

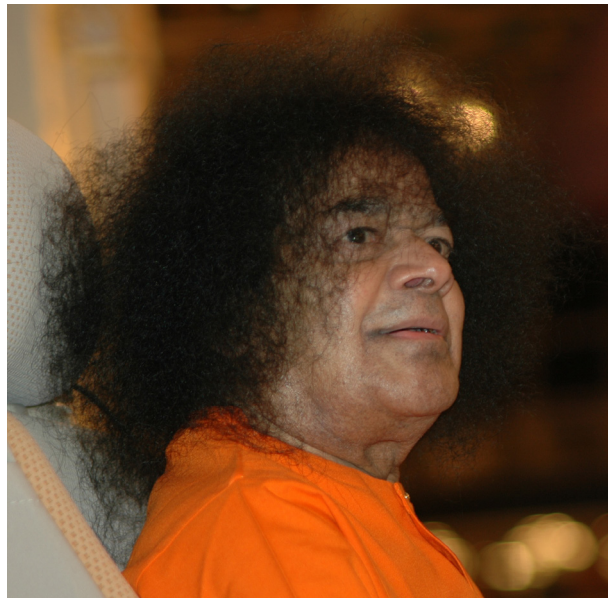


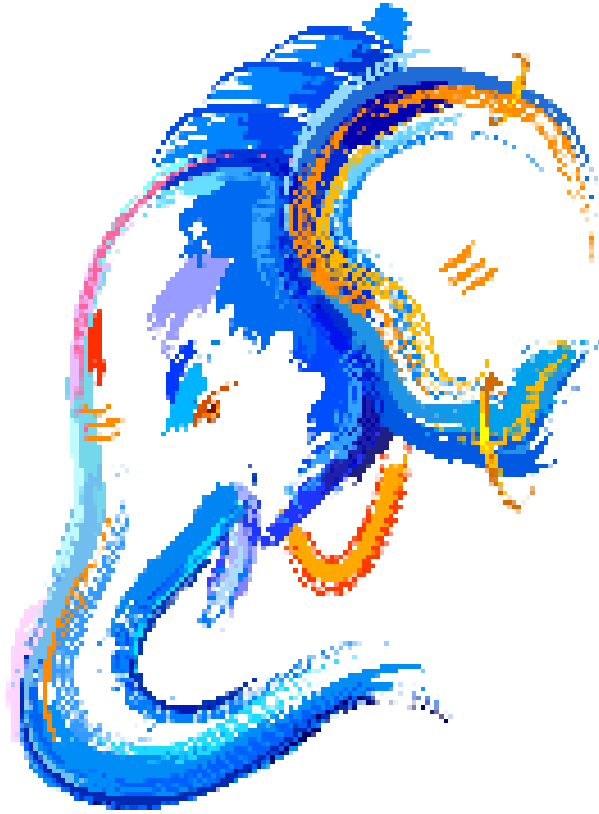
SRI SATHYA SAI  
ORGANISATION UK

# HATFIELD SAI CENTRE MAGAZINE

COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS: 1979-2019





OM GAM GANAPATAYE NAMAH

SALUTATIONS TO THE REMOVER OF OBSTACLES



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Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to faithfully reprint articles as they were first published in the Hatfield Sai Magazine. The purpose of this publication is to, first and foremost, show gratitude to our Divine Master Sathya Sai Baba and pay tribute to the late Mr and Mrs Amirthanandan, who were much loved and respected by all at Hatfield Sai Centre. This publication is not for resale of any form and holds no monetary value and is provided for free distribution only. All copyrights acknowledged. For any editorial queries, suggested amendments or digital copy, please write to the editorial team at [hatfieldsaimagazine@gmail.com](mailto:hatfieldsaimagazine@gmail.com).

Dear Devotees of Hatfield Sai Centre,

### **Happy 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!**

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's life and message manifested through a wide array of activities. The universal nature of his teachings embraced and encouraged people of all backgrounds, faiths and nationalities to work together for Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-Violence.

Since it's inauguration on 20th January 1979, Hatfield Sai Centre, has played a pivotal role within the Sai Organisation of United Kingdom.

Under the guidance of Mr Doraisamy Amirthanandan (affectionately known as Uncle Amir) and his wife Pathma Amirthanandan, hundreds of devotees young and old have benefitted from the regular sathsangs and bhajans held at their home as well as symposiums, study circles, SSE classes, workshops and service activities held at Hatfield Sai Centre and surrounding communities. Uncle Amir and his wife Pathma Aunty were pioneers and we owe them all our love and gratitude. Between them, they served our Bhagawan and the Sathya Sai International Organisation for over 30 years. Uncle Amir served as a member of the UK Central Council from 1989-1991 and was instrumental in the formation of many Sai Centres and groups. He was the first to introduce and emphasise the importance of singing English bhajans at the Centre in the 1980s and this has remained a constant fixture at Hatfield Sai Centre. Uncle Amir started the Hatfield Quarterly Magazine in October 1986 (which became a monthly publication from January 2001) and continued to edit and publish the magazine until June 2006. This monthly publication had a subscription of countless devotees all over the world.

It is a fitting tribute that the centre has chosen to celebrate the 40th Anniversary with a commemorative edition of the Hatfield Sai Magazine. Today, Hatfield Sai Centre continues to thrive within the community, welcoming a third generation of devotees who share the same earnest and wonderment of Bhagawan's life and teachings.

On this auspicious occasion let us first and foremost make a promise to continue Bhagawan's work, continue His message and take His work and message into every town, every street and into every heart from today onwards.

We pay homage to Uncle Amir, Pathma Aunty and all the officers of Hatfield Sai Centre past and present for the exemplary service offered to the Sathya Sai International Organisation in the UK.

I wish all the members and families of Hatfield Sai Centre continued success and pray all future generations of devotees carry on the work started by its founding members and touch as many lives and as many souls and as many hearts as our Bhagawan touched in His lifetime on earth.

Yours Faithfully

**Shitu Chudasama**  
**National Council President of United Kingdom**

# A SUBTLE TRANSFORMATION

Swami came into my life in the most intriguing way. On hearing that a good friend of ours from Sri Lanka was employed as a Doctor in St. Albans, we invited her to lunch in the summer of 1977. During the course of our conversation, she related the events following her husband's demise and the many touching stories about how Swami had helped her through the difficult times that followed. I was enthralled to hear of her Sai experiences during which my body turned cold, even though it was a hot summer's day. I found that I was shedding tears of joy and was truly captivated.

Subsequently, my wife, Pathma and I decided to attend Sai bhajans in London and the first Centre we went to was Russell Square. It was an inspiring scene and spiritual atmosphere that greeted us and when bhajans commenced I became very fascinated and felt very much at peace. My body kept turning cold while I shed tears of joy. We felt so exhilarated that we decided to attend another bhajan the following week – this time at the Pinner Sai Centre, for which we had no address! After driving around Pinner and much searching, we eventually stopped and asked a man on the street if he may know of a hall in the area where Indians might meet. He suggested that we inquire from the family living in the house opposite. When we rang their doorbell, the gentleman residing in that house was amazed that we had been directed to him and requested us to follow him as he was going to the Pinner Centre himself. At the bhajan, we realised that he was the Chairperson of the Centre – the late Mr. B. M. Radia! How amazing! We were fascinated by the whole bhajan meeting and felt so uplifted that we decided to attend the Pinner Centre regularly from then on.

In 1978, I decided to go to Prashanti Nilayam for the pleasure of having Swami's Darshan. It so happened that Swami was at Brindavan, Whitefield, conducting a Summer Course at the time. As I could not find suitable accommodation in Whitefield for Darshan, I stayed in a hotel in Bangalore and travelled daily to Whitefield for Darshan. On my first trip to Brindavan, I arrived rather late for Darshan. Swami having just finished giving Darshan, was going back to His Abode as I entered the Darshan compound. I kept walking behind the rows of the men who were seated on the ground and as Swami was about to

enter His Residence, He stopped, turned His Head and looked in my direction, which pleased me tremendously. I felt as if I had eye contact.

The following day, I came early and was able to get a place in the front row (as there was no queuing system then). However, to my dismay, Swami walked along the line I was sitting in, but changed direction when He came near me! I was disappointed and hoped that Swami would come to me the next day, but strangely enough Swami continued to change direction for several days, every time He came near me! Yet, I felt deeply moved and was in tears at the sight of Him.

***“About ten days later, at an afternoon Darshan, I happen to be the last person in the particular row when Swami came up to me and blessed me with ‘Abhaya Hastha’ (raising His Right Hand up as a Blessing). I burst into tears but was in bliss.”***

Soon, Darshan was over and the other devotees had left the Darshan area. I was the only one seated there, quite unaware of my surroundings, when two Sevadals realising my state, helped me up, took me to the boutique outside the Ashram and got me a cup of tea. They then accompanied me to the bus stop, put me on a bus and requested the conductor to drop me off at Woodlands Hotel in Bangalore.

The next day, I arrived very early in Brindavan and sat in a good position next to the male lead singers. It being a Sunday, soon the bhajan commenced and Swami came and sat in His Chair. During the bhajans, I noticed that Swami was looking sternly at me, whilst I was looking at Him and my hands folded in obeisance. This continued for some time and then Swami's eyes started to tear. He took His Handkerchief from His Chair and wiped off His Tears. Immediately, I broke down myself, but was in total Bliss! Perhaps Swami was recollecting my past..... During the afternoon bhajan session, Swami came up to me and blessed me saying ‘Santhosam’ – which was very appropriate as I was leaving for London later that evening. I was so delighted and decided to start a Sai Centre myself as soon as possible.

***“With Swami's Amazing Grace and with***

***the generous support and help from my friends, Mr and Mrs S. V. Deo and Mr and Mrs M Unadkat and their families, we were able to inaugurate Hatfield Sai Centre on Saturday 20th January 1979 at the Lord William Cecil Memorial Hall in Hatfield.”***

Thereafter, for the first year, bhajans were held monthly, with assistance from various Sai Centres in London providing musicians and lead bhajan singers. Also, Mr Victor Krishna Kanu addressed every meeting for the first six months on Swami's Life and Teachings and his own personal experiences with Swami. Before long Bhajan Practice Classes were introduced so that members from Hatfield Sai Centre would be able to stand on their own feet! As the Centre expanded, a Library Service, Bal Vikas Classes, Symposia, Medical Seminars, Group Pilgrimages to Prashanti Nilayam, along with Study Circles and Meditation Classes (conducted over several years by Mr Krishan Kaul) were incorporated and Hatfield Sai Centre grew rapidly.

***“The introduction of English bhajans into the Devotional Music sessions and Christmas Carols at the Christmas Celebrations helped to attract a large proportion of non-Asian devotees and seekers.”***

My wife, younger daughter and I joined a Group led by Mrs Rajesh Sivayogan in 1983, when some of the Group members, including my wife, attended the Bal Vikas Teacher's Conference. We were called for an interview when I had the good fortune to be able to sit by Swami's Feet on His Right side. After materialising piping hot 'Bhoondhi' and distributing it to all of us, Swami looked at me and asked, 'What do you want?' to which I replied 'I want You only Swami!' Immediately He circled His Right Hand and produced a Ring and put it on my finger. I was so thrilled and astonished!

From there on, I took two or three Groups each year to Prashanti Nilayam. In July 1987, two weeks before the next Group Pilgrimage was to leave, I fractured my foot and had to have my foot in plaster. After a week, the plaster was removed, but the fracture had not healed. I was advised to have the plaster put on again, but I was in no way going to miss my trip

to Swami and also disappoint the Group members. So I proceeded to Prashanti Nilayam not in plaster, but on crutches, with the Group members helping me along. I managed to sit with great difficulty on the ground and on one occasion was able to place my hands on Swami's Lotus Feet when He stood in front of me to talk to the devotee sitting behind me.

***“After Darshan, when I stood up, I found that I could walk without pain and gave up using crutches. Ironically, the crutches came in handy for a fellow member of our Group who had a fall soon after.”***

Since 1991, I had been suffering from sporadic heart complaints and angina, which I was told was inoperable due to my age and diabetic condition and was put on medication for this condition. However by March 1999, the pain was getting unbearable and I was given an appointment at the Harefield Hospital in London for April 23rd. Meanwhile, due to my failing health, I was seriously thinking of stepping down from the post of Chairperson of Hatfield Sai Centre, but had great difficulty in finding someone on the Committee who was prepared to take on the responsibility.

During my prayers, I earnestly asked Swami to help me find a successor. The next morning, in my prayers, I received the answer 'Why don't you ask your friend Yoganathan?' So I contacted Yoga and put forward Swami's suggestion. After considering this matter over with his wife, Vasanthi and son Ganesh, Yoga agreed to accept the offer and so on April 3rd 1999, Yoga took over as Chairperson of Hatfield Sai Centre to my great joy and relief.

The move was very well timed as my heart condition deteriorated rapidly and I underwent Triple By-Pass surgery at Harefield Hospital on April 16th. As I succumbed to the effect of anaesthetic, I could clearly hear the Divine Chanting of 'OM' which filled me with peace and blessedness. After about 36 hours in Intensive Care Unit, I was transferred to the Adult Surgical Ward on April 18th. My first night in the ward turned out to be a most memorable and joyous one.

***“My beloved Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba appeared in my dream and spoke at length about my life, from early childhood up to the present. At first, I***

***found it hard to believe that it was Swami  
– but soon I realised that it was my Lord.”***

Although I have had fleeting dreams of Swami before, this was the first time Swami spoke to me at length in a dream. He gave me much advice on what I should do after my recovery. He specifically requested me to discontinue the weekly Thursday home bhajans, although this had become a regular feature for over 15 years. He instructed that I should hold private Sai Spiritual Meetings in my home with only invited devotees attending. ‘It is Quality and not the Quantity that I value’, He remarked. By Swami’s Grace, I made remarkable progress and did not need pain killers after being off the Morphine drip and was discharged on April 23rd.

I would like to mention two other instances to illustrate how Swami lavished His Divine Grace upon me. About twelve years ago, when Hatfield Sai Centre was hosting a Sai Satsang in London, there occurred an incident where I lost my temper very badly with one of the helpers. A few moments later, I found to my dismay that ‘THE RING’ that Swami had given me at my first interview in 1983 had disappeared! We searched high and low, to no avail and I realised that Swami was showing me His disapproval for my loss of temper. I felt very despondent and missed the Ring very much as I used to place over my eyes every morning and night for healing. A few days later, a friend came to see me and rang the doorbell. While he was waiting for me to open the door, he glanced around him and noticed something shinning by the door. When I opened the door, he handed it to me asking me whether it belonged to me. It was ‘THE RING’! I was so ecstatic and humbly thankful to Swami for returning The Ring to me. I have no doubt that Swami wanted to teach me a lesson for not controlling my temper.

I underwent my fourth Prostate Operation early in 2003 and was informed that I had Cancer of the Prostate. When I informed the consultant that I wished to go to India soon to see my Lord, he warned me that I was not fit and would find the whole trip tiring in my condition. Yet, I was determined to make the trip and left two weeks later for a stay of three weeks. I found the whole trip very difficult and trying as I had indeed been warned and managed to attend Darshan only once a day. After I returned to U.K., I had two sets of tests for cancer and was told that there was no

signs of cancer. I thanked my Lord fervently for His amazing Grace.

During my 29 years of knowing Swami, I have had implicit Faith in Him from the very start and surrendered myself wholeheartedly to Him. Although I have been to India to have Divine Darshan on 28 occasions and Swami had in the early years spoken to me frequently at Darshan and Interviews, I have not found it necessary to ask for Interviews or write letters to Him. Nether have I spoken to Him unless when He spoke to me. This I believe is due to my firm belief in His Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence. He has given me and my family many Blessings and Grace for which I am truly thankful.

***“It has been my good fortune to have  
been able to serve Swami through the last  
29 years, in many capacities. Since Swami  
came into my life, He has influenced  
me tremendously, in my actions, in my  
outlook and attitude towards my fellow  
human beings.”***

I am conscious of the subtle changes that Swami has wrought in me to gradually wean me away from a ‘Socially oriented life’ to a ‘Spiritually’ based one. From Ballroom dancing and Night clubs to Sai Bhajan Meetings, Pilgrimages to Prashanti Nilayam and Sai Activities as well as becoming a vegetarian, Swami has brought a Subtle Transformation in me! I am really astounded and eternally grateful to my Beloved Lord for His Infinite, Boundless Love and Grace.

*by Doraisamy Amirthanandan - May 2006,  
Hatfield Sai Centre Founder and Editor of  
Hatfield Sai Centre Magazine*

## **SAI ON ISA**

The Bible does not reveal anything about the life of Jesus from the time he was 12 until he appeared to John the Baptist by the river Jordan. Those 18 years have been dismissed with one sentence in Luke 2:52 by stating, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man”. According to the Bible, Jesus was about 30 years of age when he appeared to John by the river. Whilst

the debate as to why there is no reference to these years in the Bible continues, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has spoken on various aspects of the life and teachings of Jesus which is both revealing and illuminating. Abstracts from some of His discourses are reproduced in the following paragraphs.

***“According to Baba, Jesus arrived in India at about the age of 16.”***

His mother, Mary, had sold household possessions to help him on his journey. He said that Jesus was practically penniless in his travels, often having only one meal a day. He wore loin cloth of the type seen in India today called a dhoti, much like the one depicted in the paintings of the crucifixion. He travelled in India, Tibet, Iran and Russia and was variously regarded as a mendicant or as a recluse. According to Baba, Jesus attained Christ Consciousness at the age of 25 while in India. Thereafter he returned to Palestine. About the birth of Jesus, Baba has said that it took place on the 24th, near midnight, and not on the 25th as is generally believed.

#### **MASTER WITH A MISSION**

Baba has said that Jesus was a Master with the mission of elevating man to God consciousness. “To elevate man, to raise the level of his consciousness, God has to incarnate as Man. He has to speak to them in their own style and languages, he has to teach them the methods that they can adopt and practise. Birds and beasts need no Divine Incarnation as birds or beasts to guide them for they have no inclination to stray away from their path. Man alone forgets or ignores the goal of Life.”

“The followers of each religion call upon the One God, who is Omnipresent and who listens to their prayers from whichever clime or clothed in whatever language; but, it is the same God who confers upon all mankind health, prosperity, peace and happiness. Each religion has no separate God showering Grace upon those who profess to abide by that faith alone!”

***“It is the destiny of man to journey from humanness to divinity, as he has already journeyed from ‘animal-ness.’”***

In this pilgrimage he is bound to encounter various obstacles and trials. In order to smoothen his path and help him overcome these troubles, sages, seers,

realised souls, divine personalities and Incarnations of God appear among men and illumine the path. They move among the afflicted, the seekers who have lost their way or strayed into the desert, and lead them into confidence and courage. Certain personalities are born and live out their days for this very purpose. They can be called Karana-janmas for they assume the janma or birth for a karana or cause or purpose. Such guides, exemplars, and leaders appear among all peoples and in all lands. They inspire faith in higher ideals, and teach, as if their voice is the voice of God, counselling from the heart”.

“Of course, there are many aspirants who by their devotion, dedication and disciplined lives attain the Vision of Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient ONE. They are content with the bliss they have won for themselves. Others there are who long to share their bliss with those beyond the pale; they guide and lead and are blessed thereby. They teach that multiplicity is a delusion that Unity is the Reality. They instruct others that each one is really three in one; the one he believes he is, the one others believe he is, and the one he really is “.

***“Jesus was a Karana-janma, a Master born with a purpose, the mission of restoring Love, Charity and Compassion in the heart of man.”***

“He had no attachment to the self; he never paid heed to sorrow or pain, joy or gain; he had a heart that responded to the call of anguish, the cry for peace and brother-hood. He went about the land, preaching the lesson of Love, and poured out his life as a libation the sacrifice to humanity”.

#### **DUALITY TO UNITY**

Speaking on the three stages of spiritual evolution culminating in the union with God, Baba said: “Like most seekers, he searched for the Divine in the objective world in nature, but he soon realized that nature is a kaleidoscopic picture, created by one’s own imagination, and sought God within himself.

***“Here, his stay in Himalayan monasteries, in Kashmir and other centres of eastern asceticism and philosophical inquiry brought him greater success.”***

From the attitude of being a Messenger of God, He



declared that He was the son of God, after returning from the East. For the old attitude meant duality, a master-servant relationship. One could not then move beyond the orders of the Master. One had to carry out the duties laid down in the scriptures of the faith. This he found too irksome and he felt he was the image, while God was the original". "The bond of relationship increased, the I was no more in some distant light or entity; the light became a part of the I. With body-consciousness predominant, you feel you are a servant or messenger. With heart-consciousness in the ascendant, you feel nearness and dear-ness and so the son-father bond seems natural at this stage. Later as the soul-consciousness became stabilized, Jesus could declare, "I and my Father are One," just as one states, I was in the Light, then, the Light was in me, and now I am aware that I am the Light". "Jesus could assert that his life was his message for he lived among men as he advised them to live. Everyone has to start his spiritual, pilgrimage proclaiming that he is a servant of God or a messenger of God and trying to live up to that high and responsible status. This is the stage of Duality. Then he progresses to discover the Divine within himself, and realises that God is his precious heritage, which he must claim and utilise. That is the stage when one feels he is a son of God, of the same nature as God. Finally, he merges in God-consciousness. This is the essence of all religious disciplines and teaching".

***"When Jesus proclaimed that he was the Messenger of God, he wanted to emphasise that every one is a messenger of God and has to speak, act and think as one."***

This is the true Karma Kanda of the Vedas, the spiritual discipline of work, of repetition of the name of the Lord, of meditation, of service. When progress is furthered, Jesus asserted, each one can recognise all as Sons of God, Children of God, brothers and sisters of oneself and so, deserving of worship. Finally, knowledge ripens into wisdom and the goal is reached when each one realises "I and my Father are One". "You work as a messenger or servant; later, you worship, as a son does his father, and finally, you achieve the wisdom that you and He are One. That is the spiritual journey, and Jesus has shown the way in clear terms. He announced very early in life that he had come to illumine the spiritual path. He had the light within him."

## MESSAGE OF COMPASSION

***"At all times Jesus Christ had a mind which was pure and which was unwavering and selfless. All the work he did was dedicated to the good of the world."***

"The Birthday of Jesus must be celebrated by all mankind for such Masters belong to the whole human race. They should not be confined to a single country or community. Jesus found that scholars and ritualists had befogged the true religion. He engaged himself in teaching both spirituality and morality, for education is the very Light of Life. Jesus found that people were running after glass beads and, imagining them to be diamonds, were attaching great value to them. He went round the holy shrines and discovered that they had become bazaars where Grace was being bargained for and commercialised. He condemned the priesthood which tolerated and encouraged these practices."

***"Jesus taught simple practical lessons in spiritual advancement for the good of mankind."***

"He manifested divine powers to instil faith in the validity of his teachings and he charted a path which could confer the sweet nectar of ananda (joy) on Man. He exhorted people by precept and example to cultivate the virtues of charity, compassion, forbearance, love and faith. Let us pay attention to the sacrifice that Jesus made while free, of his own volition. He sacrificed his comfort, safety and position, he braved the enmity of the powerful and refused to yield or compromise. He renounced the ego which is the hardest thing to get rid of, and we honour him for all these. He willingly sacrificed the desire with which the body torments man and this sacrifice is greater than the sacrifice of one's body under duress. The celebration of his birthday has to be marked by your sacrificing at least a desire or two and conquering the more disastrous urges of the ego. His followers have been broken into various sects, but the life of Christ is a lesson in Unity. When Christ was on the Cross, ill feeling towards the men who tortured him troubled him. Suddenly, he heard a voice alerting him, 'All life is one, my beloved son, be alike to everyone.' This was followed by another voice, 'Death is the dress of life.' As one casts off worn clothes and dons another set, so the soul doffs and dons various bodies. Jesus sacrificed

himself for the sake of mankind.”

## THE LAST SUPPER

On the inner significance of the Last Supper, Baba has said, “Carols and candles, readings from the Bible and acting out the incidents that surrounded his birth are not enough to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus said that the bread taken in the last supper was his flesh, and the wine his blood. He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are to be treated as he himself and that no distinction should be made as friend or foe, we and they.”

***“Every body is his body, sustained by the bread; every drop of blood flowing in the veins of every living being is his, animated by the activity that the wine imparted to it. That is to say, every man and woman is Divine and has to be revered as such.”***

## CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas Day is an important event for Sai Baba and the residents of his Ashram (spiritual retreat) at Puttaparthi. He celebrates Christmas with all the splendour and reverence due to it. Addressing his audience one Christmas Day, Baba said: “Today, when you celebrate the birth of Christ, resolve to lead lives of loving service to the weak, the helpless, the distressed, the disconsolate. Cultivate tolerance and forbearance, charity and magnanimity. Hold dear the ideals laid down and practise them in your daily lives.”

He then went on to describe the ways in which modern man celebrates Christmas: “The ways in which Christmas is celebrated show how far men have moved (away) from those ideals, how much ignominy they are heaping on his (Christ’s) name. The midnight hour is revered; illumination is arranged; the Christmas tree is set up. And then the night is spent in drinking and dancing.”

Baba continued his discourse with a prescription for the celebration of Christmas: “It is a day of holy ananda (bliss), but the ananda is reduced to the level of the poisonous excitement of intoxication. One must dance in divine bliss; instead, sensual dances are indulged in as a deleterious substitute.”

***“Make your hearts pure, your activities***

***holy, and your feelings beneficial to all. That is the best way of celebrating the birth of Christ.”***

## HE WHO SENT, ME...

Sai Baba’s relationship with Jesus Christ becomes even clearer with His disclosure on Christmas Day 1972 of a certain event at that Jesus was dying. Speaking to a group of people at Puttaparthi that day, He said: “There is one point that I cannot but bring to your special notice today. At the time when Jesus was merging in the supreme principle of divinity, he communicated some news to his followers which has been interpreted in a variety of ways by commentators and by those who relish the piling of writings and meanings upon meanings, until it all swells up into a meaningless mass. The statement itself has been manipulated and tangled into a conundrum.

***“The statement is simple: ‘He who sent me among you will come again; and he pointed to a lamb. The lamb is merely a symbol, a sign. It stands for the voice (the sound of bleating), ba ba; the announcement was of the advent of Baba. His name will be Truth, Christ declared. Sathya means truth, ‘He wears a robe of red, a blood red robe,’ Christ said, (Here, Sai Baba pointed to the robe he was wearing). Christ said ‘He will be short, with a crown (of hair).’ The lamb is the sign and symbol of love. Christ did not declare that he would come again, he said, ‘He who has sent me will come again. That ba ba is this Baba.’”***

Victor Kanu, a devout Christian and an author, points out that there are two significant points which emerge from a comparative study of the lives and teachings of Sai Baba and Jesus.

These are:

1. *Jesus was sent by his Father. Sai Baba was not sent but came of His own free Will.*
2. *In many instances, Jesus prayed to his Father for help before he performed miracles. Sai Baba does not pray. He performs miracles at Will.*

This leads him to the inevitable conclusion that Sai Baba is the Father who sent Jesus, the son. To the questions put to Baba by Ron Laing, a devout Christian and a noted writer whether He was the one who sent Jesus of Nazareth into incarnation and whether He was what Western Christians call the Cosmic Christ. The answer to both these questions that Baba gave was: "Yes".

In Ron Laing's own words: "It is impossible to convey in words the tone, the quiet assurance, in which He affirmed these two questions. Gently, lovingly, with total conviction, with a sort of ineffable simplicity, and perhaps most important of all, with a total lack of self - consciousness impossible in a mere human, He looked straight into my eyes which were no more than twelve inches from His, and just said Yes. I only know that it was impossible not to believe Him. I only know that I came to believe it, and that I am reporting precisely what occurred".

In 1984, in one of His discourses, Baba revealed: "Every great spiritual man had only one true disciple who followed completely his ideals" "...among the thousands of people who were admiring Jesus, only one had been capable of following him right to the end and that was Saint Paul." "Saint Paul was a great painter and sculptor, as good as Michelangelo was. He only had a vision of the head of Jesus..."

***"Baba then materialised a splendid cross, made of gold and studded with diamonds with the face of Jesus in gold shining in the centre, and said, "This is the face of Jesus as Paul saw it. Nobody has been able to give such a faithful image of it, as Paul did. This is the true face of Jesus when he died on the cross."***

### ISA - SAI

"Jesus was the name he was known by; he was honoured by the populace as Christ, for they found in his thoughts, deeds and words no trace of ego. He had no envy or hatred; he was full of love and charity, humility and sympathy. The name Jesus itself is not the original one. He was named Isa, which with the syllables reversed is Sai. Isa or Sai both mean 'Isvara,' God, the Eternal Absolute, the Sath-Chith-Anand (existence, knowledge, bliss). In the Tibetan manuscript at the monastery where Isa spent some years the name is written as Issa.

The name Isa means the Lord of all Living Beings. Baba has also revealed that ISA, when repeated constantly, echoes into SAI, the Son becoming One with the Father.

*from "Glimpses of SAI" - published by Pinner Sai Centre 1988*

## THE WAY TO INTEGRATION

Most people belong to one religious sect or another. He/She is a Jew, a Muslim, a Hindu, a Christian etc. Although intellectually we 'know' that there is only one God and that each of these paths leads to God, for many of us it remains an intellectual conception only.

We think of God in the Name-Form of our chosen Divine Being:- Jehovah, Allah, Krishna, Jesus etc. Even though we may say we are all one in God, the very Name-Form we worship helps to separate us from those who worship a different one. It tends to keep us from experiencing the Universal Consciousness which permeates everything, everywhere because our thoughts are confined to the image of one Divine Name-Form.

***"Sai Baba has pointed this out to us for although he says, "All Names and Forms are Mine," and, "Worship me by any Name and I shall respond". He also says, "God is Nameless and Formless". God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth."***

I believe that we must begin to expand our consciousness beyond the Name-Form concept. Avatars have come to earth to guide mankind back to God through Message and Example. We see and behold the Avatar but do we go deeper, beyond the Form and cling to the Message? The Avatar is a beautiful outward Form, radiant to behold but, as with a magnificent casket, the real treasure lies within. Sai Baba wants us to imbibe and practise His Message.

How wonderful it will be when every man, woman and child proclaims that he/she is a God-devotee,

in no way different or separate from anyone else regardless of colour, class and culture. God is a word understood by all religions. This Universal Spirit is the Creator and Essence of all life; the embodiment and radiator of the divine human values of love, truth, righteousness and peace. Sai tells us this over and over again, but we in our mortal weakness, tend to pay lip service only to His Message whilst worshipping and adoring His Form.

We must waken up to the concept of Divine Spirit inherent in all; animate and inanimate and space itself. Only then shall we truly know God for we shall realise that we are Spirit; everything in Spirit, and remember - God is Spirit, sacred and pure.

*by June Jackson - Quarterly Magazine,  
September 1987*

## **DIRECTED BY MEDIUM TO SWAMI**

Over the past seven years Sri Sathya Sai Baba has become an integral part of my consciousness. I have attended meetings regularly as an active member of the Christian Spiritualist Church in Welwyn Garden City for 27 years where, among other things, meditation is taught. At one of the meetings which I conducted I burnt incense and chanted AUM as I had been taught in meditation by my medium. After the meeting the leader informed me that she had in fact recently attended a Sai meeting in Hatfield where AUM was repeated and incense burnt throughout. Shortly after this I read in the Psychic News about Sathya Sai Baba. This article made a great impact on me, and I found it imperative to read the subsequent articles on Sai Baba by Ron Laing and Peggy Mason. Linking this with the AUM and incense, I was eager to attend the Sai meeting. I made two visits to the meeting Hall but found there was no meeting held on those days, and I was on the point of giving up. However, I was guided and urged by spirit to keep on trying to attend the Sai meetings.

On my third visit to the meeting Hall, I found the hall lit up and heard oriental music. On entering I saw blankets had been laid on the floor, the Altar set

up on the stage with a large size picture of Sathya Sai Baba and incense burning. I was delighted for I had found all the things I was looking for and joined in the service that followed. I enjoyed the prayer meeting, the singing of devotional songs, and meeting many devotees who were helpful in providing me with information and library books. I soon discovered that everything that the Spirit taught me was being done at the Centre and felt uplifted.

I also attended many such Sai meetings in different parts of London and had opportunities of talking to other English and Indian devotees who have been to Prashanti Nilayam and spoken to Swami. Soon I was convinced that Swami was an Avatar (God Incarnate). I found that Swami's teachings were similar to those that I have been taught by Trans Mediums. Also that Swami's teachings were no different to those preached by Christ and other religious leaders. In particular, I liked Swami's famous quote:

***“There is only one religion –  
the religion of Love,  
There is only one language –  
the language of the Heart,  
There is only one caste –  
the caste of Humanity,  
There is only one God –  
and He is Omnipresent.”***

I avidly read discourses by Swami and participated actively in the Sai Centre activities continuing to keep my close association with the Christian Spiritual Church.

In my shrine room I had installed a large picture of Swami along with other pictures of Christ etc. fully convinced that God Himself had come down to earth. While meditating one morning I was overjoyed to find that Swami's picture shone and came alive for me - as Swami gave me His Blessings and smiled. I felt elated and yet deeply humbled by this act of Grace. Recently a medium in the Christian Spiritual Church informed me that Swami would be visiting my home. So here I am, waiting for His coming. Sai Ram.

*by Bob Carter - Quarterly Magazine,  
Christmas 1987*

# DIVINE CURRENCY

Human Birth and what happens during one's lifetime is the result of one's 'Karma' or Actions in previous births or lives. Two persons born on the same day and at the same time, are found to lead very different lives. For instance, one may be born a Prince and live in the lap of luxury, whilst the other may be born in abject poverty, and would have to struggle for even the barest of necessities.

Why should there be such a great difference between the lives of these two people? This is due to their past 'Karma' we say. According to the Law of Karma good deeds or bad deeds committed in previous lives are translated into Fortune or Misfortune in the present life.

Bhagavan Baba once said, "When a hard-working man wishes to go on holiday abroad, he would need International Currency. e.g. If he took only Indian or Sri Lankan Rupees or Nepalese currency to USA or UK, he would find that these would not be recognised. He cannot buy any goods, food or drinks, as the currency he is carrying has no value. But, if he took US Dollars or Pound Sterling, he would have no problem". In the same way, Good karmas earn the Grace of God, which can be used as Divine Currency in many births and lives. The Divine Bank is ready for cashing in one's Good karma.

From time to time, we see and hear of some persons who are dishonest or unscrupulous living lives of luxury, with name and fame and apparently suffering no miseries or misfortunes. "What sort of justice is this?" we ask. What we fail to realise is that these persons are spending or drawing on the Divine Currency that they have earned in their past lives. Unfortunately, they are accruing bad Karma by their misdeeds in their present lives, which would of course affect their subsequent lives.

Some of us go to Prashanti Nilayam year after year hoping that Swami would give us the coveted Interview, but this wish remains unfulfilled. On the other hand, we see persons going to Prashanti Nilayam for the first time, being called in for an Interview almost immediately. How do we explain this? Perhaps, these fortunate devotees are reaping the fruit of their good Karma and Devotion to God in their previous lives:.....or, Swami calls for interview those who need His loving guidance for some special reason.

To help us to earn this Divine Currency, Swami has come to give us the message of Right Conduct, which leads to Love, which in Action becomes Service, which brings Peace. When there is peace, there is no Violence. Swami has stretched out His arms to receive us. It is up to us to develop a relationship with Him. He is our Divine Mother, Father, Guru and Friend. He gives us the knowledge to remove the darkness or Ignorance to lead us to Sathyam (Truth); Shivam (Bliss); and Sundaram (Beauty); away from mortality, because the Atma (Soul) does not die. One has to maintain the three dimensional relationship of Body - Soul -Supreme Soul i.e. Jiva - Atma - Paramatma, and continue to earn His Grace - the Divine Currency.

The physical body is not just composed of the Five Elements- Ether (Akash); Air (Vayu); Fire (Agni); Water (Jalam); and Earth (Prithvi). It is the place where the lord wishes to reside, but He needs a Pure Heart to use as His Temple. Therefore we must keep our hearts pure and clean so that the Lord would live forever in the Temple of our hearts. Let us enjoy His Divine Grace and become reflections of our Lord.

*by Dr Surendra Upadhyay - Quarterly Magazine, October 1991*

## HATFIELD SAI CENTRE

It is with great deal of fondness that I recall my association with the Hatfield Sai Centre and, of course, with Amir and Pathma. I came to know about them during their visits to the Pinner Sai Centre before they undertook to start a new Centre on their own. Soon after its start in 1979 at the Lord William Cecil Memorial Hall, French Horn Lane in Hatfield, Amir lost no time in exploring how, besides the Devotional Singing, all other activities could also be introduced at the Centre.

During those formative years, Amir was always on the look out for avenues to introduce new activities at the Centre. In that connection, he and I used to interact with each other closely, as a result of which I became instrumental, at his invitation, in getting the Study Circle activity, on behalf of the Centre, going at his residence in 62 Hens Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. In due course, other activities, e.g., Bal Vikas (later to become SSE), Meditation

class, Bhajan Practice class, Voluntary Service Work, etc., were also introduced. To keep the devotees all over the world abreast with the Sai activities in the UK, Hatfield Sai Magazine came into print thrice a year.

Recognising the unconditional devotion of both Amir and Pathma towards Swami and, in particular, Amir's enthusiasm, I mooted the idea, in the early eighties, of initiating regular national level Symposia and Exhibitions on the Life and Teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at the Centre. These soon turned into triannual affairs and were well attended by devotees and non-devotees not only from up and down the country but also from abroad. Offered, hand-in-hand, with these activities was the Information and Library Service that also catered, rather thoughtfully, to the needs of the visually impaired by providing Sai books in Braille. Besides being one of the speakers, I also had the privilege of being the MC and, therefore, welcoming and introducing the other guest speakers at the first few Symposia.

***“The galaxy of speakers during those symposia that I am able to recall included Lucas Ralli, Victor Kanu, Robin Ball, Peggy Mason, Mathoor Krishnamoorthy, Marguerite Roge, Sylvia Bishop, Chris Caine, Dot Rymell, among many others.”***

Having watched Amir at work from close quarters and getting a measure of how his mind ticked, it became obvious that Swami was the driving force and his devotion and commitment to Him were palpable in all his undertakings. It was particularly refreshing for me to find in him a disciplinarian after my own heart and someone who could speak his mind without fear or favour and uphold Sai principles without making any compromises.

***“In terms of his work ethics and the legacy that Amir has left behind at the Hatfield Sai Centre, he has set the bar high.”***

While it may not be easy to step into his shoes, the way he conducted himself in the affairs related to Sai and the Centre, is indeed full of inspiration. In this respect, it is important to remember that the SSSS Organization is a voluntary organization that provides the devotees with the understanding of and an environment in which to render selfless

service so as to help us uncover our native divinity.

Man has been granted the freedom of thought and will. Out of his own free will, when he chooses to tread the spiritual path, he is indeed blessed. For most of us on this path, the goal is the realization of our innate divinity, the blissful awareness, the inner poise. However, for continued progress along this path and eventual success, together with a dedicated effort, we also need Divine Grace. Of course the effort has to come first. But it is important to remember that Divine Grace does not come as a trade-off against the size of our effort. It has to be earned by the quality of our effort and commitment and is based upon the purity of our motive and the spirit of sacrifice.

Swami always refers to the earthly life as a dream so as to underline its impermanence and to warn us not to bind ourselves down to it in perpetuity. He urges us to face the challenges of life with a smile and determination and play the game well. Based on the lessons learnt in the crucible of life and without undue attachments to people or events, we must develop a wider vision and get on with the work that comes our way according to His Divine Plan.

It is important to bear in mind the fact that there are millions around the globe ready to do Swami's bidding given half a chance, and so, whatever service might be rendered through our hands, however seemingly trivial, has to be a rare privilege, a unique good fortune and, of course, His Grace. However, this privilege cannot be taken for granted. Progress is possible only through regular introspection and critical self-analysis. Recognizing the spiritual principle of oneness of life – the unity underlying the apparent diversity – helps one to become aware of one's moral responsibility – the Right Action.

Those who profess to have deep faith in Swami and affluence to match, their material prosperity is very often perceived as a direct consequence of special dispensation or Divine Grace. And, by implication, penurious existence of those who are not seen to be so endowed is likely to be attributed to the absence of Grace, owing to what would be regarded as their lack of faith.

Grace, however, is not in trade or competition

with faith or devotion; it is an expression of unconditional love from God, which is available, without preference or prejudice, in equal measure to all, irrespective of their faith or lack thereof. In fact, human being himself is a gift-wrapped parcel of Divine Grace, so precious that it comes wrapped in five coverings, the Panch Koshas (Five Sheaths).

***“When all the coverings are peeled off, layer-by-layer, what remains then is nothing but Grace in the form of the Real Self, which is of the nature of Sat (Eternal Existence), Chitt (Total Awareness) and Aananda (Absolute Bliss).”***

Unfortunately, unlike any other gift, where the wrapper is easily thrown away as an inessential even though useful item, the human being is bewitched and beguiled by the outer coverings (the body-mind complex) into believing it to be the precious gift and holding on to it life after life. And so, he masquerades as a beggar seeking tinsel and trash in spite of being the repository of the precious gem. If Sai, the mother of the Universe, be pleased, will anything be withheld from the earnest seeker? We must remember that, in reality, we are already repositories of Grace; what is often missing is merely the recognition of that fact.

With the feeling that I am the doer, man becomes egocentric and confused. We carry the burden of problems on our puny minds and slender shoulders, not knowing how to disburden ourselves. An hour of work, if only offered at the lotus feet of the Lord, would become an hour of worship. With that attitude how simple would the whole life become! Unfortunately, we go out of our way to complicate it. Offering action to Swami, however, implies a conscious recognition that He is the Doer and that we are merely His instruments. Given a tacit awareness of that fact, what right then can we possibly have to lay claim to the fruit of such action?

Ask not a man in pain the name of his religion, look not for the colour of his skin, seek not to know the size of his purse, crave not for reward or recognition; respond instead, in humility, with eyes full of kindness and heart full of love, with prayers on the lips and hands ready to serve, and be thankful for the chance given. When we experience love, for its own sake, welling up in our hearts saturating our

every thought, word and deed, without any trace of intervention or calculation on the part of the mind, it is in those inspired moments of Grace that we not only walk in the company of God but we truly affirm our Godhood.

For having been chosen to carry, at Swami's pleasure, the mantle of carrying forward the Sai work at the Hatfield Sai centre, please accept my heartfelt prayers and best wishes. Please also convey my warm regards and Sai Rams to the Sai fraternity at the Centre.

In the service of Sai,

*Krishan Kaul - September 4 2019  
(Atlanta, Georgia, USA)*

## **IT TOUCHED HIM - A PERFECT ENDING**

My heart soared on wings of joy as I sat on the sand watching my beloved Lord, content just to watch and absorb the beauty and peace, content just to be in the presence of my Lord. In my lap a hand-made book containing the 32 songs I had written since my first visit to Prashanti Nilayam a year before. I was hoping to receive Baba's blessing for the book and of course I hoped for an interview but I was happy to wait and see what transpired.

Ten days passed, our precious two weeks were nearly gone and still I had had no opportunity to get Baba's blessings. Now with only a few days left I suddenly feared that I would have to go home without the Lord's blessings for the songs I had written with so much love and joy, knowing that He, Baba was the source and inspiration. The thought was unbearable.

***“Saturday morning, I felt downcast. Sitting in the shade under the archways listening to the bhajans, I watched with aching heart as a man on the verandah prostrated himself and clasped the lotus feet of the Lord. How I longed to kiss those feet.”***

“But you have done so, many times”, the words

cut across my mind so clear and strong, with a shock I remembered the picture of Baba's feet that I always kiss after saying my Prayers. I knew Baba was speaking to me from within and my spirits lifted a little. After the bhajans, as usual, I went to the lecture hall and sat on the floor to await the arrival of the lecturer for that day. A large picture of Sai Baba hangs beside the lecturer's chair and I was accustomed to seeing the different lecturers pay their respects to the picture in their own way. But this morning the lecturer did something I had not seen the others do, he bowed and touched the feet of Baba in the picture, then he sat down and asked us if we knew why he'd done that.

***"He told us that Baba says, "Whenever my picture is worshipped with devotion, I am there present in that picture."***

and so touching Baba's feet in the picture was the same to him as touching the real Lotus Feet. Those words hit me with such force I felt as if I had been struck on the chest, tears welled up in my eyes and my own throat seemed to be trying to choke me. The lecturer was talking but I heard not a word, my mind was filled with Baba's message, my heart over-flowing. I am just one among so many but the Lord knows the thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears of each one and responds so perfectly, so sweetly to all who yearn for Him.

That afternoon as we waited in lines to draw the numbers for darshan I thought to myself. "Baba if I get in the front row this afternoon and you bless my book, then I will know you are not going to give us an interview and I will be quite happy". And so it was I found myself in the front row holding out my book with trembling hand as the Lord approached. He came near, my heart pounded like a steam engine, He looked at me, looked at the book and touched it lightly with his fingertips. I was happy. Baba had blessed my songs, but why like that I wondered? I had seen Him bless many articles, always with the flat palm of His hand, why did he touch my book like that?

A couple of days later, on our last evening in fact, I had the answer. Professor Kasturi had expressed interest in the songs and I was taken to meet him. The first question he asked was, "Has Baba blessed it?" So, I truthfully answered that He had touched it. Professor Kasturi then said, "Ah, then it must have touched Him otherwise He won't touch". He

then looked through the book, reading out a verse here and there that appealed to him. "Bhajan must be sung in one's own language", he said, "otherwise they don't touch the heart, these touch the heart". Only the Lord knows how much those words meant to me, only the Lord who knows my heart could have devised such a perfect ending.

*by Sylvia Bishop - Quarterly Magazine,  
March 1988*

## **HOW A CHRISTIAN BECAME A DEVOTEE OF SRI SATHYA SAI BABA**

My eldest daughter, born in 1940, married a Hindu gynaecologist in 1966. Later, when attending a WHO Conference in Bangalore, they both went out to Sathya Sai Baba's Ashram in Whitefield. My daughter told us about this visit, and further visits to Prasanthi Nilayam, and gave us some details of the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba. However, it was the late 1970s before I became interested in Sathya Sai Baba and His teachings.

I had been born into a normal 'Church of England' Christian family in 1911 and brought up to believe that Christianity was the only true religion, and that all the rest were rubbish: and to get involved with another religion was a mortal sin. However, after working abroad for 10 years and a further six years in the army, I found myself with a job in London and became a member of St Martin's-in-the-Fields Church in Trafalgar Square. There I joined a Christian 'cell' led by a Chaplain to study the teachings of the Anglican Church with a view to increasing one's understanding and faith. In this cell, consisting of some five members, we studied and went into much of the Christian Church doctrine and dogma, such as the Virgin Birth, and the Resurrection, etc, even writing papers each of the subjects as we studied them. However, these studies, instead of increasing my faith, filled me with doubts; yet I remained a member of the Church.

In the 1970s, because of my experience at St Martin's, I started to study books about Sathya Sai Baba and His teachings, and I soon realized



that there were no real differences in the actual teachings of Christ or of Sai Baba. In those days there were very few Sai Centres or Groups in the UK. However we attended Ian MacLean's Sai meetings in Queen Street, Reading, in 1980, and went to Sai meetings in Wellingborough, Northants and to Uley in Gloucestershire.

In 1983 we decided to go to Puttaparthi for Christmas. We were given to understand that it would be a wonderful experience and that Swami would make the journey easy. The four of us - myself, wife and two others - booked tickets through a Sai devotee agency to make sure all would be well. However the tickets only arrived the day before we were due to leave. Then at Bombay the airline denied knowledge of our onward booking to Bangalore so we had a night in Bombay and were then offered a midnight flight to Madras - which we accepted. Arriving at Madras about 4 a.m. in a thunderstorm, we were told that there should be a luxury bus to Bangalore at 9 a.m. There wasn't one, so we took an ordinary bus with wooden seats and no windows. This journey took nine hours to Bangalore, where we arrived in a sea of mud in the bus station. A taxi took us to a local hotel which had no restaurant, but we were past caring. The taxi came back at 6 a.m. on Christmas morning and took us to Puttaparthi. where we arrived soon after 9 a.m. as Darshan was finishing. What a journey!

For the first four or five days we were given accommodation with 21 others in a classroom of the Easwaramma School. We were put in the school room because our daughter and Hindu husband and two children were already there. We were, at least, under cover. People were sleeping everywhere. in the passages, under trees or just in the open. Eventually we were moved to the family sheds and for the last week we had the luxury of a flat in Prasanthi West. The ashram was much smaller then than it is now, but the crowds at festivals were always huge. Life then was difficult with queuing for everything and two of our party were unwell most of the time. Just 'getting by' took up most of our time and energy, leaving little time for spirituality. I'll not go again at festival time. However, I did get Darshan Line No. 1 once, and was able to touch Swami's Feet. Despite it all I came away from this visit a confirmed devotee of Sathya Sai...

*by John Carver - Quarterly Magazine,*

*January 1999*

## **FIRST PUBLIC DISCOURSE GIVEN BY BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA IN NOVEMBER 1953 AT PRASHANTI NILAYAM ON VIJAYADASAMI**

When I was at Uravakonda, studying in the High School, I came away one day, as you know, and threw away my books and declared that I have My work waiting for Me. The Telegu Pandit described the incident of that evening to you in his speech. Well, on that day I came out publicly as Sai Baba, and the first song I taught the gathering was:

***"Maanasa bhajare guru charanam  
Dusthara bhava sagara tharanam."***

I called on all those suffering in this endless round of birth and death to worship the Feet of the Guru, the Guru that was announcing Himself, the One who had come again for taking upon Himself the burden of those who took refuge in Him. That was the very first Message of Mine to Humanity.

"Maanasa bhajare" means worship in the mind. I do not need your flower garlands and fruits, things that you get for an anna or two; they are not genuinely yours. Give Me something that is yours, something which is clean and fragrant with perfume of virtue and innocence, and washed in the tears of repentance! The garlands and fruits you bring, merely exhibit your devotion. Poorer devotees who cannot afford to buy them are humiliated, and they feel sorry that they are helpless. They cannot demonstrate their devotion in the grand way in which you are doing it. Install the Lord in your heart and offer Him fruits of your actions and the flowers of your inner thought feelings. That is the worship I like most, the devotion that I

appreciate most.

In shops, things are generally kept in separate packets or containers and each shop specialises in some particular article. However, in an Exhibition, hundreds of shops join to make all varieties of things available and there is a great deal of window-dressing and display. So far, I have generally given individual advice, like the packets available in shops, and giving answers to individual questions. This 'speech' today is a new experience for you. I am addressing a gathering today. Even though it may be new to you, it is not new for Me. I have given advice to large gatherings before, though not in this 'Appearance'. Whenever Nirakara (Infinite) becomes Sakara (One with Form), it has to fulfil the Mission and it does so in various ways. Man is re-educated, whatever the yoga or the era is.

The first sixteen years of this Life have been the period when Balaleela (Divine play of a Child) was predominant and the next sixteen is being spent mostly in Mahimas (Miracles), in order to give joy to this generation. Santhosha or joy and contentment are short-lived sensations; you have to catch the mood and make it a permanent possession - Ananda or Bliss. After the thirty second year, you will see Me active more and more in the task of Upadesa, Teaching erring Humanity and directing the World along the path of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema.

Without totally excluding Leela (Divine Sport) and Mahima from My Activity, My task will be in re-establishing Dharma, correcting the crookedness of the human mind, and guiding Humanity back to the Sanathana Dharma (Eternal Righteousness).

Do not be led away by doubt and vain argument. Do not question if I can do all this and how I can do all this. The cowherds of Brindavan also doubted whether the little boy who grew in their midst could lift Govardhanagiri and hold it aloft! The thing needed is Faith, and yet more faith.

Once Krishna and Arjuna were going together along an open road. Seeing a bird in the sky, Krishna asked Arjuna "Is that a dove? He replied, "Yes, it is a dove." He asked Arjuna, "Is it an eagle? .... No, Arjuna, it looks like a crow to Me. Is it not a crow?" asked Krishna. Arjuna replied, "I am sorry, it is a crow beyond doubt." Krishna laughed and chided him for agreeing with whatever suggestion. But Arjuna said, "For me, your Words are far more weighty than the evidence of my eyes: You can make it a crow, a dove or an eagle and when You say it is a crow, it must be one." Implicit faith is the road to spiritual success.

The Lord loves not the Bhaktha (Devotee) but his Bhakthi (Devotion), remember. The Lord's Grace is like rain, pure water, falling equally everywhere but its taste gets changed according to the soil through which it flows, So also the Lord's words are sweet to some, bitter to others. the Lord's ways are mysterious; He blessed Vidura with the words, "be destroyed" and Dussasana with the words, "live for a thousand years;" He meant that Vidura's 'I' will be destroyed and that the wicked Dussasana will have to suffer the ills and tribulations of this world for ten centuries. You do not know the real reasons behind the actions of the Lord. You cannot understand the motives of other men who are almost like you in everything, actuated by the same motives and having the same likes and dislikes! But yet, how easily you discover the motives of One who is far, far above the level of Man! How glibly you talk and judge of something that is as strange to you as the atmosphere is to a fish!

There are four types of persons: the 'dead' who deny the Lord and declare that they alone exist, independent, free, self-regulating and self-directed; the 'sick' who call upon the Lord when some calamity befalls them or when they feel temporarily deserted by the usual sources of succour; the 'dull', who know that God is the eternal companion and watchman, but who remember it only off and on when the idea is patent and powerful; and lastly, the 'healthy', who have steady belief in

the Lord and who live in His Comforting Creative Presence always.

You proceed from 'death' to 'life' and from 'illness' to 'health' by the experience of buffetings of the World. The World is a very essential part of the curriculum of man; through the agony of Asanthi (Peacelessness) is born the infant, Sujnana (Wise Personality). The pains are worthwhile; they indicate the birth of new Life. From Asanthi you get Prasanthi (Infinite Peace), then Prakanthi (Glory of Spiritual Effulgence), and finally Paramjyothi (Eternal Effulgence). It is like the night and day alternating, this recurrence of joy and grief. Night and day are twin sisters, both are necessary to increase the fertility of the soil, to activate and refresh Life. They are like summer and winter. There are some who ask Me, "Baba! Make this summer less hot!" But in the heat of summer the Earth takes in the needed Sathwa (Pure Energy) of the Sun, so that when the rains come, she may yield a plentiful harvest. Know that Heat and Cold are both in the plan of God and treat both as valuable. Thorny plants and thornless plants are both there in nature; the wise man knows the value of both: he plants the thornless one and surrounds it with the thorny ones, so that what he fosters is left unharmed.

Karma (Universal inescapable Duty) can save, as well as kill; it is like the cat which bites; it bites the kitten in order to carry it in its mouth to a place of safety; it bites the rat in order to kill. Become the kitten, and Karma will rescue you like a living Mother; become a rat, and you are lost.

Paramatma (Universal Soul) draws the Jivatma (Individual Soul) towards itself; it is the nature of birth to have this affinity, for they are the same. They are like the iron and the magnet. But if the iron is rusty and covered with layers of dirt, the magnet is unable to attract. Remove the impediment; that is all you have to do. Shine forth your real nature and the Lord will draw you into His Bosom. Trials and tribulations are the means by which this cleansing is done. That is why Kunthi prayed to Krishna, "Give us always grief so that we

may never forget thee." They are like the dietary and other restrictions imposed by the doctor to supplement the prescribed drugs, Namasmarana (chanting the Lord's Name).

Sai is Sarvajana Priya (Loving All) and so you can take up any name which gives you joy. Preferences differ according to temperament and the character one has earned by generations of activity as a living being in this world. The proprietor of a coffee shop goes to the nearby chemist for a pill to ward off his head-ache; and the chemist goes to the coffee shop for a cup of coffee, which he thinks will cure his head-ache. Men are like that; loko bhinna ruchih. The Jnani says, 'Sarva Brahma mayam' (The Universal is immanent in All); another, a Yogi says, 'all is Sakthi' (Divine Energy); a third, who is a Bhaktha says, 'all is the Leela of Bhagawan' (Divine Sport of the Lord). Each according to his taste and his progress in Spiritual Sadhana (Self effort, discipline). Do not hurry or ridicule them, for they are all pilgrims trudging along the same road.

Sadhana is most required to control the mind and the desires after which it runs. If you find that you are not able to succeed, do not give up the Sadhana but do it more vigorously, for it is the subject in which you did not succeed and hence requires special effort, is it not?

Sadhana means inner as well as outer cleanliness. You do not feel refreshed if you wear an unwashed clothing after your bath, do you? Nor do you feel refreshed if you wear washed clothes but skip the bath. Both are needed, the Bhaya (Fear) and the Bhava (Mental Attitude), the external as well as the internal.

Children believe your words when you say that the policeman will catch them or the ghost will beat them. They are full of Bhaya, Vinaya (Humility) and Viswasa (Faith). But having grown old and filled your heads with all kinds of doctrines and dogmas, theories and arguments, you have now to use your Viveka (Discrimination) and





discover God the hard way. I will tell you, there is no escape from this; all creatures have to reach God some day or other, by the long route or by the short route.

## THE REALITY OF SWAMI

I held Swami's hand and said, "Swami! You are not fooling me this time. You are in my dream. This is a dream. Isn't it?" Swami smiled and softly replied "Tell Me. What is not a dream? With these loving words of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba echoing in my ears, I woke up from my sleep, bringing an end to yet another dream of Swami. The more I think of those Divine words of Swami in that dream of some twenty five years ago, the more I realise how great this message of Truth was.

When we are in the dream state the physical world disappears, and when we are in the physical world, the dream world disappears. Neither is permanent, nor true. The dream world is sure a dream, and so is this physical world - nothing but a passing dream. Both are only illusions like the moving pictures on a silver screen, where the only reality is the silver screen of which we are not conscious.

Swami is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent. In simple words this means that Swami is the source of all knowledge, is all-powerful and present everywhere at all times. Some years ago, when my little son was running a very high temperature and gave us cause for concern, I turned to Swami's picture which was hanging on the wall and prayed to Swami earnestly for help. Lo and behold! Instantly there manifested a small packet of Vibhuti in the centre of the room. On giving some of this Vibhuti to my son, the fever soon receded. What a Miracle! - an instant response from Swami, and an instant cure for my son!

***“To experience Swami's ever - flowing Grace, Love, Compassion and Omnipresence, one only needs to have a pure heart and sincere devotion for Him. Swami is the embodiment of Love itself. He is always ready to rescue those who are in difficulty, and call for Him from their hearts.”***

Recently, during our flight to Singapore, we became

aware of something burning in the plane. Within minutes the crew began to panic and were running around the plane with fire extinguishers, searching toilets, overhead baggage compartments and under the seats to locate the source of this smell. No fire could be detected anywhere, but the smell was getting stronger. I closed my eyes and prayed to Swami. Within minutes, the smell of burning completely vanished and we made a safe landing.

Another incident that comes to my mind is one which occurred recently on the day I was leaving Puttaparthi. About an hour before my taxi to the airport was due to arrive, I was in a state of panic as I could not find my keys for the suitcase. Having searched the Ashram and my room thoroughly, without success, in desperation I called out to the picture of Swami on the wall "O Swami! I am running out of time - I cannot find the keys to my suitcase. Please, please help me!" No sooner had I turned around, my eyes fell on the set of keys lying right on top of my suitcase!

Having witnessed and experienced such serious and trivial incidents with Swami in my daily life for the past quarter of a century, one can very well understand that I have neither the time to read or listen to anything that brings disrepute to Swami. If one were to compile the documents relating to the divine experiences with Swami of all the millions around the world, the pile of this collection would reach beyond the skies.

***“Swami is helping all the multitudes who are flocking to Him daily. He works tirelessly, day in and day out. He has been doing so nearly all His Life. What a tremendous sacrifice for the benefit of mankind!”***

Yet this very mankind who had crucified Lord Jesus with nails is now crucifying this Divine Avatar with pen and paper. Swami is the embodiment of Love itself. He is an ocean of Love and Compassion. There is no room for hatred or anger in Him. It is this very ideology that Swami wants us all to implement in our daily lives; to have patience, sense of self sacrifice and selfless Love towards all beings.

Being fully aware of these noble Teachings of Swami, we still carry on with our selfish traits. Here is an instance where I was guilty of not following His

## HATFIELD GROUP PILGRIMAGE

noble Teachings. Once I became extremely angry and mentally agitated on observing the manner of the Secretary, an elderly lady, of an organisation at its Annual General Meeting. It was very obvious to me that this lady had deliberately turned away from me twice, to avoid giving me a copy of a document that she was circulating to all the members. Being very annoyed and hurt, I took a seat in the back row. As the meeting commenced, I began to feel anger and hatred towards the secretary. Whilst in this state of mind, suddenly I could hear Swami's voice very clearly in my ears. "Hey! Where has that Love gone?" I was visibly shaken by Swami's words, and instantly realised what I was engaged in doing. Silently I prayed to Swami to forgive me, and began to radiate a beautiful beam of selfless Love towards the lady. My mind became full of bliss and I thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, I noticed the secretary making her way directly towards me through the crowd. She stood in front of me with a beaming smile on her face and placed a copy of that document in my hands saying, "I am sorry, I don't think I gave you a copy of this document. Hope you enjoyed the meeting. Hope to see you again."

***"Swami often says that Love is the greatest weapon we have in this world. Love transforms every heart. Live in Love. How True!"***

My own experience has confirmed this Truth for me beyond any doubt. When we have surrendered ourselves at His Lotus Feet, it does not take us long to realise from our own personal experiences that Swami is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent. It does not then really matter what anyone says about Swami. Our own experiences are enough for our own faith and trust in our Beloved Swami Like the silver screen, He is the only Reality of the unchanging Truth upon which this whole Creation is projected. Mankind has never ever witnessed such a Divine Phenomenon before. Swami is beyond the realm of space and time. We do not realise how fortunate we are to have taken birth at this momentous time in the whole History of Mankind. Indeed, it is a great blessing to witness and have direct experience of this Divinity - that is Sri Sathya Baba. Sai Ram

*by Bharat Sisodia - Quarterly Magazine,  
November 2000*

On 5th February this year a group of fifteen devotees including five children, left London bound for India and the Lotus feet of the Lord. On arriving in Bangalore Swami was found to be in Madras. Preparations were quickly made for transporting the party there and after nine hours of bumpy roads and much use of the hooter the group arrived hot and weary in Madras. After checking into the hotel there was barely time to freshen up before dashing off to afternoon darshan and the long awaited first glimpse of the Lord.

The wait was long and, hot and as yet, without cushions very hard. The sun was going down when at last the red Mercedes turned into the courtyard. Suddenly the people who had been sitting so patiently for so long all leapt up and rushed forward to the barrier. Those of us who were used to the well ordered darshans at Prasanthi Nilayam were taken entirely by surprise and only a brief glimpse of the bright robe and shock of black hair was had as Swami left the car and entered the hall. A large screen had been set up so that the crowd outside could see Swami seated in His chair. The bhajans and entertainment were relayed over loudspeakers and everyone settled down once more to enjoy the programme.

Those who were able left the hotel early in the mornings to attend Omkar and Nagar sankirtan and have beautiful darshan of the Lord on the balcony of the Sundaram building. Afternoon darshans continued to follow the same pattern, such difficulty in seeing Swami was unexpected but had the effect of making the longing more keenly felt. Criticism of the crowds was silenced realizing the yearning of those waiting for a glimpse of the Divine form who graced the city of Madras with His presence for a few days.

When Swami left for Whitefield we followed on and were lucky enough to obtain accommodation in and near the ashram. Morning darshans under the great Banyan tree were an exquisite delight. Swami was charming and happy and we all prayed constantly for an interview. "Wait, Wait," He said each time He passed us and we waited and prayed even harder. Afternoon darshan was held in the hall where Swami would choose several students to give

short talks. Their devotion to Swami was touching and the talks illuminating and often humorous. The group also had the privilege of an informal talk and opportunity to ask questions of the principal of the college.

All too soon it seemed we were assembling for the last darshan under the tree. It was Friday morning and Swami was known to be leaving for Prasanthi Nilayam later that day. The ladies drew line one and were seated in the front row on the aisle leading to Swami's chair. Swami came and proceeded along the men's row facing us. Silently we pleaded. He had almost passed when suddenly He turned and came across the aisle directly to where we sat.

***“Where are you from?” He asked. “Hatfield, London, Swami,” chimed up several voices. “Go”, He said. Nobody moved. “Go”, He repeated and this time we jumped up.”***

With all sorts of jumbled feelings mingled with disbelief we waited in Swami's beautiful garden. At last He came from giving darshan and soon we were filing over the little bridge and into the interview room. A group from Holland, two couples with their sons from Swami's college and a young Australian man had also been called in.

When all were seated Swami began by materialising vibhuti which He gave only to the ladies in the Hatfield group. Swami spoke to several people and then took a ring from the doctor in our group. The ring was a chunky silver one with an “OM” sign inscribed on it. “I will change it,” Swami said and taking it between thumb and forefinger, blew on it. The ring now bore Swami's picture in a beautiful setting, the owner of the ring was completely overwhelmed. The next object to come from the Divine hand was an exquisite golden statue of Ganesha. Swami showed it round to everyone, pointing out with obvious delight that Lord Ganesha was dancing. Once again the recipient of this delightful gift was overcome with emotion. The Australian was the third to receive a Divine creation, this time a watch.

***“For a while Swami talked to us and asked questions, though it is difficult to answer questions from the omniscient Lord for He always has the best answers.”***

The couples and their sons were called in for private interviews. Then the boys were sent back to their classes. Next Swami called in the Dutch group and then it was our turn. Swami said He was very happy and blessed the Hatfield programme then He asked each person how they were and what they did.

For sometime now Swami has been referring to London as the ‘bathroom’, something which puzzled and upset many of us as ‘bathroom’ is often taken to mean lavatory and not a nice thing to have the Lord call your capital city. So when Swami once again referred to London as the ‘bathroom’, several hearts must have sunk, however He continued, saying, “In telugu, ‘London’ means ‘bathroom’, language difference.” So that was it! Swami was playing with the words, what a joke He'd been having fun with us but no doubt there was a very good reason behind it.

The remainder of our June was spent at Prasanthi Nilayam which became increasingly crowded as Mahashivaratri approached. On the morning of Shivaratri the devotees were delighted to see the area in front of the Mandir hung with gaily coloured flags. Many of the devotees were unable to get into the compound which was packed wall to wall with people eager for the Lord's darshan on this very auspicious day.

In the afternoon Swami gave a discourse in the Poornachandra Hall. Although many of us had difficulty following the translation, to listen to the Lord's melodious voice was a special treat in itself and when Swami led some bhajans to close the evening our hearts were filled with happiness.

During the stay at Prasanthi Nilayam we also had the added pleasure of a visit to the planetarium where a very interesting programme was put on. Dr. Hislop from the U.S.A. was also visiting Swami at this time and we were very fortunate to be able to listen to his lectures and ask questions at a satsang for some UK devotees. Having had so many conversations and wonderful experiences with the Avatar over the years, Dr Hislop is a mine of information regarding Swami's teachings. We also had the opportunity to examine the extraordinary ring given by Swami some years ago on which the face of Prema Sai is slowly forming.

Although Swami did not call us for a second interview as He had said, the group returned home



very satisfied with the trip. Only a fraction of what Swami does is apparent on the surface, it is the inner contact with Him which is the most important and fulfilling. In subtle and silent ways He satisfies the yearning hearts and answers the prayers of His devotees from within, in a way that would not be possible verbally. No words can describe the sweetness of the Lord, nor the thrill of experiencing His presence within one's own heart.

*by Sylvia Bishop - Quarterly Newsletter,  
September 1990*

## **SATHYA SAI BABA - OMNIPRESENT, OMNIPOTENT, OMNISCIENT**

I had never heard or known about Sai Baba until May 1989, when three Sai devotees, whom I did not know, approached me with an order to make 25,000 plastic plates within 3 days for the Laksharchan Pooja at N.E.C. Birmingham. I knew that it would be impossible for me to produce 25,000 plates within such a short period, and I therefore showed no interest in the order. However, they insisted that it was Baba's work and urged me to do it expressing confidence that I will be able to carry out the work in time. After some deliberation I agreed to do the work but warned them not to blame me if I failed. Needless to say, I was utterly surprised and delighted when I quickly found the appropriate mould for the plates and made the 25,000 plates ordered, in time. However, I was amazed and could not understand how I was able to complete the work, as in fact it was a job which would have normally taken at least 8 days.

After some weeks, I was considering expanding my business and wanted to buy a large warehouse which was for sale near my present factory, but as the price was high and beyond my reach, I dropped the idea. However, my Bank Manager met me one day and without any prompting suggested that I should buy the warehouse. I told him that it was beyond my resources. But the Bank Manager offered to give me the necessary loan, and advised me to go ahead, and I was able to buy the warehouse.

Somehow the same Sai devotees came to know of my purchasing the warehouse and suggested that I inaugurate the new warehouse with a Bhajan and Laksharchan. We agreed to do it on Thursday, 17th August, 1989 but I informed them that I knew nothing about arrangements that have to be made for the Bhajan. On the previous night, these devotees came and made a nice altar installing a big photograph of Sai Baba and went home.

***“Next morning when I opened the factory, I saw what looked like dust on the photograph. I was a bit worried and asked one on my staff to dust it before the devotees came back for finishing the preparation and spreading the carpets etc. But before we cleaned it, they came in the morning at about 11.30 a.m. I was rather reluctant to let them in but when they saw it, they explained to me that it was not dust but Baba's Vibhuti (Holy Ash).”***

I was very happy to hear this although I could not entirely understand the phenomenon. The Bhajan was a great success and was attended by more than 300 devotees.

After a few days, I wanted to shift a large 7-ton moulding machine from the old factory to the new premises and tried several contractors but without success as they were not available for at least three weeks. At this stage, a young white-man, came to me with a small lorry and a crane and told me that he knew of my problem and would take care of it for me. I was surprised that he knew my difficulty, and I agreed to let him move the machinery. Within a couple of hours, he on his own managed to dismantle the machinery, and transport it to the new warehouse. When I wanted to know the charge for his services, he first refused any payment, but as I insisted, he said, “Give me whatever you have in cash.” At the time, I had only £75 on me which I gave him and within a short time he disappeared. In fact, that work would have easily cost me £200 to £300 anywhere else. After all these interesting experiences, I was inspired and had a yearning to go to Prasanthi Nilayam for Baba's Darshan.

I had never been to Prashanti Nilayam before, and so I felt rather apprehensive. Before I left for Bombay, I contacted one of the Sai devotees to get some information, and he casually remarked that

perhaps Baba might tell me how He helped to solve my problem.

On 13th January 1990, I went to Bangalore. Baba was at Whitefield then and so I went there for the Darshan. Whilst I was sitting in the Darshan line, Baba came to me and took my letter. I then asked Baba, "Can I leave today?" He said, 'Yes, go'. I then said, "Baba - Interview". He replied, "Not now, after two years", and He went ahead. A devotee sitting next to me said, "Baba knows when to give interviews to devotees".

***"As I was rather upset, I murmured loudly, "What does He know - He knows nothing". As soon as I uttered these words, Baba returned to me and said, "I know everything, I knew that you will come. I knew you had some problem with your machine and had to come and help you. You gave me £75 in cash which I have not taken, as I left it underneath your machine in a drawer. When you return you can check.""***

I was taken aback and my eyes welled with tears of joy. I could not speak, but I still had some doubt and wanted to check whether all that Baba mentioned was correct. So next day when I got back to Bombay, the first thing I did was to phone the devotee who helped me to decorate the warehouse and to request him to check under the machine whether £75 was there. As Baba mentioned, £75 found between two wooden chips covered with Vibhuti. Also, my friend had videoed this incident which I watched with great interest on my return to London on 25th February. Now I have surrendered myself into His care realising His Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience.

Jai Sai Ram.

*by Dayalji Vadgama - from a talk given at Hatfield Sai Centre, April 1990*

## THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Swami in one of His discourses posed an interesting question. He said, "You all praise God but it is much more important that God praises You. You all declare your Love for God but you have to find out

if God has declared His Love for You. You all believe that God is yours but has God told you that you are His? " God's Love for mankind has always been evident throughout the ages right down to the present day when we are basking in the glory of the Sai Avatar. God has never failed man. God has never deserted man in his hour of need. But has man ever recognised the awesome dimensions of the Lords' labour? Man's love for God is based on personal gains, whether it be spiritual or material and it is this aspect of Love that the Gita expounds. It exhorts man to surrender all at the feet of the Lord, relinquishing the fruits of action Nishkamakarma. The quality of this Love is a crucial factor on the spiritual path.

Some time after the great battle had taken place, Arjuna was contemplating on the years he had spent with the Lord where often the Lord would be sleeping on his lap and vice versa. The more he thought, the more he pondered that surely he must be a blessed soul. How else, why else would the Lord keep him so close to Him? This was the question that was being posed within his mind. The more he thought the more he realised, so he thought, that he must be a great devotee. There could be no other closer than him.

Whilst this play was going on Krishna was witnessing the drama within Arjuna's mind and interceding simply said, "There is a greater devotee than you living some miles away." Arjuna was astonished. He could not believe this. Krishna suggested that they disguise themselves in the clothes of monks and go to this particular place. When they arrived, on the outskirts of the village Arjuna noticed a leper sitting by himself. Krishna encouraged Arjuna to approach and question him for Krishna said this was a greater devotee. He did as he was told. When he approached him he noticed that the leper was eating dry grass. He could not believe his eyes and questioned him "Why are you eating dry grass?" The leper simply looked at him and said; "All living entities still have the life form in them so I wait for that moment when the life has left the grass before I eat it". Arjuna was amazed. The more he thought how could this be a greater devotee, the more difficulty he was getting into, the bigger his ego was becoming. As he stood there he noticed four large knives placed at the side of the leper. How can this be a greater devotee? He is sitting here with four large knives. What does he want to do with them? Krishna encouraged him to ask.

The leper replied “The first knife is for Narada a renowned saint, the problem with him is that he is continually repeating the name of the Lord, ‘Hari, Hari’ and the more he repeats the more he disturbs my Lord. He just won’t leave my Lord alone. If he just keeps his voice quiet for awhile God can have some rest. The moment I see him this knife is for him. The second knife is for a little boy.” Arjuna was astonished. “His name is Prahlad. He gets himself into so much difficulty that he gets thrown into fire, he is made to drink poison, thrown off cliffs and every time this happens to him he calls out, Hari, Hari save me. And on each occasion my Lord has to go and save him. So because of him my Lord has had to suffer fire, poison, the lot. The third knife is for Draupadi. She was being assaulted and called out “Krishna, Krishna, Lord of my heart save me”. And because of her Krishna had to stop his meal and go and save her. Arjuna by now was totally shocked. The fourth knife is a special knife. This is for Arjuna himself. He had the cheek to make my Lord a servant, a charioteer on the great battlefield of Kurukshetra. He made my Lord sit below him. He put his feet on my Lord’s head during the battle and he caused so much pain to the Lord. This knife is for him.

***“Arjuna at that moment shed tears of repentance for here was a devotee who wanted nothing from the Lord and this is the relationship that the Gita expounds. That there should be no gain. That one surrenders in totality. One does not surrender because one wants two cars because one wants a bigger house. It is surrender in totality.”***

The Lord declared in the Gita “One who has steady unwavering devotion to me will be very dear to me”. Man may harvest a variety of fruits in the world. He may earn wealth and honour but the Lord has shown that these are all transient. Sai Krishna has declared today that the only real permanent thing of value that we can attain through our lives here on earth is the Love of God. The Gita could be compared to a motorway leading to the realms of spiritual bliss. The body is the vehicle and the driver the Lord. We are all travelling along this motorway. Some of us may be in the slow lane. Some of us may be in the middle lane and some even in the fast lane. But the Gita guarantees us that we will

all reach fulfilment. On this motorway the Lord has placed numerous signposts. Within the eighteen chapters of the Gita he expounds on ritual wisdom, devotion, self-surrender, Nishkamakarma being the central theme, that is doing all action with full surrender.

***“The Bhagavad Gita starts with a verse whose first word is Dharma. So it begins with Righteousness, Right Action. The concluding verse ends with the word Mama, which means mine. Together it becomes my dharma, my duty, my work. The Gita also indicates that the fruit, namely Moksha, Liberation, Union is not easily grasped. It cannot be attained instantly.”***

I would like to share with you a story which Swami narrated last year when I was there, of a little boy which highlights this point. A little ten-year old boy, a Brahmin, was very eager to realise God but the difficulty was he didn’t have a teacher. He found himself a teacher. Someone who would guide him on the spiritual pathway. The problem was the Saint said to him “Serve me for ten years and on the tenth year I will give you the key to liberation. For the arduous ten years this little boy served the Saint’s every need. This little boy by nature was very pure.

Living next door to the teacher was a renowned lady dancer who had travelled all over India and again her performance was considered to be the greatest. She used to watch this little lad and could not believe why this foolish boy served this man who claimed to be a teacher. She used to observe this little boy day in and day out. In the tenth year the teacher sent the boy to another village some distance away. While the boy was away the master was on an errand the time had come when the master had to leave the worldly plain. So as he was going he quickly scribbled on a piece of paper the mantra and he left. The lady was observing this. The little boy came back the following day and found what had happened. He broke down and didn’t know what to do. He had served the master for ten years and had lost the key to liberation. He questioned the lady, “Mother, mother, did he leave anything for me. Did you notice anything that he left”. “No, nothing”.

Now what she had done was immediately pick up the piece of paper, and not understanding what it was she stuck it in her earring. The more the boy questioned she admitted "Oh, yes he did leave this". "Please mother give it to me. This is what I have been waiting for, for ten years".

"Ten years? Is that why you have been serving him?"

"Yes Mother, please give it to me".

"No, serve me for ten years and I will give it to you".

So the boy started serving the lady who had a very aggressive nature. During the ten years the boy had totally transformed the lady. Not only the lady but most of the village. Her fame was so great that she was invited to the palace to perform before the king and queen. As she was performing she went into one of her famous twirls. The earring flew off and fell to the floor. At that moment the queen took off her earrings and threw them at her as a gift. The boy quickly picked up the earrings, "Mother, mother, look what the queen has given". The lady accepted them. The boy ran to the earring with the parchment paper. The moment he read it he was released.

Now, the theme behind this story was, and is, if that little boy was given moksha, given the key to liberation the moment he wanted it the world would not have changed. He had to serve the world. He wanted liberation but in the process he also had to carry others towards that goal and this is what the Gita expounds.

*by Ishver Patel - from a talk given at Hatfield Symposium, 24 March 1990*

## **AWAKENING, ENQUIRY & AWARENESS**

Awakening, Enquiry and Awareness are 3 steps which lead to Spiritual Transformation. Every human being will have spiritual hunger at some time or the other. Even a greatest sinner, a notorious bandit or a merciless murderer must finally come to a stage where he starts searching for truth, when he starts craving for something deeper, infinitely more satisfying than the material objects and wealth he has been striving to accumulate. If not in this birth,

maybe in a future one, he will begin to experience the first pangs of spiritual hunger. Swami has said, "only when you have a deep spiritual hunger, when you have a strong urge to discover the highest Truth, the Ultimate Truth, can you even begin to start on your journey towards Me." Here I would like to think and hope that all of us fit in somewhere in this category.

***"Just one human birth may not be enough. It may take many human births before this awakening dawns and many more before one can reach the Goal. Swami often says, "Jantunam Narjanm Durlabham". This means 'Among all the forms of life on earth human life is the rarest and the noblest form of life.'"***

Why is human life the highest form? Because only a human being is gifted with knowledge and the power of discrimination. Whether one uses these or not is of course another matter!!! Without knowledge there cannot be comprehension of wisdom which is very essential for Spiritual transformation. Swami says, "One should understand the great significance of human life, which is superior to that of all other species. Because of the body consciousness, man is forgetting his inherent Divinity. You study a great deal about Prakriti (Nature) and worldly things, and lead an artificial life. without realising that the heart is the seat of Divinity. If you allow bad feelings to enter the heart, it will be polluted and the Divine will have no place therein."

When does Awakening dawn? Or how does it come? It is said 'suffering' is one of the most important reasons. It is in suffering, be it at emotional level or physical level or due to sense of loss or fear, that one feels the need to find the meaning and purpose of life, to discover the secret that lies behind the illusory world. One develops an intense desire for salvation and redemption from the joys and sorrows of the world.

How does one begin to search and satisfy one's hunger? One may read and practise commandments given in the scriptures or follow teachings of one's chosen Master. We are extremely fortunate that we have our beloved Swami, the Lord God himself, to guide us through.

Upon enquiry we learn that we have to go through

the cleansing process. A process that will lead to a state where one enjoys the unity of thought, word and deed. Shankaracharya said, "The harmony of Thought, Word and Deed makes man noble and without this harmony man is wicked." He also said that it is a sin not to have this harmony. It is in this state that one can have purity of heart and develop the virtue of equanimity. Purity of heart is essential to be able to pour unconditional Love. To make room for this in our hearts and minds we have to first get rid of all the bad qualities in us which are Kam (Desire), Krodh (Anger), Lobh (Greed), Moha (Attachment), Mad (Ego), and Matsarya (Jealousy).

Let us first look at desire and greed. Mind creates these. So we must learn to control the mind. We all know it is not an easy thing to do. At this very moment our minds are jumping from one thought to another! We hear of ceiling on desire, we talk about ceiling on desire but find it very difficult to put it into practice. Perhaps we do not even think about it. The first and perhaps the most important thing to do is to learn to at least think about it! And then of course make progress to practise it.

The mistake lies in believing that material wealth is the source of happiness. A long time ago there lived a king who was always concerned about his wealth. Once he asked his Minister how much wealth there was in his treasury. The Minister replied that there was enough wealth to last them for seven generations. Instead of being happy the King started to worry about the generation – how will they survive?

He asked his Minister as to what can be done and the Minister advised the King to consult a well known wise man. He did this and the wise man told the King to send his prince to a certain household and offer them alms and his problem will be solved. The king sent the prince to offer alms to this family. The prince knocked on the door. The head of the family opened the door and on hearing of the prince's offer asked his wife aloud whether they had enough to eat for that particular day. The wife replied that they had enough for that day. The man then said to the prince; "Sir we have enough for today and God will provide for tomorrow!" Lord Buddha has said, "Poorest man is the one who has much desire and the richest man is one who has no desire."

***"Let us look at another big enemy! Anger.***

***Being angry is not a weakness but is wickedness. It is a reflection of the inner being. Where there is Love there cannot be anger! Swami says anger wastes precious energy and affects memory power. An intense outburst of anger can use up as much energy as 3 month's food consumed by the body! Swami has also said, "whenever you get angry, a great deal of adrenalin is released in your body and this is most harmful. Remember, each time you get furious your life may be shortened by as much as a year depending on the degree of emotion raging in you."***

Attachment and ego are other obstacles in our spiritual path. Only when we give up these two will we have purity of heart which would lead us to the experience of Supreme Wisdom. The more attachment the more restlessness. Even those who leave home and family and go into the forest to do penance in search of God sometimes cannot get rid of attachment. This is a true story. During the reign of King Jana a householder left home and family in search of Truth. He did penance for a number of years and acquired a lot of knowledge and wisdom and became famous. Wherever he went to preach the message of truth, a large number of people went to listen to him. Once his discourse was to be delivered on the outskirts of the village where he once lived. Big crowds had gathered from many villages around to listen to the great Sanyasi as he was known. His wife was also in the audience. During the course of his message he noticed his wife seated at the back. He momentarily stopped and started thinking about her, his home and his family. After the talk was over, the lady (his wife) went to him and asked him the reason for the pause. He said he recognised her and remembered the past. She said, "I forgot you from the day you left the home and did not even know that it was you. I would have thought that after so many years of penance you would have become free from the worldly matters. He realised his mistake. He repented having spent so many years in the forest in search of Truth when his true Guru was his own wife.

Ego is more dangerous. It has become an incurable disease in man. Generally it develops as a result of attachment and desire, the result of 'I and Mine'

feeling. The worldly relationships develop from these evil tendencies. Swami says, "Ego is untruth. It is ego that prevents us from getting close to God. It plays all kinds of tricks in order to get unholy pleasure. To eliminate the ego, we must strengthen the belief that all objects belong to God and one is holding them on trust." Ego can make one so arrogant that one forgets one's duty towards fellow human beings.

Next is Jealousy. Very often we have heard Swami saying, "There is a cure for any disease including cancer, but there is no cure for jealousy." By jealousy man does unimaginable harm not only to others but to himself also. It is like a matchstick. When it is lit it first burns its own head and then lights other things. When we sincerely try not to be jealous we can feel the difference in the state of our mind which remains content and at peace.

If we are successful in overcoming the six enemies we can claim to have made some progress towards achieving the Goal. Where do we go wrong? When we lose the awareness of information, enquiry and knowledge. Knowledge is the accumulation of information. Wisdom is the application of this knowledge. It is of utmost importance to remember that we as human beings have been given a golden opportunity to achieve the goal of life.

Tamasic and Rajasic qualities have taken so much hold on him that man often forgets the Satvic qualities which would enable him to be on the right path. Laziness is one of the tamasic qualities. It is a great deterrent to progress in any field. In our day to day life, if we postpone what needs to be done until the last possible moment, we often end up in a panic situation, cause aggravation to many, lose temper and generally spoil the atmosphere.

Rajasic quality makes one over active, aggressive and sometimes revengeful. The Main cause of this quality is the food we eat NOT ONLY through the mouth but also through the eyes and ears and other senses. Yet we do not listen to Swami who often tells us that the media, TV, magazines, newspapers and particularly the films corrupt our minds so much that we become addicted to them and in the process we forget other things which are far more important to our life.

It is only Satvic qualities which would take us further on the spiritual path. I am sure we all know what

these satvic qualities are as Swami has explained them so very often.

However, the secret of success, is to learn to put it into practice the knowledge acquired. Swami says, "Arise, Awake and Stop Not till the goal is reached by progressing from part time devotion to full time devotion. It is very necessary to understand the difference between the two. Full time devotion does not mean to be in a temple all the time or to say prayers continuously in the normal sense of the term. It means what Swami often says, "Shravanam, Mananam and Niddhidhyasanam - listening/reading, reflecting or ruminating and putting into practice." It is the last step (putting into practice) where we seem to encounter great difficulties.

***"When a mother cooks and serves delicious and satvic dinner to her child, the child has to eat it to benefit from it. There would be no point in just looking at it and admiring it. Likewise, our Mother Sai serves us with most delicious and nutritious food through His discourses."***

Sometime back He explained why He always starts His discourse with a poem followed by the message and winds up with a Bhajan. He said, "The poem is the plate, the message is the food and the Bhajan means to digest and assimilate the message." In a very recent discourse Swami said, "While I am talking, some of you are sleeping, some are looking at the ceiling, some are thinking of other things and some of you are listening and nodding your heads." Nodding is not enough. And quite often the problem is we genuinely believe that what is being said is not for me or does not apply to me - it is meant for others! Sometimes we even go to the extent of thinking that it applies to so and so.

With sincere effort we can reach a stage when we are suffused with feelings of Love - Love for one and all, when there is no room in our hearts for malice, envy, hatred and all such negative feelings. The jealousy, the resentment has gone, our entire attitude has changed and we can honestly say to ourselves that we can see Sai in all. The Love is pure and its flow is smooth and unconditional. The nature of such Love is Divine. Swami says, "When we attain this state of Love, we actually attain Him." Remembering this let us all march on and make significant and sincere progress by remembering Swami's six Commandments about life.

*Life is a game - play it*  
*Life is a challenge - meet it*  
*Life is a search - explore it*  
*Life is a dream - realise it*  
*Life is a pilgrimage to God - finish it*  
*And above all Life is Awareness Be aware of it.*

*by Hansa Kapoor Shah - from a talk given on  
at Hatfield Sai Centre, 11 September 1999*

## **DARE TO BE DIVINE: BECOME A LION!**

The 12-hour bus ride from Madras to Puttaparthi gave me ample time to reflect on my hopes and expectations for my first real trip to see Swami. I had been to Prasanthi Nilayam in 1991 for just one Darshan. We had arrived, back then, by taxi from Bangalore and our reluctance to stay in the sheds at that time had meant that we had to return to Bangalore on the same day. That being said, we had had a very good Darshan and although brief, the image of Swami in the flesh had been etched into my mind for the years to follow.

The bus ride this time was a very different experience. Alone, travelling in what was essentially a foreign land to me and fearful of going to sleep or even getting off the bus (in case I was left behind in the middle of nowhere) I was counting the minutes toward my arrival in Puttaparthi. Would I receive an up-close Darshan? An interview? Instruction on how I should live my life? Actually, I was more worried about being scolded.

As we drew near to Puttaparthi we circled the green hills on the road into Swami's valley. Whilst cinematic music was the last thing on my mind, the green hills reminded me of a movie I had once seen. The classical theme music kept resounding in my mind as we cut through the hills left then right whilst not Sai music it was very inspirational. I thought it was just my imagination and my Western upbringing and thought nothing more of it I was trying to override the music in my mind with Gajavadana but to no avail. We arrived at Puttaparthi bus station and my weariness disappeared. As I entered the Ashram gates, I was greeted by Ganapathy - a very nice surprise as I did not expect him to be there, not knowing the layout of the Ashram. My next

surprise came as I walked down the side of the Sai Kulwant Hall. There was Swami at the edge of the Hall on the men's side giving Darshan!! Darshan within my first few seconds of stepping within the Ashram grounds - I felt very blessed.

After registering and receiving the keys to a flat - a very smooth process - I proceeded to find the others from the UK delegation to the Sri Sathya Sai Second World Youth Conference. I was part of a delegation of 19 from the UK and had arrived last. In addition to attending the youth conference, the UK delegation had a number of special responsibilities. We were heavily involved in the cultural programme to be performed in front of Bhagawan in the Poornachandra Hall. To my dismay, as I had arrived last I had managed to miss out on all of the duties for the programme and the flag procession past Swami.

As the 2nd World Youth Conference kicked off we had various talks and seminars led by Sai Youth groups from around the world who recounted experiences from Seva projects they had led. We were awe-inspired by the commitment they had shown and the scale of their undertakings. Some of the projects included:

- *Water projects for villages without access to clean drinking water, (Trinidad & Tobago)*
- *Inner city youth projects for reaching out to and training neglected youngsters (USA)*
- *A township building project (Argentina)*
- *land mine awareness campaigns (Sri Lanka)*
- *An ambitious village adoption programme. This involved the adoption of a notorious village where crime rates are very high and using love and service to reduce these social problems. (Indonesia)*
- *Sai Youth anti drugs rally - held in an area of high rise flats which has a serious drug problem. For one day, 3000 supporters (mostly non-Sai devotees) attended to make a stand against drug-dealing and crime. (Malaysia)*

To hear of these and many other projects, to watch videos of Sai Youth in Action was truly inspiring. For once in my life I got a real sense of the power of Sai. Although knowing in theory that He is universal, I could at least now visualise that it was global. And it was growing. The energy and enthusiasm on view from the 860 delegates from 64 countries was remarkable. Swami remarked during one of his

discourses to us that He could spend hours talking to us all!!

A strong message came from all the organisers of the Second World Youth Conference and Swami himself. We were told not to underestimate the role of the Sai Youth in the Sai Mission. We were told to "Dare to be Divine!" We were told that Sai Youth all over the world would be critical in taking the Sai Organisation forward after 2020 when Bhagawan will leave his bodily form. We were also told repeatedly that Swami would soon be widely known all over the world after the 75th Birthday and to be an active Sai Youth member before this time would not only be both an honour and a privilege but a great responsibility as well.

The full impact of this message hit me after watching the cultural programme that the International (non-India) Sai Youth put on for Swami. It was a spectacular event.

***"The story was of a father lion telling his young baby "Leo" to climb a mountain (of Spirituality). The baby exclaimed that the journey was pointless because of the Adharma in society and the fact that mankind was doomed. The father then recounted to the baby the impact of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba around the world through active Sai devotees. They were slowly but surely changing the way mankind behaved and perceived one another. Mankind was not entirely doomed! As long as you had faith in the Sai Mission, you could save yourself! Dare to be Divine!!."***

The show was a spectacular blend of traditional costumes from around the world and state of the art digital effects. The finale was particularly inspiring. As the baby lion climbed the mountain, a 30ft video screen showed the activities of Sai Youth around the world, with the poor, the disadvantaged, the needy. There it was again. That music. It became a theme tune for the programme. The inspiring classical music I had heard on the bus as I swung into Prasanthi Nilayam. Coincidence? No such thing, I thought along with the 2000+ people crammed into the Poornachandra Hall were inspired like no other time in our lives. We were all baby lions, reluctant

to climb the spiritual mountain. But we had been persuaded by our Father Sai.

Swami has remarked on many occasions that He wants young Sai devotees to be like lions! The lion is the King of the Jungle and He wants us to be Kings among men. He wants us to excel at everything we do - at school, at work, at university. He wants us to be model citizens. He wants us to be active Sai Workers!! Yes active!!

Swami expects the UK to have developed many significant Seva and Sai Youth Seva projects within the next 12 months!

If you are a Sai Youth reading this article, Dare to be Divine! Be a lion! Contact your Sai Youth Convenor or Regional Youth Coordinator and get involved. The clock is ticking!

Sai Ram!

*by Shayanthan Ramalingam - Quarterly Magazine, January 2000*

## LOOK BACK IN WONDER

An auspicious dawn in Prashanti Nilayam, Guru Poornima 1985 was declared by the symphony of birds calling and the morning chants that stirred the awakening of the Lord's presence. My first visit to seek divine guidance marked the zenith of my life when Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba (Swami) graced us with our first interview.

The search for God comes at the point of need. This need is rooted in many of our earlier life's experiences and a trajectory of events that finally uncover our inner quest for purpose, justice, goodness, truth and compassion. Not only did my first encounter have a profound and a lasting effect on me, but I experienced an unfamiliar serenity in which questions close to my heart emerged. I had longed for a life that would give meaning to my past, free me from all limitations and lead me into something bigger than myself. Having achieved academic excellence, I knew there had to be more to this world than my limited understanding of life. My scholarly and highly competitive world of medicine, research and academia collided with my internal world where spirituality appeared



to be elusive and I needed to bring these worlds together. The change from my old reality was a gradual metamorphosis as I embarked on a voyage of self-discovery that would heal my fragmented life and connect me to the very essence that exists in us all, but often remains buried under layers of pain, suffering and turbulent relationships, until we unfold to allow divine love to manifest.

Almost 35 years ago, Hatfield Sai Centre became my home where I re-lived my wonderful encounters with Swami over many years. More importantly it provided an opportunity to enrich my spiritual journey in so many ways, as I learnt to expand my heart and mind. Over the years, we were graced with several interviews with Swami and in every interview, He expounded on discovering the Divine through the practice of human values – pursuing the Truth, living righteously through non-violence (in thought, word and deed), embracing Love and experiencing peace at every level. It was a privilege to be part of the National Human Values team in the UK led by the late Dr Victor Kanu with whom I engaged in various human values initiatives. Every step in this direction infused a stronger faith in the Divine and inspired greater efforts for the benefit of others. This inward practice gave me pristine insights in my professional and personal life which became integrated with a deep spiritual essence.

At the Sai Centre, spiritual, service and educational activities further enhanced my journey bringing me closer to my true purpose. I look back with awe at those beautiful souls of smiling children attending the spiritual education classes whom I had the joy of teaching. They have blossomed into aspiring youths and excelled in their chosen careers and paths, grown up with the foundation of faith and purpose. Reaching out to others in various service activities took me from self-centredness to selflessness, adding value and beauty to my life and others. Devotional singing and prayers from many faiths allowed me to experience the Oneness, relishing my quiet communion with God, be it in service, prayer, meditation or in nature.

Conducting symposiums, medical and health seminars and workshops at Hatfield drew hundreds of people over the years from diverse backgrounds to share a more holistic human values approach in the practice of medicine. I was moving from a fragmented perspective to a cohesive one that embraced humanity as a whole and it's need to

improve physical, mental and emotional health. These became a testament of the transformation in my perspectives on health, medicine, science and research. It was a privilege to serve as an interfaith coordinator representing Hatfield Sai Centre at the Welwyn-Hatfield interfaith forum sharing the teachings from every faith that brought togetherness, epitomising Sai Baba's universal message of unity in this vast diversity.

***“Throughout our quest, Swami conveyed to my husband and myself the message of Oneness in our several conversations with Him. “There is no living being without the spark of Love,” says Bhagawan Baba. It has to be ignited by Love itself. Sai centre activities give us the unique opportunity to test and express within us such divine qualities and most importantly provide a shared experience with one another, and as we do so, we begin to shed our egos, and all those limiting qualities that consume us along the way.”***

Inner strength ultimately wins, but weakness will take us away from our paths. Just as evil and destruction follow the 'domino principle' so does Love. It has its own unique effect. Once the light of Love calms the ravaged hearts, it illumines our minds, awakens the power of discrimination and forces us to examine our intentions behind all our actions. That is often referred to as an awakened conscience. With hands folded, I was able to ask Swami “where is God?” at a time when many doubts prevailed. “Your conscience is your God” He replied with a loving reassurance. Applying this principle, both my personal and professional life merged into one, making me less cerebral and more complete.

“Distance is no bar for the dawn of love, the lotus blooms as soon as the sun peeps over the horizon”  
Sathya Sai Baba

Divine opportunities unfolded and the message of oneness became alive as my journey enriched me further through educational activities at the Sathya Sai University. I was asked to speak at Anantapur college on 'Women in science' and at the Sathya Sai University on preventive medicine and health. Every act makes us examine the progress we make in our relationship with God. Today the focus is on Karma

and healthy lifestyles, but we have a problem in that we are not able to sustain the 'healthy' approach to life. We have models of excellence set up by Swami and what is so unique about these? What is the formula? It is ancient wisdom combined with modern medicine. Principles of non-hurtfulness, compassion, sanctity of all life and when we reduce the suffering of someone in pain, our thoughts become sublime with gratitude, love and affection. I experience this first-hand when I serve at the Sathya Sai Mobile Hospital which brings doorstep medicine free of cost for the under privileged people of rural India. Recognising the divine spirit in each person, the medical teams treat all with loving care. Transforming patients' lives through this holistic approach of treating the patient and not just the disease, results in improved outcomes.

***“Wherever the art of medicine is loved, there is also a love of humanity”  
Hippocrates***

The last 35 years in the Sai fold have brought richness in my life with faith, love and service and strengthened my relationship with God through enduring numerous trials and tribulations. Swami said to me once “Live in the present, it is not an ordinary present, It is the omnipresent...life is a limited company”. Only recently I experienced the truth of His every word, for we all take life and the present for granted. Being given an unfavourable prognosis from an unexpected lesion in my oesophagus, I was hanging by the thread between life and death. After a nine-hour long major surgery with complications and not knowing whether I would live or die, I have now recovered well to fulfil His divine purpose for me. My critical condition was my appointment with God. During a yearlong recovery, I reflected on my transformative years in the Sai fold and learnt to value life in the present moment, just as Swami had conveyed to me then. The most important part of us is our breath which is sustained only by the divine universal energy which makes me cherish every moment.

Disease and dis-ease can be intricately related, and I learnt to practice self- healing at the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels to alleviate my fears, anxiety and the effects of the dis-ease that had crept upon me. This came when my faith became implicit trust in the Lord. After all, I had been advocating that we need to treat the whole patient, not just the disease, and here I was needing

just that! Meditation, prayer, love energy and positive affirmations are known to have favourable effects on health by stimulating our immune system through the healing of our hearts and minds. If there was a time that I strongly reflected on karma, then this was the moment.

***“Swami had explained to us in an interview that genetics and karma are closely linked, and as we practise human values at every level, we change our pattern of thinking which can have its own effect on how karma presents in our lives.”***

Our genes determine our health, but our karma can influence the manifestation of disease; hence we see great variation in patterns of disease and its prognosis in different people. We believe that this human body is a temple of the Divine, and we learn to treat it with sacredness listening to it's needs. We then understand that the body is also in the divine spirit, for we are a part of the whole, as the waves are to the ocean.

“Each man carries his destiny in his own hands” - Sathya Sai Baba

Gratitude awakens grace and my journey has taught me to be grateful for every moment given to us, as life can vanish in a heart- beat. I have re-connected with family and friends in a way that has healed broken wounds. In the storm, they became my stars, bringing a new spark of life. I feel restored and my suffering and triumph speak only of gratitude and love. The greatest lesson is to accept pain and pleasure with equanimity, which puts you in good stead for the future. The seeds of faith and self-enquiry had been planted those many years ago and I knew I was on the right path of self-realisation. Our journeys symbolise a greater consciousness of faith, strength and the energy of love where man and God become one. Every step in this direction has infused a stronger faith in the Divine and inspire greater efforts for the benefit of others.

***“Every experience, no matter how bad it seems, holds within it a blessing of some kind. The goal is to find it.” Buddha***

Beautiful souls, inspired by the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba have come into my life, who I now know were part of a grand design preparing me to face

my destiny. As we mark the 40th year of Hatfield Sai Centre, I honour all those spiritual aspirants past and present from all over the world who have made a difference in my life, as I acknowledge that my challenges I endured were not my enemy, they came to rescue me to a life of true purpose.

The one message I share is “Serve man until you see God in all men; then serve more”. The joy comes from knowing that when I serve others, I am truly serving myself.

***“Life can be changeable like the weather, sometimes stormy, then generous like the monsoon. Occasionally brutal as a tornado, which steals away our hopes, but also returns abundantly. Learning to love means discovering beauty in the changing seasons of life, because we are at one with the universe”. - Dr Daksha Trivedi***

Forty years of memories have brought great visions of hope and blessings to us all:

***Look well to this day  
for it is life's  
the very best of life.  
In its brief course lie all  
the realities and truths of existence:  
the joy of growth  
the splendor of action  
the glory of power.  
For yesterday is but a memory  
And tomorrow is only a vision.  
But today if well lived  
makes every yesterday a memory of happiness  
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.  
Look well, therefore, to this day.***

(An ancient Sanskrit poem)

*by Dr Daksha Trivedi, UK - 28 October 2019*

## **HINDUISM AND THE SAI MOVEMENT**

**(A PLEA FOR UNDERSTANDING)**

**“LOVE ALL - SERVE ALL”**

**- SRI SATHYA BABA**

Some Western writers and commentators in the Sathya Sai Organisation seem to fear that Western followers of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba may eventually be ‘turned’ or ‘converted’ to Hinduism. This, they believe, is as a result of participating in Bhajan Sessions as carried on in Sai Centres run principally by Asians whose spiritual traditions are deeply rooted in Hinduism. The aim of this talk is to allay any such fears and to show that it is inevitable that the religious traditions, through which Jesus Christ and Bhagavan Baba came, should interact with and influence the movements that bear their names.

St. Matthew, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, was not ashamed of Jesus - roots in Judaism. Indeed, he was proud enough, convinced by faith, to write an open testimony of his Master's roots in the first chapter of his gospel. - Matthew 1:1-17

Realising and appreciating the tremendous importance of Judaism in God's plan, Christians have allocated two-thirds of the bible (The Old Testament) to Judaism, to its people - the Jews, their social, religious and political history as well as their beliefs and practices. Many of these may be thought of today as strange, old-fashioned, alien and irrelevant to the contemporary cultures of the Christian World Communities. But to the Christians, the Old Testament remains a constant source of reference; for it was the Old that gave birth to the New.

***“It is an indisputable fact that Christianity began as a movement inside Judaism in the same way that the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation began as a movement within Hinduism.”***

The first Christian members were Jews. The first followers of Sathya Sai Baba were Indians/Asians. Like other Jews, the followers of Jesus worshipped in the Temple at Jerusalem, in Synagogues, and in their own homes. This was also true of the early followers of Baba who worshipped in Temples, Mandirs and in their own homes. The new Christians took some of the religious practices from the Synagogues into their new Churches. Similarly, those Hindus who accepted Sathya Sai Baba as God Incarnate carried with them into the newly formed Sai Centres, some of their Hindu religious practices.

Let us be more specific and take an example

the Christian Sacrament of Baptism. St. Paul declared 'Baptism to be the one rite necessary for everyone'. However, this Christian Sacrament of Baptism originates from Judaism. It is an act of Spiritual Cleansing (Ezekiel 36:25). Immersion in or sprinkling of water is no new practice. It was a way of expressing repentance for one's sins, and for converts to Judaism; It was part of their Initiation Into the Jewish faith. The New Testament assumes that readers are aware of the ritual of Baptism. Jesus and His followers adopted this rite as practised in...<sup>1</sup>

Now, let us probe further into Christian Worship. There is a variety of Christian Worship. Each denomination has its own form of worship and even within churches of the same denomination, there may be differences. There are reasons for the variety of Christian Worship. One reason can be found to be centering on the Issue of authority - who should be at the Head of the Church? This Inevitably led to the fragmentation of the Church and to different forms of worship.

The other reason, and perhaps the most important reason, is the fact that Jesus' Ministry was very brief. It came to an end before the community numbered more than a few hundred at most. Although His disciples asked Him about Prayer and He taught them the Lord's Prayer there is no evidence that Jesus encouraged His followers to forsake worshipping in the Synagogue and the Temple. His own custom was to attend Sabbath Service in the Synagogue (Luke 4:16) and throughout the Story of the Acts of the Apostles, Peter, Paul and the other members of the early Christian community are to be found in the Temple - the Temple of Judaism. Jesus did not prescribe a special form of worship for His devotees at all. The nearest that can be contemplated was when He told them to pray in a quiet place, 'in secret' - i.e. where they would not be interrupted or would not be tempted to show off by praying in public places (Matthew 6:1-18). Apart from this, Jesus gave them what we know as the Lord's Prayer. One would imagine that Jesus would accept His disciples to pray in the same manner to which they were accustomed to as Jews.

***"For Jesus, the practice of His teachings was more important than forms of worship and attendance at Synagogues, Temples and Churches."***

When Christians stopped worshipping at the temple at Jerusalem and the Synagogues, with few directives of Jesus to turn to for guidance, they adopted the model of Judaism from which they also obtained their First scriptures. There has never been an outcry in the Christian world for this adoption, which has now become a permanent feature of Christianity.

Would Christians and Sai devotees be honest to Jesus and Baba respectively, and indeed to themselves, if they should pour scorn on the earthly lineages and roots of their Masters? It was through Judaism that God chose to send His Son, Jesus to Mankind. It was through Hinduism that God Himself has incarnated at Puttaparthi as Sathya Sal Baba. There is therefore justification for studying Hinduism, for the revering and loving this great religion, its people and their country - India.

*by Victor Krishna Kanu - from a talk given at Hatfield Sal Centre, 25 November 1989*

## ON OUR WAY TO SAI

When Baba visited East Africa in 1968, we were living in Uganda. Although at the time I did not believe that Baba was God, I very much wanted to see Him and pay my respects to Him as a Holy Man. Unfortunately, I just could not go at the very last moment for some domestic reason.

***"When a picture of Baba appeared in the Ugandan Newspapers, I took a cutting and placed it on my shrine beside the photo of Lord Krishna, who is our family deity."***

My neighbour was a Sai Devotee and in 1970, she sent me the book "Sai Sat Charita". While reading the book, I felt uplifted and thought that I must offer some Narayana Prasad (sweet offering made of semolina) when I have completed the reading of the book; but this thought had slipped right out of my mind. After some considerable time, my son who was a toddler at the time, asked me for "sheero" (Gujurati for Narayana prasad). My son never really liked sweet food and I thought it was strange; but this reminded me of the promise I had made to offer Prasad. In "Sai Sat Charita", Baba says, "If you forget to keep your promise or vow, I will remind you". This episode made me think that

1 Text is missing in from the original article

perhaps Baba was God.

In 1972, we came to U.K. along with the many Ugandan Asians as refugees. We eventually settled in Welwyn Garden City, where we met Uncle Amir and family and we became close friends. One day, about five years later, Uncle invited us to attend a Sai Bhajan in London with them. When returning from the Bhajan about 6 p.m. on a summer's day, we noticed tissues flying about, but did not pay any attention. Soon, a car came alongside, tooting the horn and bidding us to stop. Realising that we were not intending to stop, the driver overtook us and stopped in front of us to stop. So we stopped wondering what the fuss was all about. The driver and his companion came hurriedly towards our car with a fire extinguisher and asked Uncle to open the car bonnet. On opening the bonnet, we saw a thick cloud of smoke, which was extinguished by spraying the foam. (Uncle had left a box of tissue on top of the engine, whilst cleaning the engine before leaving for London). We realised how close we were to being blown up! "Then I realised that this was Baba's miracle - showing us that He is always near and taking care of us. My very strong faith in Lord Krishna still prevented me from whole heartedly believing in Baba's Divinity. Baba had appeared in my dreams on several occasions, but I still had some doubts about His Divinity."

Since 1979 when the Hatfield Sai Centre opened, we became actively involved in Sai Bhajans and Meetings held by the Hatfield Sai Centre and in July 1984, we joined a Group Pilgrimage from Hatfield to see Baba. When we arrived at Prashanti Nilayam, we were a little late for Darshan and had to sit far away from others. When I saw Baba for the first time in person, I thought "He is not an ordinary human being – He is Divine". We had lovely Darshan during our stay and took part in all the programmes at the Ashram. It was during this time that the "Arches" were being erected around the Darshan grounds, so Baba would come out several times during the day to inspect the work and bless the workmen. We were staying in a room in West Prashanti 3, which faced the Mandir and Baba's room. As soon as we noticed any activity in the Mandir area, we would go over and have Darshan of Baba more often.

On the very last Darshan before our departure, my daughter and I were sitting in the 2nd row, when Swami beckoned to us to come. Being my first time, I was not quite sure what to do, so I went to

Baba and said that we were in a Group. He replied, "No - You go" in Hindi. I still did not understand that we had to go to the Mandir. I could not see any sevadals to ask them what to do. Instead, I went back and sat in our place in the Darshan ground. It was much later that I was told that I should have gone with my daughter! I was very upset and disappointed. However, on looking back now, I realise that perhaps I was not quite ready for Him then.

***"Two years later, we joined the Hatfield Pilgrimage to see Baba for the second time, with my husband as well. Baba was in Whitefield and at our very first Darshan, Baba took my letter. I was so overjoyed, as in it I had asked for His blessings on my son. The next day, my husband had Padanamaskar and Baba took the flower I offered to Him. I also touched His Feet – it was as if an electric current went through me."***

Gradually my life and outlook changed and I became more and more devoted to Baba. My daughter and I joined the Hatfield Pilgrimage to see Baba in February 1990. Baba was in Madras, so we had to go to "Sundaram" – His Residence in Madras. Although we were seated very far away, we could still see Him, bright and clear, on the Balcony, blessing all those gathered at sunrise – beautiful sight! We were like the Lotus blossom opening up to the Sun! In the afternoon, we listened to His Divine Discourse and returned to Whitefield; where we were lucky to get accommodation in the Ashram itself. We were also able to go into the College Hall to listen to Baba's student giving a talk, while Baba looked on like a loving and proud Mother.

The next day, Baba was leaving for Prashanti Nilayam and it was our last Darshan at Whitefield. When He came near us, one of our Group asked Him for an Interview. Baba went past, then returned and asked "How many?" and we told Him. He said, "Go in". We all jumped up with joy and went and sat outside His Residence waiting for Him. When Darshan was over, Baba went to His Residence and opened the doors of the Interview Room and invited us in. He then turned on the fan, saying we must be feeling hot. He produced vibuthi for the ladies and a watch for one of His students and a statue of Lord Ganesh in gold for a couple who were

called in with us. Baba took the Hatfield Group into the Inner Room and asked each one of us what we wanted. When it was my turn, He spoke in Gujarati, which pleased me very much. Since we knew that Baba was leaving for Prashanti Nilayam, we asked Him whether we could follow His Car. He said "Yes" and we had the pleasure of following His Car, just two lengths behind!

Soon it was Maha Shivratri and we were privileged to be in His Divine Presence for that auspicious occasion. Dr. Hislop was in Prashanti Nilayam at that time and he invited our Group to His room for a Satsang / Study Circle. He shared with us his rich experiences with Swami and let us have a look at the ring that Baba had materialised for him.

I returned from this trip feeling uplifted, my intense pain and worries soothed and feeling a sense of peace and calm. With more and more awareness of Baba's Divinity, we became very much involved in Sai activities. Two years later, I became seriously ill and was in intensive care off and on, but all the time, I could feel Swami's Presence beside me – His orange robe touching my face and causing a flow of energy. At a very critical time of my illness, when I was hovering on the brink, I saw Lord Shiva by my head and my Lord Sai in front of me with His right arm held up blessing me. That, I think, was the major turning point and from then on, I have been on the mend and have gradually recovered.

Baba has given me and my family so much Grace. We continue to be part of Hatfield Sai Centre and Sai family. Baba has guarded and guided me through many difficult crises - most of all, He has shown me His great Love and Divinity – His Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omniscience. Sai Ram.

*by Shanta Yadav - Hatfield Magazine Archives*

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

*The greatest parting gift of our Beloved Bhagawan is the power of His Divine Love that has and continues to transform the hearts of millions of people across the world. Those of us who have attended Hatfield Sai Centre over the past four decades, have had the unique opportunity to join a happy, caring Sai family abundant with that same Divine Love, constantly filling our hearts to the brim. We have shared in*

*each other's life stories, watching our children become young men and women, leading fulfilling lives in society, whilst also saying goodbye to dear friends and loved ones. We were not the first, nor will we be the last to experience such Love.*

*From the age of eleven, as a Bal Vikas (SSE) student, I have had the opportunity to share in much of Hatfield Sai Centre's history; to learn from many wise souls that have walked through its doors. I have fond recollections of participating at Battersea Town Hall in the 1980s when SSE children from all over the country would travel with their parents and gurus by car and coach to march in procession before performing musical items and dramas on National Easwaramma Day. Or the fierce rays of the afternoon sun while sitting on the sands of Prashanti Nilayam, waiting for Bhagawan to walk amongst us, graceful and soft-spoken, a time before the Sai Kulwant Hall was built.*

*Those were golden years. Such experiences have defined me and many others throughout our youth and adult life. This could not have happened without the tireless and selfless contributions of many devotees (some of whom are featured in this magazine) who gave their time, energy and resources to help support education, devotion, youth and service activities in the spirit of compassion, sacrifice and unity. That is the real nectar, that is the real power of His Divine Love.*

*Uncle Amir and Aunty Pathma were Sai parents and grandparents to many, including myself. They gave selflessly and humbly. They were the embodiment of simple living and high thinking. We will all miss the cups of tea and cake that Aunty Pathma would give to us on home visits and the sound of her harmonium and Uncle's maracas during bhajans. You always felt peace when you were in their company. You always felt at home.*

*Compiling this commemorative edition of the Hatfield Magazine has of course brought back many happy memories. A loving thank you to all who have contributed. It is humbly offered at the Lotus Feet of our Divine Master - with immense gratitude to our Dearest - Sathya Sai Baba. Jai Sai Ram!*

*Yours Faithfully  
Ganesh Yoganathan*



A horizontal, irregular splash of red watercolor paint, ranging from a light pinkish-red to a deep magenta. The paint is layered, with some darker areas in the center and lighter, more translucent areas towards the edges. The text is overlaid on this splash.

LOVE ALL

SERVE ALL