxic cultures that surround them. My personal belief is that this training results in young people who are better able to successfully navigate their journeys toward productive

and responsible adulthood. The adults who go through the facilitator training are, for the most part, empowered to become better teachers of youth and more competent human beings." (Sarah W. Blandina, Volunteer, Freedom through the Arts, in collaboration with Purdue University)

"Thank you for the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Program training. ... The program is wonderful, and we would like additional trainings as we expand our youth program from summer only, to an ongoing, year-round program. (Dorothy Campbell, Extension Educator, Purdue University)

"I enjoy using the Sathya Sai curriculum because it simplifies my lesson planning and gives me a step-by-step format that allows me to teach positive objectives as well as life applications to help enhance the human values of our children." (SSEHV Teacher, United Church Neighborhood Houses)

"The program (SSEHV) works! I see a difference in my children, so keep doing what you are doing, and I will work with you on behalf of my children." (parent of SSEHV students)

"I like this program because it has peace and dignity. I also like this program because it talks about friendship." (Sadie, age 10, Neighborhood Houses)

"Silent sitting is meant to calm me down! Not only does it calm me down, but it makes me think about what I am going to do." (Michelle, age 8, SSEHV student)

—Compiled by **Bea Flaig, Ronne Marantz, and Doris Hampton**
Members, Advisory Board, SSEHV Foundation

Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

A Report from the Chairman

The Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation is the governing body of the international Sri Sathya Sai organizations.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Sai Ram! With the Blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation is moving forward. The board of directors is as follows: Dr. Michael Goldstein, chairman and director; Sri H. J. Dora, director; Sri A. Ramakrishna, director; and Dr. Narendranath Reddy, director. The first formal meeting of the current board of directors was convened during Mahashivaratri 2007.

There are now four standing committees: the health care committee, education committee, publications and media committee, and cultural committee. Also, an ad hoc committee for the forthcoming Sai World Youth Conference has been appointed. The primary mission is to bring authenticity, accountability, and efficacy to all functions of the Sri Sathya Sai organizations, so that they are worthy of bearing His name. Just as Swami and His message are perfect and timeless, the task of uplifting the organization to function in an ideal and worthy manner is never ending. Let us all work together in a spirit of love and do our utmost to improve ourselves, the Sri Sathya Sai organizations, and the world.

World Youth Conference The Sai organizations must provide a spiritual haven for the youth. In the Sai organizations, the

youth should find an environment in which love is everpresent, understanding prevails, and the structure, function, and programs provide an inspiration that is conducive to spiritual growth.

With Bhagavan's blessings, a world conference of Sai youth will convene in Prasanthi Nilayam during the forthcoming Guru Purnima celebrations, around July 29, 2007, under the theme, "Ideal Sai Youth: Messengers of Sai Love." The conference will focus on spiritual transformation and consider how the Sai organizations can positively contribute to the lives of Sai youth and to the realization of the purpose of human life.

An international Sai youth committee has been assembled from all parts of the world. Shitu Chudasama of the UK will be the Youth Coordinator for this conference. Additional information regarding the exact dates, preparatory *sadhana* (spiritual disciplines), recommended reading, and other details of the conference will be sent out by him soon. [Editors' note: Please see also the announcements on page 41.]

Education Committee The Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation sponsored an inter-national Sai education conference in London on January 20–21, 2007. The conference was planned and executed by

the education committee of the World Foundation under the excellent leadership of the committee chairman, Mr. Kalyan Ray. The accommodations and logistics of the conference were accomplished by the Sai Central Council of UK, the Sai UK Trust, and the central coordinator of UK, Mr. Ishver Patel. In addition to Sai educators involved in the SSE and SSEHV programs in all European countries and Russia, the zone chairmen and/or central coordinators from all zones attended. Forty-four countries were represented by 207 delegates.

The chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation introduced a director of the foundation (Dr. Narendra Reddy), a member of the Prasanthi Council (Dr. William Harvey), the members of the education committee, and the zone chairmen of the Sri Sathya Sai international organization.

He emphasized the following points: Bhagavan Baba has given His approval for this great event. We must strive to come together, transcending our differences, in a spirit of love. Swami has also sent a message of restraint—that we should learn from this meeting before we plan future Sai education meetings, and that we look carefully at all our schools and institutes and consolidate our achievements in these areas before embarking on new projects. If our program is based on the divine message of Bhagavan Baba, if it is true to its mission, if our efforts are worthy, then the results should be noteworthy and respected in the world.

The chairman thanked the members of the UK Sai organization for their loving hospitality to all delegates. He again thanked

the chairman of the education committee, Mr. Kalyan Ray, for his extraordinary service. Finally, he acknowledged the great service rendered over a period of decades by three members of the education committee, who have been pioneers in the international Sai education programs: Dr. Victor Kanu, Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai, and Dr. Thorbjorn Meyer.

Publications and Media Committee

Among the most important tasks of the Sai organizations is the dissemination of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's divine message. The publications and media committee, under the chairmanship of Vijay Desai, has been very actively engaged in this noble work.

As a result of recent efforts by the publications committee, zone chairmen, and central coordinators, we now have twelve countries translating, publishing, and distributing the *Sanathana Sarathi* in the following countries: Croatia, Far East (in Mandarin Chinese), Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latin America (in Spanish), Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Currently, thirty-two countries are engaged in the translation of Swami's books into local languages. A key function of the publications committee has been the establishment of a formal process to translate the divine message into local languages.

In order that we might function in an orderly manner, a formidable database is being constructed, consisting of listings on: international Sai bookstores, publication facilities, translators, archiving of books and DVDs into local languages, and Sai organization statistics.

Health Care Committee The health care committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Narendra Reddy, demonstrates the meaning of “Sai ideal healthcare”: competent healthcare rendered with love and without cost. The medical presence of overseas physician volunteers at the ashram has undergone substantial growth. In the beginning, a handful of international physicians would care for overseas devotees who developed medical problems, in a tent erected during holidays. Now there is a perpetual presence of international physicians, from a roster of 130 doctors from nine countries, who provide free, loving healthcare in the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital year round. Many specialties are represented, and the doctors see approximately fifteen hundred patients per month. This general hospital service is augmented by a satellite clinic in the ashram during holidays. During the celebrations of Bhagavan Baba’s 81st birthday, twenty-four physicians of the international medical team treated 3,416 patients between November 18 and 25, 2006.

The health care committee took an active role in the establishment of an orthopedic department in the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prasanthi Nilayam. Operations commenced on July 13, 2006, and on a monthly basis, approximately 1,500 outpatients are seen and fifty surgeries performed. In the first seven months, 12,000 patients were treated, 416 surgeries performed, and 8,576 patients received physiotherapy.

Specialists, including cardiologists, radiologists, ophthalmologists, and anes-

thesiologists, comprise a panel of international consultants who provide coverage in the Sri Sathya Institute of Higher Medical Sciences.

Outside of Prasanthi Nilayam, medical camps provide free, loving care—Sai ideal healthcare—all over the world. Bhagavan Baba has emphasized the importance of free healthcare provided with love, and His international physician devotees are responding wholeheartedly.

Cultural Committee Substantial progress has been achieved with regard to adherence to the proper protocol for the presentation of cultural events in the Divine Presence. The chairman of the cultural committee, Umberto Frascati, has been actively seeking to improve the quality of the performance of these events. National Sai organizations and their international central coordinators are actively engaged in viewing the prospective events and ensuring their quality. As a result, more inspiring cultural events have been taking place and are planned for the future. The love and cooperation demonstrated in this process reaffirms the dedication and discipline of this organization.

The Sai organizations are moving forward. Let us love Him, and, as a result, love all. Let us follow Him, and, as a result, serve all. Let us realize Him within ourselves, and, as a result, accomplish the purpose of these human lives that we have been given.

Lovingly, in the service of Sai,

—**Michael Goldstein**

Chairman and Director
Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

Katrina Sai Service

A Unique Opportunity to Serve

As most people are aware, the natural disaster, “Hurricane Katrina” wreaked havoc in people’s lives throughout the Gulf Coast Region. Sri Sathya Sai Baba centers from the Mid-Atlantic region responded immediately by providing clothing and other items, but a few Sai devotees took a step further by going down to the Gulf Coast during Swami’s 80th birthday celebrations. At that time, the towns badly hit by Katrina were slowly clearing away the debris so that they could begin rebuilding. Many volunteer groups started to pop up and take an active role, and that’s how our connection began with one of many towns in the affected area, namely, “Pass Christian,” in the state of Mississippi.

Trip 1 It all began with our first visit during Thanksgiving weekend 2005, coinciding with Swami’s 80th birthday. We could not imagine then, the various service activities that this one trip would lead to. A group of about twenty-five volunteers from different parts of the East Coast, including a number of young adults, came together and took part in clearing debris, demolition work, tearing up insulation, and gutting damaged houses. As we hauled away everything that the locals possessed, we were reminded graphically of Swami’s words that nothing is permanent and what it means to be detached to worldly

things. In the words of one resident of Pass Christian, “Yes indeed, my whole life’s investment was washed away in a moment, and I know I cannot rebuild it, but looking at you all, I have the confidence to go on again and restart.” This statement impacted us deeply, reminding us every inch of Swami’s *grama seva* (village service) projects in India.

Trip 2 Our second trip was not pre-planned but spontaneous, upon receiving a call from Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC), the organization with whom we had camped during our first trip. The town was completely without Internet and networked computer services; hence it was out of connection with the rest of the world. Also, some half-dozen computers had been stolen, and the CCC organization asked for our help in securing the remaining computers. A few of us who are involved professionally with computers formed a small group and went to Pass Christian during New Year’s Eve weekend. This trip, we set up a full-fledged computer lab, as a hub for the city to establish communications with the outside world. Therefore, this trip focused on technological efforts through setting up a computer lab with Internet capabilities, networking, printer capabilities, and other software and hardware support. This inspired an awesome

feeling among members of the local organizations, and at this point we met the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) coordinators for the area.

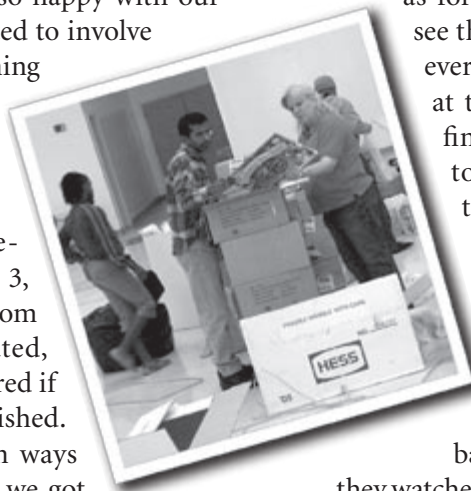
Trip 3 This was a big venture with almost sixty volunteers participating, ranging from ages ten to seventy. It was most challenging, and eventually our Sai team worked directly for the city of Pass Christian to take on some community projects. We renovated a church, worked on restoration of a house, cleared debris for the city, cleaned the gymnasium, and restored the computer lab to further standardization by providing routers, networking, printers, and other support. The town was so happy with our Sai group that they wanted to involve us in more complex planning strategies. Thus, the Sai group finally had its own presence in the local community.

Trip 4 After we returned home from Trip 3, all the contacts we had from Pass Christian evaporated, suddenly, and we wondered if our service role was finished. But Swami has His own ways of planning things, and we got a call from the director of the Chamber of Commerce, Gulf Coast Region, who had found out about the Sai group in particular, as people were really impressed with our behavior and conduct. That led to our working with the Department of Public Works and the Chamber of Commerce, who remained involved in rebuilding the city

after FEMA withdrew its presence from the town. They invited our group to help out in whatever manner we could.

Therefore our next visit took place during the Fourth of July weekend, and the primary focus of our little group of Sai volunteers was to help in whatever way we could and also scout for future projects. Our main project involved restoring the Memorial Park, which is the town square or focal point. We helped with landscaping, removal of weeds (unwanted grass and so on), watering, spreading mulch, and overall beautifying the park. This ended up being one of the most memorable trips down to the South, as for the first time we could see the locals, volunteers, and everyone spending their time at the beaches, which were finally officially reopened to the public. We spent the evening having fun playing Frisbee, cricket, and so on, along with playing beach volleyball with the locals. It was immensely gratifying to see happy smiles back on their faces, even as they watched the weather, since it was the beginning of hurricane season.

Trip 5 Basically, this trip over Labor Day weekend, 2006, turned out to serve a personal need rather than a community project, no doubt as preplanned by Swami. A Pass Christian resident named Ms. Collate was in a pressing situation. She had to move back into her house within the next



thirty days, before FEMA took away the trailer where she was housed temporarily. She had been medically laid off her job the previous year due to a fall and resulting back problems. Her young sons were living with their grandmother in Texas, and she was all alone in Pass Christian, fighting it out single-handedly with some support from Randy, of the American Baptist Church organization. By Sunday of that Labor Day weekend, her entire house—three bedrooms with closets, two bathrooms, a living room, hall, kitchen, and other small areas, with walls higher than fifteen feet at places—had to be painted, so that the flooring work could start the following Monday. This was mandatory under FEMA regulations; otherwise, sanctions would go into effect and prevent her from moving in. She was really desperate and depressed prior to our arrival.

We hadn't been sure what we would end up working on, but the moment we came into Pass Christian, Randy, who was helping this time with our accommodations, said, "Guys, there is a woman who is desperate to get this thing done." We met her that same Friday night, and she was very happy and motivated, indicating that she was ready to accept our help the next day. As expected, it was a full day without much break, yet we finished the painting of her house by Saturday at 4:00 p.m. We had a chance to talk to her about her plans, and in this way we got some answers to our inner questions about Swami's plan. We asked her if she was angry with God, since Katrina had completely destroyed her home and life investment. She smilingly gave

"Yes, I don't know you guys, but I welcome you with open arms because I know you are coming down for a good cause. That is why I am not afraid."

the answer, "This part of the Gulf Coast is famous for its casinos and gambling. Because of these evil activities, God did what He should do. By doing this (Katrina), He has totally wiped out the casino businesses, and gambling activities have come down to almost zero." She was not at all upset about her house being destroyed.

We also asked what it was like to have total strangers come to help out, and if she weren't afraid or distrustful, being in such a vulnerable position. She replied, "Yes, I don't know you guys, but I welcome you with open arms because I know you are coming down for a good cause. That is why I am not afraid." Secondly, she made it clear that she had no one to help her out, and she was all alone, struggling. She pointed toward the trailer where she was living and said, "I sit there and get depressed about everything. But when you guys come all the way from New York City, it gives me the feeling that I am not alone, and I get motivated seeing you. If you were not here, I would still just have white walls, and now I have colors in my house. I am more rejuvenated with this, and I know I can continue for the next couple of weeks." She agreed to stay in touch with us and gave us her cell phone number.

We had a chance to ask Randy, who had been in Pass Christian right from day one, “How do you sustain your energy for this work?” He answered, “I derive my energy from you guys, who come here often.” He also stated, “There is still lot to be done right here in Pass Christian. We need help, and there has been a decline in terms of volunteers.” Despite all the work that had been accomplished, there continues to be “a real need, now—right now.” By the way, this trip we had “VIP accommodations” in the form of trailers with shower facilities, toilets, and a kitchen, thanks to Randy.

Thus Swami connected us once again to Pass Christian and gave us a fresh breath of air, energy, and motivation to keep returning again and again. I thought this might be the last trip on my part, but you know how surprises are the gifts from our beloved Swami, and I love those surprises!

On another front, the computer networking center that we set up previously had become Pass Christian’s main registration, volunteer help, and other database hub. Thus we saw some fruits of our service ripening in Pass Christian, with the grace and blessings of our beloved Swami.



Trip 6 This trip was probably the most unplanned of all, and it provided us with a new opening in terms of becoming one with the Pass Christian community. We drove down during the weekend of December 9-10, 2006, and took part in a wonderful program called “Giving Back to the Community,” which had been initiated by school children. Incidentally, this was the first major Christmas celebration after Katrina. Therefore we ended up distributing almost 8,000 salt-water taffies, along with Christmas cards, to all the families of the community. The following were the highlights of this service trip.

The inspiration and motivation came from within our own Sai organization, as this service would not have taken place if not for one Sai devotee who had the idea of utilizing the taffy—leftover from another

Sai activity back in Puttaparthi—for Katrina Sai service. She was dedicated to making sure we received the taffies before leaving for Pass Christian. So her determination and motivation inspired us in the end to make this trip. Bottom line, there are many who do a lot of things that go unnoticed and from which we can draw inspiration.

Baba Takes Many Steps Many times Baba has said, “If you take one step, I will take

100 steps,” and in our case He took 1,000 steps. Initially, seven people were to attend this trip—a team of three from New York City, and another team of four from other parts of the Mid-Atlantic region. On the day we were to leave for Pass Christian, one of the NYC members had to cancel at the last minute, due to office issues. That left me and one other who had come to the U.S. only three months prior for graduate studies. In fact, he and I had been on the same *seva dal* (service) team at Prasanthi Nilayam back in January 2006, and here we were put together again by Swami’s will. Initially he wasn’t sure about this trip, due to a final exam, but it got postponed to December 13, and he took a chance by joining me for the trip. On our way to Pass Christian, we got a call from the other team of four, that they could not make this trip, as their main driver had fallen sick that morning. So we ended up being the only two out of seven on this trip.

Now I had my thoughts as to how to distribute the 7,000-odd taffies into 600 bags and also write personalized greeting cards and put them in the bags of taffy as a token of love to all the families in the community. We estimated it would easily take us eight or nine hours to write all the cards and prepare the bags, but I was extremely tired, being the only driver for the entire trip from New York to Pass Christian, some 1,350 miles and almost seventeen hours. But then, Swami has His plans above all.

We reached Pass Christian around 4:00 p.m. on December 9, got our accommodations, and met the organizers of the “Giving Back to the Community” event, Robert and Marion

“They were all so happy with the Sai Group that they have welcomed us back and want us to get involved in whatever manner we prefer.”

Hamilton. They took us to a place where we were supposed to prepare the bags for the next day’s big event. They provided us with tiny transparent bags, and I told them that we would take care of the 600 bags. Suddenly Marion said, “Don’t you want us to help you with this service? We are energized, seeing you guys come all the way from New York City.” I was surprised by her kind gesture and told her yes, because in my mind I had been praying to Swami about how the two of us alone could achieve this big task after our marathon drive, and He answered my question without any delay. Then not only did she and Robert work with us but also a few others who were involved with the big event.

It was funny that those five Sai devotees who could not make it for this trip were replaced by Baba with seven key members of the Pass Christian community, totaling the divine number of nine in all for making up the 600 bags. These townsfolk also helped write personalized greetings such as “Love, Joy, and Peace,” “Merry Christmas,” “Peace, Peace, Peace,” “Love All, Serve All,” “Help Ever, Hurt Never,” and many others in those 600 beautiful cards.

Thus I experienced for the first time Baba acting through the people whom I thought we were going to help. The flow of love was clearly seen, and in fact they asked us to help them set up for the next day's program.

Small Seva Leads to Baba's Big Picture The next day's program, "Giving Back to the Community," was part of the town's Christmas celebration and also a tribute to the community for staying strong after Katrina. The program was attended by major state and local officials, pastors, church organizations, school coordinators, and the general community. Highlights of the program included:

1. A performance by four little girls from Pass Christian, ages 10-11, called the "4PartAngel" group (www.4partangel.com). Their program was aired on the ABC-TV "Good Morning America" show, and they had performed in front of mayors and other officials to raise funds for Katrina Relief. They wanted to give back to the community where they have lost their homes, friends, relatives, and others who have relocated after Katrina.
2. Gifts of toys to all children ages two to twelve in attendance. Incredibly we had almost 3,000 toys and some 2,000 stuffed animals and other toys to give away.
3. Giving out our 7,000 taffies and Christmas/New Year cards for all families.

From the moment we arrived, we were treated as one among them as we worked side by side, helping to unload, sort, and arrange toys, set up the stage, and other jobs the whole day. In fact we had interactions with the mayor and other officials with regard to further service activities. They really appreciated us, that is, the Sai group. They were all so happy with the Sai group that they have welcomed us back and want us to get involved in whatever manner we prefer.

We wondered to ourselves, "Where do we go from here?" As we wound down our most recent visit, we had time to reflect that the whole experience has opened doors for us to venture deeper into the community. We wondered whether we might be able to work out an Education in Human Values (EHV) program within the schools of Pass Christian, or initiate exchanges between our own Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) children of similar ages in Pass Christian on service projects.

What surprises will Baba give us? We are really excited and thank Swami for guiding us again and again in our service activities. We look forward to going again, and with Swami's grace hope to continue to be His instruments in rebuilding one of the many towns affected by Hurricane Katrina—Pass Christian, Mississippi.

—**Sai Kishore Paluru**
Flushing, New York



Is He?

This came to me as a result of reflecting on 'surrender,' for it seems in some ways that human surrender is a result of His will.

Is He the One—

*Who kindles the dormant senses into dharmic action,
And ignites the distracted intellect into energized devotion?*

Is He the One—

*Who coaxes the timid, lazy mind into brave nobility,
And challenges the destructive ego into all-embracing humility?*

Is He the One—

*Who harnesses the waning conscience,
Transforms it into elixir-effulgence,
And stirs the deep oasis of pure love into Self-acceptance?*

He is!

He is!

He certainly is—

*The One who wills us on this journey
to eternal bliss and union!*



—Aparna Murali
Los Angeles, California

Young Adult Study Circle

Focus: Collaboration vs. Competition

The following outline came from Young Adult responses during a college-group study circle investigating the characteristics of collaboration vs. competition. The discussion went on to consider two types of competition—healthy and unhealthy.

Attributes of Collaboration

- working together
- sharing ideas
- accepting other viewpoints
- working with a unified goal
- listening
- compromising
- practicing cooperation
- helping each other
- making use of interdisciplinary strengths; playing on each others' skills and experience
- having trust in members
- learning how to be a team player
- being willing to go above and beyond
- detaching from receiving credit and recognition

Attributes of Competition

Healthy Aspects

- bettering yourself—pushing your comfort zones
- being inspired to work harder
- increasing your level of skill or rank
- gaining the opportunity to learn from failures
- improving personal output

Unhealthy Aspects

- pulling others down so you can climb higher (cheating, sabotage, etc.)
- losing focus on your own goals through constant preoccupation with others' performances
- experiencing jealousy, depression, anger, and so on

—Aru Narla

Mesa, Arizona

Region 9 Sai Spiritual Education Coordinator

Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference, July 2007

Youth Sadhana Program and Announcements

The Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference 2007 will take place in Prasanthi Nilayam at Guru Purnima time (near July 29). The theme of the conference is *Ideal Sai Youth—Messengers of Sai Love*. Online registration for the conference and other details are now available with full instructions and requirements at <http://www.saiconference.org>.

A program of nine spiritual disciplines (*sadhanas*) for youth has been formulated as an offering to Swami. Every Sai youth is urged to practice this program, even those not attending the conference. The nine disciplines are as follows:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. chanting of the Lord's name | 5. speaking less and speaking softly |
| 2. reading of Swami's discourses and books daily, and participating in weekly youth study circles | 6. taking an active part in Sai centers |
| 3. engaging in group selfless service activities | 7. improving communications and interacting respectfully with parents |
| 4. practicing dietary discipline | 8. practicing a ceiling on desires by not wasting food, money, energy, or time |
| | 9. practicing daily meditation and prayer |

The USA Young Adult program is implementing this *sadhana* program at the local and regional levels. For more information, contact your local or regional young adult representatives. A handbook, *Sadhana Program for Sai Youth*, presenting the nine *sadhanas*, is available online, along with other conference details, at www.saiyousa.net.

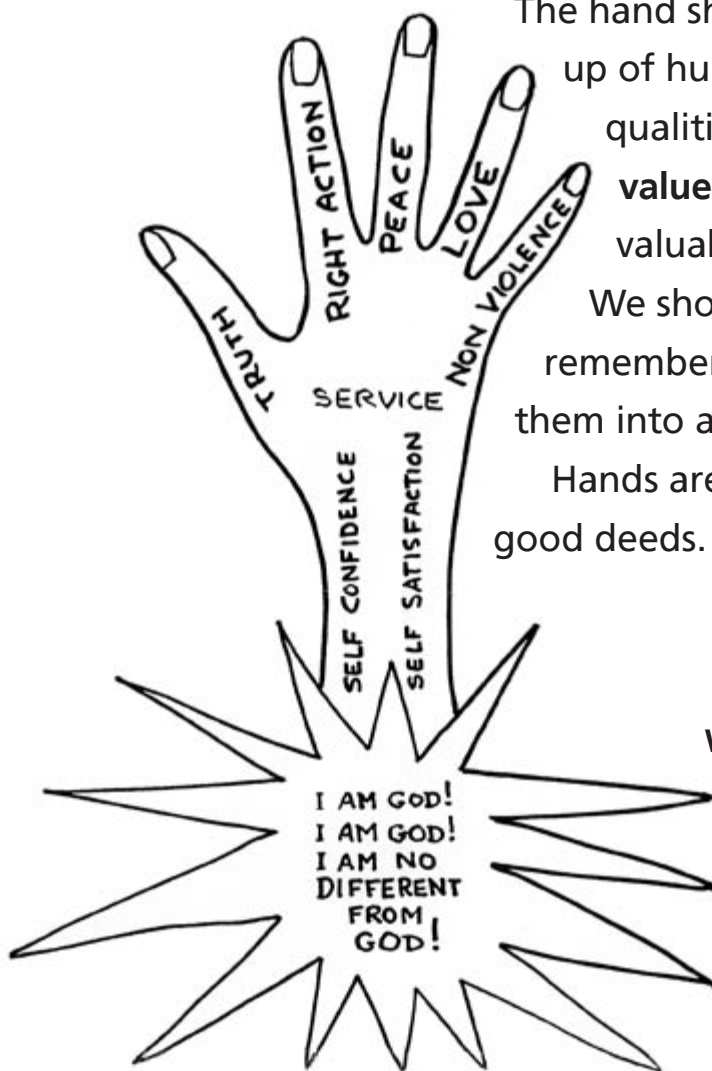
The nine spiritual disciplines constitute a rigorous but necessary program for youth aspiring to serve society and live the teachings of Bhagavan. The disciplines enable us to learn Bhagavan's teachings, transform ourselves, and selflessly serve others in the joyful bliss of divine oneness. When these disciplines are put into daily practice with dedication, devotion, discrimination, and determination, they lead to purity of heart and thus bring us to the experience of our innate divinity manifesting in daily life.

—Shitu Chudasama

Planning Committee, Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference
(an ad-hoc committee of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation)

Sai International Youth Choir A Sai International Youth Choir will perform songs in four-part harmony (men's and women's parts each divided into high and low voices) during the WYC. The choir will consist of fifteen to twenty singers and musicians from each world zone and be directed by Ms. Alma Badings of the Netherlands. Once finalized, the music and songs will be posted to the Internet so that singers may practice their parts prior to auditions in Prasanthi on July 15, 2007. Rehearsals will commence on July 16. Interested musicians should send a resume of their musical experience to Ms. Badings at abadings@planet.nl. For information, registration, and answers to questions, contact Chahna at mynavati27@hotmail.com.

The Hand of Human Values



The hand shows how you are made up of human values, or divine qualities. These are called **values** because they are so valuable, like inner jewels!

We show our divinity when we remember these qualities and put them into action.

Hands are to be used for doing good deeds.

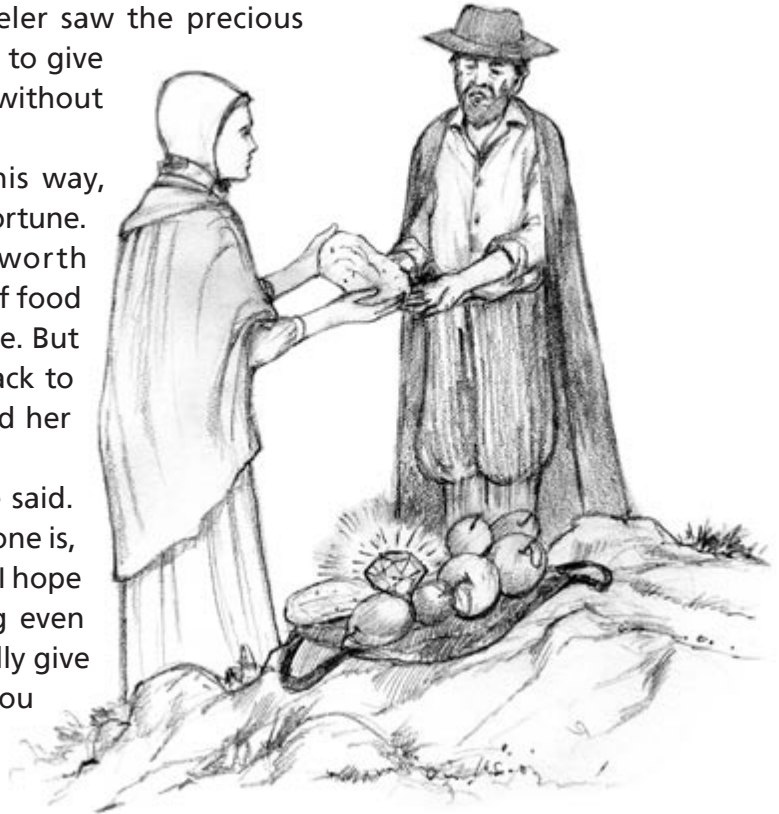
What divine qualities do you see inside the hand?
What good actions will you practice today?

The Most Precious Possession

A wise woman was traveling in the mountains and found a precious stone in a stream. She put it in her bag. The next day she met another traveler who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveler saw the precious stone. He asked the woman to give him the stone. She did so without hesitation.

The traveler went on his way, very happy about his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him plenty of food and possessions for a lifetime. But a few days later he came back to the wise woman. He handed her the stone.

"I've been thinking," he said. "I know how valuable the stone is, but I'm giving it back to you. I hope you can give me something even more precious. Will you kindly give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone!"



- What did the traveler value most at the beginning of the story?
- What did the traveler value most at the end of the story?
- What precious possession(s) did the traveler want, that the wise woman had inside? (A hint: Think about the lesson of the hand on page 42.)

—Story Author Unknown

—Illustration by Ashwini Jambotkar

Reflections on a Pilgrimage

Our group pilgrimage to Puttaparthi was a wonderful experience. Even though we were not able to perform anything in front of Baba, Baba gave us many golden gifts, such as wonderful *darshan*, *prasadam* (blessed food), a discourse, and just a wonderful and fun trip. The day we learned we would not perform, I was so sad that I cried all day, even in Sai Kulwant Hall. The event that made it even sadder was that Baba's students also performed a play that was similar to ours (on the unity of all religions). The other reason I was sad is that we had practiced for more than seven months. Some kids even drove eight hours to the practices. On the surface, it seemed as though not performing in front of Baba was unfortunate, but after thinking about it for a long time, I came to the realization that perhaps there is a deeper meaning to the matter.

For example, sometimes, when a student in 12th grade has performed well and is working very hard, the student does not have to appear for the final exams. In the same manner, we worked hard over a period of several months in perfecting our play. During each practice we performed as if Baba were present, and we all were full of love, devotion, and discipline. Having practiced so dutifully, perhaps Baba felt as though it were unnecessary for us to pass through the final exam of performing in His physical presence. During our practices, Baba was present in everything around us and in every one of us as well. We need to realize His omnipresence and spread His message of love to the rest of the world.

Now I will narrate another experience in my life. Once, one of my classmates was cursing at my friends and me. Then I decided to try

to solve the problem. One day during lunch hour at school, I talked to her. I told her that it is not only food that affects your body, but also

“I end by thanking all my *Bal Vikas* (Sai Spiritual Education) teachers and my parents for molding me into the person I am today.”

your words, actions, and thoughts. If you use foul language, it will have a bad effect on you.

She asked me how using bad words would affect her, when she was using them against others. I responded by telling her that when

one eats a chili pepper, the burning sensation hurts only oneself. Likewise, when someone uses foul language, the sensation that occurs within the body is worse than the burning sensation caused by the chili. Using bad language can disturb the peace inside one's body and therefore will result in lack of concentration in school and loss of respect from others. She immediately asked me where I learned this, and I told her about Baba. After talking to me, she promised that she would never use foul language. To this day, she has put her promise into action, and she is very thankful to me for making an impact on her life.

I end by thanking all my *Bal Vikas* (Sai Spiritual Education) teachers and my parents for molding me into the person I am today. Baba has said that our life is His message, and so I pray to Him that He may guide all of us in fulfilling His divine words. Let us all be instruments in His divine mission.

—Rushi Thanawala

East Brunswick Center, Mid-Atlantic Region

Miracles of Sai: Awakening the Buddha Within Us

Buddha Purnima

Lord Sai, universal teacher of the truth of love that unites all religions, all castes, all races, all colors, and all countries, calls on us to grasp the essence of the ‘eternal Buddha’ that resides in each and every one of us as *buddhi* (the intellect, wisdom sheath or *vijnanamaya kosha*, conscience, or inner master). *Purnima*, the full moon day, signifies fullness or wholeness; shining with bright effulgence; radiating the calm, cool, soothing rays of love; and the harmonizing of purified thoughts, words, and actions.

Lord Buddha as Manifested by Lord Sai

A miraculous moment took place in the serene Blue Hills of Kodaikanal, at the Lord’s residence, Sai Sruthi, as we devotees gathered at His Lotus Feet near Buddha Purnima time in May 2003. We were struck with awe and wonder and taken beyond time and space as we witnessed Gautama Buddha, “The Light of Asia” (563–483 BC), as manifested in the Divine Hand: Lord Sai created a nine-inch beautiful image of the peaceful, compassionate, lotus-eyed Buddha, in a meditative pose, made from the unique, copper-red clay soil of Lumbini Park, Buddha’s birthplace near Nepal. Swami blessed us all with the gift of holding this reservoir of calm, pure energy. Then, in His usual playful manner, He held it so that it vanished in thin air.

Sai’s Revelations to the Buddhist Monks

Then, in July 2006, a group of Tibetan Buddhist monks came for Lord Sai’s *darshan*, escorted by Dr. and Mrs. Ong of Singapore. They were blessed to offer their love for Lord Sai through a special type of Buddhist prayer ceremony invoking the ‘energy body’ of Buddha, referred to as Chinrajee. The monks were called for a group interview and emerged in ecstasy, having been blessed not only with the *darshan* of the noble prophet Buddha in Lord Sai, but each monk had also received the precious divine gift of a pendant of Chinrajee, materialized by Swami and charged with His divine energy, for the benefit of their spiritual services worldwide. This sharing is my humble offering to Lord Sai and our global Sai family, as it was He who facilitated my being able to meet Dr. and Mrs. Ong and the monks firsthand and partake in their joy.

—**Sarvalakshmi Duriseti**
Laguna Hills, California

Buddha Purnima, celebrated in honor of Gautama Buddha’s life and enlightenment, takes place in May. For further study, see Swami’s discourses on *buddhi* in Summer Showers 1990, and on Buddha and Buddha Purnima in Sathya Sai Speaks 30 (May 15, 1997), Summer Showers in Brindavan 2000 (May 21, 2000), and Summer Showers in Brindavan 2002 (May 26, 2002).

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NEW ARRIVALS (MOSTLY)

BOOKS

Invitation to Love – A Spiritual Journey This book by Valerie Allen describes the author's spiritual journey to Sri Sathya Sai Baba. She hopes it will help other seekers find the love that is so essential to world peace and unity. BW-068 \$23.00

Message of the Lord as a Practical Philosophy This 700-page volume in five parts is intended to help the reader understand not only the original Bhagavad Gita, but also Sathya Sai Baba's *Gita Vahini* and related materials from Sai literature. BI-101..... \$12.00

Bhakta Sakha ("The Devotee's Friend") 2007 This annual publication is a hardcover diary or calendar with a writing page for each day of the year, color photos, daily Sai quotes, and other practical information. BI-154\$7.00

The Mission of Sai—at a Glance To commemorate Swami's 80th birthday, this book is a pictorial compilation of some of the humanitarian projects undertaken by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. BI-154\$7.00

CDs

Prayers for Daily Chanting This CD contains numerous prayers that can be chanted at various times of day and for specific activities, such as morning prayers, mealtime prayers, prayers for well being, and so on. T-SCE-173 .. \$6.00

Sai Surya Samaan Performed by Anup Jalota, this CD was an offering of love to Bhagavan Baba on the occasion of His 80th birthday. T-SCE-172 .. \$6.00

Veda Parayanam 1 Vedic literature forms the foundation of the glorious spiritual culture of India. This CD contains the Ganapati Prarthana, Narayana Upanishad, Taittiriya Upanishad, and Mahanarayana Upanishad. T-SCE-164 .. \$6.00

Veda Parayanam 2 Vedic hymns, created by the Divine and believed to exist eternally, are potent with deep spiritual insights. This CD contains the Mahanarayana Upanishad, Purusha Suktam, Vishnu Suktam, Sri Suktam, Devi Suktam, Nila Suktam, Rudram, Bhagya Suktam, Ratri Suktam, Rishabha Suktam, Hiranyagarbha Suktam, Mantra Pushpam, and Kshama Prarthana. T-SCE-165 .. \$6.00

A Bridge Across Time 7 Popular *bhajans* performed by Sai students. T-SCE-162 .. \$6.00

A Bridge Across Time 8 Popular *bhajans* performed by Sai students. T-SCE-163 .. \$6.00

Instrumental Sai Bhajans 1 Popular Sai *bhajans* performed by mandolinist U. Srinivas
T-SCE-166 .. \$6.00

Instrumental Sai Bhajans 2 Popular Sai *bhajans* performed by mandolinist U. Srinivas
T-SCE-167 .. \$6.00

Krishna-Arjuna Dialogue The Bhagavad Gita for young adults, as broadcast by Radio Sai Global Harmony. In MP3 format, this 6-hour CD is meant to appeal to young minds and features beautiful interpretations and insights that Baba has given on this classic.
T-SCE-224.... \$11.00

Transformation of the Heart 1 This MP3-CD is a collection of conversations with devotees whose lives were transformed by Baba. The personal narratives show how spiritual awakening can occur under vastly different circumstances. T-SCE-217 ...\$11.00

VCDs

These discs can be played on TVs or computers equipped with CD or DVD players.

Sai Symphony Orchestra Classical music performed in the Divine Presence on Gurupurnima, July 11, 2006. Fifty-three musicians from twenty-two countries made up the orchestra, conducted by Klaus Maurer of Switzerland. T-SCE-222 .. \$9.00

Festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam 2005 Part 1 This boxed set of seven VCDs highlights festivals held in Prasanthi Nilayam from January to July 2005. These include the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet, Maha Shivaratri, Sri Rama Navami, Buddha Purnima, and Guru Purnima. T-SCE-124 \$25.00

Festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam 2005 Part 2 This boxed set of seven VCDs highlights festivals held in Prasanthi Nilayam from July to December 2005, such as the International Sai Symphony performing on Guru Purnima, Sai Children's Festival, Dasara, 80th Birthday Celebrations, Christmas, and "Life is a Song Sing It," a musical program by Australian and American devotees. T-SCE-125 \$25.00

For complete listings of books and media by and about Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and to order 24/7, please visit our website at www.sathysasaibooks.com. Visa and Mastercard accepted.