

Brahmacharya

The edifice of life is a four-storied mansion. In this mansion the ground floor is the most important one. The upper three storeys are based upon this. It is known as *Brahmacharya* (explained below). In everyone's life, childhood and youth are extremely important. This period of life should be regulated by practicing purity and tranquility.

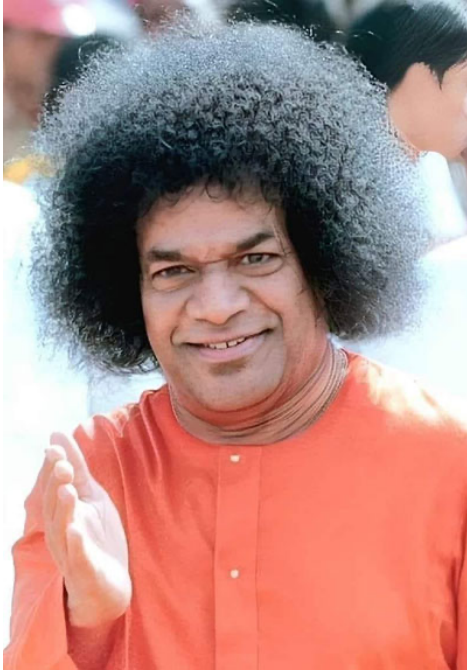
Brahmacharya means leading a life of pure thoughts, pure actions, and pure aspirations. Unfortunately, today people tend to regard *Brahmacharya* as living somehow in an unmarried state. The term *Brahmacharya* carries within it its sacred import. *Brahmacharya* means whatever thoughts we entertain, whatever actions we perform, whatever enterprises we undertake, they should all be filled with the consciousness of *Brahman* (the Supreme Omnipresent Divine). Conducting ourselves with the awareness that the Divine is present everywhere is "*Brahmacharya*."

***Brahmacharya* is present in all four stages**

The basic characteristic of *Brahmacharya* is that one should be full of pure thoughts, all one's actions should be sacred, and one should be engaged in selfless service. *Brahmacharya* is not confined to the early years of one's boyhood and adolescence. *Brahmacharya* is a state that is implied in all the three other stages of life also (*grihastha*, *vanaprastha*, and *sanyasa*). The base is *Brahmacharya*. The second stage or storey is that of *grihastha* (the householder). The third is *vanaprastha* (retirement to the forest). The fourth is *sanyasa* (complete renunciation of all attachments). *Brahmacharya* is present in all three other stages like an undercurrent: *Brahmacharya* in the *Brahmacharya* state, *Brahmacharya* in the *grihastha* state, *Brahmacharya* in the *vanaprastha*, and *Brahmacharya* in the *sanyasa* states. In all four states, *Brahmacharya* is immanent in equal measure. It signifies purity in all the states. Only when there is purity, *Brahmacharya* has any meaning.

Manava (man) means one who is pure. Man means one who is noteworthy. It also means one who has faith. These are the various meanings of the Sanskrit word *manava*. Delving into the meaning of the word *manava* further, it will be noted that it consists of two terms: *maa* (ever) and *nava* (new)—that which is ever new, that which is always fresh. In this freshness there is *pavitrata* (purity or sanctity). Hence, in this sacred human birth, to lead a life filled with pure thoughts and pure actions is characterized as *Brahmacharya*. So the real meaning of *Brahmacharya* is not confined to the corporeal discipline of celibacy attached to it in the physical sense,

but it implies recognition of the Divinity inherent in man and leading a life based on that recognition. Therefore, for the life of the householder, the recluse, and the renunciant *Brahmacharya* is the foundation.



The foundation of a student's life is purity

The period of a student's life is a crucial stage in life. All the three other stages are based upon one's life as a *vidyarthi* (student). Whatever purity or sanctity you develop during your student days will determine the degree of purity in the other three stages. Life as a student is thus a foundation for the rest of one's life. Hence a strong foundation must be laid for the ground floor. If the ground floor is weak and gives away, the whole edifice will collapse.

Hence, the entire human existence should be sanctified by observing *Brahmacharya*. This implies that by practicing purity and recognizing the omnipresent Divinity, one should regulate one's daily life by spreading purity and sacredness everywhere. Purity of mind, purity of *chitta* (consciousness), purity of the heart, and purity in action—this fourfold purity constitutes *Brahmacharya*. Whatever you do, you must act with the same sense that it is an offering to the Divine. This is the real significance of *Brahmacharya*.

Food is the primary requisite for life. Without food one cannot live. Hence life has been described as *annamaya* (composed of food). But man is not content to live on food alone. The mind is not satisfied if the stomach is full. Although food is essential for the body, the mind craves for *ananda* (bliss). Life can find fulfillment only if *ananda* is experienced. Hence, man cannot rest content with merely being alive. He has to be active and ever on the move. In the process he has to ask himself the questions, why am I restless? Why am I active? What do I do to engage myself in actions? When the right answers are found for all these questions, all actions become sacred.

The heart should be filled with sacred feelings

"For what am I performing these actions? How am I doing them? What is the sanctity attached to them?" It is when one enquires into these matters, he will realize their true purpose and meaning. This enquiry has to be conducted in the proper way. He should ask himself whether the enquiry is purposeful or futile. Once he comes to the conclusion that a certain action is right, he should do it with earnestness. *Brahmacharya* is the primary requisite for developing pure thoughts and performing pure actions.

Moreover, in practicing *Brahmacharya*, it is essential to cultivate sacred thoughts. The heart should be filled with sacred feelings. You must eschew from your mind any thought of causing harm to anyone. Only then, the life that starts with *annamaya* (food-filled) will culminate in *anandamaya* (a blissful life). Man should not consider that happiness consists in having a house full of children and equipped with all the amenities for comfortable living. Nor can peace be realized through wealth, power, or position. Peace is the outcome of our actions and thoughts. If our thoughts are pure, our actions will also be pure. When actions are pure, life itself becomes holy.

Concentrate on your duty in the present

The primary reason for the lack of peace in the world today is that the thoughts and conduct of people have gone astray. The first step, therefore, is to make our thoughts pure. We need not bother about the past or the future. Concentrate your attention on your duty in the present. Dedicate all your energies to the fulfillment of this duty. This was the basis on which our ancients directed their lives, according to the injunctions of the *Vedas* and the *Sastras*. Today there is a wide gulf between the lives led by our ancients and the prevailing modes of living. What is the reason for this difference?

Admittedly, food is essential. But there is scarcity of food today. What is the reason for this shortage? The fact is people have given up the practice of *Yagas* and *Yajnas* (sacrificial rites and rituals) that used to be performed in the past. *Yajna* is not merely sitting in front of a fire and uttering some *mantras*. *Yajna* really means the spirit of sacrifice or *tyaga* (renunciation). Today this spirit is totally absent. Indeed, the desire for *bhoga* (enjoyment) has grown limitlessly. Because of this, the fascination for external objects has developed, leading to the forgetting of one's true nature. As a result, man has become prey to the numerous sufferings.

Divinity is ever present in man in all its purity. But man is unable to recognize this because of his attachments to transient pleasures, like the black bee. This bee has a proboscis with which it can bore a hole through a strong bamboo or even through the human body. But when it enters a lotus flower and the lotus folds itself, the bee is unable to get out of its tender petals because it is immersed in the enjoyment of the honey in the lotus and forgets its own real strength. Likewise, man today, forgetting the Divine that is present within him and in everything he beholds, immersed in worldly concerns, and intoxicated with mundane pleasures, is oblivious to his own true Divine nature. Man forgets his inherent capacity in the involvement with the mastery of the external world.

The youth of today must get away from these involvements and develop confidence in their true selves. Whatever difficulties they may confront, whatever obstacles may come in their way, they should regard them as passing clouds. Nothing in the world is permanent. Only one thing is permanent and unchanging. That is the Divine. Install firmly in the minds the Divine and regard it as the only permanent entity that can confer enduring bliss. All others—whether they be relations, friends, or possessions—cannot give you lasting bliss.

One of the students had spoken about how in one year both his parents had passed away, leaving eight children, of whom he was the eldest. In this tragic situation, Swami alone could offer solace and courage to the bereaved children. From that time to this day, Swami had been looking after the children who looked up to Swami as "Sai Mother" and "Sai Father." No kith or kin could have looked after them in this manner. The Divine does not give up anyone who has faith and trust in the Divine. Difficulties may come in succession like mountains, but they will disappear like snow if Divine grace is there. What is required is firm faith in God. Strengthen your faith in the Divine.

Another devotee (an American businessman) was once faced with such difficulties that he wanted to wind up his business. But Swami advised him not to do so. Because of his past experiences with Swami, he had firm faith in Him and carried on his business. He was able to get over his difficulties. No one has suffered in this world who has had firm faith in God. Many have come to grief because of lack of faith.

Disbelief in divine affirmations

Today you believe in what you see in the films or what you read in the newspapers or novels. You believe in what you see in a play or what is said in an almanac. But you have no faith in the Divine pronouncements of the *Vedas: Tat Twam Asi* (That thou art), *Ayam Atma Brahma* (This *Atma* is verily *Brahman*), *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am *Brahman*). *Prajnanam Brahma* (The Constant Integrated Consciousness in man is *Brahman*). People have no faith in these *Mahavakyas* (Divine affirmations) but are easily misled by the meretricious declarations of worldly men. This is the lamentable degraded plight of man today. The reason is man has abjured faith in God. He has become a victim of faith in worldly things.

The first requisite is for men to develop faith in God. This is even more essential for the youth. Whatever plans you may draw up for the future, base them on faith in God. They should be righteous. You will then achieve success.

Discourse at "Sai Sruti," Kodaikanal, 23 April 1988

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 21*

Many people think of God only when grief overtakes them; of course, it is good to do so; it is better than seeking the help of those who are equally liable to grief. But it is infinitely better to think of God in grief and in joy, in peace and strife, in all weathers. The proof of the rain is in the wetness of the ground, the proof of bhakti (devotion) is the shanti (peace) the bhakta (devotee) has—shanti that protects him against the onslaughts of success as well as failure, fame and dishonor, gain and loss.

~Sathya Sai Baba

Noblest Deeds in the Eyes of Baba

What is in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name will smell as sweet. All names are His. It makes no difference by whatever name we may call Baba.

What is the noblest deed in the eyes of Baba? To return good for evil; To abide by His will; Not to tell lies; To love Him. Just imagine that when our heads and hearts are filled with His thoughts, it is natural that our attachments to everything else will fade away. The result will be that there will be no heartbreaking separations. So, we will never consider any imaginary object or transitory existence to be real. Our minds will, therefore, acquire strength and stability. We shall be able to see realities of life in their true perspective without internal attachment to them; heart-breaking separations will automatically cease.

Life in the world is nothing but play and entertainment. The world is only a drama, and we are all actors in it. In a drama the *gains and losses are all unreal*. Every actor in a play must naturally accept his share of gains and losses as a part of the play. But having once known it to be a part of the play, he keeps himself detached from the effects of these gains and losses. "The actor in the play knows that both gains and losses are temporary exhibitions on the stage, and his real purpose is to please his MASTER with his acting. If we begin to look upon these losses and gains as real and consequently start crying seriously or getting elated unduly, and if we decline to further play the part allotted to us with due attention, the result will be that the MASTER will be displeased, and may use other forms of compulsion to make us play our part properly.

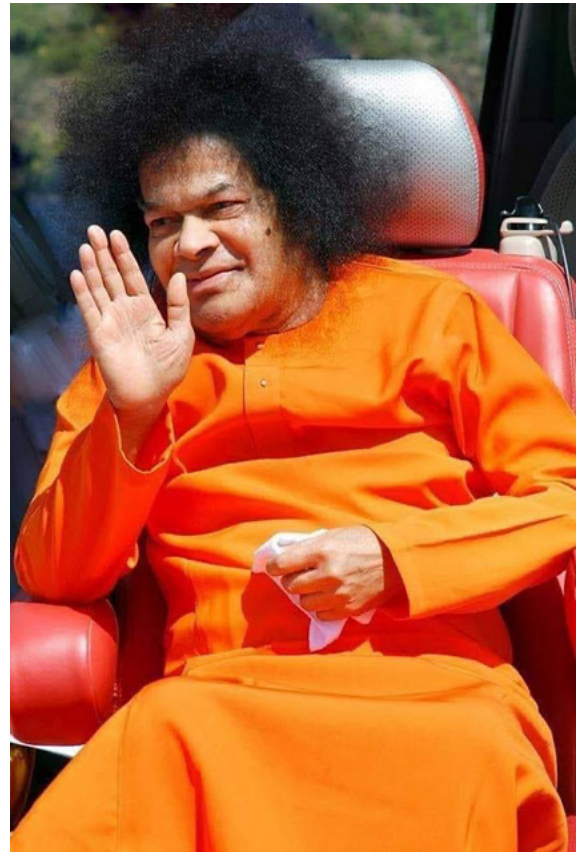
All gains and losses are imaginary because the inner meaning of this drama is something quite different. Human life or death is like putting on or taking off theatrical dresses. Our relations are not real; our attachments are merely imaginary; the gains and losses here are meaningless. Surrounded by these thoughts, our minds can live and act in the same surroundings without being affected by painful incidents and without excessive exultation, in a state of balance or poise. When we strive to discharge our duties thinking that this is in obedience to the will of God, we shall be mentally free from the results thereof. Then our mind will acquire purity and stability. This does not mean that after knowing the real character of the world to be merely a stage drama, we are free to spoil our part in it. On the contrary, just as an actor performs his part with zeal and energy, we should continue to play our part in this life and should at the same time remain unaffected by the gains or losses of life, free from the fear of death, just as all good actors remain unaffected by the pre-arranged incidents in a play.

There is only one Reality in this world, and the rest is all illusion or play. This thought gives us unlimited peace of mind. Pride or egoism is the greatest enemy of man for another reason also i.e., through it man establishes a world of his own, apart from that Reality. For example, when a man says, "I am learned"; "I am powerful"; "I

am descended from a great family"; then with these thoughts he separates himself from that Reality, because we are either *atma* (soul) or nothing at all. If we are *atma*, then we existed before any qualities appeared, consequently we are distinct from these attributes. These attributes or qualities will by subsequent association with us generate in us feelings of pride or egoism, which are all perishable and are far away from the essence of *atma*. If we are "nothing", then to whom do these qualities or attributes belong?

Moreover, it is not proper for us to brag of our greatness in the presence of a very great personality. On the other hand, if we acknowledge our qualities to be gifts of God, and then own these qualities as our own a thousand times, and even if we go so far as to say that we are made up of these qualities, there is no real harm done, because in the affirmation of these qualities, there is negation at the very core of one's heart.

In the divine Court of Baba, the most acceptable action is doing good to one who has done evil unto you, for returning good for good constitutes no real merit. This merely is an exchange on equal terms. But to return good for evil is the starting point of spiritual life. When we learn to love Baba's men for His sake, by suppressing our wounded feelings, Baba will love us more. By learning to abide by His will, tranquility of mind is attained. We feel pain when something that we like goes away from us, or the thing we like is not gained, or when something we dislike stays on with us. When the all-pervading Reality—Baba and the desire to abide by His will permeates through our head and heart, that very moment we will be released from all pains and troubles for then there will remain no 'likes,' or 'dislikes', acquisitions or relinquishments, because there is no individual will be left in us. Then apparent poverty or misery or destitution and want will not exist for us and we will be ever happy under all circumstances because there is no 'opposition' left in us for anything.



Someone asked a *Faqir* (ascetic) "Are you happy?" He replied, "How can I be unhappy when the entire Universe is functioning in accordance with my will." The questioner felt annoyed at this answer and asked him again, "You were born only a few years ago, whereas the entire universe is functioning since eternity, then how can it be working in accordance with your will?" The *Faqir* replied, "Why, then,

under whose command is the universe functioning?" The reply came promptly, "In accordance with the will of God". The *Faqir* then explained, "I abide by His will; His will is therefore my will; the entire creation is functioning in accordance with His Commands and my will is one with His will, that is how the whole creation is working in accordance with my will." The questioner marveled at this explanation and said, "This is a wonderfully *simple way for a drop of water to become an ocean*. There is no attempt here to force His will on our wishes; but we should try to work in accordance with His wishes, when our mental opposition disappears by these thoughts, then the ocean of peace and bliss will flow within us."

By refusing to tell lies, purity of tongue and purity of mind is gained. We should feel grateful for the innumerable kindnesses of Baba and should gain mastery over egoistic feelings.

In truth all praise belongs to that Great Source of Light, and also to all those names and forms through whom He manifests Himself who become worthy of respect to the same extent. Just as a bubble is never separated from water, in the same manner these personalities (prophets, saints, seers) are also internally connected with that one Great Source of Light. We shall endeavor to see the virtues and greatness of the founders and prophets of others so that the sphere of our love may be widened. In truth all praise belongs to Baba, from whom alone all this life emanates and exhibits itself. Dispersion is death and Unity is life, Dislike is thorn, Love is flower. Separation is darkness, Union is light. Therefore, we should refuse to see small differences in religions, arising from difference in the place of birth, the need of the time, and surrounding circumstances. By thinking of our essential unity in God, we should enjoy spiritual exultation. Just as a common thread passes through all the beads in a rosary, we find that Baba and His love is common to all religions. All desire Him, some try to reach Him in one way, others in another way. All lines from the circumference reach the same center. We should try to pursue our journey on one path and should feel happy in seeing others also proceeding on their own path. The result will be that our sphere of spiritual life will become universal, and an ocean of love and divine intoxication will naturally flow in our minds. Human bloodshed resulting from petty quarrels will disappear. *Gita* also teaches us that:

(*Gita* VII 21-22)

(21) "*Yo-yo yam-yam tanum bhakthah Sraddhaya 'rcitum icchati tasya-tasya `calam sraddham tameva vidadhamy aham.*"

Whatever form any devotee with faith wishes to worship, I make that faith of his steady.

(22) "*Sa taya sraddhaya yuktas tasya 'radhanam ihate labhate ca tatah kaman mayai 'va vihitan hi tan.*"

Endowed with that faith, he seeks the worship of such a one and from him he obtains his desires, the benefits being decreed by ME alone.

Therefore, on seeing a temple we should picture Rama and Krishna, on seeing a mosque we should think of *Khuda*, on seeing a church we will imagine God, in front of *Gurudwara* the presence of the Almighty. It is my prayer that Baba may infuse real love in all men for each other so that all may be threaded like beads in one large rosary of love. And the time that is lost in quarrelling, debating, may be utilized in remembering the Creator and in furthering the material prosperity of His children. Thus, we should realize that God exists, and this world is His creation, and that we all are brothers and sisters. Realizing this principle, we should spend our time in peace and joy, loving all Baba's creation.

~S. D. Khera, Calcutta

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, April 1968

Beloved Baba—Take My Hand

Beloved Baba, take my hand
As I hold it up to you;
Dispel the cloud of *maya*
Which obscures you from view.

My haughty Self and You are One
Which in my heart I know;
I also know to reach that state
I must be pure as snow.

But, on my own, I cannot weld
My human will with Thine;
So, this is why I seek your help
To relinquish all of mine.

Help me, dear Baba, to let go
Of my imaginary needs
And, I will try to turn from all
On which my ego feeds.

And, as I reach up high to you
Please take my hand in yours
Until I'm empty of myself
And my lightened spirit soars.

But when I first catch sight of that
Which seers call the Light

I may be overwhelmed by It;
So, hold me very tight.

In pouring out my heart to you
I've lost that cloud so dark
And, can relax in quiet relief
Till my soul soars like a lark.

~Phyllis Krystal

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, March
1977

When Prof. Frank Baranowski saw Sri Sathya Sai's Aura

July, 1978

Professor Frank Baranowski, a psychologist and regression therapist, specializes in research on auras, the energy patterns that surround all living beings, and works at the University of Arizona. He is an expert in bio-magnetic field radiation photography. He has photographed and interpreted the auras for numerous men and women using the ultra-sensitive Kirlian camera.

Professor Baranowski had read several books about Sri Sathya Sai Baba, including Samuel Sandweiss' 'Sai Baba, the Holy man and the Psychiatrist'. He wondered whether such a person could really exist and whether all that was written about him was factual. As he was, at that time, writing a book on reincarnation based on case studies and other findings, he was interested in Sri Sathya Sai Baba's claim of being a reincarnation of Shirdi Sai Baba.

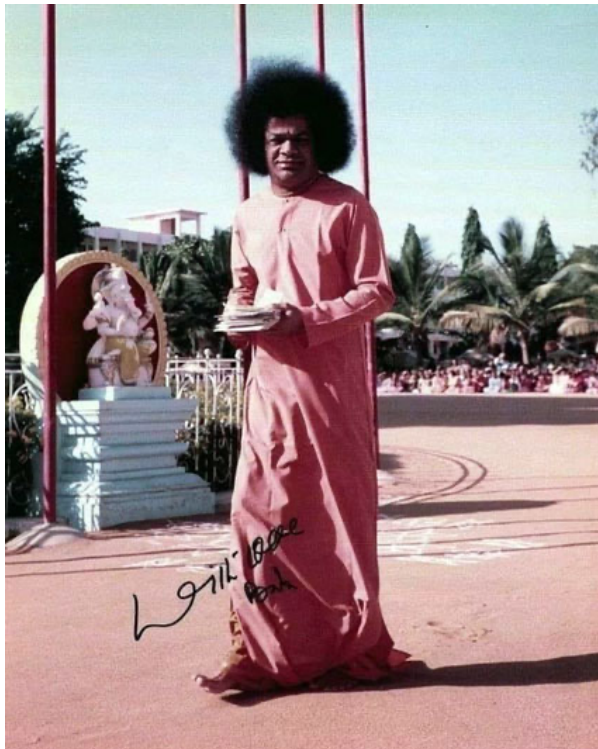
During Christmas 1977, Professor Baranowski was a guest at a home where a *bhajan* (devotional songs) session was in progress. A stranger to this form of worship, he withdrew to a room upstairs. He was resting there quietly in the dark room when, to his astonishment, a candle on the table suddenly burst into flames. The bright flame illuminated a nearby picture of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He could not understand who could have lighted the candle. He was alone in the room. There had not been any sound and no one had come in. How could a flame appear all of a sudden on the wick of the candle? He stared at the picture, and it did many things to him. It seemed to penetrate into him and to beckon to him. To a man of science, this occurrence was totally inexplicable.

Sathya Sai Baba? Yes, I had heard of Him but with a lot of mixed emotions. The stories that were attributed to this man bordered on the incredible. As a man of science, I am aware of psychosomatic healings, and I have seen miraculous healings,

yet here were rumors of a man from India who could heal people by His mere touch. The story hinged on the unbelievable.

In July of 1978, I found myself at the first World Peace Conference at Bangalore. I had heard that Sathya Sai Baba resided in a place called Whitefield. This small community boasts of a college founded by Sathya Sai Baba dedicated to science and commerce. As I arrived by taxicab, the first thing I noticed was the refreshing cleanliness of the area.

Though hot and stiflingly humid, hundreds of Indians and foreigners crowded the grounds surrounding Sathya Sai Baba's *ashram* or residence. I joined the patient assemblage, sitting squat-legged among them. I didn't have to wait long until Sathya Sai Baba appeared. I must confess, this first time I saw Him I was not impressed.



He was of small stature and walked among the people as if He were distracted. He would hardly take the time to look at a person or to talk with them—then He would suddenly turn His head as if looking for someone else. It wasn't until the next morning that I realized I was seeing an individual who possessed gifts beyond description.

It was about five o'clock in the morning, and the followers had been singing their devotional songs and chanting during a parade around the compound at Whitefield, when Sathya Sai Baba came out of His residence.

Now, I have always been able to see the human aura. The auras around average people extend as much as three to five feet. Auras are composed of every imaginable color and these colors change as a person's emotional, physical, and mental states change. In general, whenever the color blue is evident in a person's aura, it is an indication of deep spirituality; green is a healing color; yellow indicates high intelligence; and red means anger or frustration.

The color pink, which is rarely seen, typifies a person capable of selfless love, and this was the color that Sathya Sai Baba had around Him. The aura around Sathya Sai Baba went beyond the building reaching 30 or 40 feet in all directions. Never having seen any aura like this before, my first reaction was to look for fluorescent lights

that may have been shining on Him. But as I watched, the beautiful pink energy pattern moved as He moved; there was no doubt that this was His aura.

Entranced by this remarkable sight, I barely heard the devotional songs that were being sung, and before I knew it Sathya Sai Baba had gone. The crowd settled in the now familiar cross-legged position and prepared themselves to wait until Sathya Sai Baba's next appearance, four hours later.

I have had the pleasure of meeting such personalities as ex-president Gerald Ford, Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, and Pope John Paul II, and I have studied their auras as well as tens of thousands of others, and I say this not as a testimonial but as a fact; not one person I have ever seen has an aura to compare to the size and color of Sathya Sai Baba's aura.

The heat was remarkable; the humidity hung like a wet cloth over the gathering. Amid chanting, a few anxious eyes watched the threatening skies, dark clouds gave foreboding signs of torrential storms, but all around me devotees were assuring each other "Sathya Sai Baba won't allow it to rain".

Then, there He was again, I felt my heartbeat quicken as He turned in my direction. Soon He stepped beside me, looked at me, and then made a quick motion to the man seated beside me. Suddenly crushed lilies began to appear in the palms of His hands, and as they poured forth, the petals filled the cupped hands of the seated man. But the flower petals didn't stop coming; they went on to fill the waiting hands of a second, a third and then a fourth person!

As this great man turned away, He glanced in my direction as if to say, "Have you noticed what I have just done?" I couldn't have helped witnessing what had happened. To answer possible arguments, Sathya Sai Baba's sleeves reached His elbows. So, it was not by magic tricks that these petals appeared. And I was not hypnotized into believing I was seeing them, for I am a licensed hypnotist myself and am very difficult to hypnotize. Within my limited understanding, it was difficult to believe I had just witnessed this miraculous demonstration. I sat there, in that same position, for a very long time, dumbfounded by what I had seen.

The very next morning I felt myself drawn back to the very same compound, sitting in the lotus position and waiting for Sathya Sai Baba to appear once again. As I sat quietly, I heard a voice in my mind tell me that I must cross the field, walk through the area where the women were standing, and talk to a man who was standing against a building there. I did not feel comfortable approaching a stranger, especially in a strange country where there is a language barrier, but I could no longer ignore the voice in my mind. I went across the field and found a man standing against the building. I spoke to him.

"I hope you speak English. I have a voice in my mind that says I must speak to you". He introduced himself as Prof. Narender, and he said, "You must be the lecturer

Sathya Sai Baba said would speak to me today." I am a lecturer; I have given approximately 9,000 lectures all over the world, but how did this man know that?

In the next four days I watched Sathya Sai Baba with His devotees. He calmed them; He gave them hope. As He walked among them, the beautiful pink color in His aura permeated the violent red colors in the crowd. His selfless love transcended their fears and worries. Perhaps you have to meet this man to understand His gifts. He gives of Himself to thousands of people from all around the world who await His blessings.

Prof. Narender's message to me proved to be that I was to speak to Sathya Sai Baba's College on Friday afternoon. Eight hundred students, and later 100 teachers, listened to my lecture. As I stood next to Sathya Sai Baba, I could see His aura reach beyond the platform. It surrounded all the people in the room. Soon His love—and that's the only word I can use for the warm, buoyant, totally immersing emotion we experienced that evening—reached each and every person in that room and they began to sing and chant devotions to this man.

The word '*Avatar*' is often used when referring to Sathya Sai Baba, meaning one who has Christ-like powers, or God-like power and one who may even be God Himself. Now, I am a devout Catholic. Yet I would be a fool if I did not recognize the powers this man has.

Amidst the singing and chanting, the *Avatar* turned to me and said, 'Because you are a man of such great love....' and He showed me the empty palm of His hand. He circled His hand in the air three times and produced a ring with the nine precious gems of the world embedded in gold. He said, "It will only fit the first finger of the right hand." And indeed, that is the only finger it fits. It's magnificent! It's a beautiful ring! But it holds special meaning to me because this great man, this *Avatar*, graced me with His words: "Because you are a man of such great love.... "

The next day I was once again honored by Sathya Sai Baba as I was granted a private audience with Him. I was anxious to discuss not only reincarnation with Him, but also my grandson. The boy was born with a heart defect. At the age of one year, he weighed slightly less than seven pounds. Numerous operations left him with little hope for a normal life, even if he survived at all. But before I could mention this to Sathya Sai Baba, He told me that there would be an operation on the day I arrived home (in Arizona) and that the baby would be well. I said, "You must be wrong. The baby is not old enough to have this operation. The physicians said the minimum age for the operation would be at age two, even two and a half." Sathya Sai Baba just smiled, and said, "No, it will be on the day you arrive home."

He was right. On the day I arrived in Arizona, the baby was operated on. The doctor who performed the surgery gave my grandson little hope of survival. When my daughter introduced the doctor to me, I discovered he was from India. I told him I

had just returned from there and mentioned some of the places I'd been to. When I mentioned Whitefield, he interrupted me and asked, "That's Sathya Sai Baba's country, isn't it?"

I said yes and showed him the ring I had been blessed with. The doctor looked at me with the eyes glowing, and said, "The child will live," as if all that was needed was the mention of Sathya Sai Baba's name.

The child did survive. Perhaps of all the miracles I witnessed in my ten days in India, no miracle is as great as the miracle of one man giving so much love to so many people. In my estimation and experimentation, Sri Sathya Sai Baba is, aura-wise, exactly what He says He is and what He asks everyone to be. He is love, pure and simple. He is love walking on two legs. Such unselfish love is nothing other than divinity.

His own words say it best: "Love. Continue to love and all will be well."

Source: *Sri Sathya Sai Digvijayam* (1926 - 1985); and "*Living Divinity*" by Shakuntala Balu, Pages: 47-50. Publisher: S B Publications, Bangalore 1983

Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

Dialogue with the Divine

The following questions to Bhagavan by a devotee and Bhagavan's answers have been taken from a devotee's diary.

Q: When the *Avatar* is incarnate on earth, can His message be received even when one is not in His physical presence?

A: Yes, God's voice can be heard by man in his heart. It may come in the form of some signs, or it may be an inner experience, where God's approval is felt. More than this, each aspirant can do some introspection as to whether he is practicing qualities dear to God. If he is practicing, he will get self-satisfaction. When one is not satisfied with oneself, how can God be satisfied?

Q: Swami often speaks of "experience of oneness." Whatever may be the *sadhana* [effort] done by a *sadhaka* [devotee], is it not a fact that Swami's grace alone can confer that experience?

A: God's grace automatically follows *sadhana*. This is the law.

Q: But, still, is there not the factor of 'time' for such an experience to come to a *sadhaka*?

A: There is no such thing as 'time' (being decided earlier). Everything depends on the intensity of *sadhana* because that experience is timeless. But as long as you keep fixed hours for *sadhana* (like meditation in the morning and evening), the factor of 'time' for the ultimate experience to come is there. That experience, which is '*kaalaatheetha*' (transcending time), will come when you lose the sense of time.

Q: Swami was telling us about 'contentment'. Does it apply to one's attainments in the spiritual domain also?

A: No, one should have contentment regarding worldly possessions. Spiritual field has no end. There should be contentment regarding things that have a beginning and an end. The Spirit has neither a beginning nor an end.

Q: The spiritual pursuit will end with man reaching God?

A: You cannot call it the 'end'. It is 'merger'.

Q: Many times, I am getting intense noble emotions thinking of some situations in the Ramayana or Bhagavatam. Is there any '*dosham*' (defect) involved in it?
(*I was trying to remove the space below, but couldn't*)

A: There is no '*dosham*' in it. You can experience that. You can experience anything that is acceptable to your heart.

Q: But it is said that one should have '*Avyabhichara bhakti*' (fidelity in devotion).

A: '*Vyabhicharam*' means the mind straying away from God to worldly things. As long as the mind is concentrated on divinity, it is not '*Vyabhicharam*'.

Q: But, Swami, there is change of forms (involved in such experience)—from Rama to Krishna and to Sai.

A: If you give up one form and go to another, it is '*Vyabhicharam*'. Here, there is no giving up of the form (no change of *Ishtadevata*). All the experiences ultimately merge into one form and finally into 'Divinity'.

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, May 1988

Thought of the MONTH

His Presence Behind the Maya Screen

Man should first clearly grasp the habits and mannerisms of his mind and its tendencies and attitudes. Then only can he control it and gain mastery over it; and purify and develop his memory, will, and imagination.

Waywardness is the natural characteristic of the mind. It is like the wind, that is why Arjuna described it to Krishna thus:

“O, Krishna, the mind is very wayward, it moves very fast, it is very powerful, it is very difficult to bring it under control”. Then Krishna replied, “Arjuna, no doubt what you said is correct. But by uninterrupted attention and discipline, and by the practice of renunciation, it is possible to control it. Hence, practice *dhyanam* [meditation] as a first step.”

Dhyana Vahini, P. 66-67

Let the mind run wherever it likes, only, be careful you do not follow it, seeking to discover where it is going! It will then wander about for some time as the fancy takes it, and soon, getting tired and exhausted, it will come back to you in the end! It is like a little child that knows nothing. Since the mother is following it and calling it back, it gets courage and confidence to run forward in any direction, but if the mother does not run behind the child and retraces her steps quietly, the child too, of its own accord, will run back to the mother!

Dhyana Vahini, P. 44

The Lord is behind the screen on the stage of Prakriti, giving the cue to all the actors for their various parts. So, every actor must be conscious of: he must be anxious to catch the faintest suggestion He might give, keeping a corner of the eye always on Him and having the ear pitched to catch His voice. Instead of this, if a person forgets the plot and the story, (that is to say, the work for which one has come and the duties that appertain thereto) and neglects to watch the Presence behind the screen and simply stands dumb on the stage, the audience will laugh at his folly and charge him with spoiling the show.

For these reasons, every actor who has to play the role of Man on the World-stage must first learn the lines well and then, remembering the Lord behind the screen, await His orders. The attention must be on both; the lines one has learnt for the role and the directions one may get from the stage manager. *Dhyanam*, alone gives one this concentration and this awareness.

Dhyana Vahini, P. 36-37

Advise the mind, “Oh mind that flows so swiftly in so many directions! Do not drag me along the floods of objects, along the path of sensual desires and spoil my career. Take me to the Lord, instead. Flow in that direction Please.”

Dhyana Vahini, P. 78



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