

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

Dedicated with Love and Devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Higher Learning

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SAI'S MESSAGE

Higher Education

*Bereft of truth, righteousness,
peace, and love, the value of
all your education is zero;*

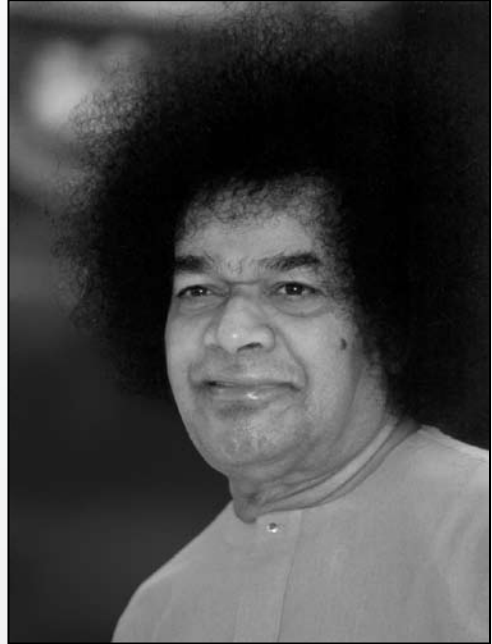
*Bereft of truth, righteousness,
peace, and love, the benefit
of all your acts of charity and
kindness is zero;*

*Bereft of truth, righteousness,
peace, and love, the utility
of all your positions of power
is zero;*

*Bereft of truth, righteousness,
peace, and love, the result of
all your good deeds is zero.*

*Truth, righteousness, peace, and love are verily the pillars of the
mansion of Sanathana Dharma (the universal path to God). What
else is to be conveyed to this assembly of noble souls?*

*What is the use of acquiring education that cannot lead you
to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will grant you
immortality. (TELUGU POEMS)*



—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Nov. 22, 2009

Education, Properly Aligned, for the Entire World

Vice Chancellor's Address, Sri Sathya Sai University Convocation, Nov. 22, 2009

Prof. Vishwanath Pandit

With loving salutations at the lotus feet of our beloved Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, I invoke his blessings for this august function. Revered Chancellor; Professor Samuel Sandweiss who has kindly agreed to deliver the convocation address; distinguished members of the governing body, the university trust, and the academic council; respected guests, members of the faculty, graduands of the year, and dear students; it is my privilege to welcome you all to the 28th Annual Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai University.

Real Education: A Foundation for *Dharma*

Human existence has two apparently distinct but in reality integrated aspects—the manifest and the unmanifest or, more simply, the outer and the inner self. The need to promote both has been felt ever since humanity emerged from a primitive state.

Naturally, man's initial concern was with the gross body and its relationship to the manifest world. While improvement of the capabilities needed for living steadily improved, the urge deepened to listen to the unmanifest Self. Though man lives in the body-mind-intellect complex, he cannot ignore the higher Atmic complex (inner divinity). The *vyavaharik* (practical worldly concerns) and the Atmic life need to be integrated effectively. This is where education

comes in, with its twin segments that need to complement and indeed reinforce each other.

Great thinkers in the past had a clear understanding that education was indeed the very process that lays the foundation for *dharma* (righteousness) by removing the cover of ignorance and letting the inner Self shine. This was put remarkably by the Greeks:

Education should devise the simplest and most effective methods to turn the mind toward the light—not to implant sight in it—it already has the capacity, but to correct its orientation, because it is now improperly aligned and not facing the right way.

Therein lay the seed for *educare* (bringing out of the inner essence). Similarly, the societal-welfare implications of education are marvelously brought out by a Chinese proverb:

If you are planning for a few months, grow fruits and vegetables; if you are planning for a few years, grow trees. But if you are concerned about generations to come, educate your children.

More than a century back, the reputed philosopher John Stuart Mill emphasized the

power of education and therefore the need to design and harness it for human good:

Education and opinion, which have so vast a power over human character, should so use that power as to establish in the mind of every individual an indissoluble association between his own happiness and the good of the whole. ... Selfishness is the principal cause that makes life unsatisfactory. ... There is no inherent necessity that any human being should be a selfish egotist, devoid of every feeling or care but those which center in his own miserable individuality.

The earliest three universities in Europe, established several hundred years back at Oxford in England, Salamanca in Spain, and the Sorbonne in France, had deep religious and presumably spiritual foundations. This was true of India much earlier when universities at Nalanda, Taxila, and other places were established, and even more so and much earlier, when the system of education took the form of *gurukulas* (residential centers for spiritual study) under the guidance of great saints and sages.

Unfortunately, man progressed materially with advancements in science and technology; however, his concern for inner peace and happiness got steadily blurred. Education “for life” took a back seat, and the phrase “making a living” became increasingly prominent.

Education became entirely focused on mind, body, and intellect, with egocentric tendencies leading to *swartham* (self-

centeredness) and *swaprayojanam* (self-indulgence) as the sole motivation for all human endeavors.

Dharma got diluted into morality, which in turn came down to ethics, and has fallen further to a syndrome of market mechanism driven entirely by profit. Education itself has today emerged as one of the best businesses under the regime of a globalized world. No wonder the world is up against massive problems of environmental degradation, poor access to health care, and absence of true education.

The Divine Mission

Time had obviously come for the Lord to redeem his promise to reincarnate and take the world back to *Sanathana Dharma* (the universal path of righteousness). As he stated in the Bhagavad Gita (4:7):

Whenever and wherever righteousness declines, O Bharatha (Arjuna), and unrighteousness increases, then do I manifest myself. (*Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir-bhavati bharatha; abhyuddhanam adharmasya tadatmanam srujamayaham.*)

He did exactly as he had promised and came down once again, as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to transform humanity. The divine *sankalpa* (will, resolve) was clear.

Education was the top priority, and the objective was obvious. The start had to be made with education for girls, because educating one girl meant educating one—or more correctly, two—families. Inaugurating

"Saturated with the five human values of truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence, alumni of the Sri Sathya Sai University across India and indeed across the world have been acknowledged not only as competent professionals but also as role models, for their moral behavior and service to society."

the Sri Sathya Sai College of Arts and Sciences for Women at Anantapur in 1968, Bhagavan declared:

India is being forged into a bhogabhumī (land of luxury), a land of skyscrapers, tinned food, air-conditioning, and television. Indians are being shaped into an imitative, insurgent, and ill-disciplined mass. They are being transplanted on other soils and encouraged to grow without roots. This is an insult to the past and a sacrilege on the history of time.

That is the reason I have decided that this college be inaugurated on Gurupoornima Day, as a reminder of the highest tradition, in which the highest ideals of life were instilled by personal example and guidance by the guru, to pupils eager to imbibe.

Education Saturated with Values

True education is not merely for India but for the entire world, and this country is meant to lead in spiritual regeneration. Bhagavan highlighted the need for character-building, so as to produce enlightened citizens for tomorrow who have a deep commitment to social welfare.

The sapling planted at Anantapur, and later at Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam itself, has now grown into a university that has been acclaimed as a path-breaker by a delegation from the Indian Parliament in 1997, two peer teams of the University Grants Commission in 1999 and 2008, and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, which gave it the highest level rating of A++ in 2003. The uniqueness of this university goes deeper, insofar as the emphasis on human values is in no way at the cost of academic excellence.

That the two streams complement and reinforce each other is fully evidenced by the type of students it has produced.

Saturated with the five human values of truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence, alumni of the Sri Sathya Sai University across India and indeed across the world have been acknowledged not only as competent professionals but also as role models, for their moral behavior and service to society. The ancient system of *gurukula* education has been effectively reinvented to suit the modern times.

No doubt this must verily be the only university of its kind in the entire world. The daily interaction students have with the revered Chancellor of this university is

unthinkable anywhere else. The purpose is to mold the students' mind and intellect, filling the heart with love for all. I cannot do better than quote Swami himself, as follows:

Education means broadening the heart. It implies development of control over senses. It should make one seek to promote the good of the world. It should serve to instill all good qualities in the student. An education that is devoid of such qualities is worthless.

Sai System of Education: Inculcating a Duty to Society

The educational system followed here has a clear interface with society, in all its endeavors. This is abundantly evidenced by the kind of academic research that is pursued here, as well as the co-curricular activities undertaken. A well-known example of the latter is *grama seva* (village uplift project), which is undertaken every year with all students and all teachers participating. This year's program lasted ten days, during which students and teachers visited more than 150 villages spread over the three *mandals* (administrative zones) of Kothacheruvu, Bukkapatnam, and Puttaparthi, carrying the message of love from Bhagavan. *Lakhs* (hundreds of thousands) of packets of food and sweets were distributed, along with several thousand saris and *dhotis* (men's and women's clothing). How much joy this gives to the villagers can only be seen to be believed. More than that, for teachers and

students, it is a matter of happiness and a process of learning.

Similarly, the bounden duty of undertaking academic research relevant to social welfare is prominently reflected here in the topics chosen for large research projects as well as those for PhD and MPhil dissertations. Examples of these relate to devising solutions for problems of drinking water, identifying useful fauna and flora in this area and how these may be used, and several ways in which health care can be improved.

This is well-illustrated by the work undertaken by scholars who will be awarded PhD and MPhil degrees by Bhagavan today. By his grace, several teachers of the University were chosen this year for prestigious awards by reputed organizations and agencies. The University has arrived at a new threshold, when its role as an instrument of Bhagavan's mission has assumed greater importance. We pray for his guidance at every step.

When Swami added the MBA program to the University when it was barely five years old, one wondered why a university devoted to promotion of *thyaga* (sacrifice, renunciation) should train students for plum jobs in the business world. The revered Chancellor knew that every aspect and sphere of life was becoming increasingly corporatized. Hence the need to prepare an army of students with values-based training, who must enter the portals of business establishments and transform them into institutions for social good.

This is indeed happening, slowly but steadily. Obviously, Swami knew both the

potential ailments and the effective remedies. Spiritual elements are fully integrated in the teaching programs of all disciplines in the University, as ordained by him.

Conference on Ethics and Finance

How the University shoulders its responsibility as a watchdog was highlighted recently by a high-profile conference on “Ethics and the World of Finance,” organized by the University at the end of August 2009. This conference brought together about thirty top-level figures from the highest echelons of the financial world—regulatory institutions and insurance companies; bankers and investment agencies; a dozen reputed academics well-versed in finance, management, and economics; and versatile bureaucrats dealing with governance.

Their two-day deliberations focused on the current international economic crisis, which has led to bank failures, widespread bankruptcy, and massive unemployment, loss of access to health care and prospects of education, and massive impoverishment of ordinary people. A great number of poor households have been robbed of their precious savings.

It is clear that if we want to identify the basic cure for all this, we have to go back to what Swami prescribed for such ailments more than three decades ago, in 1976 to be precise, when he asked us to exercise a “ceiling on desires.” In the present context, a pertinent part of the divine direction was, ***Do not waste money.***

In today’s context the problem arose not only from excessive greed—not merely of an individual but of institutions who were playing with others’ money. The idea of behaving like a trustee was thrown to the winds because of a built-in asymmetry: “Profits will be mine, but losses will be yours.”

The roots of the problem and the solution to the present travails of humanity were succinctly explained by Swami in his valedictory discourse (at the Ethics and Finance conference), with reference to episodes from the Mahabharata: how Dharmaraja, falling prey to his weakness for gambling, brought misery to his family—an excellent illustration of how people dominated by wrong tendencies ignore risk and throw away precautions, and also, how Draupadi brought up the question of the well-being of other stakeholders—her other four husbands. There is no way to highlight what was said except by quoting Swami himself, who said:

Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows. Cultivate love of God, which will lead to fear of sin and bring morality in society.

The Conference on Ethics and the World of Finance became a turning point for many participants, who realized their real role in promoting human welfare as trustees for the society.

—Prof. Vishwanath Pandit

Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai University
Courtesy: www.sssbpt.org/Pages/Prasanthi_Nilayam/convovcaddress.html

Uphold Ethics and Morality

*Bhagavan's Valedictory Discourse, Conference on Ethics and World of Finance,
August 2009*

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later, but the Indweller has neither birth nor death. The Indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness. Truly speaking, the Indweller, who is in the form of the Atma, is verily God himself. (TELUGU POEM)

The *Dehi* (Indweller) has no bondages. *Dehi* is also referred to as *Atma* or *Brahman*.

Embodiments of love! People worship God in various ways and develop faith in him. However, God has no name or form. He is one and only one, yet people call him by different names—Rama, Krishna, Allah, Jesus, and so on. These are all based on individual fancies, for God has no particular name.

God is one. *Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti* (Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by many names). The one God is referred to and worshiped by various names and forms. These forms ascribed to God are the result of people's imagination and as portrayed in some paintings. In fact, no one has ever visualized God, for in whatever form one contemplates on God, God will manifest in that form. God is one, not two!

Individuals refer to themselves as "I," "I," "I." This "I" refers to the individual ego, born out of attachment to the body (*deha bhava*). When this is removed (crossed out), one becomes the *Dehi* (Indweller). You become God, verily. Divinity transcends name and form. Since time immemorial, people have contemplated, worshiped, served, and longed for such a transcendental divinity.

Draupadi's Wisdom

People have many desires in this material world. Emperor Dharmaraja had only one desire: playing the game of dice. He was very fond of this game. The Kauravas noticed Dharmaraja's weakness. They contrived to trap him, using his weakness. Their maternal uncle Sakuni instigated and advised them, "Go invite Dharmaraja for a game of dice."

Sakuni was an adept in this game, and he could easily defeat his opponents by foul means. Duryodhana and his brothers were on one side, and Dharmaraja was on the other. The dice used in this game were manipulated to enable them to score a victory each time the game was played. As a result, Dharmaraja lost the game every time. He lost his empire, his brothers, himself, and even Draupadi (the Pandavas' wife). The Kauravas annexed his empire and took control over Dharmaraja's brothers and wife Draupadi. They dragged her to the royal court.

Draupadi then posed a question to the honorable members and elders in the assembly: had Dharmaraja pawned himself first and then lost her, or vice-versa. If Dharmaraja had pawned himself first and lost the game, then he had no right to pawn Draupadi. Moreover, Draupadi was the

wife of not only Dharmaraja but all the five brothers. Had they given their consent for Dharmaraji to pawn Panchali (the wife of five brothers) in this game of dice? No one in that august assembly dared to answer these subtle points raised by Draupadi. They did not open their mouths.

Draupadi's Tolerance

Dronacharya, one day in his youth, had gone to King Drupada to ask for the gift of a cow. Because the king refused to make the gift, Dronacharya in his anger had left Panchala with his belongings, wife, and child, Aswatthama. While walking toward Hastinapura, he had encountered the Pandava and Kaurava children playing in a field near a well. Coming near the children, who stood around the well, Dronacharya inquired, "My dear children, what is the matter? Why are you all standing around the well in this manner? What has happened?" The children replied in one voice, "Swami, our ball fell into this well."

Dronacharya then pacified them saying, "Do not worry, I will retrieve the ball." So saying, he pulled out an arrow and shot at the ball. The arrow stuck into the ball. Then he shot another arrow, which stuck to the back of the first arrow. In this manner, he released a number of arrows, one after the other, and finally, with the help of the arrows, which were now made into a long pole, he pulled out the ball and handed it over to the children. Seeing this wonderful feat of Dronacharya, they fell at his feet. They realized that they had at last found someone who was an expert in archery.

They conveyed this news to Bhishma, who appointed Dronacharya as the teacher of both the Kauravas and the Pandavas.

Among all the children, Arjuna in particular learned the skills of archery and quickly became an expert, winning the affection and admiration of Guru Dronacharya. In fact, Arjuna made his guru proud and famous by his skills. This, however, made Aswatthama, Dronacharya's son, jealous. From then onward, Aswatthama bore a grudge against the Pandavas, particularly Arjuna. During the Mahabharata war, Aswatthama joined the Kauravas and fought against the Pandavas.

One night, during the war, he stole into the camp of the Pandavas and massacred the Upapandavas (young children of the Pandavas), mercilessly, in the dark. As he was about to escape, he was tracked down by Arjuna, who dragged him into the presence of Draupadi. Instead of becoming angry, cursing the evildoer, and pronouncing punishment on him, she fell at Aswatthama's feet, the son of her husband's most revered guru, and said:

*My husbands learned all that they know
at the feet of your father, Dronacharya.
Being the son of Dronacharya, is it proper
to kill my innocent children? How could
you have the heart to kill them? They
were unarmed, young, quietly asleep, not
holding any enmity against you, and not
contemplating any harm to you. (TELUGU*

POEM)

While Draupadi was thus pleading with Aswatthama, Bhima could not bear it. Exploding with anger, he roared:

This Draupadi is a stupid woman, for she pleads for the freedom of this wretch. She feels no anger against this murderer of her sons. This assassin is not a Brahmin. Do not release him; kill him. If you do not do so, I myself will kill him, with my powerful fist. (TELUGU POEM)

Aswatthama trembled with fear and felt helpless. Also consumed with rage, Arjuna was about to attack Aswatthama. Draupadi then raised both her hands and pleaded with Arjuna thus:

Oh, Phalguna! It is not righteous to kill a person who is afraid or has lost courage, who is asleep or intoxicated, who seeks refuge or is a female. You should not kill Aswatthama, for he is the son of your preceptor. (TELUGU POEM)

Draupadi then fell at Arjuna's feet and reasoned with him, "Arjuna, will my sons be revived by your killing Aswatthama? His mother would experience the same kind of sorrow that I am undergoing now. Having studied the Vedas and Sastras, how is it that you are unable to maintain your tranquility?" Thus, Draupadi pleaded with Arjuna to forgive Aswatthama for his heinous act.

Arjuna retorted, "You are preventing me from keeping my vow."

Draupadi replied, "Tonsuring his head and removing the crown jewel from his head will be equivalent to killing him." Arjuna

then agreed to her pleadings, and as a token of punishment, shaved Aswatthama's head, took his crown jewel, and set him free.

"There is no use in brooding over the past. Past is past; forget the past," is the advice given by Draupadi to Arjuna. On the advice of Draupadi, Arjuna suppressed his emotion.

Just now, an economist who participated in the conference mentioned the theme "Ethics and Finance." Arjuna followed ethics and saved the life of Aswatthama, forgetting the loss of the Upapandavas.

To save the life of a fellow human being is far superior to accumulating wealth. Several such incidents of nobility are to be found in the Mahabharata and the Bhagavatha. There are many noble women such as Draupadi, who was broadminded and noble of character. It is only because of such women that the country of Bharat (India) has achieved great progress from age to age and attained its pre-eminent position today. Unfortunately, the Bharatiyas (Indians) have forgotten their glorious past. They are now like a mighty elephant that is unaware of its innate strength.

Uphold the Tradition of Moral Purity and Tolerance

In the supremely holy land of Bharat (India), tolerance is the towering quality of our character. What is the real beauty in a human being? It is not the beauty of the physical body. It is the quality of tolerance that confers real beauty on an individual. Our Bharatiya culture has given utmost importance to the quality of tolerance. This has been our tradition through the ages.

One must therefore uphold one's rich tradition of purity and tolerance. A true Bharatiya is one who protects these two qualities. He who lacks morality is not a human. Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows. Hence, one must protect one's morality. That is the real quality of a Bharatiya. Only one who is endowed with a noble character is eligible to be called a Bharatiya.

Just as an elephant is unaware of its innate strength and submits itself meekly to the commands of its *mahout* (trainer), the Bharatiyas of today forget their innate strength and purity and are imitating the western culture. Though they are endowed with great strength and have mastered the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the scriptures, they are aping western culture, forgetting their own greatness. This does not befit the people of such a great nation. You have to realize the greatness of your culture and follow your conscience. Unfortunately, people today do not follow their conscience.

Observe Restraint and Limits

If you continue to imitate western culture, your own strength will gradually diminish. Therefore, do not imitate others. Observe restraint. A lion attacks another animal only when it is hungry; it does not go about killing every animal it comes across. Even a wild beast like a lion has the capacity to restrain itself. Hence, it is necessary for every human being to observe restraint and certain limits. Limitless ego, anger, and desire will only lead you astray.

You have to divert your mind from such a situation and follow the noble path, so that you do not cause harm to others or suffering to yourself. Do not utilize your strength and power indiscriminately.

You see modern children enjoying unrestrained freedom. Freedom no doubt is good and permissible but should be within a limit. Then only does it acquire value. Trying to amass wealth and being overly smart will only lead you to danger.

You must have seen in the news how America has indulged in colossal wastage of its money and resources waging wars against Iran, Iraq, and other nations. What could America gain from this? Today the American economy has slowed down and there is recession in the country. It is all due to their improper usage of resources.

Take for example, Lord Easwara. He is mighty and all-powerful. Yet, he uses his all-pervading power only to the extent necessary. He does not use his power indiscriminately. One must emulate his example and make proper use of one's strength and resources, only to the extent necessary.

Do not waste your thoughts, for it makes your mind unsteady and wavering. (*showing his handkerchief*) What is this? This is a cloth. No, this is not a cloth but a bundle of threads. Not even threads, it is just cotton. Without cotton, there can be no threads, and without threads there can be no cloth. Likewise, the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. Therefore, put a check on your thoughts. Even the wealth you acquire and the food

you eat must be within a certain limit. Food is God; do not waste it.

Guidelines for Purposeful Living

Help ever, hurt never. These are some of the guidelines for a purposeful living that you must follow. He is blessed who conducts himself in such a way that he does not hurt others or get hurt in the process. You have to learn these skills, which are not available in textbooks. Watch your thoughts, and see that they do not go astray. Each time a thought arises in your mind, analyze it: “Is it good or bad?” If you feel it is bad, do not allow it to persist. Just let it pass. If it is a good thought, put it into practice so that you and others also will be benefited.

In the conference held yesterday and today, certain guidelines for the efficient functioning of the banks in the country have been deliberated upon. Whatever actions you perform must be in a spirit of self-improvement. Do not be under the impression that you are serving the organization; rather you are serving yourself by your sincere efforts. Do not at all give room for ego and pride.

By depositing your savings in the bank, it is not the bank but you who will benefit, for it will come back to you only. In the same way, you will benefit by the good you do to others. You are doing it for your own good life.

If you want to earn a good name in society, **cultivate three principles: *daiva preeti*, *papa bheeti*, and *sangha neeti* (love for God, fear of engaging in sin, and morality in society).** If you foster morality in society, people will gather around you, treating you as a

good person. First and foremost, develop love for God. The next is fear of sin. Only when you cultivate this quality will you become a person of character. When you have a noble character, the entire society will love you. No one will hate you. Maintain good character and love all. Love is everywhere and God is everywhere. Hence, love all. The more you love others, the higher your reputation will rise in society.

If you commit a mistake or indulge in an evil deed, others will try to imitate you. Hence, be good, do good, and see good. This is the way to God. Only when you conduct yourself in such a manner will you earn a good name in society.

You cannot learn these things from a textbook. It is not textual information. It relates to the purity of heart. You should develop such sacredness. Unfortunately, one finds only secrets but no sacredness anywhere. This is not good. If you smoke a cigarette, your friend too will come to you and say, “Hello, you are a good boy. Give me also a cigarette.”

As is your company, so will be your behavior. “Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.” If your company is bad, you become a bad person. If you are good, others will follow your example and become good.

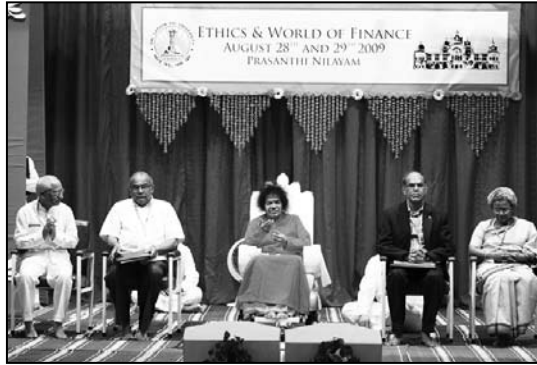
Today, you find that some companies have closed their operations. What could be the reason for this? If one company is following foul methods, other companies will also follow suit. It is a common thing that bad habits spread quickly and easily. You must therefore be cautious and strive for good

things to happen. Do not be hasty to imitate bad things. “Haste makes waste; waste makes worry. Therefore, do not be in a hurry.”

Dear children, you are all very young. Start doing good work right from this age. Set an example to others. Do service to society. It is society that protects you.

Even before you start doing social service, there are four persons whom you should revere and respect: mother, father, preceptor, and God, in that order. First and foremost is the mother. Make her happy. If your mother is happy, your entire life will be happy. If you make her unhappy, you will suffer. Hence, keep her happy and content at all times. Your mother’s happiness is your happiness. She will protect you always.

It is the mother who gave birth to you and brought you up. She may reprimand you and even beat you when she is angry with you, but her anger is only momentary. You should not feel for it. The temporary anger will not last long. Realize the fact that anger, ego, jealousy, and the like are all temporary phases. Even lust is momentary. These are all temporary, and hence they come and go. They are not permanent. But one principle, the *Atma Tattwa* (principle of inner divinity), is everlasting.



Develop love for one and all. Love, Love, Love! ***Love all and serve all.*** Love is your only property that lasts forever. There is nothing greater than love, and nothing greater is needed.

Plunge into service with the feeling, “Service is God; service is my life.” Service should not be undertaken with an expectation of remuneration. ***Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows.*** Do not be elated when you get money or depressed when you lose it. The difference between money and morality is: money comes and goes, whereas morality comes and grows.

Dear children, today is a very happy day. Pray that occasions like this should reoccur wherever you may be.

God is your sole refuge, wherever you may be—in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain, or in the middle of a deep sea. (TELUGU POEM)

God is always with you, above you, behind you. He will always protect you. Develop this firm faith in your heart. God’s grace is not transitory. He will always be with you. You are all good children, I know. Conduct yourself as good children always.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
August 29, 2009

Students: Holy Repository of Sai's Teachings

*Convocation Address by Prof. Samuel Sandweiss, MD, Chief Guest,
28th Sri Sathya Sai University Convocation, November 22, 2009*

During the 2009 University Convocation ceremonies, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Vishwanath Pandit, introduced Dr. Samuel Sandweiss as follows:

"Today there is a wide consensus in the medical profession that most ailments are born in the mind and passed on to the body in different ways. Hence the need to "mend the mind," as Bhagavan has taught. We cannot think of a better person than Dr. Samuel Sandweiss, who has mastered this subject in all its facets and shown how spiritual practices affect the mind and expand consciousness and love. He not only teaches psychiatry at the University of California, San Diego, but has also been a practicing psychiatrist for over 40 years. Rising well above the body-mind-intellect complex, he treats human beings as embodiments of divinity.

"Most of us have learned a great deal from his inspiring books, namely, *Sai Baba: The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist*, *Spirit and the Mind*, and more recently, *With Love, Man is God*. An ardent devotee of Bhagavan for more than three decades, Dr. Sandweiss has served on the Sathya Sai Baba Council of the United States since its inception in 1975. He and his wife, Sharon, have hosted a Sai Baba Center in their home for over 35 years. They also oversee Birth Day Publishing Company, which publishes books about Sri Sathya Sai Baba by western devotees. I welcome Dr. Sandweiss to this august function and request him to deliver the convocation address. All of us need to listen carefully and take a valuable message with us when we leave. I am sure the message will inspire the outgoing graduates for many many years to come."

I am deeply humbled by the invitation to address you at this 28th Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai University. I consider Swami to be divine—omnipresent, our constant friend and companion. Whenever, wherever has there been such a chancellor, who is with us in this life and the next, leading us to bliss and love? It is humbling to speak before him. It is the greatest honor of my life.

Today I am addressing graduating students of this very special university, and I would also like to include all devotees of God, because in our hearts we are all Swami's students.

What are we learning here that I found nowhere else? We have experienced Swami saving us at the very last minute wherever we are, showing his command over time and place. Seeing Swami materialize an object is

to bear witness to the truth that “creation—the universe—is a projection of God’s will; it has no basic reality.” Swami has written so in *Bhagavatha Vahini*.

Can modern science even begin to imagine this reality? Yes! God exists! His heart is soft like butter. He loves us, and wants our love—love merges into love—“I am God.”

“The mind is the key”—the cause of our bondage or liberation. “Follow the conscience”—it leads us to serving society. Through service we find God in society and are fulfilled!

Students, you are the holy repository of Swami’s teachings, soon to test this sacred knowledge in the crucible of daily life. How are we to live these teachings? Here is a story.

A “Names of God” Ring

In February 2005, Swami materialized a gold ring for my wife. It had a rectangular surface, and from one side we saw the inscription, *Om*. We noticed, when viewing the inscription from different sides, the same lines looked like words in different languages. One looked Arabic. Swami said that they were names of God. I knew the mystery of the different names would unfold in the course of life.

Sharon’s brother, Michael, became ill—his wife was disabled. They couldn’t care for themselves. They sank into despair. We traveled 2,000 miles to work hard for a week cleaning their home and moving them to a safe place. Their home was in such disarray

and so dirty that we had to wear protective masks when working there. This is man’s condition today. We live in polluted land, water, air, and societal relationships. We have become sick!

Swami was in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and as we established purity in the setting and in our impulses, we saw signs of Swami’s divinity—in the smiles on our brother’s and sister’s faces.

While at the desk of our motel, the clerk noticed Sharon’s ring. “Do you know what that means? It is the name of God, *Allah*,” she said. Service brought insight!

Subsequently we learned the meaning of each word as we turned the ring in different angles. From one angle it was *Om*; from another, *Allah*; from another, *I am I*; from another, *El*, a name of God in the Jewish religion. Swami was teaching—different names but one God, and that by serving, we see our unity in diversity.

Deeper grew the wisdom in the course of service, and then Sharon and I went to St. Petersburg to speak at the Russian National Sai Conference about a year-and-a-half ago. Swami teaches self-management, family management, local community service, even service in the world community.

We told the ring story and showed pictures on a large screen. Muslims in the audience were deeply moved and cheered. They were happy to see that Swami had recognized them by materializing their holiest word. We were so happy to play a part in bringing such happiness.

Professor Jafar Malaev from Dagestan had the widest smile of all at the conference. I'd never heard of Dagestan. How could I have met Professor Jafar but in the expanding orbit of Swami's love? He was a Muslim and chancellor of a large university with an enrollment of 30,000 students. He had been impressed by Swami's love and educational programs. "How can I bring your teaching to my university?" he asked Swami. Swami simply said, "You are the educator; find out for yourself."

There's a major lesson for us here! We must integrate the teachings through the power of practice. It is up to us. Constant integrated awareness—hands in society and head in the forest—integrate them as one!

Jafar said, "We must rise above anger, violence, and revenge, if we are to survive. Problems such as in the Middle East between Palestinians and Israelis must be solved with love." Then, taking my hand and looking deeply into my eyes, he said, "We must stop fighting and learn to love each other. Sandweiss, I love you."

I was sincerely touched and responded, "And Jafar, I love you."

Swami's ring brought us together.

Jafar is Muslim and I am Jewish. I pray that this love generated by Sai enters into the age-old conflict between Palestinians and Israelis—Muslim and Jew—resolving all factions, all frictions—healing our hearts and bringing peace. Is it possible? Only through Swami's love. And we are his messengers. We gain confidence in the possibility of pure love

bringing world peace, by looking at how this love has already manifested!

I Am God—and You Are, Too

When I first met Swami 37 years ago, I couldn't stop thinking and writing about him. I was so thrilled to see infinite consciousness and love in a being, and to know that he is a reflection of the Self. I learned that I am God. But when I told my fellow psychiatrists at the University [of California] that I am God, they thought that I had lost my mind in India. Actually, I found my heart here! Matters didn't improve when I said, "Wait, wait—you are God, too." Modern psychiatry still has a ways to go.

Then came the temples of healing—the super-specialty hospitals with their message of purity and compassion. How quickly they appeared, how beautiful they are, how efficiently and effectively they express Swami's love for the poor and needy. How they encourage us to be instruments of this love as well.

In an age when medicine has been polluted by desire for money and position, the message of Swami's hospitals—of purity, sanctity, and service—is already being heard and practiced. For instance, one month ago I took part in the first Sai International Medical Conference at a large convention center in California, USA. The conference was organized by the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee, chaired by Dr. Narendra Reddy.

Swami told Dr. Reddy that He would conduct the meeting, and indeed, it was



Dr. Samuel Sandweiss walks at Swami's side during the Sri Sathya Sai University Convocation ceremony in Sai Kulwant Hall, Nov. 22, 2009.

brilliant. About 30 gifted speakers, some chairmen of departments, presidents of societies—from the USA and around the world—spoke to an international group of about 450 doctors, about Swami's love and how they have integrated it into their practices, free clinics and camps, and disaster relief programs. Some of our brothers and sisters had been to such distressed areas as Darfur, Somalia, Kosovo, and poor villages in Russia, Africa, and India—serving the most suffering of our brothers and sisters—and with Swami's support ever present.

Instruments of Transformation

Swami is bringing about a transformation, not only in medicine but also in all relationships, and especially in education. I have

seen this [Sri Sathya Sai] University blossom. I saw the beginning, when there were only lines in the sand pointing out where to dig. I've seen the buildings rise. I've seen you in the corridors and the classrooms, the laboratories and hostels, on the sports fields, and during darshan when you scurry so quickly for a seat near Swami. I've been friends with the Vice Chancellors from the beginning. The first one, Dr. V. Gokak, sat at our kitchen table in the United States, teaching our four young daughters the food prayer.

And now I stand before you at the time of this 28th Convocation, having seen such a transformation of buildings, programs, and students. How exhilarating to see your bright faces and sense the eagerness in your hearts to serve. You are proof that the integration

of secular and spiritual education is not only possible, not only practical—it is essential if we are to survive!

Dear students, be ever vigilant to hold tight to Swami as we face today's enormous problems. Poverty of love and the rise of selfishness are producing great suffering in our minds and on Mother Earth. Anxiety, depression, hatred, confusion, and loss of reason and purpose run rampant. Mindless production and consumption have produced depletion and pollution.

Over one billion people already suffer from a shortage of clean water, and we cough up 93 million tons of toxic waste daily into the atmosphere. This mindless, selfish action affects us all—the Inuit Eskimos of Greenland, for instance, are among those with the highest concentrations of these toxins in their body. They are at our mercy.

We currently use 20% more resources than the Earth can regenerate. With the growing world economies, if everyone consumed to the degree found in the United States, it would take five planets the size of Earth to replenish our addictions. Adding four more planets cannot be our goal! We face the threat of nuclear war, genocides, racism, fundamentalism, narrow-mindedness, terrorism. How can this dire condition change? Only through Swami's love, and we are his messengers.

Our place is with Swami, to be worthy instruments of his love. The issue is not that we don't know the teachings. Swami has placed them firmly in our hearts! The problem is one of losing our will and de-

termination over the long haul, of “getting and forgetting” our close relationship with Swami. Swami described this closeness in a letter to his students years ago:

*The bird with you—the wings with me
The foot with you—the way with me,
The eye with you—the form with me,
The thing with you—the dream with me,
The world with you—
the heaven with me,
So are we free, so are we bound,
So we begin, and so we end,
You in me, and I in you.
Be happy!*

We must not “get and forget” the gifts that Swami has given, because of bruised egos, daunting tasks, or prolonged effort. There are no excuses to wander—“I am too tired,” “It is too inconvenient,” “My career consumes all my time,” “I have to make money,” “I'm not in the mood,” “I'm embarrassed,” “I forgot”—so many reasons to drift.

No, no—the path of pure love is too important. Rather, we must recognize our role and rise to the calling—as Swami once wrote to students:

Students! See life as a battlefield meant for heroism and courage. You are the children of God, heroes in action, great soldiers in the age of Kali. The mother is awaiting your arrival on the scene. Hold tight and be ready to serve.

"We must seriously prepare for the moment when Swami picks any of us out of the crowd, as he picked me today, and places us in a position to influence world events. By singing his name, serving his children, and studying his eternal wisdom, we must prepare ourselves for the day he picks us."

Dr. Jack Hislop: Fiercely Determined to Serve

Here is a story about fierce determination in service and sacrificial love ever ready to serve Swami.

Dr. Jack Hislop came to know of Swami and served him faithfully for the last 30 years of his life. He was the first president of the Sathya Sai Council of the United States and wrote two books about Swami, *Conversations with Sathya Sai Baba* and *My Baba and I*. Swami told me that for his last 15 years, Hislop was in constant meditation on Swami.

Hislop was a strong man and spoke all over the world about Swami. When he was approaching death and becoming frail, he was invited to speak in Japan. Because he was so weak, he wrote to Swami asking if he should go.

Swami sent back one word: "Go!"

It appeared that Swami was asking for total surrender—to fully release everything into him and accept that he is the doer!

Although Hislop could hardly stand, he obeyed our master and, remarkably, spoke 35 times in 10 days. Sometimes Swami holds a devotee up as a role model of sacrificial service. I believe that Dr. Hislop was such a devotee. Hislop returned home feeble and faint. One morning I called. He said that he

had fallen in the night and was too weak to rise, so he lay for hours on the floor. I was alarmed and immediately took him to the hospital. We found out that he had cancer and would soon die.

Dr. Hislop had no fear of death—Swami was his staff and support. When asked what he had learned from his long spiritual life and what was giving him strength now, without hesitation he said, "I have practiced many paths—meditation, service, detachment—but of all paths, the most lasting and what I'm holding onto now is devotion! All other paths—meditation, service—have dropped away. What remains is devotion. I see Swami, and I know that he is in me, and I am in him."

Pure Love—the Alpha and Omega

Pure love is most precious. It is the *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning and the end.

When everything impermanent is removed, love remains. When the well runs dry and all the frogs leave, there remains only God's pure love to keep us company. Swami tells us that creation, preservation, and dissolution emanate from this pure love. Pure love brings beauty to the character, harmony to the home, and peace to the world, and

Swami has come to give us this pure love. As he has said:

I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster.

Swami has showered his pure love on me in overflowing abundance today. He has allowed me the honor of being Chief Guest and the opportunity to speak to you today. The invitation came as a complete shock. I know that many are better qualified, but Swami allowed me the honor. It is an expression of his pure love, a love that operates beyond the realm of human comprehension, plain and simple. I am grateful beyond measure for your pure love, Swami. Thank you.

We might ask if Swami's love can actually bring peace to our troubled world. It is one thing to see the miraculous appearance of super-specialty hospitals, mammoth clean water projects, revolutionary educational programs, and spiritual centers all over the world practicing service and love. It is something else altogether to consider that Swami can actually bring world peace. Although Swami has said that in a short time we will have world peace, it seems almost impossible.

But let us be open to the possibility of this "impossibility." We must seriously prepare for the moment when Swami picks any of us out of the crowd, as he picked me today, and places us in a position to influence world events. By singing his name, serving his children, and studying his eternal wisdom, we must prepare ourselves for the day he picks us.

My wife once asked Swami if he would save the world. He answered, "Half save, half seva." *Seva* (service)—pure love in action!

Swami, as we approach the year leading to your 85th birthday, the year designated as "Pure Love":

*Let your glory shine on our hearts like a million suns,
setting our love aflame,
until you and I become the same.
Let us walk with your love in our hearts,
your name on our lips,
your hand in ours,
and hand in hand—
half save, half seva.
Let us bring honor to this holy university and to your sacred name,
and radiate love to the world,
so that the mountains ring with love,
the heavens sing with love,
the stars shine with love,
the poets rhyme with love,
and all the beings
of all the worlds are happy.*

Students, I know the love in your hearts. I share it. I've heard you chirping frequently in front of Swami, "Swami, Swami, Swami!" "Swami, Swami, Swami!" I've seen him moved by your yearning. I pray he hears this plaintive cry from fledgling birds about to fly and blesses us with his precious words of love. Dear Swami, please speak to us on this glorious and sacred Convocation Day.

—Courtesy: www.ssbpt.org/Pages/Prasanthi_Nilayam/sandweisspeech.html

Announcements

- **Pre-World Conference 2010: Study Materials and Study Circles on Sai Ideals**
- **Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee: Relief Efforts in Haiti**
- **2009 International Medical Conference - Online Archives**
- **USA Retreat and Pilgrimage Dates, 2010**

Pre-World Conference 2010: Study Materials and Study Circles on Sai Ideals

The Zone 1 Pre-World Conference, under the theme, “The Sai Ideal: *God Is!, I Am I!, Love All, Serve All!*” will be held April 17-18, 2010, in Orlando, Florida, and will include two study circles, one on “Sai Ideal Human Life” and one on “Sai Ideal Spiritual Organization.” The study circle format and conference agenda are described at www.sathyasai.org/organize/conferences/preconference2010.html.

These study circles will be carried out in the context of what Swami has said about “God is,” “I am I,” and “Love All, Serve All.” For this purpose, participants are expected to read nine selected discourses (two on “God Is,” four on “I am I,” and three on “Love All, Serve All”), along with three concordances of quotes on these topics (all downloadable from the website above), before coming to the conference.

However, rather than just read the discourses, we suggest that Sai Centers have study circles on the discourses, with the aim of pondering, discussing, and finally understanding “God Is,” “I am I,” and “Love All, Serve All”—and what they mean to us.

These study circles could serve two purposes:

1. Devotees who are not going to the conference will benefit from the study circles, too, and, after the conference, reports to the centers from those who went will be more beneficial.
2. As is always the case, one benefits far more from a study circle than from reading, because one hears the different viewpoints, the different facets, as the diamond gets polished by different people.

We suggest (and it is only a suggestion) that Sai Centers study the discourses in the coming months. Don’t race through them. Instead, aim to cover at least one discourse from each of the topics (“God Is,” “I am I,” and “Love All, Serve All”) before the conference. It is better to spend time on one discourse, gaining much understanding, than it is to race through several of them.

—Dr. David Gries

Chair, Zone 1 (Canada, West Indies, USA)

Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee: Relief Efforts in Haiti

In response to the devastating impact of the January 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti, and with the blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, relief efforts by the Sri Sathya Sai Organization began in late January 2010. Relief missions commenced in the final week of January and the first week of February, with teams from Latin America, USA, and Canada traveling to Haiti. These teams first met with members from the Sathya Sai Organization of the Dominican Republic and Haiti to ensure swift delivery of compassionate and loving care to the victims.

On Tuesday, January 26, 2010, two teams of doctors and volunteers under the leadership of Dr. Jorge Berra from South America and Dr. Hector Castaneda from Central America proceeded to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to set up the medical camps to serve the victims of the earthquake. They then traveled to the Dominican Republic-Haiti border to set up a medical camp.

A third team of doctors and volunteers from the USA and Canada under the leadership of Dr. Hari Conjeevaram then met the other two teams at the medical camp. The joint efforts of all three teams ensured the effective delivery of Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare. In addition, these teams undertook the task of assessing the local needs and available resources to plan future trips.

In February more teams of volunteers were to be dispatched to the Dominican Republic. As conditions in Haiti improve, future teams will be composed of both medical and nonmedical personnel. Young adults participated in the first trip and will be joining in future missions.

In a letter outlining the plans above, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee and a director of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, stated, "This is a wonderful opportunity for all to work together and deliver Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's message of love, service, and compassion."

Information for Those Wishing to Volunteer: Dr. Hari Conjeevaram is the Director of the Sri Sathya Sai Haiti relief efforts from North America. Individuals interested in volunteering may contact him at hconjeev@hotmail.com, with the following information:

1. Your name, email, and phone number
2. Your profession and any specialized training
3. Prior disaster relief or medical camp experience if any
4. Fluency in: English, French, Spanish, or Creole
5. Several choices of one-week periods when you can be in Haiti (please list the week from Saturday to Sunday—e.g. 13-21 Feb)

You will then be contacted with further information. There is no guarantee as to choice of dates. Please do not travel to Haiti without contacting and receiving confirmation from Dr.

Conjeevaram's committee. If you do so, you may not be able to join one of the teams, because space is limited, and complete coordination is necessary. Thus, to join one of the teams, it is imperative to get prior written confirmation from the coordinating committee.

Donations of Medical Supplies for Haiti Relief Efforts In addition, medical supplies for Haiti relief efforts are being collected through the Sri Sathya Sai International Center for Medical Services. For information about donating supplies, please contact Mr. Rohan Balasuriya, RohanLBa@aol.com.

2009 International Medical Conference - Online Archives

The materials and proceedings of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Conference held October 10-11, 2009 in Anaheim, California, USA, are available through the following links at the Sathya Sai Organization International website:

1. Presentations and videos from the proceedings of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Conference: <http://www.saicast.org/medconf2009.htm>.
2. Posters from the medical exhibition on "Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare and Sathya Sai Global Health Mission": <http://www.sathyasai.org/saihealth/09octssghmexhibition.html>.
3. PDF copies of the books, *Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare* and *Sathya Sai Global Health Mission*: <http://www.sathyasai.org/saihealth/09octssghm.html>.

USA Retreat and Pilgrimage Dates, 2010

Regional retreat updates and information may also be viewed at the official Sai website: <http://us.sathyasai.org>

- **Zone 1 Pre-World Conference (Canada, USA, and West Indies):** April 17–18, 2010, Orlando, Florida. Conference theme: "The Sai Ideal: *God Is!, I Am I!, Love All, Serve All!*" For details and registration, see: <http://us.saiconference.org/>. Study circle format and conference agenda are described at www.sathyasai.org/organize/conferences/preconference2010.html.
- **USA Pilgrimages: Group 1, June 23-July 2, 2010; Group 2, July 5-14, 2010, Prasanthi Nilayam, India:** Registration is closed as of Feb. 15, 2010. Please see www.saipilgrimageusa.org for updates.
- **Region 1 (Northeast): May 28-30, 2010** (Friday 8 p.m.–Sunday 7 p.m.), at Russell Sage College Campus, Troy, NY. Theme: *The Sai Ideal–God Is; I Am I; and Love All, Serve All*. Speaker: Sunder Iyer. Contact: Glenn Rothbart, 508-872-6899(h); 774-249-5623 (m).
- **Region 4 (Mid-Central): May 21-23, 2010** (weekend before Memorial Day holiday weekend) at Camp Wyman, just outside St. Louis, MO. Details to be announced.
- **Region 6 (Pacific North):** The Grants Pass Sai Family Reunion will be held over the Memorial Day holiday weekend, May 29–31, 2010, to avoid a conflict with the USA Pilgrimages to Swami, happening around the Fourth of July. Further details to be announced.

“United Sai America”

Regions 4 and 7 Joint Pilgrimage and Cultural Program in Prasanthi

A joint pilgrimage spanning different regions of the US last summer turned into a beautiful exercise in unity and cooperation—and, in light of preparing for this year’s all-USA pilgrimages and cultural programs scheduled for June and July, an auspicious preview and reminder of what is possible when working together with love.

On July 30, 2009, Bhagavan came out at 5:00 p.m., granting darshan to the concourse of devotees assembled in the Sai Kulwant Hall. Proceeding centerstage after a full round of darshan, the Lord most lovingly accepted prayerful offerings of the USA combined pilgrimage of 222 devotees from Region 4 (Mid-Central Region, including Sai Centers from Southern Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee) and Region 7 (Northern California and Nevada). The organizers came up to Bhagavan in groups, one after the other, ladies and gents.

The Lord seemed minutely interested, perusing descriptions of USA Young Adult (YA) service programs—involving YAs across the country—and posing questions to Region

4 President cum chief organizer, Dr. Jack Feely. Then Bhagavan asked Dr. Feely to announce the program to the audience.

Thus began the fruition of many months of preparation by members of Regions 4 and 7, as reported in the Festivals & Functions archives at the Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, website.

But how did two far-apart regions of the USA happen to join ranks in this united endeavor? And how does a region whose geographic area comprises six states—a wide area indeed, pull together a program that coordinates and includes all those who wish to participate?

Dr. Feely explains, “The joining of the two regions was quite curious. Region 4 decided



to plan a pilgrimage including a cultural program. In a small core planning group meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, we decided to focus on the multiple ethnic groups forming the melting pot of the USA. Initially we were just going to sing various songs and have the children march around in cultural costumes. We asked the YAs in the region to select the music/songs because of their expertise. They agreed, and then they discovered that a YA group from Region 7 was planning a pilgrimage during the same timeframe as ours.

“Then the YAs from both regions discussed the possibility of joining the two groups. The planning committee agreed and suggested that all the YAs could help us select the music and songs. In other words, Region 7 and our YAs had the musical talent, and Region 4 had the children. After the music and songs were selected, the selections were sent to the groups around Region 4, so they could begin practicing. Then the YAs from both regions suggested they could write some script and actually create a skit to be performed by the children while the entire group sang live during the performance.

“This sounded like a great idea. So, from a small meeting in St. Louis, one thing led to another, and the ‘United Sai America’ performance came to be—which is a simple way of noting that Swami had his divine finger in this from the start and guided us all.

“Our children were spread around Region 4, so on three separate weekends they were all brought by their parents to St. Louis for rehearsal and taping of the words. The words were pre-recorded but the music/songs were presented live at Prasanthi. Between these weekends, the children, guided by their parents and Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) teachers, rehearsed their parts over and over. On one of the three weekends in St. Louis, three YAs from Region 7 flew to St. Louis to help the adults practice the songs. Since the songs were in African (Zulu), Latin, Native American, Spanish, and so on, they were especially challenging for many devotees, in terms of learning the pronunciation.

“Countless teleconference calls took place between the two regions. Many committees—comprised of representatives from both regions—were formed, including committees for Service, Logistics, Album, Cultural Pro-



March/April 2010



gram, and so on. The final pilgrimage included Region 4 adults, YAs, and children, and Region 7 YAs. It really was a ‘united’ and ‘uniting’ experience. The first time the entire 222 people were together to practice was at Prasanthi—but everyone had practiced previously in various ways at home.”

Even devotees from Region 8 (Southern California and Las Vegas, Nevada) gave assistance as needed with a few things such as the soundtrack and a printed program.

What is America’s message to the world? What does American sentiment reflect? The Region 4 and 7 groups found a memorable way to answer this and to impress upon the Lord their dream of a divine visit to the United States of America. They contrived to “send” the illustrious Sage Narada on a fact-finding mission, to report back to the Lord of lords about the varied cultural traditions of the US. The country and its citizens from different countries, races, and religions welcomed the sage in his fact-finding mission.

Sage Narada is famous for his spiritual attainments that allowed him to enter many a world at will, while ever engaged in chanting the name of Lord Narayana. In this drama, Narada ends up calling on various spiritual sects across the US, finally to submit his report to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

With the power-packed sounds of the Rudram sanctifying the air in Prasanthi, sending vibes across the universe calling for harmony and unity in diversity, the presentation began with Sage Narada arriving in the United States and visiting some Native Americans in the state of Oklahoma. This group’s traditions

include the belief that everything on earth has a purpose. In their theory of being, every disease has an herb to cure it, and every person is on a mission.

Narada’s next visit was to a class at the St. Joseph Catholic School, in Nashville, Tennessee, where the teacher, a Catholic of Italian-American background, and the students were learning Latin hymns in praise of Jesus Christ.

The sage’s next destination was a Buddhist monastery, where the devotion of the monks transported Narada into ecstasy, and he spontaneously blurted out a powerful verse on Lord Buddha. Equally inspired, one of the monks also recited a chant, after which Narada and the monks prayed together.

Narada’s next encounter was with a small group of African-American gospel singers from a congregation of The United Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama, who were assembled for the National Day of Prayer, held each year in the US on the first Thursday in May, with the theme of praying for one’s country and the country’s leaders.

The illustrious Sage Narada then met with a Hispanic-American group from El Paso, Texas, who presented a Mexican folk dance set to the tune of Spanish-language hymns in praise of Jesus Christ. Touched by their devotion, Narada also offered his heartfelt prostrations to Jesus Christ.

Then, in San Francisco, California, Sage Narada sat in on Jewish and Muslim prayers and songs from two followers of those religions. Narada remarked that though the two religions were different, their prayers were both for peace.

Narada's final stop in his US tour was at a Hindu temple in Kansas City, Missouri, where devotees were gathered to celebrate Rama Navami (Rama's birthday) with *nagar-sankirtan* (group devotional singing in a public procession). Narada recalled that "the Lord does not reside in Vaikunta (Vishnu's heavenly abode), nor solely in the hearts of great sages, but anywhere that devotees sing God's praises!"

The presentation was interspersed with lines from the famous Hindi bhajan, "Hey O Vithale, Bhakta Jana Vatsale ...," with Sage Narada singing the tune in ecstasy as he traveled from place to place, glorifying the Lord. The beautiful songs and hymns featured throughout, depicting various cultural groups, enlivened the program, especially those the audience could recognize, such as the Islamic song in praise of Allah, "Ya Mustafa ...," which received an enthusiastic round of applause by the devotees. Truly, the Americans seemed to have adopted a mission to depict the United States of America as a "United Sai America"!

Narada, hailed by the Puranas (classical Indian spiritual narratives) as a great servant of Lord Maha Vishnu, served as a worthy instrument in this case too, in coming up with a report for the Lord in physical form. After concluding his visit to the US and returning to India, Narada expressed his deepest gratitude for the opportunity to learn from the diverse people of the United States of America, reading out his report to Sai Baba as follows:

Dear Lord, I have come back from my mission. My heart is filled with joy! Words fail to express my gratitude to thee, for giving

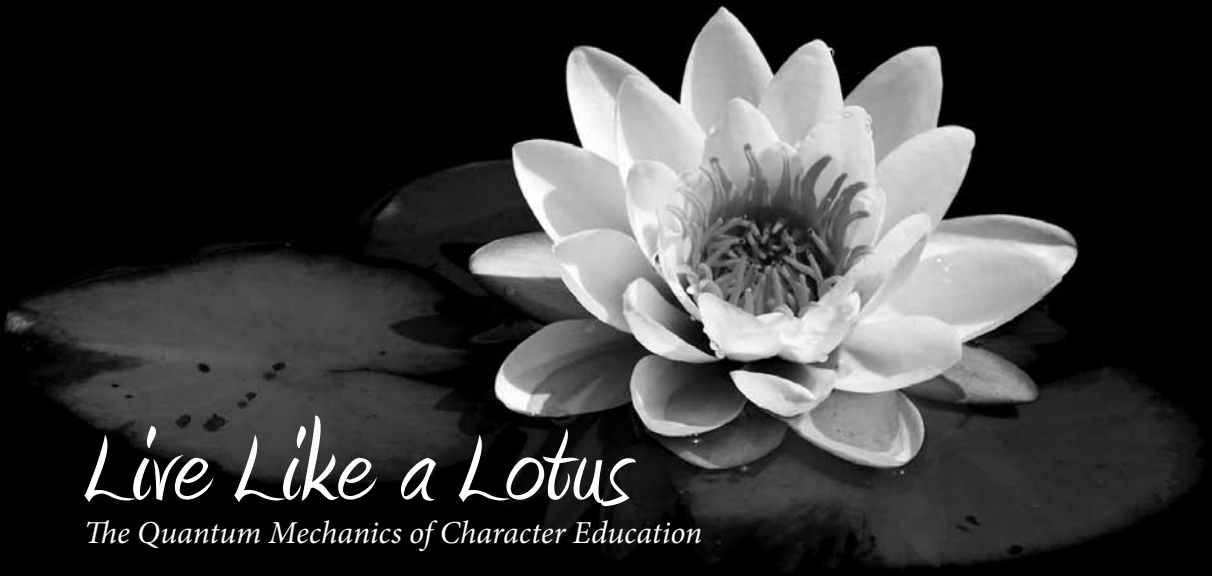
me this opportunity to learn from all the wonderful people in this great country. The people in the United States of America are just like flowers in a garland. Every region in this country emanates a unique divine fragrance that wafts towards thee. This country, with its diverse ethnic groups, echoes the divine statement:

There is only one religion, the religion of love; There is only one language, the language of the heart; There is only one caste, the caste of humanity; There is only one God, and he is omnipresent.

The people of this land send their prayers for your blessings and hope that you visit them soon ... Narayana, Narayana!

Bhagavan, who sat through the program with rapt attention, called forward the actor who played the role of Sage Narada and created a chain for him. *Arati* (sacred flame) was then offered at Swami's request, and after the officials sought Baba's blessings, Bhagavan asked the group to carry on with a short program of *bhajans* (devotional singing) before calling for *Arati* once again. *Prasadam* (blessed food) was distributed, along with clothing from Bhagavan for the performers, before Bhagavan retired to his residence, the *Yajur Mandiram* (Holy Abode of Joy). Thus ended a beautiful day with a United America and the Lord of lords.

—Courtesy, www.sssbpt.org/Pages/Prasanthi_Nilayam/unitedsaiamerica30072009.htm;
Dr. Jack Feely, President, USA Region 4
Amol Patil, Prasanna Kankanala, YAs



Live Like a Lotus

The Quantum Mechanics of Character Education

Over two years ago, I began taking my four-year-old grandson, who has cerebral palsy, for massage and energy therapy at a clinic that is interestingly and appropriately called “Inner Works.” The owner is a Ms. Wilson.

After our first visit, I paid the required fee for the treatment at the front desk. The following week a colleague of Ms. Wilson approached me and said in a soft voice that the owner didn’t want to take money from me.

I replied, “That is not correct.” Ms. Wilson insisted I should not pay, and I insisted she should accept the fee. After the treatment that day, she told me the reason for refusing to take money, and this is what she said, almost verbatim: “When you walked into my office the first time, I felt Sathya Sai Baba walked into my life. Since then I feel his loving embrace, guidance, and love, as I treat my clients. I had heard his name through a friend long ago, but never read about him or felt his presence in my life in any way. Since you walked into my office, however, I feel he is always with me. I feel you have brought him into my life. That is why I do not want to take money from you.”

I convinced her that she should accept the fee, saying that is how Swami allows an instrument of his to function. I told Ms. Wilson that, based on my experience, Swami seeps into peoples’ systems like water under a carpet. I told her I was immensely happy Swami is with her, guiding her in helping her clients.

Then, over a year ago, Ms. Wilson asked me whether I would conduct a kind of “prayer meeting” once a week, for the benefit of herself and her colleagues. I placed her request in my own way at the lotus feet of Baba. Lo and behold, he not only gave permission but also gave assurance that he would “be there” at the meetings.

We conducted the meetings every Monday morning from 7:30–9:00 a.m. I would go without any preparation, topic, cue cards, or notes. At every meeting a topic appeared

spontaneously, Swami used this servant's voice box, delivered his message, and one-and-a-half hours passed by like a second. The following article is based on the topic, "Quantum," which arose spontaneously at one of the meetings.

I lived in Swami's physical presence for about seven years (1979-1985), serving him. Since 1985 I haven't seen him physically, but by his grace, I feel his presence every day and every moment. I am ever grateful for his immense love and grace. People are surprised that I haven't gone to see Swami all these years. They tell me that I would not recognize the place, because it has changed so much. My response is: "I would go there to see THE LOTUS, not the murky waters of modernity. For I know what remains unchanged among all the changes that take place at Prasanthi Nilayam and Puttaparthi!"

Quanta and Character

The concept of *quantum* was first introduced in 1900 by a famous German physicist, Max Planck, to explain the behavior of radiant energy emitted from and absorbed by materials as a function of wavelength and temperature. The quantum concept—generalized and defined as *a portion, a bit, an elemental unit of a thing*—has relevance in our daily life. For example, in the context of the six enemies of man—lust (*kama*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), attachment (*moha*), pride (*mada*), and jealousy (*matsarya*)—we should be cognizant that:

- **a quantum of lust**, if not properly handled, can multiply and become greed;
- **a quantum of anger**, if not properly handled, can multiply and become rage;
- **a quantum of craving for sensory pleasure**, if not properly handled, can multiply and become indulgence;
- **a quantum of pride**, if not properly handled, can multiply and become insufferable **arrogance**; and
- **a quantum of jealousy**, if not properly handled, can multiply and become **hatred**.

Similarly, on the positive side, in the context of the five human values—truth (*sathya*), right action (*dharma*), peace (*shanti*), love (*prema*), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*)—we should be cognizant that:

- **a quantum of intention for telling truth**, if properly nurtured, can multiply and make you an ardent **devotee of truth**;
- **a quantum of disposition for right action**, if properly nurtured, can multiply and make you an ardent **practitioner of right action**;
- **a quantum of peaceful demeanor**, if properly nurtured, can multiply and make you an **embodiment of perfect peace**;
- **a quantum of interest for spreading pure love**, if properly nurtured, can multiply and make you a **storehouse of pure divine love**; and
- **a quantum of nonviolent disposition**, if properly nurtured, can multiply and make you a **practitioner of nonviolence**.

Right Education: Hallmark of the Truly Content

Right education is the key to curb the negative and accentuate the positive. But what is right education? A precise answer is provided by the following verse from the Vedic texts:

(Right) education bestows humility. Humility bestows deservedness. Because of deservedness, wealth accrues. Wealth utilized in helping the needy confers happiness.

Humility is the hallmark of the truly educated and the truly content. Sir Isaac Newton, the all-time great in classical physics, though often portrayed as a very egotistical person, displayed profound humility at times. For example, when asked, “How do you want to be remembered?” it seems he replied, “I feel like a small child playing at the beach, picking up a rare pebble, while the whole ocean lies in front of me waiting to be explored.”

I understand that at Eastman Kodak Laboratories in Rochester, New York, a plaque hangs on the wall bearing the words, “Contentment is the first sign of decay.”

The somewhat negative overtone of this message is perhaps intended to convey that in a business organization, people must not be complacent about improving the products and profits. But a positive meaning of contentment is to **be content with what one has earned through fair means**. In other words, one should not become greedy, which leads ultimately to discontent and unhappiness.

The wealth of education is different, however. One lifetime might not be enough to learn and understand all the mysteries of life, living, and God’s creation. Many incarnations might be required to become wise—and this implies *human* incarnations, because the species *homo sapiens* appears to be the only one endowed with the powers of intellect, intuition, and discrimination. Sri Sathya Sai Baba made this point very clear over four decades ago in the statement, “The first place was granted to mankind, and my knowledge was placed in (his) mind.”*

So, the question becomes, how to insure rebirth as a human being? Sathya Sai Baba’s answer is: by leading an exemplary life in the present birth, following the precepts and practices of human values. In other words, **live like a lotus** in the present birth. A lotus

*In 1970, Baba scribbled on a scrap of paper for a devotee, *I only separated myself from myself so that I can love myself. When I love myself, I love you. When you love yourselves, you love me. We are one. There was no one to know who I am till I created this world at my pleasure with one WORD. Immediately mountains rose up. Immediately rivers started running. Earth below and sky over its head, oceans, seas, lands and watersheds, sun moon, and the desert sands sprang up from nowhere to prove my existence. Came all forms of beings, mankind, beasts, and birds flying; speaking, hearing, and all powers are bestowed upon them under my orders. The first place was granted to mankind, and my knowledge was placed in (his) mind. Come one, come all; let us not be ungrateful called. Let us faithfully serve Him and love Him, love Him, love Him.* I distinctly recollect seeing a photocopy of the scrap of paper on which Swami wrote the above words, in the house of a devotee in Bangalore. —SVP

lives in murky water and yet it keeps its head high above the pond. Similarly, live in the murky world because you have to, but do not let the murky world get into you.

- Follow your conscience and develop the required stamina for achieving self-love, self-contentment, self-esteem, and self-realization.
- But be careful not to allow self-love to degenerate into selfish-love, self-contentment into self-centeredness, self-esteem into self-aggrandizement, and self-realization into self-promotion and self-conceit.
- Desist from imposing on others your ideas, beliefs, convictions, and faiths.
- Respect others' right to think for themselves and to follow their conscience. Remember the words of Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592):

Though we may be learned by the help of another's knowledge, we can never be wise but by our own experience.

We should not dwell on our past, worrying as to whether we were created by God or came from apes through a process of evolution. Evolution is an inevitable consequence of creation, just as death is an inevitable consequence of birth. So we must always keep the bigger picture in focus, aware of the fact that we are the only species on which God bestowed the powers of intellect, intuition, and discrimination. Therefore, we must feel grateful and say to God:

O Lord, thank you for the bounty of divine gifts and blessings. We promise we will use them to live in harmony with your creation.

I often remind myself that we, as the intelligent custodians of God's creation, have an obligation and a duty to preserve its pristine character.

—Sastry V. Pappu
Hazelwood, Missouri

The traditional number of created beings is 84 lakhs (8.4 million), and man is the final item of the evolutionary procession, but why did the number stop at 84 lakhs? It stopped because man is the zenith, the fullness; he is Madhava (God), in fact, though he has ignored the truth and holds fast to the belief that he is just a man. He is endowed with manas, buddhi, chittha, and ahamkara (mind, intelligence, consciousness/heart, and ego), all four, in an integrated personality, whereas the birds and beasts and all other species have mostly ahamkaram (ego) alone. The lives of the latter are centered around the aham and its desires and demands. But man has the capacity to follow sathya, dharma, shanti, and prema (truth, righteousness, peace, and love); man alone has it. If manava (man) does not evince that capacity and develop it, he is as bad as a vanara or danava (ape or ogre). When man was created, there remained nothing higher to create.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 6:15-1, April 1966)

Lessons from God:

Karma

Part Two of a Series by Amarjit Singh Bamrah

My lessons at the feet of Sri Sathya Sai Baba began one day in April 1996. That day, Guru Nanak appeared to me and said, “Amarjit, I have come to pass you to your guru in this lifetime.”

Then Sathya Sai Baba appeared. I argued with him, saying, “You are a fraud and a magician; go away.”

However, the inner growth started at that time. I suddenly became interested in meditation, psychic studies, mediumship, and so on. I had no idea Baba was behind the scenes, pushing me.

Then, in May 1999, Sathya Sai Baba appeared with Shirdi Sai Baba and took me to a desert dune for an interview. They were sitting on top of the dune, and I had to ascend the dune to meet with them.

“So, Amarjit, you want to merge with God,” they said.

Then Sathya Sai Baba spoke, saying, “Amarjit, the path to God is fraught with danger. Are you sure you want to merge with God?”

I looked all around and saw demons surrounding me, ready to attack. But the power of Baba kept them away.

I looked at Baba and said, “Yes, Baba, I want to merge with you and work for humanity.”

He disappeared, and the coursework of many trials and tribulations began.

Karma

Karma is a Sanskrit word that translates literally as “action.” The concept of karma is commonly misconstrued as punishment for past bad actions, but karma has nothing to do with judgment. Rather, it is simply the universal law of cause and effect: every thought, word, and act has an equivalent reaction. Whatever energy we send into the world reflects and resounds, affecting our circumstances. Karma can also refer to the “work” or duties we have ahead of us, which includes the fruits of actions from both past and current lives.

The law of karma relates to one of the Newtonian laws of physics, that every action produces an equal and opposite reaction. Every time we think or do something, we create a cause, which in time bears its corresponding effects; the same energy we generate corresponds to what will return



"The law of karma relates to one of the Newtonian laws of physics, that every action produces an equal and opposite reaction. Every time we think or do something, we create a cause, which in time bears its corresponding effects..."

to us, whether in this lifespan or the next incarnation. In this way the karma accruing to a personality from its actions, generates its next birth—reincarnation.

It is said, "As you sow, so shall you reap." This proverb has its origin in a Bible verse: *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* (Galatians 6:7) The meaning is, your deeds, good or bad, will repay you in kind.

A Harmless Card Game?

Diwali, 2003 It was Diwali/Indian New Year time, and we invariably met with our friends and played three-card poker. I saw no harm in playing, as the stakes were always kept low and we played for fun. I thoroughly enjoyed the three-card game; it was exciting,

got the adrenalin flowing, and one could make lots of noises.

On this night I happened to be playing with my cousins and family in our home. We had been playing for some time, the pot had grown to quite a number of pounds, and it was becoming very exciting. I looked at my hand and saw that the cards were extremely high—three kings.

Wow, I am going to win, I thought. This is my game. I got very excited. Soon only two players were left, as the others had all thrown in their cards. I thought to myself, *I will raise the stakes.*

Suddenly, to my amazement, I had a vision of my cousin's three cards lifting up from his lap, as if by magic, and opening up

in front of me. I saw he had the highest hand possible—three aces.

I blurted out, “I cannot play against your three aces.”

He said, “How do you know my hand? You are cheating. You have looked at my cards!”

I replied, “I am just guessing.” I threw down my hand without matching his bet.

All of a sudden, Sai Baba appeared to me and said, “Amarjit, follow me.”

I complained, “Baba, why did you show me his cards? I do not need your magic.”

Baba replied, “Let’s take a trip, Amarjit. Let’s fly into the minds of all the players, each in turn. Amarjit, look at the effect of the cards, money, and game on each person.”

Baba then took me, one by one, into the other players’ minds and showed me the state of their thoughts and emotions. As we flew into the mind of the first player, I saw that this person had lost money. Internally, he was jealous and very angry.

Then we looked into another player’s mind. This person was very upset at losing, and he was firing negative energy (psychic attack) at the winners. Then we visited the winner, who was becoming more and more arrogant and greedy.

Baba then brought me back into my body and said, “Amarjit, as a person on the spiritual path, you must refrain from these immoral gambling practices, as **the karmic issues affect everyone.**

“Try not to raise greed, anger, or lustful emotions in other people. This is the way to raise your God awareness.” Saying this,

Baba dematerialized, leaving me to ponder what I had been shown.

I began to consider the very nature of gambling. One person gains while many others must suffer a loss. The economic benefits come only to a very few, and the financial loss is often borne by those who can ill afford it.

Furthermore, gambling also can become an addiction. As in the case of alcoholism and other addictions, compulsive gamblers are dominated to the extent that they risk not only money but everything in this life. They lose control of themselves. The fruits of gambling are evident on every side, and they are not good.

Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” (Holy Bible, Matthew 7:17)

The Bible teaches that Christians are to love their fellow man. But in gambling, one has to hope for the worst for his fellow man in order to gain the best for himself.

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

(Holy Bible, I Timothy 6:10)

“Do You Need This Karma?”

Bromley, UK One fine day I was shopping in a supermarket with my mother. We picked up some groceries, and while proceeding to the checkout counter, I realized we did not need one of the items.

I said, "Mom, we will leave this on one of the shelves close to the checkout counter," and I proceeded to do so, to save the long walk back to its correct place.

My mother said, "That will be fine."

Little did we know what lay ahead as a lesson to us both. Suddenly Sai Baba materialized and said, "Amarjit, you do not need this karma."

I asked, "Karma? What karma, Baba? What are you talking about?"

Baba replied, "The karma of leaving the groceries on the wrong shelf, of not returning them to where you picked them up."

I said, "Come on, Baba! You cannot be serious. How can leaving this item here be a karmic issue?"

Baba said, "Come, Amarjit, we will go into the future and see what happens."

Baba waved his hand with a certain *mudra* (hand gesture of spiritual power or significance), in such a way as only he does, and suddenly we were *back to the future*!

We were standing near the grocery item that I had placed on the side, not wanting to be bothered with returning it to the correct shelf, which was a long walk away.

Baba said, "Look, Amarjit."

We watched as one of the store clerks approached. When he saw this grocery item in the wrong section, he began hurling tremendous negativity, curses, and mental (psychic) attack at the person who had placed

it there ... *me*! He was muttering to himself, "All day I keep collecting and restocking groceries in their correct places! Why are people so inconsiderate!"

Baba said, "Look, this clerk is very tired. All day long he has to restock the groceries on the correct shelves, and he is certainly not happy. With every item he has had to move

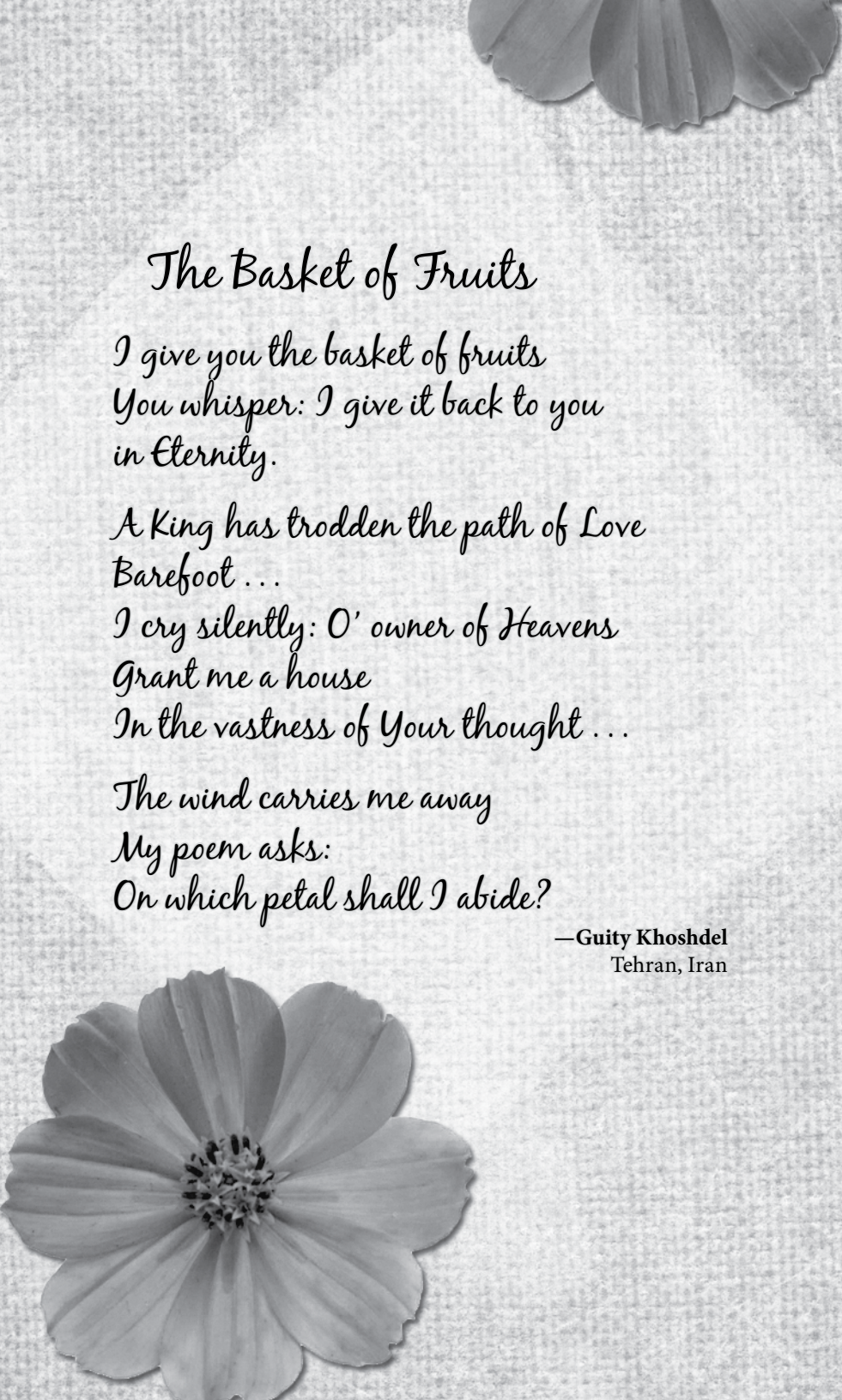
to the correct spot, he has become more and more annoyed. Do you need this karma, Amarjit?

"And also, look at the grocery item itself that you have placed on the wrong shelf. The connected consciousness of this grocery item is likewise not happy, because it feels itself as responsible for this curse being sent to you.

"Amarjit, in the future, **tread as the gods do, and revere even the ground you are walking on. Walk with compassion, as the gods walk. Learn not to create karmic issues.** Let this be a lesson to you."

So, dear fellow spiritual warriors, learn from this lesson. Remember, whatever action we do or take has a direct effect on our karma. Learn to radiate love always. That is the way to raise our godliness. With every breath, love God.

—Amarjit Singh Bamrah
Kent, UK



The Basket of Fruits

*I give you the basket of fruits
You whisper: I give it back to you
in Eternity.*

*A King has trodden the path of Love
Barefoot . . .*

*I cry silently: O' owner of Heavens
Grant me a house
In the vastness of Your thought . . .*

*The wind carries me away
My poem asks:
On which petal shall I abide?*

—Guity Khoshdel
Tehran, Iran

Sai Service Spreads Its Wings in Colorado Springs

Region 9 Medical Camp, Colorado Springs, Colorado, June 20, 2009

A medical camp, coordinated by the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Colorado Springs and supported by members of other Colorado Sai Centers, was held at the Senior Health Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on June 20, 2009. Approximately 30 volunteers, including 8 medical professionals, assisted in setting up, providing services to over 130 attendees, offering refreshments, welcoming and registering attendees, and cleaning up.

The medical camp began with a prayer and the spiritual aim of putting Bhagavan's message into action. His example of providing free medical care provided constant inspiration for the volunteers, who strove to serve as his instruments in a divine mission. Bhagavan's maxims, "Work is worship" and "Service

to mankind is service to God," suffused the atmosphere as the volunteers addressed the needs of a cross-section of the Colorado Springs community, including the indigent and elderly, for whom access to preventive care may be difficult. As an added touch of Sathya Sai Baba's presence and example, the event coordinators played the DVD "His Works" continuously during the camp.

The camp emphasized prevention of diabetes, dyslipidemia (high blood cholesterol and triglycerides), and osteoporosis; clinical breast examinations; bronchial asthma evaluations; and information on prescription drug assistance. Cardiologists, gastroenterologists, and nephrologists provided personal consultations.



The eight medical providers included two cardiologists, one internal medicine specialist, two gastroenterologists, one nephrologist, one dentist, and one lab medicine technologist. Procedures and tests conducted during the day included bone scans for osteoporosis, lipid panels; assessments for diabetes, lung functioning, allergies, and skin; oral dental evaluations, and blood pressure measurements. Results of these tests identified 27 participants with dyslipidemia, 10 with asthma, 12 with onset of diabetes, and 3 with onset of hypertension.

In addition, visitors could receive health education on colonoscopy, limb prosthetics, and dental care, including distribution of toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss.

The majority of participants were seniors who offered their appreciation at receiving these services at no cost. Some were amazed that the volunteers were willing to offer their time for free. A gentleman in his seventies stated that he had not known such services ex-

isted—or people willing to provide them—and that he had no words to express his thanks. In some cases, participants indicated that without these free services, they would not be able to afford the evaluations. Even though the lines were long at times, everyone was grateful to receive the results from their tests plus medical advice about what to do. A few of the staff at the Senior Health Center also participated in the camp and expressed appreciation for the opportunity.

In addition to health services offered to the participants, free bicycle safety helmets were offered to children. In total, about 50 helmets were individually fitted for the children, who left smiling.

—Sai Center of Colorado Springs, Colorado



“The Way Forward” Initiatives

YAs’ Vision for Service and Spiritual Living

“The Way Forward Initiative” consists of ten “houses” or forums for service endeavors. After the National Youth Conference in May 2009, young adults (YAs) prepared a booklet on The Way Forward, which was presented to Swami in November 2009. Swami accepted the booklet, examined it carefully, and made loving comments. Through exchanging ideas and resources, the youth hope better to serve their communities, transform their lives through selfless service, and awaken the divinity within. The ten houses of “The Way Forward” are as follows:

House	Purpose, Suggested Objectives
Going Green	Integrating spirituality with the environment through conservation, preservation, education, and alternative/new practices and designs. • Develop “eco-sadhanas” for Sai centers and conferences. • Design homes and vehicles that are 100% sustainable.
Medical Service	Developing and implementing Sai Ideal Healthcare Values in daily practice and fostering these ideals through collaboration, internal reform, and organized service projects nationwide. • Create a repository of information (articles, discourses, research papers) to help health practitioners understand and implement Sai Ideal Healthcare in their daily lives, thereby blending science and spirituality.
Refugee Projects	Experiencing oneness with refugees that come to the USA, by sharing Swami’s love with them, and enabling them to become independent and self-sufficient. The Bhutanese Refugee Project will be the first example. • Develop a website for centers and YA groups, with resources and best practices for working with an identified group of refugees.
Health and Wellness	Actively engaging in our personal well being; helping the Sai Organization and local community through educational activities focusing on lifestyle modification for better physical and mental health. • Develop initiatives addressing the health needs of a local community, for improving mental, spiritual, and physical well being.

House	Purpose, Suggested Objectives
National Infrastructure	Improving national YA infrastructure through enhanced communication tools, sharing of best practices, and short- and long-term planning, for growing/sustaining a vibrant national Sai YA program. • Develop communication tools that enable greater participation among youth. • Develop a leadership training program for youth leaders.
Human Values in the Community	Promoting and enhancing service projects related to developing human values among youth in our communities. • Engage in community projects for developing character and human values in youth. • Participate in a monthly Human Values Sadhana Calendar, through which Sai youth can collectively practice spiritual disciplines related to the five human values.
SSE Group 4	Helping youth ages 16-18 transition from SSE to YA groups. • Develop recommendations for a nationwide SSE Group 4 program and curriculum.
Rehabilitation Projects	Creating sustainable initiatives to serve the needs of at-risk populations in local communities. • Develop a model program for working with at-risk youth through a long-term mentoring initiative.
Sai and the Arts	Exploring Swami's teachings through artistic expression (creative writing, drama, film, music, etc.) • Integrate arts into existing service projects. • Hold a values-based community art fair and talent show in a local community.
Living the Sai Life	Living a blissful life, spreading love through our actions, and enabling others to do the same, at home and at work. • Establish a "Ceiling on Desires Week" in a local community.

—YA "Way Forward" Team

Mantra Pushpam:

The Religion of Love (All Faiths)



Sai Sravan Cherukuri attended Swami's schools in Puttaparthi and, like all Swami's students, studied the Vedas. While he was a student, Sai Sravan took careful notes when Swami explained the inner meanings of various parts of the *Mantra Pushpam*, one of the most valued hymns of the Vedas. Swami told his students that this explanation was not available in any books.

Sai Sravan is now a father and shared these notes with his children, explaining Swami's teachings on how various verses of *Mantra Pushpam* relate to the power of love and all the world's religions. Sai Sravan's young daughter, Sai Keerthana, became very enthused about learning the *Mantra Pushpam* and these meanings. She ran to meet her father every day as he came home from work, begging him to continue teaching her. She asked him to repeat the lines of the *Mantra Pushpam* and their inner meanings, again and again. Then, with her father's help, Sai Keerthana wrote what she had understood.

Out of Sai Keerthana's sincere wish to share with other Sai students her love for these teachings, we are presenting her summary of inner meanings from the *Mantra Pushpam*.

Mantra Pushpam means "Flower of the Vedas." It explains aspects of creation, such as the moon, stars, and elements, beginning with water. Why water? According to Swami, water stands for love, the origin of all that is. *Pushpam* refers to the flowering of understanding, or knowing the inner significance of all of creation. Therefore, the meaning of the *Mantra Pushpam* is:

Love is the source of all creation—and the source of all the religions.

mantra pushpam

The *Mantra Pushpam* explains various aspects of creation that form the basis of different religions and faiths. This presentation shows how the *Mantra Pushpam* relates to all the religions represented in the *sarva dharma* (all-faiths) symbol, which depicts the essence of Bhagavan's universal love.



the water of life is love

*Yopam Pushpam Veda | Pushpavan Prajavan Pashuman Bhavati |
Chandramava Apam Pushpam | Pushpavan Prajavan Pashuman Bhavati |*

According to Swami, *apaha* means water—the water of life—and stands for love. Reading this verse of the *Mantra Pushpam* and replacing *apaha* with *love* gives a deeper and significant meaning:

The one who understands the inner significance (*pushpa*) of love (*apaha*) and its relationship to the mind (*chandra*) will reach the ultimate goal.

this is all that needs to be known

Next we have three lines that are repeated many times throughout the hymn:

Ya Evam Veda | Yopamayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |

“This is all that needs to be known.

The one who is illumined by love attains the highest abode.”

Zoroastrianism

*Agnirva Apamayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati | Yo Agner Ayatanam Veda |
Ayatanavan Bhavati | Apova Agner Ayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Ya Evam Veda | Yopamayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |*



Agni means fire and is the symbol of Zoroastrianism. The above verse means that the one who understands the significance of the sacred fire reaches the ultimate goal.

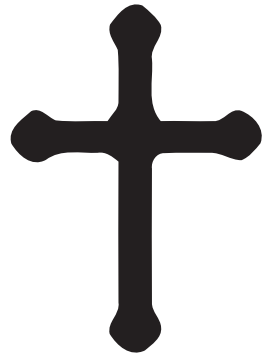
Swami tells us that the spiritual meaning of the sacred fire of Zoroastrianism is: **Offer all bitterness in the sacred fire and emerge grand, great, and godly.**

Christianity

*Asouvaitapann Apamayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Yo(a)mushyatapata Ayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Apova Amushyatapata Ayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Ya Evam Veda | Yopamayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |*

Asouvaitapannaha means the burning sun. The cross is a symbol of the pain and suffering of burning.

Swami tells us that the spiritual meaning of the cross is to **“cut the ‘I’ feeling clean across, and let your ego die on the cross to endow on you eternity.”**



īslām

*Chandramava Apamayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Yas Chandramasa Ayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Apovai Chandramasa Ayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Ya Evam Veda | Yopamayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |*

Chandra means the moon. The changes of the moon are related to changes of the mind. Fixing the mind that is filled with love on the supreme Lord captures the spirit of Islam. Thus, the above verse means: “The one who understands the connection between the mind of fixed faith and love reaches the ultimate goal.”

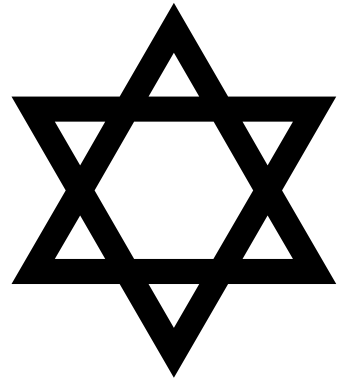
Swami says, **“Be like the star that never wavers from the crescent but is steady in fixed faith.”**

jūdāism

*Nakshatraniva Apamayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Yo Nakshatranam Ayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Apovai Nakshatranam Ayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Ya Evam Veda | Yopamayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |*

Nakshatram means star. The star is symbolic of all-pervading energy and the soul of Judaism. Thus the verse above means: “The one who recognizes the grandeur of the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent loving Lord reaches the ultimate goal.”

Swami tells us that the Jewish star means: **Trust in God, who rules over all six directions (east, west, north, south, up, and down), symbolized by the six points of the star.**



buddhism

*Samvatsarova Apamayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Yah Samvatsarasya Ayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Apovai Samvatsarasyaya Ayatanam | Ayatanavan Bhavati |
Ya Evam Veda | Yopamayatanam Veda | Ayatanavan Bhavati |*

Samvatsara (year) represents time. The Buddhist wheel represents *dharma* (right action), which is related to time in terms of cause and consequence. The verse above means: “The one who understands the interrelationship between love and time (action) attains the ultimate goal.”

Swami has given us the spiritual meaning of the Buddhist wheel as follows: **“Remember the wheel of cause and consequence, and the wheel of *dharma* that rights them all.”**

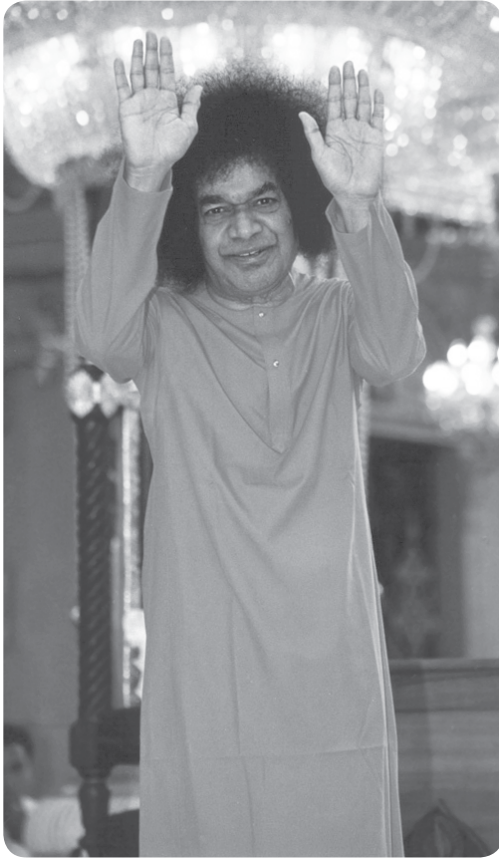
hinduism

Ya Evam Veda | Yoapsunavam Pratishtitham Veda | Pratyevatishtathi |

“This is all there is to know. The one who knows this is stable like a boat on the ocean of Love. He will be able to know the Self, which is all there is to know.”

The sound of creation and beginning of knowledge is *Aum*. Swami says, “Listen to the primeval *Pranava* (*Aum*) resounding in your heart as well as in the heart of the Universe.”





the religion of love

The various faiths express the same immortal message of love and righteousness in diverse ways. Bhagavan says, “There is only one religion, and that is the religion of love.”

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti – Peace, Peace, Peace.

—Sai Keerthana Cherukuri
(former Group 1 SSE student, Bethesda, Maryland)
Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Puttparthi, India

Sai Spiritual Education Lesson Plan

Mantra Pushpam: The Religion of Love (Groups 3-4)

- **VALUE:** Love • **SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE:** Unity of Faiths

- **QUOTE:** *There is only one religion, the religion of love.* —Sri Sathya Sai Baba
- **PRAYER/SILENT SITTING:** “Love is the water of life; let divine love flow to all and flood our minds and hearts with God’s light and grace.” Students sit silently up to five minutes or so.
- **SONG SUGGESTIONS:** “*Guru Nanaka Jiki Jai Jai Kar*”; “There Is Only One Religion”; let students choose Sarva Dharma songs they LOVE, and sing them WITH LOVE.
- **STORY/PRAYER:** This lesson is ideally suited to introduce a long-term project for study of all the major religions. Read “*Mantra Pushpam: The Religion of Love (All Faiths)*” with students. If possible, study these hymn excerpts through listening to each section. See the following link to a multimedia presentation on the *Heart2Heart* website that has similar material: “The Mantras of *Mantra Pushpam: Multifaith and Multidimensional*,” with audio files of each few lines, at http://media.radiosai.org/Journals/Vol_04/01SEP06/Mantrapushpam.htm. The web page also includes audio files of songs, prayers, chants, and hymns from all the faiths mentioned.
- **DISCUSSION:** Discuss **the meaning, according to Swami**, of each quoted segment of the *Mantra Pushpam*, after reading and listening, a few lines at a time. *Swami explains throughout the hymn that understanding the meaning of love and its relationship to the mind—being illumined by love—will take us to the ultimate goal* (see p. 42 and each refrain). *What clues are in each part of the hymn for putting this idea into practice?*
- **ACTIVITY:** Have students create affirmations from the key ideas relating *Mantra Pushpam* with each religion. Point out how these ideas and affirmations are seeds that can grow with the water of love. Examples: “Love is the water of life . . .” (see prayer above). ***Seed of Zoroastrianism:*** “I offer all bitterness in the sacred fire and emerge grand, great, and holy.” ***Seed of Christianity:*** “I cut the ego-‘I’ feeling clean across and let it die on the cross, to gain eternity.” ***Seed of Islam:*** “I fix my mind, filled with love, on God alone. I am like a star that never wavers but is ever steady in fixed faith.” ***Seed of Judaism:*** “I trust in God who is omnipresent in all the six directions, all-loving, all-knowing, and all-powerful. God is ever in me, around me, above and below me, my companion and Self, at all times.” ***Seed of Buddhism:*** “I unite all my actions in love, helping ever, hurting never.” ***Seed of Hinduism:*** “I listen to the sound of *Om* resounding in my heart and in the heart of all the universe.”
- **LIFE APPLICATION:** Have students practice the affirmations they wrote during the activity, not just repeating them but putting each resolve into practice.

Continued on page 48

SSE LESSON PLAN, continued from page 47:

- **EXTENDING ACTIVITIES:** Arrange for students to participate in chanting of the entire *Mantra Pushpam* as a devotional activity, keeping in mind the meaning of each verse and the goal of love. **Extended Study, Unity of Faiths:** Using the *Mantra Pushpam* as a basis, study each faith tradition in depth, perhaps one per week, in the light of “practicing the religion of love.” **Devotional Art Project:** Have students make bracelets or prayer chains out of beads/seeds; decorate the beads with symbols for each religion, and then charge each bead with its matching affirmations or songs—e.g., repeat the affirmation __ times a day for __ days.

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