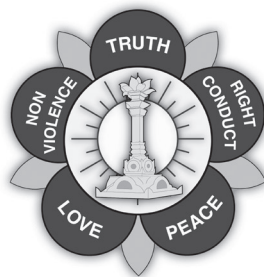


Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

Dedicated with Love and Devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Trust in God

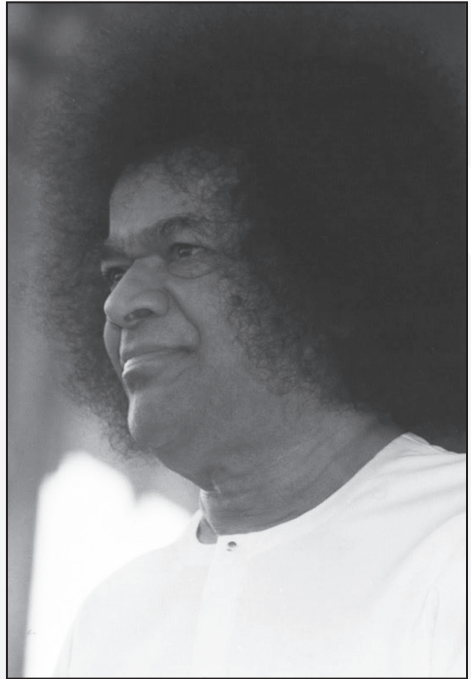
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SAI'S MESSAGE

Trust in the Will of God

“Where there is a will there is a way” is absolutely true. At first, the will is your own. It has to be strengthened by the assent of God, but until you convert it into the Almighty Will of God, you seem to be playing a particular game that you do not desire to give up. You can always change the game, if you so wish. You are not weak and helpless. All strength and power is within you. God-vision is yours the instant you will it with concentration. But you simply don’t choose to do so.

Sai is not mocking; he is perfectly earnest. He is giving expression to the truths garnered from the depths of experience. “Trust in and submission to the Supreme Will in all circumstances” means “the vision of truth” or “realization of the Eternal Principle of all creation.” “If God wills” means “if you assert your own all-powerful Will.” The real solution, therefore, is to awaken the inherent power and splendor of your soul. Do it! You are verily the Immortal Truth, the great Changeless Reality. May victory ever be yours.



—With blessings, Baba
Prema Dhara 1:10

Zone 1 “Sai Ideal” Conference

Orlando, Florida, April 17-18, 2010

About 600 devotees from the USA, Canada, and the West Indies met on April 17-18, 2010, at the Radisson Hotel in Orlando, Florida, for the U.S. Sai Organization’s conference on the Sai Ideal. This was one of ten zonal conferences being held throughout the world in preparation for the World Conference to be held next November at Prasanthi Nilayam during the festivities celebrating the 85th Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The conference and all the Sai Ideal conferences are momentous occasions: for the first time, we are focusing attention as an organization on what Swami has said he has come to give us—Self-realization.

As Michael Goldstein, Chair of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, said, the agenda of the conference was to study what Swami has communicated to us regarding the spiritual nature and purpose of our human lives. The Lord has said that we are divinity encased in human form. We must understand what this means and how to conduct our human lives, as “Sai Ideal” humans. Then all else will fall into place, all else will be as it should be.

The theme of the conference was the Sai Ideal, as embodied in three aphorisms—“God Is,” “I Am I,” and “Love All, Serve All.” Prior to the conference, devotees read nine of Swami’s discourses with these themes and looked at a compendium of related quotes by Swami.

The goals of the conference were to:

1. Deepen our understanding of the Sai Ideal, be transformed by it, and realize the Sai Ideal within ourselves;
2. Study what it means to be a “Sai Ideal Spiritual Organization,” including the application of principles, authenticity, accountability, and the practice of what we preach;
3. Prepare for the upcoming two USA pilgrimages and the Sri Sathya Sai World Conference IX, whether or not we participate in a pilgrimage or attend the conference; and
4. Intensify our own spiritual practices.

The program started Saturday morning with devotions—lighting of candles on the simple but beautiful altar with Swami’s picture, a chair for Swami, and an abundance of flowers, followed by a prayer and a few devotional songs. This set the stage for what many felt was the best conference they had ever attended. The energy in the room was palpable—the love, the happiness of being together in Swami’s presence discussing his most important teachings, were felt by all.

David Gries, chair of Zone 1, welcomed the devotees. He conveyed the news that Narendra Reddy, member of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, had been with Swami in Delhi and had received Swami’s blessings for the conference and the two

U.S. pilgrimages to Prasanthi Nilayam this summer. Narendra had been scheduled to fly from Delhi to the conference, but ash from the Icelandic volcano kept him in Frankfurt, Germany. We missed his presence and his planned talk.

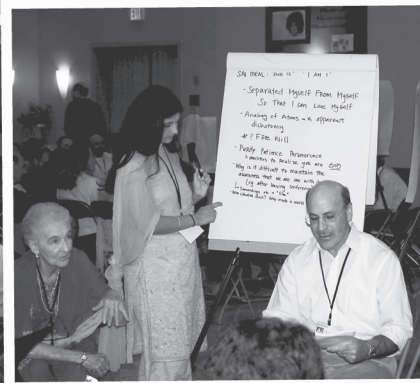
Gries went on to explain that in the first four recorded discourses of the 1950s, Swami told us about his avatarhood and what he has come to give us. Moreover, he has repeated what he has come to give us in almost every one of his 1,500-odd discourses. Why has it taken us over 50 years to focus on this issue?

Bill Harvey, member of the Prasanthi Council, with his usual calmness and equanimity, talked about the benefits of the Sai Organization—the only organization to which the Lord of the Universe has lent his name. He discussed the mind as the object that keeps us from the bliss that is our birthright. Just as light naturally sweeps away darkness, we should sweep away negative thoughts with positive ones. He ended with

some ABC's (such as Always Be Cheerful) and a new DEFG: Don't Ever Forget God.

Michael Goldstein spoke at length on Oneness. He related several personal experiences of Swami's omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. Speaking with humor one moment and with intensity about our spiritual search the next, he inspired laughter and tears in all and energized the audience to focus on our spiritual transformation, to become Sai Ideal humans.

The heart of the conference consisted of two study circle topics, which were discussed by 20 circles of 25-30 people. On Saturday, the topic focus was "Sai Ideal Human Life," and on Sunday, "Sai Ideal Spiritual Organization." Study circle presenters posed prepared questions to start the conversation flowing, and everyone was invited to contribute (using the study circle format). Indeed, many thoughtful ideas came out of these study circles. Participants commented that they had never experienced such fruitful study circles.



After each study circle, the conference convened in plenary session, and study circle presenters took 2-3 minutes each to give the highlights of their study circle. This was followed by summaries and expositions on the study circle topics by Phil Gosselin, USA Central Coordinator, and Jon Roof, President of the USA Central Council.

Recorders for the study circles kept good records of the proceedings, and we are processing their notes to determine whether to prepare a pamphlet on the outcomes of these study circles, so that those who were not there could benefit as well.

Saturday evening, everyone was treated to a presentation by Dr. Hari Conjeevaram on the Haiti disaster relief being conducted by the Sai Organization. Then, the first of the two USA pilgrimage groups going to Prasanthi Nilayam this summer conducted unison singing, and the choir for the second group sang a few of their songs. What a beautiful evening program!

The conference ended with a question-and-answer period conducted by Michael

Goldstein. In his inimitable style, Dr. Goldstein answered some deep questions and spoke more about the Sai Organization. The appreciation and inspiration he evoked met with a standing ovation and a joyful and productive conclusion to the first Zone 1 conference.

This conference exceeded everyone's expectations. Some e-mails to us after the conference remarked that it was just like being in Prasanthi Nilayam, so full of love and joy. Others said they had never experienced such inspiring study circles and speeches. Others praised the smoothly functioning organization.

What made the conference function so smoothly and successfully? Credit for this goes to the almost 100 volunteers who maintained the conference website, took care of registration, prepared the handouts, handled travel arrangements (all devotees who requested it were met at the airport and transported to the hotel!), prepared and served food, arranged the meeting hall, organized and led the study circles, liaised

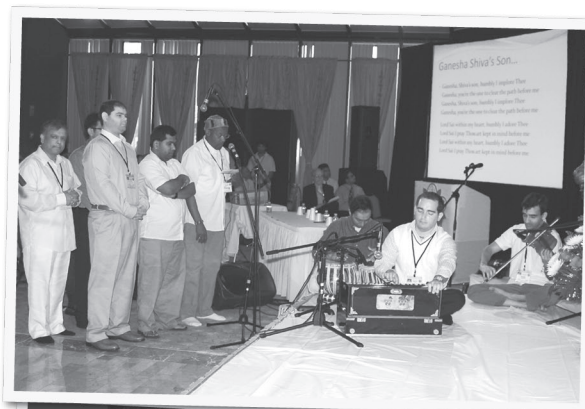


with the hotel—and more. Many worked behind the scenes, doing selfless service, just happy to be involved and useful. To all of these Sai Ideal volunteers, a warm and loving thank you! Vijay Sagramsingh, who organized all these volunteers and was in charge of local arrangements, deserves special mention.

Finally, we thank Swami for providing us with this opportunity to meet, and for giving us the awareness of His Presence. That Presence, that Love, is what made this conference so precious to all.

—Zone 1 “Sai Ideal” Conference Committee

Bettina Biggart, Member at Large
 Sathyam Choudhuri, Devotion Program
 Mike Congleton, Handouts
 Bea Flaig, Co-Chair
 Piyush Ghayal, Website
 Phil Gosselin, Study Circles
 David Gries, Co-Chair
 Jon Roof, Study Circles
 Vijay Sagramsingh, Local Arrangements
 Tom Scovill, Evening Events



Airport Encounter

“Trust”—What Does That Mean?

It seems airport encounters are one of the preferred methods of operation in the unknowable antics of Sathya Sai Baba! Accounts of his “disguises” and timely messages seem to be regularly reported.

My first audible message from Baba came when my mother, Barbara Rousseau, embarked on her first journey to see him at Brindavan, the smaller ashram near Bangalore, India, in the spring of 2000, following Baba’s healing of her cancer at a distance. Actually she dates her communication with Sai Baba since age five, when she received a telepathic message about the option of not “coming back,” which brought her Catholic parents some dismay when she relayed this message to them!

Before taking Mom to the airport for check-in, we stayed the night at a motel. She fell asleep, while I stayed up worrying about her safety as I watched a news report about increased violence that had broken out on the India/Pakistan border. Terrified that my mother’s plane might get hijacked, I asked Baba nervously, “Will my mom be okay?”

Immediately, I received a telepathic answer, “I’m taking care!” This instant response eased my mind enough for me to get to sleep.

Yet, early the next morning, while Mom still slept, I awoke only vaguely remembering the exchange I had had with Baba. Had I been dreaming? Was it wishful thinking? While brushing my teeth, I decided to confirm what I thought I’d heard. “Baba, I’m sorry,” I expressed mentally. “My faith isn’t very strong. I’m just double-checking. Will you please make sure Mom will be okay?”

Again, immediately and to my surprise, he answered, “Don’t worry. I’m taking care! I’m taking care!”

I was astonished that communication with him could be so immediate and easy! I was so stunned, I didn’t tell Mom—not during breakfast, not while driving to the airport, or even while escorting her to the departure gate (this took place before so much security as these days, and I was able to accompany her). When we sat to wait, I finally did tell her about Baba’s “double reassurance.” She, too, was amazed at how instantly he had connected with me, and she felt encouraged by his assurance of vigilant guidance and protection!

In the subsequent years, I’ve received Baba’s calling cards via the aroma of fresh roses where there were none in proximity—several times in the snowy-dead of winter!

I've also experienced, in public places, the scent of his *vibhuti* (holy ash), which smells similar to Nag Champa incense.

Several times, during my often stressful work—counseling emotionally-troubled youth—I would ask Baba before going to sleep to help me with particularly difficult cases. More than once I would see him in my dreams—when he would not necessarily speak to me, yet I would feel comforted. Invariably, the next day, my cases would go extremely well, and I often experienced much-needed “breakthrough” sessions with troubled kids.

Recently, the pressure of completing a psychology doctoral degree while working was wearing me down mentally, physically, and emotionally. I felt “on the edge” and doubted my own capacity to handle the intense workload I had gotten myself into. I wondered if I were on the right path.

After a particularly difficult week and feeling immersed in this mental quandary, I was on a regional flight commute to San Francisco. I was guided to sit in a seat I hadn't chosen initially. As a result of sitting where I did, I experienced an amazing “synchronistic” visit with my seat-mate on the plane. As we chatted, she revealed that she often traveled to Southern India to help others. I shared with her that my mother often goes to Southern India to see her guru. At the same moment, we said harmoniously, “Sathya Sai Baba!” and laughed. Her story of healing and transformation was very similar to that of my mother's. We enjoyed our spiritual com-

monality a great deal and parted ways after exchanging contact information.

After arriving in the San Francisco airport, I sat for a moment, still feeling doubtful and overwhelmed about whether my life was going in the right direction. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, an odd-looking young man with frizzy red hair tied up in two little ponytails said, “Excuse me.” Although his hair was very bizarre, he was dressed as a typical youth—blue jeans, nondescript shirt—and he carried no luggage. Thinking I might be in his way, I stepped aside. Then I realized he wanted to talk to me.

He pointed to the canvas bag in which I carry my laptop computer. As a psychology student-practitioner, I had received this bag as a promotional gift from our student liability insurance company. The young man pointed to the logo on the side of the bag, which is stylistically integrated with the company name, “The Trust.” He asked, “What does that mean?”

I wasn't exactly sure what he meant, so I commented, “That's the insurance company logo for our psychology program.”

He then repeated, “But what does *that* mean?” He pointed to the word, *TRUST*.

I patiently explained, “We are insured with that company. It's not life or health insurance; it's liability insurance for working with clients.”

He looked me directly in the eye, and I wondered uncomfortably, “What is wrong with this guy? Why doesn't he just leave me alone?”

A third time, he asked, “What does this mean?” and pointed once again to the word, *TRUST*.

He then repeated the word, *TRUST*, several times. Feeling flustered and confused, I just stared at him, at a loss for what to do. How could I deal with this guy? Obviously, we were missing a connect somewhere!

Just then, the shuttle pulled up, and I got up to leave as he walked away. Once settled in my seat, I reflected on the odd encounter, and suddenly it hit me like a bolt of lightning! Had it been Baba? I recalled that just prior to the encounter, I was feeling deep anxiety about my future.

TRUST, TRUST, TRUST—three times! I was not living in the moment, the key to heaven and to oneness. Pondering about the

young man and his strange appearance, I remembered that others have had just as odd connections that proved to be propitious.

What this airport encounter confirmed in me is the mandate to have faith and surrender, no matter what situations life presents. I often become very focused on the external world, but it is realizations such as these that help shift my perspective toward what is really important.

—**Bria Milicevic**
San Francisco, California



Bria Milicevic and her reminder to “Trust” – the key to heaven and to oneness.

You are journeying along the road of ups and downs (samsara, illusory worldly life) in this car [called the body]. Recognize that God is the person at the wheel. He will take you happily to the destination. Have faith in him and be free from fear, anxiety, and agitation. Surrender to him. His grace can save you, his wisdom enlighten you. His power can overcome all your obstacles. Faith and surrender are manifestations of bhakthi (devotion). They can ensure peace and joy for you and all mankind.

—**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**
SSS 15:24, Oct. 3, 1981, "Faith in the Goal"



TRUST IN GOD

BELIEVE IN THE OMNIPRESENT, OMNIPOTENT, OMNISCIENT DIVINITY

SANDALWOOD gives more and more fragrance when subjected to more and more grinding; so does sugarcane yield juice as it is chewed more and more. Gold gets refined when it is heated and melted in fire. So also a true devotee never falters in his love for God, even when facing troubles and obstacles. God tests his devotees only to lift them up to a higher level in the spiritual ladder. A true devotee leads a sacred life that is sanctified when he faces the obstacles and problems with full faith in the Divine. The body is only for leading a sacred life. ...

Absence of Self-confidence is the cause of all miseries and troubles man encounters in the world. One should have confidence in his inner Self, the *Atma*. If one has this Self-confidence, he will have self-satisfaction, which will lead to self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice leads to liberation, or Self-realization. Everything is based on “Self,” and everyone is an embodiment of the Self. The body is just an instrument.

This tumbler here has water in it. Without the tumbler, water cannot be held; the tumbler is the container for the water, which is necessary to quench one’s thirst. So

also the body is the vessel to hold the water of divinity. To drink the water is *sadhana* (your spiritual efforts and discipline). Your thirst for realizing divinity is quenched by *sadhana*. ...

One should not become discouraged... . One cannot always have pleasure. Pleasure is an interval between two periods of pain—they are like sunshine and shadow. You should make efforts to look upon both with equanimity. Man wants to get all that he desires and gets disillusioned and disappointed. 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.

God is omnipresent. He has hands, legs, mouths, faces, everywhere and pervades the entire universe, so what is the need to search for him? Such searching may be called folly. All forms of God are in you, and any time is auspicious for realizing this. There is no need to wait for a new year, a new religion, a new culture, or a new philosophy; what is needed is only a pure heart. You should not give room for impurity or pollution in the heart.

You can make your life sacred by following the golden rule: “Help ever; hurt never.”

Speak softly, sweetly, and truthfully. The body has two eyes to see different things, two ears to hear good or bad, two hands to do good or bad—but there is only one tongue, to speak only the truth. Real bliss consists in sanctifying the senses. The ornament for the hand is charity; that for the tongue is truth, and that for the ears is listening to divine, scriptural talks. What other ornament is needed, other than these! Bliss is beauty; it is the nectar of life. You should enjoy the sweetness of bliss.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Spend your life cherishing sacred thoughts, listening to good things, speaking good words, and doing good deeds. If you all adopt this path, happiness and prosperity will reign in the world. No government, politician, or anyone in the world can protect you from troubles and disasters. There is only one who can protect you, and that is the Supreme Lord. To seek his protection, you must pray wholeheartedly, “May everyone in all the world be happy.” (*Loka samasta sukhino bhavantu**).

—SSS 26:14, Apr. 14 1993
“Trust in God, the Sole Protector”

Develop Faith in God More and More

First and foremost, you must have Self-confidence. Today people suffer because of lack of Self-confidence. If you have total

*Revised by Bhagavan in recent times as, *Samastha loka sukhino bhavantu*, connoting, “May all beings everywhere be happy.”

faith in God, you will be able to overcome all difficulties. A few difficulties may arise along your way, but do not be unduly perturbed. Face all hardships with courage and conviction. Only then will you will attain true happiness. Never blame God for your difficulties. You are bound to face the consequences of your actions, whether good or bad. But if you have God’s grace, even bad will be turned into good. So, develop faith in God more and more.

You trust your friend whom you have met only a few years ago, but not God who is with you, in you, and around you throughout your life. You believe in the *dhobi* (laundry person) and part with your valuable clothes. You are prepared to bow your head in front of the barber. You are prepared to put your life in the hands of a driver.

But you do not believe in the omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient Divinity. ...

Self-confidence cannot be purchased or obtained through learning; it is based on deservedness. Develop divine thoughts to attain deservedness. ... Follow the divine path. If you have faith in God, he will protect you in the face of all adversities. He is always with you, in you, above you, beside you, and around you.

—SSS 32-1:2 Feb. 14, 1999
“Cultivate Love in Your Heart”

Follow the divine path. If you have faith in God, he will protect you in the face of all adversities. He is always with you, in you, above you, beside you, and around you.

Devotion to God Protects You

Though air is invisible and intangible, it is everywhere. Similarly, divinity is invisible and intangible, yet omnipresent. Without realizing the divinity within, man becomes egotistic and feels that all his accomplishments are due to his education, intelligence, and physical prowess. But in reality, it is

divinity that protects and safeguards man at every step, from womb to tomb. No one has the power to protect his own self. Only the Divine Power and the Divine Will enable man to protect himself, and only Divinity has free will, none else.

Whatever God says or does is for the welfare of humanity. God is selfless. There is no trace of selfishness in God. Does the sun gain any benefit by rising and setting? None at all. Sunrise

and sunset are for the benefit of mankind, enabling humans to discharge their duties during the day and rest during the night. Similarly, every act of God is for the benefit of humanity, not for God's benefit. ...

Sai confers on you devotion, power, and ultimately, liberation. Never get misguided by the words of others. Keep this in mind and redeem yourselves. ... Follow Swami's commands; earn good marks and a good name; set an ideal to the rest of the world. That is what I want. ...

How can you understand divinity when you are unable to understand the importance of human values? First, practice human values, then divinity manifests itself.

Today we find restlessness, anxiety, and worry prevalent everywhere. Spirituality is the only solution to all these ills of society. Due to lack of spirituality, man falls victim to depression and disease, which are products of the mind, not the body. Lack of peace of mind results in depression; this in turn leads to disease. Develop physical strength, have faith in God, experience bliss, and share it with your fellow beings. Whatever may happen, never give up spirituality.

Only devotion to God protects [you], nothing else. Distance yourself from animal qualities; develop human qualities and be one with the Divine. How can you understand divinity when you are unable to understand the importance of human values? First, practice human values, then divinity manifests itself. Take to the path of spirituality and go to the four [directions] propagating spiritual ideals and striving for the welfare of the world at large. Be always happy.

—SSS 32-1:1 Jan. 14, 1999

“Divinity Protects and Safeguards Man”

Performing Your Duty Is Union with God

Bliss is with you. Bliss is in you. It is behind you, above you, below you, and all around you. When you are immersed in bliss, what is it that you need to search for? The way to experience this bliss is: bend the body, mend the senses, end the mind. This is true culture. Have faith in this culture, lead a pure and meaningful life, and attain the goal of human life.

Perform your duty. “Performing your duty properly is indeed *yoga* (union with God).” (SANSKRIT VERSE: *Karthavyam yoga-*

muchyate). Duty is God. Today, you have forgotten yoga and are running after *udyoga* (job). In the job you may get promotion, but you have to face retirement, too. There is no retirement in yoga, which is *nithya* and *sathya* (eternal and true). “Perfection in action is true yoga” (SANSKRIT VERSE: *Yoga karmasu kausalam*). Discharging one’s duty efficiently and with love is yoga. Duty is God.

Divinity permeates everything in this universe. God has ingrained mystery and beauty in nature. Everyone must try to discover the divine mystery in nature. Nature is invested with divine beauty. No man can create this wonderful beauty. At sunrise, everything looks golden.

God’s creation is described in various ways. If God’s creation is so beautiful, how much more beautiful must God be? Before trying to visualize the beauty of the Creator, discover and appreciate the beauty of nature.

As long as you are in this world, carry out your duties diligently. While discharging your duties, spend time in thoughts of divinity. Today, many waste time. Time is the very form of God. The Vedas proclaim, “*Samvatsaraya Namaha* (Salutations to God in the form of time).” In fact, *Samvatsara* (which also means *year*) is God’s name. People even say *Nutana Samvatsara* (“New Year”), but God is ever new. The ever-new, ever-efulgent God takes the form of man and is called an *avatar* (embodiment of divinity). Actually, every new human birth is an avatar, as God resides in each heart as the Atma.

Realize the Eternal Bliss inside You

There is no living body without Atma, and it is not possible to realize the Atma without the body. The body and soul are related. They are interdependent. The body should be maintained strong and healthy to experience divine bliss. Do not waste all your time in eating, sleeping, and sensual pleasures. Perform your worldly duties at their proper time, and set apart time to offer yourself to God.

Perform all your actions in the service of God. “All actions should be done to please God (SANSKRIT VERSE: *Sarva karma Bhagavadprithartham*).” Do not have any worldly preferences. Actions performed for personal satisfaction are attributable to the worldly path (*pravritti marga*); those performed to please God relate to the inward path (*nivritti marga*). Do not wait till you are unable to move, your vision fails, folds and wrinkles appear on your face, and your hair turns gray. Why not think of God from the very beginning? “Start early; drive slowly; arrive safely”: this should be the guiding principle for one’s life’s journey as well.

Think of God early in life. Be not proud, O man, of your beautiful body, youth, and power. Do not forget the fact that very

Bliss is with you. Bliss is in you. It is behind you, above you, below you, and all around you. When you are immersed in bliss, what is it that you need to search for?

soon you will have to face the misery of old age. Your body is nothing but a mere puppet, a doll of skin. Understand the truth of this “puppet dance.” (TELUGU POEM)

Bliss is inside you. Make it come out. This is real sadhana. Do not bother about worldly problems. They are passing clouds.

This [world] is not life. Make proper use of the body and experience ultimate reality. Within this body of clay (*mrin-maya*) is awareness of the Atma (*chinmaya*), which imparts value to the body.

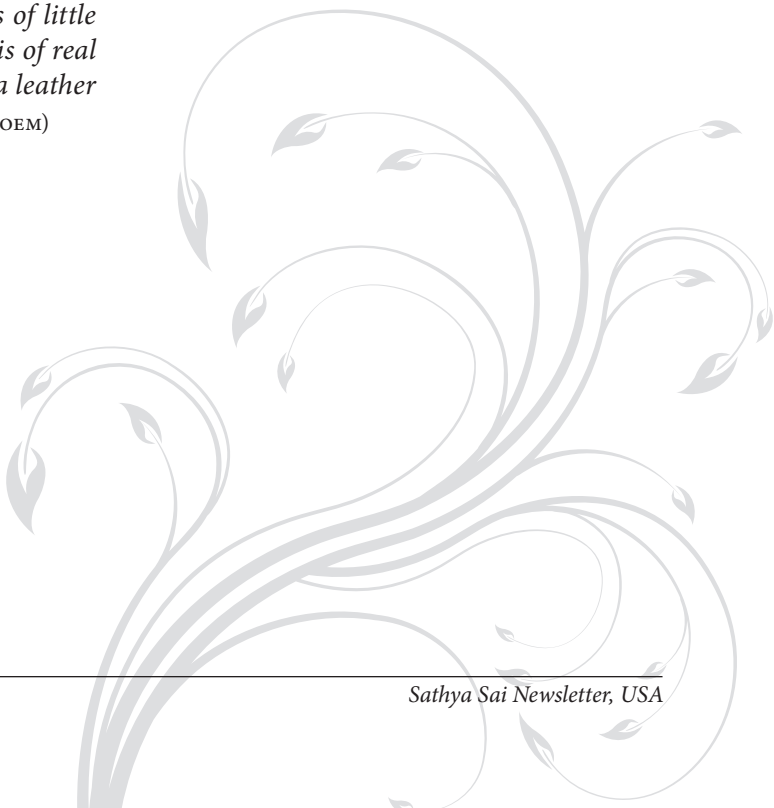
The body is a box of rusty tin. Inside the box are priceless gems—diamonds ... emeralds ... sapphires. The box is worthless, but the gems

are highly valuable. The body is of little worth, but the indwelling Lord is of real worth. The body is a mud doll, a leather puppet, a delusive toy. (TELUGU POEM)

But nectarean, nondual, eternal bliss is inside you. Despite having this treasure inside you, you search around and undertake pilgrimages. No need. Bliss is inside you. Make it come out. This is real sadhana. Do not bother about worldly problems. They are passing clouds. There is only one permanent truth—the principle of the Atma. The body is temporary, but what is inside is the permanent, eternal principle of the indwelling Divinity.

—SSS 32-1:12, Apr. 27, 1999
“Dwell in God-Consciousness”

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Love My Uncertainty

The Road to Undoing Insecurity and Realizing True Security

It is my perception—drawn from listening to many individuals relate their personal histories—that insecurity is the most common underlying cause for the majority of the problems from which we suffer. So we need to find a remedy for this condition if we hope to be able to make practical spirituality our way of life.

Such widespread insecurity is understandable when we consider the manifold symbols of hoped-for security that people strive to attain—none of which are lasting or can guarantee permanent security. The more people strive to attain some measure of the security they crave, the further it recedes, like a will-o'-the-wisp, forever beyond their reach.

Different individuals express insecurity in various ways, according to their supposed needs. Some people think they will feel secure if they find the perfect partner, while others concentrate on securing a safe occupation, or a certain amount of money. Still others believe they can achieve their goal by attaining a degree from an accepted college, or through promotions to important and influential positions at work or in the community. So many people are desperately trying to find that magical and mystical state in which they will feel safe and secure.

One's heritage, education, and the opinions and values current in the world all point to specific panaceas for this chronic disease of insecurity. We are persuaded by the media that if we buy a particular product or attain a specific goal, we will feel satisfied and fulfilled. But the reverse is the inevitable result, and we are forced to look further and more feverishly for the illusive state of security.

As this situation persists, more and more people exhibit signs of insecurity in their behavior, both consciously and unconsciously. This results from a desire to convince others, but primarily themselves, of their own value, ability, prowess, knowledge, importance, attractiveness, or any other proof of their superiority that they can accept as convincing. Often this attitude smacks of "protesting too much"; assuming a role of appearing utterly secure and sure of themselves, their attitude is actually but a mask concealing their self-doubt.

Some people resort to the cruel habit of criticizing others, not only to boost their own importance, skill, brilliance, or other attribute in the eyes of others, but also to reassure themselves of their own superiority.

Other people openly reveal their lack of confidence and self-esteem in bids for reassurance from others that they are worthy of approval, since they themselves have no confidence in their own value. Still others consort with people whom they consider to be important in some way, erroneously believing that this “importance” will reflect onto them, but this establishes only a temporary, borrowed sense of security. Such are the hangers-on who gather around famous people, hoping to ride to fame or fortune on another’s coattails. These are just a few of the many ways people fool themselves in efforts to overcome the gnawing feeling caused by insecurity.

What Is Security?

But what actually is security? Is it so important or worth all the effort expended to attain it? And why does worldly security always seem beyond our reach, despite every effort to achieve it? The answer lies in yet another question that Sri Sathya Sai Baba repeatedly urges us to ask ourselves: **“Who am I?”**

He supplies the answer in many different ways, usually by showing us what we are *not*. When we have discarded at last all the things we are not, we can be free to discover who we *are*, for Baba assures us that we are all God. But this assertion is difficult for most people to believe, since they are accustomed to identifying themselves with their physical-body-mind-personality-ego complex, forgetting that this is merely an illusory container for the real Self.

Insecurity is completely unnecessary; in fact, it is a futile waste of time and energy, simply because people have sought their security in the wrong direction—in the outer world instead of within themselves. If we expect security to be granted to us by attachment to anyone or anything outside ourselves, we are doomed to disappointment. Security can be found only when we identify ourselves with who we really are: the unseen Spark within the outer observable sheath in which we exist in the world, which is of equal value to the Spark in everyone else. So, where is the need for insecurity, if we are all equal in value? And why do we try to be “better” than anyone else?

Our heritage and early conditioning are the cause of our mistaken identity and the resulting insecurity that it causes. We have been taught in each recurring birth into this world to identify ourselves with our physical bodies and its attendant thoughts, feelings, speech, acts, desires, and senses. We have all been taught untruths about our true identity, from the very beginning of our many sojourns on earth, resulting in the haunting sense of insecurity that we have suffered continuously.

In each successive life we have continued to seek security, only to be left even more insecure by having failed to find it. Many people have been driven to depression, insanity, and even suicide by the failure of their search. And in each new age, the situation has worsened, as this pattern has become more deeply etched on the human psyche. The resulting dejection leads to even

more control by the “monkey mind” in its search for security.

Relying on the Inner Reality

Now the time is approaching for a new and very different way of life to be ushered in, heralded in large part by Baba’s life and ministry. In the coming New Age, we shall all be taught who we really are, and our erstwhile hidden identity will be revealed to everyone, so we can learn to feel secure in the knowledge that we are all equal in our God-selves—none better or worse, wiser or more stupid, stronger or weaker, richer or poorer—but all one, and of equal value, with a common source. But in order to move freely into this new and very different way of life, relying more and more on our inner Reality to direct us, we will need to detach ourselves from all the old, false, and disappointing pseudo-security symbols, and replace them with the only security that is permanent—identification with our real Self, which is perfect and therefore completely trustworthy.

Some of us will undoubtedly be pioneers and make the first leap in faith from the “known” to the “as-yet-unknown,” where none of the old rules and codes of behavior will be of any use and where there will be no certainty of what will happen at any given moment. None of “our own” plans will be valued, only those that are initiated and then directed by the Source of Wisdom within each one of us. This will mean giving up the familiar, and we all dislike having to face the unfamiliar. Many people even prefer a painful but familiar situation to an unknown

future where there are no familiar ground rules to follow, but only the direction of the High Self to guide us one minute at a time. Yet this is the place where Baba is seeking to lead us, and it is the main reason he says he has assumed human form at this time. So he urges us to “love my uncertainty,” which is the cure for the insecurity we have all suffered so long.*

An Exercise: Surrender, Trust, and Accept

One of the best and easiest ways to free ourselves from our mind’s tight grip on our many and varied false security symbols or attachments is to take time to sit quietly and ask Baba for help.

Baba himself suggests that we first concentrate on his form and repeat his name, or that of our chosen form of divinity, so that we feel we are actually in his presence. Then, quite simply, talk to him as if you were with him. Tell him your desires, addictions, weaknesses, insecurities, and ask him to help you to overcome them, so that you will be able to “love his uncertainty” and learn to develop true Self-confidence.

And excellent aid is to say, **“I surrender myself and my whole life, with all my desires and fears, into your safekeeping. I trust you to give me only what you know I need for my spiritual growth, and I accept whatever that may be.”**

To **surrender, trust, and accept** helps us to take that essential step of letting go of our ego’s control and asking Him to live

*Krystal, Phyllis, *Taming Our Monkey Mind* (York, Maine: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1994), pp. 143-146.

through us.* Baba tells us that all work should be accompanied with an attitude of worship. All our activities, even the smallest detail of the most seemingly insignificant or menial tasks, should be divinely inspired and offered as worship. But it can be divine only if we relax and let Baba—or our own God-Self—act through us. Then he can use his divine energy to accomplish so much more than we can do with our limited, ego-involved selves, and without the frequent tension or exhaustion.

To do so calls for **surrender, trust, and acceptance**. If we can **surrender** to his will and direction, **trust** him with every aspect of our lives, and **accept**—instead of resisting whatever happens—we will be free to flow with him in a lighthearted daily dance,

instead of being depressed by worry and sorrow, fear, guilt, insecurity, and all the other negative emotions or attitudes that plague us and rob us of our sense of well-being. When these no longer control our lives, their place will be filled by positive and beneficial attitudes and emotions, such as love, compassion, kindness, generosity—and true security.**

—Phyllis Krystal

Zurich, Switzerland

Excerpted and adapted from *Taming Our Monkey Mind* (2004) and *Ceiling on Desires, Expanded Edition* (2009).

*Krystal, Phyllis, *Ceiling on Desires, Expanded Edition*, (Edmond, Oklahoma: Legendary Press, 2009), p. 17.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

You have taken several births but are yet to realize God. Merely repeating [the names of God] is of no use. You must have full faith in God. Only then can you attain salvation. You should consider faith (viswasa) as your life-breath (swasa). Without life-breath, you cannot live.

Where there is breath, there is life.

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 God.

Where there is God, there is bliss.

Human life should begin with faith and end in bliss. When you have no faith, how can you attain happiness? Increase your faith in God and attain peace. Through truth, experience God. God is bliss. The experience of divinity is true bliss.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

SSS 32-1:12, Apr. 27, 1999, “Dwell in God-Consciousness”

Seeking Sai at Home

No Need to Seek Anywhere Else

After trips to see Swami (Sri Sathya Sai Baba) and years of living in Europe, I returned to the U.S. and married. In the Swiss Alps I had spent long periods in solitude, silence, and fasting, believing that extreme asceticism was the way to get “home” to Baba in my heart and to merge.

I believed that the extreme methods of goal-pursuit I had used in business could also be employed in spiritual life to accomplish oneness and mark it off my list of things to do. But, as usual, God had other plans.

An American I knew from high school and to whom I hadn’t spoken in 25 years called me; within a short time we married, and I moved back to the U.S. The culture shock after nearly ten years away from the country and adjustments to marriage after years of celibacy sent me spiraling. What was the point of all of the hard spiritual effort, I asked Baba. Why send me back to this worldly life when I had found peace and contentment on the mountain peaks, away from people and the world’s madness? I was mad, angry at Swami for having brought me back.

Several years earlier I had surrendered to Divine Will, or so I thought, but in reality I’d done it with a stock-exchange mentality:

“I’ll surrender, if I get enlightenment—my way, and in my timing.” But complete surrender meant accepting and following my conscience, even if it took me away from the beautiful Swiss Alps.

Back in the U.S., my faith wavered. What am I doing here? I wondered. I felt daunted and angry at Baba for pulling me away from the serenity I’d found literally three thousand feet above most of the populated world, and for plunging me back into the heart of what most people live and struggle with everyday. I felt that the city reserved no “space” for what I thought of as spiritual. My heart cried out to know why I had to come back here.

A dream came to me that shifted my perspective in the way that only Baba can do: *I walk through the streets of Charlotte wearing a white punjabi like the one I wear at Prasanthi Nilayam. People all around also walk these streets. They’re filled with light, and everything is aglow with the vibrant energy of love. I realize that this is the ashram. There’s no need to seek anywhere else. This is Prasanthi Nilayam, the Abode of Infinite Peace. It’s right here in front of me, inside me, and all around. Home is right here.*

The actions and practices that Baba teaches take root *here*—in daily routines,

conversations, and work life. He tells us not to retreat like hermits but to do our work in the world, and this sometimes feels like the hardest stage of spiritual practice.

There's a lovely story of a man who asks his guru for enlightenment, and the guru sends him off to meditate for three months. When the seeker returns and goes for his ritual bath, the guru asks a sweeper woman to prepare a pail of trash to dump on the freshly-washed devotee. The devotee returns, the woman dumps the debris, and the devotee explodes in a rage. His peace is not anchored. The guru sends him off for more years of practice.

Here in the bustle of life, the practice is in living and using the tools Sai has given us. Alone on the mountain we can learn the practices, but until they're tried and tested, we don't know if they are steadfast.

Living consciously in the world is living love. It's easy to be at peace when no one is around to make me feel irritated or angry. It's easy to resist desires to over-consume when there are no ads or stores nearby.

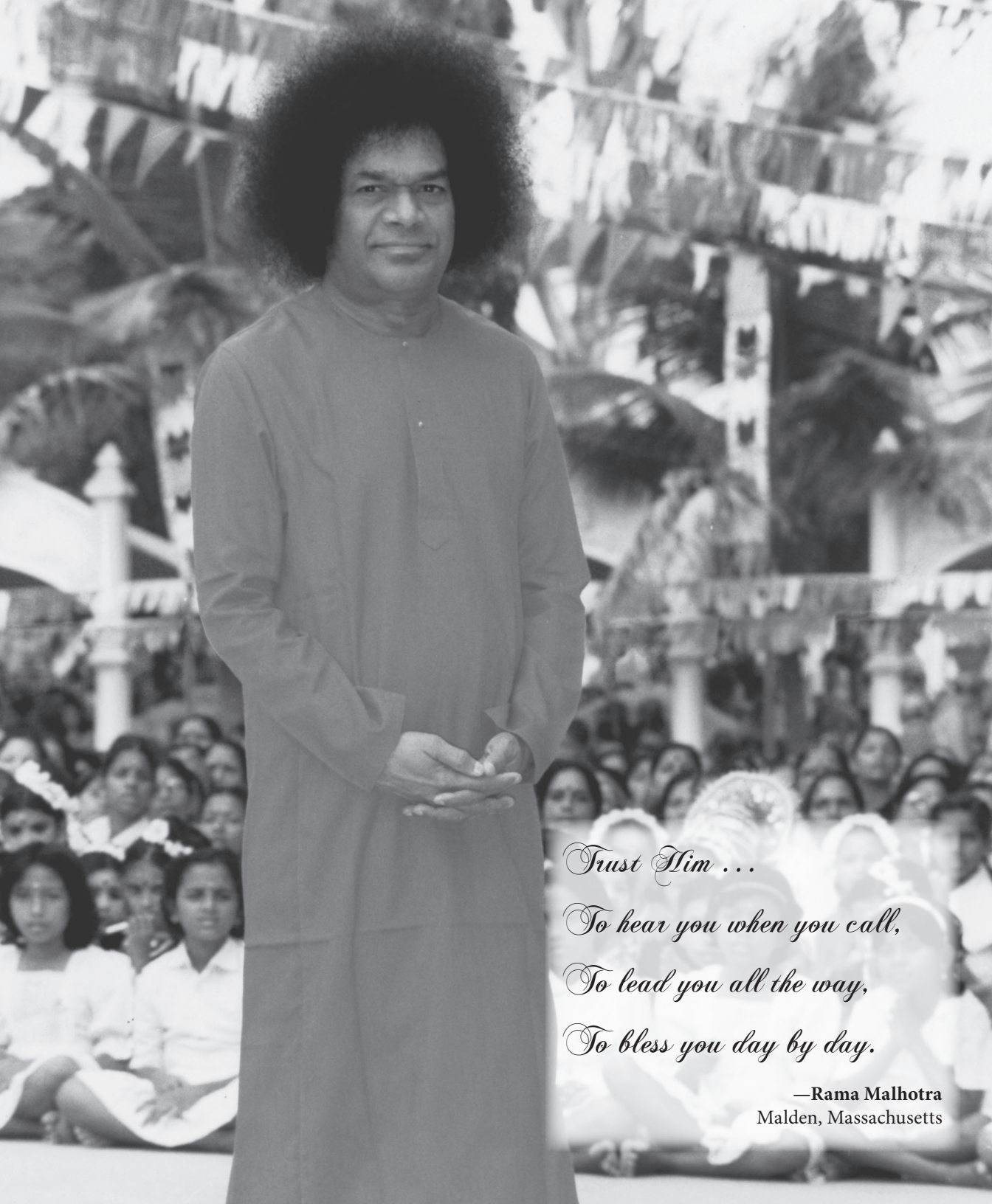
But in the city, the practice of reducing desires is tested, and only after being thoroughly tested does it become deeply and solidly rooted, like an ancient oak tree. The inner peace and silence is tested by constant noise, chatter, and temptation to turn on the TV or Internet. But the draw inward and Godward, or Baba-ward, remains stronger, and the inner peace grows and expands until it overflows.

Here in the city, Baba challenges me to transcend his form and not only find him but love him—in the eyes and hearts of pedestrians and cashiers, in the blossoms and grass poking through the concrete, in the air and sky. He is Home, and Home is everywhere. In the same way he turns Prasanthi into a place of peace, through being peaceful and loving, I must do my part here—all the time knowing that God is the Doer and the Indweller, and that we are One. This is the path of bliss. Even when I feel separate from love, faith reveals it's there, just below the surface.

—Debra Moffitt-Leslie
Charlotte, North Carolina

The individual does not progress alone. He is not separate from society. Therefore, the individual's work to free himself from animal characteristics and to live a spiritual life is not done for himself, but is done for all of God's creatures. The work of freeing the individual's nature from animal qualities is done, in love, for God, and done in His Name and with His help.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
(quoted in Hislop, John, *My Baba and I*, p. 196)



Trust Him ...

To hear you when you call,

To lead you all the way,

To bless you day by day.

—Rama Malhotra
Malden, Massachusetts

A Sai Love Story

Unmistakable Reflections of Divine Omnipresence

Our Friend, Beloved Sai, has advised that none can fathom his divine ways, that it is useless even to try. Instead, he urges that we practice his peerless teachings, live an exemplary spiritual and human life, dedicate ourselves to selfless service, grow in love and detachment, and deeply dedicate ourselves to the liberatory task for which he and we have come.

Sai is sweeter than sweetness itself. He is more loving, more giving, more merciful, and more penetrating than we have the capacity to comprehend. He has blessed us beyond our ability to cognize, and is ever calling us to seek him in love and faith as life's eternal goal.

Through single-minded devotion and unswerving determination, we can achieve that nearness with him in our hearts—and perhaps gain experiential awareness that he is One without “the second” that we fallaciously think we are.

Swami called me for an interview the first time I visited him at Prasanthi Nilayam in 1985. Another interview-room encounter with the Divine has not occurred since, yet

that single interview clearly continues to bear fruit, and over the years has been lovingly complemented by a number of increasingly intimate *inner views*. He expresses his love and encourages me, as he demonstrates his omniscience and omnipresence in a variety of profound and unmistakable ways. I am

always left astonished, humbled, and elevated by these lucid reflections of his divine love.

One January morning of this year, Sai left yet another signature of his great glory. I had been working on plans for the new Institute of Sathya Sai Education-USA (ISSE-USA) for several consecutive days. On that particular morning I had turned on the television—sometimes appropriately known as the “idiot box”—to watch what is called “the news.” I left to go to another part of the



When he returned to watch a news broadcast, the author found this inexplicable image of a red rose overlaid on the cosmos instead.

house and returned to find an incredible image frozen across the entire TV screen. It was an arresting red rose in full bloom that appeared to have come directly out of the far reaches of the cosmos. It was bordered on the top and bottom by two horizontal bands of purple, with a brilliant flash of light darting off to the right. Stars and nebula were clearly visible throughout the background, yet I did not perceive that Swami's image was visible there too.

The battery in my camera needed recharging, yet as fate, or Swami, would have it, my daughter was visiting and was quickly beckoned to take a photo of the screen with her phone. I left the picture on the television screen for some time, then came back to planet earth and afterward changed the station.

Later when I was preparing for our first national ISSE-USA conference, I was inspired to use that same photo on the printed dedication to Swami. After the

conference, I sent a copy of the picture to my ISSE-USA associates, and got an *OMG!* (Oh, my God!) message from Berniece Mead, who was the first to spot Swami in the picture. After looking closely, I also located his divine image in a place other than the one she had spotted. Needless to say, our next phone call was pure *satsang* (holy company)!

While this is the most recent, it is not the only "rose story" through which Swami has demonstrated his magnificence to me. Perhaps he will inspire that more of these stories be shared in what we call "the future."

As this brief story comes to a close, may our faith remind us that when it comes to spiritual life, absence of evidence is never evidence of absence. We do the Lord's work and position ourselves through selfless love to draw his grace, and never tire of waiting for whatever he decides to say, or not say, and do, or not do.

—Hymon Johnson, Ed.D.
Goleta, California

If you do not trust yourselves and your own reality, you can never trust another. Ultimately, trust depends on faith in God, as expressed in your own actions and in the actions of others. Virtue can grow only in an atmosphere of theism; you must have faith in the omnipresence of God, that God is the witness, the guide, and the guardian. Self-confidence, confidence that you are the pure unlimited Self, is the great reinforcement that religion can endow you with. When you establish this in your hearts, you can be entrusted with any type of responsibility and any type of work.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
SSS 12:41, June 20, 1974, "Instruments of the Divine Will"

Institute of Sathya Sai Education–USA (ISSE-USA)

First National Conference Report to the USA Sai Community

The goal of education is to confer purity. Worldly education is transient. Knowledge of the Self alone is eternal. It can be acquired only through devotion and love for God.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, September 20, 2000



The Institute of Sathya Sai Education-USA (ISSE-USA) held its first meeting in Glendale, California, on February 27–28, 2010. After an opening invocation and dedication ceremony, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Dr. Narendra Reddy, Attorney Michael Dave, and Dr. Hymon Johnson, the Institute Director, addressed the gathering.

Much of the rest of the weekend was spent sharing ideas in committee meetings and discussing various ways the ISSE-USA can best promote an accurate and practical understanding of Sathya Sai Educare and Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (Sathya Sai EHV) among professional edu-

cators and community workers across the country. The meeting ended in full session on Sunday with the chanting of the Gayatri Mantra and the Samasta Loka Prayer (universal prayers, for enlightenment and happiness for all). All expressed their gratitude to Swami, to each other, and to the local Region 8 (Southern California) devotees who had provided key logistical and other support services.

The Education Committee of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation (SSSWF) and the ISSE-USA Board of Directors recently approved the Institute's Guidelines and Policies.

These Guidelines encourage adherence to the overriding spiritual objective of the Sri Sathya Sai Organization and are designed to assure the highest quality in all that we do.

Five standing committees have been assigned to address the major functions of the Institute, whose chairpersons constitute the ISSE-USA Leadership Council. The ISSE-USA committees and their respective chairs are:

- Diploma Course Planning and Oversight Committee, Dr. Ronne Marantz
- Educational Resources Committee, Megan Bennett
- Sathya Sai EHV Community Programs Committee, Doris Hampton
- Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Partnership Schools Committee, Kalika Grana
- Sathya Sai School Development Committee, Dr. Tom Scovill

A Research and Publications Committee and a Website Development and Oversight Committee will also be activated in the near future.

An ambitious instructional program leading to certificates, a standard diploma, and an advanced diploma will be offered for those wishing to work with the Institute in applying Sathya Sai Educare and Sathya Sai

EHV to school and community programs. It is also a priority of the Institute to establish the first Sathya Sai School in the United States.

The work of the ISSE-USA will be professional, inclusive, and practical. Yet as part of a global network of organizations named after our Beloved Lord Sai, the paramount objective of the Institute will be to reflect and exemplify his more essential teachings of universal love, unity, and selfless service. As it relates to the Institute, this requires a focus on integration of spiritual and secular education and promotion-by-example of Sathya Sai Educare, as the means to achieve a fully human and spiritual life.

We remind ourselves that all results and outcomes are in Sai's divine hands. He has blessed us to be associated with him in this great work, and encourages us to serve all in a proactive spirit of discipline and loving cooperation.

We are establishing welcoming, efficient processes and means of communication. We pray that our small contributions to Sai's educational mission will proceed in ways that are pleasing to him, and that they assist us in achieving the task for which he and we have come.

—Dr. Hymon T. Johnson
Director, ISSE-USA

Education has as its cornerstone the guiding principle whereby you can remove yourself from sorrow and difficulties and move on to a higher path.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Nov. 22, 1984

Southwest Region 9 “Walk for Values” USA

Phoenix, Arizona, February 27, 2010

Fun and gaiety marked the air as the day finally arrived—February 27, 2010, the day of the Walk for Values (W4V) in Phoenix, Arizona. The weather was favorable—cloudy and perhaps a little breezy—but the spirit of enthusiasm in everyone assembled at Wesley Bolin Plaza in downtown Phoenix was far from dampened.

The Region 9 Walk for Values planning team had spent numerous hours coordinating and organizing, for almost a year, to realize this W4V event. Study circles on the Five Human Values had been conducted in Sai Centers for five months in preparation for this Walk for Values. Nearly 800 people had pre-registered for the walk, with over 700 participating on the day of the walk.

An army of young adult volunteers diligently went about their assigned roles as a constant influx of walkers checked in, including nearly 100 people from the Bhutanese refugee community in Arizona, whom the local Sai Centers had been serving over the past year.

Dressed uniformly in white T-shirts bearing the W4V logo and sporting colorful caps inscribed with the cardinal value that each individual had chosen and pledged to put into practice—**truth, right conduct, peace, love, nonviolence**—everyone seemed excited.

The Mallet Masters, a band from Kyrene Brisas Elementary School of Chandler, Arizona, provided lively music prior to the

opening ceremonies. Children and adults alike had a ball getting faces painted with symbols representing the five values.

Numerous colorful balloons contributed to the vibrant atmosphere, and a keen observer might notice that each value was represented by a particular balloon color—red for love, yellow for truth, and so on. The spirit of generosity was also apparent, as most everyone brought cans of food for St. Mary’s food bank; the needy were not to be forgotten.

As it neared 10 a.m., Dr. “Panch” Panchanathan, one of the main organizers of the event and president of the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Mesa, Arizona, extended a warm welcome to all. While waiting for the honorary guests to arrive, he had no problem eliciting hearty, affirmative responses from the audience to his frequent interjections, “Are you fired up yet?” Everyone was fired up and ready to go.

Ms. Elaine Hausman, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, led a group of singers in an entertaining rendition of “We Are the World.” The song’s inspiring lyrics and appropriateness for the Walk for Values setting struck a chord with the audience.

Dr. Panchanathan acknowledged the various faith groups present, as well as the participants from other states, such as Utah, Colorado, California, and New Mexico. He affirmed, “Today is a celebration of the spirit that brings everyone together—namely, the

five basic human values that permeate all faiths and religious teachings.”

Mr. David Feasby, USA Region 9 Vice President, addressed the crowd, emphasizing that this was a tremendous opportunity to reflect on the five values of truth, right action, peace, love, and nonviolence, which form the basis of all faiths and are inherent in every human being. Paraphrasing Mohandas Gandhi, he noted that for change to occur, we must take responsibility for living the change that we hope to see in the world. This walk could be a first step toward living a life in which thought, word, and deed would all align with the five human values.

Mr. Ray Madaghiele, CEO and co-founder of the Transformational Learning Center, stated that the W4V event was an affirmation of the empathy and compassion we all share and the common bond that transcends differences of color and religion. “The core value is love, which is the might of the spirit,” he said. In 2002, Ray rode his bicycle for 70 days, from Phoenix to New York, to show support for 9/11 victims. He had a flat tire only twice in 3,369 miles! The prayer

that saw him through was “The spirit of the Lord is within me, making safe, successful, and easy my way.”

The Vice Mayor of Phoenix, Mr. Michael Nowakowski, who, interestingly, has a liberal arts bachelor’s degree in religious studies, read a proclamation by Mayor Phil Gordon, that February 27, 2010, be declared Walk for Values Day for the City of Phoenix. Drawing references to the era of “change” sought in recent political movements, he emphasized the need for a “Yes, we can” attitude to bring values to the community.

Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, spoke on behalf of Mr. Tom Horn, Superintendent of Public Instruction. She emphasized that incorporating character education into the academic curriculum is one of the chief objectives of schools in Arizona.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and the National Anthem sung, led by Desert Vista High School choir representatives. Then it was time for the 2.2-mile walk, with banners, signs, and balloons galore!



Volunteers wearing yellow vests helped guide the participants, assisted by city police officers on motorcycles. A medical team stood by, ready to deal with any emergencies; fortunately, their services were not needed during the walk. It was a peaceful walk, conducted in accordance with local traffic regulations. The participants walked behind the banner of the value they had chosen to practice and carried signs proclaiming the human values and sub-values, prepared by the adults, young adults, and SSE children of the Sai organization.

Groups of singers helped maintain the walkers' momentum. One in particular was the children's group, who chose songs by Linkin Park and 3 Days Grace. "We wanted to sing songs that every kid would know!" volunteered Aravind, reflecting a spirit of inclusion and harmony. The favorite song, which reportedly merited an encore request, was "Never Too Late," by 3 Days Grace. "It's never too late to reverse your mistakes in life," shared Tarun, an articulate 6th grader

with a philosophical outlook, as the group treated this writer to a private performance of the song.

We had the opportunity to chat with some of the participants and organizers, before and during the walk. Mr. David Feasby shared that he was ecstatic to see so many people assembled for the W4V and hoped that it would lead to increased awareness of the need to lead life peacefully. He had chosen personally to practice the value, **truth**.

Mr. Ranganathan, a retired professor from Vivekananda College, Chennai, felt that the Walk for Values represented a great opportunity for people to think about values and put them into practice. "In our [younger] days, we did not think about these things," he reflected, pensively.

Mr. Manmohan Desai echoed similar sentiments about awareness and the need to practice values consciously.

A pair of attendees from Colorado, Tim and Susan, had chosen **right conduct** to practice. "We are more aware of our ego now." They offered this as one change they



had observed in themselves since their resolution to participate in the W4V.

Andy, also from Colorado, had chosen **love** as his value to practice, and in a lighter vein shared that as a result of his focus on practicing love, he finds himself speaking more sweetly to his wife, especially on the phone, even in the middle of a busy day!

“Excellent! Colorful! I am enjoying it!” quipped Amritha, an engineer employed at Intel, in a spirit of celebration.

Jennifer, from Albuquerque, shared that she has tried to lead her life based on the five human values for quite some time. Her husband used to host students from other countries, including India, and she has a lot of respect and admiration for Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Mr. Jerry Govan, from the Interfaith Movement, spent considerable time sharing his views and beliefs. Describing himself as a spiritual person who believes in peaceful co-existence, he expressed confidence that love can break down all resistance. Jerry and his wife had coauthored a book on taking the “e” out of *ego* so that one can go forward in life, and he seemed to have considerable knowledge of East Indian traditions and beliefs. He feels he was born with **the spirit of inquiry** (a subvalue of truth) and had attended churches of various denominations in the quest for truth. “Love is the highest form of energy,” he affirmed.

After the walk, Ms. Carla Givens, President of Region 9, thanked all the organizers, participants, and volunteers for the W4V; Phoenix-based VoiceAmerica.com



(Internet broadcasting) for media coverage; and so on. Ms. Aru Narla, Region 9 Education Coordinator and co-organizer for the walk, presented flowers to Ms. Givens. The SSE children then sang “God Bless America.”

Lunch packets were served to all by the volunteers, while Dane and Company performed popular musical numbers that were greatly appreciated by the audience. A sense of fulfillment suffused the air as the volunteers and participants proceeded to clean up.

On a personal note, what remained with this writer at the end of the day was the truth that we are the world, and each of us has to take responsibility for living the change that we would like to see in the world.

—Rama Narasimhan
Mesa, Arizona

Walking for Values—A Personal Reflection

A Monumental Change, Brought About through Love

The Walk for Values was an inspiring and monumental event. I loved how people all over came together to unite for the same belief. For so long I have had to minimize, or felt that I had to understate, my faith in Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I have a picture in my living room of Swami and also one of Jesus. Visitors would wonder at my having two pictures that, to them, contradicted each other.

Swami says that all paths lead to God, and that's what I tried to clarify, but I would still feel weird in my own skin when people couldn't understand how I could be involved in something so foreign to them. No matter how I tried to explain, I could feel their negative thoughts slowly make their way into my mind. It became frustrating.

However, the Walk for Values helped all those worries and frustrations melt away, upon seeing so many new faces participating. You could feel the love emanating from people of all backgrounds and walks of life that day! It was wonderful!

The walk was a great opportunity for me to truly embrace a value. I would like to think that I incorporate all values in my life; however, I believe the value, **love**, was most appropriate for my current situation. I had recently received a job offer to be a

paraprofessional specialist in a “SPICE 1” room—a classroom for autistic children. Mind you, I had no experience with autism and only a small amount with special needs students.

I was quite worried when I realized that this position was my only option for employment, due to my being an educator fresh out of college. I had heard plenty of horror stories about biting, pinching, and so forth, and I had vowed that I could never teach in a classroom like that. Nonetheless, I was called in for an interview and told that I was up against some very highly qualified applicants. Then things seemed to move quickly, and I stayed very calm. To my astonishment, I got the job.

I supposed this was where Swami was taking me, whether I wanted to go along or not. My first thought was fear that I wouldn't be able to do this job, but I decided at least to try. When I began working with the students, I felt extremely scared and reluctant. These students seem to live in an entirely different world, and for me, one that was very hard to enter.

This is where the value I chose—**love**—came in. I needed to practice love now more than ever. I practiced seeing the word,

LOVE, when I met with the students for their reading sessions and so forth. This wasn't needed every day, but some students could become a little out of hand. I prayed a lot to Swami to use me as his instrument. I still lacked confidence and felt like I wasn't doing a good job.

But as I practiced love, I started to change my views and began to understand these individuals. It became so much more apparent to me how wonderful these students are. They are just like you and I, except they have some ticks and quirks. But they are all children of God, and I am very fortunate to have had such an experience.

My worries have vanished and my fears settled. I never thought in a million years that I would work with individuals with such needs. I knew I would eventually run into them in the classroom, but never dreamed I would have a classroom full of them! They are absolutely fabulous, and I truly love them all. They have made me a better educator, and I am grateful for the experience.

I chose love because it showed me how to love others when I had a hard time finding that love; also it encompasses **compassion** (a subvalue of love), one of the most prominent qualities needed when teaching in that environment. **Tolerance** and **patience**, two other aspects of love, were also big milestones to aspire to.

All in all, I have accomplished more in a few months with these students than in my prior four years in the teaching program. I had been sent to this job to teach, but I believe Swami sent these students to teach me.

The Walk for Values was fun, and it brought my friends and family together. I wish we could have walked longer. I can't wait for the next Walk for Values, and I will continue to implement the values in my daily life.

—Maureen Lewinson
Gilbert, Arizona



Author (left), at the recent “Walk for Values” in Phoenix



Haiti Relief



"I want from you ...

A love that is the form of truth.

A love that feels truly for others.

A love that gives, gives, gives!

A love that serves Me in others.

A love that sees Me constantly.

A love that knows no fear.

A love that is content and peaceful.

A love with persevering patience.





A love that endures all and blames none.

A love that smiles in all sorrows.

A love of firm faith in God.

A love that welcomes Me in all forms.

A love that knows to surrender.

A love that is pure and untainted.

Give Me this love,

And I will open the doors to your prison

And give you your freedom forever.”

—Sai Darshan 2:64 (Seema M. Dewan)

—PHOTOS TAKEN BY SAI YOUNG ADULTS ON A RECENT RELIEF EFFORT TRIP IN HAITI
SOURCE: HEARTS UNITED FOR SAI WEBZINE, VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2, WWW.SAIYAUSA.NET

Katie's Apple



One day, a little girl named Katie hopped on a train bound for heaven. When the train arrived, she stepped onto the platform and saw a long line of people. They were lined up in front of God, who sat on a golden throne, handing out beautiful, plump, sweet apples to everyone in line.

Katie couldn't wait to get one of those shiny red apples. She had to wait a long time, as the line moved quite slowly. She tried to be patient but could hardly contain her excitement.

She watched as others came to the head of the line, received a precious, sweet-smelling apple from God's own divine hand, and went away happily. At long last, it was Katie's turn. She stretched out her small hand eagerly, and God also stretched out his arm toward her. He dropped a big, rosy apple into her upturned palm.

She tried to grasp the apple, but alas! It tumbled out of her grip and rolled away out of sight.

“Waaaaaaahhhh!” Katie began to wail, and the tears of frustration and disappointment began to flow. She had waited so long, and now she had lost her chance.

But God said kindly, “Katie, do not cry. You can have another chance to get an apple, but there is one condition. You must go to the very back of the line and wait your turn once more. Do you have the patience to wait that long?”

Katie looked back at the long line of people, which seemed to grow longer and longer, even as she stood there.

She knew she would need to have a lot of patience to stand and wait through that long line again.

But she did not want to miss the chance to receive an apple from God to take back to earth. So she made up her mind to have patience and nodded her head. She would try again.

She trudged for a very long time to reach the back of the line. She stood again for hours and hours as the line moved forward ever so slowly. She kept picturing in her mind the happiness of being face to face with God once again, and receiving another shiny red apple.

Then she found that it was not so difficult to wait, after all. Some of the people near her in line began to sing joyful songs praising God. Their happiness spread all around, and Katie began to sing too. The time started to pass pleasantly.

Before she knew it, she was at the head of the line once again. This time, she put all her focus into holding her hand steady, feeling determined not to drop God’s gift.

God held out a ripe, red apple and placed it gently and carefully into her hand. He bent near her and said, “My darling girl, do you know why the first apple fell? I willed it, because it was rotten inside. You are a happy girl, helpful and loving to your family and friends. Take this apple and enjoy it with love in your heart. As you return to earth now, remain always good.”

God always decides what’s best for us. His timing is perfect when he wills to give us a gift. Whether we view an event as good or bad, what God gives us is always for our good. Katie was blessed, and so are we. We can always trust God to give what is best for us.

—Author Unknown, adapted from
Heart2Heart e-journal, Oct. 2009

—Illustration by Lyn Kriegler-Elliott,
New Zealand

Sai Spiritual Education Lesson Plan

Katie's Apple (Group 1)

VALUE: Peace • **SUBVALUE:** Patience

QUOTE: *One must gladly welcome troubles instead of regarding them as unwelcome. Difficulties help one to nurse and build the capacity for patience . . . Times of distress offer the ideal opportunity for the development of patience and forbearance. . . Once you have learned to be endlessly patient, love will walk in almost immediately.* —**Sri Sathya Sai Baba** (Summer Showers 2000:12, May 25, 2000, “Kshama, the Grandest and Noblest Virtue”)

PRAYER: Say each line and have the children repeat it in response: *Lord, teach me to be patient with life. Teach me to be patient with people. Teach me to be patient with myself. Teach me to trust your timing, Lord. My only wish is to surrender to your greater and wiser plan.*

SILENT SITTING: Have children practice sitting silently for 1-2 minutes. To develop patience, have them practice again for 1-2 minutes.

DEVOTIONAL SINGING: “Know that the Lord is sweetness itself; everything is a sign of his grace”

AFFIRMATION: *“I practice being patient in times of trouble and distress, so that I can experience love instead, and be happy.”* Explain that Swami tells us we must constantly ask ourselves if our patience and ability to face troubles is getting stronger or weaker. He tells us to say, *“Patience is like my life breath. I cannot afford to let it become less strong or steady.”* (Ibid.)

READING: “Katie’s Apple” (on pp. 30-31)

DISCUSSION: Ask students to retell the events of Katie’s story (prompt them with questions as needed). *What happened when Katie got to the front of the line the first time? How would you feel if God asked you to go to the back of the line again? Why do you think God asked Katie to do this difficult task? What does it mean to “be patient”? What is “impatience”? What does Swami say about patience? Why is it important to be patient instead of angry and impatient? What are “times of distress”? When is a time you found it hard to be patient? What do you think it means that God knows best what is good for you? What if God or your parents do not give you what you think you want? Why is “God’s timing” best?*

ACTIVITY: “Patience Package and Puzzle” Beforehand, prepare a package wrapped with many layers, each layer containing a small gift such as a sticker, along with a piece of a jigsaw or word puzzle that can be put together after everyone has a turn to unwrap a layer. For example, the puzzle might be a set of letters that make up the word “P-A-T-I-E-N-C-E,” or parts of the prayer or quote, or it might be selected pieces of a jigsaw puzzle the class can complete together. Make sure the parcel has as many layers and gifts/puzzle pieces as children in the class. How to Play: Have children form a circle; give the wrapped parcel to one of the children. The child must wait until you give the direction to unwrap the

outermost layer. After unwrapping, the child must wait again until you say to pass the parcel to another child. Wait differing amounts of time so that children must listen before unwrapping or passing it on. They may want to do everything quickly, but they must be patient. After the game, have children work as a group to put together the puzzle.

LIFE APPLICATION: Children can plant seeds (have them bring seeds, container, and potting soil from home). Discuss proper care of the plants with water, fertilizer, and sunshine. Have children keep a graph of the plant and note/draw its stages of growth. They must resist digging it up before it sprouts and practice patience as it grows. Discuss how a tiny seed over time changes into something quite beautiful. Encourage children to compare the plant with themselves—how they grow into human excellence over time. Discuss what we can do each week in all our activities to add to our patience and our human excellence, a little at a time.

EXTENDING ACTIVITIES: Play “Wait and Go with God.” Draw a finish line at one end of a play area and have students line up at the other end. When you say, “Go with God,” they may advance (walking); when you say “Wait!” they must stop. Any other words, such as “Walk,” “Go,” or “Go ahead,” they must ignore and wait for the correct cue, “Go with God.” Anyone who moves before the words “Go with God” is out. Object of the game is to cross the finish line.

USA Regional Retreat and Event Dates, 2010

Regional retreat updates and information may also be viewed at the official Sai website:

<http://us.sathyasai.org/> or <http://us.sathyasai.org/infoconf.htm>.

Region 5 (North Central): Sept. 3-6, 2010 (Labor Day Weekend), the 20th North Central Region Sai Conference and Retreat, at Camp Henry Horner, 26710 W. Nippersink Road, Ingleside, IL 60041. Contact: Vijay Sai Reddy SAI-RAM-1043 (724-726-1043), info@sathyasaicenters.org; website: www.sathyasaicenters.org.

Region 7 (Northern California): Sept. 11, 2010, “Love All – Serve All,” a one-day free event open to devotees and the public. Foothill Elementary School, 13919 Lynde Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. Guest speaker: Dr. Joe Phaneuf. Contact: Vikram, 408-324-6262, jvikram@gmail.com, or Soundarya Madhavapeddi, 414-217-7041, mnagasoundarya@gmail.com.

Region 9 (Southwest): Sept. 3-6, Friday 6 pm–Monday 10 am, “Land of Enchantment” Retreat at Bodhi Manda Zen Center, Jemez Springs, NM. Theme: *God Is. I Am I*. Speakers: Ramesh Srinivasan, and Cass and Shama Smith. Contact: Elaine Hausman, 505-660-0283, ehausman@rockridge.biz. Travel arrangements: Romy Keegan, 505-366-4980, romydancing@aol.com.

God Lives Under the Bed

The Miracle of Simple Faith

I ENVY KEVIN. My brother, Kevin, thinks God lives under his bed. At least that's what I heard him say one night.

He was praying out loud in his dark bedroom, and I stopped to listen.

"Are you there, God?" he said. "Where are you? Oh, I see. Under the bed. . . ."

I giggled softly and tiptoed off to my own room. Kevin's unique perspectives are often a source of amusement. But that night something else lingered long after the humor. I realized for the first time the very different world Kevin lives in.

He was born 30 years ago, mentally disabled as a result of difficulties during labor. Apart from his size (he's 6-foot-2), there are few ways in which he is an adult.

He reasons and communicates with the capabilities of a 7-year-old, and he always will. He will probably always believe that God lives under his bed, that Santa Claus is the one who fills the space under our tree every Christmas, and that airplanes stay up in the sky because angels carry them.

I remember wondering if Kevin realizes he is different. Is he ever dissatisfied with his monotonous life?

Up before dawn each day, off to work at a workshop for the disabled, home to walk our cocker spaniel, return to eat his favorite macaroni-and-cheese for dinner, and later to bed.

The only variation in the entire scheme is laundry, when he hovers excitedly over the washing machine like a mother with her newborn child.

He does not seem dissatisfied.

He lopes out to the bus every morning at 7:05, eager for a day of simple work.

He wrings his hands excitedly while the water boils on the stove before dinner, and he stays up late twice a week to gather our dirty laundry for his next day's laundry chores.

And Saturdays—oh, the bliss of Saturdays! That's the day my dad takes Kevin to the airport to have a soft drink, watch the planes land, and speculate loudly on the destination of each passenger inside. "That one's goin' to Chi-car-go!" Kevin shouts as he claps his hands.

His anticipation is so great he can hardly sleep on Friday nights.

And so goes his world of daily rituals and weekend field trips.

He doesn't know what it means to be discontent.

His life is simple.

He will never know the entanglements of wealth or power, and he does not care what brand of clothing he wears or what kind of food he eats. His needs have always been met, and he never worries that one day they may not be.

His hands are diligent. Kevin is never so happy as when he is working. When he unloads the dishwasher or vacuums the carpet, his heart is completely in it.

He does not shrink from a job when it is begun, and he does not leave a job until it is finished. But when his tasks are done, Kevin knows how to relax.

He is not obsessed with his work or the work of others. His heart is pure.

He still believes everyone tells the truth, promises must be kept, and when you are wrong, you apologize instead of argue.

Free from pride and unconcerned with appearances, Kevin is not afraid to cry when he is hurt, angry, or sorry. He is always transparent, always sincere. And he trusts God.

Not confined by intellectual reasoning, when he comes to Christ, he comes as a child. Kevin seems to know God—to really be friends with him in a way that is difficult for an “educated” person to grasp. God seems like his closest companion.

In my moments of doubt and frustrations with my Christianity, I envy the security Kevin has in his simple faith.

It is then that I am most willing to admit that he has some divine knowledge that rises above my mortal questions.

It is then I realize that perhaps he is not the one with the handicap. I am. My obligations, my fear, my pride, my circumstances—they all become disabilities when I do not trust them to God’s care.

Who knows if Kevin comprehends things I can never learn? After all, he has spent his whole life in that kind of innocence, praying after dark and soaking up the goodness and love of God.

And one day, when the mysteries of heaven are opened, and we are all amazed at how close God really is to our hearts, I’ll realize that God heard the simple prayers of a boy who believed that God lived under his bed.

Kevin won’t be surprised at all!

—**Kelly Adkins**, Orlando, Florida

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(Kevin passed away in November 2007).

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SELECTED BOOKS – RECENT ARRIVALS

Prema Dhaara, Vol. 3, compiles letters written by Sri Sathya Sai Baba to his students, covering a period from 1946 to 2005. This volume is unique in that it contains scanned copies of actual letters Baba wrote in his own handwriting. BI-363 \$6.00

From None to One, by Bea Flaig, tells how the author went from being an atheist to becoming a spiritual seeker under the loving direction of Sai Baba. She was led eventually to the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) program, which she implemented in her classroom. BI-365 \$6.00

Divine Daffodils, by Prof. Anil Kumar Kamaraju, is a compilation of talks given by Prof. Kumar on Sunday mornings in Prasanthi Nilayam. They are based on different topics given in Swami's divine discourses. BI-360 \$6.00

The Annunciations of Sathya Sai Avatar, a small booklet compiled by G. Krishna Murty, contains selections from divine discourses, in which Swami has mentioned his mission and goals as the avatar of the age. BI-364 \$1.00

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 I, 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 an extension of human values education. Soft cover, 174 pages. BW-031 \$14.00