

# Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

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

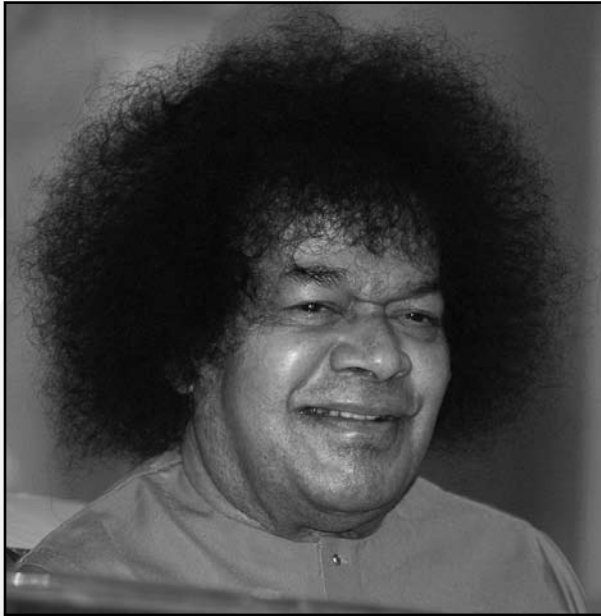


*"Silence"*

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**PLEASE NOTE NEW BOOK CENTER ONLINE ADDRESS: [www.sathyaaisbooksUSA.org](http://www.sathyaaisbooksUSA.org)**

# SAI'S MESSAGE



## Practice Silence

The first step in spiritual discipline is: practice silence. Then, you can more easily recognize the galloping of the mind behind worldly happiness. Restrain its movements; turn it inside, into the calm lake of bliss that lies deep in the heart! Get over fear, by establishing your mind in the One, for fear can arise only when there is another. An inquirer from the United States

asked me recently, “How can faith become firm?”

I answered, “When the truth is known, faith is rendered firm.” When the truth is known that [a snake perceived on the path] is but a rope, faith in its harmlessness is made firm, and fear that it is a snake disappears. Let people know the truth; then they will grow in faith, and the faith will endow them with great energy and enthusiasm. The rest will follow, and *dharma* (righteousness) can flourish in this world.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba  
SSS 11: 16, March 8, 1971

SILENCE IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE REALIZED SOUL.

# He Taught So Much, in Silence

*Pure Love and Pure Peace*

**In 2003, I visited Sai Baba for the first time. I learned about him from my sister, who learned about him from a blind Indian woman.** I had never been to India, even though I am a world traveler. I had never been to an ashram. I had never seen an avatar. I had never prayed for world peace with thousands of devotees and people from all around the globe. I was excited.

Upon our arrival in the Prasanthi Nilayam ashram, Sai Baba's "abode of peace," I noticed how clean it was. Palm trees provided shade. I saw an abundance of green foliage: plants growing in clay pots and colorful flowers embracing a healthy looking lawn. Pilgrims were coming and going. Gardeners tended to their work with loving care. The quiet and peaceful atmosphere was inviting. There was silence in the air. The absence of noise was immediately apparent: no mowers cutting lawns, no harrowing chainsaws manicuring bushes and trees western-style, no screaming dust blowers cleaning sidewalks, no automated sprinkler systems watering gutters and missing thirsty plants. All work was done by hand.

I was provided with my first teaching from Sai Baba: love and revere Mother Nature and all creation. Do not scare her

with roaring sounds or feed her poison. She grows an abundance of food for your survival. Without her, you cannot exist. Birds, insects, and animals are happy here because no chainsaw tops off blooming bushes or trees, making them round or square, destroying future berries and seeds that provide precious food for Sai Baba's beloved little creatures and creation.

When we love and care for Mother Nature with all our heart, there is happiness, there is peace. Peace invites silence. Silence and peace make our minds churn no more.

Early the next morning, after praying and chanting the sacred *Om* twenty-one times in the *mandir* (temple) and feeling one with all mankind and all creation, the crowd of ladies in the temple joined a large group of female devotees who had prayed in front of the shrine dedicated to Ganesha, the elephant-faced son of Lord Shiva. We were led by an unusually tall, grey-haired Indian woman who rose above all in height, like the Grand Spirit of the mighty Himalayas leading her sheep, her spiritual soul-seekers. Soon this massive, tight-knit caravan of devotees began moving forward, chanting *bhajans* (devotional songs), glorifying God. What a sight to behold in the early morning

hours! I felt so good, so uplifted, so very happy.

Then we queued up at the darshan hall. Thousands of people were already present, awaiting Sai Baba's blessings. It was not long before Sai Baba arrived! What excitement!

Here he was—a real avatar, a real God with bushy hair! His beautiful, black, huge eyes were beaming over the crowd; his smile and appearance were overpowering, showering pure love onto all. It was said that Sai Baba was not feeling well, was in pain. He had undergone hip surgery. Despite all, he came to bless thousands of his beloved devotees. Ten minutes later he left. No discourse.

Because of Sai Baba leaving early, we had plenty of time for *seva* (selfless service) in the “western” canteen, to peel potatoes and cut vegetables. We sat outdoors, under palm trees that provided shade and a cool breeze. It felt so pleasant and peaceful there. I happily participated in a colorful conversation with devotees from all around the world, learning where they came from, what languages they spoke, and whether they had seen Sai Baba before. Then, a young woman from Sri Lanka tapped me on my shoulder and told me that Sai Baba said for me to practice silence.

I was stunned! Sai Baba had spoken!

Sai Baba says, *I appreciate two things most in you: (1) **Silence.** It is only in the depth of that silence that the voice of God can be heard. Speak as low as possible, as little as possible, as sweetly as possible. Do not whisper to each other, for that is done only when someone is being traduced behind his back. Do not talk loudly, away from my*

*hearing—for there is no such “away.” (2) **Namasmarana** (repeating the names of God). Engage yourselves in repeating the name of the Lord, whatever other business you may be doing. Let the name of God be the permanent background for all your activities.* (SSS 8:33, Sept. 22, 1968)

I fell silent immediately. I contemplated the vegetables I peeled, admiring their contours and skin, their colors, and the divine work they would fulfill to provide food for everyone that evening. I felt very grateful. I silently hummed *namasmarana* and thanked Sai Baba for his infinite love and teaching.

At 4:30 p.m. it was time to queue up again in front of the darshan hall to receive Sai Baba's blessings. Thousands had gathered again. Then something happened, and my eyes grew huge: three dark-skinned elders arrived, sitting directly opposite from me as ordered by the *seva dal* (service corps volunteer). I sensed that their home was in the desert. They looked so royal! They were matriarchs of a tribe, no doubt! I could imagine the vast desert in their pitch-black eyes, and the many journeys they might have trekked with their families, camels, sheep, and felt yurts. I barely noticed the many deep

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**He showed me  
what silence  
is all about:  
how silence  
looks, how  
silence works,  
how silence is  
perfected.**

wrinkles carved in their beautiful faces by the hot desert sun and the relentless, blowing, sacred wind. Their frames and muscles were so flexible; nothing creaked when they folded their legs to sit on the ground. I was mesmerized! I know not to stare, but these elders were so beautiful and had such a presence about them! They never said a word. They

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**Pure love and  
pure peace are  
born in silence  
and are void  
of any words.  
They live deep  
in our heart and  
soul, awaiting  
awakening.**

sat gracefully in silence all the time. They reminded me of the ancient sphinx overlooking the vast Sahara desert in Egypt, holding secrets and visions of the hidden and the unseen.

Sai Baba sent me these three matriarchs of the Indian desert to show me how silence looks and how it is perfected. Thank you, beloved Sai Baba.

While I was immersed in this rare adventure, Sai Baba arrived before anyone was seated in the darshan hall. This time he stayed for one hour, but no discourse. We sang joyfully and did not let him out of our sight. In the days to follow, Sai Baba could not always come to bless us. We sat outside his private abode and prayed in silence. We prayed for his quick recovery, his health, his beautiful being and grand soul, and the gratefulness we held for him to have come

to Earth to help humankind, who forgot their divinity and ventured on a path of self-destruction.

While in Sai Baba's presence for two weeks, I never heard him speak or give a discourse. Always he sat in silence in his chair, looking at his beloved devotees, who in turn looked at him, while he was quietly working with each one of us to help solve our many problems that we offered to him.

Plenty of teachings and opportunities were "created" and presented during our stay, so that we could learn to transmute, transform, and heal, all while he protected us and embraced us with his pure love. By practicing silence, we were able to hear his whispers, his teachings, his messages. I did not notice it then, but upon returning home, it dawned on me that even Sai Baba himself taught me about silence—by *not* speaking, by *not* giving any discourses, and by sitting silently in his chair right in front of me in the bhajan hall. He showed me what silence is all about: how silence looks, how silence works, how silence is perfected. A few days later, I heard that Sai Baba had given a discourse in Prasanthi Nilayam!

Pure love and pure peace are born in silence and are void of any words. They live deep in our heart and soul, awaiting awakening. Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has come to Earth to show us how to awaken, how to become one with him, and how to live silently in the presence of God.

—Jutta Benner  
Charleston, Oregon

# Silently and Constantly Contemplate on God

*Attain Divinity As Taught by Lord Dakshinamurti*

**Dakshinamurti** is a representation of Lord Shiva. Temples dedicated to Lord Shiva typically have an image of Dakshinamurti in a south-facing niche, or facing south. Considered to be the ultimate guru or spiritual teacher, the embodiment of knowledge, Dakshinamurti is often portrayed with demons being crushed under his foot, symbolizing the destruction of ignorance and inner enemies. The youthful-looking Lord Dakshinamurti sits peacefully under a banyan tree, inspiring the wise by his silent immersion in yogic meditation, ever-flowing bliss, and supreme joy. He teaches through silence, via all-pervasive consciousness. Thursday and the full moon of Guru Purnima are associated with worship of Dakshinamurti as the principle of the guru.

Shankaracharya, the 8th century sage who expounded the concept of nondualism, composed a cycle of Sanskrit verses on Dakshinamurti that begins:

*We pray to you and invoke your name, O illustrious Dakshinamurti, who though young in appearance, is surrounded by a vast assembly of sages. O most eminent of preceptors, you explain, expound, and expose the greatest of truths and the concept of the Supreme Reality so eloquently, through silence alone. The very symbol of consciousness and bliss, you are lost in the bliss of the Self and joyous in appearance. —Ed.*

**E**mbodiments of love! The entire universe is permeated by Lord Dakshinamurti. The world is the reflection, reaction, and resound of Dakshinamurti. Dakshinamurti is young in age. Then, now, and forever, he is youthful. However, his disciples are hoary with age. They are venerable and steeped in sacred learning. His followers used to spread his message in ever so many ways. It is impossible to describe in words the true nature of Lord Dakshinamurti.

*The stories of the Lord are amazing. They purify the lives of the people in all the three worlds. They are like a good friend who helps you in times of need.*

*They are like a shelter for the sages and seers doing penance in the forest.*

(TELUGU POEM)

## The Wisdom of Dakshinamurti

How can anyone describe the glory of Dakshinamurti? His nature defies all descriptions. He is silence personified. His silence itself teaches all wisdom to spiritual seekers. From that silence emanates *sujnana* (discriminatory knowledge), *vijnana* (higher wisdom), and *prajnana* (constant integrated awareness). He is resplendent with divine wisdom. He always has a sweet smile dancing on his face. It is not possible to describe the nature of Dakshinamurti. He is *nirgunam*,

*niranjanam, sanathana, niketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, and nirmala swarupinam* (attributeless, pure, the final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free, and the embodiment of sacredness).

No description or amplification can fully explain Dakshinamurti's true nature. His form is effulgent and blissful. How can one describe such an embodiment of love! He is the embodiment of truth!

*Creation emerges from truth and merges into truth. Is there anywhere in the cosmos where truth does not exist? Visualize this pure and unsullied truth.*

(TELUGU POEM)

There is no place in this world that is not permeated by truth. Truth is changeless. Any object in this world may undergo a change, but truth will not! The famous musician, the late M.S. Subbalakshmi, used to invoke the blessings of Lord Dakshinamurti before she commenced a musical concert. No one can achieve even a small task without invoking the blessings of Lord Dakshinamurti. It is only by his divine will that everything is possible. All divine forms have emerged from Dakshinamurti. He is a youth, yet all divine powers are immanent in him. Where can you find the omnipresent, ever-young Dakshinamurti?

*With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe.*

(SANSKRIT SLOKA)

Lord Dakshinamurti is present in the eyes that see, the ears that hear, and the nose that breathes. All the words that we

speak belong to him. In fact, he is the prime mover of all our activities during the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. Hence, we must lead our lives with constant awareness of the nature of Lord Dakshinamurti.

## Divinity is All-Pervading

There is no place in this universe that is not permeated by God. There is no object in this world that is not divine. Every object, every individual—nay, even the insects and bacteria are embodiments of Lord Dakshinamurti. It is the one divine principle that manifests itself in different forms.

*Jewels are many, but gold is one. Cows are many, but milk is one. Beings are many, but breath is one. Forms are many, but God is one.* (TELUGU POEM)

Everyone must recognize this truth. You may sing the glory of God by any number of names: Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana, and so on. All these are names ascribed to God by man, but God has no particular name or form. All names and forms are his. The Dakshinamurti principle permeates all beings. He is *chaitanya swarupa* (the embodiment of consciousness). Wherever consciousness is, there is Dakshinamurti. The Dakshinamurti consciousness is present in all human beings.

## Effect of the Inner Enemies

People remain unable to realize this divine consciousness, due to attachment to the physical body. The effect of the body-mind-intellect-memory-ego complex covers the Dakshinamurti principle.

Besides this, the the six inner enemies (desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy) block one's realization of the divine principle. These are like dark clouds that cover the resplendent sun. We think the sun is not visible. But once the dark clouds clear, after some time, the sun reappears with all its effulgence. Similarly, when you are able to remove the "clouds" of *ajnana* (ignorance), *aham-kara* (ego), and the six inner enemies, you will be able to realize Dakshinamurti as the self-effulgent divine consciousness present in you.

Every human being should strive to divest these six inner enemies. If you chant the divine name and constantly contemplate on divinity, it is possible to get rid of these dark clouds. In fact, the six inner enemies are not inborn qualities of a human being. They are acquired only during the course of one's life. They are self-acquired. They come one by one and settle like thick clouds on the psyche of a human being.

For example, a single bangle worn on the wrist does not make any noise. But when a second bangle is added, they start making noise. A human being starts his life as a single person. Gradually, he develops illusory needs, like family and so on. That is *kama* (desire).

Due to this desire, he marries and gets a wife. Thus, they become two. Over the course of time, the two multiply themselves into many: children, grandchildren, and so on. Thus, the size of the family keeps on growing. All this human bondage is of one's own making; it is not God's gift.

Thus, one should make efforts not to entangle oneself in this bondage, right from an early stage of life. This is the message taught by Lord Dakshinamurti, by his own example.



*Be constantly aware of the fact that Swami is the eternal witness to everything that goes on in the world, and he is watching you.*

Since he did not entangle himself in bondage from the beginning, he always looked young and fresh.

A human being should not degenerate into an animal. One should lead the life of a human being. Then only does one deserve to call oneself a human being. Otherwise, there is the danger of degenerating to a mere animal.

It is only in the animals that the qualities of *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (pride), and *matsarya* (jealousy) manifest, in large measure. We should always live like the two-legged human beings, not like four-legged animals. Every individual has to constantly remind himself that he is a human being, not an animal. Then one must develop the faith that one is not merely a human being but is verily an embodiment of divinity. The

mind, intellect, memory, senses, and ego come in the way of a human being realizing this truth.

### **“Who Are You?”**

You say, “This is my handkerchief.” It follows that *you* are different from the handkerchief. Similarly, you say, “This tumbler is mine.” It follows that the tumbler is separate from you. In the same way, you say, “This is my body.” The implication in this statement is that you are not the body. When you say “my mind,” it means you are different from the mind.

Then the question arises, “Who are you?” Since you are different from all these things, you are able to say, “my body, my mind,” is it not so? The result of this inquiry establishes the truth that you are yourself, and not the body, mind, intellect, memory, senses, or ego. However, by association with these vestures and appendages, you develop various qualities.

A *paan* (chewing mixture) can be made by mixing three ingredients, namely betel leaves, areca nut powder, and slaked lime. When it is chewed, your mouth and lips turn red; the lime content is responsible for this red color. But lime should be added in a very small quantity; otherwise, there is the danger of the mouth being affected with inflammation.

Similarly, man should set reasonable limits to all his activities. Only when man confines himself to limits can he lead his life as a human being. The moment he crosses his limits, he becomes a demon. A human

being should live like a human being only. There are three letters in the word *manava* (human being): *ma* means *maya* (illusion or ignorance); *na* means without, and *va* means conducting oneself. Thus, a *manava* is one who conducts himself without illusion. Lord Dakshinamurti taught such a sacred *jnana* (wisdom). He taught that in spite of donning the human form, one should not develop any attachment to the body.

Embodiments of love! A human being’s most important and innate quality is love. It is an inborn gift from the mother. Love is God, live in love. You must lead your life with love. Whomever you come across, consider them as embodiments of God. Even when you come across someone who hates you, offer your salutations to him. Then only can you be considered a real human being.

Be constantly aware of the fact that Swami is the eternal witness to everything that goes on in the world, and he is watching you. Do not associate yourself with divisive groups. It is only when you join such warring groups that differences of all sorts grow. There are several such groups in the world today.

Not one individual is to be found who is not a member of some group or the other. The only difference is the extent to which one involves oneself in such groups. The one who constantly contemplates on God is the noblest of all human beings.

*“Everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances, contemplate on God.”*

*(Sarvada sarva kaleshu sarvatra Hari chintanam.)* (SANSKRIT SLOKA)

This means that one has to spend one's time constantly in the contemplation of God. Even your body has to be engaged in God's work. Your entire life must be filled with divinity.

It is only when one leads a divine life that one's intellect blossoms. Life will become divine only when devotion to God is developed. Humanness will be sanctified and one's life will be fulfilled. First and foremost, live like real human beings. Then only can you attain divinity.

In the Treta Yuga, people considered Sri Rama to be an ordinary human being in the early stages of his life. Only when he killed Ravana and destroyed the demonic forces did he begin to be extolled as God by the people.

## God Is the Embodiment of Bliss

Embodiments of love! You cannot experience bliss as long as you are afflicted with the *arishadvargas* (six inner enemies). The Atma is the embodiment of eternal bliss, wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the great statement, *That Thou Art (Tattwamasi)*, one without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness to all functions of the intellect, and beyond

all mental conditions and the three attributes of *sathwa* (balance, purity), *rajas* (passion/excess), and *thamas* (dullness/deficiency). (*Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam,*

*Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadgee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam*). To experience this, one should always try to be happy and eliminate the six inner enemies.

You must lead your lives in a state that is beyond duality, the pair of opposites. It is only when you lead such divine lives that you can be considered real human beings. If, by chance, some evil qualities develop in you, remember God's name to get rid of such qualities. When you constantly contemplate on God, you will yourself become God.

You are all embodiments of love in the truest sense. You cannot live even for a second without love. You are expressing this love in many ways. Develop love. Live as embodiments of love. Gradually attain divinity. This is the important message I am conveying to you today.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Ati Rudra Maha Yagna, August 11, 2006



# Fruits of Silence

*An Elixir Beyond Compare*

**S**ri Sathya Sai Baba emphasizes the need for observing silence to whatever extent possible. A few years ago I came across a bulletin bearing the title, “Fruits of Silence.” It was issued in the name of Shirdi Sai Baba by one of his devotees. The importance of silence was expounded in that bulletin through the format of a conversation between a saint and a seeker.

I tried to assimilate the contents of that conversation from the standpoint of what Swami has been exhorting us to do all along. In what follows, I give my understanding of the meaning of “the fruits of silence.” For this purpose, I use the same format of dialogue—between Saint and Seeker—as was used in the bulletin mentioned earlier.

*Seeker:* O Saint! What should I do to be worthy of the name of man (*manava*), loving all of God’s creation and living in perfect harmony with nature?

*Saint:* Practice silence.

*Seeker:* Won’t it be difficult to practice silence while the monkey mind constantly tries to resist it?

*Saint:* Yes! It will be very difficult but only in the beginning. The very nature of mind is to generate thoughts. Bad thoughts, however, will distract you from the real path

of self-realization. One can overcome the evil designs of the monkey mind through disciplined practice (*sadhana*) and adherence to the following five fundamental principles: truth (*sathya*), righteousness (*dharma*), peace (*shanti*), love (*prema*), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*).

*Seeker:* Why is silence so important?

*Saint:* Silence is important because it can be considered an elixir that will soothe your nerves, calm your mind, and thus prevent tremendous loss of energy. It allows you to become aware of your faults and weaknesses. It prepares you for carrying out efficiently the required self-examination. It fosters wisdom and the ability to see the futility of entertaining feelings such as passion, anger, miserliness, lust, hatred, jealousy, and impulsiveness, which waste your productive energy.

*Seeker:* What exactly are the fruits of silence?

*Saint:* The fruits of silence are beyond your imagination. Silence paves the way for tolerance and forgiveness. It makes the practice of self-control easier and strengthens your moral base. Silence is the foundation for raising the edifice of wisdom and godliness in a person. Once you have tasted the joy of

silence, you will realize the utter futility of allowing your monkey mind to have its sway. Then, silence alone will become your guiding principle in life, which is the first step toward spiritual awakening and to living ultimately in the illuminating light of *Atman* (the inner divinity).

*Seeker:* What do the scriptures say about silence?

*Saint:* All scriptures unequivocally extol the attitude of silence as a virtue beyond compare. A

person practicing silence is described as one engaged in *mauna vratam* (a vow of silence). The term *mauna* means silence, and *vratam* means the act of carrying out some chosen task with strict discipline and adherence to the required code of conduct. That should tell you a lot about the status assigned to

silence in the scriptures. In essence, through silence you can realize your true Self (*Atman*), a spark of the universal divine Self.

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



*Silence in speech means confining one's speech to the limit and the needs of the occasion. By this discipline, excessive talk is avoided. As a result, the power of speech is conserved and enhanced. Discipline in speech also results in truthfulness. Truth-speaking serves to purify the thoughts. By this means one can realize truth and acquire the highest wisdom. Therefore purity in speech is vital. It has to be achieved by restraint in speech.*

—**Sri Sathya Sai Baba** (SSS 27:7 Feb 2, 1994)

BE LIKE THE ROSE FLOWER THAT SPEAKS SILENTLY IN THE  
LANGUAGE OF FRAGRANCE.

# *Finding God*

*Only in stillness, forgetting self, can you know Me as I am:  
The Self that is vibrant, yet still.  
When you experience this feeling, your faith in Me is assured.  
In the silence, I have answered.  
You called, and I came to you.  
You were alone and now you are not.  
Your longing has brought My love.  
My wonderful energy has merged with your small portion,  
and you can't move or speak.  
Your children's calls go unanswered . . . until I withdraw.  
Now that you have experienced My grace, your life is forever changed.  
As the years go by, your faith will never waver,  
because you know Me as a living powerhouse of energy.  
So have faith when you are afraid, for I am strong.  
Have faith that I will love you, even when you forget to love Me.*

(Inspired by the poem, "I Am There," by James Dillet Freeman,  
in the January/February 2008 Sathya Sai Newsletter USA)

—**Marilyn Brooks**  
Eugene, Oregon



# Silence and the Name of God

*Entering the Heart of Islam*

From *"The Enigma of Islam:  
Understanding Its True Glory,"*  
Courtesy: Heart2Heart e-journal,  
September 2008, [www.radiosai.org](http://www.radiosai.org)

**T**he nature of the mind is sound. The vibrations of thought waves in the mind produce very subtle sound that cannot be heard by the physical ear. Nevertheless, the inner ear can hear this sound. In fact, physical sound is only a resound of the sound of thought. The interval between two consecutive thought waves is the gate to silence. The name of God is the key to this gate. The name of Allah is the key to the Infinite, and to enter this gate is to enter the heart of Islam. For, Allah says to his prophet (peace be upon him) in the glorious Qur'an, "Of whosoever it is Allah's will to guide, He expands his heart into Islam." (Al-Anaam 6:125) "Heart" here means absolute silence. "Islam" means total surrender to God. When the mind is unified with the name of God, it dissolves into silence, because the name of God is the primordial sound of silence.

"For those who believe, those hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, for without doubt, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (The Holy Qur'an, 13:27-28)

## The Primordial Sound of Silence

God is silence. Silence cannot be described. The moment you describe it, it ceases to be silence! Silence is neither being nor nonbeing. It is not emptiness and it cannot be described as something. It is That which is beyond attributes.

Every sound is born from the womb of silence. Every sound dies too in the tomb of silence. The whole of creation as sound has emerged from the womb of silence and will finally dissolve in the tomb of silence. The first sound that arose from the womb of silence is the name of God. And from this primal sound, the whole of creation came forth. It is also through this primal sound that the whole of creation will return into silence. The name of God is the primal sound that leads one back into the soundless.

Different religions refer to this primal sound of silence by different names: Allah, Aum, Jesus, Rama, Krishna, and so on. The scriptures of ancient India state: "AUM, the Word, is all this, the whole universe. All that is past, present, and future is indeed AUM, and whatever else there is, beyond the threefold division of time, that too is AUM." (Mandukya Upanishad, 1:1)

The Christian Bible proclaims: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... All things were made and came into existence through It, and without It was not one thing made that has come into being." (John 1:1)

The name of God therefore is both the efficient and material cause of the universe. Everything in the universe is a vibration of God's name. Every atom in the cosmos is a resound of the primal sound. The heart of creation beats with the name of Allah. When the mind is unified with God's name, it becomes one with the whole of creation, one with the music of being and becoming, and one with the all-pervading sound stream that has no direction, because you cannot [pin]-point where it is coming from. When one's mind is unified with God's name, like the Prophet's was (peace be upon him), one will begin to hear the echo of the divine word in everything—as if the sky, the earth, the moon, and the universe all are saying the same name that one is repeating. In this state of oneness, one's heart expands into Islam.

## Key to the Gate of the Infinite

How does one unify the mind with the name of God? This is a most practical question, for which the Prophet Mohammed's paradigm is a prime solution: "O ye who believe, let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. If any act thus, the loss is their own." (Holy Qur'an, 63:9)

Likewise instructs the Hebrew scripture: "Listen, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy entire mind and with thy entire heart and with thy entire strength." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Loving God with one's entire mind happens when one has unified the "I" consciousness with the name of God. This requires integrating the three levels of consciousness (waking, dreaming, and deep sleep) with God's name.

The "I" consciousness is operative in the waking and dreaming states and remains as a latent seed impulse in the deep sleep state. When the "I" consciousness is operative, one is mindful of the "I" as the "doer" and "experiencer." From dawn to dusk, the "I" parades itself as "I am a doctor," "I am a professor," "I am a husband," "I am a devotee," "my property," "my interests," and so on. But once the "I" has been unified with the name of God, one is only conscious of God.

When this unification is attained, the three levels of consciousness become automatically integrated with the primal sound of silence. Then, the little individuated "I" is replaced with the name of God. The cry of "I, I, I" turns into a divine call,

*To listen is to be silent. To be silent is to be aware.*

“Allah, Allah, Allah.” The self pride of “I am this” and “I am that” turns into a divine glorification: “Allah is this” and “Allah is that.” The greed of “this is mine” and “that is yours” is converted into “*La illaha illa allah*: there is none but Allah.”

Islam is attained when the “I” forgets itself in the remembrance of Allah. St. Paul attained this essence when he said, “It is no longer ‘I’ who lives, but God living in me.” (Galatians 2:20)

“Do not say, ‘I am nothing’; neither say, ‘I am something.’ Do not say: ‘I need such and such a thing,’ nor yet, ‘I need nothing.’ But say, ‘Allah,’ and you will see marvels.” (Mulay al-‘Arabi ad-Darqawi, *Letters of a Sufi Master*)

## **Integrating the Divine Name into All Our Activities**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, *Chanting of God’s name (namasmarana) is the easiest path to liberation.* (SSS 35:6 Apr. 13, 2002)

Aisha said, as narrated by Muslim, that the Prophet remembered God at all times of the day and night. (Hadith 003:0724)

The glorious Qur’an states, “My devotees are those who remember their Lord while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides.” (Holy Qur’an, 3:191)

Seekers will ask, how can one remember God while standing (waking consciousness, where both the body and the mind are standing, that is, active); while sitting (the dreaming consciousness, where only the mind is active); and while lying down (deep

sleep consciousness, where both the body and the mind are inactive).

How do we fill the whole waking day with the remembrance of God? There is a very practical and easy way of unifying the “I” consciousness with the name of God during the waking state when the body and the mind are both active, through a number of steps that we must follow systematically.

We have already elaborated on how everything in this entire universe is a vibration of the primal sound of silence, which we call “the name of God.” The first step is to discover this sound in every ordinary sound and scene. Our body-mind complex is made up of sound, and it produces sound continuously—the sound of the heartbeat, the breath of life, the noise produced while eating, bathing, walking, brushing the teeth, or for that matter, while sweeping the house or doing other household chores, such as washing clothes, cutting vegetables, cooking, gardening, and so on. The list is endless. We must discover and realize that all these sounds are but modifications of the primordial sound of God; they are actually a resound of the name of God. In fact, every sound that our body produces and receives is a call to prayer, a call to remember Allah.

The second step is to harmonize and integrate the name of God with every sound that our body-mind complex produces during the waking state. We must form the habit of waking up with the name of God. The first thought of the day must be “Allah”—or any

name that one chooses to call the primal sound of silence, any name that evokes a strong feeling of love and emotion in our heart. When we call it, our heart should melt in tears. Our passion for this name should be irresistible, for this is our direct line to divinity. Allah says to his prophet (peace be upon him), “I am just as my devotee thinks I am.” The name is the line; the love is the connection. The call is the switch. When we go to bed with the divine name, we will always wake up with the name of God in our heart and on our lips.

*In order to attain purity, it is not enough if chanting of the divine name is confined to a limited period. It has to be a continuous spiritual exercise throughout one's life. Only then will the divine name get imprinted on one's heart. You may attend to your daily routine. But, while attending to your duties in your own house or in the outside world, constantly remind yourself of the name of God.*

(Sri Sathya Sai Baba)

“Mention the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with a complete devotion.” (Holy Qur'an, 73:8)

“O you who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance, and glorify Him morning and evening.” (Holy Qur'an, 41-42)

Eating is a most sacred act. In the Hindu religion, food is regarded as God: “*Annam Brahma*.” (Vedic injunction: “Food is God.”)

In the Christian tradition, during the Last Supper, Jesus taught that the food we eat is his body, and that whenever we eat, we should remember God. Every meal is a

Holy Communion in the body of Christ. (Luke 22:19)

We must therefore merge the act of eating with the sound of God's name. This means that we have to endeavor to eat our food in silence. After saying the blessings, the actual eating of the food must be an act in remembrance of the name of God. And every bite will take us beyond the beat of the sound to the One who digests the food within us in the form of fire.

*If you talk while taking food, the digestive system will be spoiled. Once the digestive system is spoiled, various diseases will confront you. ... Most children do not know this rule. Take your food in silence in a calm atmosphere. Do not howl, talk, and chit chat. Do not laugh or cry while taking food.* (Sri Sathya Sai Baba)

Can you imagine what happens when all the sound-producing activities of the body-mind complex during waking consciousness are saturated with the name of God? An ordinary bath becomes a shower of divine drizzles! An ordinary walk becomes a rhythmic dance of Allah's name! The very act of breathing utters the primal sound of God's name, and the acts of one's daily duty become a *japa* (rosary) of God's name.

It will be ecstasy when every association is spent in the remembrance of Allah and every action is sweetened by the immortal honey of God's name. The living presence of God's holy name will surround us like a heavenly fragrance, welling up from the depth of nothingness. An unseen power will anchor our soul, making us feel as if we can

fly with the wings of an eagle. Our heart will be filled with a divine music that is hidden to the ears of mortal man. In short, our soul will get so suffused with the ethereal sound of silence that people will think we have gone out of our minds! And this is true, because at this point, the mind is about to drop.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Remember Allah as much as you want, until people say that you are crazy and foolish.” (As narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*)

### Inner Resonance of God’s Name

Another stage is reached when the resonance of God’s name awakens in one’s heart. At the beginning, the remembrance of God’s name may seem mechanical. One has to make consistent effort to integrate the name of God with all one’s actions during the day. But a time will come, depending on the intensity of one’s constancy, when the name of God will begin to repeat itself within the heart of the devotee. This is the awakening of the power of soul resonance.

The heart will begin to reverberate with the sound of God’s name. One hears in one’s inner self the echo of the divine name arising from the core of silence. It is like a song that you like so much that you sing this song often, and then after a time, without any conscious effort, you “hear” the song singing itself within you. This is the power of soul resonance, the power of Lord Hanuman, who so unified his consciousness with the name of Rama that every hair on his body vibrated with the sound of “Ram.”

“With the heart, remember Allah, secretly from creation, soundlessly and speechlessly. That remembrance is best of all; out of it flowed the sayings of the saints.” (Sheikh Amin al-Kurdi, *The Enlightenment of Hearts* [Tanwir al-Qulub], p. 522)

When the heart is awakened to the sound of silence, just as the physical heart pumps blood to every cell and organ in the physical body, the waves of the divine name from the spiritual heart will invigorate the vital life force of the devotee. And every cell will tingle with the sound of the name of Allah; every hair will stand like a violin string tuned to the frequency of God’s name.

At this stage, the heart of the devotee will connect to the heart of God and to the soul of the earth. Everything will speak to him: the trees, the mountains, the ocean, and the sky will converse with him; beast and birds, fish and reptiles, and all the creeping and crawling creatures will talk to him, and he will understand their language. This is the language of the heart, and every sound will draw him nearer and nearer to the womb of silence.

This is the stage where the devotee has to develop and deepen the art of inner listening. To listen is to be silent. To be silent is to be aware. This awareness is the “living presence of Allah.”

Jalaluddin Rumi was one whose heart was awakened by the call of silence, one whose ego was burnt by the flames of love, one who embodies the essence of Islam. How can one gauge the depth of the heart of one whose heart Allah has expanded into Islam?

Or how can one understand that which has no stand, or fathom that which has no top or bottom! Who can measure the heart of Rumi? He was a perfect Muslim. His life was so completely transformed into prayer that everyone who saw him wanted a prayer from him.

“Wherever I put my head, that is my place of worship. No matter where I am, that is where God is. Vineyards, roses, nightingales, the *sema* (sounds; also, Sufi rituals), and loving . . . They are all symbols; the reason is always Him.” (Jalaluddin Rumi)

“Your thoughts are the bar behind the door! Set the wood on fire! Silence, heart!” (Jalaluddin Rumi)

## Divinizing Our Dream State

The dream state is like “sitting” because although the body is asleep, the mind is still active, so it is a state between waking and deep sleep. One may wonder how on earth one can remember God while dreaming. But this aspect of our life is so important and vast that when utilized properly, the amount of progress one can make on the spiritual path is like making a two-hundred-year journey just in two days.

The reason is evident. The world we experience in the dreaming consciousness is the storage house of our subconscious mind. Our subconscious mind is the record of all our past deeds, thoughts, words, and emotions. It holds the imprint of all our impulses and tendencies, past desires and future determinations. When we gain access to the subconscious mind, a lot of things

can happen very fast, because the world of the dreaming state has an entirely different time scale. Hence, the dreaming state is characterized by the absence of time.

What happens when our dreams are divinized? A whole vast chunk of the subconscious mind can be erased by God’s name! It is as if we have a cassette of junk music, which we want to replace with spiritual music. What do we do? We simply tape the spiritual music over it. Then, the old song is not only wiped out but becomes irretrievable. This is what happens when we divinize our dreams. A large storage bin of past tendencies and so on just gets wiped out! One may not achieve this feat in many lifetimes of ordinary waking consciousness. Hence, we must sleep with the name of God by injecting the primal sound of silence into our subconscious mind.

## Use the Little Gap

There is a little gap that separates the waking and the sleeping consciousness. This interval is the door to the subconscious mind and is that moment when we are neither awake nor asleep. If we autosuggest the name of God into this opening, then this sound of silence will weave its miracle as we slumber. The name will clean and purify; it will scrub and wash; it will churn and remove all the dirt from the inner recesses of our subconscious mind. How do we autosuggest the name of God into the door of our subconscious mind?

First, we must not fall asleep in just any way. We must practice the art of falling asleep

## *To contact silence in full awareness is the goal of Islam.*

with the name of God. For those who fall asleep facing up, synchronizing the name of God with the breathing until one falls asleep may be the best. Those who sleep on their sides may prefer to hug the name of Allah in the cavity of the heart, like hugging the silence, to feel a living closeness with the reality of one's chosen name of God. Or, one can sleep with soft, cool background music playing the holy names of God, a repetition of one's chosen and adored name, while emptying one's head of all thoughts and connecting the heart with the sound of silence in the music until one falls asleep.

*If you seek to know where the Atma is, it is the chaitanya (consciousness) between one state of consciousness and another. This is not easily understandable by all. There is a state between waking and sleep. Few know what this state is. We seem to be in the waking state, and then we close the eyes and fall asleep. Only the yogis have observed this phenomenon. That which is conscious between the waking and sleeping states is the Atmic principle. (SSS 23:19, May 29, 1990, "Know Thyself")*

*If you can experience the knowledge of the waking stage and the bliss of the sleeping stage, both at the same time and to the full, that is moksha—true liberation. Then you have consciousness, knowledge and bliss, unalloyed; you are Being-Awareness-Bliss itself, pure and simple. You must watch for the moment when the wakeful stage passes into the sleeping stage, and concentrate on that moment, purifying it of all the agitations and*

*thoughts that mar the wisdom and bliss. (SSS 11:17, Mar. 24, 1971 "Liberation from Bondage")*

### **Annihilating the "I" Impulse**

To contact silence in full awareness is the goal of Islam. To consciously enter into "deep sleep" is the very essence of spirituality. This means to consciously bring the body-mind activity to a complete stop. In this state one is awake while asleep.

In meditation, we consciously enter into deep sleep. When this state is sustained, the seed "I" (ego-"I") impulse gets annihilated. Just as any seed subjected to a certain temperature ceases to germinate when it is planted, the seed "I" impulse, when subjected to the heat of silence for an uninterrupted period of time, becomes dead.

And those whose seed "I" impulse is dead are perpetually in a state of rest. But because they entered into this state of rest consciously, they are awake in their rest. In this state, "*La illaha illa allah*" (There is no God but God) becomes a living realization: "Allah! There is none but him, the living, the Self-subsisting, eternal. No slumber can seize him, nor sleep." (The Glorious Qur'an, 2:25)

"Our souls are restless until they rest in God." (St. Augustine of Hippo)

For those who have attained Islam (total surrender), the "I" seed impulse is dead, that is, annihilated, and the three levels of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and sleeping—are unified into one. These holy ones have attained the unity of Allah. They

are eternally at rest because the seed “I” impulse, the very cause of man’s unrest, is gone. They do not experience suffering or sorrow, because it is only the “I” that suffers and the “I” that gets hurt. They do not experience birth and death, because it is the “I” that is born and the “I” that comes again. To them there is no up or down, no inside or outside, no male or female, no young or old, because the “I” that divides and joins is deceased.

The cross is the symbol of Christianity and its essence. When the ego-“I” is cut across, one cannot suffer or die. Jesus never suffered; he never died, because Jesus had no “I.” Jesus went through the way of the cross to teach humanity how not to suffer in suffering, and how not to die in death, by simply destroying the root of suffering and death—which is the ego.

We do not experience pain or suffering in deep sleep because in deep sleep there is no separate “I” feeling. We might go to bed with a severe toothache. But this pain disappears immediately as we enter into deep sleep. Why is the pain not experienced? It is because the “I” is temporally withdrawn. But the moment the “I” wakes up again, the pain returns in full force. When the “I” is permanently and consciously dissolved in silence, there can be no experience of pain, even though one is fully conscious of the pain. One knows the pain because one is conscious, but one does not suffer the pain because there is no “I” feeling.

As long as this “I” dominates in one’s life, one will continue to experience the dualities of suffering and release, pain and pleasure,

depression and elation, good and bad, death and birth. In fact, one’s happiness is indirectly proportional to the predominance of this ego-“I” in one’s life. When the separate “I” is replaced by “Allah,” one begins a return journey into paradise.

## Take the Steps

The Prophet said, “Allah says: ‘I am just as my devotee thinks I am. I am with him if he remembers me. If he remembers me in himself, I too, remember him in myself, and if he remembers me in a group of people, I mention him in a better group in my presence. If he comes one span nearer to me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to me walking, I go to him running.’” (As narrated by Abu Huraira in the Hadith, 9:93:502)

Our beloved Sathya Sai Baba reiterates the same truth: *Remember that with every step, you are nearing God, and God, too, takes ten steps toward you when you take one step toward him. There is no stopping place in this pilgrimage; it is one continuous journey, through day and night, through valley and desert, through tears and smiles, through death and birth, through tomb and womb. When the road ends, and the goal is gained, the pilgrim finds that he has traveled only from himself to himself.* (SSS 8:9, Mar. 5, 1968)

“Remember me, and I will remember you.” (The Holy Qur’an, 2:152)

—Father Charles Ogada

Catholic Priest of the Order of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers

# Remember the Thrill ... ?

*A Recap of USA Devotional Pilgrimages, 2008*

Hundreds of USA devotees from various regions experienced the thrill of traveling to the feet of the Lord as members of a group devotional pilgrimage during the past year or so. These brief recaps, compiled from announcements at [www.radiosai.org](http://www.radiosai.org) (“Prashanti Diary”) and [www.ssbpt.org](http://www.ssbpt.org) (“Festival Archivals”), give us glimpses of highlights from these trips. The group pilgrimages undoubtedly provided enthralling memories and spiritual impetus for all the participants.

**Region 8 (December 27, 2007):** Devotees from Southern California and Hawaii were blessed with the opportunity to present a short play and a program of songs with a Christmas theme in the divine presence. SSE children presented a fifteen-minute play, “The Boy Jesus,” with a soundtrack interspersed with live singing of traditional carols by a choir. Bhagavan blessed the boy who played the part of Jesus with a chain. The choir then sang a program, “Life Is a Song: Sing It Again,” including songs such as “Hello Again” and Josh Groban’s “You Raise Me Up,” rendered with great feeling by the devotees. Bhagavan went into the interview room during the last song of their performance and came out with clothing for the singers and chocolates shaped like gold coins for the children. After distributing the coins and the clothing, he accepted Arati and retired for the day.

**Region 1 (January 5, 2008):** Sharing an afternoon darshan presentation opportunity with performing groups from Maharashtra, Goa, and Mumbai, pilgrims from the Northeast region of the US were blessed with the chance to perform when Swami came onstage just before five o’clock. Their musical program on Unity of Faiths got underway in five minutes, and Bhagavan listened to them for twenty minutes before asking for the next program to commence.

**Region 1 (July 5-6, 2008):** Bhagavan permitted a group from the Northeast region of the USA—around 200 strong—to perform music in the Sai Kulwant Hall on the evening of July 5. The program, “True Flowers of Worship” (Nonviolence, Sense Control, Compassion, Forbearance, Meditation, Penance, Peace, and Truth), got underway just before five o’clock. Their songs were interspersed with a few lines of commentary, and the program concluded in half an hour. Devotional singing then commenced, and after twenty minutes of bhajans led by the Region 1 group, Swami’s students were invited to sing several more bhajans while *prasadam* (blessed food) was distributed.

The Region 1 group had also put up an exhibition in the Poornachandra Auditorium with the theme, “The SPI-ritual (Spiritual Power of Individual) Challenge for the Pilgrim.” The exhibition had four sections:

External Resolves of a Pilgrim, Internal Resolves of a Pilgrim, The Sathya Sai Path, and Challenges. On July 6, 2008, Swami went to the Poornachandra Auditorium to view the Region 1 exhibition.

**Region 10 (July 28, 2008):** This evening, a group from Region 10 of the USA (Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas) got a chance to present a musical program in Sai Kulwant Hall that included enactments by children. The program depicted Bhagavan's love for humanity throughout the ages, showing scenes of his various incarnations and messengers to uplift man to enable him to realize his divinity. The entire group of 276 performed a medley of songs in seven languages, woven together with narration, and 57 SSE children provided dramatic portrayal through skits and dances. The six episodes focused on the majesty of Rama, the mischief of Krishna, the serenity of the Buddha, the compassion of Jesus, the glory of Allah, and the grandeur of Bhagavan Baba.

Swami responded to this outpouring of love by coming down into the group of children for a photograph. He granted *padnamaskar* (opportunity to touch his feet) to several of them, materialized a gold chain for one boy, and distributed prasadam to everyone. After a few minutes they began bhajans. Bhagavan accepted Arati and returned to his residence at 6:40 p.m., raising his hands in blessing to all.

Additional photos may be viewed  
in the Festival Archivals at [sssbt.org](http://sssbt.org).





## Regional Reports

Loving Satsang and Service

REGION 2: MARYLAND ■ NEW JERSEY ■ NEW YORK ■ PENNSYLVANIA ■ VIRGINIA

### Peaceful in the Poconos

*33rd Annual Mid-Atlantic Region Retreat*

With the divine grace of our beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, USA Region 2 (Mid-Atlantic) held its 33rd annual regional retreat on May 23-26, 2008. The retreat took place in the beautiful and serene surroundings of Camp Westmont, in the rolling hills of the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania. The theme of the 2008 retreat was "Unity in Thought, Word, and Deed."

Devotees from across the region began arriving early on Friday morning, welcoming each other eagerly with warm *Sai Rams* and readying the devotion hall and a room for Swami with beautiful decorations. They also set up the registration desk, dining facilities, medical camps, and various other arrangements.

In keeping with Swami's message of self-sufficiency, devotees from various centers undertook to prepare all meals, serve the meals to all gathered, and then clean up in the dining area. Welcoming *bhajans* (devotional songs) were sung in the evening.

During the next three days, the morning hours were peacefully celebrated with *Omkar* (21 *Oms*) gently wafting through the pre-dawn hours, followed by the *Suprabhatham* (a hymn to awaken the Lord within). *Nagarsankirtan* (melodious community bhajan-singing during a walking procession) took place through the campground in the morning cold and dew. All present felt transported to Prasanthi Nilayam. Following these activities were meditation and yoga stretches. Tea, coffee, and breakfast were served to all.

The mornings at the retreat were then sanctified with a devotional program of group bhajans and discourses by guest speakers. This year we had the good fortune of welcoming Dr. Venkat Sadanand and Dr. Ronne Marantz as our keynote speakers. As has become a tradition of our region, the Monday morning speakers were Swami students. All the speakers inspired us by their various experiences and encouraged us to continue to practice the theme of the retreat in our daily lives.



## Regional Reports

Loving Satsang and Service

In the afternoons, workshops continued the theme of the retreat. These included:

**“Coler Hospital Community Partnerships”** Sunderam Srinivasan, a Sai devotee and permanent resident of Coler Hospital (a long-term care facility), spoke about a unique community partnership/relationship that has developed between the hospital and NYC-area Sai Centers and other local organizations that take part in service and cultural programs at the hospital.

**“As Your Faith Grows”** This offering consisted of a video presentation of Baba’s life and divine mission, followed by a panel of devotees who shared how they came to know of Swami and how their lives have been transformed as a result.

**“Daily practice of Unity of Thought, Word, and Deed”** A life of spiritual practice involves the dedication of all acts to God, the offering of whatever one does, thinks, or speaks, at the feet of God. You can do this only when you are aware always of the presence of God, in and around you....”

**“Seva (Service): What’s It All About?”** We have all been encouraged to do selfless service, but what is *seva*, really? Service-oriented organizations abound, but what is different about the service activities of members of the Sai organization?

This workshop explored the spiritual aspects of *seva*.

During the retreat weekend, medical *seva* was offered to devotees. This took the form of blood sugar and cholesterol screening, including body-mass-index and blood pressure checks. Doctors were also available throughout the retreat for emergency healthcare services and one-on-one counseling following the medical check-ups.

The evenings found us serenaded by cultural programs from the SSE children and the Young Adults. SSE children from Richmond and Hampton Roads performed a play entitled, “Where Does God Live?” and SSE children from Bridgewater and Scotch Plains performed a play entitled, “Amazing Grace,” a brief insight into Prof. Kasturi’s interaction with Bhagavan. The Young Adults performed a scintillating musical program incorporating various *ragas* and *talas* (melodies and rhythms) and multi-faith devotional songs. Saturday and Sunday nights ended with campfires, thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Throughout the retreat, the atmosphere was one of love and cooperation. Over 880 devotees had pre-registered using a website specially created by the region’s web specialists, and about 100-115 additional walk-in devotees arrived on Saturday and Sunday. Attendees felt Swami’s divine presence throughout the retreat and took home memories of a spiritually uplifting, devotional retreat, ready to face the rigors of daily life with renewed hope and energy.

—Region 2 Sai Centers





## Regional Reports

Loving Satsang and Service

REGION 3: ALABAMA ■ FLORIDA ■ GEORGIA ■ MISSISSIPPI  
NORTH CAROLINA ■ SOUTH CAROLINA

### The Message Is Love

*Presentation at Unity Church of St. Petersburg*

The Sathya Sai Center of Tampa Bay, Florida, was invited by The First Unity Church of St. Petersburg, Florida, to give a presentation regarding Sri Sathya Sai Baba. On August 21, 2008, approximately 40 interested individuals came to



learn about Swami. The crowd consisted of well-versed spiritual seekers, only a few of whom had heard the name *Sathya Sai Baba*. A Unity church member and ordained minister, Don Sandin, along with the head pastor of the church, Rev. Temple Hayes, were the impetus behind the meeting.

Don has been a Sai follower for many years. Don spoke of how he first heard Sai Baba's name and how Sai has been guiding, protecting, and saving his life over the years. A film about Sai, "His Works," was shown, followed by a slide presentation highlighting Swami's biography, teachings, and relevance in today's world. The evening concluded with devotees sharing experiences and stories that highlighted how Swami has personally touched and transformed their lives.

The message of love formed a common thread for the evening, and that Swami is the embodiment of love—"Love walking on two feet," as mentioned during the presentation. An extended question-and-answer session followed, as the au-

dience was visibly moved and eager to learn more. They were encouraged to investigate the Sai phenomenon personally, both within their heart and conscience and externally, rather than going on hearsay. The Rev. Hayes was grateful for this opportunity for members of her church to learn of this avatar and is eager to have more meetings in the future to introduce more church members to Swami and his message of love. We pray that Swami continues to awaken the world with the knowledge of his message and mission.

—Sai Center of Tampa Bay, Florida



## Regional Reports

Loving Satsang and Service

REGION 6: ALASKA ■ MONTANA ■ OREGON ■ WASHINGTON

# Reflections on Native American Teachings

*Forest Retreat “a Perfect Backdrop”*

The Sathya Sai Baba Center of Portland, Oregon, held a one-day retreat in a secluded forest by a roaring river, a perfect backdrop for our theme on the teachings of the Native American Way. Five members attended, along with two guests. We were blessed to have “Bear Woman,” Margo Bear, as our guest speaker, who is a member of the Grants Pass Sai center. Bear has followed the “red road” (the Native American spiritual path) since she was a young woman, after Swami’s direct instructions.

We were led through a day of rich spiritual insights, experiencing various native rituals, with explanations as to their meaning and of connectedness to Mother Earth. Bear emphasized that the Native American way is not one of doctrinal “teachings” per se, but that everything is considered a gift: a feather that you find in your path, a heart-shaped rock you notice on your walk. Everything is medicine: feathers, tobacco, beads, abalone shells. All are treated with sacred reverence.

The “red road” includes worship of the five elements—earth, sky, fire, water, and wind, which are acknowledged through various aspects of ceremony. By silence, listening to Mother Earth, and teaching our youth the right way, we can live in harmony with everything that forms a part of nature.

We learned the central importance of ceremony in native people’s lives, and its

varied purpose: purification, initiation, and communication with Mother Earth. The sweat lodge is a main example of purification and a preparation for other ceremonies, such as a vision quest or a sundance ceremony. In the sundance ceremony, participants dance uninterrupted for five days, without food or water, often wearing or waving eagle feathers or wings, which are held as highly sacred by many tribal nations.

We also experienced a “talking circle,” with each participant speaking from the heart as we took turns holding a turkey feather. Bear gave us beads of the sacred number nine, that we used in a circle ceremony, infusing them with prayers, before taking some home for our altars and as gifts.

Bear invited us to join the native people in continued awareness of our divine power and duty to care for and protect all that is sacred on earth, and to bring consciousness to ritual, gifts, and sacredness in everyday life. We all felt the divine presence of our beloved Swami throughout the day, and heard his message through the voice of the native peoples. We deeply appreciate the gift Swami sent us in the form of Bear Woman and her wisdom, service, and beloved presence.

—Sai Center of Portland, Oregon



## Regional Reports

Loving Satsang and Service

REGION 6: ALASKA ■ MONTANA ■ OREGON ■ WASHINGTON

### Prison Inmates Share Their Thoughts

The Portland Center serves prisoners at the Columbia River Correctional Institution every week. Each meeting lasts two hours and begins with a discussion of human values, followed some stretching, tai chi, or yoga, ending with a group meditation.

A few prisoners share their thoughts:

“This class is a couple of hours of real peace and tranquility in what is utter chaos (i.e. prison life)—kind of an anchor for the times between classes.” —Bruce

“Any kind of talking about the divine is beautiful. I don’t want to complain about anything, because I’m going to live with it.” —Daniel

“I used to meditate before, in federal prison. I got away from this. This class and Wednesday night group (i.e. meditation) is the only inner quietness and peace in my week. I get up early to cook in the kitchen. The early morning is the only time I have to meditate. We are real grateful that you guys come here. We know that’s not easy to do. Getting back on the right track helps us. It is helpful to me personally. It’s changed me in this short period of time.” —John

“We are treated normally here—just a space where we are not convicts. We are just human beings. It makes me look forward to the next class. When this class ends, I look forward to the next class.” —Bob

An unexpected gift: One of the inmates painted his version of Lord Ganesh and shared it with us (shown).



An inmate's version of Lord Ganesha

—Sai Center of Portland, Oregon



## Regional Reports

Loving Satsang and Service

REGION 7: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ■ NEVADA (EXCEPT LAS VEGAS)

### Easwaramma Day Delights

*Subregional Satsang of Region 7 Sai Centers*

For the first time in many years, the 2008 Region 7 (Northern California and Nevada) observance of Easwaramma Day (a day in early May that honors the mother of Swami's physical body) was replaced by several center-based celebrations and one subregional celebration. These occurred in several locations throughout the region.

The subregional celebration, hosted by the Sacramento Sathya Sai Baba Center, involved five centers (those of Fremont, Peninsula, Sacramento, San Jose, and Walnut Creek), and took place on May 11 (Mother's Day in the US). A total of 250 adults and 75 Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) children attended the function. The Peninsula and Fremont centers joined forces to conserve resources, honor Mother Earth, and enjoy wonderful *satsang* (holy company) by traveling together in a bus to Sacramento.

The invocation began precisely on time as children from all participating centers offered the Holy Kalasham (sacred pot symbolizing hearts brimming with love and respect) to our Lord. This was followed by melodious *bhajans* (devotional singing).

The SSE children from the participating centers then offered thought-provoking plays and skits reflecting the theme, "Universal Mother." The Walnut Creek center presented a beautiful dance drama, welcoming all and inviting the members, volunteers, guests,

and Swami to sit and enjoy the program. The Fremont SSE children presented an interesting skit on the benefits of following the five human values. The Peninsula center's SSE children impressed everyone with the usefulness of recycling and how this can lessen the burden on Mother Earth/Mother Nature. The Sacramento SSE children demonstrated perfect pitch in their harmonized recitation of the Vedic hymn, Mantra Pushpam. Its explanation and supporting artwork enthralled the audience.

The region's youngest children made a mural depicting "Mother's Love" and presented a play, and a devotee inspired and uplifted us by sharing his experiences with Swami and describing Sai's love for children. The day's program ended with devotional singing led by adults from the participating centers, Arati (ritual blessing using a camphor flame), and distribution of *prasadam* (blessed food).

In summary, all felt the presence of Mother Sai and his abundant love, in everything that was done, everything that was said, and everything that was heard. We were blessed to take part in this beautiful event where members from different centers joined hands, shared their love, and presented a united offering to our Universal Mother, Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

—Region 7 Sai Centers



## Regional Reports

Loving Satsang and Service

REGION 8: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ■ HAWAII ■ LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

### Easwaramma Day and Buddha Purnima Celebrations

*Enthusiastic Traditions Continue at the Arcadia, California, Sai Center*

**Easwaramma Day** Every year on May 6, the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center of Arcadia serves a hot meal to the homeless and the needy at the Pasadena Union Station Homeless Shelter, to which all participants, including the administrative staff and the homeless, eagerly look forward. They know that on May 6, they will be treated to a high-quality, home-cooked, hot Indian meal, by people who treat them with respect, love, and compassion.

Arcadia center members served over 100 homeless and very needy guests with a vegetarian meal, balanced with the required nutrition. Pre-prepared in the homes of devotees, the meal was taken to the shelter about 10:30 a.m. The ladies took over the shelter kitchen while the

men cleaned and set up the tables in the dining area.

The men swept the floor, wiped tables and chairs clean, and set up the tables with flower vases, place mats, forks, spoons, napkins, and cups. The ladies cleaned up the kitchen and commenced warming the food they had brought, while additional fare was prepared onsite.

The food was dished up onto plates by the ladies, and cups filled with apple juice, all of which were placed on the tables by the men, who then invited their guests to participate and enjoy the meal.

With hearts filled with love, the men served the guests with great attention, treating them as if they were at the highest quality restaurant with attentive waiters hovering around, serving with love and ensuring that every need was satisfied. The food consisted of a "Sai salad" with dressing, potato curry, bean curry, and rice, followed by carrot cake served as dessert.



## Regional Reports

Loving Satsang and Service

Everyone was offered second and third helpings and many took advantage of the offer, enjoying the meal to their hearts' content. An apple to take away was gifted to everyone.

The guests expressed their gratitude by clapping and requesting our group to serve many more times a year. Thank you, Swami, for giving us this wonderful opportunity to serve the needy and filling our hearts with your divine love.

**Buddha Purnima** Later in May, for the seventh consecutive year, the Arcadia center celebrated Buddha Purnima (Wesak), with a program offered at the Divine Lotus Feet. Devotees of multireligious and multiethnic origins participated in unity, enjoying the oneness of all, seeking the same goal. Over 140 devotees, including many from other centers in the Los Angeles area, participated with devotion and love.

The program, along with a rose, was offered to Swami, followed by three *Oms* and chanting of the Buddha Gayatri. A slide show of colorful paintings depicted the life story of Gauthama, the Buddha, with chanting of *Buddham, Dhammam, Sangham* and *Saisha Saranam Gachchami* in the background.

As the slides changed with the narration of Buddha's life story, the music waxed and waned. Devotees from Sri Lanka felt twinges of nostalgia as they listened to drums playing in the style traditional to their country's Buddhist temples.

A choir offered two beautiful devotional songs to Swami, and others who knew the songs joined in. This was followed by a radio-type play based on Buddha's discourse on the lay person's code of conduct, the Singalovada Sutra. In this *sutra* or discourse, seekers learn how to conduct one's duties, whatever one's role: child to parent/parents to children, husband to wife/wife to husband, employer to employee/employee to employer, teachers to pupils/pupils to teachers, and lay people to clergy/clergy to lay people. The discourse was selected as a reminder to all to maintain these ethical and cultural values. The celebrations ended with everyone singing nine *sarva-dharma* (all faiths) bhajans, in unity, with enthusiasm and love. Prasadam was served to all devotees on their way out.

—Neil Munaweera, President  
SSBC of Arcadia, California



## YAs Serve in a Variety of Energetic Projects



The YAs of Region 6 are primarily based in the greater Portland, Oregon, and greater Seattle, Washington, areas. In 2007, Swami blessed the youth with many opportunities to serve. During Swami's 82nd birthday celebrations, the YAs led a blanket and warm clothing drive. Over 120 blankets and warm clothes were collected and offered to the Orion Center in Seattle, which serves homeless youth.

Youth in the greater Portland area were guided by our Divine Mother to introduce and lead the way in the form of a wonderful quilting project. With lots of enthusiastic preparation and active participation, many YAs in the region were blessed to participate in the 2007 World Youth Conference held in His divine presence at Puttaparthi.

Commencing in 2008, YAs began two quarterly service projects. One is through

Food Lifeline, an organization in Seattle. In June 2008, Sai youth repackaged 10,000 pounds of food in approximately four hours. Youth also began cooking lasagna lunches for approximately 100 people at the St. Angeline's shelter in downtown Seattle.

YAs participated in a Habitat for Humanity rebuilding project in early 2008. Swami again blessed the YAs with an opportunity to serve at the free dental camp held in Eugene, Oregon. Approximately ten YAs served in many key roles, including Spanish translations and patient check-in. The YAs also played an active role in organizing a Seattle Area one-day retreat with Jeremy Hoffer as the guest speaker. Thank you, our beloved Mother Sai, for guiding our each and every step!

—YAs of Region 6

## Home Repair and Rebuilding

### *YAs of Los Angeles and Orange Counties' Service Project*

With Swami's grace, Region 8 Orange County/Los Angeles Young Adults (YAs) were given the opportunity to revisit their friends at Rebuilding Together Pasadena. Rebuilding Together provides free repair/rebuilding services for those with the greatest need and is the national leader in affordable housing preservation. The organization brings volunteers and communities together to improve the homes and lives of low-income homeowners.

The Region 8 YAs had worked twice previously with this fantastic community organization, and this third visit was another wonderful experience for all involved. The home being repaired belonged to an 89-year-old African American woman and long-time resident of the neighborhood, and she was present all day on the front lawn, watching the work being done.

The fact that we could see and speak with the person receiving the fruits of our efforts was an added treat. It was great having

a smiling face attached to the property we were repairing, and it made everyone happy to know our work would directly benefit this sweet, elderly woman who kept us company with her little dog. At lunchtime, we heard from her relative how her home had been a place of stability, love, and refuge across multiple generations. This woman was a true matriarch in her family and community, and it was touching to learn about the history associated with her home.

The day had a feeling of togetherness, and the sound of laughter and hard work filled the air. The YAs handled a variety of tasks, ranging from prepping/cleaning the home, to clearing the property of refuse, to putting a new coat of paint on the house. We worked in harmony with other church and community service teams, making new friends and sharing the joy of selfless service with a large and friendly group of people.

—Aparna Murali





# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Recent Global Developments in Sai Education

In an announcement dated September 29, 2008, Dr. Michael Goldstein MD, Chair of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, made several announcements as a result of the Sri Sathya Sai World Education Conference of July 2008. In summary:

**Global Overview and Guidelines** A “Global Overview” book has been written by the Education Committee of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation that provides the history and definition of Sai Education programs, as well as guidelines that provide for the orderly function and interaction of Sai institutes and schools, and that goals have been set for the Sai institutes and schools to review and begin implementing the guidelines internationally during the coming months.

**Global Coordination** The Prasanthi Council will take an active role in the implementation of Sai Education programs worldwide and work with zone chairpersons and senior Sai organization representatives in each country involved with Sathya Sai Educare/Education in Human Values (SSEHV), Sathya Sai Schools, Sathya Sai Institutes, and Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) programs, and in implementing and revising the guidelines pertaining to Sai Education programs in each society and culture. These individuals will work in concert with the directors and staff of the Sathya Sai Institutes, Sathya Sai Schools, national SSE chairpersons, and all Sai educators in all countries.

**New Global Advisory Committees** Four new advisory committees have been formed under the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation Education Committee, which is chaired by Kalyan Ray. These committees are designed to function autonomously and also to report directly to the World Foundation, under the auspices of the Education Committee. The new committees and their respective chairs are:

**Sathya Sai Institute Committee:** Art-Ong Jumsai, Pal Dhall, Co-Chairs

**Sathya Sai Schools Committee:** Victor Kanu, Chair

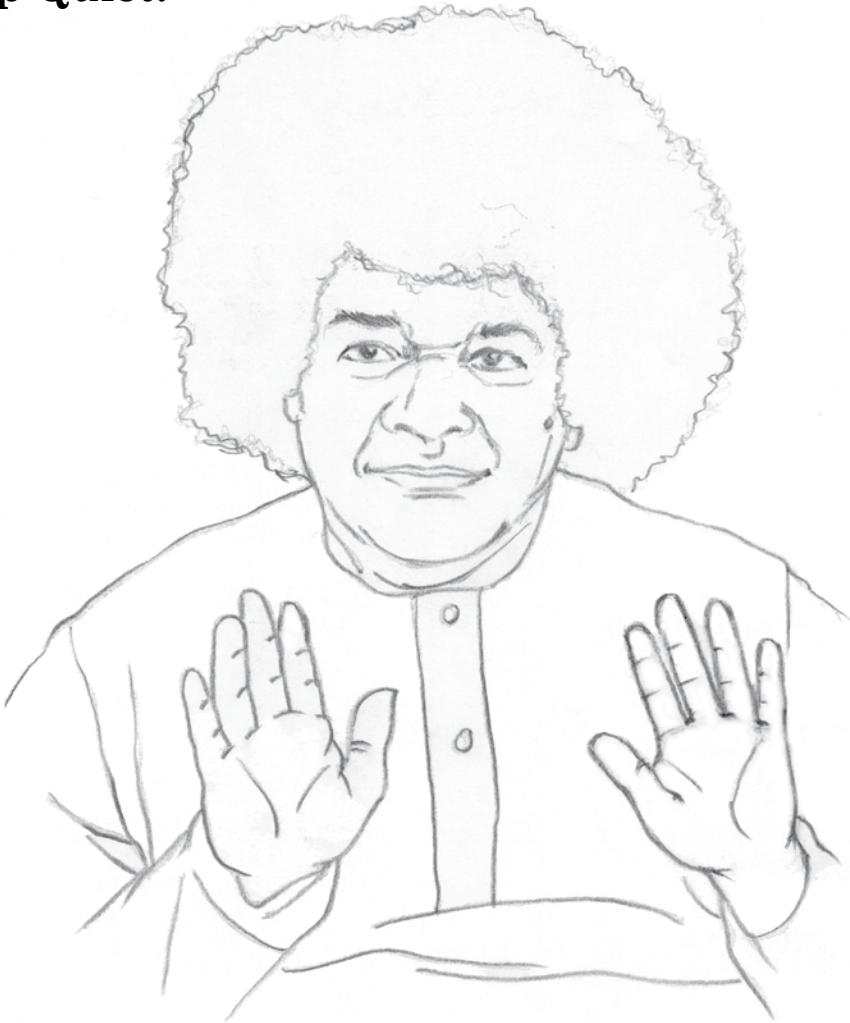
**Sathya Sai EHV in the Community Committee:** Thorbjorn Meyer, Chair

**Sai Spiritual Education Committee:** Berniece Mead, Chair

Dr. Goldstein emphasized that Swami, in his inaugural discourse for the World Education Conference, reiterated the concept of “I am I” as the core of true education: that true education is not related to the world but to learning the essence of who we are, and that then only will we realize the meaning of “I am I.”



## “Keep Quiet!”



When Swami raises his hands this way, people consider it to be a shower of blessings. But Swami also points out another meaning. Sometimes he means, “Keep quiet!”

“Speak only when necessary. Speak softly and sweetly. Too much talking wastes time and energy,” says Sai. “I have often told you, talk less, work more.”

–Illustration by Ashwini Jambotkar

# Lord Dakshinamurti and the Ocean

Lord Dakshinamurti is a form of Shiva. He is shown as a youth who attracts a following of great sages. He teaches mainly through silence. We can learn many important lessons from Dakshinamurti. Here is a story told by Swami about him.

Lord Dakshinamurti taught his message through silence. He seldom resorted to speech. By merely seeing him, he could impart the deepest truths about the universe and the Divine. One time, in the course of his travels, he reached the shore of the ocean. He was delighted to listen to the *Omkara* vibrations coming from the ocean. The ocean represents the Sabda Brahman, primal divine sound, and the grandeur and majesty of God.

Dakshinamurti was the very embodiment of intellect. He always inquired deeply into the meaning of what he observed. He drew a lesson from the endless waves reaching the shore from the ocean. As he stood gazing at the ocean, he noticed that the wind was blowing some trash into the water. However, the trash was soon swept back to the shore by the waves. This happened repeatedly. As soon as any rubbish fell on the water's surface, the ocean promptly threw it out on the shore by a series of waves, without retaining the debris for even a short time.

Dakshinamurti questioned the ocean, "How selfish you are! You are boundless without measure. Can't you make some room for this poor stuff? Isn't it highly selfish on your part not to tolerate this tiny bit of trash, as vast as you are?"

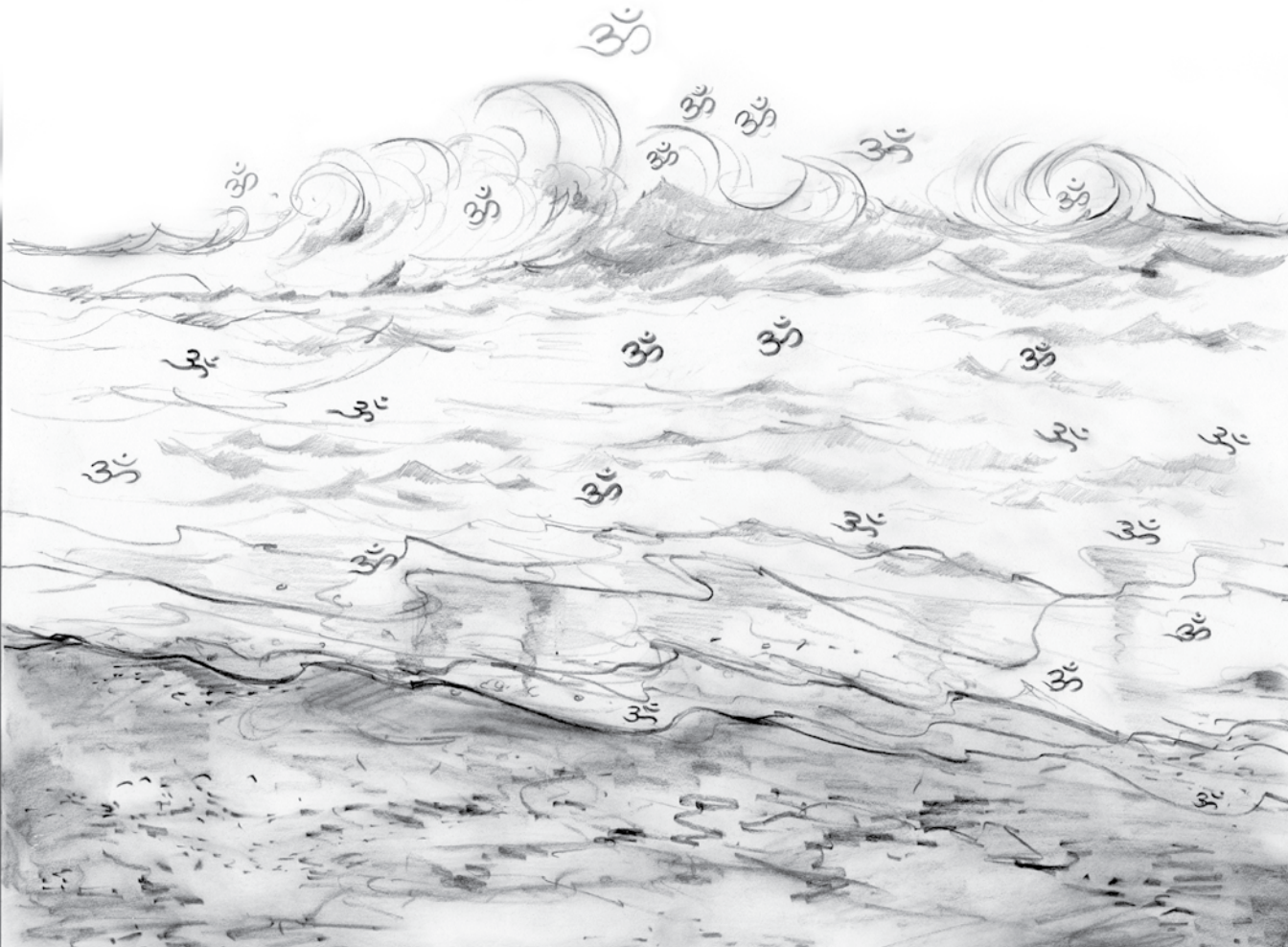
The ocean gave a fitting answer. "Lord! There is nothing unknown to you. Within me are innumerable treasures, such as lustrous pearls, beautiful coral, and so on. If today I allow this piece of dirt to remain with me, before long I will be filled with flotsam and jetsam, and all kinds of contamination. My entire form will be changed. I do not want to become impure. Trash is not my ornament; the waves are my ornament, and the holy sound of *Om* that they make. Hence, from the very first instant, I have to cast off anything that is dirty and polluting. Only then can I remain pure." (Summer Showers 2000, May 17, 2000, ch. 4, pp. 69-70; SSS 22:11, June 18, 1989)

Likewise, every person should keep out even the smallest bad thought, the moment it seeks to enter the mind. To treat a bad thought as small and insigni-

cant would mean allowing such things to enter the mind, and in due course fill it entirely. In the process, the entire nature of the person becomes changed. His human essence gets undermined. Every effort must be made to keep out all bad thoughts and feelings, and to promote human qualities as much as possible.

Through a very small effort, great things can be accomplished. A huge serpent can be destroyed by a large number of small ants. Do not consider yourself small. Seek to acquire the strength and determination to carry out your duties. In the world, difficulties crop up from time to time. Jealousy toward others is quite common, especially when you view others as being better than yourself. Crows are hostile toward cuckoos. Cranes make fun of swans. Do not allow yourself to be overwhelmed by such experiences. You have to confront these experiences boldly and stand up for truth. (SSS 22:11, June 18, 1989)

–Illustration by Ashwini Jambotkar



## Sai Spiritual Education Lesson Plan: Group 4 (Older Teens)

### Lord Dakshinamurti and the Ocean: A Lesson in Purity

**VALUE:** Peace • **SUBVALUE:** Purity • **DISCIPLINE:** Silence and Self-Examination

**QUOTE:** *If the senses are polluted, of what avail are spiritual exercises? When the water in a tank is polluted, all taps will give only polluted water. Your heart is the tank. Your vision and thoughts are impure. Your speech is foul. When the heart is polluted in this manner, the senses are bound to be sullied. When the heart is filled with good thoughts and feelings, all that comes out of the senses—your speech, your vision, your action—will all be pure.*  
—Sri Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 31:3, Feb. 5, 1998)

**PRAYER:** *Omkar.* While chanting 21 *Oms*, focus on the cleansing of 21 aspects of the self: 5 elements (earth, water, fire, air, space); 5 senses (taste, smell, sight, touch, hearing); 5 actions (eating, talking, taking, walking, giving); 5 housings for the soul (physical body, life force, mind, conscience, bliss); 1 = seeing only One: divinity, unity, purity.

**SONGS:** “From the Silence of Nothing, the Lord Gave a Sound” / “O Lord Purify Me”

**STORY:** “Dakshinamurti and the Ocean” (See pages 36-37.)

**QUESTIONS:** Why did the ocean throw the trash back on the beach? What can we learn from the ocean’s actions? What “pollutants” can overtake our hearts and minds? What can we do to keep out bad feelings and thoughts? How can practicing silence help?

**ACTIVITY:** Have students read the quote aloud and give examples of “pollutants” that contaminate the mind and senses. (*foul language, negative attitude, anger, bad thoughts, etc.*) Display a “T-chart” with the headings *Pollution* and *Solutions*. Have students suggest an inner pollutant or negative habit they’d like to reduce. List this under *Pollution*. Under *Solutions*, list students’ ideas for concrete actions and practices to reduce and cleanse this pollutant. Have students make additional T-charts in their spiritual journals, for other inner pollutants. These can be rotated week-by-week as a long-range practice.

**LIFE APPLICATION:** Students can: (1) Focus on one inner pollutant per week; write an affirmation to address its cleansing, and practice the “Solutions” listed in their charts. (2) Practice *Omkar* daily, visualizing purity in 21 aspects of the self. (3) Observe 10 minutes daily of silent focus on God, for inner cleansing, at an agreed-upon group time. Allow time for sharing and monitoring of progress at future group meetings.

**AFFIRMATION:** In silence I feel the presence of God. In this holy feeling, I cleanse myself of inner pollution. I cleanse myself of \_\_\_\_\_ (envy, annoyance, disappointment, etc).

SSE lessons may be adapted for SSEHV settings.

# *Study Circle on Silence:*

## **God Manifests According to Your Feeling**

A devotee was asking God, “You say that you are in me, above me, below me. How is that you are not protecting me?”

God answered, “I am always in you, around you. Don’t look for me externally.”

The devotee asked, “Are you behind me really?”

The Lord replied, “My shadow is your body.”

When the devotee turned around to see whether God was behind, he could not see him. He asked, “Are you speaking the truth? I don’t find you.”

God replied, “When you turn back, I too have to turn back, so you could not see me. You have not understood the truth.”

Suppose you stand before a chair; the chair is in front of you. If you turn around, the chair is at your back. God manifests according to your *bhava* (feeling). When you pray, “Can’t you hear my prayers?” you visualize God hearing [your prayer] with his ears. When you pray, “Can’t you see my suffering?” you visualize God’s eyes seeing you. When you pray, “Why don’t you stay with me?” you listen for his footsteps. You have to maintain perfect silence [to hear God’s response].

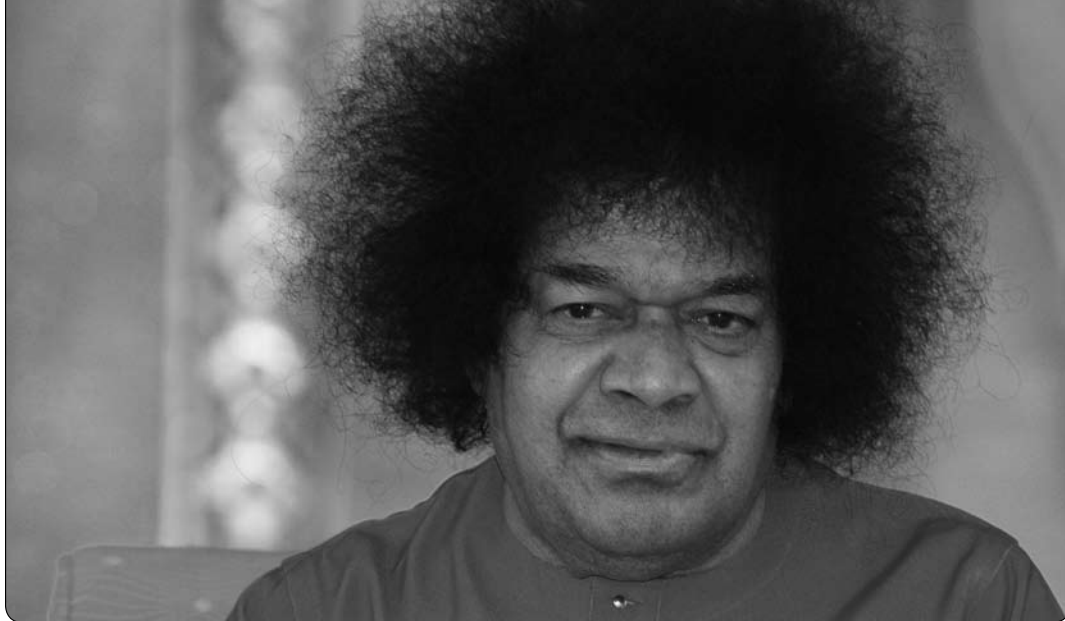
The ancient seers spent their time in listening to the voice of God, which is *Pranava*. Even now, you can experience this. Close your ears gently. You will hear the sound *Om* from within.

God proclaims, “Oh devotee, you are seeing with physical eyes and listening with physical ears. **Be in utter silence** [so you can] hear the footsteps of God.” Such holy paths have been shown by great devotees. One who doesn’t understand this is in ignorance.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba  
SSS 31:16, Apr. 22, 1998

### **Discussion Questions**

- *How can we best understand the truth of God’s omnipresence?*
- *When you pray, how do you visualize God?*
- *What is the importance of silence as a spiritual discipline?*
- *What does the Lord’s statement mean, “My shadow is your body?”*
- *How can we get past the outer-directed senses and experience God’s presence?*
- *How can we know if we have reached a state of “utter silence?”*



## 2009 Festival Dates (India)

**January 1, Thursday: New Year's Day** Thousands of devotees and many Sai school alumni throng Prasanthi Nilayam annually to spend New Year's day in a sacred manner in the divine presence. Bhagavan reminds us that every day, every moment, a new year is born and needs to be sanctified with noble thoughts, words, and actions.

**January 11, Sunday: Sports and Cultural Meet** The annual sports and cultural exhibition held in the Hill View Stadium represents a joint presentation of the Primary School, the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, and the three Sathya Sai University campuses of Anantapur, Brindavan, and Prasanthi Nilayam, of active physical events requiring a high degree of perfection, coordination, and skill.

**January 14, Wednesday: Makara Sankranthi** This day, celebrated traditionally as a harvest festival, marks the commencement of the sun's journey to the Northern Hemisphere and is extolled in the scriptures as being of great spiritual significance. In Prasanthi Nilayam, the celebration doubles as a day for recognizing awards and prizes earned by Bhagavan's students and the valedictory function of the Sports and Cultural Meet.

**February 23, Monday: Maha Shivaratri** This most auspicious night is celebrated with continuous devotional singing from sunset till dawn, in full contemplation and adoration of God, so that the vagaries of the mind can be totally subdued and transcended, to attain realization of the Atman.

**March 27, Friday: Ugadi** New Year's Day for the people of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra is thought of as the day upon which Krishna left the body, signaling the change of *yugas* or ages, and the day upon which Brahma (God) created the universe.

# Swami's Lesson in Communication

*An Instant and Lasting Acknowledgment*

**At the close of my second visit to see Sri Sathya Sai Baba, in August of 2000, he gave me the clearest demonstration of exactly how to communicate with him.** My wife was not feeling very well physically, so we had decided to shorten our visit and were due to leave after morning darshan.

We had been staying in one of the hotels in the village that was owned and run by a Sai devotee. This lady had been blessed not only by having spent years in his presence, but also by being granted numerous interviews. Oh, how I longed for one of those interviews myself. Aside from the many things my monkey mind desired, a large part of me simply wanted to express my overwhelming gratitude to Swami for all his blessings and for the protection of my family, which I had been privileged to enjoy since first becoming aware of him while living in New York City in the early 1970s.

The night prior to leaving, I visited the hotel owner to settle my account. While meeting, I shared with her just how much I really wanted to speak to Swami and thank him for everything. After listening to me, she

smiled and said, "Victor, all you have to do is become very quiet, and when he walks by, simply think of everything that you wish to tell him. He'll hear you!"

The next morning, I was in place for darshan very early, and though I can't exactly recall, I believe I had an excellent seat somewhere either at or very near to the front. As the music began and Swami entered, I watched my hopes rise and then fall, as it looked at first as if he might pass near me, but then he turned abruptly and walked off in another direction. Eventually he seemed to linger near a group that was situated across the aisle from me, about fifteen yards or so away. Although I could see him straight ahead, alas, he was too far away for us to engage in any kind of conversation.

At that point, recalling what his devotee had told me the night before, I closed my eyes and became very still and centered. Then, with the fullness of my attention, in my mind I recited the following:

"Oh, dear Swami! How I wish I could speak with you, just to let you know how truly grateful I am for all your love and protection that you have so graciously bestowed upon

me and my family over all these years. I thank you and love you so very much!”

When the thought passed, I opened my eyes, and in that instant I received the greatest blessing possible! While Swami was still about fifteen yards away, in the exact spot at which I had seen him last, his eyes locked directly with mine. He was staring right at me. As I realized this, my heart leapt for joy, and I began to cry out, “Oh, Swami, thank you...!”

Immediately, in the intervening nanosecond between the thought arising in my mind of crying out to him and the actual utterance of any sound, he made an abrupt gesture with his right palm. His hand was

about waist high, and with the quickest flash of movement and in the clearest way possible, he signaled me to “Stop!” I understood this at once and again became still.

Ever since then, I’ve known in my heart of hearts that all I ever need to do to communicate with Swami is first to become still, and then to focus my attention on my thoughts and direct my attention to him. Just as he so vividly demonstrated to me at darshan, I now understand that he’ll always hear me! What a blessing!

—Victor Paul  
Atlanta, Georgia

*It is no use indulging in arguments and disputations; he who clamors aloud has not grasped the truth, believe me. Silence is the only language of the realized. Practice moderation in speech. That will help you in many ways. It will develop love, for most misunderstandings and factions arise out of carelessly spoken words. When the foot slips, the wound can be healed; but when the tongue slips, the wound it causes in the heart of another will fester for life. The tongue is prone to four big errors: uttering falsehood, scandalizing, finding fault with others, and excessive articulation. These have to be avoided if there is to be peace for the individual as well as for society.*

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 1:10, July 22, 1958)

BE SILENT YOURSELF; THAT WILL INDUCE SILENCE IN OTHERS.

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## NEW and RECENT ARRIVALS:

### BOOKS

**Ati Rudra Maha Yajna** (Swami's discourses only) is a compilation of the ten discourses given by Bhagavan during the historic Ati Rudra Maha Yajna of August 9-19, 2006, in Prasanthi Nilayam. Paperback, 121 pages. BI-159..... \$3.00

**Ati Rudra Maha Yajna** (complete) contains not only the ten discourses given by Bhagavan during the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna, but also the texts of 22 discourses by eminent guest speakers during the course of this landmark event. Paperback, 256 pages. BI-167..... \$4.00

**Expanding the Boundaries of Self**, by Oliver H. Jobson, is a log of the spiritual gems the author has learned in his life journey, and how a spiritual aspirant begins to discover the inner journey. BW-055.... \$14.00

**God Lives in Prasanthi Nilayam**, compiled by Prem Luthra, presents Swami's declarations on avatarhood. The first section consists of quotes about the mission of the avatar in general, and the second section is quotes that refer specifically to this avatar. BI-202 ..... \$3.00

**Into the Realms of Friendship: A Journey with the Great Masters**, compiled by Meenal Gupta, highlights the wisdom of over 80 philosophers, mystics, and saints, through 600 thought-provoking sayings on the theme of friendship. BI-201..... \$9.00

**Maya and the Master**, by Vijaya Kumari, author of the compelling book, *Anyatha Saranam Nasti (Other Than You, Refuge There Is None)*, contains revelations of divine secrets and why it is necessary for God to descend in human form. The book makes an effort to perceive Swami's divinity and the essence of his nature. BI-203 ..... \$6.00

**Parthi Baba**, by Jaya Narasimhan, discusses Baba's mission, miracles, Sai spiritual education, and the value of reciting the Lord's name. BI-198..... \$3.00

**Sri Sathya Sai Veda Vani** is a compilation of divine discourses by Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the significance of the Vedas. BI-145..... \$5.00

## CDs

**Baba Teaches Shiva Panchakshari** “Aum Namah Shivaya” is one of the most popular mantras for aiding concentration and meditation. This CD contains a live recording of the mantra as taught to devotees by Bhagavan on the occasion of Maha Shivaratri 2004. SCE-168.....\$6.00

**A Bridge Across Time, Volumes 1-12** Popular bhajans performed by Sri Sathya Sai Students. Twelve separate CDs. Each CD ....\$6.00

**AUM** This CD contains **Omkar** repeated nonstop, so that the listener may attune himself/herself with its auspicious divine vibrations. SCE-185.....\$6.00

**Transformation of the Heart, 1**, an MP3 CD, presents a collection of conversations with devotees whose lives have been transformed by Baba. The personal narratives illustrate how people’s spiritual awakening can occur under vastly varied circumstances. *Note: MP3 CDs are not like typical music CDs, and they work only on CD players that play MP3 files. These CDs will work in the CD drives on most personal computers.* SCE-217 ... \$11.00

**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. SCE-164.....\$6.00

**Veda Parayanam 2:** Vedic hymns, which were created by the Divine along with the universe, are believed to exist eternally; they are highly potent and rich 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, Rishabh Suktam, Hiranyagarbha Suktam, Mantra Pushpam, and Kshama Prarthana SCE-165.....\$6.00

## VCDs

*(VCDs can be played on most DVD players, including those in personal computers)*

**Sathya Sai Baba: A Message of Love** This documentary was filmed by Cosby Powell in 1982 in Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan. It speaks of the universal language of the heart and Swami’s message to all that God is love. SCE-211 .....\$9.00

**Sathya Sai Baba Talks to Westerners** This documentary was filmed by Cosby Powell in 1991 in Kodaikanal, on an occasion when Swami spoke to a group of overseas devotees on the subject of detachment and ridding oneself of desires. SCE-212 .....\$9.00

**The Universal Teacher**, a film from 1980 by Richard Bock, shows highlights of Swami’s 55th birthday celebrations. SCE-215 .....\$9.00