SaiSarathi

A Monthly Newsletter of the Mid-Atlantic Region, Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organization of America

Realize God Through Pure Love

All the objects in this visible universe are
Extremely beautiful, attractive, and pleasing.
The Divine is immanent in the entire cosmos.
The cosmos is filled with love.
The Supreme Self is the embodiment of love;
Hence if love encounters love they merge;
Hence if you develop your love
You become eligible to achieve
Oneness with the Divine.

Love exists for love and nothing else. It is spontaneous and imparts delight. Everything is permeated by love. Love sees with the heart and not the eyes. It listens not through the ears but by the tranquility of the heart. It speaks not with the tongue but out of compassion. Compassion, kindness, and love are separate words that mean the same thing. Love has many synonyms.

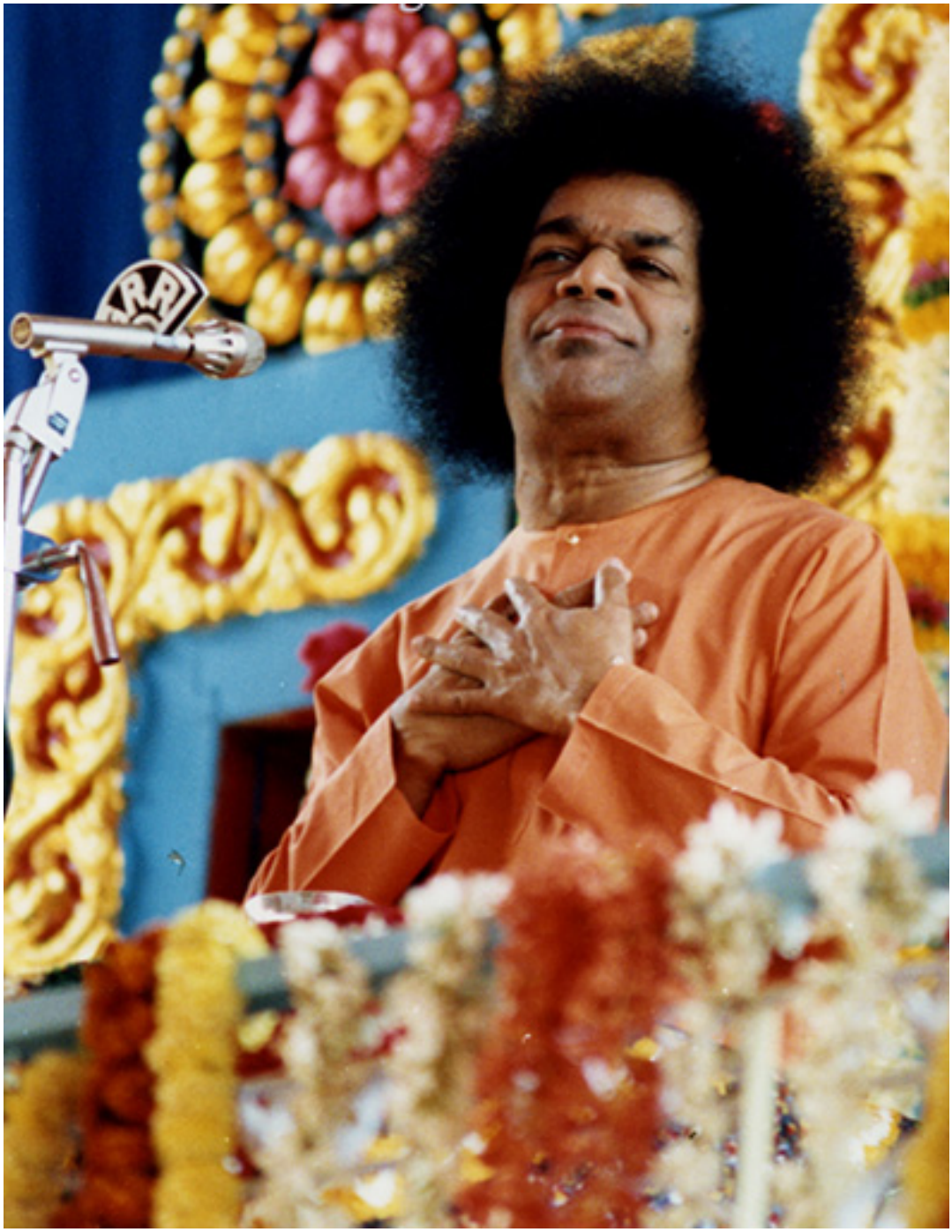
Love can emanate only from the heart and not any other source. Love is immortal, nectarine, blissful, and infinite. A heart filled with love is boundless just as rivers with different names and forms merge in the ocean and become one with it, love in many forms enters the ocean of the heart and gets identified with it.

True love has no beginning or end

Love can conquer anything. Selfless, pure, unalloyed love leads man to God. Selfish and constricted love binds one to the world. Unable to comprehend the pure and sacred love, man today is a prey to endless worries because of his attachment to worldly objects. Man's primary duty is to understand the truth about the Love principle. Once he understands the nature of love, he will not go astray. The various contexts in which the word love is used today have no relation to the true meaning of love. The affection, between a mother and child or between a husband and wife is incidental to a certain temporary relationship and is not real love at all. True love has neither a beginning nor an end. It exists in all the three categories of time—past, present, and future. That alone is true love which can fill man with enduring bliss.

One's thoughts, one's words and looks should be filled with love. This is divine love. One who is saturated with this love can never be subject to suffering. Men today are affected by praise or blame. But one who is filled with divine love transcends praise or censure. He is unaffected by criticism or flattery. He treats alike joy and sorrow, profit and loss, victory and defeat.

It is not easy to experience such love. It is easy to blame God but difficult to realize God. Men today prefer the easy path to the rough, one. They should realize that there can be no pleasure without pain.



The mission of Jesus

It was to teach mankind the greatness of divine love that Jesus came. His father passed away when Jesus was ten years old. Thereafter, with the permission of his mother, he embarked on his ministry of service to the people. He resolved on three tasks: one, to be filled with Divine love and to share it with others was the main purpose of his life; two, he should not succumb to praise or censure in carrying out his mission; three, to inspire in others the conviction that the Divinity within is omnipresent. Jesus considered spreading the gospel of love as his foremost task. He encountered many ordeals in carrying out his mission, but he regarded them all as challenges to be overcome. He was determined to treat pleasure and pain, sickness and failure with equanimity. He could not bear to see anyone suffer. He was opposed to the traffic in birds going on in the temple in Jerusalem. The affected persons turned against him. But Jesus carried on regardless of their hostility. In the end he sacrificed his life for the sake of others and out of his love for all.

Every human being is potentially a messenger of God. But, today, men have become messengers of the Lord of Death. They are traitors to their true human state. Humanness demands that everyone should manifest the Divinity within him. Everyone should be a real messenger of God and strive to promote-peace and security in the world. There is no other path to be followed. God's message is sacred and totally free from self-interest.

When Christ was born, three kings came to see the infant. One of them declared that the child would be a lover of God. The second one said that he would be the beloved of God. The third one declared that he was God. A lover of God is a messenger of God. The one whom God loves is a "Son of God." When one experiences both, he becomes one with God. "Father and Son are one."

Therefore, at the outset you must prepare yourselves to be messengers of God. This means that you should live up to the message of God. The message calls for service to all. Compassion, morality, and integrity are essential elements in the message. In propagating this message faith in God should be promoted. Love should be the watchword. The absence of love gives rise to hatred. Today there is no unity among the people. Without unity how can there be bliss? Without bliss how can anyone experience God?

Men should lead selfless lives. This may seem difficult. But, in reality there is nothing easier. It is selfishness that creates all kinds of difficulties for mankind. Selfless love will give no room for any evil. Unselfish love may meet with opposition from one's kith and kin and from worldly persons. But one should not be deterred by such opposition. Love should be cherished as one's life breath.

The elements and the Divine

It is essential to have faith in God. The five elements are manifestations of God. They are the earth, water, fire, air, and ether (or space). In the earth God exists in the form

of *Prajna* (Awareness). In fire, God is in the form of *Jagrata-Swaroopa* (wakefulness). The Vedic warning is, "Be awake". In air, God exists as the *Prana* (vital breath). In ether (or space) God pervades it as the primal sound, *Omkara*. Every element thus proclaims the manifestation of one aspect of God.

All beings experience the presence of the Divine through the five elements, the five senses, and the five life breaths. Some may ask, "When the Divine is omnipresent and is in all beings, why is He not visible to us?" If investigation is made on right lines, God can be perceived. Some human effort is essential to get this perception. Just as the reflection of the sun can be seen in all its purity only in clear and still water, though reflections may be noticed in ponds, wells, and oceans, God can be perceived only when the heart is pure and unselfish. How can God be expected to appear before a person whose mind is wavering and whose outlook is self-centered? The wavering mind will experience only a hazy figure. In a steady mind, God will present a clear image.

Mind is the cause of man's bondage

The mind, according to the scriptures, is the cause of man's bondage or liberation. The mind has three qualities: *tamas*, *rajas* and *satwa*. The *tamasic* quality makes the mind ignore the truth, pursue the false and impels man to indulge in what is unholy and improper. It is necessary to correct this tendency of the *tamoguna*. The *rajoguna* is responsible for a person living in a kind of dream-state and treating it as real. The *satwic* quality makes a person see good even in a bad person or object. The *satwic* person sees God in the whole cosmos and fosters the godly approach to creation.

Today people all over the world are racked by fears of various sorts. There is no peace anywhere. But people should not give way to despair. They should face the situation with courage, without bothering about the results.

Make love the basis for all your actions. The *Gopikas* prayed to Krishna to play on the flute and fill their barren hearts with love so that love may grow and ripen in their hearts. The love of God should be free from any desire for favors. God judges the devotee's love by the intensity of the feeling and not by the number of ways in which worship is offered.

Love of God does not mean giving up your normal duties. In the performance of these duties, every action should be done as an offering to God—*Bhagavata preetyartham* (for the sake of pleasing God). Look upon the body as a moving temple, wherein God' resides. Recognize that God is always with you and around you.

Messengers of Sathya Sai

The Messengers of Sathya Sai are doing excellent work. They are helping to build dwellings for the poor in the villages. They also arrange for the marriage of poor villagers, raising the money from among themselves. Many old students at the

Women's College (at Anantapur) are living in overseas countries like Germany, U. S. A, Australia, and Japan. It is an index of their devotion to Swami that they have come from these distant places for this annual meeting of "the Messengers" at great expense. I asked the President of the Association why the members are wasting money in this way. Why should they not use it for helping some poor people in their places? Every trip costs about a lakh of rupees per person. Her reply was: "Swami! We are not concerned about the expense. We come to Swami to get our spiritual batteries recharged go that we may render, better service. Money comes in one way or another: But we must develop our spirit of sacrifice. It is for this reason that we are coming here. Even the money we earn is not really ours. We are merely agents. We are a kind of trustees for our incomes."

This attitude must be appreciated. People should regard all wealth as coming from God to be used for sacred purposes. No one brings anything with him at birth and carries anything with him at death. All relationships in between are transient. Treat everyone alike. Even bad people will be transformed if you treat them with love.

Show love to those who dislike you also

St. Paul was an example of one who originally hated Christ but later became his foremost apostle. When you show love toward all, even to those who dislike you, God will love you. Then you become a "Son of God." You earn the right to inherit the Kingdom of God. You can become one with God.

Among the Messengers of Sathya Sai, consisting of men and women, it is the women who are carrying on more service activities. This is all the more commendable because of the handicaps they labor under as housewives with in-laws and others who dominate over them. Nevertheless, they are persuading their husbands to come to Swami. This is true *seva* because they are converting skeptics to believe in God.

The male old students have more freedom but are not equally zealous in rendering service. They should realize the true meaning of freedom, namely, carrying out the dictates of the Spirit.
As a nation we have achieved freedom, but we have not achieved unity. Unity can be achieved only through love. This was the message of Jesus.

Make yourselves worthy of calling 'Sai Devotees'

Students! When you are observing today the birthday of a divine personality you have also to follow his teachings. You must remember what constitutes the greatness of the person whose birthday you celebrate. We celebrate Sri Rama's birthday, but how many respect the words of the father as Rama did? How far are you prepared to sacrifice position and power as Rama did? People insist on rights to which they have no claim. How can they call themselves devotees of Rama? You should follow the ideals of Rama.

What is meant by calling yourselves devotees of Sai? You must foster love and develop unity. You must consider yourselves as members of one family, the children of one God. Only then you are entitled to call yourselves Sai devotees. Whatever others may say, do not bear any ill-will toward them. Welcome everything as for your good.

The more you serve God, the more the bliss you will experience. Hence, fill your life with love, grow in love and end your life in love.

Christmas message on 25-12-1995
Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 28

Sathya Sai Sweeties
With
Birthday Blessings

1. The love that glows in every heart, know, that love is God. If you yearn to reach Him, love all.

2. The Truth that shines in everyone, know, that truth is God. If you seek to merge in God, practice Truth.

3. What is Love? It is the cream of the life that is lived in the holy light of full morality. If you aspire to be happy, experience Love in every act.

4. Love is the charm that can transform the stoniest nature into the softest sweetness.

5. The love that you bear to yourself is the basis for all forms of love; therefore, love your Self, your *atma*; without it, you cannot really love at all; without it, your heart is but a stone.

6. Taste the elixir of the Love that sweetens all the various form of *prema*; then only can you realize that in all beings there dwells the self-same *atman*, the *atman* that is One without a second.

7. Cultivate *prema*, if you wish to escape the agony of partitions and divisions and differences.

8. No. *prema* is not the common stuff so miscalled. It is the nectar of the lotus of the human heart. The heart that has no nectar is but a cell of darkness.

9. Have you the desire to have *ananda*, at all times? Then, speak in Love; act in Love, remember in Love. Be *prema*-full.

10. Do you crave for the fruit of *sujnana*? Then, seek it in the winding vine of Faith, lovely with the fragrant flower of *bhakti*. The *bhakti* flower alone can give the fruit, *jnana*.

11. Develop Humility before elders, dread of sin and steadfast faith in all things good.

12. The purpose and goal of life here is the realization of the *atman*. Do you yearn for it? Then, take up the *sadhana*: Renunciation, Service with no desire for the fruit thereof, and constant Remembrance of the Lord.

13. Whatever you feel is wrong when done by others, avoid doing them yourself.

14. However, you crave others should honor you, honor others likewise.

15. Those who consider world peace essential, must seek the welfare and happiness, the comfort and joy of all and pray to the Lord to bless all, with these; but they should, along with the prayer, comfort and help others, to the extent possible.

16. Four prides destroy the humanity of Man: the pride of Riches, the pride of Ancestry, the pride of Scholarship, and pride of being Young. The farther you are from these, the fuller you are with Love—the nearer you are to the Lord.

17. Four forms of Faith help Man to progress along the path toward Divinity: Faith in One's scripture, faith in one's Religion, faith in one's Country, and faith in one's Village.

18. The respect rendered to individuals and to Status is no respect at all. Status is short-lived; individuals rise and fall. The *atman* alone cannot be tarnished, changeless gem! Respect it; that is the real Self-respect.

19. Are you struggling to destroy your egoism? Then, do not run after positions of authority over others: that will only foster it. But, through His Grace, if you are in such a position, do your duty with considerations for the needs of others and respect the feelings of others. That is the crown of glory for that position.

20. Are you seeking Peace, Happiness, and Equanimity? Then, seek them in thoughts of God; nowhere else can you get the permanent brand. All three got from elsewhere are yours only for the moment: the next minute, you are plunged in suffering.

21. The greatest happiness is to be rid of lust, greed, envy, and malice.

22. Not causing harm to others, that is *punya*. Not doing disservice is the greatest service.

23. Why waste precious time in searching for the faults of others? Search for your own, discover at least one and correct it. That is the best use to which you can put the precious time.

24. Time is the very embodiment of God: so, frittering it away is as bad as ignoring God.



25. Are you planning to spend your days without malice or hatred? Then, do this: speak gently and with moderation.

26. Do not worry about others and their nature; try to acquire a good nature, yourself.

27. Far better is it to practice one virtue yourself, than repeating parrot wise a crore of suggestions to others.

28. Always be full of courage, enthusiasm and joy; this gives you strength—physical, mental, and spiritual.

29. Do not yield or become sad when you are columnized or threatened; do not swell and get conceited when you are praised or honored. Both these delude you and plunge you into malice and hatred.

30. In the name of *bhakti* do not cause mental pain to others; do not disturb their peace of mind, or cause inconvenience to them.

31. Never disparage the *Ishtadevata* of another or his mode of worship, in the mistaken view that your God and your mode are higher and better. Never laugh at another's faith; that is heinous sin.

32. God is immanent everywhere, in everything; all spots are holy, all moments are sacred, all acts are observed by Him, knowing this be vigilant; do not err anywhere, at any time.

33. Let your mind dwell on the name and Form you like most. Worship Him so. Do not change them to suit the whims of another or to please another.

34. When you are engaged in *japam*, *dhyanam,* and *bhajan* let your mind too experience the sweetness; do not merely exercise the body and the tongue. Genuine joy will be yours, only when your mind is fully immersed in them.

35. These thirty-four points should be well pondered over and put into practice, from today; this *sadhana* will lead you on to realization and you will experience Inexpressible Bliss.

~BABA

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi,* Nov. 1960



Petition

Lonely, I press my face to the glass;
Outside pounds Your Ocean of Mercy.
From here, the Pearls are hidden,
So, I close my eyes to see the better .....
Now, within my gaze, twelve thousand miles into the Sun.
Is an acre of Your children, humbly seated for Your *darshan*.
You come out, Your Lotus Feet stepping
To the beat of my heart,
Your Lotus Eyes loving Your Own.
Your Left Hand soon fills with square white Hopes;
Your Right explores the air;
Has my Yearning reached a Lotus Fingertip?
Wait, Little Good Sai, Wait for me.
Quiet temple within, I fight through my quasi world,
Struggling to return to Your Holy Orange Peace;
Ultra—marine, ultra—montane, You are,
And I so far, but no longer Lost;
The needle of my Compass never wavers;
Your Divinity beams blessings
Into the purblind mist of my narrow night.
True, You inhabit my heart;
You move me in that murky place,
But I perish for Your presence; so, wait, Lord of Love,
Just a little.

Advent of the Infinite

One November, in a village, isolated and remote,
Lay a Baby, Jay a Kingling, lay a Godlet, newly born;
Neath His blanket coiled a Cobra, the *tamboura* struck a note,
Which the *maddala* accompanied, so auspicious was that morn.
Came the neighbors to admire Him, stayed the neighbors to adore,
For the Infant had a Power in His Crown of Curly Hair,
And a warmth to challenge Sunlight curved the Smile the Godling wore,
So, unknowing His Divineness, yet the neighbors lingered there.
Little knew they in this dwelling crouching meekly by the road,
That a million praying Pilgrims would converge here from afar,
And the Softly Cooing Kinglet, Who illumined this abode,
Was the Firmament's Adornment, was the Baby *Avatar*.

—Phane R. Tirone
Source: *Sanathana Sarathi,* Dec. 1977

My Story—The Silver Door

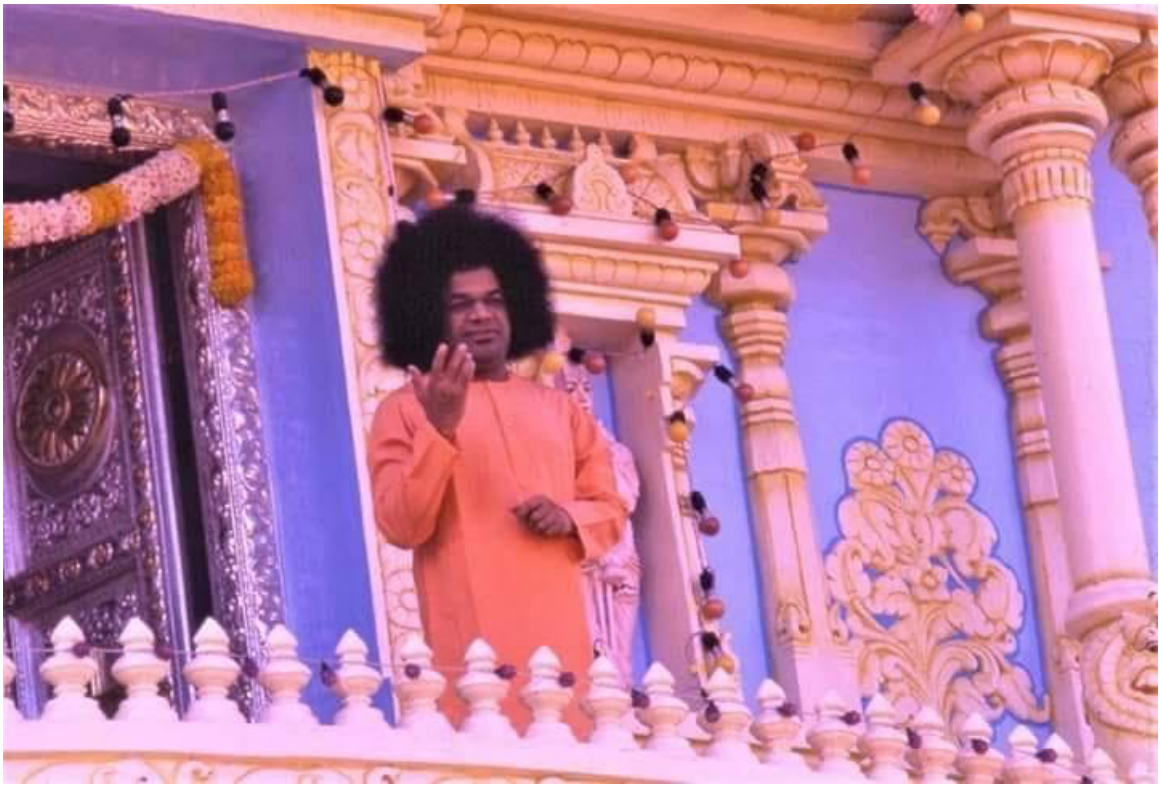
Part One: On the way....
I'm making my way slowly through the town and the pavement is very hot in the early morning. Inside I am singing within my heart to my Lord Sai Baba whom I love..... His song, "*Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam*" I am thinking how happy I am, independent as a person who walks, instead of riding in a machine also driven by man. Because, when they are driving they must concentrate on the road ahead. They cannot look at other things such as the sun rising, or the sunset, or the banks of cloud shapes... just a strip of pavement. But I am free and not a prisoner of the car and if I want to I can turn and go back at any time. So, I coast along at my own rate and feel bliss. I can see something of the world and even though it exists in my head, it is all my own within, and also, I can worship as I do on the way the form of the One I love who made me whole and gave me PEACE and LOVE. I feel the breeze on my face and I sing and I keep all the things of His in my heart. I am flying without fear. I was not always thus, No... Once I stood outside the door and was forlorn and lost and lonely. Baba was that door and I waited for someone to come and open the door.

Part Two: My Vision...
I seem to be standing in front of a beautiful temple and the most astounding thing about it is the Silver Door with all the symbols of all the religions on the Door. Now I can say what the vision was that I saw some years ago. Here I am waiting breathlessly in front of that Door, with hundreds of thousands of people around also

waiting. The silence is immense and even the birds fly noiselessly and perch on the trees in hushed silence waiting for something in great expectancy. Their silhouettes stand transfixed... not a sound is heard, as if the world has stopped for the moment. My whole self is beginning to vibrate with the tension of those few minutes. I am afraid to close my eyes for fear of missing something, as I keep my gaze upon the SILVER DOOR. And I say to myself, "O be still my heart," as its beats are too loud, and so as not to miss the sight of my beautiful and wondrous Lord.

The sun has not even shown a slight silver of gold, and time seems suspended for just a moment. If I shut my eyes I see the dear Lord's form, but I am trying to keep them open so as not to lose that first sight. I count the seconds on my *Japmala* that I hold there. The 108 beads will be but a moment or two. Has he gone away? Has something happened? Or is this all illusion and the Lord who is all light will not be there? Is it really true???

Then the SILVER DOOR swings wide and in front of it shining in a bright gleam of light with a golden Halo around His hair and the shining red fluorescence of His robe like the sun as it rises in the morning—there He is!!!



There He stands, and a glance comes from His beautiful soft eyes, and He raises His hand slowly and gives the sign of blessing to all. His voice is like a flute undulating and soaring, and sweet starts the song as He stands in aglow of heavenly light. The birds circle all around singing their best to the Lord, and with the early streaks of the sunlight even the trees shake their leaves in ecstasy toward Him. The birds are still circling, all the while singing their hearts out to Him. The sun has come out of the blank night, as if it too was doing some homage to Him. All nature seems to be singing in praise to the dear One. He lifts his hands slowly and seems to lift the hearts of all to the Consciousness of God. Am I crying for joy? Or sorrow—because of the agony I know, He has suffered in silence for us all? For the ones who have kept Him in agony by disbelieving Him? And going against His precepts? Although He says He loves all whether they love Him or not.

Then I noticed a difference in His hair as it seemed to me a crown of thorns appeared to be sitting upon His head. But He is still smiling. He started to look very stern and in a moment, He took off the crown, and it was all flowers that He picked off one by one and threw down to all the people below. I tried to pick one up, but it was gone to someone else. Then I looked up and saw to the aide of BABA a dragon-like thing standing over Him in a menacing attitude, seeming to be whispering into His ear. But then a dazzling flame came out from between BABA's eyes and the terrible thing was nothing but smoke and ashes and disappeared. Perhaps I was the only one who saw it. My Lord's voice came out in clear strong accents as He sang to us. Then after the *darshan* was ended, He turned and with a last farewell of His hands high in the air, He went back behind the SILVER DOOR.

Peace and contentment came over me, and I was immersed in a state of happiness that I had never known before. As the tears came from my eyes and rolled down my cheeks, I thought of how filled with Love for us He was and how if I were to die right then, I would be so overcome with joy that I would be deliriously happy anyway.

For that brief time when He looked down at us who had waited in the dawn, so lovingly and compassionately, and yet so intimately to each and every one, the place seemed to be electrified with His LOVE. And the children singing in joyous tones the *bhajans* that He taught them also were filled with LOVE.

Was this a vision or was it real? Is it all *MAYA*? Whatever it was, I am always in a state of bliss and don't know or seem to care for anything except to live as though He were here beside me. I thought, "For Him I have surrendered my life, and I know that He will never forsake me nor ever leave me alone." He is mine and I am His, forever and ever… *OM NAMAH SIVAYA*…

~Genevieve Savoroff
Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, January 1977

Conscious Recycling

"God's creation is very sacred. Do not pollute it. How sacred are the five elements given by God! But today the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, the sound we hear – everything is polluted. All these sacred elements have been made unsacred by humanity. That is why the world today is afflicted with so many diseases. That one is a true human being who makes sacred use of the five elements. Never waste natural resources.

~*Sathya Sai Speaks,* Vol. 29 (1996)



Tidbit: Are you consciously recycling?

What is recycling? It is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as trash. The recycled material is then made into new products. This activity conserves energy and natural resources, and can benefit the community, the economy, and the environment.

https://www.epa.gov/recycle/frequent-questions-recycling

What can you recycle curbside?

https://www.wm.com/us/en/recycle-right/recycling-101

1. Plastic bottles, cups, containers: Generally, plastic labeled #1 and #2 are recyclable curbside
2. Food and Beverage cans: Tin, stainless steel, and aluminum
3. Food and Beverage containers: Milk cartons, juice boxes, and food cartons
4. Flattened cardboard and paperboard
5. Paper and paper cups: Paper, newspaper, magazines, and empty paper cups
6. Glass bottles and containers: Rules vary by state

Remember not to put the recyclables in a plastic bag, but instead put them directly into the recycling bin.

What can you not recycle? Check locally for special collection programs for these items:

1. Shredded paper
2. Tissue paper, paper towels, toilet paper
3. Plastic bags

4. Batteries
5. Plastic wrap and film
6. Plastic packaging: Flexible packaging like chip bags and juice or soup pouches
7. Polystyrene foam: polystyrene cups and containers, peanuts (check local shipping stores, they may accept)
8. Tangling items: Garden hoses, rope, leashes, wire, holiday lights, string and chains
9. Dirty Diapers
10. Household items: Pots, Pans, Clothing, textiles, shower curtains, mini-pools, fencing, and furniture.
11. Medical waste
12. Garage waste: Car parts, scrap metal, tires, filters, propane cylinders
13. Green waste from the yard
14. Food Waste
15. Wood
16. Clothes hangers

Recycling resources by state: Standard accepted items usually include paper, cardboard, metal cans, plastics, and glass. Check local county and city policies.

Virginia: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

https://www.deq.virginia.gov/land-waste/waste-management/recycling/statewide-recycling-programs

Maryland:
https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/WasteManagement/Pages/Recycling.aspx

Delaware: https://dswa.com/programs/single-stream-recycling/

https://dnrec.delaware.gov/waste-hazardous/recycling/what/#/topic/acceptable-to-recycle-curbside

Pennsylvania: https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/residents/recycling-and-disposal

New Jersey: https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/outreach-and-education/recycling/

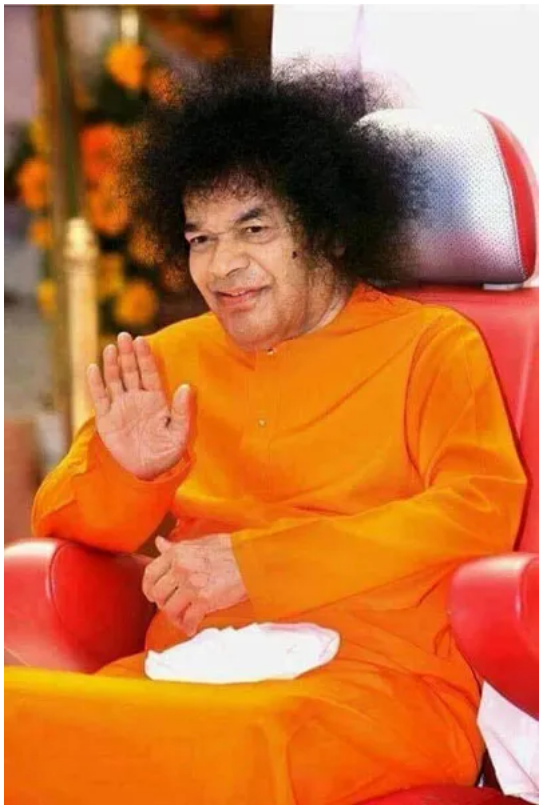
New York: https://recyclerightny.org/

https://www.nyc.gov/site/dsny/collection/residents/recycling.page

https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/recycling-composting/more-things-you-can-recycle

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* 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 my mother first. By that time, forty minutes had passed since my heart had stopped beating. I was small, bluish grey in color, not breathing and without any heart beats. 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 flower around the crib.

Overnight, some 'mysterious hand' had pulled out the feeding tube. When my grandfather came at 5:00 am, 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 pm, which meant we would have to get up just before the *bhajan*. 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* 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, being an auspicious day. Thus, on 24 June 2004 I entered the portals of His school.

When I was in 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 tenth 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 eleventh 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 eleventh 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 stop. 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, SSS Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam
Source: *Sai Chandana* 2010 (85th Birthday Offering)

Thought of the Month

Sacrifice

Just as a seed sprouts and grows into a plant wherein a flower blossoms, so does the Divine seed grow in the heart of man and blossoms as a flower, *Sath-Chith-Anandha.* Just as it is natural for a seed to become a fragrant flower, so is it natural for man to experience the bliss of the Divine—*Sath-Chith-Anandha.*

There is much evidence to demonstrate the Divinity that is inherent in man. But few men are ready to make the sacrifice that is required to experience this, Divinity. The ancient sages regarded human life as full of fragrance to be enjoyed. They considered life as full of nectarine sweetness. When man is oblivious of this sweetness, he ceases to be human. *Tyaga* (sacrifice) is the sweetness in *manavatva* (humanness)

~*Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 28 (1995)

The sacred and fragrant articles that are offered and the precious gems that are placed in the sacrificial fire are symbolic of the offerings that man should make in life. He should offer his pure heart and good qualities such as *sathya, dharma, shanthi* and *prema* (truth, virtue, peace and love) to the Divine. The real spirit of giving to society and the community the wealth, knowledge and skills one possesses is the true *yagjna* (sacrificial rite). Without the spirit or sacrifice the performance of external rituals has no meaning. Life itself is a *yajna*. To make human life an oblation in the sacred fire of duties and actions is itself a *yajna.* To get rid of one's bad qualities is *yajna.* Every individual who seeks to lead an ideal life, to achieve bliss and attain Self-realization must cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. *Yajna* is the means to lead one from sorrow to happiness, adversity to prosperity, darkness to light.
Human life can be worthwhile only when it is based on sacrifice or the quality of renunciation. Thereby, not only can it become meaningful, but Divinity can also be experienced. Life does not consist of eating, sleeping and such activities. The *Vedanta* (concluding essence of *Vedas*) has declared that the human goal is *moksha* (release from bondage). What is this bondage? It is not association with wife and. children, with property or attachments and hatreds. Even the sense of 'I' and 'Mine' do not constitute bondage. It is the ignorance of one's true Self that constitutes bondage. The process of liberation begins with the attempt to discover one's own Self. This *yajna* is intended to reveal to man the truth about himself and lead him to the Divine.

~*Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 16 (1983)

Bali is the symbol of *tyaga* (sacrifice). He controlled everything by his spirit of sacrifice. The *Gayatri mantra* begins with the utterance: "*Bhur-Bhuvas-Svaha*." These represent the three worlds that are in the body itself. *Bhur* represents *prakrithi* (Earth), which is the physical body. Mind is *Bhuvarloka*. *Prajnana* (spiritual awareness) is *Suvarloka*. Body represents materialization as it is made up of five physical elements. The mind is vibration and *prajnana* is radiation. If you enquire into their inner significance, all three are in your body itself.

The battle between Bali and Indra represents the mind battling to control the senses. When the mind is controlled, one attains Divinity. This is the spiritual state. Bali performed many sacrifices to attain this state. Bali means tax. You pay taxes to the Government for electricity, water, drainage, etc. What tax did Bali pay? He gave all his possessions, body, mind, and soul, to the Lord. The Lord's first foot covered this world, and the second foot covered the other world. How huge the Lord's feet

would have been to cover the whole world? How can such a huge foot be kept on Bali's head for the third step of land? The inner significance of this action is that Lord entered Bali's body, mind, and soul. Once the ego or body consciousness is surrendered, then there is no bar to one's realization. It is the body consciousness that stands in the way and makes you forget God. Vamana opened Bali's eyes to help him realize the Divine. The imprisoned man had to be freed. Bali offered his body, mind, and soul to the Lord.

~*Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 27 (1994)



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