

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

Dedicated with Love and Devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Season of Light

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SAI'S MESSAGE

Light and Love

The flame of a lamp has two significant qualities. One is to banish darkness; the other is a continuous upward movement. Even if a lamp is kept in a pit, the flame points upward. The ancients have taught that the upward movement of the flame denotes the path to wisdom and the path to divinity. However, the external light can dispel only the external darkness, but not the darkness of ignorance inside man. . . .



The Vedas declare, “God is present within and all around.” So, one must have both internal and external purity. Water helps to keep the body clean, but it is love that keeps the heart clean. You should celebrate festivals in full realization of their inner significance.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Oct. 19, 1998

LOVE IS THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT.
REALIZE THE SPIRIT AND YOU ARE FILLED WITH LOVE.
—BABA

Came the Light: His Mission

Into the darkness came the light to help humanity. God took a form as one who would not frighten those he came to help, and not by sending a representative, but in person.

He came to clear the darkness—to bring permanent light.

He took form in a forgotten place where people loved God more than anything.

He grew and unveiled his secrets one by one until his physical vehicle was ready. As the cry of humanity swelled, it came time for *maya*—illusion—to be cast off so he could do what he came to do.

Slowly people came. They fell in love with him. His miracles intrigued and awed them, but the real attraction was his love—pure unadulterated love, a love they had never experienced before.

The creator of that love, the one responsible for its existence, was in their very presence. Their minds could not understand but their hearts knew, “Here is what I have been seeking forever. Let me love like that. Let me be that kind of love. Let me be that kind of person.”

Some darkness lifted—a little here and a little there. Soon the light began to reach the people’s hearts and minds. To complete

his mission, they first would have to become human, then divine. He inspired people by example and created an ashram, schools, and hospitals, and performed many projects to help people.

He set an example that the way to God and his love was through remembering his name and doing service. He organized so that people could do this.

People went back to their countries, organized groups to remember God, and performed service. Soon, even people who could not see him in person had their eyes opened. “Wow. God is here, and he is part of my life. Let me spread the word.”

The word spread. The service spread. The awareness of God—a reality as a living force—spread. The realization that God is part of everyone and everything spread. People opened their hearts to him.

The “miracles” became secondary to the accomplishments of his many projects, which became his real miracles. Projects by devotees helped people to realize that God was active in their lives wherever they were.

God loves us in spite of everything we have “done.” We are his. He wants us to understand that we were created from the



"Baba came with a plan. It is unfolding as directed, right on schedule. God's light will be known around the world."

same love that he is. God is perfect. Therefore, we are perfect.

God keeps telling us to realize and act our divinity. We are divine. We are God. God's mission is for each of us to wake up, open our eyes, realize our true nature. We are God.

There is still much darkness but the light is expanding. Soon it will overwhelm the darkness, and all will be light.

Baba came. He loved. The love overcame the darkness.

Soon the whole world will beat a path to his feet, as the glory of God in human form is revealed even more. As people get tired of the physical world with its various forms of darkness, they will yearn for the light.

When they discover that the light has taken form, they will beat a path to the "place of highest peace," to discover God sitting among the masses.

Baba came with a plan. It is unfolding as directed, right on schedule. God's light will be known around the world.

The darkness will vanish and God will reign.

God, having accomplished this mission, will drop the Baba entity, but people won't need it, as enough will have realized that they too are God.

In that day the Word will be one and the world will be one.

—Gerald Dominick
Puttaparthi, India

Meditation on Light

The conversations recorded and transcribed by Dr. John Hislop are legendary, covering a wide range of spiritual questions and Sri Sathya Sai Baba's responses. The following are excerpts of Sai's instructions concerning "meditation on light" (*gyoti* meditation).

A Visitor: What is a guru?

Sai: A guru is a light to show one the road, but the destination is God. One is grateful to the guru, but it is God that one worships. Nowadays one worships the guru, which is quite wrong.

H (Hislop): Suppose that guru is the Lord himself. How would that change the picture?

Sai: (laughs) It changes the picture a great deal. If the Lord is one's guru, no need to worry about anything. Just as a loving mother cares for her child, if one has surrendered his life to God with full faith, the Lord takes care of that devotee. No need to worry about anything. Really, guru is only God. God is within only. Those outside are not gurus. They are teachers of one sort or another. *Guru* means "he who removes darkness." Only God can remove the darkness within—only by God's grace.

—Transcript 45 (XLV), p. 122

Sai: (to a group of westerners) Any doubts or questions? Spiritual questions only.

A Visitor: Why a lamp, in meditation?

Sai: Why a light? From sand, if one takes, it will be depleted. From a water tank, if each one takes, the tank will go dry. But a thou-

sand people can take the flame of one candle to light their candles, and the flame is in no way diminished.

Light a lamp or a candle. Gaze straight ahead at the flame. Then take the candle flame, the *gyoti*, into your heart and see it amid the petals of the heart. Watch the petals of the heart unfold and see the light illumine the heart. Bad feelings cannot remain. Then move the flame to the hands, and they can no longer do dark deeds. In turn move the flame in like fashion to the eyes and ears, so they may henceforth take in only bright and pure sensations. Then move the light outward and into your friends, relatives, and enemies, and then into animals, birds, and other objects, so that all are illumined by the same light.

Christ said, "All are one; be alike to everyone." In this way you will no longer be limited to this body but will expand throughout the universe. The world that is now so big will become very, very small. To expand beyond self and see that your light is the light of the universe is liberation. Liberation is not different from this.

A Visitor: To keep sitting straight is certainly not easy to do.

Sai: To sit straight is important. Between the 9th and 12th vertebrae is the life-force. If

the spine is injured at this point, paralysis occurs. If the body is in a straight position, as if it were wrapped around a straight pole, the life force may rise up through the straight body and give the quality of intense concentration to the mind. Moreover, just as a lightning rod attached to the roof of a building attracts lightning, in like fashion, a perfectly straight body provides a conductor, so to speak, for divine power to enter the temple of your body and give you the strength to accomplish your task and reach your goal.

As another example, the divine power is always here, just as radio signals are here. But to hear the radio music, there must be an antenna. Further, if the tuning device is not properly adjusted, there will just be some sound but no music. In like fashion, the divine power, which is always present, may flow into you if the meditation is correct and the body straight.

A Visitor: How about *Brahma muhurta* meditation?

Sai: *Brahma muhurta* means early morning, between 3 and 6 a.m. It means that the senses are quiet, not yet agitated by the day, and the mind is quiet from sleep. But the hour should not be taken and changed around, taking one time today and another time tomorrow. A

half-hour in the morning and a half-hour in the evening is enough for sitting meditation. If done all day long, it will lose its attraction after a couple of years.

Spiritual practice should be varied for interest. Some *bhajan* (devotional singing), some repetition of the name of the Lord, some time spent in the company of spiritual people, and so on. Just as in daily life, some variety makes the day interesting.

H: Swami, how should the period of meditation on the *jyoti* be brought to a close?

Sai: First, you are in the light. Then, the light is in you. Finally, you are the light, and the light is everywhere. Enjoy for a while, then bring the light back to the heart and hold it there all day.

The form of God may also be included—Krishna, Rama, Jesus, Sai—as you wish. The form of God selected may be seen in the center of the flame wherever it is carried, and then you are with God everywhere.

A Visitor: It was mentioned in a meeting that people doing other kinds of meditation should not join the Sathya Sai Baba Center.

Sai: This yoga and that yoga is not the answer. Yes, they may join even if doing other

*“First, you are in the light.
Then, the light is in you.
Finally, you are the light, and
the light is everywhere. Enjoy
for a while and then bring the
light back to the heart and
hold it there all day.”*



meditations. Let all unite in the one goal. God is reached only through love.

Pranayama (breath control exercise) subjects the heart and lungs to strain and pressure. One's health must be good. *Bhakti yoga* (path of devotion to reach God) is best. A big mixture will create only confusion. The meditation on light is safe and sure and leads directly to the goal.

A Visitor: But if one has been initiated into another meditation, Swami's book says it is a sin to change.

Sai: The goal remains the same. There is just some change in the pathway, the method employed. Meditation on light is real meditation. Light is formless, eternal, divine. It is the safe way and the sure way. But above all is love. Love is the royal highway to God. God is love. At the beginning we should carefully consider and investigate the meditation or *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) that we propose to adopt. Who is the guru? What is the result? If then we have full confidence that it will take us to our spiritual goal, then go ahead and stay with it. But it is a spiritual goal that we aim for, not a physical goal, not a goal at the sensory level.

A Visitor: But how can I get the self-confidence that I do not have?

Sai: To do bad things, you have the self-confidence to go ahead. The same self-confidence is also there to do good things. Everyone has self-confidence.

H: That is very good.

Sai: Yes, it is important. The self-confidence is already there. If there is interest in the good

things, the self-confidence is already there to carry them out.

People go to America and charge various amounts for spiritual information that belongs to everyone and for which no charge should be made. The information should not be sold, and the Americans should not buy.

H: Swami, in terms of the light meditation, I was not quite sure how Swami said it had liberation as the result.

Sai: You are the light. The same light is found in others also. The body drops away, and you are the light. That is liberation.

H: Does Swami mean that, by means of light, one expands through the entire universe and is no longer limited by body?

Sai: "My" falls away. There is no longer "my."

H: Here is a meditation given by the Lord, himself, and it takes one direct to liberation! Why would a person wish to bother with any other meditation?

Sai: Some sensory pleasure, some body result.

H: Yesterday, Swami, people got the idea that any kind of meditation could be used at a Center.

Sai: Don't worry about that. After a little while, they will feel how great the "light meditation" is and change to this. Do not force them. Give them some time.

H: Swami says that it is a benefit of the highest order if an individual's life is such that he merits God's love. How to directly experience that divine love?

Sai: In the kitchen is a sweet. Now, you must come from afar to the kitchen to enjoy the sweet. Only when you eat the food is the hunger relieved. To enjoy the sweetness of divine love, you must attempt to experience it directly. How to get the ability to experience divine love directly? Our ancient *rishis* (sages) enjoyed bliss by going into solitude and sitting with their bodies stiff and apparently lifeless.

On the other hand, people are all the time shaking their heads and bodies. Such people cannot get concentration. The body is described as a temple containing the Lord. If this part of our body keeps on shaking, the contents, the mind, will also shake. That is why in meditation certain postures are prescribed, and they must be maintained.

When in meditation, take the mind deep, so as not to be distracted. The deeper the mind is taken, the less it is disturbed by the surrounding noise. In the [Bhagavad] Gita, it is said that concentration precedes wisdom. If, in sitting for meditation, you keep on scratching your head or your back, you will not be doing the right kind of meditation. Some people sit for meditation. They simply sit, but then they wonder how soon they can move from that posture.

When in meditation, concentrate on the form chosen by you; then pass into contemplation, and then into meditation. Only via the three states will you get there. From concentration, one must cross the field of contemplation to enter meditation.

“There are three things: the meditator, the chosen form, and the process of meditating. The three should merge and become one, and this is the state of meditation.”



There are three things: the meditator, the chosen form, and the process of meditating. The three should merge and become one, and this is the state of meditation. But if all the while you feel you are meditating, it cannot be called meditation. When there is complete attention on the form chosen, that will lead to meditation. The attention of the mind is totally removed from the body and totally concentrated on the form chosen as the object of

your meditation.

—Transcript 50 (L), pp. 141-145

H: Swami, in meditation, some of the westerners are taking light alone, not the quite definite form of the *jyoti* , but just a formless light, and they are concentrating on that and projecting that. Is it correct to take formless light as the object of concentration?

Sai: It is not practical to attempt to concentrate on that which has no form. To concentrate on the *jyoti* (flame) is an illustration. The object of concentration can be sound,

form, the *jyoti* , etc. It needs to be something concrete. It is not easy to fix the mind on the abstract.

H: Is there a particular pathway along which the flame, the *jyoti* , should be moved in the body?

Sai: The light is first moved into the heart, which is conceived as a lotus, the petals of which will open. The *jyoti* is then moved to other body parts. There is no particular sequence. But important is the final body station, which is the head. There the light becomes a crown, enshrining and covering the head. The light is then moved outside, from the particular to the universal. Move the light into relatives, friends, enemies, trees, animals, birds—until the entire world and all its forms are seen to have the same light at their center as has been found to be within oneself.

The idea of moving the light into the universal phase, the idea of universality, is that the same divine light is present in everyone and everywhere. To impress this universality on the mind, we do the spreading of the light outside one's own body. One should understand that what comes about in meditation as one moves deeply into it, is not the thinking of the light, but the forgetting of the body, and thereby the direct experience that the body is not oneself.

This is the stage of contemplation, when the body is totally forgotten. It cannot be forced. It comes about by itself and is the stage that naturally follows concentration.

Vivekananda said that in meditation he was unable to find his body; where was his

body? He could not find it. [The purpose of] seeing the light and moving the light here and there is to give work to the mind, to keep the mind occupied in the right direction, so that the mind will not be thinking of this and that, and thus interfering with the process of becoming more and more quiet. Spreading the light into its universal phase, sending the light into every other body—when one is so concentrated that he is no longer conscious of the body—is the stage of contemplation.

As contemplation deepens, the stage of meditation comes about of its own volition. It cannot be forced. If the meditator remains conscious of himself and that he is engaged in meditation, then he is not meditating but is still in the preliminary stage, at the beginning of concentration.

There are three stages: concentration, contemplation, and meditation. When contemplation deepens, it moves naturally into meditation. Meditation is entirely above the senses. In the state of meditation, the meditator, the object of his meditation, and the process of meditation have fallen away, and there is only one—and that one is God.

All that can change has fallen away, and *Tat Twam Asi* , That Thou Art, is the state that exists. As one gradually returns to his customary and habitual state of consciousness, the *jyoti* is again placed in the heart and kept lighted there throughout the day.

H: In meditation on the form of God, Swami says that transition into the states of contemplation and meditation occurs naturally without the volition of the person who is meditating. But how does this tie into the

meditation on light where the meditator deliberately and with volition moves the *jyoti* here and there?

Sai: The three stages—concentration, which is below the senses; meditation, which is entirely above the senses; and contemplation, which lies between and is partially within the senses and partially above the senses, on the border of each—are the experience in genuine meditation, whether the object taken be form or light. There is no essential difference.

If the devotee has a form of God to which he is particularly devoted, he may merge that form into the *jyoti* ; the form that is most attractive to him becomes the object of his concentration and is seen to be within the light, wherever it is seen.

Or, the concentration may be just on the form of God, for God is universal in every form. Again, the object chosen is just a device to allow one to sink deeply into quietness and to allow the body, which is non-self, to fall away, out of consciousness. Anything concrete, such as light, form, or sound, may

be chosen as the object of concentration. It is not possible just to move directly into the stage of meditation. ...

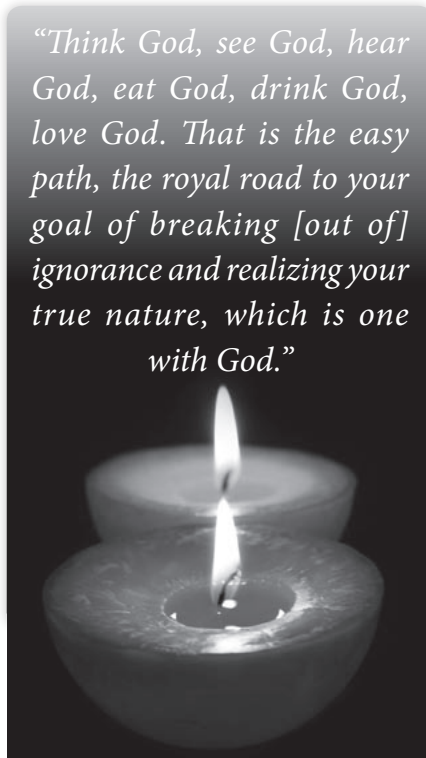
Meditation as described by Swami is the royal road, the easy path. Why bother with other practices? For meditation to be effective, there must be steady practice, with no hurry and no worry. With steady practice, the person will become quiet, and the state of meditation will naturally come about.

To think otherwise is weakness. Success is assured. Call upon God. He will help you. He will respond, and he himself will be your guru. He will guide you. He will always be at your side. Think God, see God, hear God, eat God, drink God, love God. That is the easy path, the royal road

to your goal of breaking [out of] ignorance and realizing your true nature, which is one with God.

—Transcript 49 (XLIX), pp. 136-139

—Excerpts from *Conversations with Sri Sathya Sai Baba*, by **Dr. John Hislop**
(San Diego: Birth Day Publishing, 1978)



ONLY BY THE LIGHT OF THE DIVINE LAMP INSIDE
CAN YOU BLOSSOM AS A WORTHWHILE PERSON.

—BABA

Season of Light: Significance of Dipavali

I Am the Light; the Light Is Me

*What is the reason for all the violence in the world? With the decline of selfless service, irrational desires have grown. The pursuit of mundane desires without fear of sin has led to a waning of the love for God. Men have lost their humanness; as a consequence, peace in the world has been shattered. **"I am in the light; I am the light. The light is in me. The light is me."** The wise one who realizes this truth becomes one with the Supreme. (TELUGU POEM)*

Embodiments of Love! God is the One who manifests himself in the cosmos with myriad heads, myriad eyes, and myriad feet. Despite this eternal divinity being so near us (by his omnipresence), people search for him all over the universe. This is as foolish as a person who goes begging to his neighbor for milk while the wish-fulfilling cow (Kamadhenu) is in his back yard. It is sheer senselessness on man's part to search for God outside, when the Divine is within him.

No one can comprehend or describe the glory and mystery of nature (*prakriti*). Nature is a reflection of the sport of the Divine. It is animated by the three *gunas* (qualities or tendencies), which are manifestations of the trinity (e.g., Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva). God nourishes and promotes nature via the three *gunas* in multifarious combinations and forms. Life's purpose is to experience the sacredness of nature as a projection of the Divine.

Realize the Value of Time

Time is supremely precious. It waits for no one. Everyone has to submit to time. It

is not subject to any one. Only when time is utilized properly through right actions can the human rise to the level of the Divine. Mankind's foremost duty is to make the right use of time through the bodily vesture given to him.

Man is bound by actions in this world of phenomenon. While divinity is all-pervasive, man fails to recognize this principle. He remains unable to see the light within. The reality that you seek everywhere in the outside world, is within you. The Supreme Lord is present inside and outside, everywhere in the cosmos. People today look only at the outside world like any animal. To look inward is the mark of the true human being. Obsessed with the external and losing the internal vision, man forfeits his power of discrimination.

Significance of Dipavali, Festival of Lights

When we inquire into the significance of Dipavali, we find that traditionally it is a joyous festival to celebrate the destruction of the demon, Naraka, by Sri Krishna. (Naraka had imprisoned the gopis.) First we have to understand the Krishna principle before

we can understand the Naraka principle. Krishna is the embodiment of the five elements—ether, air, fire, water, and earth. He is also the embodiment of the five life breaths (*pranas*)—*prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *udana* and *vyana* (the life breath, downward air, diffused air, upward air, and digestive air).

The mantra, *Kleem-Krishnaya-Govindaya-Gopijanavallabhaya-Swaha*, contains the essence of the Bhagavatha (epic story of the Lord's incarnation as Krishna). These five names represent the five *pranas* or vital airs. *Kleem* refers to the earth. *Krishnaya* refers to water. *Govindaya* refers to *agni* (fire principle). *Gopijanavallabhaya* refers to *vayu* (air). *Swaha* refers to ether. When we recognize that the Divine is immanent in the five elements, we will realize that there is no place in the cosmos where these five elements are not present. The human body is composed of the five elements. These elements, because they constitute the body, can affect only the body; they cannot affect the Atma (inherent divinity) in any way.

Misinterpretation of the Bhagavatham

In commenting on the Krishna story in the Bhagavatha, many writers have indulged in all kinds of misinterpretations. One such misinterpretation relates to Krishna's wives. In the human body are what are called *shad-chakras*—six spiritual centers. Of these, the two most important are the *hridaya-chakra* (the heart center) and the *sahasrara* (the thousand-petaled center at the top of the head). The *hridaya-chakra* is also known as the *hridaya-kamala* (lotus of the heart), and

the *sahasrara* is called the “thousand-petaled lotus.”

The lotus of the heart has eight petals. These eight petals symbolize the eight worlds, the eight directions, the eight guardians of the world, the eight *bhutas* (spirits), and the eight parts of the earth. Because Krishna was the lord of these eight petals, he was described as the husband of eight queens. The master is referred to as *pathi* (master, ruler, husband, presiding one), and those under him are described as wives. This is a symbolic relationship and not a husband/wife relationship in the worldly sense. Because the esoteric significance of these relationships was not properly understood, the Bhagavatham was subject to misinterpretation.

It is also stated that Krishna was wedded to 16,000 *gopikas* (cowherd maidens). Who are these *gopikas*? These are not maidens in physical form. At the head is the *sahasrara*, the thousand-petaled lotus. The Lord is described as the embodiment of the 16 *kalas* (aspects of divinity). As the Lord of the *sahasrara*, he presides over the 16,000 *kalas* (channels for spiritual energy) that are present in this lotus. The *kundalini shakti* (spiritual energy flow) that starts at the base of the spinal column (*muladhara*), rises and merges with the 16,000 *kalas* in the *sahasrara*. This is the esoteric significance and the meaning of the role of the Divine within the body. Oblivious to this inner meaning, people indulge in misinterpretations and perverse expositions.

Krishna's encounter with the demon Naraka has to be understood against this

background. Naraka means one who is opposed to the Atma. Naraka does not mean a demon; it was the name of a satellite that revolved round the earth. People were filled with apprehension about the threat to the earth from this satellite. When it seemed to approach the earth, Krishna removed their fear by destroying the satellite.

Dipavali Commemorates Krishna's Victory

Dangers from the planets are feared from time to time. For instance, some years ago, people expected great danger to the world from the combined position of the "eight planets" (*astagraha*). Five thousand years ago people dreaded the approach of a planet near to the earth. To allay their fears, Krishna came to their rescue and averted the impending danger. The celebration of Dipavali as the day of deliverance from Naraka commemorates

Krishna's victory. The day is observed as an occasion when the Divine leads mankind from darkness to light.

The legendary Naraka episode in the Bhagavatha describes the demon Naraka as the master of Pragjyotishpur (Assam region). The symbolic meaning of *Pragjyotishpur* is "a

place that has forgotten the Atma." The inner significance is that demonic forces dwell in any place where the Atma is forgotten. All the chaos and evil in the world today are due to the fact that men have forgotten the Atma.



"All the chaos and evil in the world today are due to the fact that men have forgotten the Atma. Everyone is conscious of the body and of the individual soul, but not of the Paramatma (Supreme Self) within him."

his desires. Man today has progressed to the stage of caring for the first three sheaths. Up to this stage his vision is turned toward the external.

The *vijnanamaya kosha* (based on *buddhi*, the power of discrimination), however, calls for internal vision. It leads to

Everyone is conscious of the body and of the individual soul, but not of the *Paramatma* (Supreme Self) within him.

From Food Sheath to Bliss Sheath

Man is encased in five *koshas* (sheaths or housings)—the *annamaya* (food), *pranamaya* (life principle), *manomaya* (mind), *vijnanamaya* (wisdom), and *anandamaya* (bliss) sheaths. The physical body is the *annamaya kosha* (based on food). Man takes good care of the body and also of the *pranamaya kosha*, as he cannot exist without the life-breath. Without the *manomaya kosha* (mental sheath), man cannot accomplish any of

the understanding of the *anandamaya kosha* (sheath of supreme bliss). Starting from the food sheath, man should progress toward the bliss sheath and not get stuck halfway, in the mental sheath. This is why man gets filled with demonic qualities, which can only lead him to Naraka (hell). Demonic qualities (symbolized by Narakasura, the demon Naraka) have to be destroyed to avoid being thrust into Naraka. By taking refuge in Krishna, the destroyer of Naraka, man can get rid of his demonic qualities.

On Dipavali day, people light numerous lamps with a single candle. The light with which other lamps are lit is symbolic of the Divine. The other lamps are *jivana jyotis* (individual lamps) that derive their light from the one Supreme Light. The festival of lights is observed in order to teach this truth to humankind.

Every festival has an inner meaning and purpose. Forgetting this, people observe holy days only as occasions for feasts and fun. Holy days in Bharat (India) are all full of spiritual significance. Forgetting this, people get lost in meaningless observances.

According to the legend, Krishna killed Narakasura with the help of Sathyabhama. What does this signify? Each of us has to fight and destroy the demonic forces within us by resorting to *sathya* (truth). “Truth alone triumphs” (*Sathyameva jayathe*) declares the Upanishad. “Speak truth” (*Sathyam vada*) is a Vedic injunction.

Once the Earth goddess went to Vishnu and lamented that she could bear any burden except that of carrying those who indulge in falsehood. One must be prepared to make any kind of sacrifice for upholding truth. That is the lesson taught by the great King Harischandra, who sacrificed his kingdom, wife, and son for the sake of his pledged word, and who stands out as a supreme upholder of truth.

Everyone should endeavor to adhere to truth. Truth is God. With faith in God and adherence to truth, all demonic forces can be vanquished.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Speaks (SSS) 22:35, Oct. 28, 1989

The lighthouse of hope for this ocean of life is God, who is the only permanent entity. This lighthouse never fails, so you should engage yourself in godly activities with unstinted devotion.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 26:14, Apr. 14, 1993)

The Poor Woman's Lamp

A Traditional Tale from Buddhism

At the time of Buddha, there lived an old beggar woman called "Relying on Joy." She used to watch kings, princes, and others making their offerings to Buddha and his disciples, and there was nothing she wanted more than to be able to do the same. So she went out begging, but at the end of a whole day all she had was one small coin.

She took the coin to the oil-merchant to buy some oil. He told her that she could not possibly buy anything with so little. But when he heard that she wanted the oil for an offering to Buddha, he took pity on her and gave her a small amount of oil.

She took the oil to the monastery, where she lit a lamp. She placed it before Buddha and made this wish: "I have nothing to offer but this tiny lamp. But through this offering, in the future may I be blessed with the lamp of wisdom. May I free all beings from their darkness. May I purify all their obstructions and lead them to enlightenment."

That night the oil in all the other lamps went out, but the beggar woman's lamp was still burning at dawn. When Buddha's disciple Maudgalyayana came to collect all the lamps, he saw that one was still alight, full of oil and with a new wick.

He thought, "There's no reason why this lamp should still be burning in the daytime," and he tried to blow it out. But it kept on burning. Then he tried snuffing it out with his fingers, but it stayed lit. He also tried to smother it with his robe, but still it burned on.

The Buddha had been watching all along and said, "*Maudgalyayana, do you want to put out that lamp? You cannot. You cannot even move it, let alone put it out. If you were to pour the water from all the oceans over this lamp, it still would not go out. The water in all the rivers and the lakes of the world could not extinguish it. Why not? Because this lamp was offered with devotion and with purity of heart and mind. And that motivation has made it of tremendous benefit.*"

After Buddha said this, the beggar woman approached him, and he made a prophesy that in the future she would become a perfect buddha, called "Light of the Lamp."

So, it is our motivation, good or bad, that determines the fruit of our actions.

—As told by Sogyal Rinpoche
in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*,
© 1992 by Sogyal Rinpoche

The Maccabean Miracle

The Origin of Hanukkah, the Jewish “Festival of Lights”

Around 200 BCE (about 2200 years ago), the Ancient Greeks from Syria controlled Israel. The Jews believed in one God whose glories could not be described, so they used an unpronounceable name, YHWH (Yehovah). The Syrian-Greek rulers passed laws preventing Jews from studying their holy books or celebrating their festivals. The Jewish Holy Temple in Jerusalem was remade into a temple for Zeus, one of the chief Greek gods. The Maccabees, a small band of faithful Jews, resisted this religious persecution. They set out to overcome the Syrian forces who occupied their homeland:

*When they saw the army coming to meet them, they said unto Judah (Maccabee): ‘What? Shall we be able, being a small company, to fight against so great and strong a multitude? ...’ And Judah said, ‘... **There is no difference in the sight of Heaven to save by many or by few; for victory in battle standeth not in the multitude of an host, but strength is from Heaven.**’ (1 Macc.)*

The small band of Maccabees succeeded in their revolt and regained control of the Holy Temple. They removed the Greek altars and statues of Zeus. The priests began rituals to cleanse the temple. They prepared for a festival to re-dedicate the site as the chief Jewish temple.

Inside the temple was a lamp, a menorah (candelabra) with seven branches. This



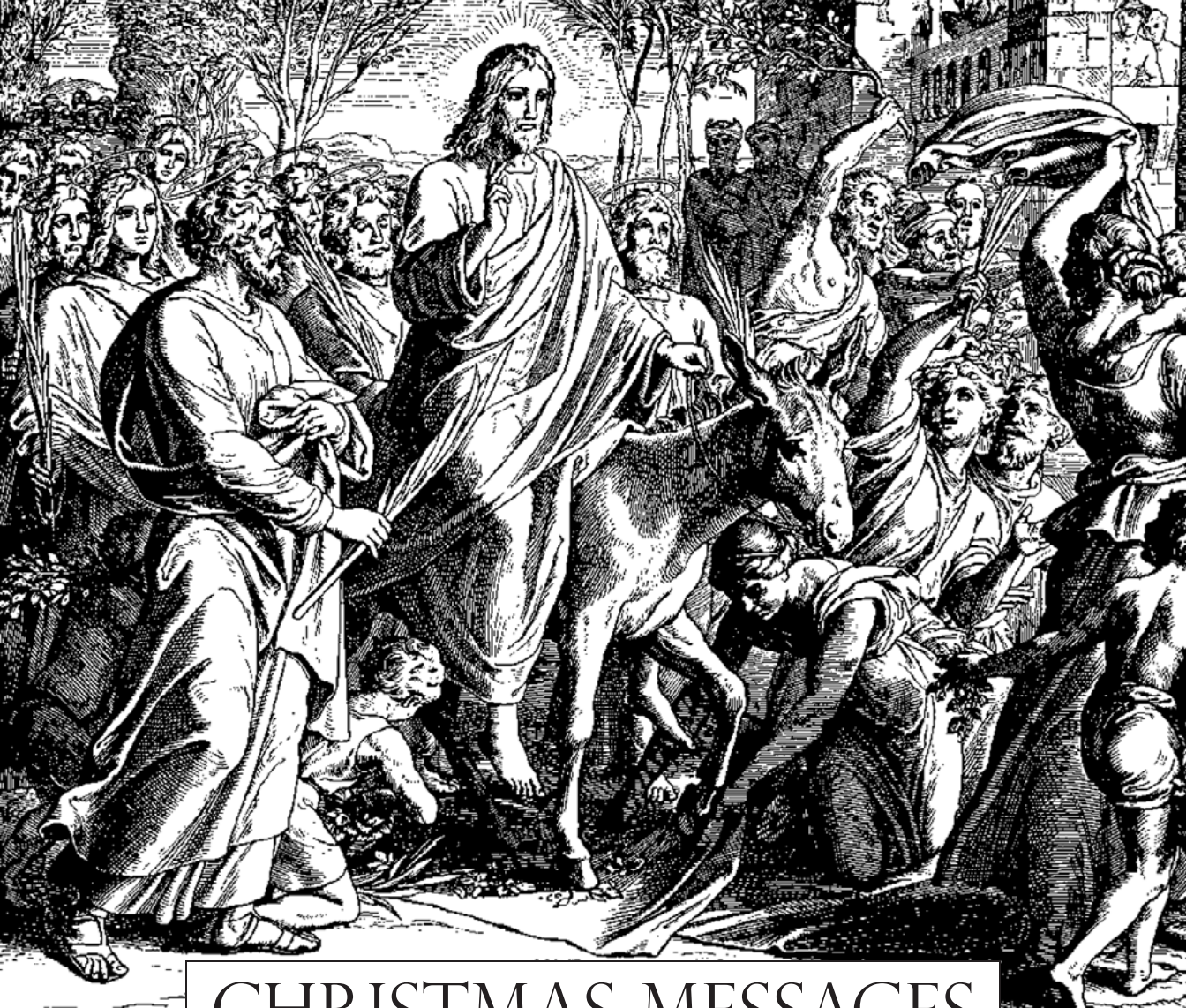
sacred lamp, according to their tradition, should always be kept burning in the temple and never allowed to go out. They hunted for a supply of purified olive oil. They found only one jar of purified oil. The pot contained barely enough oil to burn for just one day. What to do? It would take a whole week to prepare a new supply of sacred olive oil.

The Maccabees decided not to wait. They went ahead, rededicated the temple, and lit the “eternal flame.” **Then a great miracle occurred. The lamp burned for eight days—**long enough to prepare more oil.

The Hebrew word *Hanukkah* means “dedication.” The Holy Temple re-dedication is commemorated each year as the eight-day festival of Hanukkah. During Hanukkah, families retell the story of the “great miracle”; they light eight candles on a menorah and enjoy oil-fried foods. The holiday follows the Jewish calendar but usually falls in December.

The events of the story demonstrate the message of an earlier Jewish prophet, Zechariah: **“Not by might, not by power, but by My spirit,” saith the Lord.**” (Zech. 4:6). The spiritual message is one of relying not on physical strength but on God alone.

—Newsletter Staff



CHRISTMAS MESSAGES

on the Life and Teachings of Jesus

Two thousand years ago, in Palestine, a province of the Roman Empire, there were Jews professing Judaism. The Jews believed in one God called Yehovah. They believed that God would send a messiah (savior) for the people of Israel. Jerusalem was the sacred city of the Jews, and it continued to be even under the Romans. This was the time when Jesus was born.

—Sathya Sai Speaks (SSS) 24:29, Dec. 23, 1991



The story says there was **a star in the sky** that fell with a new light, and this led a few Tibetans and others to the place where the savior was born. What the story signifies is this: a huge halo of splendor illuminated the sky over the village when Christ was born.

This meant that he who was to overcome the darkness of evil and ignorance had taken birth, that he would spread the light of love in human hearts. Jesus was to shatter the darkness that had enveloped the world, and the aura of light was a sign that announced the event. Such masters as Jesus arrive in answer to humanity's prayer: "Lead us from darkness to light" (*Thamasso ma jyotir gamaya*).

If each one does his duty in the spirit of dedication, the light can illumine all, but if the doors of the heart are shut against the light, how can darkness disappear?

Make your hearts pure, your activities holy, and your feelings beneficial to all. That is the best way of celebrating the birth of Christ.

—SSS 11:54, Dec. 24, 1972

Jesus's Childhood

Like the fragrance in the bud of a flower, the divinity of Jesus was evident from his boyhood. Three kings from the East came to see him at the time of his birth. One of them, on seeing the child, felt that Jesus would be a lover of God. Another felt that Jesus would be loved by God. The third king felt that Jesus would one day declare his oneness with God. The first king's thought indicated Jesus's role as a **messenger of God**. The second king's thought indicated that Jesus would be the **Son of God**. The third king's thought indicated that the child would one day declare, **"I and my Father are one."** Jesus was named the Christ as he was regarded as the chosen messenger of God.

Who is a messenger of God? The one who comprehends the purpose of his life. A "Son of God" is one who appears as divine to others. **"I and the Father are one" signifies the true nature of the individual**, his identity with divinity. In this manner, Christ progressed in his ministry. He conveyed his message in simple and convincing terms.

—SSS 24:29, Dec. 23, 1991

When Jesus was a child, during a visit to Jerusalem, he became lost in the crowd. After a frantic search, his mother, Mary, found him in a temple, listening intently to the speech of a priest. When Mary told Jesus about the trouble they had gone through in searching for him, he answered, "Mother! When I am safe with my Father in his home, why should you worry about me? This is the temple of God. It is my Father's mansion. Nothing will be lacking here. In this eternal

and sacred home, I am perfectly safe and well-protected.”

This shows that even by his 12th year, Jesus was full of divine qualities and was imparting divine messages to those around him. Christ declared to the world three important ideas: (1) God is one. (2) God is omnipotent. (3) Do not hurt anyone, because God is the Indweller in every being.

—SSS 22:38, Dec. 25, 1989

From childhood, Jesus displayed such sacred qualities as compassion, love, and sacrifice. Realizing from his early years that the **discharge of one's duties** was the primary obligation of a human being, Jesus used to help his father in his work as a carpenter. The father passed away in Jesus's 12th year. For a while he carried on his father's work, but in due course he set out on his ministry in the service of the people. (SSS 24:29, Dec. 23, 1991)

Like most seekers, Jesus first searched for the Divine in the objective world. But soon he realized that the world is a kaleidoscopic picture created by one's own imagination, and thus he sought to find God within himself. His stay in Himalayan monasteries in Kashmir and in other centers of Eastern asceticism and philosophical inquiry gave him greater awareness.

—SSS 14:16, Dec. 25, 1978

Jesus's Mission

Jesus grew up in Nazareth. After Joseph's passing, he sought his mother's permission to embark on his divine mission. At age 30, he got baptized by John the Baptist and spent 40 days in penance in a forest. During the

penance, he prayed to God for three things: (1) to be blessed with the quality of loving everyone equally; (2) to have the strength and forbearance to suffer patiently any indignity or persecution to which he might be subjected; (3) to be enabled to use his God-given body wholly in the service of God.

After 40 days, Jesus emerged from his penance with the faith that his prayers had been granted. He encountered the fishermen at Galilee, who became his first disciples. He told them that **he had come to establish the reign of love on earth** and that they would be his helpers in his mission. He spoke to them about how precious human birth is and urged them to seek the kingdom of God within themselves.

—SSS 21:34, Dec. 25, 1988

Jesus was a *karana-janma*, a master born with a purpose—the mission of restoring love, charity, and compassion in the heart of man. He had no attachment to the [bodily] self, nor did he pay any heed to joy or sorrow, loss or gain. He had a heart that responded to the call of anguish, and he went about the land preaching the **lesson of love**. His life was a libation for the upliftment of humanity.

—SSS 14:16, Dec. 25, 1978

Christ's basic teachings were related to the promotion of compassion, sympathy, love, sacrifice, and fellowship among human beings. Love, sacrifice, compassion, morality, integrity, and similar qualities are common to all religions. In different ways, all religions seek to promote unity in diversity. ... The



primary duty of human beings is to recognize that the paths indicated by different religions may vary, but the goal is one.

—SSS 24:29, Dec. 23, 1991

As Jesus went on with his preaching and attracted multitudes, some of the priests and people in authority grew envious of his popularity. This happens in all countries. They started persecuting him and charging him with treason. Jesus, however, continued to the end to carry on his mission of love and righteousness, first as “messenger of God,” and later as “Son of God.”

—SSS 21:34, Dec. 25, 1988

The Jews held the rituals and regulations laid down by the prophets in the scriptural texts as valid for all time, so they held the teachings of Jesus as wrong. They were not moved by personal hatred toward Jesus. The problem arises in every age—the conflict between the letter and the spirit, between the

doctrines that are held sacred, the mantras that are held to be holy, the various do’s and don’ts to be followed scrupulously, and the **underlying truth**.

—SSS 14:60, Dec. 24, 1980

Christ declared that God can be realized only through love. Once a high priest in Jerusalem called Jesus and asked him, “Are you king of the Jews?” Jesus replied, “I do not say so.” The priest told Jesus, “You are leading the people astray by your wrong teachings. You are telling them that everyone can enter heaven only through you.” Jesus answered that he had been telling people to seek the kingdom of heaven. The priest asked, “Where is that kingdom?” Jesus replied, “**The kingdom of heaven is within you, within everybody.** When this is my teaching, how can I be accused of claiming that the kingdom of heaven can be attained only through me?” How did Jesus get the courage to speak in this fashion? It was because he was proclaiming the truth. Truth is born of love, which comes from faith in God.

Where there is faith, there is love.

Where there is love, there is peace.

Where there is peace, there is truth.

Where there is truth, there is bliss.

Where there is bliss, there is God.

—SSS 20:31, Dec. 25, 1987

Christ sacrificed his life for the sake of those who put their faith in him. He propagated the truth that service is God, that sacrifice is God, and that only those who can pour out compassion to their fellow man can claim a place in the grace of God.

—SSS 10:39, Dec. 25, 1970

The Embodiment of Compassion

Love is an amalgam of sweetness, effulgence, and wisdom. Compassion is the reflection of love. Jesus was the embodiment of compassion. He looked with compassion at the poor and the miserable and gave them succor. ... From those times to the present, those who care for the well-being of all living beings and humanity have been subjected to various trials and tribulations.

Good people are always pursued by difficulties and troubles. The messiahs, the prophets, saints, and God-men have always suffered from ordeals of various kinds. You should not be bothered about such things. Have faith in God. When you live up to the truth you believe in, you will be indifferent to what others think.

—SSS 26:37, Dec. 25, 1993

Although in terms of physical form human beings appear different, in spirit they are all one. This is the truth propagated by Christianity. It has declared that all are the children of one Lord and, believing in the Fatherhood of God, all should live in harmony.

—SSS 24:29, Dec. 23, 1991

It is therefore appropriate that the birthday of Jesus, who felt the need to save mankind and strove to achieve it, is celebrated, but the celebration must take the form of adherence to the teachings (he imparted), loyalty to the principles, practicing the disciplines, and experiencing the awareness of the Divine.

—SSS 11:54, Dec. 24, 1972

The observance of holy days such as Christmas is an occasion for realizing the importance of love and harmony among human beings. It is not right to celebrate Christ's birthday (only) by feasting, drinking, singing, and merry-making. The ideals taught by Jesus should be put into practice.

—SSS 21:34, Dec. 25, 1988

All the great teachers belong to all mankind. It is wrong to believe that Jesus belongs only to the Christians and that Christmas is a holy festival for the West only. To accept one of the great teachers as one's own and to discard the rest as belonging to others is a sign of pettiness. Christ, Rama, Krishna—they are for all humans, everywhere.

—SSS 11:54, Dec. 24, 1972

When rain pours down from the sky, pure water falls on the valleys, mountains, rivers, and seas. But the pure water acquires the color and taste of the region or spot where it falls. Likewise, prophets and messiahs, coming down in different forms, in different parts of the world, at different times, impart their message in terms appropriate to the times, places, and conditions of the people concerned. **Religions cannot be considered different from each other for this reason.**

All religions have taught only what is good for humanity. Religion should be practiced with this awareness. If the minds are pure, how can religion be bad? (TELUGU POEM)

—SSS 24:29, Dec. 23, 1991

Continued on page 24

*Swami is the smallest of the small
And the largest of the large.
As approaching the smallest,
He is the atom that makes up all the objects that we see.
Through his Sankalpa (Divine Will),
Maya (illusion) is ordered and orderly,
Conforming to our needs and wants,
To give us the choices that have to be made,
So that God may experience us coming closer to Him
Or further from Him.*

*It was with this mindset
That my constant integrated awareness
Focused on the entry door to our house.
All those Swami atoms got together
To form the dimensions and specifics of that door.
What has Swami done for me in the creation of that
door?*

*In the winter, cold winds, sleet, and snow
Are kept away from my hearth.
In spring, the growth-laden rains
Remain outside.
In summer, the strong midday sun
Is reflected away.
In fall, the winds that herald the coming coldness
Are blocked.*

*These functions are performed by Swami as the door,
Whether they are appreciated or not,
But, obviously, these are not the only
Duties of the door.
It welcomes Mom, Dad, Teacher, and Guest
To our house,
From God as the form of the door
To God in human form.*

Meditations on a Door

A Thanksgiving Poem



*It welcomes friends, relatives, and acquaintances, who will
reflect back to us
A glimmer of who we really are.
It allows the family to grow
And interact in privacy,
Where Truth must first be taught
And Love initially fostered.*

*It keeps the unwanted or enemy from disturbing us
Without some warning.
The door keeps the house quiet
So that we may pray, meditate, and sleep
In silence
So that we may come closer to God
Within us.
The door swings open and closed
To allow us to be in the "world"
Or in the "forest."*

*What is the point
Of all these words?
It is that Thanksgiving is a daily event,
A moment-to-moment event.
This thankfulness becomes gratitude;
Gratitude is the hallmark of humility,
And both are the foundations of Prema (Unconditional Love)
May the micro-Swami and the macro-Swami always grace
your lives.
Shanti, Shanti, Shantihi.*

With Love,
Gary Kauftheil
Mullica Hill, New Jersey

Christmas Messages

Continued from page 21

Christ's Crucifixion

People talk of Christ's sacrifice as evidenced by his crucifixion. But he was surrounded and bound, crowned with a crown of thorns by the crowd who captured him, and later nailed to a cross by his captors. A person bound and beaten by the police cannot say that he has sacrificed anything, for he is not a free man.

Let us [instead] pay attention to the sacrifice that Jesus made freely, out of his own volition. He sacrificed his happiness, prosperity, comfort, safety, and position. He braved the enmity of the powerful. He refused to yield or compromise. He renounced the "ego," which is the toughest thing to get rid of. Honor him for these qualities. He willingly sacrificed the desires with which the body torments man; this is a sacrifice greater than the sacrifice of the body under duress. Celebrate his birthday by sacrificing at least one or two desires and by conquering the more disastrous urges of the ego.

—SSS 11:54, Dec. 24, 1972

The human body is like sugarcane, filled with the juice of love. Only when the body is subjected to hardship can the divine, sweet juice of love flow from it. Without trouble to the body, pains to the mind, and control of the feelings, how can you expect to experience the Divine? Men today aspire for liberation without suffering on their part. God's love is not to be secured so easily. The precious gem of love can be gotten only in the

bazaar of sacrifice (*thyaga*, renunciation). It is valued only in the kingdom of love.

—SSS 26:37, Dec. 25, 1993

Christ also taught that the body should be used for recognizing the Indwelling Spirit and not to protect itself. It is a mark of ignorance to pamper the body and ignore the spirit within.

—SSS 21:34, Dec. 25, 1988

Jesus said that the bread taken in the Last Supper was his flesh, and the wine, his blood. He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are to be treated as he himself, and that no distinction should be made as to friend or foe, *we* or *they*. Every body is His body, sustained by the breath; every drop of blood flowing in the veins of every living being is His, animated by the activity that the wine imparts to it. That is to say, everyone is divine and has to be revered as such.

The Roman rulers were told that Jesus was attempting to assert himself as king and thus could be punished for treason. Their insistence made the governor order Jesus's crucifixion. When the nails were being driven into him to fix him on the cross, Jesus heard the voice of the Father saying, "**All life is one, my dear son! Be alike to everyone!**" And Jesus pleaded that those who were crucifying him might be pardoned, for they knew not what they were doing. Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of humanity.

—SSS 14:16, Dec. 25, 1978

Jesus knew that God wills everything, so even on the cross, when he suffered, he bore no ill-will toward anyone, and he exhorted

those with him to treat all as instruments of God's will.

—SSS 14:60, Dec. 24, 1980

One point I must bring to your notice today. **At the moment when Jesus was merging in the Supreme Principle of Divinity**, he communicated something to his followers, which has been interpreted in a variety of ways by commentators and those who relish the piling of writings on writings and meanings upon meanings, until it all swells up into a huge mess. The announcement itself has been manipulated and tangled into a conundrum.

Christ's statement was simple: **"He who sent me among you will come again."** And he pointed to a lamb. The lamb is merely a symbol, a sign. It stands for the voice (of the lamb), *"Ba-Ba."* The announcement was of the advent of Baba. "His name will be Truth," declared Christ. *Sathya* means Truth. "He will wear a robe of red, a blood-red robe." (Here Baba pointed to the robe he was wearing.) "He will be short, with a crown (of hair). The lamb is the sign and symbol of love."

Christ did not declare that he would come again. He said, **"He who made me will come again."** That *Ba-Ba* is this Baba, and Sai—the short, curly-hair-crowned, red-robed Baba—has come. **He is not only in this form, but he is in every one of you, as the Dweller in the heart. He is there, with a robe the color of the blood that fills the body!**

—SSS 11:54, Dec. 24, 1972

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Joe Darin waits for an inspiring quality of light to "grab him" when searching for subjects to photograph. To him, "The light is more important than the subject." This "cross in light" caught him by surprise in a shopping mall.

Photography by Joe Darin, "Skylight Cross." Courtesy of Joe Darin.

The Lord Has Come—for Transformation of Hearts

2008 Christmas Address at Prasanthi Nilayam by Ted Henry

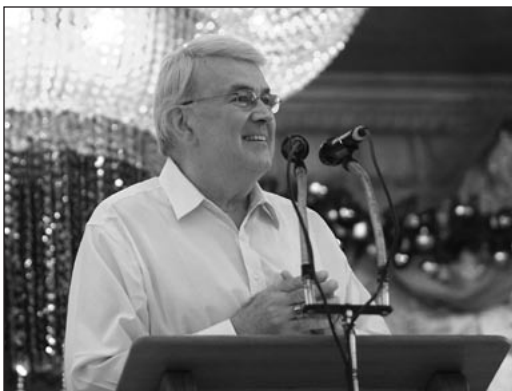
Respected elders, students, Sai sisters and Sai brothers, *Sai Ram!* Merry Christmas! Joy to the world, the Lord has come!

We are among the luckiest people in the entire world this Christmas Day, because we are spending Christmas with

Jesus himself! Two thousand years ago Jesus walked the rugged earth of the Mediterranean. He had a band of followers that was very small, but they loved him dearly. His mission lasted for just three years, and for a long time after he was crucified, accounts of his life were spread only by word of mouth.

So what was it about this young man, Jesus, that caused people to follow and worship him as the son of God throughout the next 20 centuries? It was his message of peace and love, and the personal experiences he gave his followers.

Jesus healed the sick, brought the dead back to life, and made the blind see again.



Ted Henry has been a broadcast journalist in the USA since 1964 and weekday news anchor at WEWS-TV5 (ABC) in Cleveland, Ohio, from 1975-2009. A former Peace Corps volunteer, his wide-ranging activities both on- and off-screen have demonstrated the common elements of interest in humanity, service, and compassion.

I turn for everything. And as our most loving parent, you reach us when the moment is most perfect.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba's divine love reaches new people every minute of every day. But *when* this happens is strictly his will. Because I'm a television journalist, I had the thought that I might assist in bringing Sai Baba's name to other countries, but I didn't understand something that Baba has since shown me in abundance.

About nine years ago I had the privilege of asking Baba if I might help take his name to America. He said, "No. Take my love instead."

He impacted people's lives in ways no one could ever forget. And 2000 years later, he has come again, our Lord-God, manifest, as Bhagavan.

Beloved Swami, you are not only the Christ-consciousness, you are my Christ-consciousness, the one to whom

Even though Baba's name is now being spread everywhere by his devotees, for me, in that moment, that was the right message. He wanted me first to become submerged in his love.

Back home in America, where few people know where to look for true happiness, the *seva* (service) my wife Jody and I engage in is to present Sai to the inquisitive, as well as to record video interviews with Sai devotees. It is our life's greatest privilege to share his love in this way.

However, we now realize that this is merely a privilege and a pleasure that he graciously grants us, as an exercise for our own growth. And, in fact, it has proven to be sort of a "boomerang" *leela* (divine sport) of the highest order, as you will soon see.

Baba doesn't need the Hindu newspaper, or the BBC, or a television journalist from Cleveland, Ohio, or anyone one else to carry his message. Baba needs no one to help him. Sai Baba needs nobody to carry his name, to spread his mission, or to identify his purpose. He makes his presence known *wherever* in the world he chooses, *when* he chooses, and *how* he chooses. He does this through the grace of individual, heart-to-heart, personal experiences.

Like Jesus, the son of a carpenter, who was born in Bethlehem, Sathya Sai Baba gives each of us our own unmistakable experiences, which awaken us from our deep, deep spiritual slumber. He does this for only one purpose, so that we may come to know what he is really here to give us: liberation itself, through his unfathomable love.

Just think of it. There is not a soul in this hall today who does not have a story to tell about how this avatar entered his or her heart. Each story is unique. Each is miraculous, intimate—a divine romance that will outlive our bodies. And it happens to millions daily, all over the world, simultaneously.

Swami gave me my latest personal experience just this week. An 88-year old friend of mine in America was very sick. She is not a devotee, but she loves Swami. She sent me a message here last week, asking me to pray to Swami for her health, regarding a serious operation on her colon that was scheduled to take place this week.

I told this to a Sai brother in America, and he carried *vibhuti* (sacred ash) to this dear woman many miles away. The next day, Baba took a letter from me in which I had requested his mercy for this woman. This woman rubbed *vibhuti* all over her stomach. The day after that, she was healed. Surgery cancelled. This woman calls it a miracle, and so do I. Our gratitude and love to Swami.

Personal "Baba" experiences like this have expanded immensely our conception of omniscience and omnipresence. This is worldwide, interactive, tender loving care, 24/7. Who but God could create such unmistakable moments in so many people's lives? It is our Baba, our beloved Swami.

This avatar knows his devotees so intimately, and he wants to interact privately with them, at a soul level. It is this golden heart-to-heart link, one person at a time, that will forever transform us all. Sai Baba has shown his heart-to-heart connection clearly

to us through the many and varied stories that Jody and I have collected while doing video interviews with devotees.

At first I thought the purpose of our service efforts was to record and preserve for posterity the precious accounts of divinity revealing itself. Not quite. Swami's purpose, the real purpose, was to transform the man whom he himself once called a "good boy, but a doubting Thomas," into a "trusting Ted."

I was born under the astrological sign of Libra, plus I'm a journalist. That's not always a good combination for a believer. It isn't in my nature to be fully convinced or committed to anything, because I always tend to see several sides to every story. For many years I tried to suspend judgment, to be primarily a witness, an observer, to what I saw happening here right before my very eyes.

But our beloved Swami is so very clever. First he hooks you; then he cooks you! He has cooked me so very well, sweetly allowing me to do my video *seva* for all these years, without me knowing what he was really up to. In fact, after 11 years now, we've recorded over 100 hour-long, magnificent stories from loving, holy, and spiritually-transformed Sai devotees.

Thus Swami has allowed us to learn at the feet of his many apostles. But here's the surprise. Here's the boomerang *leela*. I thought I was collecting these stories to show to others, to be used as a tool to change their lives! But all the while, unbeknownst to me, Baba was using these same stories that were being told to me—which I was recording,

year, after year, after year—to change *my* life. To change me!

And it happened. Time after time, devotee after devotee told me the most amazing stories of Baba.

I heard their words.

I saw their tears.

I felt their love.

And I too was changed.

Who did this to me? How could this happen? How on earth could a 63-year-old man, set in his ways, whose heart was encased in a cage of steel, have it pierced by such love?

I know how, and so do you.

Now, even I cannot deny or equivocate any further. This can only be the work of God! As Jesus was once with us, God is here with us now.

Our beloved Bhagavan, beloved Baba, we are filled with gratitude for the experiences you give to us all. Continue to be the "presence" in our lives, whether we live inside the ashram, outside on Samadhi Road, or 10,000 miles away.

You melt my heart when you make me so aware of your devotees who have been touched by your divine hand.

Beloved Swami, we are most grateful for the continuous personal experiences you provide for all. They are the engine that drives us toward transformation. You so graciously help us with your beautiful *leelas*, and by coming into our dreams.

To some people you give personal experiences by talking sweetly into their ear, or by having books fall on them, the right books that they need to read. And still



others experience your presence through such outright miracles as did our friend, our wonderful friend, Harriet Freeman, in Galion, Ohio, this week.

Dear Swami, we followers who are discovering your divine hand in our lives—Russians and Venezuelans, Indians and Nepalese, English and Africans, Italians and Brazilians, and all the rest of us—go back to our homelands as changed people. And as our hearts are transformed, so too are our actions.

As others slowly begin to recognize this, the pathway to more and more hearts opens to love.

Beloved Swami, you have taught us well. Let us always remember to be grateful, and to be happy, be happy, be happy.

Let us pray. Most beloved Bhagavan, beloved Mother-Father God, we pray that you take us deeper and deeper each day into

the majesty of your divine awareness. We pray that you continue to make manifest to us your all-nurturing love.

For my wife, Jody; for my children, Joanna and Adam; and for all people in all places, show us the way. Please continue to show us the way. Beloved Swami, guide us home, and awaken us from this dream, so that we may become aware of our oneness with you. *Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram.*

—**Ted Henry**

Cleveland, Ohio

(Prasanthi Nilayam, Christmas 2008)

See pages 30-31 for an article based on one of Ted Henry's many "video seva" interviews.

A beautiful introductory video on Sai Baba, produced by Ted Henry and entitled "Who Is Sai Baba?" may be viewed at www.souljourns.net. Ted is also in the process of posting his collection of video interviews of Sai devotees online for public viewing at www.vimeo.com/souljourns. The videos range in length from 35 minutes to over an hour.

Experiencing Swami from Within

Based on an Interview with Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

Dr. Wayne Dyer is a prominent American best-selling author and internationally recognized lecturer. Recently he was interviewed for a television news program in Cleveland, Ohio. In the course of that interview, Swami's name came up, and at the first mention of Sai Baba, tears appeared in his eyes. He has never seen Swami in person but said that he was well acquainted with Baba, because Baba has appeared often in his dreams.

How come Swami is blessing Dyer by regularly appearing in his dreams? Dyer is an intensely spiritual person. He is featured regularly on public television in America and is considered one of the foremost inspirational speakers in the field of spiritual growth and personal development. He has written 25 books over the last 30 years, many of which have been bestsellers throughout the world.

For the first decade of his life, Dyer lived in an orphanage and foster homes. He now looks back on those years as being some of his most formative, a time during which he learned the important lesson of self-reliance. He sees himself as the Eternal Soul, disguised as an author, lecturer, father, husband, and a thousand other things—he obviously takes his *advaitam* (nonuality) seriously.

Part of Dyer's popularity is due to the inclusion of many quotes from Swami in his books and presentations. One of his observations demonstrates his closeness to the teachings of Sai Baba: "Send out love and harmony, put your mind and body in a peaceful place, and then allow the universe to work in the perfect way it knows how."

In public lectures around the world, Dyer invariably brings up the name of Sai Baba. "I am not sure why he comes to me," he says. "It just started happening, several years ago. This (Baba) is a being who lives at God-consciousness, who has, as Jesus had, the ability to manifest at will (just as Jesus manifested fish and loaves). All of us have the ability to manifest, but there is a timeline between what we think and what we do."

In the recent TV interview, Dyer exclaimed, "Even as you speak (about Sai Baba), I get very emotional. I could almost break down and cry right now. It's not a tear of sadness; it's not a feeling that I am hurt in any way. It's just the most blissful, peaceful (feeling). Do you know what it feels like to be in a warm shower after you have been out in the cold? It's like having a warm shower running inside of you."

This is how Dyer describes Baba's appearances in his dreams: "It's an energy that moves up and down your spine and gives you gooseflesh, only it's internal gooseflesh. It's just bliss. That's the way it is, and that's how I feel."

"...Baba is one of those beings that calibrates at one of those exceptionally high spiritual levels that is commensurate with Source. He is Source Energy. He lives at Source Energy. He is God. We are all pieces of God, and he is there all the time."

When asked why others don't have such access to the many qualities of Sai Baba, Dyer replied that everyone has access but they do not want it. He adds, "It's just that they believe they don't (have access). It's like your question itself (about this) has resistance built into it. The idea is that if you believe you don't have something, then you don't have it."

Dyer says this is how people create resistance to what they want. "If you use phrases like 'the worst-case scenario,' then you just can't have 'the best-case scenario.' You know, 'As a man thinks, so he is.' It's based on simple metaphysics. Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at change."

Often in his talks and frequently in his writings, Dyer teaches about nonattachment. About meeting Sai Baba in India one day, he says, "I am not attached to it at all. Honestly, I am not. I don't have any illusion that if he were to walk into this room right now, that it would be any different from this very experience (of talking about him) right now." Dyer adds, "It's because I already feel Baba's presence in this room right now. It's just that strong."

Dyer says, "I have a very, very strong internal knowing about my connection to Source (God), and Sai Baba is someone who lives at this level of God-consciousness. David Hawkins, in his book, *Power vs. Force*, speaks of a handful of people who live at this God-realized level. He says they are steadfast in their abstention of thoughts of harm, that they don't exclude anyone, and that they include all, and Baba is one of those beings that calibrates at one of those exceptionally high spiritual levels that is commensurate with Source. He is Source Energy. He lives at Source Energy. He is God. We are all pieces of God, and he is there all the time."

Dyer's book, *The Power of Intention*, describes the force brought to an individual's life by ego and how it interacts with fear. "When you get ego out of the way," he says, "when you just allow (life to be), and if you knew who it was who was walking beside you at all times on this path, then you would have no fear."

Dyer continues, "One of the quotes I like from Swami Paramananda (of the Ramakrishna Order) is that when you reach God-realization, nothing can go wrong—*nothing* can go wrong. All you have to do is live at the level I am speaking about, and you don't have to go around practicing or worrying about it; you just have to reach for higher vibrational energy at any moment, which means staying connected to Source. One of the great questions to ask is, "Would God have this thought?" and then to remind yourself that you are God, that you are a piece of God."

Dyer says that by definition, anything that excludes cannot be spiritual. And he says that nearly all religions exclude. It's one of the thoughts that makes this famous author so popular among those who know him. His life is dedicated to inclusiveness. It's one of the reasons he speaks so forcefully about Sai Baba. If there is anything Wayne Dyer is against, it is exclusion, and he knows Sai Baba is all about inclusion.

—Ted Henry
Cleveland, Ohio

Christmas Gift of Love

Sometime in the week before Christmas 2008 while I was in Prasanthi Nilayam to help with Christmas decorations, I prayed to Swami, “If this is not real, show me what is real!” On the night after Christmas, I left Sai Kulwant Hall after the evening program and walked slowly past Swami’s house, then down the road between the Poornachandra auditorium and the West Prasanthi buildings. As I came to the main road and prepared to turn to the right to retrieve my shoes, I saw a frail old Indian man holding a walking stick sitting on a step at the corner. He wore a faded white shirt and *dhoti*, his head was wrapped in an old white turban, and he carried a long, narrow bag in one hand.

As I approached the man, I heard a voice inside my head say, “Give him the *prasad*.” USA devotees had assembled and brought gift bags for distribution that evening; they contained a picture of Swami, a packet of *vibhuti*, and some nuts and candies.

My first reaction was, “Okay.” Then my mind jumped in and said, “What will I say to him? What will he think?” I walked past him, turned the corner, found my shoes, then heard the voice again say, “Give him the packet.”

I turned and started heading back to where I had seen the old man sitting on the step. He had left! Disappointed, I looked up

to search for him and was surprised to see him almost directly in front of me, bent over almost double, moving slowly.

I walked up to the weary old man, leaned over, and said “Sai Ram,” holding the packet in front of him. He looked up at the green organza bag with the picture of Swami showing through, dropped his walking stick, and opened his hands to receive it. A woman nearby gasped when she heard the walking stick drop and bent down quickly to pick it up for him. As she rose, she saw the old *sadhaka* looking at the packet and, not wishing to disturb the special moment, waited respectfully to return it to him. After I placed the packet in the devotee’s cupped hands, he raised it to his forehead, with great reverence and joy beaming on his face! I received a rush of joy from his joy, and we shared a moment of divine love.

The joy of that moment stayed with me as I walked up the road, my heart bursting with love. Swami had shown me what is real, what real service is—divine love shared by two or more hearts.

Only one thing is permanent, and that is divine love. It connects heart to heart and love to love, so we must develop love. —Sri Sathya Sai Baba (Sathya Sai Newsletter USA, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 10)

—Shelley Harrison
Ventura, California

Service to Society

USA Sai Medical Camps, July 1, 2008–June 30, 2009

Summary

Total patients seen:	4,887	Total medical camps:	79
Total bone marrow registrants:	1,474	Total health care professionals:	943
Total regions:	10	Total support staff:	1,777
Total cities:	13		

Medical Services Offered

AIDS awareness
 Children's safety: poison control, bicycle helmet, infant car seat, pediatric health education
 Education on diabetes, hypertension, obesity, exercise, asthma, and smoking cessation
 Referrals to local hospitals and clinics
 Eyeglasses, vision, and glaucoma testing
 Diabetic foot exams
 Dental health
 Skin care
 Auditory tests
 Blood glucose level testing
 Blood pressure measurements
 Bone marrow donor screening
 Cancer screening
 Lipid panel testing
 Osteoporosis screening
 Mammograms
 Pap smears
 Heart and lung exam
 Height/Weight/BMI measurements
 Immunizations
 Laboratory tests
 First Aid/CPR
 Respiratory function tests

Medical Professionals Involved

Cardiologists
 Dentists
 Dermatologists
 Endocrinologists
 ENT specialists
 ER physicians
 Gastroenterologists
 General practitioners
 Internists
 Medical residents
 Medical students
 Neurologists
 Nutritionists
 Obstetricians/Gynecologists
 Ophthalmologists
 Orthopedic surgeons
 Pathologists
 Pediatricians
 Pharmacists
 Physician assistants
 Psychiatrists
 Psychologists
 Radiologists

—From a July 2009 Report of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee

Corona-Norco Medical Camp, March 7, 2009

A Young Adult Perspective

God will not ask you when and where you did service. He will ask: With what motive did you do it? What was the intention that prompted you? You may weigh the service and boast of its quantity, but God seeks quality—the quality of heart, the purity of mind, the holiness of motive.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 15:31, Nov. 19, 1981)

The Young Adults have regularly participated in the annual Corona-Norco Regional Health Screening Camp. Given the current economic situation and high unemployment rates, such health fairs are needed more than ever.

We could spend time explaining the many logistical needs that were met in setting up and carrying out a camp like this, but the real challenge is to describe the subtly transforming experiences that each volunteer has felt.

Here we share the experiences of two young adults. One is a biomedical engineer working for a reputable firm in Orange County, and the other is a freshman at the University of California, Irvine, considering pharmacy school as a possible career option. On one level their experiences may seem simplistic, but these young adults found joy and inspiration in performing simple acts of service that were beyond their training, with love and sincerity.

—Sri Sathya Sai Region 8 Newsletter, Mar. 2009

“I decided to volunteer at the medical camp this year because I wanted a break from the stress of studying and wanted to do something I enjoy, which is volunteering! I worked at the registration desk of the Women’s Care Department. From 7:30 a.m. till 3:00 p.m., another young adult friend and I sat outside, registering patients for Pap smear and mammogram services.

“Between the two of us, we processed paperwork for approximately 150 patients. This was a lot to accomplish, but what touched me the most was a man, waiting

for his wife to finish her exam, telling us how grateful he was for the efforts of all the volunteers.

“I was truly amazed and inspired by the patients, all the doctors who helped each patient, the volunteers who had a blast communicating with each other, and the runners who spent the whole day on their feet without once complaining! I felt honored to be able to contribute to helping others, and I am eagerly waiting for the next medical camp!”

—Anupam Maroly

“This was my third year of volunteering at the Corona-Norco Medical Camp but my first time in the Women’s Care Department. The women’s care area was crisp and ready to take in the teeming ladies who were arriving for Pap smears or mammograms, and we familiarized ourselves with most of the process before they came in. The rest we knew we could learn along the way and improvise if necessary—and we did!

“Lunch time created a bottleneck for the ladies waiting for mammograms, while the technicians and nurses took a break. So, we created a cordoned-off area where patients could change into gowns and finish their physical exams before having mammograms. Additionally, the nurses and doctors conducting the physical exams were kind enough to take their breaks inside the department and eat quickly, so they could get back to business!

“Basically, it worked like a charm, and we were able to get the system going like a well-oiled machine. Yes, we did have a few hurdles. One mammogram tech locked her keys in her car. Our task force leader called AAA auto service, and they took care of the situation. The other mammogram tech had hardly slept the previous night due to insomnia, so we kept her motivated throughout and encouraged her to sprinkle water on her face when needed. Overall, it was an energetic experience, and thanks to the help of the wonderful, bilingual young adults, nurses, doctors, and assistants who helped us, we pulled it off! Go, team pink! Truly, when we work together, miracles happen!”

—Sinthu Kumar

From *Sri Sathya Sai Region 8*

Newsletter, Mar. 2009.

Photography: Victoria Hargreaves



Poems on Light

by SSE Group 2, Mesa, Arizona

*God is light
God holds the key to divinity
Take hold of the plug
Put it in you
When you are plugged in
You will very well find
You are divine
Forever attached to God*

—Sanjay Srinivasan

*Each of us has a light
We all shine so bright
If all of us are together in one
We are as bright as the sun*

—Saager Buch

The Light in My Heart

*Light, light, shining bright
First speck of light I see tonight
I wish I may, I wish I might
Have this light in my heart, shining bright*

*Light, light shining bright
First speck of light I see tonight
When I turn it on, I wish I might
See God in my heart
With the light shining bright*

—Richa Murthy

The Shining Glory of Light

*Light is a golden spark
Divine, elegant, subtle*

*Light, a shining armor
A noble shepherd of nature*

*Light, the messenger of the sun
Loyal supplier of enriching elements
Guardian angel of Life Force
The warmth and love of light reaches all
Sighted or unsighted*

*Light, an effulgent healer
A gigantic torch of the universe*

*Light, a nurturing mother
Teaches modesty and
Selfless, relentless work*

*Let's all show gratitude
To light by meditating on it!*

—Karthik Chandrashaker

Light

*Light is a source of energy.
Light is powerful.
We see light wherever we go.
We can't waste any electricity because light is electricity.
We use light everyday, in endless ways,
Combinations of some types of light.
A rainbow is caused by light from the raindrops,
Separating out the colors in white light so we can see them better.
My name means light.*

—Roshini Darapu

*Light is a circuit of prayers
That solves all our problems.
The only thing is we must do what we say,
For that is what God does, just the same!*

*God holds the power that we see through;
It glows powerfully in our hearts;
It is stars and the sun, which are all one!*

*Light is precious, for it is God.
It is invincible.
We see only from it, for without it
We would need no eyes.
With its gleam, it shines.
Sometimes it turns us blind.*

*Light is golden.
It is around our very own God's head.
It casts us shadows,
For that is all we can see.
It shines much more than we can see;
It is like we are blind because we cannot see everything
But the shadows from the casting sun.*

—Meghana Bandlamuri

*Light shines everywhere.
When light is gone, darkness is there.
In the day, the light shines;
It makes my life like a gold mine.
Fill my life with your light,
So that I can love
With all my might.*

—Aditya Rajasekaren

Light

*You put the power of light in my heart
Light Shine Light Shine Bright
Light Shine Light Shine Bright*

—Lokesh Pandya

*Light shines in your mind,
It glows in your heart;
Light is prayers,
Light is God,
You must keep your word,
For light is life!*

*Light is powerful;
It is a circuit.
Light is not just a lamp;
It can be stars
And also the biggest of them all—the sun!*

*Light is God,
Which is one.
We pray, but do we really mean it?
It goes through one ear and comes out the
other—
We should follow what we say!*

*Light is precious,
It is invincible
Because it is God.
It is gold;
It turns us blind.
Light casts us shadows;
We can't see anything without light!*

—Shreya Bellampalli

*Light is bright
Light is wealth
Light shimmers light
Light sparkles through the dark
Oh! Beams of Light!*

—Tarun Suresh

*Light is bright.
It takes up darkness.
Light is the key to everything.
Light will give everything to you,
If you were light, so bright.*

—Aravind Narasimhan

Sun God Light

9/18/06

*Dazzling glory showering grace
Brilliant beads of sun rays
Rising me up in warm embrace
Setting me down in cool resting place*

*Head of spherical solar family
Dispelling darkness for orbiting bodies
Allowing me to witness boundless beauty
Charging me with radiating life energy*

*Shining example of leadership
Inspiring devotion, discipline, duty
Providing me hope on a cloudy day
Helping me light life's pathway*

*Dancing colors in kaleidoscope shapes
Endless images on which to meditate
Surrounding me with silent protection
...Healing me with gentle reflection...*

Om Sai Ram

—Aru Narla
SSE Group 2 Teacher

Victory of Light: Michael, the Archangel

Michael the Archangel is a heavenly messenger of God. He is said to lead the forces of light. The name Michael means “who is like God.” Michael carries the mighty sword of truth. It cuts away all that is false and dark. The light scatters the darkness. Let us all live in the light, for the light, as the light.

—Illustration by
Ashwini Jambotkar

Sai Spiritual Education Lesson Plan

Victory of Light (Group 1)

VALUE: Truth • **SUBVALUE:** Discrimination, Courage

QUOTE: *We must overpower the inner enemies such as anger and fear, which drag us toward a fall. Then the light of wisdom can shine clear and bright. . . . We light lamps at home to scatter away the darkness. Darkness is the home of evil and wrong actions. Truth will defeat the forces of falsehood.* —Sri Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 6:39, Nov. 11, 1966, paraphrased)

AFFIRMATION/PRAYER/SILENT SITTING: *“I am in the light; the light is in me. The light is me; I am the light.”* (SSS 22:35-1, Oct. 28, 1989). *O Lord, lead us from darkness to light.* Children sit silently 1-2 minutes. Teachers may wish to display a safely lit candle.

SONG SUGGESTIONS: “This Little Light of Mine,” “Bow to the Light Within,” “Hold On to the Light”

STORY: Read and talk about Archangel Michael (p. 41) and the Sai quotes above. You may wish to have the children recite these as a choral reading.

DISCUSSION: Ask: *Who is Archangel Michael?* (God’s messenger; leader of the forces of light); *Where is the light of God?* (around us and in us); *How powerful is the light?* (It can win against all darkness—sadness, anger, etc.); *How can we add to the light?* (Be happy, do what is right, follow Baba’s teachings, obey parents, etc.)

ACTIVITY: Provide crayons or markers and large pieces of drawing paper. Have children fold the paper in half, then have them draw what darkness looks like on one half of the paper and what light looks like on the other half, leaving space for writing under each drawing. Then have children write captions under each picture of what actions would add to the forces of darkness (lying, cheating, stealing, not obeying parents, etc.—the children will have a long list) and what actions would add to the forces of light (being honest, helpful, loving, kind, etc). Carry the discussion further by asking how these actions would make a person feel.

LIFE APPLICATION: Ask children always to practice doing actions that are in the light. They can use the captions under their drawings of light to help them practice during the coming week.

EXTENDING ACTIVITY: Poems of Light Read and discuss the Group 2 “Poems on Light” (pp. 36-40). As a class project, students can write or dictate, then illustrate, their own poems on light. Poems and artwork could be collected and reproduced as a class booklet.

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RECENT ARRIVALS: BOOKS

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vols. 1-39. The collected divine discourses of Sri Sathya Sai Baba are a definitive resource for Swami’s teachings, narratives, and history of his works, as set forth in public discourses from 1954 to 2006. The two most recent additions are Vols. 38-39 (2005, 2006). Order each book individually. The codes are BA001–BA039\$6.00 ea.

Ceiling on Desires (Expanded Edition), by Phyllis Krystal. This greatly expanded statement of the “Ceiling on Desires” program includes the original text at the beginning of Part 1, plus the addition of a chapter on dealing with desires during holidays. Part II gives explicit suggestions for applying the Ceiling on Desires program to negative emotions, exploring in-depth how they relate to desires and the four resources of money, food, time, and energy. Chapters on dealing with anger, jealousy and envy, pride and vanity, fear, control, egoism or selfishness, sloth, and guilt are included, plus helpful and concrete exercises. Part III explores how our use of the five senses relates to the waste or nonwaste of money, food, time, and energy. The savings utilized by the practice of ceiling on desires/nonwaste can be employed in selfless service and the program used as an extension of human values education. Soft cover, 174 pages. BW-031 \$14.00

Love Is My Form: Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, by B.V. Ramana Rao, recounts the author’s initially skeptical journey to Sai Baba—and how he was spiritually transformed through numerous experiences and the witnessing of many miracles in Baba’s divine play. BI-188..... \$3.00

Sai Blossoms, by Professor Anil Kumar Kamaraju, Swami’s translator, is the fourth book in a series of the popular “Sunday talks” given by Prof. Kumar in Prasanthi Nilayam, which expound in-depth on Swami’s sayings and teachings. (The previous three volumes are *Sai Sandesh*, *Sai-Chology*, and *Sai Vedam*.) The author characterizes this volume as a continuation of *Sai Vedam*; it contains 14 lectures and rich question-answer sessions at the ends of some chapters. Various spiritual topics are covered; Professor Kumar imparts

what he has learned as a result of observing, at close range, whenever possible, Bhagavan Baba's actions, interactions, and utterances. BI-181 \$5.00

The Divine Master: My Lord and My Light, by Jenny Socrate, describes the essential stages of finding one's way to spiritual fulfillment. She discusses and demonstrates Swami's teachings through sharing her own learning experiences. BI-193..... \$5.00

Journeys to Love, by Kirsten Pruzan Mikkelsen, is a compilation of experiences from 21 different devotees from Denmark, and how their lives have been transformed after meeting Sri Sathya Sai Baba. In soft cover, 360 pages. BI-325 \$6.00

Vedas: In Search of Truth, by Girish M. Kamra, offers a unique perspective on using logic, reason, and rationale—basic scientific fundamentals—to explore the existence of the Creator and his divine glory. Using quotes from Swami and scientific data, the author leads the reader on an intellectual journey to discover the misconceptions of the Big Bang theory and the relevance of cosmic creation. BI-192..... \$6.00

Sri Sathya Sai Baba: A Yugavatar, by Dr. K. Hanumanthappa, a distinguished educator and scholar, touches upon the unique features of the Sai system of education, his personal experiences in the divine presence, and a special vision Swami gifted him of the Bhagavad Gita. The author also discusses Swami's message of love and the unity of religions. BI-235 \$5.00

CDs

Kaliyuga Ke Avathar Sai Bhajans Beautiful bhajans on Lord Sai performed by Srinivas Raghavan. SCE-194... \$10.00

Remind Me My Lord Sai devotional songs in English, performed by Srinivas Raghavan. SCE-195... \$10.00

Festival Dates in Prasanthi Nilayam and Elsewhere

Nov. 7-8, Sat.-Sun. – Akhanda Bhajan
Nov. 19, Thursday– Ladies' Day
Nov. 22, Sunday – Sri Sathya Sai University Convocation
Nov. 23, Monday – 84th Birthday of Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Nov. 26, Thursday - Thanksgiving (USA)
Dec. 11 (Fri.)-19 (Sat.) – Hanukkah
Dec. 25, Friday – Christmas