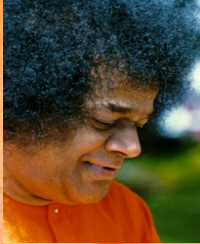


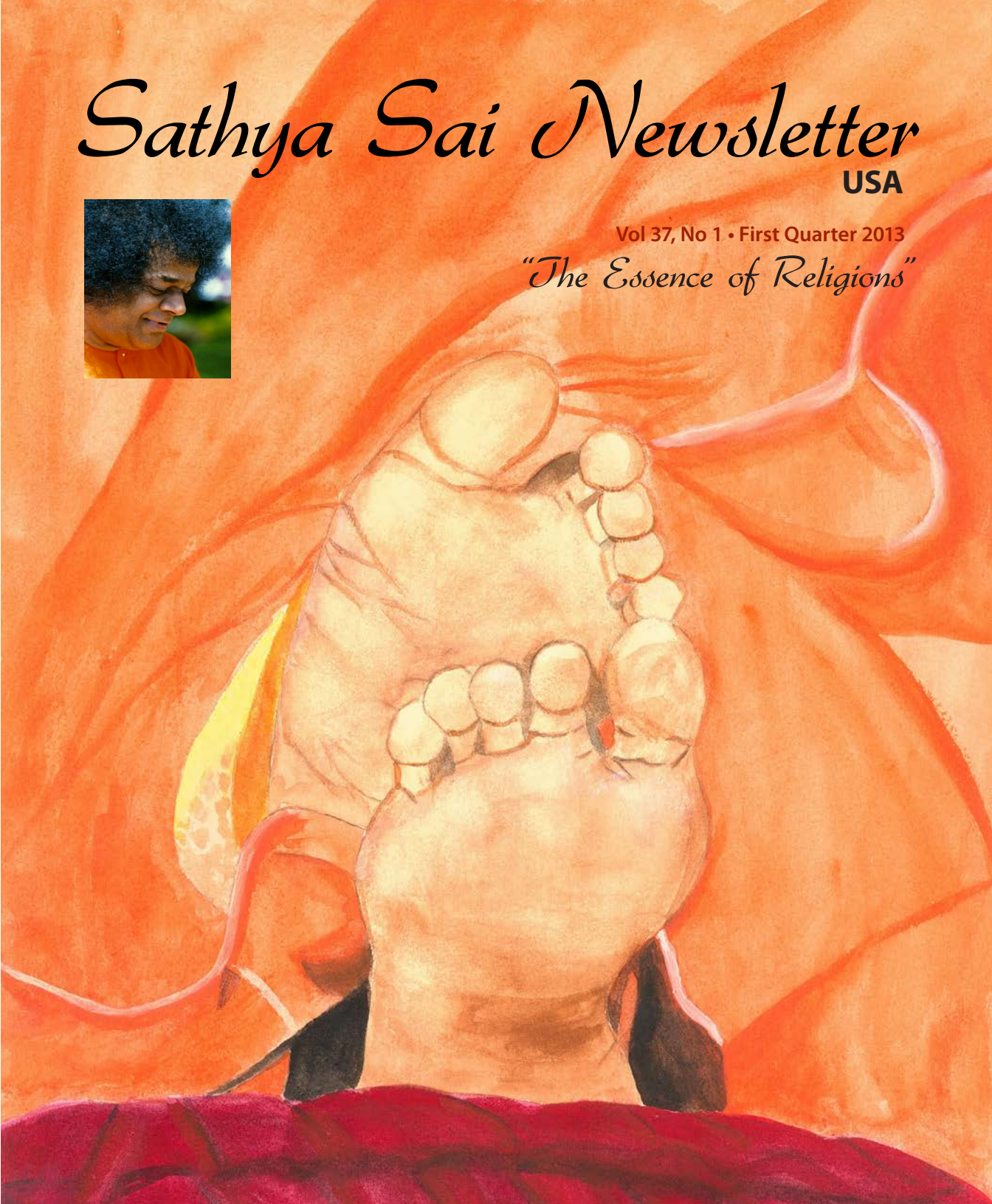
Sathya Sai Newsletter

USA



Vol 37, No 1 • First Quarter 2013

"The Essence of Religions"



Sathya Sai Newsletter USA

Dedicated with Love and Devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



The Essence of Religions

Sai's Message The Deepest Yearning of Man.....Sri Sathya Sai Baba	3
Announcements:	
Prasanthi Council: New Year Greetings and the Way Forward. Narendranath Reddy MD, Chair	4
"Sathya Sai with Students" – Books and Blog..... Narendranath Reddy MD, Chair	9
Two Additional Websites of Note	10
MahaSamadhi Day, April 24, 2013	11
Sathya Sai World Foundation: New Appointments, Int'l Sai Organization Gary Belz, Chair	12
In-Depth Study:	
The Essence of Religions.....Sri Sathya Sai Baba	13
Understanding How Different Faiths Relate to Divinity	
Summary of Southeast Region 3 Retreat	Jorja Kelley 20
Interfaith Panel Discussion	Transcribed by Jorja Kelley 22
<i>What is the essence of the faith?</i>	24
<i>How to be a better follower of the faith?</i>	24
<i>What is most misunderstood about your faith?</i>	26
<i>Concepts of death and the afterlife</i>	30
<i>Explanations of seeming unfairness, tragedy, and suffering</i>	31
Lord, Free Our Hearts!	Winnie Bolton 36
Breath of Eternity (POEM).....	Monika John 37
Nurturing the Spiritual Life	Axay Kalathia 38
ISSE-USA: ISSE-USA Announces 2013 Summer Courses.....	40
Sai Service – Love in Action: SaiLoveinAction.org – Recent Postings.....	SaiLoveinAction.org Team 41
Sai Young Adults: Gayatri Chanting Initiative.....	USA YA Gayatri Initiative Team 44
Sai Students: The Blank Book (STORY)	RadioSai.org 49
SSE (Group 3 Lesson Plan): The Blank Book (All religions share basic beliefs)	Beth Clark 52
Sathya Sai Baba Society & Book Center: New & Recent Arrivals.....	54
Sathya Sai Newsletter USA	56

Copyright © 2013, Sathya Sai Baba Society & Book Center. All rights reserved.

COVER ILLUSTRATION: "For Sai" by Sharon Robinson. IMAGE CREDITS: pp 5–7, courtesy theprasanthireporter.org; p 12, Unity of Faiths woodcut by Supriya Kharod; p. 39, commons.wikimedia.org; released under the GNU Free Documentation License.



THE DEEPEST YEARNING OF MAN is to experience
the One, the Basis, the Being that has become

Be aware of the One that manifests as the many.

That is divine life.

Aspire for such a life, not simply for a long life.

*Aspire for the bliss that the awareness of the Inner
Divinity can confer, not for the pleasure the objects of
the world can give.*

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, *Sathya Sai Speaks* (SSS) 22:15, end quote



New Year Greetings and the Way Forward

Message and Reports from the Prashanthi Council

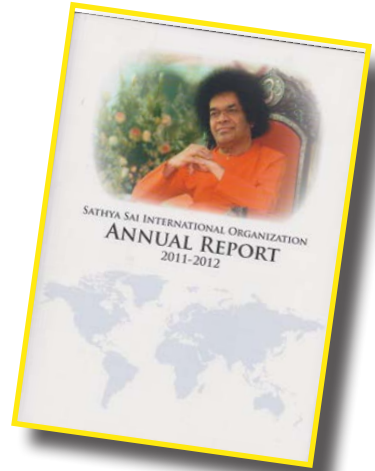
DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

LOVING SAI RAMS TO ALL OF YOU.
With love and reverence, I offer my prayerful *pranams* at the divine lotus feet of our omnipresent and loving Lord, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

I wish you a very happy, healthy, and holy new year 2013, filled with divine love, peace, and joy. We are blessed and fortunate to be contemporaries of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the embodiment of pristine and universal love.

This is a time to reminisce and contemplate on the historic revelation of Bhagawan's divinity during the first World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organizations on May 17, 1968, in Mumbai, in which he said:

Your good fortune is greater than what was available for anchorites, monks, sages, saints, and even angels or demigods. . . . This is a human form in which every divine entity, every divine principle – that is to say, all the names and forms ascribed by man to God – are manifest. . . . Do not allow doubt to distract you. If you only install in the altar of your heart steady faith in my divinity, you can win a vision of my reality.



Annual Report 2012 The glory and mission of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is taking a quantum leap after his Mahasamadhi, which is another reassurance that he is still with us and will be with us for eternity. During the celebrations on Mahasamadhi day in 2011, I shared that Swami's work would continue with more enthusiasm and dedication.

When we recently compiled information for the 2011–2012 Annual Report of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization, we were delighted to find that loving selfless service is being done in the name of Sai in more than 115 countries, including Afghanistan, Botswana, Colombia, Croatia, China, Kuwait, and Kyrgyzstan.

This Annual Report was released on November 23, 2012, by his Excellency, the Governor of Tripura,* and is available online

*Tripura is a state in India near Bangladesh.

on the Sathya Sai International Organization website [here](#).*

2012 Birthday Celebrations and Meetings

We witnessed the glorious birthday celebrations of our loving Lord, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, in Prasanthi Nilayam, from November 18–25, 2012. Devotees from around the world participated in the festivities and experienced the Divine Presence. Overseas devotees from Thailand, Bali, Dominican Republic, Japan, and Malaysia expressed their love and adoration for Sai through many cultural events, including dances, plays, and music programs. Senior devotees from overseas – Dr Phil Gosselin, Mrs Marianne Meyer, and Mrs Kayoko Hira – gave inspiring talks about the divine love, glory, and works of Bhagawan.

During the birthday festivities, several meetings of the directors of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, the members of the Prashanti Council, zonal chairs, and central and deputy central coordinators from around the world took place in Prasanthi Nilayam. The focus of the discussions was on how to go forward in sharing Swami’s divine love and message with the world. New initiatives were also discussed, such as a global service day, leadership conferences, workshops for the officers, and using electronic media to share information about the service activities of the organization.

For the first time, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust members met with the directors of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, members of the Prasanthi Council, the zonal chairs, and



Mr Phil Gosselin, Chairman, Zone 1 (North America, English-speaking countries), Sri Sathya Sai International Organization, addressed the audience on the morning of Nov 23, 2012, during the 87th Birthday Celebrations in Prasanthi Nilayam.

Mr Gosselin reminisced about Birthday celebrations of the 1970s, when Bhagawan would Himself unfurl the Prasanthi flag atop the mandir. Gosselin recalled how Bhagawan would then most lovingly accept garlands from devotees.

Summarizing some activities of the international Sathya Sai Organization, he referred to various projects, such as serving disabled children in Belarus, Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) Schools in Ecuador, dental camps, and various other medical camps ranging from Laos to many parts of the world.

Mr Gosselin recounted a personal experience of how Bhagawan had shared with a group gathered in the interview room about the oneness of humanity. Swami materialized a cross for them and stated, **“Swami is beyond all religions; Bhagawan’s language is the language of the heart.”**

“Swami is not restricted by time and space,” said Mr Gosselin. “He is present everywhere, and all the worldly scriptures have been reanimated by Him.”

—*The Prasanthi Reporter*, Nov 2012

* <http://sathyasai.org/files2012/WorldReport2012-Reduced.pdf>

the central and deputy central coordinators. The trustees gave an update on the annual report of the Trust and the workings of the medical, educational, and water supply projects founded, blessed, and guided by Swami. The 2012 Annual Report of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust can be viewed [here](http://www.srisathyasai.org.in/Pdf/Annual_Report_2011-12_Web.pdf).*

This is our divine legacy, and the international leaders expressed a sincere desire to participate and support these projects. All the major institutions, the Sathya Sai Central Trust, the All India Organization, and the Sathya Sai International Organization renewed a commitment to work in greater unity and harmony toward a common goal of serving in the divine mission.

2012 Christmas Celebrations

Christmas was celebrated in Prashanthi Nilayam by devotees from over 40 countries. Sai Kulwant Hall was decorated beautifully by devotees from New Zealand, with “Aroha: Live in Love” as the central theme. The festivities took place from December 24–26, 2012, and included international choirs of adults and children, Christmas carols, and dramas. The drama by South African devotees, a children’s play entitled “Christmas with Gogo,”** with a central theme of “God is Love, Live in Love,” touched the hearts of devotees.

Two speakers, Ms Petra von Kalinowski from Germany and Dr Deborah Ellens from the USA, shared the message of Jesus in light of their personal experiences of the love and



Dr Deborah Ellens, who comes from a solid Christian theological background, spoke on Christmas evening in Sai Kulwant Hall about her first visit to Bhagawan in 1995, during which she sought clarification on ten spiritual questions. Though she did not get an interview, by the time she returned home to the US, all ten of her questions had been answered to her satisfaction. Being passionate toward Jesus and having been drawn to Bhagawan later, the devoted seeker in her was blessed with a unique vision during one of the darshan sessions: Bhagawan walked straight toward her, alternately changing His appearance to that of Jesus, then to that of Baba, to Jesus, to Baba – convincing her thoroughly of the oneness of Bhagawan and Jesus.

Dr Ellens narrated a brief version of the glorious story of Jesus’s birth and described Jesus’s three prayers as mentioned by Bhagawan often in His discourses. Referring to Bhagawan’s “leaving” the earth plane on Easter Sunday, the speaker shared her conviction that His mission is continuous, and that we, His devotees, must take it forward.

—*The Prashanthi Reporter*, Dec 2012

* http://www.srisathyasai.org.in/Pdf/Annual_Report_2011-12_Web.pdf

** Gogo: a storyteller.



***Christmas at Prasanthi Nilayam:** Grandmother Gogo, a storyteller, tells children gathered under the great baobab tree of the oneness of God's creation, as expounded by Jesus and Sathya Sai Baba.*

teachings of Sri Sathya Sai. Many devotees who previously had attended Christmas functions in their own countries expressed that they felt the Christmas spirit even more palpably in Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami's love was experienced by all and reverberated throughout Sai Kulwant Hall.

Noteworthy Achievements

Once again, during the past year, Sathya Sai volunteers and devotees around the world received special accolades.

Kazakhstan For instance, at the invitation of Mrs Sara Nazarbayeva, First Lady of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a seminar on Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV)

was organized in the city of Almaty, from August 21–24, 2012. The First Lady sent a letter of appreciation to Ms Marianne Meyer, stating, "The generosity of your soul is infinite. You have given the opportunity to teachers to enrich their methodological experience, to fill their teaching activities with creative meaning. I express my heartfelt gratitude for your noble work."

U.K. Another noteworthy achievement is that of Mr Dipak Fakey, who has been recognized for "Services to Education and to Community Cohesion in Leicester," for which he has been awarded membership in the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE). Mr Fakey started the Good

Values Club in Leicester, which he used to spread Swami's message on human values. He turned a public school, Abbey Primary School, which was at the brink of closure due to its poor performance, into one of the top-ranking schools in Leicester, by implementing values-based education.

Mexico Another remarkable event took place in the city of San Luis Potosí, Mexico, where a three-day conference on SSEHV was held from October 26–28, 2012, for educators from all over Mexico. About 1,200 teachers attended the conference, the vast majority of whom were previously unaware of Sathya Sai. These educators were inspired and evinced interest in taking an active role in the SSEHV program.

China A meeting of educators took place in April 2012 at the South China Normal University in Qinghai, Guangxi. The leaders of current SSEHV projects in China, including university professors and postgraduate students, attended. SSEHV has spread to several schools in addition to those in which the SSEHV project was initiated.

Highlights of many other wonderful service, educational, and medical projects and works in other places, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Africa, Canada, and the USA, are available in the annual report.

Making the Best Use of Our Opportunity

Having the great fortune and blessing of association with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, we need to make the best use of our opportunity. Swami said:

*Obeying my instructions is enough; it will benefit you more than the most rigorous asceticism. Practice **truth** (sathya), **righteousness** (dharma), **peace** (shanti), and **love** (prema), which are dear to Me; resolve to keep those ideals before you ever, in all your thoughts, words, and deeds. That can confer on you the summum bonum of mergence in the Supreme Divinity. (May 17, 1968)*

Finally, we need to remind ourselves that the main objective of the Sathya Sai Organization is to help us realize our divine nature. The best and easiest way to achieve this is to hold on steadfastly, with one-pointedness, to the divine lotus feet of our Lord Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and practice His eternal message of love. His message for us is to saturate our thoughts, words, and deeds with the elixir of love and attain eternal bliss. We should resolve to realize this supreme goal in this very lifetime, with our sincere effort and the grace of Bhagawan.

—Narendranath Reddy MD
Chairman, Prashanthi Council



The year becomes new, the day becomes holy, when you sanctify it by sadhana (Godward discipline), not otherwise. Sadhana can grow only in a field fertilized by love. . . . The love you have for material objects, name, fame, wife and children, etc., should be sanctified by being subsumed by the more overpowering love of God.

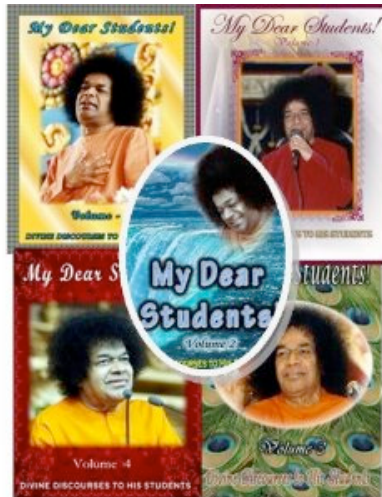
—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Jan 1, 1967

"Sathya Sai with Students" – Books and Blog

Books Published by Swami's Students

DURING THE WORLD YOUTH CONFERENCE OF JULY 2011 in Prashanthi Nilayam, books on Swami's discourses to students were given to all the delegates by the organizers. The feedback received about the utility of the books was outstanding, and there were requests that the books be made available internationally, so that devotees such as Sai center members, young adults, and students of the Sai Spiritual Education or SSE programs, or who are unable to visit Prashanthi Nilayam on a regular basis, may access these books.

Catering to this request and with the guidance of the administration of Sri Sathya Sai University, all the books published by Swami's students and blessed by Bhagawan over the last many years are now available on *amazon.com*. These offerings include Swami's discourses to students at Prashanthi Nilayam, Brindavan, and Kodaikanal; interviews and conversations of Swami with students; Swami's discourses on business and management; books on experiences of Sai students; books on students' prayers sung at



Prashanthi Nilayam; and many other items.

Most of this literature was hitherto accessible only to students and has been but very recently provided to the wider Sai audience, so that all can know and imbibe His teachings, especially the youth. These are now available to devotees throughout North

America, at their doorstep, so to speak, through this online means.

The listings may be accessed at *amazon.com* by typing the phrase *saistudents* in the search option, or directly, [here](#).*

"Sathya Sai with Students" Blog Update

We shared previously about a blog titled "Sathya Sai with Students" (<http://www.sathyasaiwithstudents.blogspot.in/>), developed by the students of the Prashanthi Nilayam campus. The blog was created to share with students and devotees of Bhagawan, various precious experiences of the students with Swami, and important lessons imparted by Bhagawan to his students. The blog is based on various books published by the Hostel Publications

* <http://bit.ly/SaiStudents>

Division and blessed by Bhagawan over the years, providing authenticity of content and a proper source for every article, discourse, and conversation.

Updates to the blog occur on Thursdays, with new articles under five categories: Discourses to Students, Experiences of Students, Conversations with Students, Management Lessons for Students, and This

Day, That Age: Down the Memory Lane. The blog surpassed 100,000 visits in its first five months.

Please enjoy the students' blog at <http://www.sathyasaiwithstudents.blogspot.in/> and share in Bhagawan's message, love, and the divine experiences of His students.

With loving regards,

—Dr. Narendranath Reddy
Chairman, Prashanthi Council

Two Additional New Websites of Note

SathyaSaiSocietyofAmerica.org and *PathofTransformation.org*

DR NARENDRANATH REDDY, Chairman of the Prashanthi Council, recently announced the initiation of two beautiful and useful websites:

SathyaSaiSocietyofAmerica.org

The **Sathya Sai Society of America** website, <http://www.sathyasaisocietyofamerica.org>, was launched on December 13, 2012.

The Sathya Sai Society of America is a charitable, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation, established in the USA in 1968 with the blessings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Since its inception, the Society has supported many medical, educational, disaster, and humanitarian relief service projects. At

present, the Sathya Sai Society is supporting Hurricane Sandy relief work.

PathofTransformation.org

The initial phase of a website and accompanying Facebook page, designed and produced by Dr Samuel Sandweiss, Member-at-Large of the USA Central Council, was launched in October 2012.

PathofTransformation.org is oriented to newcomers who would like to know about Sri Sathya Sai Baba, including His message and programs, presented via multimedia in a structured, course-like manner. All are invited to peruse the many offerings of the website. Path of Transformation also has a Facebook page, [here](#).*

A Divine Treat: Picnic in Kodai, 1994

(A brief video - click [here](#).)**

* <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Path-of-Transformation/307509206023512>

** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDRjOxS0d1E>

Mahasamadhi Day, April 24, 2013

Sri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsavam (Holy Festival of Adoration and Homage)

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Lord of the Universe, has pure, selfless, and unconditional love and compassion that transcends all limitations. He has spread the joyous experience of love and compassion to all beings. He has shown us how to love and how to live in love. Millions of devotees around the world have experienced his divine presence and pristine love. There are no physical limitations for Baba, and he manifests anywhere according to his will.

The Lord, who has no birth, no death, no beginning or end, and who is beyond name and form, assumed an enchanting and beautiful form with the sweet, nectarine name of Sathya Sai Baba, to remind us that our true nature is divine. In this process he granted us the divine bliss of his darshan (divine vision), sparshan (divine touch) and sambashan (divine discourse and conversations).

Every year on April 24, during the Mahasamadhi Day celebrations (Sri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsavam—holy and grand festival of adoration and homage), let us rededicate our lives to love him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Let us practice his universal message of love and sanctify our lives by serving in his divine mission.

Let us express our heartfelt gratitude to Bhagawan by celebrating the Mahasamadhi Day on April 24 by having some or all of the following events in our Sathya Sai Centers and



also extending these activities to the regional and national levels:

- Sharing of experiences by devotees on the glory and mission of Sathya Sai Baba.
- Devotional singing and bhajans.
- Cultural programs.
- Youth and SSE performances.
- Service projects.
- Audio-visual presentations of Bhagawan's darshan, discourses, and humanitarian projects.

I urge all devotees to participate with enthusiasm and love in the center, regional, and national events on this auspicious occasion of the Mahasamadhi Day and share their joy and love with others.

—Dr. Narendranath Reddy
Chairman, Prashanthi Council

Sathya Sai World Foundation



New Appointments, International Sai Organization

WE ARE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE that Mr G B Choithram Jethwani has kindly accepted to be the Zonal Chair of the Middle East and Gulf countries. Mr Jethwani has been doing selfless service as Central Coordinator for many years. He is a source of inspiration for many important events in the zone. In his professional life Mr Jethwani is a very successful businessman and is the Chairman of the Geebee Group of Companies, well-reputed industrial business houses in the Gulf region.

Mr Kishin Khubchandani, the Zonal Chair of the United Kingdom and Ireland, has kindly agreed to take on the additional responsibility of the African countries and islands of the Indian Ocean (excluding Sri Lanka). He has been serving in this zone for more than 30 years, and our senior international advisor, Shree Indulal Shah, has recommended him highly.

Dr Pal Dhall has kindly agreed to be the Chairman of the Sathya Sai International Education Committee of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation. He has been serving as a member of the education committees since 2006. He has been involved in the evolution of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) and Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) for more than 20 years in Australia and has

contributed very significantly in these areas. He created a Parenting Program and wrote two books on this theme, one for parents and one for trainers. He is Chair of the Australian Sathya Sai Education Institute in Canberra and has been running the Diploma Course in Australia for the last 12 years.

We appreciate the dedication and good work of Mr Kalyan Ray, the past chairman of the Education Committee. He initiated and oversaw the implementation of Human Values-based Environmental Education as a global United Nations program, the first educational program within the UN system to introduce Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values to public schools in Asia and Africa. Since his retirement from the UN in 2007, Mr Ray has dedicated his services to Bhagawan's education mission. We thank Mr Kalyan Ray for his hard work and service.

We believe the new appointments and changes will bring a wealth of new ideas to the ongoing wonderful work of the Sathya Sai International Organization. We pray to Swami to give all of us the strength to love Him and serve Him till our last breath.

—**Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation**

Gary Belz, Chairman

Shree H J Dora, Director

Dr Narendranath Reddy, Director

Shree A Ramakrishna, Director

The Essence of Religions

A Compilation of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Teachings

Religion is . . . the call of the Spirit from which we have come, of the Sea in the heart of the river. It is the sense of kinship one feels when one sees other beings immersed in grief or joy. It is the exultation one feels when experiencing truth, beauty, and goodness. . . . Religion (matha) is the product of awareness (mathi).

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, *Sathya Sai Speaks* (SSS) 7:20, 23 April 1967

FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL, scriptures and the experience of saints and seekers have agreed in declaring that there is One Supreme Indweller in all beings, and only One. All efforts to distinguish between the devotee, the object of devotion, and the means of devotion have concluded at this point only. . . . **The One can best be defined as love (prema);** for, all nature is immersed in love; all beings are bound by love; all are drawn by love. Love is in all; love is of all. Love is all. **As affection, sympathy, attachment, fraternity, loyalty, reverence, adoration, patriotism – love expresses itself in many directions.**

The path of nondualism proclaims that this One is inseparable and unique; dualism emphasizes the excellence of Its [the One God's] Names and Forms; qualified dualism speaks of names and forms as integral parts of the One. All reveal Its glory.

Worship

Adoration is the way of approach to reach the One and submerge oneself in

Its glory. Adoration arises when awareness of divine glory manifests; then, it is a continuous process, called *sadhana* (spiritual practice). In the beginning, the Adored and the adorer are different and distant, but later, they commingle and come to be more and more composite. For, the individual and the Universal are ultimately One.

The wave must yearn only for losing itself in the Sea; it should not have any lesser wish, any other aim. Merging gives full content. The ego will be dissolved; all signs and symbols of particularism, such as name, form, caste, color, creed, nationality, church, sect, and the fights and duties attendant thereon, will fade.

For such liberated individuals who have merged their ego, the only task to adhere will be the uplift of humanity, the welfare of the world. Their stage of bliss will react on the world beneficially, without any conscious effort on their part. They have been rendered as embodiments of the nectar of immortality, so they are embodiments of the sweetest bliss. Endeavor to reach that goal and do that service to the world. (SSS 7:24, June 1967)

Religion aims at promoting the harmony of body, intellect, and mind, through **righteous conduct**. . . . Religions were instituted to foster the well-being of society through the promotion of **love**.

Religion Promotes Righteous Conduct

Dear students! The truth proclaimed by all religions is one and the same. The ultimate goal of all religions is the same. **The primary object of religion is to cure man of his follies and make him a real human being.** Equally, religion aims at **promoting righteous conduct by transforming man's mental attitude.**

Religion is concerned with **developing in man faith in the Spirit, beyond his preoccupation with the needs of the body.** For all religions, **the foundation is morality.** If morality declines, humanness will decline, together with the eclipse of religion.

Morality is the basis of right conduct. Whether it is the state, the society, or the individual, the basis for them all is morality. When morality goes, all three will be undermined. All prosperity and happiness are based on moral strength. It is to make man realize the value of the ethical life that religions came into being.

Religion aims at promoting the harmony of body, intellect, and mind, through righteous conduct. Right conduct in its totality represents morality. It is otherwise known as *dharma* (righteousness). *Dharma* also means that which is pleasing (*priyam*). It also refers to what is of real value in life. When one leads a life governed

by moral values, one achieves the most precious things, including name, fame, and prosperity. Material objects have their value, but *dharma* is invaluable. No price can be set on it.

Dharma is otherwise known as morality (*neeti*). Morality is equated with selfless love. **Religions were instituted to foster the well-being of society through the promotion of love.** The ancient sages laid down certain rules and precepts in accordance with the times, the place, and the circumstances of the country.

These were intended **to foster human values and were based on the scriptures and the Vedas.** No one can determine the precise date, place, or authorship of these regulations.

The sages believed that these disciplines were conducive to the promotion of the highest human qualities and were divinely ordained to help mankind. With the efflux of time and because of the predilections of different sages, these rules got divided into branches and sub-branches, with the names of the respective sages attached to them. . . . They were all designed to promote social well-being. . . .

Today various kinds of differences are arising among religions. This is not a good thing. Everyone should base his life on the **divinely ordained morals and truths**, and endeavor to foster these. Morality should serve as a beacon of illumination for

All religions and scriptures agree that going to the aid of fellow-beings in times of need and saving them from distressing situations is a person's greatest virtue.

everyone. Without that light, human life would be plunged in darkness.

The ancient sages made known to the world that by their earnest quest for God, they had been able to experience the Divine. They declared:

We have seen that sacred effulgent Purusha (Supreme Person) in our hearts; we have seen Him beyond the darkness of ignorance.
(PURUSHA SUKTAM)

But the purpose of human life is not merely to secure a vision of the Divine or to experience the bliss of that vision. Those who love sugar must seek to become sugar itself!

The knower of God becomes God Himself (Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi).
(MUNDAKA UPANISHAD)

Religion aims at bringing about such a transformation. Making man first into a human, religion seeks to transform him to Divinity itself. But religion, which has such



a sublime purpose, is being degraded to serve petty ends. . . .

Though people may call themselves Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and the like, there should be no differences between them. Students should be completely free from sectarian differences. They should respect all religions, because **what you cherish in your religion is found in other religions also.** If you adhere to your own religion, you need

not worry yourself about other religions. (SSS 22:24, July 23, 1989)

Doing Good to Others

All religions and scriptures agree that going to the aid of fellow-beings in times of need and saving them from distressing situations is a person's greatest virtue. Every human being has equal rights in the world. All belong to one family. To enjoy peace of mind, it is essential to practice forbearance and equanimity. There are persons good and

bad, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, in every country of the world. Though born in the same family and breathing the same air, some persons are narrow-minded, have crooked ideas, and indulge in selfish deeds, while others are good and selfless.

“Loving and respecting all living beings equally (*Suhrudam sarva bhutanam*)” and “The one Atma is present in all beings (*Ekatma sarvabhuta antaratma*)” are well-known aphorisms from the scriptures. In other words, **to be friendly toward all beings is everyone’s duty, since the same Atma (inner divinity) is present in all beings. Comprehending this truth, it is the duty of everyone born as a human being to do good to others on the basis of love.**

There is no need to search for God anywhere, since God resides in every being. The body is therefore to be considered as the temple of God. Today man is breeding bad thoughts in the mind, thereby polluting the heart, which is the seat of the Divine. (SSS 25:39, Dec 25, 1992)

Recognize Unity by Compassion and Love

Every man has a heart. Every heart is filled with compassion. However, how many choose to share this compassion with others? Sharing the compassion in one’s heart with others has been characterized as devotion (*bhakti*). The one who does not share his compassion with others cannot be called a human being. Today the human heart, which should be full of compassion, has become stone hard. This is man’s misfortune.

What is the reason? It is because the heart is so filled with the bitterness of differences of caste, creed, and nationality that it has become stony. All human beings belong to one caste, one community, one nation. All are embodiments of the Divine. Krishna declared in the [Bhagavad] Gita, “*All beings in the world are a fragment of My Self.*” It is tragic that man should forget his divine essence and behave like a demon. . . .

Giving up narrow ideas and feelings, people should show compassion toward their fellow beings. Compassion is the hallmark of devotion (*bhakti*). No one can hope to please God without showing compassion (*daya*) toward his fellow men. A loving heart is the temple of God. God cannot dwell in a heart without compassion.

God is one. The goal is one. People need to change their outlook and develop love toward all. There is nothing greater in the world than this feeling of a universal loving vision (*premadrishti*). There are many eminent scholars and intellectuals in the world today who are adept in seeing the diversity in the world. Why don’t they try to see the unity that underlies this diversity? They alone are good who see the unity in the apparent diversity; those who see only the diversity are merely clever intellectuals. . . .

How to Recognize Unity in Diversity?

How can one recognize this unity in diversity? Birth and death are common to all human beings. Whether one is a millionaire or a pauper, both are brought forth from their mothers’ wombs. Hunger and thirst

are common to all. The kind of food that is eaten may vary, but hunger is the same for all. Likewise, thirst is common to all. These basic common experiences point to the unity that underlies the diversity.

The Upanishads have emphasized the spiritual oneness of all beings. The life force is one and the same, in all. The Atma is the same in all. What, then, causes differences in the bodies? These differences are the results of differences in the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the individuals concerned. The indwelling spirit is the same in everyone. . . .

People must realize they are sparks of the Divine. They must develop sacred thoughts and lead ideal lives. They must seek to promote the welfare of society.

Pray for the welfare of all. The power of prayer is incalculable. Everyone gathered here should pray every day for the welfare and happiness of all people everywhere. This is true spirituality.

To render service to others to the limit of your capacity is real spirituality. The body has been given to man for serving others. If one has a compassionate heart, is truthful in speech, and uses his body for serving others, he needs nothing else to redeem his life. . . .

It is not enough to speak about one's ideals; one must live up to them. Today people must develop a compassionate heart and be truthful in speech. Truth is the means to realize God. God is the very embodiment of truth. Where there is truth, there is God. . . . Today, people must adhere to truth in their life. Whatever dharmic acts you do should be done

in a spirit of renunciation of their fruits. Charity is the best ornament for the hand; truth is the best ornament for the throat, and listening to sacred things is the best ornament for the ears. (SSS 29:07, Mar 20, 1996)

Purity of Heart

All religions have laid stress on purity of heart. They have also declared that without a pure heart, all spiritual exercises are valueless. How can purity of heart be realized if the mind is filled with egoism? The body can be cleansed by water, but the heart can be made clean only by chanting the Lord's name. . . .

The Lord's name is like a boat for a man crossing the ocean of life. It is supremely important in the Kali Age. It has been declared that there is nothing greater than the name of God in the Kali Age. By no other spiritual or religious practices can peace be attained in this age. The divine name can turn poison into nectar. It can revive a lifeless thing. It is surcharged with infinite power. . . .

Those who have firm faith in God should not bother about what others think or say about them. They should adhere to their practices regardless of what others feel. They should have the courage to practice what they know to be right. They must be afraid to commit sin but have no fear at all in chanting the name of God. The Lord's name will protect them till the end of their lives, even when all others desert them. You must practice chanting God's name from now on, because no one can say when the end will come. (SSS 22:15, 22 June 1989)

The principle of harmonizing is the very heart of all religions and faith.

The Omnipresent God Is One and One Only

The followers of every religion, in their own way and style, call upon the One Omnipresent God, the same God who confers health, prosperity, peace, and happiness upon all mankind. No religion has a separate God showering grace upon those who profess to abide by that faith alone! It is the destiny of man to journey from humanity to Divinity. In this pilgrimage, he is bound to encounter various obstacles and trials.

In order to illumine the path and help him overcome these troubles, sages, seers, realized souls, divine personalities, and incarnations of God take birth in human form. They move among the afflicted and the seekers who have lost their way or strayed into the desert, and lead them into confidence and courage.

Certain personalities are born and live out their days for this very purpose. They can be called *karanajanmas* (born for a purpose), for they take on the *janma* (birth) for a *karana* (cause, purpose). Such guides, exemplars, and leaders appear among all peoples and in all lands. They inspire faith in higher ideals and teach in the Voice of God, counseling from the heart.

Of course, there are many aspirants who, by their devotion, dedication, and disciplined lives, attain the vision of the Omnipresent,

Omnipotent and Omniscient One. They are content with the bliss they have won for themselves. There are others who go out and share this bliss with those beyond the pale; they guide and lead and are blessed thereby. They teach that multiplicity is a delusion and that unity is the Reality. (SSS 14:16, Dec 25, 1978)

What Is Religion?

There are three steps or stages in this journey: “I am Yours”; “You are Mine!” and finally, “I am You!” Every spiritual seeker has to proceed from one to the other and reach the journey’s end. Move on; don’t halt. It is good to be born in a church, but it is not good to die in it. Grow and rescue yourselves from the limits and regulations, the doctrines that fence your freedom of thought, the ceremonies and rites that restrict and re-direct. Reach the point where churches do not matter, where all roads end, from where all roads run! (SSS 9:14, 29 July 1969 “The Voice of the Ocean”)

In the world today, one does not see unity or love anywhere. Life appears to be a totally mechanical affair. The term man does not mean merely the external appearance of a human being. We should have the conviction that he is a soul dwelling in a body. This may be an act of faith. But without such faith, life has no meaning. Today we believe in things that should not be believed and have no belief in the things in which we ought to believe.

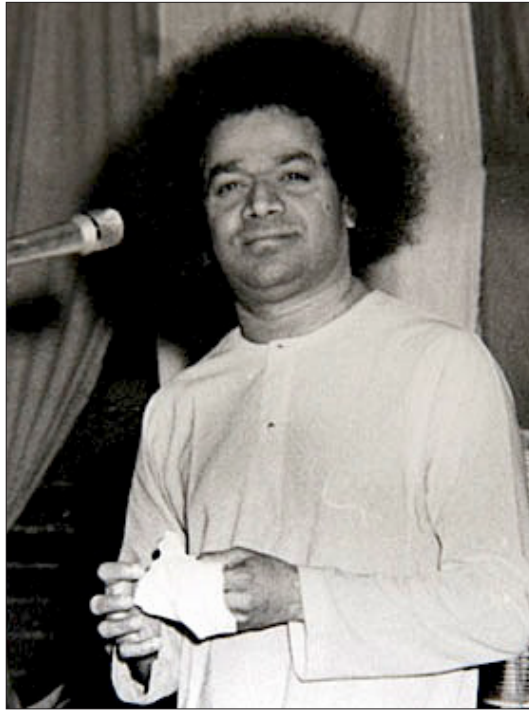
We should have faith in ourselves.

We should understand our true nature and rectify our failings. Discovering our true self, we should live up to its demands. (SSS 17:27, Nov 18, 1984)

Harmony of Religions

In the current spiritual beliefs of mankind, one cannot discern anywhere a harmonizing factor (*samanvaya*). The principles of coordination and reconciliation have to be expanded and expounded. Though religions have separate names and the doctrines are distinct from each other, in essence, all are one. The aphorism, “God is the main purport of the scriptures/Vedantic texts (*Tat Tu Samanvayat*),” endeavors to emphasize the common core.

Unfortunately, the apparent differences among the religions have subverted the amity of all men and the feeling of international brotherhood. Today, the experience and wisdom of great seers who have unveiled the mystery of the cosmos and their feelings of universal love are not appreciated, accepted, and respected. All religious dogmas, except



a few, can easily be harmonized and reconciled.

The same God is extolled and adored under various names, through varied ceremonial rituals in the many religions. In every age, for every race or community of peoples, God has sent prophets to establish peace and goodwill. Since many separate religions have spread worldwide, they have lost

fraternal feelings and thereby have suffered in validity.

There is an urgent need for harmony. All great people are images of God. They form one single caste in the realm of God; they belong to one nation – the divine fellowship.

Each must interest himself in understanding the practices and beliefs of the others. Only then can everyone, with cleansed mind and loving heart, attain the Divine Presence with others. **The principle of harmonizing is the very heart of all religions and faith.** (*Sutra Vahini*, ch 4, p 36)

—From the discourses and writings
of Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Understanding How Different Faiths Relate to Divinity

Interfaith panel discussions featured at the Southeast Regional Retreat, Black Mountain, North Carolina, Memorial Day weekend 2012



Sunder Iyer



Interfaith Panel Discussion



Vijay Sagramsingh

Summary of Southeast Region 3 Retreat

SAI DEVOTEES RETREATED in May 2012 to the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, amidst the serene beauty of Black Mountain, North Carolina, over a long Memorial Day weekend, to renew themselves.

The theme of the retreat, **“Harmony: In the Individual, Family, and Society,”** accomplished its aim. Each aspect of Harmony was addressed by the keynote speakers: Fize Mohammed, Robert and Rita Bruce, Prof Gnana Bhaskar Tenali, and Sunder Iyer, all of whom glistened with wisdom gained through their experiences with Swami.

Further enhancing the retreat were members of the U.S. Sai Central Council: Bettina Biggart, Wayner Crowder, Vijay Sagramsingh, and Dr Axay Kalathia. They graced us with an expanded vision of Sai’s

Mission for all aspects of the organization. Additional workshops were given by Dr Jose Gomez, Dr Sarvesh Sathiraju, Venkatesh Srinivasan, and Andres Toth. **This retreat had it all:** a myriad of facets for whatever was needed to balance and give harmony – guidance on parenting and on anger management, yoga, music, Vedic chanting, service, and yes, even harmony between religions. Recorded segments are available online for further information and enjoyment, at <http://vimeo.com/user9614745/videos>.

It was my pleasure and privilege to attend the North Carolina Retreat, and to be in the audience for the Interfaith Panel Discussion. It was the first time ever, at least in the Southeast (U.S. Region 3), for us to feature a panel discussion of three religions: Islam, Hinduism (Sanathana Dharma), and Christianity. The panel included Sai devotees



Moments of peace: Click [here*](#) for a short video gift – 2.25 minutes of tranquility – of the serene brook at the Black Mountain NC retreat.



Dr Jose Gomez



Rita and Robert Bruce



Bettina Biggart, Wayner Crowder

and a member of the Christian community. I really didn't think I would enjoy the panel, dreading a religious debate. But was I in for a surprise (Sai-prize)!

Afterward, at the center presidents' meeting, I was so impressed with the panel that I suggested an article be submitted to the *Sathya Sai Newsletter USA* and volunteered to write the article.

Initially I had intended just highlighting bits of quotes from the panelists for a news article. That would have been easy and quick! But I changed my mind, because the panel's impact on me was far greater when I heard the responses to the questions in their entirety. In these days and times, it is even more important to understand different religious beliefs, especially in America, so we can exercise more tolerance.

The panel covered volatile issues such as *jihad*, and confusing issues such as idol worship, belief in countless deities, and denominations. Then, of course, hearing the miraculous personal experiences that were shared was important, too. I felt the panelists' answers were expressed so eloquently, with such love, that I didn't have the heart to cut anything.

So, instead of writing an article, I transcribed the video taken of the discussion. I gained more understanding of important topics in each of the religions presented when I didn't try to condense or eliminate.

The following is Part 1 of the panel discussion, featuring selected questions taken in advance, allowing each of the panelists to address the question.

—Jorja Kelley

Ft Walton Beach, Florida

*<http://us.sathyasai.org/ssn/media/BlackMountainBrook.wmv>



Interfaith panel representing Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. From left: Dr Axay Kalathia (moderator), Pastor Neville Steele, Professor Gnana Bhaskar Tenali, Mr Fize Mohammed.

Interfaith Panel Discussion

SAI DEVOTEES WHO ATTENDED the USA Region 3 (Southeast) Retreat in Black Mountain, North Carolina, over Memorial Day weekend were treated to an Interfaith Panel Discussion. This was the first time, at least in Southeast Region 3, that such a panel contained participants outside the Sai community. The panel was comprised of a moderator, Regional President Dr Axay Kalathia, and three panel members:

Pastor Neville Steele, born in Trinidad and Tobago of Catholic parents and now living in the U.S., represented Christianity.

Pastor Steele is founder of the Get Ready International Outreach Ministries; he also founded Project Embrace to help empower children and youth in East Charlotte, North Carolina, and has authored a book, *A New You Right Now*.

Professor Gnana Bhaskar Tenali, Professor of Mathematics at Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne and a former student, graduate, and professor at Sri Sathya Sai University, where he was Lecturer and Teacher of Vedas and Sanathana Dharma, represented Hinduism.

**“The goal of this panel is a sharing, a dialogue,
where each one speaks from his heart,
and shares . . . how they relate to Divinity.”**

Mr Fize Mohammed, from Trinidad and Tobago, a longtime Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) teacher and officer in the Sathya Sai Organization, international speaker, financial consultant and manager, and host of a Radio Sai Trinidad weekly program on the birth, life, and teachings of Sathya Sai Baba, represented Islam.

As moderator, **Regional President Dr Axay Kalathia** explained the format. He would read a pre-selected question, and then each panel member would be given the opportunity to answer the question. “The reason we’re having this Interfaith Panel,” Dr Kalathia explained, “is that the world is getting smaller. We’re interacting with people from communities, which in time eons ago just didn’t happen. . . . We may have different thoughts, different ways of worship, different customs, different rituals. But underlying all these differences, the yearning for the Divine is the same. We all have the same yearning. We all have the same love for the Divine. We all have certain underlying values that form the core of our faith.”

“This exchange is very beneficial,” continued Dr Kalathia, “because it helps us to re-evaluate our own belief systems. . . . It makes us reflect and hopefully be more secure in our own faith. . . . The goal of this panel is a sharing, a dialogue, where each one speaks from his heart, and shares . . . how he relates to Divinity.”

Dr Kalathia cited Swami’s words:

*Truth is what I teach;
Right conduct is the way I live;
Peace is the mark of my personality;
Love is my very nature.*

(Prema Dhaara, Part 2, p 59)

“Those values of peace, truth, right conduct, love – and add nonviolence – are the core, not only of what Swami teaches but of all the great faiths of the world.”

Dr Kalathia reminded the audience of the proper attitude one must have as a listener, by sharing advice that Swami once gave to his students:

Students have to consider themselves as the limbs of the wider society and strive for its welfare. They have to value the opinions that others hold as much as they value their own. Everyone has the right to believe in his reading of reality. No one has the right to dispute the sincerity and faith of others. Controversies and conflicts arise when such a right is claimed and exercised. Students should not be so self-centered as to argue that their line of thought is right and that all others are wrong. Such an attitude reveals weakness and fear. Each person has the right, and duty, to arrive at and assert his point of view for consideration by others.

(Prema Dhaara, Part 2, pp 43-44)

NOTE: THIS ARTICLE WAS TRANSCRIBED FROM A VIDEO RECORDING. When bits of the quotes were not understandable to the transcriber, “. . .” was inserted to represent the missing text. Repetitious phrases have been eliminated for brevity. The entire video may be viewed either *here* or *here*.*

What is the essence of the faith?

Dr Kalathia (Moderator): In one or two sentences, what is the most important message or essence of your faith?

Pastor Steele (Christianity): The essence of my faith is love, because we serve a God who IS love. Unless we love one another, we cannot say we serve or know God. We must love one another, for God IS love.

Prof Tenali (Hinduism): The essence of Hinduism, in short, is that every human being is innately divine, and the purpose or reason why we are here on this earth is to realize the fact that we are indeed part of the same divinity, the One Almighty God. That makes us, therefore, all children of the same God. . . . All are brothers and sisters, so we love each other, we serve each other, as members of one family, with the single-minded goal that we are all here to realize the divinity within.

Brother Mohammed (Islam): In Islam, *Islam* means “peace.” The main contributing factor and teaching in this wonderful religion is complete submission and obedience to the will of Almighty Allah. A definition of a

Muslim is one who completely surrenders himself to the will of Allah. When we refer to completely surrendering to Him, the surrendering incorporates the practicing daily of the five fundamental principles of Islam: prayers five times daily, believing in the Oneness of Allah, doing charity, going on pilgrimage to Mecca, and engaging in the holy month of Ramadan.

How to be a better follower of the faith?

Dr Kalathia (Moderator): What should the followers of your faith do to be a better follower of your faith?

Pastor Steele (Christianity): In order to be a better follower of the faith that I profess, followers must be obedient to the word of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Every word that Jesus spoke, he spoke for our spiritual interest. It may not be for our best economic or emotional interest, but it is for our best spiritual interest. And once we are obedient to the word of God as brought to us by Jesus the Christ, then we will indeed become better followers, personally, spiritually, and otherwise.

Prof Tenali (Hinduism): Though we continue to use the word Hinduism, truly Hinduism is no organized religion. It is to be accurately called *Sanathana Dharma*, meaning, “an ancient way of life” – an ancient way of life that has been discovered to be an optimum way of life toward the realization of this Oneness that permeates through all of us, the realization of the purpose of our lives.

* <https://vimeo.com/44560656> or
<http://vimeo.com/user9614745/videos>

“The essence of my faith is love, because we serve a God who IS love. Unless we love one another, we cannot say we serve or know God. We must love one another, for God IS love.” —Pastor Neville Steele

So, being an ancient way of life, over the past several thousands of years, a lot of wisdom has been passed on down the generations in the form of numerous scriptural [teachings and commentaries]. While there is no particular scripture that every Hindu must read, we have an abundance of scriptures available, all of which are supposed to help a Hindu understand why this ancient way of life has been designed in this particular fashion.

Today, a Hindu finds there are lots of rituals that are part and parcel of Hinduism; there are a lot of rules and regulations that are already embedded in this religion, and at times, to the modern Hindu, this can get overwhelming.

The complete meaning behind these rituals and rules that have been ordained by the ancient seers of India, has been lost to an extent. While there are people who still continue to have the complete understanding and keep transmitting this knowledge from generation to generation, the large majority does not have the time or means, or they're not completely in touch with the inner significance of all these rituals, their meanings and purpose. How it's supposed to help us has been lost to the vast majority.

So, in order to be a better Hindu, what should a Hindu do? The answer is, they can try by every possible effort to understand the meaning and significance of the rituals and rules, and how these rituals and rules, which have been laid down very faithfully and followed strictly throughout these thousands of years, how these are going to help us realize our innate divinity.”

Brother Mohammed (Islam): In Islam, as we have said, it has five fundamental, cardinal principles. Sometimes in the practicing or adhering to these principles we can lose the essence of what the inner purpose is. Sometimes we can get caught up in the physical practice without having the proper inner attitude.

For example, a Muslim is supposed to pray five times daily: at the break of dawn, 12 noon, mid-afternoon, when the sun sets, and in the night. And the purpose of these five prayers, as the holy Prophet Mohammed once said, is, “If a person takes a bath five times a day, the body remains clean. When he dips into prayer five times a day, the mind becomes pure.” There is constant divine remembrance of Almighty Allah during the course of his daily duties.

However, what can happen: it is also said that when you do one particular set of *namaz* or prayers, you attract a certain amount of blessings. That is quantified. Sometimes the believer gets caught up in the reward of doing the prayers, losing the essence of what the inner meaning and purpose is.

So, to become a better Muslim, I think what is vitally important is that as we practice the five cardinal principles; our attitude should be not to do it for reward, but out of the selfless love and pleasing of Almighty Allah. Once we do this, then we can win the grace and bounties of Almighty Allah.

What is most misunderstood about your faith?

Dr Kalathia (Moderator): What aspect of your faith is most misunderstood among its own followers? And the corollary to that question is, what aspect of your faith is most misunderstood by those outside your tradition?

Pastor Steele (Christianity): I think what is most misunderstood about Christianity is the fact that there are so many denominations, so many divisions. The reason is that over the centuries, various philosophers and religionists have put forward their own understanding of the word of God as revealed to us in this book called the Holy Bible.

In this book, it is said, in Proverbs, chapter 3, verse 5, that “we must not lean upon our own understanding.” If we are to follow Jesus Christ, who came into this world to teach us to know God as Father, we

must not look to what we know and what we understand as human beings, because the word of God came to us through the writings of men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

In ancient Hebrew, the Holy Spirit was referred to as *Ruach hachodesh*, or for those of you who speak different languages, he is also known as the *Espiritus Sanctus*, or what we call the Holy Spirit – an invisible Person, who came to us after Jesus ascended back to heaven, two thousand years ago.

So the truth, as revealed to us by Jesus, is what must be practiced, for there to be unity among all believers. It must not be distorted; it must not be misrepresented, as has been the case over the centuries. But we thank God that today the truth is made known, so that we can look toward harmonizing all aspects and all parts of Christianity.

Without the unity of Christianity, then the force or the love that should transpire among believers would not be exemplified, would not be, in essence, demonstrated. So, together as a body, Christianity is often misunderstood because of the lack of the unity of what is taught to us about the word of God.

I know for a fact that we are living at a time wherein which the truth of God’s word is made known to us. It is because we have the truth, and we live the truth; then can we experience once again the Oneness that Jesus Christ experienced when he walked the face of the earth almost two thousand years ago.

“If a person takes a bath five times a day, the body remains clean. When he dips into prayer five times a day, the mind becomes pure.”
—Prophet Mohammed

Prof Tenali (Hinduism): The most misunderstood aspect of the Hindu religion, among the Hindus, is that many think that we have several gods. So, there are people who think, “Well, I’m Hindu, but my God is Shiva.” Then somebody else thinks, “I’m also Hindu, but my God is Vishnu, and Shiva is not my God,” and so on.

So, we have numerous forms of deities, both male and female, and most Hindus tend to think that we have too many gods to worship, forgetting the fact that they’re not different from one another. Shiva, as a personification of All-Auspiciousness, is All-Pervading Auspiciousness.

But the all-pervading aspect of the one divine entity is called Vishnu. Vishnu literally means “One who is All-Pervading.” But this “One who is All-Pervading” is also All-Auspiciousness. So, whom we call Shiva, the very embodiment of auspiciousness, is all-pervading. To think that Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu are different is wrong, and so also is, “I worship this, but that other form and name are not worthy of worship,” which some people think.

Swami has said in several discourses (Sanskrit phrase), meaning, “*Whatsoever form of divinity you worship and offer a*

salutation to, it reaches the one underlying Godhead.”

By the same token, he has also said, “*So if you, therefore, by default, also say that ‘I do not like this particular God, and that entity is not God,’ that rejection also reaches that one Godhead.*”

There is only one fundamental Reality: whether you offer worship or whether you reject it, both are received by the same Entity. This is what Bhagawan has emphasized to dispel the impression that there are different Gods. There are different manifestations of the same One Godhead. This is what in my opinion is largely misunderstood.

And another aspect that has been misunderstood about Hinduism: many think that Hindus are idol worshipers. They think that here are some stone images or some drawn images, maybe pictures, and Hindus worship these. So idol worship is one of the largely misunderstood concepts of Hinduism by others, whereas, the fact is, the fundamental tenet of Hinduism, as mentioned in one of the scriptures, the Upanishads, or the Ishavasya Upanishad, says, “(Sanskrit phrase) – *The entire universe is permeated by God.*”

So, for a Hindu, there is no object in this universe that is not worthy of worship, because everything for a Hindu is supposed to be a manifestation of God. When they worship an idol, they are not worshipping the stone, they are worshipping the divinity that has manifested and is only a symbol that stands in front of a Hindu. The worship is actually to the one Godhead, which is all-pervading, all-knowing, the omniscient, omni-present, omnipotent God.

There is a huge theory of these idols, as to why the idols are different types, etc. We cannot go into those details. Definitely, it's not as simple as it looks. It's not just some stone image that is laid out, and it's not that Hindus are ignorant and cannot see that a stone is a stone. They see much more beyond that. With your permission, I would like to give a small anecdote, which happened with Bhagawan.

There was a scientist, a great, well-known physicist, who came to Swami. He was very renown, a great scholar and academician. Swami and he were traveling by car from Puttaparthi to Bangalore, and somewhere midway, Swami stopped and said, "Let's take a break; we'll sit by the roadside." And they sat there engaged in conversation. So Swami picked up a stone and asked the scientist, "Can you tell me what is this?"

"Of course," he said. "Swami, it's a stone."

"No, no, I know it is a stone, but tell me more. What do you see, as a scientist?"

So he, being a chemistry scientist, explained to Swami, thinking that Swami

wanted to understand the chemical composition of the stone, so he explained to Swami about all the atoms, and the particles and molecules, and all the forces within the atom, all the science thereof. Swami listened to him very patiently and then said, "All that is fine. What else?"

Well, he tried a few more advanced theories, but he thought Swami would not probably understand, so he was trying to make it simpler, and he could only go so far.

Swami continued to ask, "What else?" until the scientist had to fall quiet and say, "There is nothing more to add. I described it at the very superficial part of the stone, then went down to the molecular level. I went down to the energy of the atom . . .," and things like that.

Still Swami said, "What else?"

Swami took the stone back from the scientist, held it in his hand, broke the stone, took out a small piece of it and gave it to the scientist and said, "Eat it."

Then, when the scientist put the piece of stone into his mouth, it tasted sweet – because Bhagawan had converted the stone into candy.

Then Swami said, "*Just the way you could not explain that it was sweet, there was sweetness in the stone. Divinity is present all through this universe. So, a stone is not [just] a stone; there is divinity inherently present in the stone.*"

This is just to explain why idol worship is not what it appears to be.

Brother Fize Mohammed (Islam): An aspect of Islam that is most misunderstood, both internally and externally, is what we call *jihad*. I think it is important to deal with this, because there is such a great misconception that whenever people think of Islam, immediately violence comes to their mind, that this is a religion of violence. According to the holy Prophet Mohammed, *jihad* means “The Holy War.” It is misunderstood internally because of the interpretation given by some of the great leaders. Some of them interpret this to mean that those who trespass against their religion should be killed. This is very sad.

The Holy War, according to the holy Prophet Mohammed, is the war that goes on within the individual, not without. It is similar to what Swami has said about the Mahabharata War, that the five human values represent the five Pandavas, and the thousands of Kauravas represent the evil tendencies, and that constant battle takes place between them, every day of our lives.

Similarly, in Islam, the fighting of the human values with the negative qualities is what we call the The Holy War. That is the very reason we have taken birth, so that the human values can win. So that is the Holy War the Holy Prophet Mohammed speaks about.

Islam is a religion of peace. In fact, when Swami opened the mosque in 1978 – a mosque that was built by him in Puttaparthi when the Muslims had to walk seven miles to the nearest mosque – Swami, in blessing the mosque, said, and these are his exact words, “No religion praises violence or falsehood.”

So, this is a religion of peace, and the concept of *jihad* has to be taken in its proper understanding, insofar as the believer is concerned. It is necessary to

emphasize that the *jihad* is the inner war or inner battle that takes place in the life of the believer every single day.

This is also misunderstood internally in the religion. One of the sad things in recent times is that when a leader misinterprets a verse like this, the masses follow blindly. This is total madness. Swami has said, “Sacrifice in any form, in any religion, is wrong.” And to



Professor Gnana Bhaskar Tenali (Hinduism)

say that one can plant bombs on himself and go and blow up towers, etc., in the name of Islam and that he will get liberation, is sheer madness and a total misinterpretation of what the true value of the religion is. So, let us be clear, that Swami has said that the Holy Quran was revealed to the holy Prophet Mohammed in the same way that the Vedas were revealed to the rishis – directly from God.

Thus, in its original text and purity, Islam is a religion that fosters an awakened peace, more than any [other] quality, in the lives of the believers. In the Holy Quran, Allah speaks about the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God, which can be achieved by practicing the five fundamental human values.

So, please, I urge you all to remove this misconception in your mind that Islam is a religion of violence. The Lord Himself, Bhagawan, has stated that it is a religion of peace. Whenever you hear the term *jihad*, know that it refers to the inner war and not the outer war. The inner war is more important. As Swami says, that is really the battle we should be waging – on the negativity inside ourselves, rather than outside.

Concepts of death and the afterlife

Dr Kalathia (Moderator): Changing course just a little bit, why don't we this time start in a different direction (order) for the questions. "How does your faith define and interpret the concept of death and the afterlife?"

Brother Fize Mohammed (Islam): Islam teaches that there is one life physically, and

that there is an afterlife. There is a verse in the Holy Quran that states, "To Allah we have come from, and to Allah we shall surely return." So the emphasis is that we have one life to live on a physical level. In the Holy Quran it is stated that we must maximize the use of the allotted time on the face of the earth. In the Holy Quran it is also stated, "Every man's action will cling to his neck, good or bad." The rewards of each action, the merit of each action, he will receive in the afterlife. So it is propagated and recommended that during this one particular lifetime, the Muslim, the believer, should strive to do as much as he can to win the grace of Almighty Allah, so he can store up his treasures in the afterlife, where he can then enjoy what they term "paradise."

Living in this physical world in this one life, the practicing of the five cardinal principles is extremely vital and important to the Muslim. He strives every single day, knowing it is one life to live, so he maximizes and lives every day as if were his very last. In the Holy Quran, it is also stated that at least once in a Muslim's lifetime, he should make a pilgrimage to Mecca, and when a Muslim makes the pilgrimage to Mecca, he feels that he has completed his life cycle.

The other four fundamental principles – the fast, believing in the oneness of Allah, giving alms and charity, the five daily *namaz* – are practiced every single day. The essence of one's life is to maximize the use of the time allotted by Almighty Allah through the practicing of the five fundamental principles, to win the grace of God, so that he can reap the benefits of the afterlife. So, when

“The entire universe is permeated by God.” —Ishavasya Upanishad

the physical body is no more, the Muslim believes that the soul goes back to Allah from whence it came.

Explanations of seeming unfairness, suffering, and tragedy

Dr Axay Kalathia (Moderator): Before we move on, I think it would be nice if we cover this question at the same time: *How do we explain the seeming unfairness of the world?* When we look at things from a superficial standpoint, from our limited view, things sometimes seem unfair. There’s suffering and tragedy, seemingly unfair. How does your faith explain that? I think it ties in with death and afterlife as well.

Brother Fize Mohammed (Islam): In Islam, just as in all the other religions, I believe, there is this theory of cause and effect. We have a saying in Trinidad that if you plant tomatoes, you can’t get corn. Whatever you plant, you will reap. So if you do good, only good will follow you; if you do good, only good consequences will come. And this is what is propagated as a teaching in Islam – that when we do good, we win the grace and bounties of Almighty Allah.

When something happens to us that we cannot explain – a calamity, a child dies prematurely, someone gets into a

motor vehicle accident, there’s a grave and serious sickness that takes away a loved one suddenly – the Muslim believes that these are tests from Almighty Allah, to test one’s faith. One doesn’t know the past, present, and future, but Almighty Allah knows. So one is supposed to welcome these tests as opportunities for growth to become closer to Almighty Allah. The greater the test, the greater the blessing one will receive. So tests, trials, and tribulations are viewed as opportunities, or should be viewed as opportunities for growth, to become closer to God.

Prof Tenali (Hinduism): We just mentioned a while ago that in the Hindu perspective, life is a journey toward the realization of one’s innate divinity. Having said that, this life that we are in here on earth is one of the many numerous lives we will take, in this process of evolution. It is a continuous process, so this concept of reincarnation, rebirth, is probably unique to Hinduism.

The idea is that as we live our life, we are performing actions on various levels. All these actions – the Sanskrit word used for these actions is *karma* – all these actions will have some consequences and will have some results. And these consequences are all not necessarily experienced in this one lifetime that we are here on earth – some of which we

might, some of which we might not – because the current birth itself is a consequence of certain actions that have been performed in the numerous lives we have had in the past.

So, I will answer both questions together. Whatever happens in the current life is not without reason; there was a seed sown earlier that has grown into a tree, and now the fruits are being reaped. Of course, as Brother Fize mentioned earlier, good actions, virtuous actions, dharmic actions, meritorious actions, will result in favorable situations – and the opposite, if we do the opposite actions.

What is this favorable situation, we have to ask? As it has been mentioned a while ago, these favorable results don't necessarily mean that we will make more money in this life, or that we will have a lot more luxuries in this life. This favor is toward the process of growth and inner realization, so the more meritorious, noble, and virtuous deeds a person does, the closer the individual is getting to the realization of his own innate divinity.

But at the end of life, one lifetime, the balance sheet is not completely matched. There is some collection of meritorious deeds and some collection of non-meritorious deeds, not all of which have already been experienced or paid for. So, when one leaves this body, the karmic baggage, as one may call it, is still there to be experienced by the individual soul.

As was explained by Lord Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, one of the very well-known Hindu texts, though it is not

a prescribed text for any Hindu, “(Sanskrit phase) – In exactly the same manner that an individual discards a piece of clothing that has become worn, dirty, and unusable, and puts on a different garment; this body, too, is like that for the soul.”

We are wearing this garment that we call “this body.” When this gets worn out, when it is not fit enough to use for the purpose of why we are here on this earth, about which we have already talked, then one casts off the body, in just the same way that one removes a shirt that has become dirty or soiled and changes to a new one. That is the analogy Lord Sri Krishna has given. So, to a Hindu's thinking, “death” is only a process of transformation; it is not an end.

Then what happens? The individual soul comes back – not once, not twice, but maybe a million times if needed – as many times as is needed, in order to reach the level of perfect realization of Oneness with God. That, therefore, automatically explains why certain miseries and sorrows take place in one's life. Because, apparently, extremely noble, kind, and very mature, very nice persons seem to go through untold suffering, suffering after suffering, and there is no possible explanation.

Every individual who knows a certain person may have seen from childhood that the person is a very great soul, and there is no explanation why all these “bad” things keep on happening in his or her life. Whereas, another person, who may not appear to be as meritorious or as noble, seems to reap all the “great” things in life.

That is explained as the karmic baggage that we are reaping here in this lifetime, some of which can be explained but not all. We move on to the next life, with all of the added baggage, and some of it has been used up, some of it is newly acquired, and this process goes on until an individual becomes mindful of the fact that, “Anything I say, anything I do, anything I think, is going to have a consequence. Therefore, let me be careful. Therefore, let me live my life carefully, with awareness of what I am doing, what I am thinking. Am I doing the right thing? Take me closer to this goal of my life.”

Once that process kicks in, then the individual slowly starts reducing the karmic baggage – again, over several lifetimes – until the situation and time comes when the person is completely in unison with God Awareness.

Pastor Steele (Christianity): Well, as far as the understanding of death is concerned, the word of God teaches us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And it also states that it is appointed unto man once to die, and after death there is the Judgment.

You may wonder, “What is sin?” Sin essentially is the separation of man from God. And Jesus the Christ came into this world to show us the way back to the Father, God Almighty, so that we would no longer be separated from Him because of disobedience.

In Christianity, which I consider to be a way of life rather than a religion, Jesus

came to show us, or to share with us, the Gospel. In the Gospel, we learn that there is the first death, and there is the second death. The first death is the separation of the body from the soul. The soul is the life of the body. When the body is separated from the soul, the body goes back to the ground from which it was first created.

The second death is separation from the spirit of God Himself. If, during your lifetime, you do not seek forgiveness from God, to be reconciled to Him after you die, you will continue being separated from God for all eternity.

When Jesus came, he taught us the concept of repentance. And when we repent of our sins, for our wrongdoings – as a matter of fact, when we come into this world, we do not come into this world as perfect beings,



Brother Fize Mohammed (Islam)

or as holy beings; we come into this world programmed to do evil.

A child does not have to be taught to do wrong. No one teaches the child to lie, to steal, or to do bad things; it's automatic, because there is a sinful nature that we inherited from our first parents.

Because of the sin that separates us from God, God in his infinite wisdom sent Jesus Christ into this world, to show us the way to forgiveness. Once we are forgiven, then we are reconciled to God and we are destined to live with Him forever in eternity.

A transcendental experience

I had an experience early in life, at the age of 16, and I think it would be best for me to read it out of this book that was recently completed:

My earliest recollection of the supernatural life was at age 16 in Cedros, Trinidad. It was a bright, sunny Easter Monday in 1971; the annual sports meeting was underway at the savannah, across from the only cinema in the village. My younger sister, who never lost a sprint, was about to participate.

Eager to see her run, I quickly bicycled to the track, only to learn that it was an hour before her race was scheduled to start. Instead of returning home, I decided to bike around the village. On approaching an incline, I got off the seat and peddled as hard as I could to the top of the hill.

Suddenly, a bright light, brighter than the midday sun, formed a funnel above my head, and an eerie feeling overtook me. I lifted up my eyes, and I went blank. Later I was told that I lay unconscious on the road.

A neighbor who saw me fall off the bike came to my rescue. She sent word to my parents after I was lifted up out of the street and taken to lie on her porch, a lifeless corpse. I was unresponsive and in a comatose state. I was taken to the hospital, and neither the doctor nor the nurses knew what was wrong with me. I was taken then to the village priest, who himself could not help me.

I remained unconscious for eight hours, during which time I had not a clue what was going on around me. Finally, I was taken to my paternal grandfather's home and laid on a bed. Funeral arrangements were discussed when it was assumed that I was dead.



Pastor Neville Steele (Christianity)

However, about 9.00 that evening I opened my eyes. I felt like I was in a boat, tossed to and fro by billows. The undulation finally stopped. I became wide awake and asked for something to eat. Upon questioning me as to what had happened, I could not find an explanation, except that I saw a bright light in the sky, which came into me, and I fell off the bike.

From that day on, a light in the shape of a candle flame shines in darkness and is always seen wherever I focus my open eyes, or close my eyes. I have noticed that it shines brightest when the peace of God is greatest within me and His perfect will is being done in my life. The presence of the light within me has guided me throughout life and gives me the assurance to prevail over unfavorable situations and circumstances.

As I sit here before you today and look to the wall at the back of the sanctuary, I can see that light. It is a light that is always with

me. This is something I know will be with me, even if, even when, I should journey out of this world – because it came from God to me and will remain with me until I see Him face-to-face one day.

Dr Axay Kalathia (Moderator) It's interesting hearing all these wonderful, wonderful comments from this distinguished panel. The thoughts going through my mind are that it's interesting they are using many of the same terms: *obedience, unity, surrender, love, faith, proper understanding, truth* – not to say that their understanding may always be exactly the same. There's no reason to want to abashedly change who we are or what we believe; that's not what we're here for. It's good to share what we believe.

END OF PART 1

—**Transcribed by Jorja Kelley**
Ft Walton Beach, Florida

Students! *Do not entertain religious differences. The God Who is worshipped in all religions is One and the same. With that conviction, respect all religions. Realize that the essence of all religions is one. Don't enter into futile controversies or criticize other religions; to do so is fraught with danger. When you attack another religion, you are really guilty of assailing your own religion. Therefore, show your reverence to everyone.*

“Whatever deity you adore, the worship reaches the One Supreme Lord.”

—**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**
(SSS 22:24, July 23, 1989)

Lord, Free Our Hearts!

Lessons Out of Adversity

9/11: A DAY THAT
REGISTERS as a
part of our history,

while the future we are facing is a mystery, and the present we are living is a gift. Nearly twelve years ago, terrorists took aim to hit America in its heart on 9/11 (2001), but America's heart still beats strongly.

They tried to demolish the steel in our souls. Innocent lives ended, leaving widows and widowers, grieving parents and grandparents, and children growing up without a parent.

Americans, though, embraced tenacity, strength, and courage, far beyond the norm of compassion. The wrong-doing experienced was dwarfed in number and importance by the hundreds of heroes and heroines who demonstrated that God's goodness is embedded in this confusing world, and who, by so doing, restored our hope and sanity.

New York was my home. My parents arrived in New York from Ireland and were married in St Francis de Sales Church on the East Side of Manhattan. I entered the world on a kitchen table with the aid of a midwife, one flight above the neighborhood butcher shop at Park Avenue and 98th Street! I was born, raised, educated, and married in the

"Big Apple," fully participating in the city's vibrant aliveness. It will always be beloved in my heart.

On 9/11, my husband Tom and I were living in Mount Angel, Oregon, and as we watched this terrible catastrophe taking place in our native state, it pierced our hearts, as we knew well the neighborhood, with its immense buildings and wide and narrow streets. Many times we had visited the Twin Towers on convention trips.

Now, over the past decade, the city and its residents have sifted through survival, rebuilding, and facing fears of germicidal warfare. If 9/11 taught us anything, it taught us to refocus our character and moral fiber as a nation, defining our essential freedoms.

One may master all forms of knowledge, vanquish one's adversaries, and fight with valor and courage, but in the end, the honor of a nation depends on the morality of its people.

We could start by becoming a force for spiritual global warming, by encouraging harmony rather than conflict, balancing each other to mix and blend, recognizing that seeing beyond difference and diversity is essential for the peace in the world.

—Winnie Bolton, "Something for the Soul"

Mount Angel, Oregon

breath of eternity

*"God is One, and liketh unity."
—Prophet Muhammad*

What do you call your God –
Allah, Jesus, Krishna, Sai, Rama, Buddha?
Listen deeply to the sound of all names.

Each one is flowing on the breath of eternity,
revealing equal meaning:
truth, mercy, kindness, living presence.

You may summon your God
as Mother, Father, Great Spirit,
Beloved Friend, the Tao.

Whether you cry or whisper, denounce or deny,
the response arrives unfailingly, as
truth, mercy, kindness, living presence.

—Monika John
Eastsound, Washington

Nurturing the Spiritual Life

Inspired by Sathya Sai Baba

AS WE REFLECT on the year that has past and set directions for the year to come, these pearls of practical wisdom based on Sathya Sai Baba's teachings can be applied by all, no matter the background.

Spiritual Nurturing of the Body

Diet

- Eat with gratitude, reverence, focus, and patience.
- Avoid distractions (television, computer, phone, PDA, book) during your meal.
- Eat moderately – stop eating when two-thirds full.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables. Eat more foods in their natural state. Eat more seasonal and local foods.

Activity

- Arise early and turn in early for the night.
- Upon arising, reflect and set an intention for the day, and express gratitude for the gift of this new day.
- Upon retiring, reflect upon the days events, resolve to correct mistakes, and express gratitude for the gifts of the day.
- Sit in silence for at least a few minutes each day.
- Walk in the morning or evening daily (think positive uplifting thoughts during the walk; appreciate the beauty of nature; feel gratitude).
- Play games.

Spiritual Nurturing of the Mind

Principles

- See the unity that underlies the diversity of life.
- “Love” is that which unites; “hate” is that which divides.
- A “virtue” is that which unites; a “sin” is that which divides.

- “Good” is that which unites; “evil” is that which divides.
- Everything that happens to you is a potential learning and growing experience toward seeing unity.

Outlook

- Remember that you are in charge of your own happiness.
- Remember, the earlier you replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts, the happier you will be.
- Keep in mind that both happiness and sorrow, when dependent upon that which is outside of us, will always be impermanent
- While you have to learn from the past, you also need to move on and live in the present.
- Undertake each activity with enthusiasm.
- Be passionate with regard to effort and dispassionate with regard to results.
- Know and respect your limits. Avoid overactivity or excessive commitments.
- Be lighthearted. Smile and laugh more.

Spiritual Nurturing of Relationships

- Be eternally grateful to your parents for granting you this life. Express your gratitude by respecting them and making them happy.
- Cultivate time with the elderly, for the influence of their wisdom, and with the young, for the influence of their energy.
- Focus on improving your own weaknesses rather than dwelling on the perceived weaknesses of others.
- Forgiveness is more about freeing yourself than freeing the other.
- It is more effective to sway others by your actions than by your words.
- Nurture empathy.
- Offer good deeds each day. A smile is a good deed. A prayer or positive thought is a good deed.

—Axay Kalathia
Bradenton, Florida



ISSE-USA Announces 2013 Summer Courses

THE INSTITUTE OF SATHYA SAI EDUCATION-USA (ISSE-USA) is pleased to announce its 2013 Summer Course offerings. Diploma Courses One and Two will commence at the University of California, Santa Barbara, on June 22 and June 23, 2013.

An important element of the ISSE-USA mission is to spread Sathya Sai Educare and Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) to persons and institutions not already associated with the U.S. Sai Organization. Accordingly, this year we will extend invitations to individuals outside the Sai Organization for the first time. As a result, due to space limitations, we may find it necessary to limit participation of Sai devotees to those who are professional educators, community workers, or who wish to initiate official SSEHV activities, projects, or programs in association with the Institute.

FOR AN APPLICATION AND MORE INFORMATION, please send an inquiry to isse-usa@cox.net.



The Santa Barbara coastline with the UC Santa Barbara campus (location of the ISSE Course) in the foreground.

SaiLoveinAction.org – Recent Postings

WHAT IS SaiLoveinAction.org? Inspiring stories of service projects from the USA and around the world – with a focus on how service transforms the one who serves, or how service fosters spiritual growth, or how it exemplifies the highest spiritual teachings – are highlighted in the *SaiLoveinAction.org* website, which was launched in early 2012 and continues to grow.

- The website now contains over 45 articles, with more being added all the time. The USA portion of the Sai Love in Action team involves over 35 people from all over the country working together to help produce the website and its multimedia content. Other teams are forming internationally to augment the effort.
- One of the latest innovations is the ability to display article pages in either English or another language, according to the locality.
- Please keep checking the website, as new articles are added continuously. Here we bring you a sampling of recent postings.

—Sai Love in Action Team



“One-On-One” Friendships with the Elderly LITCHFIELD CT Through interacting over time with elders during their last stages of life, a volunteer “friendly visitor” intent on discovering the meaning of compassion finds her own fears of death and dying have been transformed. [Read article . . .](#)

Adventures of Green Hanuman, Part 1 KNOXVILLE TN A young adult puts what he has learned from Sai Baba on caring for nature and Mother Earth into action when he sees the need. [Read article . . .](#)





Haiti Relief Efforts SATHYA SAI CENTER OF BETHESDA MD
A Maryland Sai devotee volunteers in relief services in Port-au-Prince after the severe earthquake of Jan 2010 on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola. [Read article...](#)

Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Support MINNEAPOLIS MN
Volunteers rely on Sai Baba's teachings while working through challenges in helping Bhutani refugee families get resettled. [Read article...](#)



Serving Breakfast Weekly at the Mental Health Association SANTA ANA CA
Young Adult volunteers prepare and serve breakfast weekly at a facility for the mentally-challenged and often homeless in Orange County, CA. [Read article...](#)

Volunteers Adopt-a-Roadway TUCSON AZ Sai Center
members who have cleaned a stretch of roadway monthly in Tucson for the past 20 years note a decrease in litter over time and feel good about contributing to the cleanliness and beauty of the environment. [Read article...](#)





Story Circle DALLAS TX USA What needs to change in us in order to understand the teaching: “**Serve man until you see God in all men**”? For the author, the answer came through a service project called Story Circle at a shelter in Dallas. [Read article . . .](#)

INTERNATIONAL STORY: Humanitarian Work in Haiti CANCÚN, MEXICO Carlos supervises the preparation of 3,000 meals a day for poor children in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. [Read article . . . \(in English or Español\)](#)



HOW to NAVIGATE the *SaiLoveinAction.org* website:

The links in the preceding article take you directly to an article online. Or, to find additional articles from the *SaiLoveinAction.org* home page, (1) **spin the globe** to locate orange dots that represent posted projects from around the world; (2) **zoom in 100%**, keeping the desired location in the center of the map; (3) **preview a brief description** of a story by hovering the mouse over an orange dot; (4) **click on a dot** to bring up a story.

- **Double-clicking on the map** zooms in toward the center of the map. (It pays to zoom in 100%, as dots for some stories are on top of each other – where there are multiple stories from the same location.)
- **Flat Map View:** Click on the “Flat Map” button (lower left corner of the home page). In some browsers and on handheld devices, the Flat Map option may work best.

SaiLoveinAction.org welcomes people who would like to author a story about a selfless service project! If you are considering submitting a story, please send an email with a short description to: submissions@SaiLoveInAction.org. A team member will get back to you with more information and guidelines and assign an editor to help you develop and polish it and provide guidance about images, quotes, audio/video clips, and so on.

Gayatri Chanting Initiative

An offering of love and gratitude by the Zone 1 Youth



The Gayatri mantra is enough to protect the person who chants it, because Gayatri embodies all the divine potencies. It is an essential requisite for the young because it ensures a bright and auspicious future for them. The young students are the citizens and leaders of tomorrow. Hence, they should develop pure and noble thoughts. —Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Aug 23, 1995

ॐ भूर्, भुवः स्वः ।

Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvaha,

तत् सवतिर्, वरेण्यं ।

Tat Savitur Varenyam,

भर्, गो देवस्य धीमहि ।

Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi,

धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat.

Meaning of the Mantra: *We meditate on that most adorable, most desirable, and most enchanting luster (effulgence) of our Supreme Lord, who is our Creator, Inspirer and Source of eternal Joy. May this light inspire and illumine our intellect (and dispel the darkness).*

Word Meanings:

Aum: The primeval sound (from which all sounds emerge);

Bhur: who is our Inspirer;

Bhuvah: who is our Creator;

Suvaha: who is the Abode of Supreme Joy.

Bhur, Bhuvah and **Suvaha** are also considered to mean the three worlds – heaven, earth, and the lower worlds.

Tat: of That (Divinity);

Savitur: from Whom all creations emerge (also means the Sun God, who is our life source);

Varenyam: the most adorable, desirable, or enchanting;

Bhargo: luster or effulgence;

Devasya: Supreme (Lord);

Dheemahi: we meditate upon;

Dhiyo: intellect (activities of the intellect)

Yo: may this light;

Naha: our;

Prachodayat: inspire/illumine;

॥ ॐ भूर्, भुवः स्वः तत् सवतिर्, वरेण्यं भर्, गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

॥ ॐ भूर् भुवः स्वः तत् सवतिर् वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥



Gayatri FAQs

The quotes answering the following questions are from Sri Sathya Sai Baba's discourses and writings on the Gayatri Mantra (with citations).

1. **What is the Gayatri Mantra?** *Gayatri Mantra is the Universal Prayer enshrined in the Vedas, the most ancient scriptures of man.* (Sathya Sai Speaks [SSS] 13:34, June 20, 1977)
2. **Universal Prayer – but I've heard the Vedas are associated with the religions of the Far East. The Vedas make no distinction whatsoever on the basis of religion, caste, nationality, etc. The Vedic Mantras can be chanted by one and all.** (Ati Rudra Maha Yagna, Aug 9, 2006)
 - *The Gayatri Mantra is the embodiment of all deities. It is not related to any particular sect, caste, idol, or institution.* (SSS 16:06, Mar 17, 1983)
3. **So what exactly is a "mantra"? and who discovered this mantra?** A mantra protects the person who contemplates on it and, *when pronounced properly, brings out the divine power in man.* (SSS 17:25, Oct 1, 1984) *The sage Viswamitra devised the Gayatri Mantra.* (SSS 5:7, Feb 25, 1965)
 - *Gayatri is that which protects (thra) the life breaths (gayas or pranas) or the senses (indriyas), beginning with speech. Besides, it is said, "That which*

saves those who sing it, revere it, repeat it, or meditate on it is called Gayatri."

(Dharma Vahini, ch 7)

4. Really? Can mere sounds do that?

Yes! *Westerners have investigated the vibrations produced by this mantra and have found that when it is recited with the correct accent, as laid down in the Vedas, the atmosphere around becomes visibly illumined.* (SSS 13:34, June 20, 1977)

5. I didn't know that! What else can the Gayatri Mantra do?

The Gayatri Mantra has many benefits. Swami says:

- *One who is initiated into the Gayatri Mantra at an early age will become highly intelligent.* (SSS 33:04, Feb 10, 2000)
- *Gayatri is the reliever of all diseases... wards off all misery... is the fulfiller of all desires... is the bestower of all that is beneficial. If the Gayatri Mantra is chanted, various kinds of powers will emerge in one.* (SSS 28:22, Aug 23, 1995)
- *The effulgence of the Divine will descend on you, illumine your intellect, and light your path, when this mantra is chanted.* (SSS 13:34, June 20, 1977)

6. How do I learn the Gayatri Mantra and pronounce the words? Is there a recording out there somewhere?

We are fortunate to have a recording of Bhagavan Baba reciting the Gayatri Mantra – the best source for the proper way to chant! Click [here](http://us.sathyasai.org/ssn/media/GayatriMantra.mp3) * to access or download the audio file.

*<http://us.sathyasai.org/ssn/media/GayatriMantra.mp3>

॥ ॐ भूर् भुवः स्वः तत् सवतिर् वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

॥ ॐ भूर् भुवः स्वः तत् सवतिर् वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

7. **Are there any other guidelines about reciting the Gayatri Mantra?** Aside from emphasizing proper pronunciation and intonation, Bhagavan has given specific instructions for when and how frequently to chant the Gayatri Mantra: *It is essential to recite the Gayatri Mantra at least three times during morning, noon, and evening.* (SSS 16:06, Mar 17, 1983)

- *There is no need to chant any other mantra if you chant the Gayatri Mantra.* (SSS 33:04, Feb 10, 2000)

8. **Why three times a day? Doesn't that make this another ritual?** On the point of reciting the Gayatri thrice a day, at morning, noon, and night, Swami has said: *[It] will serve to reduce the effects of the wrong acts one does every day. It is like buying goods for cash, instead of getting them on credit. There is no accumulation of karmic (result of action) debt, since each day's karma (action) is atoned for that day itself by reciting the Gayatri Mantra.* (SSS 16:06, Mar 17, 1983)

9. **What about reciting the Gayatri at other times of the day?** There is no restriction on when the Gayatri can be chanted. Bhagavan has said:

- *You need not be bound by the three points of time to recite the prayer. It can be repeated always and everywhere; one has to ensure only that the mind is pure. . . . When you bathe, the body is being cleansed; let your mind and intellect also be cleansed. Make it a point to repeat*

it when you bathe, as well as before every meal, when you wake from sleep, and when you go to bed. (SSS 13:34, June 20, 1977)

- *Chant the Gayatri as often as possible. If you chant it while you take a bath, your bath gets sanctified. Likewise chant it before taking your food. The food becomes an offering to the Divine. Develop heartfelt devotion to God.* (SSS 28:22, Aug 23, 1995)

10. **Someone once told me that only certain groups of people are supposed to chant mantras like the Gayatri. Is that true?** This is a mistaken belief. Swami has declared:

The Gayatri Mantra is a prayer that can well be spoken with yearning by men and women of all creeds and climes in all centuries. (Thus Spake Sai . . . <http://www.sssbpt.org/Pages/Specially/Gayatrimantra.htm>)

11. **Great! This clarifies a lot of my doubts. Now I only wish I had the meaning of this mantra.** The Gayatri Mantra is embedded with profound meaning. One of the simplest explanations is: *In the Gayatri Mantra, the unity of body, mind, and soul is depicted in the first line, Bhur-Bhuvah- Suvaha. The next line, Bhargo Dhevasya Dhimahi, means, "Throw away the darkness."* Dhiyo yonah Prachodayat means, *"Let the effulgence of the Divine dispel the darkness of ignorance."* (SSS 28:11, May 6, 1995)

॥ ॐ भूर् भुवः स्वः तत् सवतिर् वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

॥ ॐ भूर्, भुवः स्वः तत् सवतिर्, वरेण्यं भर्, गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प् रचोदयात् ॥

12. What are some of the other ways of understanding the Gayatri Mantra?

Here are a few different meanings:
We contemplate the glory of Light illuminating the three worlds: gross, subtle, and causal. I Am That Vivifying Power, Love, Radiant Illumination, and Divine Grace of Universal Intelligence. We pray to the Divine Light to illumine our minds. (<http://www.sathyasai.org>)

13. I see a trend here. All these revolve around illumination. What is the connection between the Gayatri Mantra and light? The Gayatri Mantra is addressed to the energy of the Sun. It has immense powers, powers that are truly amazing, for the Sun is its presiding deity. (Sathya Sai Vahini, ch 22)

14. Sure, the Sun is responsible for light in the world we live in, but does it really illuminate us within? What is more efficient for spiritual uplift than meditation on the Effulgence that illumines and feeds the intellect? What is more vitally fruitful than the prayer that pleads for saving the mind from sinful tendencies? (Dharma Vahini, ch 7)

15. But practically speaking, how does the Gayatri Mantra illumine us within? [Gayatri] has three names: Gayatri, Savitri, and Saraswati. These three are present in everyone. Gayatri represents the senses; it is the master of the senses. Savitri is the master of the life force. Savitri signifies

truth. Saraswati is the presiding deity of speech. The three represent purity in thought, word, and deed. Although Gayatri has three names, all three are in each of us as the senses (Gayatri), the power of speech (Saraswati), and the life force (Savitri).

(28:22, Aug 23, 1995)

16. So, the Gayatri Mantra helps us develop purity in thought, word, and deed. That's great! But I still have a doubt. There are so many prayers and mantras out there. How is Gayatri different from the rest? Gayatri is a treasure you must guard throughout your lives. . . . Never give up the Gayatri; you may give up or ignore any other mantra, but you should recite the Gayatri at least a few times a day. (SSS 13:34, June 20, 1977)

17. OK, you've made your point. But I'm not sure I'm ready to make another commitment. If the Gayatri Mantra is chanted, various kinds of powers will emerge in one. Hence, the Gayatri Mantra should not be treated casually. (SSS 28:22, Aug 23, 1995)

18. Has Swami mentioned anything about the effects of chanting Gayatri Mantra for youth? Boys who have been indolent or dull before . . . have been able to develop their intelligence and be more diligent in their studies after they have received the Gayatri Mantra. . . . Like sunrise after the night, the

॥ ॐ भूर्, भुवः स्वः तत् सवतिर्, वरेण्यं भर्, गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प् रचोदयात् ॥

॥ ॐ भूर् भुवः स्वः तत् सवतिर् वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Gayatri Mantra dispels the darkness of ignorance: "Dhiyo yonah prachodayat" – the rays of the Gayatri Mantra illumine the mind and intelligence and promote knowledge, wisdom, and discrimination.
(SSS 16:06, Mar 17, 1983)

19. **That's pretty amazing! Anything else I should know?** *It (the Gayatri Mantra) is an essential requisite for the young, because it ensures a bright and auspicious future for them.* (SSS 28:22, Aug 23, 1995)



Suggestions from youth on daily Gayatri chanting:

- **GIM (Gayatri Instant Message) system:** Pair up with your friend on chat; ping each other daily to remind each other, and chant together.
- **Neighborhood YA system:** If YAs live in the same neighborhood, they can stop by on their way back home for a few minutes and chant the Gayatri.
- **Phone buddy:** Chant Gayatri with your phone buddy daily.
- **Conference bridge:** A dedicated conference bridge for 21st century sages-in-making: YAs can dial in at pre-picked dates and times to offer collective prayers.
- **Gayatri ring tone:** We can have Swami chanting the Gayatri Mantra as the ring tone on phones, pagers, or other electronic devices. Set up alarm reminders and have this chant as the ring tone. That way we can chant it along with Swami, who is our best buddy.

—USA Young Adult Gayatri Initiative Team

॥ ॐ भूर् भुवः स्वः तत् सवतिर् वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

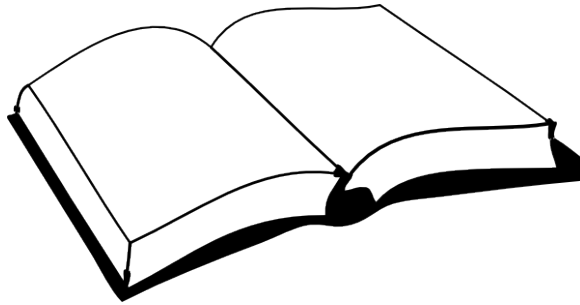
Mark Your Calendars! Zone 1 Sai Youth Conference: August 23–25, 2013

Philadelphia, PA – “One for All, All for Sai”

Pre-conference initiatives include Gayatri chanting, selfless service, and “Ceiling on Desires” as a spiritual discipline program. More details to be announced soon.

For updates, please visit www.saiyusa.net.

The Blank Book



ONCE THERE LIVED A MAN who had never heard of God. One day, someone knocked at his door. The man opened the door to find another man who said, “I’ve come to tell you about God.”

The man was surprised, for he had never known such a person existed. “Who is God? Where can I meet him?”

The guest replied, “You have to come to the Christian church. It is the only place where the real God abides, and there you can meet him. I’ll come tomorrow to take you to him.”

The man closed the door and went about his daily tasks, eventually forgetting about the unexpected visitor. Then came another knock at the door.

“I’ve come to tell you about God,” said the visitor.

“This is the second person today who wants to tell me about God,” thought the man, who knew nothing about the Creator. “Who is God? Where can I meet him?”

“You have to go to a Muslim mosque, the only place where the real God abides. You can meet him only there. I’ll come tomorrow to take you to him,” said the second visitor.

The man was surprised but didn’t pay much attention to this caller either. After some time, another person knocked at his door.

“I’ve come to tell you about God,” said the third visitor.

“Who is this God everyone is talking about? Where can I meet him?” asked the man.

“Only in the Hindu temple does the real God abide, and only there can you meet him. I’ll come tomorrow to take you to him.”

After the third visit, the man really started to think about God. His desire to meet God grew.

The man pondered to himself, “The visitors will return tomorrow. Which one should I follow? Where can I find the real God?” He tossed and turned in his bed the whole night, trying to decide whom to believe



and where to go. Only toward morning did he fall asleep, but then he had a beautiful dream.

THE MAN DREAMED he was in a green meadow, the very same meadow where he had spent many beautiful moments as a child, playing among the insects, grass, and flowers. The day was sunny and warm. He was sitting in the grass cross-legged, and another man, very much like him, was sitting opposite him.

“Who are you?” the man asked.

“I’m God, and you know it.”

“No. I know nothing about you. But I would like to meet you and get to know you. Where can I find you?”

“I’m sitting right in front of you. You can never find me, because you never lost me.”

“No, God! I only heard about you today, when three men wanted to take me to you. Please wait for me. Tomorrow, I’ll go with the Christian to the church to learn more about you.”

“I won’t be waiting for you, because I never left you. I am always with you, and you know it.”

“No, God! Please wait for me. If I don’t find you in the church, I’ll go with the Muslim to the mosque. I’ll discover who you are and come to you.”

“You can neither come to me nor leave me, for we are ONE.”

“No, God! How is that possible? I don’t know anything about you. I’ll go to the Hindu temple. I’ll learn everything about you, and then I’ll come to honor and worship you.”

God smiled and said, *“You are like a book with blank pages. You don’t contain a single note, word, or picture.”*

“You can go to the Christians, and they’ll write in your book their story about me. You can go to the Muslims, and they’ll write their story about me in your book. The Hindus will also have something about me to pen down in your book.”

“But you can be a writer, too, because today you’ve met me. So, you can write your own story about me in your book, which contains only blank pages at the moment. If you will let me, I will help you start writing your book.”

The man understood that he really was talking to God. He said, “Yes, please help me start the book!”

God gave the man a thick, bound book with blank pages. “My instructions are in the book,” said God.

The man looked closely at the book as he turned the pages. At the top of each page, he saw the same words, over and over:

*Each day of your life is like a blank page in your book.
Each day, ask for My help and start the day with love,
peace, nonviolence, truth, and fairness. Then, every
story of yours about Me will be true!*

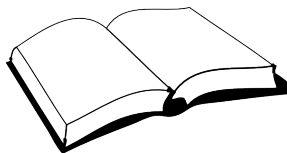
IN THE MORNING, the man woke up in a cheerful mood. He tidied the house, put on clean clothes, and waited for the guests. Very lovingly, the man received the Christian, the Muslim, and the Hindu. With love and compassion, he listened to them talk about their faith. Then he lovingly showed them out.

At the end of the day, the man opened the book with the blank pages and began to write his story of God:

*The God I saw in my dream and the God I
was told about by the Christian, the Muslim,
and the Hindu have something in common -
Love, Truth, Fairness, Nonviolence, and Peace.*

The man finished his first story about God with the conclusion,

There is only One God, and he is everywhere!



—Ms Rita Ivanova, Latvia

SOURCE: [http://media.radiosai.org/Journals/
Vol_07/01NOV09/09-get_inspired1.htm](http://media.radiosai.org/Journals/Vol_07/01NOV09/09-get_inspired1.htm)

Sai Spiritual Education Lesson Plan

“The Blank Book” (Group 3)

VALUE: Nonviolence • **SUBVALUE:** Unity

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: All religions share basic beliefs.

QUOTE: *Wherever truth, peace, and love are emphasized – in whatever religion or language – by whichever teacher, there we have the eternal religion.* —Sri Sathya Sai Baba (*Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba*, compiled by Roy Eugene Davis; Atlanta GA: CSA Press, 1974, p 118)

PRAYER/AFFIRMATION: “We are peacemakers, one in the love of God. With hearts united, we establish harmony and peace in our lives and in the world.” (Unity Worldwide, <http://unity.org/prayer/prayersAffirmations/worldPeacePrayerAffirm.html>)

Additional affirmation: “I am God.”

DEVOTIONAL SINGING: “One Love,” by Bob Marley

PRE-STORY DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY: *What do you think the word religion means?* (Baba has said, “The word religion contains the prefix re-. Re- means doing something again. The other part of the word [deriving from *ligare*, to bind or connect] connotes ‘unifying.’ Religion may be thus interpreted as reunion . . . the restoration of the primal unity of Atma (Soul) and Paramatma (God).” (SSB 1979:10) So, religion basically means returning to where we have come from; re-union; reconnecting to our Source.)

Discuss the following quote. Then, in teams of two, discuss and write what you think are the universal foundations of all religions. (See sample list on p 52. See also pp 12–18.)

“All religions teach one basic discipline - the removal of the blemish of egoism from the mind, restraining it from running after trivial joys. Every religion teaches man to fill his being with the glory of God and evict the pettiness of conceit. It trains him in methods of detachment and discrimination so that he may aim high and attain liberation. Believe that all hearts are motivated by the one God, that all faiths glorify Him alone, that all names in all languages, and all the forms man can conceive, denote the same divine principle. His adoration is best done by means of love.” —Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 8:22, July 4, 1968)

READING: “The Blank Book” (See story on pp 48–50.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (All questions should relate to the story, subvalue, and affirmation.)

1. *Why did God say that the man wouldn't find Him in the temples or the mosque?* (“You can neither come to me nor leave me, for we are ONE.”)
2. *How did God say the man would find him?* (**Ask for God's help** and start each day with **love, peace, nonviolence, truth, and fairness.**)

3. *What did the man discover about all the religions?* (All are based on **love, truth, fairness, nonviolence, and peace.**)
4. *What did the man conclude about where to find God?* (God is inside him and everywhere.)
5. *What does the Blank Book represent?*
6. *What is in the way of religions being accepting of each other, so the world can live in peace?*
7. *Why do you think the terrorist acts of 9/11 occurred? How might that day have been different if people were more accepting of each others' religion?*
8. Discuss the following quotes: *"It is good to be born in a church but not to die in it. . . . Reach the point where churches do not matter, where all roads end, from where all roads run."*
—Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 9:14, 29 July 1969) *"Religion is not God but shows the way to God."* (Inter-religious Attitude, Swami Nikhilananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York)

ACTIVITY: My Story of God: Review the handout, "World Religions – Principle Teachings" (download [here](#)*) and the list made during the discussion of the foundations of all religions. Then begin to write your story of God. Include drawings if you wish.

POWs (Pearls of Wisdom) – Public Speaking: Have students write three "pearls of wisdom" they learned during this lesson. Then ask a student to get up and speak about one of these at the end of the lesson.

LIFE APPLICATION: How Faith Defines Me: Think of one aspect of your faith that you think is common with other faiths as well. Write about this aspect, and also how you have practiced it during the week.

—Lesson contributed by **Beth Clark**, Springfield, Virginia

UNIVERSAL FOUNDATIONS OF ALL RELIGIONS (sample list; for further study, see pp 12-18)

1. Belief in Higher Power – God
2. Have a creation story
3. Have teachings about where we go after dying, the after-life
4. Instruct in how to contact the Higher Power
5. Concerned with service, removing difficulties/relieving suffering
6. Teach spiritual practices to connect with the Higher Power
7. Provide a code of conduct; teach morality, virtues, human values
8. Emphasize congregation/fellowship
9. Meet the needs of people at the time and place the religion formalized
10. Teach the Golden Rule

* http://us.sathyasai.org/ssn/media/orldReligions-PrincipleTeachings-Handout_BlankBookLesson.pdf

Sathya Sai Baba Society & Book Center

Please visit our website at: www.sathyasaibooksusa.org
Complete Catalog of Books, Calendars, Photos, Audio and DVD Resources
Secure Online Ordering

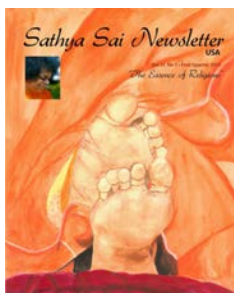
Book Center Hours: Mon–Fri 10.00 am – 4.00 pm, Sat 12.00–3.00 pm

305 West First St, Tustin, CA 92780-3108

Phone: (714) 669-0522 Fax: (714) 669-9138

E-mail: bookcenter@sathyasaibooksusa.org

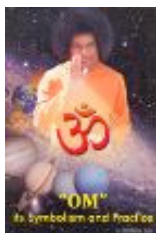
Sathya Sai Newsletter USA



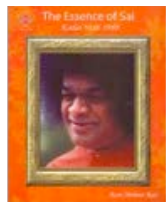
Sathya Sai Newsletter USA Quarterly publication, paperless, free subscription. Register [HERE](#) for our e-mail list, to receive notices of new editions as they become available, or see our web page, [here](#).*

See also our complete [Sathya Sai Newsletter USA archives \(1976–2012\)](#), [here](#),** to browse or download past issues.

New & Recent Arrivals: Books



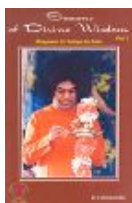
“OM”: Its Symbolism and Practice, by G Sridhara Iyer. In 2009, the author was asked by Swami to write an article on OM. As a result, much material was gathered, providing the basis for this book. The author describes the symbolism and spiritual significance of OM, as explained by Swami, the Upanishads, The Bhagavad Gita, and the great rishis and sages who experienced its power. He expounds on the intimate relationship of the breath and sound, as well as methods of chanting OM. BI-43 \$6.00



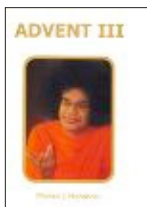
The Essence of Sai - Kodai Visit 1988, by Ram Mohan Rao, gives a wonderful account of the days a blessed band of students and teachers spent with Bhagavan Baba as he travelled with them to Kodaikanal, from April 13 to May 8, 1988. BI-440 \$6.00

* <http://us.sathyasai.org/newsletter.html>

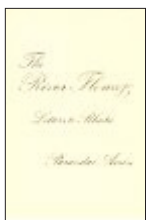
**<http://us.sathyasai.org/ssn/index.htm>



Beacons of Divine Wisdom, Part I. Originally published in Telugu under the title *Divya Jnana Deepikalu*, this book is a compilation of articles written by Bhagavan Baba. To benefit students and society, Swami has written about the life history of some Avatars, Puranic characters, spiritual personalities, and exemplary devotees in the Indian panorama. BI-434..... \$6.00



Advent III, by Michael Hollander, provides a brief autobiographical sketch and talks about the author's early years with Sathya Sai Baba, starting in the summer of 1972. He shares some of his experiences with Swami and how His universal teachings relate to everyone, regardless of their religious or cultural background. BW-007..... \$4.00



The River Flows: Letters to Rhutu, by Purandar Amin, might well be titled "Letters to Our Children," representing the universal wish of spiritually-minded parents to lovingly direct their children's minds toward the ultimate truth. The author does this in a most thoughtful and practical way through this series of letters scribed to his daughter and bound into an elegantly-designed book as a wedding present. BI-382.....\$9.00



Wisdom of Sai Women, by Sue Evans, Lyn Kriegler, and Kirsten Pruzan Mikkelsen, contains interviews with 18 Sai women devotees from around the world. They share stories of their lives, stories about Swami, and the wisdom they developed through walking the spiritual path. Soft cover, 226 pages. BI-493..... \$5.00



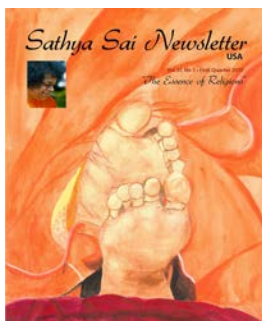
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Vani (Lessons for Daily Life), Vol I, compiled by B V Ramana Rao, presents sweet and interesting parables cited by Bhagavan Baba during innumerable discourses. The original Telugu poems and parables have been translated into English. BI-433..... \$5.00

CDs:



Bhajans: A Bridge Across Time, Volumes 1 – 16. Performed by Swami's students in his presence, this set contains over 200 bhajans, in a zippered case with a booklet describing the contents of each album. SCE-701 \$30.00

Visit the Sathya Sai Baba Society & Book Center at sathyasaisbooksusa.org.



Sathya Sai Newsletter USA

Sathya Sai Newsletter USA is a free quarterly publication featuring Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings, articles, and poetry based on those teachings and on the experiences of devotees from the USA and beyond. It also features information on Sai Organization activities in the USA, International Sai Organization announcements, artwork, poetry, photos, and more, and covers news and inspiration from all wings of the USA Sai organization – devotional, educational, service, young adult activities, and children's programs. It is published online free of charge under the auspices of the Sathya Sai Baba Society & Book Center.

Archive of past issues: Click [here](#) to access our complete archive from 1976 to present.

Submission guidelines: *Sathya Sai Newsletter USA* welcomes photographs, original illustrations, literary contributions of interest to the Sai community, Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) stories and lesson plans, young adult contributions, and regional reports. Kindly submit text in an email or word document (not as a PDF or slide presentation). Kindly send photos in JPEG format. Artwork may be scanned and saved as a JPEG image. We are unable to return submissions, so please keep a copy for your files. Submissions are reviewed, selected, and edited with discrimination as to appropriateness. With all submissions, please include the author's/artist's/photographer's name, location, and contact information. Kindly include complete citations for all quoted material, including the dates of Sathya Sai Baba discourses from which such quotes are drawn.

Submissions may be e-mailed to ssnusa@sathyasaibooksusa.org, or sent to the following address: *Sathya Sai Newsletter USA*, c/o Sathya Sai Baba Society & Book Center, 305 West First Street, Tustin CA 92780-3108

Editorial questions: Write to ssnusa@sathyasaibooksusa.org.

Subscription and mailing list questions: Kindly contact the Book Center volunteers at bookcenter@sathyasaibooksusa.org. Telephone: 714-669-0522.

Copyright © 2013 Sathya Sai Baba Society & Book Center. All rights reserved.

Your thoughts, words, and deeds must be saturated with my message. Then, they will spread effortlessly and efficiently, and the face of the world will be transformed.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba (*Sathya Sai Speaks* 8:19-2, May 17, 1968)