

Four Responsibilities of Every Human Being

Among all the living beings, man is sacred. In this world, it is but natural that a person who is occupying an important or high position will have great responsibilities. Similarly, man occupies the highest position among living beings and is charged with important responsibilities. What are these responsibilities? The first responsibility is with respect to sin, *papam*. The second one is *shasanam*, the ordinances and laws. The third one is *shastram* or scriptures. The fourth is the one that cannot even be imagined as it is in the form of a curse. Man is bound by the above mentioned four responsibilities.

The first one is *Papam* or sin

Among living beings, man alone is capable of committing sins. That is because man alone is endowed with the power of discrimination that can distinguish between good and bad. Only man, with the power of discrimination, will face situations in which he may commit sins. What is the meaning of sin? Sin refers to any act committed even after knowing that it is bad. If you know that an activity is bad and must not be done and you still do it, it amounts to sin. Though man has been endowed with the power of discrimination, on account of his ego and jealousy he commits sins. Even among men, children and mentally challenged people are not affected by sins. The reason is that these people will not have the discrimination power. These people are ignorant, and they do not know what they are doing. Innocence and ignorance free a person from being attached to sin. The realized soul, a *jnani*, would not have any attachment or selfishness in him. He will always have a sense of equality and equanimity. He would not commit any sin. Selfishness and such other vices do not exist in a realized soul.



Whatever he sees, whatever he utters, and whatever he does is entirely for the welfare of the world. Therefore, this realized soul would not be suffering from sins. A man who does not belong to these three categories, who is attached to the body and is selfish, he alone will be committing sins. He who allows the mind to waver, giving unbridled freedom to it, will be subject to the dualities of happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, profit and loss, etc. Every man is prone to commit sins. He has to avoid this by using his power of discrimination, by finding out what is good and what is bad and doing good actions only.

The second one is *shasanam* or law

In the world there are two courts of justice. These courts of justice are places where punishment is given to people who have not obeyed the law, who have been cruel, and those who have committed sins. These courts of justice award punishment to people who have transgressed the court, the laws of the nation, and those who have done injustice. The laws are established for giving justice to man and not for the sake of animals and birds.

Here is one small example: Imagine that some animals have gone into the fields, destroyed them and caused a great loss. No court of law will give a verdict that those animals that were responsible for destruction of the crops will have to pay any fine or undergo any punishment. If it becomes so essential to give some punishment for such acts, the punishment will be awarded to the master who owns the animals that caused the destruction. This makes it very clear that law courts of justice are established to dispense justice and award punishment to people who are responsible for breaking the law.

You hear of many such incidents that take place in day-to-day life, like stray dogs entering the house, eating and spoiling the food, and breaking the pots in which this food is kept. Is there any court of law that can ask these dogs to pay compensation for breaking the pots and eating the food in the houses? Instead of these animals, if man were to do the same thing, the courts of justice would award punishment to the man who is responsible for such destruction. The substance of this example is that human beings must recognize that these courts of law are established to award punishment to people who indulge in breach of law, and they must conduct themselves in such a way that they are not subjected to any type of punishment. Only then, it can be assumed that things have been clearly understood.

The third one is *shastras* or the scriptures

These scriptures have laid down a code for the people who are in the four stages of life: *brahmacharya*, *grihastha*, *vanaprastha*, and *sanyasa*. (youth/student, householder, recluse, and renunciate) These scriptures have also laid down, as a part of the code, all the acts that have to be done and those acts that should not be done, from the birth of a child until he reaches the last stage of his life, such as the naming ceremony, marriage celebrations, etc.

The procedures and *mantras* [religious formulas] for performing the *yagnas* and *yagas* (ritualistic sacrifices and ceremonies) that are performed for the welfare of the world and humanity are laid down in these scriptures. While conducting a marriage, the promises that the bridegroom must make to the bride and vice-versa are all laid down in such a way that family life would be safe and happy. Today, people undergo various problems and difficulties in their family lives. This is only because people do not conduct themselves according to the promises given to their spouses, with the fire as the witness. If we conduct ourselves according to our promises, we will be able to lead very happy and peaceful lives. Man has been endowed with two eyes through which he can see. He has been given two ears to hear good as well as bad. But man has only one tongue. Man has to stand by the word that he has given. If he goes contrary to the promise he has given, then he is like a poisonous snake. If a man stands by his word and acts accordingly, then he would be able to see the unity in life as well as the Divinity.

Importance of Right Understanding

In Indian culture, there are two important statements: '*Satyam Vada, Dharmam Chara*' (Speak the truth and follow the path of righteousness). Truth means that there is only one reality. Truth is only one and not two, as illustrated in the statement: 'There is only one *Brahman* (God), there is no second entity.' If one does not follow the code laid down by the scriptures, scriptures also punish you. There are four types of sins that a tongue can commit: speaking untruth, criticizing others, making fun of others, and indulging in too much talk.

By these four types of activities, the tongue commits sins. The students of today should make an effort to take the path of truth and observe truth. But what you find in the modern age youth is that they utter one thing and contradict it the very next second. The *Bhagavad Gita* has declared, "You have to dedicate your life for truth." But you do not find people living their lives based on this statement. If a person undergoes these three states: *yoga* (spiritual practice), *bhoga* (pleasure), and *roga* (disease) in a day itself, how can we describe that person as equal minded?

By the movement of the sun and the earth, morning, afternoon, evening, and night are all observed. But in reality, there is no such change in human nature and human beings. Students should know that when the sun is on the equator, there is day and when it moves away it is night. Really speaking there is nothing like sunrise and sunset. In God's creation, everything has been created for the welfare of humanity, for the preservation and the good of humanity.

Creation is one that is so sacred, but it has been misunderstood on account of artificial understanding and wrong interpretation given to it. Such an attitude is likely to harm the nation. Students of science know very well that the moon is comparatively closer to earth with respect to the other celestial objects. The moon is at a distance of 245,000 miles from earth. On full moon day and new moon day, the moon comes little closer to earth by a few degrees. But for such a small change itself there is such a tremendous response in the oceans and the waves rise to great

heights. What if the moon were to come two or three miles closer to the earth? There would be *pralaya*, total destruction. Only when the moon is at the usual distance of 245,000 miles is the earth safe.

When the five elements are in the right proportion and in the place where they ought to be, and when the senses also perform their functions properly, then everything is okay. God would be able to take care of your welfare and offer you all the protection necessary when you observe laws as laid down in the scriptures. You must design your life according to the code laid down. When you hurt or harm the great sages, you come in the way of the welfare of the world. They may utter out of agony a word of anger and it becomes a curse.

Unfortunately, there are quite a few people who think that what sages are doing is wrong on their part. Whatever curse is given, that curse is going to be a sort of protection. Only when a wrong act is punished, would one be able to correct himself. If you go on forgiving the mistakes that are committed, then more and more [mistakes] will be committed. As more acts go unpunished, man also loses the power of discrimination. To awaken the people to what is reality and what is discrimination, this curse or *shapam* is also prescribed as a part of the *shastras*.

Story of the Eleventh Shankaracharya

Once upon a time, certain laws were laid down for people who were occupying the places of *Peethadhipatis* (watchmen, gatekeepers.) During the days of the 11th Shankaracharya, there was one gatekeeper who was standing near the entrance of the *Matha* (monastery). His name was Ubhaya Bhaskara. He was constantly uttering, '*Tasmat jagrata jagrata*', ("Be careful, be careful"). Shankaracharya, while sitting for meditation, was thinking of the wealth that he possessed, number of disciples that he had, and all such worldly matters. When his mind was going in this wrong path, there was a declaration coming from the watchman, "Be careful, be careful." That became an eye-opener for Shankaracharya, and he reminded himself that he is going on a wrong path. There was another disciple, who was uttering from behind:

*'Mata Nasti, Pita Nasti, Nasti Bandhu Sahodaraha
Artham Nasti, Griham Nasti Tasmat Jagrata Jagrata'*

"There is no mother, no father, no relative, no brother, no wealth, and no property. Be careful, be careful."

Another disciple, from another side was declaring that:

*'Janma Dukham, Jara Dukham, Jaya Dukham, Punah Punah,
Antah Kale Mahadukham, Tasmat Jagrata, Jagrata'*

"Birth is sorrow, life is sorrow, and everything in the world is full of sorrow. When the last moment of life arrives, it is also a great sorrow. Always be careful."

You have to recognize, therefore, that all these laws and declarations that have been laid down are meant to correct the wrong thinking of man and put him on the right path of thinking so that he will be safe. These sacred paths alone can lead you on to the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Only when you follow these paths will you be able to reach an elevated state. For whom are these four—peace, love, scriptures, and curse—required? Only a sick person who really wants to cure his sickness needs the medicine and diet control. For a person who does not want to cure himself from the disease, he will not require any medicine or diet control. All these four, in the same way, are required only for those who want to free themselves from the bondage. A person who does not care to free himself from bondage, who indulges himself in worldly ways, does not need any of these four things. For him, his own words are curses.

Source: My Dear Students Volume 1, Mind, Body and Atma, Discourse 12
–Sathya Sai Baba, Divine Discourse at Sathya Sai Hostel on September 11, 1986

Journey Into Light

Swami always says, "I am in you, with you, above you, around you, below you." Swami has been with us from time immemorial, for many lives, even though we don't know. However, when He chooses to show His presence, He does it in the most inexplicable ways. We call them miracles, but our Lord calls them His visiting cards. Every one of us has many such experiences, which stand as a testimony to how much Swami loves us, and cares for us. The following are a few experiences that took place in my family, and I am grateful to Swami for all that He has done.

It was the year 1992. My mother was 28 weeks pregnant and went into premature labor. The doctors tried to avert the delivery for the fear that the fetus would die. *Vibhuti* [sacred ash] was applied, and the contractions stopped. Again, at 32 weeks she was hospitalized, and they decided to deliver the baby.

The doctors administered medicines to my mother, but the fetus reacted badly to the medicine and the heart stopped beating. The baby had to be delivered immediately. My grandfather had to administer the anesthetic and my father, a doctor, had to assist the delivery as no one else was around. After two minutes, I was delivered lifeless.

My grandfather had to attend to my mother first. By that time, 40 minutes had passed since my heart had stopped beating. I was small, bluish grey in color, not breathing and without any heartbeats. My grandfather rubbed my heart and pushed oxygen into my lungs to try and get my heart beating. He was praying to Swami for help. After five minutes, he heard an inner voice saying, "Let go! What are you trying to do, create a monster in the house?" He realized what it meant, you may get the

heart beating, but you cannot give life to a dead brain. My grandfather managed to get the heart beating to half the normal rate. But my body color did not change. Everyone was chanting "Sai Ram" continuously. I was kept in an intensive care crib.

My father went home, prayed to Swami, and lit an incense stick in the prayer room. Swami showed His presence there. The ash from the burnt incense stick remained stiff, without falling, in the shape of letter 'S'. At the hospital, they could smell whiffs of jasmine around the crib.

Overnight, some 'mysterious hand' had pulled out the feeding tube. When my grandfather came at 5 a.m., I had no limb movement. My grandfather did not re-insert the feeding tube but took me to my mother. Miraculously I began drinking milk and my limbs began to move.

I slowly improved and went home on the fifth day. For the next few months, the CD with Swami chanting the *Gayatri Mantra* was played round the clock. The following week my grandfather came to Prashanti Nilayam and thanked Swami. He asked Swami to name the child as He had given the life. Swami took my photo, which was clicked when I was a few days old, and wrote 'Sai Adithya' on its back.

From the time I was very young, I used to feel sad while leaving Prashanti Nilayam. I used to tell Swami about this and ask Him whether I could study in His school. He would say, "Not now". The time was not ripe.

Then in October 2003, I came to Puttaparthi with my parents for about three weeks. The day came for us to leave. We were leaving at about 5 p.m., which meant we would have to get up just before the *bhajan* [sacred songs]. When Swami came in His golf cart in the verandah, He signaled to my father with His hand that He would come back and see him. My father was still seated when the *bhajan* started. I was wondering what was going on, because sitting on the side I did not know the happenings on the verandah.



After the *Aarti* [waving of the flame] Swami got into the golf cart and then saw my father and asked us to go for the interview. I got up and went inside. Swami asked me if I wanted to join the school in the sixth class. I replied in the affirmative. He told me to come in the last week of May and He would make me join the school.

In April 2004, I left my school in Australia and came to Prashanti Nilayam at the end of May. Two weeks went by, but Swami did not say anything. I became very sad. One day I broke down and cried for a long time. Within a few days, on 22 June, we received a phone call saying that Swami had asked me to join the school on Monday 24 June, as it was an auspicious day. Thus, on 24 June 2004, I entered the portals of His school.

When I was in the seventh class, Swami asked my father what I wanted to do when I grew up. My father thought for a while and then said that I wanted to do medicine. Swami became extremely happy and smiled. So, it was decided that I would be a doctor. It was possible for me to do math or biology after 10th class and then do medicine. I wanted to ask Swami for guidance.

During the *Sahasra Poorna Chandra Darshana Mahotsavam*, I dozed off during the study hours. In my dreams, I was sitting on the stage in the stadium during the proceedings. Swami got up from His chair and walked toward me. I got up and asked Swami whether to do math or biology. Swami was about to answer when my dream abruptly ended as the teacher had woken me up. I felt a little sad but soon forgot about it.

As the New Year dawned, I decided to ask Swami as soon as possible as to what subject to take in 11th class. On the night of January 2, I had a dream. I was sitting outside when someone informed me that Swami wanted to see me. I got up and ran inside a room where Swami was seated on a chair.

This room did not look like the interview room. I asked, "Swami, math or biology?" Swami replied, "Biology". Then Swami said something in *Telugu* and I told Swami, "You know that I don't know *Telugu*, Swami." Then Swami said in English that I could get better marks. So, I decided to take biology in 11th class.

These few instances show how Swami guides us in our lives always. He knows what is best for us even if we may not think so. Swami is always there to guide and help us whether it is physically or through other means. He is our best friend, and we should learn to talk to Him in heart. If we do this, He will respond, and we will be uplifted. One must not waste this opportunity to be with God. One's life should be made such that this will be the last and he will merge back into Him.

When I was very small, Swami created a chain for me. The pendant was a leaf with an image of Sai Krishna on it. I soon started to chew the pendant as I was still small, and it developed into a habit.

However much my parents tried to stop me, I would not. One day the pendant broke off the chain. It was then that I realized my mistake, but it was too late.

In the next few interviews we had, my mother would show Swami the pendant and ask Him to fix it. Finally, Swami told me to keep it at home and told me, "Krishna is in your heart." This teaches us that God is inside us and we need not go searching for Him. He is always within us, guiding and guarding us. Once we realize this, we will be free from the cycle of birth and death.

~N. Sai Adithya
Alumnus, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam
Source: *Sai Chandana* 2010 (85th Birthday Offering)

The Lord Is Here

When thou art happy, little one,
Then Sai is thy companion gay
Laughing with glee, roaring with mirth,
Willing to join in thy innocent fun—
When thou art happy, little one.

When thou art perplexed, dear child,
Sai then assumes the role of thy teacher
Dispelling shadows, bringing light
Showing thee the right path, like a guide—
When thou art perplexed, dear child!

When thou art unhappy, my friend,
Sai is thy tender loving mother
Nursing thy wounds, thy grief to end,
Ready and willing Her love to spend—
When thou art unhappy, my friend!

When thou dost stoop to wrong, rash youth,
Remember thy father Sai is at hand
To advise, admonish and help thee find
The ways of virtue, with the lamp of truth—
When thou dost stoop to wrong, rash youth!

This Sai as a mother gives thee love and care
As a friend, He is willing thy joys to share
As a teacher, He helps thee in thy search for truth
As a father, He swerves thee from ways uncouth.

What cause now, for sorrow and grief?

What cause for thee to wail and cry?
What room for tears when our Lord in [KK: "is" here?] here?
Just surrender thyself to Sathya Sai.

—S. Udyavar

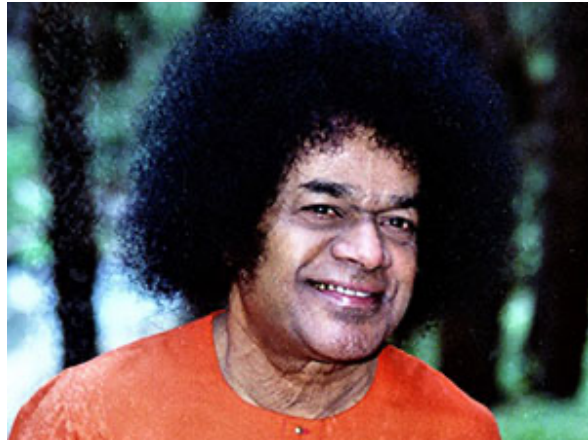
Source: Sanathana Sarathi, Dec. 1967

Turn Him Over to Me

The Cowans

"Why can't we know God? If we must have Self-realization, why don't we?" wailed the Cowans—Walter and Elsie. "We followed one belief after another; each step gave some little wisdom, but no security, no actual knowing how to reach the Goal. We felt discouraged. We talked it over and made an important decision: Pray loud and sincerely for the Highest Living Master to come and take us to the Goal. We did so; the next day a friend came and gave us a book, the book on the Life of Sathya Sai Baba. We knew our prayers were answered." Their wish was fulfilled.

The Cowans have been visiting Prasanthi Nilayam and Whitefield every year since then; their shrine at Tustin, California, is known to many as the Jasmine Shrine, since the fragrance of jasmine that pervades it is an indication of Bhagavan's Presence. The Picture in that shrine was mysteriously placed there by Bhagavan, in answer to the prayer of Mrs. Cowan for that particular Picture, which she could not get in India. An eight-rayed star jewel



appeared on that picture once, for all to see for many days, when the Cowans prayed for some sign that Baba was with them. *Vibhuti* showers from the pictures of Bhagavan at Tustin even as it does in the homes of countless devotees in India and elsewhere. Hundreds have seen the shower and returned convinced that Baba is a Divine phenomenon, transcending the laws of science. The Cowans are happy in the lap of Baba's love. Elsie Cowan writes, "He gives us strength and power. He is compassionate. In time of need, He wraps His grace around us like a very warm blanket, soft and lovely, to soothe us into a state of bliss. Without Him, there would be no one to turn to."

The Astounding News

In April 1972, when the Cowans returned from Brindavan to Tustin, Elsie Cowan told the Sai Group, "We have come back from India, my husband and I, brim full of the most astounding news that can happen to anyone. It is so fantastic that many of you may doubt it, because hardly any of us realize the great importance and the tremendous Power of this Great High God, who not only walks the Earth, but cares for all the planes from earth to eternity. *Walter died at Madras; Sai Baba resurrected him.*"

Dr. John Hislop, himself an ardent *sadhaka* [devotee] for many years, who like the Cowans travelled through many *gurus* to the Presence of the Highest Living Master, was at Madras, Whitefield (Brindavan), and Prasanthi Nilayam, throughout almost the entire Experience. So Elsie Cowan asked Dr. Hislop to tell the story to the American Sai group. He recorded his narrative on tape with the words, "Walter and you arrived in Madras on December 23, 1971, and came to the building where Sri Baba was holding a conference with some 3000 presidents of His *Seva Samitis*. Sri Baba at once came to you and gave Walter and you a warm and affectionate greeting. Walter was obviously not feeling well, and ushers provided chairs as soon as you arrived. On the morning of the 25th of December, news spread quickly that an elderly American had a fatal attack of what was thought to be heart trouble, and had passed away. My wife and I at once went to your hotel. You confirmed the news. You told us how the attack had felled Walter in the hotel room. You had prayed to Sri Sathya Sai Baba at this most trying moment of your life; but with great self-control and recollection of human mortality, you had ended your prayer with, 'Let God's Will be done'. Mr. and Mrs. Ratan Lal were staying almost next door; you remembered this, and when you called her she came immediately. With her help, you summoned a room boy, and Walter was lifted from the floor to the bed. It was soon evident to you that Walter had indeed passed away from the body. Someone called an ambulance to take Walter to the hospital, but it was your experience that Walter had died in your arms soon after having been lifted from the floor to the bed; and you were so exhausted that you could not accompany the then lifeless body into the ambulance. These events took place in the early morning hours."

Baba Visits the Hospital

"At 7 A.M., you had recovered sufficient strength to go with Mrs. Ratan Lal to Sri Baba's place of residence to tell Him the news and ask for advice and help. (*Sri Baba, we learn, told the devotees around Him in Telugu that it would be a great pity if the old lady had to return to the States with the corpse of her husband, after their long longed-for visit to Him. Ed.*) Sri Baba said He would visit the Hospital about 10 A.M. At 10 A.M. Mrs. Ratan Lal accompanied you to the Hospital, but you were told that Sri Baba had already been there and had left just before you arrived. Upon entering the Hospital, you found Walter alive."

"The attending physician of the Hospital is well known to Sri G. K. Damodara Rao, Retired District & Sessions' Judge. He told the Judge that Walter was indeed dead when he examined him shortly after arrival. There was no sign of life. He said that he pronounced Walter as dead, that his ears and nose were stuffed with cotton, and that Walter was covered with a sheet and moved into an empty room. The doctor had then left the hospital on some professional duty and had missed seeing Sri Baba when Sri Baba was in hospital. When the doctor returned to the hospital, Walter was alive."



"I saw Sri Baba at His place of residence, after He had returned from the Hospital," continues Dr. Hislop. "He told me and others within hearing that Walter Cowan had died, and that the Hospital had stuffed his ears and nose and covered him with a sheet. Sri Baba said that he had brought Walter back to life. I did not enquire of Sri Baba as to the details of how he had brought Walter back to life or His reasons for doing so, nor to the best of my knowledge did anyone else."

Another Crisis

"On December 26th, Sri Appa and I accompanied Sri Baba to a meeting of the lady members of the Nagara Sai Samiti. Sri Appa and I were sitting on the platform just a few feet from Sri Baba and were able to closely observe Him. He gave a spiritual discourse, all without any break or any moment of hesitation. From the meeting, we were to go to a devotee for lunch."

"As soon as we got into the car, Sri Baba turned to us and said, 'While I was talking in the meeting, Mrs. Cowan called me. I at once went to the Hospital and did what was necessary. Mr. Cowan's health has taken a bad turn.' When we arrived at the house of the devotee for lunch, Sri Baba turned to us and said, 'Take this *Vibhuti* to the Hospital and give Mr. Cowan some in his mouth and rub the rest on his forehead and chest. If you walk to the corner over there, you will find Mrs. Hislop in a taxi. She will take you to the hospital.'"

"The fact was my wife had been following Sri Baba in a taxi. However, she had taken great pains to stay out of sight, but her effort was of no avail for, as usual, Sri Baba knew everything!"

When we reached the hospital with the *Vibhuti*, Mrs. Cowan said, "Walter took a very bad turn just a little while ago. I thought he was dead; I was terrified; I at once called Baba in a loud tone of voice. When I called Baba, I felt His presence at once."

The Third Time

"A week or so later, I was speaking with Baba at the Prasanthi Nilayam. Walter and you were still in the Hospital at Madras. Sri Baba said, 'Today I received a telegram from Mrs. Cowan. Mr. Cowan was again in a serious condition. I answered the telegram. Mr. Cowan will soon be out of the Hospital; he will come to Bangalore. It is My *sankalpa*, My Will.' Of course, you told me it was no physical telegram. The telegram was your 'prayer'. Baba told me during the same conversation. 'Cowan died three times. I had to bring him back three times.'"

The Cowans in Bangalore

"I and my wife saw Walter and you at the West End Hotel; Bangalore. Walter appeared to be extraordinarily well. Sri. Baba visited Mr. Cowan twice at the Hotel. During the second visit, He told you that Mr. Cowan was strong enough to make the 15-mile drive out to Whitefield each morning, and that he was to return to the Hotel at noon each day.

Dr. Gnaneswaran was the physician who attended on Mr. Cowan at Bangalore. He had Walter's medical history with its specific laboratory tests showing severe diabetes lasting for many years and various other diseased conditions. After assuming responsibility as Walter's physician, he as a standard medical man rechecked the findings of Walter's American doctors with his own laboratory tests. He could scarcely believe the results. ... Not only were the diabetic symptoms completely absent, but the tests for the other diseased conditions were also negative!"

"He explained; 'Only the Divine Baba, only God, could do this.' The extraordinary fact seems to be this: When the total organism that was Walter died, the only entity that returned to life was Walter himself. Walter's various diseases died with him, and they were not reborn. Only Walter was reborn! A most marvelous and inscrutable event, is it not? Walter is alive again, free of disease, and filled with enthusiasm to tell people about the Divine Presence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. His mental state has also changed. You say and Walter agrees that he was one of the world's champion worriers. Now Walter is calm and free of worry," says Dr. Hislop.

The Journey with Baba

Walter Cowan, too, has much to say about his death and subsequent events. He says in the tape that is now circulating in the USA, "While in the Connemara Hotel at

Madras, two days after I arrived, I was taken very sick with pneumonia and was in bed. As I gasped for breath, suddenly all the body struggle was over and I died. I found myself very calm, in a state of wonderful bliss, and the Lord, Sai Baba, was by my side. Even though my body was laid on the bed, dead, my mind kept working throughout the entire period, until Baba brought me back. There was no anxiety or fear, but a tremendous sense of well-being, for I had lost all fear of death."

"When Baba took me to a very large hall, there were hundreds of people milling around. It was the hall where the records of all my lives were kept. Baba and I stood before the Court of Justice. The one in charge knew Baba very well. And he asked for the records of all my lives. He was very nice and kind, and I had the feeling that whatever was decided would be the best for my soul."

"The records were brought into the hall... arm-loads of scrolls. They seemed to be in different languages. As they were read—Baba interpreted them. In the beginning they told me of countries that have not existed for thousands of years and I could not recall them. When they reached King David, the reading of my lives became more exciting. I could hardly believe how great I apparently was in each life that followed. As they continued reading my lives, it seemed what really counted was my motives and character, as I stood for outstanding peace, spirituality, and political activity. I do not remember all the names. but I am included in almost all the history books of the world from the beginning of time. As I incarnated in the different countries, I carried out my mission, which was peace and spirituality."

The Return

"In about two hours they finished reading the scrolls, and the Lord Sai Baba said, I had not completed the work that I was born to do, and He asked the Judge that I be turned over to Him to complete my mission of spreading the Truth. And He requested that my soul be returned to my body, under Baba's Grace. The Judge said, "So be it." The case was dismissed; I left, with Baba, to return to my body. I hesitated to leave this wonderful bliss, but I knew it was best to complete my mission so that I could merge with my Lord, Sai Baba."

Walter Cowan says that he talked all of it over with Baba later. And, he says, "Baba said it was not my imagination, it was a true experience." Dr. Hislop, too, asked Sri Baba if Walter had this actual experience. He writes, "Sri Baba replied, 'The experience was a real experience, not an illusion. It was an experience occurring within Mr. Cowan's own mind, and I was myself there, directing and clarifying the thoughts.'"

More Light on the Accountant

Dr. Hislop wanted a little more elaboration. He asked Baba, "if every person had a similar experience at death; Sri Baba, he says, replied, "It is not necessarily so. Some had a similar experience, and some had not."

Dr. Hislop, in the tape referred to above, spoke also of the Hall of Judgement and its significance. He said, "Now, there is something most interesting here. At the time Walter recounted his experience to my wife and myself, that day neither of you—that is, neither Walter nor you—had seen Volume VII of "Sathya Sai Speaks"; nor had we seen Volume VII. Yet, in Volume VII, Sri Baba made a statement about the mind, that exactly corroborates Walter's quite independent and uniquely personal experience.

Just listen to this! Volume VII, page 468, II paragraph: A portion of a talk given in Telugu at Prasanthi Nilayam in February 1971, "The mind plays many tricks with you, the chief of which is to foster the ego, and hide the Prompter and the Power within. You must have heard of an Accountant in the Court of the King of Death, Chitragupta, by name. He maintains a Register of the Good and the Bad done by each living being, and on death he brings the Books to Court and strikes the balance between debit and credit. Yama, the King, then metes out the punishment that can expiate and educate. This Chitragupta has his Office in the mind of man, all the time, awake, alert. The word [Chitragupta] means "Secret Picture"; what he does is to picture all the secret promptings that blossom into activity; he notes the warning signals as well as occasions when these signals were ignored or wantonly disregarded. You must see that the warning of the Divine against the merely human or even the bestial inclinations are heeded."

The Vedic Ceremony

A few days after Mr. Cowan had fully recovered from his unique adventure, Baba called the Cowans to His Presence at Brindavan, Whitefield. A few American devotees like Indra Devi, Dick Bock, and the Hislops were there; also, some Indian devotees like Dr. S. Bhagavantam, D.Sc. Baba blessed the reborn Mr. Cowan and his wife at what Dr. Hislop refers to as "a very beautiful and very significant Vedic Ceremony."

He explained the meaning and purpose of the rites celebrated when persons reached the ages of 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 and 100. He blessed the septuagenarian Mr. Cowan and his wife. *Vedic* hymns were recited; *bhajans* were sung by the American group and the students of the College at Brindavan. Baba created wedding rings and jewels for the happy couple and filled their hands with other gifts He created. He asked the Cowans to relate the story of the death and resurrection; he referred to the 'call' of distress that Mrs. Cowan raised the next day from the hospital, and the 'telegram' He sent the day when there was a relapse. He declared that when devotees whom He chose were threatened with fatal accidents or 'untimely' death, He rescued them so that they may continue to be instruments for His Task. He also said that He gave His Presence during the dying moments and showered consolation, courage, and comfort to devotees who had won His compassion. "They pass is ("in"?) peace into Me," He said.

Truly, Bhagavan is the Highest Living Master, the Incarnation of the Lord. "Why can't we know God?" the Cowans asked, in their anguish. They knew God. God has revealed Himself to them in all His Glory.

—Editor

Postscript

On May 8th, Walter Cowan wrote to the Editor, "We are delighted that you are printing the story of Sri Sathya Sai Baba bringing me back to life. Everyone seems very interested to hear this story, and it gives them encouragement to hear that there really is no death, but just the loss of the physical body. It rids people of the fear of death. I am really feeling fine. Would you believe this? I have gained about 30 pounds since 'coming back'!"

—Editor

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, June 1973

Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

What Is the Purpose of Life?

The boys were pleading with Swami to come to the hostel.

Swami: (To the elders in the Portico) Good boys, good voice! Very good music. It sounds like a *Qawwali*, does it not? (To students) Daily same song. Why do you not change it? It is so hurting to the ears. (To a boy) What is the purpose of life?

Student: Swami, to love all and serve all.

Swami: No! The only way to reach God is to love all and serve all. What is the purpose of life?

Student: Swami, help always.

Swami: Just help ever. You must help ever, hurt never. Even in the Bible, compassion is stressed upon a lot. Many a time we hurt others by our thought, word, and deed. Controlling the three and abstaining from the misuse of them is the real purpose of life—also called *trikaranashuddhi*. Our thought, word, and deed must all be equally pure. In the Sri Sathya Sai Organization they have a program called EHV—Education in Human Values. But it must be 3HV—education in human values of the head, heart, and hand. This is called as—The proper study of mankind is man. Man is the one who has complete mastery over his head, heart, and hand, i.e., he speaks what he thinks and does what he says, hence achieving a unity of thought, word, and deed. This is unity in diversity.

Beings are many, breath is one.
Jewels are many, gold is one.
Nations are many, earth is one.
Stars are many, sky is one.

(To a Primary School boy) How many brothers?

Student: All are brothers, Swami.

Swami: (To the Primary School boy) Good! Difference is in bodies only, but the *atma* is one—unity in diversity. How many sisters?

Student: Swami all are sisters.

Swami: (Turning to the Institute boys) See! Compare this boy's answers with our big boys' answers. In the Primary school, all these small boys are pure. At the Higher Secondary school, the balance is slightly upset. By the time they come to Institute the balance is completely gone. You see each of these boys gives correct answers but not our big boys!

Swami: (To the Primary School boy) What do you want? Why did you come here? Where are the other boys? Why special for you?

Student: Swami, I came because I want Your *darshan* [to see] and to talk to You.

Swami: What do you want?

Student: Swami, I want You.

Swami: Come on! Take Me! I am ready.

(At once the boy jumped up much to the amazement of everyone and bent down to take *padanamaskar* [touching the Lord's feet].)

Swami: (Looking at the Institute boys) See, that is how you must be. (To the Primary School boy) What is your father doing?

Student: Swami, you are my mother and father

Swami: Good boy. What is your father doing?

Student: Swami, he is a neurosurgeon. He wants to come here and serve at Your hospital.

Swami: It is OUR hospital. I do not need any hospitals for Myself. I never fall sick. What is your mother doing?

Student: She is a retired scientist, Swami.

Swami: Retired so soon?

Student: Swami, after marriage, she retired.

Swami: (Laughed and said) Then it means she has stopped after marriage. You must not say retired. Retired is after 28 years of service. Our boys must learn to use the correct words. They do not even know what words to use when writing letters also. (To an Institute boy) How many marks?

Student: Swami, I got an A grade.

Swami: Why not O grade? Our boys must get O grades.

Student: Swami, I will try this time.

Swami: Don't try. Try and try then it will become dry. You must do it! Will you do it?

Swami: (To the Institute students) Boys must all study well. Studying is the duty of all students. You must do your duty. Duty is God. Work is worship. Study well, respect your elders and listen to what your parents say. That is your duty. Today students want to be fed by their parents, clothed by them, and want their money. But they do not want to respect them. Our students must not be like that. What you do now to your parents, tomorrow your children will do to you. We must live in the present, the omnipresent. The fruits of the past are in the present. The seeds of the future are also in the present. We must learn to live in this omnipresence. (To a visiting company Managing Director) How are our MBA boys?

M.D: Swami, they are very good.

Swami: Compared to outside boys, they are much better. But still, this age is like that. Sometimes, they do get bad thoughts. Yet, they are good. Outside boys cannot be compared to our boys. If holidays come, for example, our boys cry not to go home. They want to stay with Swami. But outside boys in other hostels keep counting how many days are left to go home. My boys are all happy here. (To the boys) Not just here! You must be happy everywhere. Good boys!

~September 21, 1991

Source: *Students with Sai: Conversations (1991-2000)*

Thought of the MONTH

Nature Is the Best Teacher

If there is a boil on the body, we apply some ointment and cover it with a bandage until it heals. If you do not do this, it is likely to become septic and cause great harm later. Every now and then one has to clean it with pure water, apply the ointment again and put on a new bandage. In the same way in our life, there is this (particular) boil that has come up in our body, in the form of 'I', (*ahamkara* [ego] and *mamakara*). If you want to really cure this boil of 'I', you will have to wash it every day with the water of love, apply the ointment of faith, and tie the bandage of humility around it. This will cure the disease that has erupted with this boil of 'I'.

Divine Discourse, Feb 17, 1985

The whole world is intimately associated with the Sun God. He is the visible manifestation of the Lord. In India, Sun God (*Surya*) is considered highly sacred and granted the unique status of a great *Guru*. Sun is also the source of time. The Sun limits and regulates the number of years each one lives. He performs His duty without thought of reward and is humble and steady. Imagine the patience with which the Sun puts up with all that extreme heat, and gives sufficient warmth to the human body, every single day. Human beings are so full of activity and intelligence on account of the solar energy that is imbibed. If the Sun is idle even for a moment, the whole world will go cold and dark. The actions of the great is the ideal that the rest must keep in view. This also shows that all in the world are bound by the obligation of *karma* (activity).

~Geeta Vahini, Chapter 6

If you view the world with love, it will appear as filled with love. On the other hand if you view it with hatred, everything will appear antagonistic to you. Eyes filled with love shine with brightness and cheerfulness. On the contrary eyes filled with hatred appear bloodshot and fearful. Your thoughts determine your actions whether good or bad. The external world will reflect your thoughts. You must consider the entire universe as a temple of God. You must regard all that is beautiful and great in nature—the lofty mountains, the vast oceans, and the stars in the sky—as proclaiming the glory and power of the Divine. The sweet fragrance of flowers or the delectable juice of fruits should also be regarded as tokens of God's love and compassion.

~Divine Discourse, July 24, 1983

All of you must realize that the relationship between you and God is permanent and is beyond the limitations of time and space. You should not waste your life thinking only of the physical relationship. The body is a passing thing. What you see externally is a burden; when you have made it a part of yourself it ceases to be a burden. It is like the food that a traveler carries on his shoulders for consumption on the way. As long as the

food remains outside it is a burden. But when he has eaten it, he gets stronger and there is no burden on his shoulder. You must safeguard the Divinity you experienced and magnify it by contemplating on it internally. You should concentrate on the attainment of union with the Divine, which is permanent and beyond the limitations of time and space.

~Divine Discourse, July 24, 1983



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