

2014

Sathya Sai Service Organisation

Republic of Ireland, Zone 9, Region 91

**SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER
JAN - FEB 2014**

Dear Devotees of Sathya Sai,

A Happy New Year to you all and to your families and friends.

Commencing a new year is like starting a journey; one that will take us into new and exciting areas of life, to learn and experience, and gain greater knowledge to be transmuted into wisdom.

One is often inclined to look back on the past year, with its ups and downs, twists and turns. But Swami tells us that, "Past is past, the future doesn't exist, live in the present -the Omnipresent."

Excellent advice, I think you will agree, as it serves no purpose to dwell on the past, particularly past hurts. Many individuals are learning the truth of His statement but, sadly, very few countries are!

Violence is still a feature of much of mankind, and there seems no sign of it abating. It is because of this that we, as Sai devotees, should turn our thoughts towards Swami, particularly at this time as we edge our way towards the Golden Age, which, I understand, will include a renewed consciousness.

Let this year, 2014, be the beginning of this change, and pray for Swami's return to us, to begin this renewal. Over the years Swami gave us the "tools" by which to commence this new journey that will take us into an era of unprecedented advancement.

Let us grab this opportunity with zeal and rejoice in His service.

Sai Ram. Ed.

We all create our own world, ourselves. The real world is within us; that is the spiritual, divine world. Nothing else really exists. – BABA

Having Lunch with God!

There was once a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with cupcakes, several cans of juice and started on his journey. When he had gone about three blocks, he saw an elderly woman seated on a park bench watching the pigeons. The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink when he noticed that the lady looked hungry, so he offered her a cupcake.

She gratefully accepted the cake and smiled at him. Her smile was so wonderful that he wanted to see it again, so he offered her a drink as well. Once again she smiled at him. The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling without saying a word. As it began to grow dark, the boy realised how sleepy he was and wanted to go home. He got up to make his way back, but before he had gone no more than a few steps, he turned around and ran back to the old woman and gave her a loving embrace. She gave him her most charming smile.

When the boy arrived home his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. "What has made you so happy today?" she asked.

"I had lunch with God," he replies. Before his mother could respond he

added, "Do you know? She's got the most beautiful smile in the world!"

Meanwhile, the old woman also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face. He asked, "Mother, what has made you so happy today?"

She replied, "I ate cupcakes in the park with God." Before her son could reply, she added, "You know, he is much younger than I expected."

Too often we underestimate the power of a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring - all of which have the potential to turn life around. People come into our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime... Take no one for granted and embrace all equally with joy and bliss!

(From S.S.S. Bal Vikas Magazine - April 2001)

Dedicate your life to serve others, for the "others" are only visible representatives of the Lord Who resides in you. – BABA

Early Days with Baba by Victoria Cruickshank

The autumn of 1969 found me in Kerala, South India, studying and travelling with Swami Chinmayanada, fulfilling the desire that had brought me overland from England to learn more about Vedantic philosophy. But, sadly, the teaching programme came to an abrupt end when this saint had a heart attack. It was whilst enquiring

after his health at a devotee's house that I first made contact with Sri Sathya Sai Baba. There, on the walls, were pictures of this strange-looking person with large amounts of hair. When I asked why they had pictures of this Holy Man, when Swami Chinmayananda was their guru, I was told that 'Yes, Chinmayananda was their Guru, but this was God Himself!'

They took us down the street to another house where there were many, many pictures of Hindu gods and goddesses and also of Sai Baba. Extraordinary things were happening underneath the glass of these pictures. The ones of Sai Baba were covered in ash with only the eyes showing, large, beautiful jewels had appeared on foreheads, but most memorable of all was the picture of Krishna holding a pot, out of which streamed honey that was seeping through to the outside of the glass. We tasted it, and it was like no other honey. Everywhere, a sweet smell coupled with a sense of serenity that seemed to be "other" worldly. The elderly couple, who lived there, took us upstairs to a bedroom where we were allowed to look from the doorway at a rumped bed with footprints on the floor in ash, and the same sweet atmosphere. They told us that at night Sai Baba would come and sleep on the bed and leave footprints; before going to bed the wife would straighten the bed clothes and they would find the bed rumped again the next morning. So we decided that a visit to "God" must be made, and set off for Puttaparthi. Eventually, a couple of hours after nightfall, we arrived there. No electricity in the village then and apart from the moon and stars, and small kerosene

lamps in a few little shops all was dark and silent. It felt like the heart of the continent.

I will never forget waking up to the sound of the mandir bell and Omkar the next morning, and joining the couple of hundred people for darshan. Despite the wonder of the place, the next few days were somewhat difficult (and) there were no other western women for me to talk to, the sexes were segregated.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself seemed enigmatic but distant. After a few days of feeling quite confused and physically under the weather; I decided to leave when He caught my eye at Darshan. At that moment when He looked at me I knew, that whoever He was, He had always been with me, had experienced everything I had experienced, knew everything about me, and the look just said, "So now you know".

Next day we were called for an interview, and Baba told us to stay.

It was soon Shivarathri and some more westerners turned up. It was after the festival that we all went to Brindavan in Whitefield, Bangalore, and then followed three extraordinary months. We lived in Kadugodi village, and Swami used to call us in to His house in the evenings and talk and sing with us. We were a group of about seventeen, all in our early twenties or younger. He used to tell us again and again, "Swami's love is like the love of a thousand mothers."

Another time, all dressed up in the uniform Baba had allocated to us, convict style pyjamas for the boys, and brown and green saris for the girls, we were whisked off to the

opening of the Joy ice cream factory near Bangalore, following Baba in and out of the enormous freezers, singing bhajans and eating too much ice cream cake!

Many extraordinary things happened at that time. We were treated like children in the way He kept us close to Him, and there was a feeling of safety and belonging which can only be described as a sense of "coming home". He used to say that most of the westerners came to Him because they had never really known a mother's love!

"Ladies must have nerves of steel, and hearts of butter", was one of the important remarks He made to me personally; and when someone asked Him what is the best way to pray for others, He said, "Pray that they may find good work to do". But for me the most profound words were said one evening when He came up behind me as I was sitting, no doubt waiting for Him, He took me by surprise, tapping me on the shoulder said, "Don't worry, the ONLY thing that matters is your contact with the God INSIDE".

These words, combined with the practice of Namasmara have been my life raft over the past twenty five years. It is an initiation into the heart of religion, which is the prayer of the heart as practised by Christians, Sufis, Buddhists and Hindus. Whether you call it chanting a mantra, or saying the rosary, it is, according to Baba, the only safe way in this polluted century to purify the mind and eventually attain the mystical union with God.

(Reproduced from the "Sri Sathya Sai Baba" monthly magazine, Hatfield Centre, Oct. 2001).

Be firm in your faith, in weal and woe. Develop an optimistic attitude towards life. - BABA

Pooja Instructions

1. Chant the sacred syllable, "OM" three times.
 2. Recite the Ganesha Prayer.
 3. Recite the Prayer to the Guru.
 4. Read the sacred Sathya Narayana Katha chapter 1 to 5.
 5. Recite the Sai Gayatri Mantra three times.
 6. Sing two or three bhajans beginning with a Ganesha Bhajan.
 7. Sing the Sarva Dharma Prayer.
 8. Perform Aarti.
 9. Chant the Samastha Lokaah Prayer.
 10. Distribute vibhuthi prasada while reciting the Vibhuthi Prayer.
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The Sai Organisation is simply a gathering together of people who have a common goal in personal spiritual development.

The Sai Organisation should be motivated by love. You join the Organisation to give, to receive, to progress, to learn, to become inspired and to serve.

The Organisation itself is not important: it only provides an opportunity for men, women and children of all faiths to gather together and find the way to

progress along the spiritual path and to help others on the same journey.

- BABA

Food & Spirituality

We have the Power to Change the World

The following article was recently published by the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Toronto.

When we first came into contact with Swami's teachings, one of our concerns was eliminating the killing of innocent animals for nourishing our body. Hence, we began taking vegetarian cooking classes at the Montreal ISKCON temple and did much reading. At first, the reason for being vegetarian was that the animals had a soul and that eating meat was killing, and I lived with this reasoning for a few years. However, one day came across the book "Diet for a New America", by John Robbins and after reading the book, vegetarianism had a whole new meaning. I understood that animals were living, sensitive and innocent beings and that especially in North America, they were being badly mistreated. Having understood this, I also understood that consuming products of the animal industry would be supporting the cruelty and suffering which was being inflicted on animals. Would anyone of us support the infliction of pain and suffering on any being, human or animal? Hence, throughout the year, we slowly modified our eating habits, reading every label and questioning the ingredients in every food item. We refrained from supporting profit

made through the infliction of pain and suffering. There may be exceptions, but overall, profit and human values do not go too well together.

Today, our concern is in doing the least harm to our fellow human and animal beings and also the environment. Our solution to this is by supporting environment, vegetarian and organic organisations. Yes, there is a price to pay but we have it easy, our cost is mostly financial but many have paid with their lives for a cause in which we believed in. People like Steve Biko and Nelson Mandela have paid dearly for a cause which they believed in and these people may not be labelled as "spiritual" by many. How are we to act for causes which we believe in, considering ourselves to be devotees of Sathya Sai Baba? Some may say that what we eat is of little importance in relation to spirituality. However, if we cannot meet the "little" challenges, will we be able to meet the "big" challenges?

Today, oppression of human beings is on the wane compared to the past few decades. However, oppression of our mother earth and friends of the animal kingdom is on the increase.

Swami recently spoken of the harm we are causing our mother earth. He has said: Nature is exhibiting frightening disorders. National calamities like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and floods are the result of disturbances in the balance of Nature caused by reckless exploitation of natural resources.

Each and every one of us has the power to change the world and we make big statements of our beliefs through our actions. Let us tell the

world what we stand for through our support of our mother earth and our brothers and sisters of the animal kingdom. - Paul Urbani

I have not come to guard your jewels and your 'valuables', I have come to guard your virtue and holiness and guide you to the Goal. - BABA

A Trip to Prashanti by Hari Mahaswaran (age 12 years)

I had never been inside the Mandir myself. But when I stepped inside, I was truly amazed. In the back there was a big statue of Arjuna and Lord Krishna during the Great War in the Mahabrat. In the front there were three pictures: one of Shirdi Sai Baba and two of Sathya Sai Baba. When the interview started, Baba blessed each and everyone. He gave us a two-hour discourse that only felt like ten minutes. He started His speech with the meaning of the word 'man'. Swami also emphasised character, controlling anger, not wasting time and doing service. Swami was very happy, saying that He was pleased with our unity and devotion. We left Puttaparthi on the next day. While I was leaving Puttaparthi, I was in total bliss. This was an experience not many people had. In the interview room, Swami has said that now we were in the Hall, but when we returned to Canada, the Hall would be within us. The moment that I first saw Swami will always be with me forever. This entire trip will be a cherished memory that is embedded in me for evermore.

When involved in Seva at Sai Centres, it is important to remember what Swami said regarding money. Where money is involved, it is not 100% spiritual.

– BABA

A Wish to Share This...

“Sanathana Dharma” magazine

Charlotte (Who is blind and used to come and sing beautifully at our centre in Bedford), was scheduled to do a sponsored parachute jump (!), to raise money for disabled children in Africa on Thursday 10th October. On Wednesday when she was half way home on the train I received a phone call to say that due to the bad weather and the strong wind, Charlotte would not be able to jump. She was devastated at the thought of letting people down because we were told there was no chance of the plane going up that weekend. As always, we offered our prayers to Swami, He who can remove all obstacles, and put our trust in Him. We were then told there was a possibility that the weather would break today, Sunday, and they could fit Charlotte in then. Early on Saturday morning I received a 'phone call to say the forecast for Sunday had changed and the jump was cancelled again. I looked out of the window and I could see a bright patch in the sky so I told them that if the weather changed we could be there within fifteen minutes.

They said they did not hold out much hope but promised to ring us if it happened. We immediately prayed to Swami again and ten minutes

later we received another phone call to say that there was a break in the clouds and there was a small window of time that they could load one plane for people to jump but we had to leave home immediately.

One and a half hours later Charlotte successfully and safely completed her jump and soon after the weather changed again, no more planes flew that weekend. Non-devotees would say this was just good luck but we knew better and we thank Swami for His benevolence and ever abundant love.

Charlotte has raised 1,000 pounds sterling for this charity which is called DESO and sends disabled equipment overseas to children who have nothing. How great is Swami's love. Jai Sai Ram, Sue.

See in yourself Baba

See in Me Yourself, for I see Myself in you all. You are My life, My breath, My soul. When I love you I love Myself. When you Love yourselves, you love Me! I have separated Myself from Myself, so that I may love Myself. My beloved ones, you are My Own self. - BABA

I am Sai Baba!

During Swami's young days, He extolled the high Vedic philosophy to the village urchins. He also began talking about a saint called Sai Baba. His father, Pedda Venkappa Raju, could stand it no longer. One day, he approached Sathya with a stick in his hands to beat the devil out of Him! He asked Sathya, "Who are you?"

Tell me the truth." Sathya calmly replied with love and authority, "I am Sai Baba. Keep your houses clean and your minds pure. I shall dwell in them forever."

The stick in Pedda Venkappa Raju's hand fell down. He was dumb-founded. He said, "If You are really Sai Baba, show us proof." Sathya took a handful of jasmine flowers in His hands and threw them on the ground. They fell, forming the letters, "Sai Baba" in Telugu!

From that day onwards, everyone in the village and nearby villages started to call Sathya, 'Sai Baba'. They began worshipping Him with great devotion, and offered special poojas to Him every Thursday.

Bow to Sri Sai. Peace be to all.

Duty with Love is Desirable. Duty without Love is Deplorable. Love without Duty is Divine. – BABA

Jesus in India

It has been said that the spiritual heart of India is Benares, being also the major centre of Vedic learning. On the occasion of Jesus' stay in India, He was engaged in intense study of the spiritual texts of Sanatana Dharma. He also concentrated on the practice of yoga.

When Jesus attained a satisfactory level of scriptural and philosophical knowledge, He was sent to the sacred city of Jagannath Puri, a great centre of Shiva worship, second only to Benares. In Puri, Jesus lived for some time in the famous Govardhan Math, a major centre today of the

monastic order, of philosopher/saint of India, Adi Shankaracharya. There Jesus attained perfection in the synthesis of yoga, philosophy and renunciation, and began to publicly teach the Eternal Dharma.

Recent discoveries show that He also lived, not only in Govardhan Math, but also in many other places in India.

Jesus was popular at teaching and gained great notoriety among all levels of society. However, those who were making religion into a business became intensely jealous and even began to plot His death. Therefore, He left Puri and returned to the Himalayan regions, where He lived in various Buddhist monasteries at that time.

Jesus was well aware of the form and purpose of His death, from an early age, but it was the Indian masters who made everything clear to Him regarding them.

Arriving back in Israel, Jesus went straight to the River Jordan where His cousin, John, the Master of the Essences, baptised Him, thus preparing Him for the sacred mission before Him.

"Man can reach perfect bliss only when his heart becomes free from envy, egoism, greed and other evil traits. We need persons who can recognise and relish the recognition of the kinship and the identity between man and man, as well as between one society and another. They have to move beyond the limited 'I' to break loose from the entanglements of the senses. They have to jump over the battlements of

the fort called 'body' and enter enthusiastically the wide world beyond".

"From the narrow vision of the 'individual need' man must voyage out into the broad vision of the 'universal'. When a drop of water falls into the ocean, it loses its narrow individuality, its name and form and assumes the form, name and taste of the ocean itself. If it seeks to live separately as a 'drop', it will soon evaporate and be soon reduced to non-existence. Each one must become aware that he is part of the one Truth that encompasses everything in the Universe. It is reprehensible to stick for one's whole lifetime to the low narrow paths of selfishness, envy and greed. Make the heart big and the mind pure. Then only can peace and prosperity be established on the earth." - Sri Sathya Sai Baba

What is true Love? Pure, unselfish Love towards all living beings, considered as embodiments of the Divine, with no expectation of reward, is true Love. - BABA

What we must strive for today is not a new religion or a new society or a new code of morality; they are there already, in each race and country. We also have the basic plans for spiritual training already laid down in most religions. But we need persons who have attained purity in all levels of consciousness. Be a servant; a servant of God- then all strength and joy will be added unto you. - BABA

A Porter Who Disappeared by Dr.
R.S. Padmanabhan

In May 1973, Swami asked me to go to the USA for the admission to postgraduate training, of my son, who was in his Final B.D.S. I planned my visit as per Swami's instructions. My ticket was book via Bombay/Bonn/Dusseldorf/USA. I alighted at Bonn where my patient, Vice Consul of the Indian Embassy, had organised a special visit to Dental Hospital. After staying with him at Bonn for a week and visiting hospitals in the weekend, I went with my host to Bonn airport at 9 a.m. to go to Amsterdam. The flight was at 10.10 a.m. from Dusseldorf to Amsterdam. Suddenly, the flight was cancelled and I was asked to come the next morning. I was in a dilemma. My friends at Amsterdam - two old devotees of Swami were waiting for me at the airport to receive me. They were Swami's devotees whom we were looking after at Bangalore under Swami's instructions. You can very well imagine my plight. My friend had left me at the airport, I had missed the flight and my friends were waiting in Amsterdam.

Swami had materialised a ring with a Topaz stone before my leaving Bangalore and had assured me that my trip would be successful. The ring has a fantastic story which is relevant to be mentioned here. The ring had a plain yellow stone. I wore it and received Swami's blessings. Col. Joga Rao, who was inquisitive asked Swami whether His image was present in the ring, Swami said; "Whether it is present in the ring or not, I will be present in his heart and

will take care of him". He took the ring back, blew three times and returned it to me. I could now see Swami's image in the ring.

I waited at the airport and started praying to Swami. The authorities there suddenly told me that there was one possibility of reaching Dusseldorf that was by taxi. I was told it was only 110 miles and with luck I could reach Dusseldorf by 10.10am. just in time to catch a flight for Amsterdam. At 9.10 am. they got me a taxi and gave instructions to the driver explaining the situation and asked him to take me to Dusseldorf airport straight, which he did.

As soon as I reached Dusseldorf airport, a porter in white dress came to the taxi, picked up the baggage and went to the plane with me, handing over the baggage; there was no security check or anything of that sort. I was emotionally upset to imagine how I could make it. In the meantime the porter had left. I wanted to pay him, but could not see him. The plane left at 10.15a.m. I reached Amsterdam as per the schedule and met my old friends at 11.15a.m. This is one aspect of the story. I fulfilled my work in Washington and returned to India.

After my return home, I went to Brindavan. The unexpected happened; Swami, after His morning Darshan, called me and asked about the trip. I explained everything to Him and He said, "Well, everything was alright except that at the Dusseldorf airport, I had to carry your baggage from the taxi to the aircraft, you never thanked Me for carrying it! You can imagine how I would have felt. I realised that

Bhagavan is with us all the time! We must deserve and pray for His Grace! The providential sequence of events was truly amazing!

If you see Me in your dreams, I am really there. You cannot dream of Me unless I will it. – BABA

States of Illusion

"And His name shall be Truth". Jesus.

'Sathya denotes Truth Absolute, in Sanskrit'. The following explanation for Salvation and Liberation, comes from an excellent book entitled "When God Walks the Earth" by Jack Shemesh. I quote a piece from it here.

"Jesus warned that until the coming of the Father, all should be aware of false prophets who would preach in His Name. He stated that one must be born again, not of the flesh, but of the spirit. This clearly depicts that being born again of the flesh, something called transmigration of the Self from identity to identity, was taught by Jesus based on Vedic, Egyptian, Buddhist and Hebraic knowledge. Christianity was accepted in Rome only 400 years after the Crucifixion. In later times, certain powerful churches distorted these Vedic Truths. These distortions brought about the illusion that heaven was a peak goal, and that believing in Jesus was all that was necessary to become saved. Saved from what? No one can use someone else to attain a palace and get away without consequences. Grace can be earned, but not stolen. Even those who earn salvation do

not attain liberation, as salvation is only protection for the dual-minded who fear pain, suffering, disease, the unknown and unexpected. Liberation is freedom from all these states of illusion”.

“Many Christian believers of today are repeating the same ignorant mistakes which many Jews, Romans and neighbouring natives of Jesus’ day committed. They did not recognise or accept Jesus then, and much of their Christian offspring of today does not quite recognise the Divine in the present human form. This does not only pertain to followers of Christianity, but to humanity at large, whether religious, atheist, monist or what have we”.

“The Book of Revelations remains a mystery to even the wisest Christian philosophers because the Vedic contents on which it was based in connection with Nadi Grantas (predetermination of the future of humanity in general), is beyond intellectual comprehension. Many profess to have understood the figures 600,606 (six-hundred-three-score and six) and 144,000. These figures can only be known in depth and meaning to one who has actually had exposure to the intimate sources or beings who guard that knowledge. That is only possible through direct experience, as Jesus and other great Souls or saints have been blessed to receive.”

I will conclude with this final paragraph; Scriptural knowledge can easily be distorted into impressions of one’s own interpretations and be superimposed on the minds of others to force opinions of self-made truths. This is why religious minds refute each other claiming to have

and to hold the key to God’s Truth. So many wars have been fought using God’s Name in such ways.

I do not love the devotee, I love only his devotion. - BABA

A Hospital with a Heart at its Centre

Many devotees have seen and visited the Sai Super Speciality Hospital in Puttaparthi, and marvelled that it could have been designed and built in twelve months!

“One afternoon I took a piece of paper”, wrote Keith Critchlow, Sai Baba’s architect, “and I drew from one end of it to the other and the whole hospital was complete. I realised then that all one has to do is to let your ego go. If ‘you’ don’t matter then God can work through you”.

“That seemed to work very well, the drawing was sent and it was accepted to be the image that was required. It was based on something very simple - that the central feature of the hospital should be a symbol of unity because the symbol of health is the symbol of wholeness and unity. In the human body the heart which is shaped like one’s hand pointing downwards - this corresponds to the physical incarnate state. In the symbol of architecture we turn the heart right round and point it back to God. So the main symbol of the centre of the hospital was a large heart, which is also a symbol of Sai Baba and His love, pointing back to Heaven with a flowering Lotus on top which itself is a symbol of completed consciousness. The

building was wrapped around the centrepiece and instead of the wards sitting on top, I asked Sai Baba if I could wrap them around like two arms which embrace people with love to cure and heal them. He was very pleased with that idea. He came back to it many times and had a chuckle and said, "Yes, we'll have two arms coming round, that'll be very nice, very nice."

"The next thing Baba said to me was that I must go back to London and that I had one year to build the hospital. Well, it takes seven years to build a hospital, and the latest hospital we have in this country (England), of which we are most proud, took 10 years to build. It is in the Isle of Wight. He said, "This has to be complete, we will have the first operation by this day (which was His Birthday) next year." Well, I knew that was impossible but as I had seen the impossible is possible with Sai Baba, I said, "Alright, I'll go back to London and see what we can do."

"The team of architects came together very quickly - there were 17 of us and we worked for 17 hours a day for three months and did many more drawings than were normally done in the circumstances. We sent them to the construction company in India and they had six months to put up this hospital. As I said, it never takes less than seven years in this country and we consider ourselves to be highly industrialised, very clever. We thought it was impossible but at the same time we knew it would be possible.

The construction company did an amazing job and one of our English people went over to supervise the laying out of the hospital and it

sprung out of the ground. A matter of hours before the opening little pieces weren't finished but when the time came and the Prime Minister of India came to open the hospital, everything was completed.

The first operation was done exactly 12 months after the statement made by Sai Baba that the hospital was going to happen - just totally incredible; there is no other word for it!

There must be so many stories of people who have interviews with Sathya Sai Baba and see miracles performed but, for me, just the first series of miracles with my own ring was part of many miracles I have watched Him perform. I have been very graced that He gave me a second ring on my second visit which I wear whenever I'm going to write or draw anything. He also gave me a watch which He materialised out of His hand. On this occasion, two of my engineers were present and they were still not quite sure whether He was a conjuror or a Holy Man. He waved His hand and simultaneously two more watches dropped out of His hand onto His lap - the engineers were rather amazed!"

"I do not know what more I can say, except that I am extremely grateful to be put into a position to be able to serve Sathya Sai Baba. Since the building of the hospital my life has seen many changes. I have now been put into a much more responsible position in this country as far as architectural education is concerned." (From Spring 1993 issue of UK's 'Sathya Sai Baba' quarterly magazine).

Prayer must emanate from the heart, where God resides and not from the head where doctrines and doubts clash. – BABA

“Are You God?”

Arnold Schulman asked Swami, “Are You God?” Swami replied, “Why do you waste time trying to know Me. Can a fish measure the sky?” “So I am fish!” Schulman thought. Swami said, “If God had come with all the paraphernalia by which you can recognise Him as God, then He had to come in different countries in different forms with various paraphernalia, which each country has imagined God to be. Then you would have put Him in a circus and charged money.” Schulman said, “Ah, you are God! You are God! Is that not what You are saying?” Swami said, “First, you have to understand yourself, then you understand Me. I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am not old, I am not young. I am not all these.”

This is something which takes a long time to be digested. But, Schulman laughed, perhaps without quite knowing why. Maybe he was embarrassed for having asked the question and unnerved by the answer. Here was a human being, or who looked like one, curled up in a coach, legs thin like that of a teenage girl, with Afro hair, with nothing one could think of to accept Him as God!

Swami said, “Some people think it is a beautiful thing to be God on Earth in human form. If you were in My place you would not think it is so beautiful. I know everything that has happened to everybody in the past that happens in the present and in

the future. So, I am not so quick to give the mercy they ask Me. I know why a person has suffered in this life, and what will happen to him when he is born in future, because of his action in the present. So, I cannot act the way people want Me to. They call Me cold-hearted and the next minute they say soft-hearted, ‘Why don’t You do this? Why don’t you do that? Why don’t you stop wars? Why don’t you do away with diseases?’ they ask. What they don’t know is that I am not responsible for one’s suffering. I don’t cause suffering. People make their own palaces or prisons.”

Schulman asked, “Can I write that in my book?” Swami said, “What do you know about Me? Do you believe in Me the way I said you have to believe Me?” Schulman said, “Not yet, not yet.” Swami said, “Then how can you write about Me? You are like a child. When I give you what you want, or make you happy, you love Me. But the next minute when I am too busy and cannot see you when you want Me to, you don’t wait, you go away! You listen to Me with respect, but in private you laugh at Me. You say, ‘He says love your enemy. How can I?’ and you laugh at Me! What kind of book can you write about Me?” Schulman said, “That kind of book...” Swami said, “For what purpose? Why should you write a book about Me not knowing anything about Me? For publicity? I don’t need publicity. I am not a Yogi.” Schulman asked, “What are You telling me? Are you telling me I can’t write a book?” He was perturbed, because he had already promised his publishers about his book. Swami said, “Write it, write it, but write the truth. Only about what you see here, how you laughed at

Me, how you appreciated Me, how you allowed yourself to love Me, in spite of all the obstacles that come in the way."

Swami rubbed his (Schulman's) chest vigorously with both His hands to stimulate his spiritual circulation. "I am always with you, even when you don't have belief in Me, even when you forget Me, even when you laugh at Me, or hate Me, even when I seem to be on the opposite side of the earth. You need some material thing to remind you that I am always with you." Swami pushed up His sleeve, otherwise Schulman will think that the thing was kept somewhere in the sleeve and rotated His open palm, closed it, and opened it. He was holding in His palm a golden ring with His picture in the centre, painted on porcelain, surrounded by sixteen stones which seemed to be diamonds. He put the ring on His finger. It fitted perfectly. Schulman laughed and said, "How can I get this through customs?" Swami said, "Don't worry, I will take care of it!" and He touched the ring with His finger tips saying, "I am in you and you are in Me and don't forget that, we cannot be separated."

In conclusion, two custom inspectors had looked at the ring and told him "worthless". That is how Swami's word works.

The Teachings of Jesus and Sai Baba

The teachings of Jesus are in tune with Baba's, said Mario Mazzoleni, the priest who was excommunicated because he wrote a book entitled "A Catholic Priest meets Sai Baba".

"From the Gospels," he wrote, "we can synthesise the virtues necessary to live in purity, prudence, righteousness, fortitude and temperance. The Church has always proposed truth, hope and charity as theological virtues; has always promoted assistance to the starving, the wanderers, the sick, and so on; stresses the importance of comforting the afflicted, forgiving the affronts, being patient with the bothersome persons. I find that the seven deadly sins, listed by the Catholic doctrine, are nearly the same as the ones pointed out by Sai Baba: pride, avarice, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth. All that is taught is undoubtedly good, but it is part of the unfinished piece of mosaic. In fact, if people knew the triple bodily dimension which constitutes the human being (physical, astral and causal) and the influence it exerts over the choices of life, the evangelical precepts would be much more understandable and there would be much more strength in putting them into practice".

"I can say that Sai Baba brings us continually back to our subtlest dimension that is the divine one: we are Atman, Spirit. The Atman is an invisible elusive entity. It is not possible to immediately change from a gross and material dimension to the absolute transcendent one. The way Baba shows is gradual: to change from the state of mortality to the state of immortality, first of all it is necessary to put aside one's material interest, then refine them and finally sublimate them up to the state that enables one to be continually blissful". "Sai Baba does everything in order to help us from

any point of view: physical, psychical and even material. Furthermore, Baba is amidst us: He helps His devotees directly, without intermediaries, through a presence which ranges from a physical to a subtle dimension, from a real meeting in private to a meeting in a dream, from monosyllabic answer to a sentence caught during meditation. Why ignore so great a fortune? Would it not be foolish to lose such an unrepeatable opportunity?"

"Certainly Jesus is not jealous if a Christian loves Sai Baba; He will be happy to continue His Divine Mission even after two thousand years. He could see His prayer realised: "Holy Father, keep those You have given Me, true to Your name, so that they may be one like us." (John 17:11 b) "Will one life be sufficient to express gratitude to this Divine Director who gives life back? Bowing and kneeling down on front of the Goodness and Compassion of Lord Sai, I offer to the brothers this humble thought."

Source: Sanathana Sarathi, July 2001.

In you is the Truth, you are the Reality, and all this is simply ignorance, a searching of false things. – BABA

"How Many Are You?" Frequently, Swami asked His devotees, "How many are you?" in relation to the numbers seeking interviews. However, most Christians are familiar with the biblical story of the "madman", whom everybody feared, and of whom Jesus asked the same

question. The voice replied, "We are 100!"

The man had been possessed by that number of spirits, because they knew that he was predetermined to meet a Great Soul, a Saviour, Who would have the power to deliver them from their imprisonment. Having possessed the man's mind, and kept his body safe and protected in hill caves, from accidents and wild animals, until the day came when he would meet their deliverer, Jesus, face to face.

Jesus was told about the man and asked to be taken to him, for He was known to release many spirits who suffered the bondage of greed. It was greed that entrapped the 100 together, which was why the swine were also present for the act of deliverance (it is said that swine represent greed).

At Jesus' command the spirits entered the swine and the latter plunged over the cliff to their death, thus releasing the 100, but also allowing the swine their place to evolve.

During the course of Jesus' life He redeemed many such souls who had suffered long under curses, thus releasing them to return to their lifes' journey in their original human forms.

God is bound to you by the closest bonds of Love. God is the nearest, the dearest, the most loving, the most eager companion and kinsman for man. - BABA

The Thief

Sathya Sai Baba once described Himself as a thief... He steals our hearts!

I shouldn't think anybody would mind this thief entering our homes, and instead of taking our precious items, leaving behind Vibhuti sprinkled randomly throughout the house.

Yes, He steals our hearts and minds but leaves behind evidence of His presence and so much love. And when He again returns He has promised, I understand that He will visit all the Sai Centres!

Live in the world but do not let the world live in you. What is the use of sitting in a meditation pose in the forest and thinking of an ice cream. - BABA

My Path To Sai by dr. N.D.G. Leslie

It is likely that all of us who have ended up at the feet of SAI find, on looking back at the journey we have made, that it is difficult to decide on how much of a factor was chance and how much, a subtle destiny guiding us along. It seems to me sometimes that chance does not come into it at all, but that at every stage indicates the general evolution of a destiny based on Karmic causation. In my personal pondering over the past, what is most surprising is that there never was the slightest notion that I would become a devotee of SAI.

My father came from a Roman Catholic family in Sri Lanka. My

mother was from a Buddhist family but had been baptised into the Roman Catholic faith before their marriage. I was educated at a Roman Catholic school in Colombo, which was a college with a tradition of strict discipline and regular religious knowledge instruction, Sunday Mass, Holy Communion, Confession and meatless Fridays, were practices regularly taken to. I eagerly studied all that was expected of me - Prayers, Catechism, the Bible and the Gospels. However, in the later years in College one of teachings which I found difficult to assimilate was that of a human being having only one life on earth which is like a test for which he is created and that, depending on the performance in this test, moves after death into an eternity of Heaven or of Hell, or to an intermediate Purgatory. It seemed very unfair type of arrangement to decide upon an eternity of life following upon a single existence - The circumstances of heredity and environment of an individual could vary so greatly and also the actual lifespan was so variable, a proportionate allocation of time for the test was not given. A human being could live for 70 years, 70 months, 70 weeks, 70 days or even 70 seconds. It was difficult to grasp what sort of testing could be carried out in the case of infants who die, unable to survive beyond infancy.

I recall that there seemed to be within me, an almost inborn belief in Re-Birth and also in the law of Karma where action and reaction occurred in the moral plane and any act carried out with intent towards good or evil had corresponding consequences which could appear during a succession of births. I did attempt to test out these views in

questions addressed to religious knowledge teachers at school, but got the impression from them, that the teachings of the Church should not be questioned but should be accepted without reservation because of the guarantee of infallibility which was stamped on them.

During the years at College, I recall reading a great deal on Hinduism and the lives of Indian Holy men. I read many books written by Swami Vivekananda and also on Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Sri Ramana Maharishi. The Vedanta philosophy which incorporated the concepts of Karma and Rebirth, seemed to me at the time most acceptable and fulfilling. It was much later that I began to read books on Buddhism. After qualifying as a doctor, when working as a Surgical House Officer at the General Hospital in Colombo, a Senior and very erudite Buddhist Priest was admitted to the ward for a minor operation. I did enjoy the times spent in conversations with this Venerable Monk who talked of Buddhist teachings and gave me a number of booklets to read. I recall being impressed by the gentle and serene personality of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha and by profundity of His basic teachings - the four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. Buddhism seemed to take Vedanta to its absolute and total conclusion of Non-Duality. I made the conscious decision to accept and to act accordingly to the teachings of the Buddha. However, this decision did not keep my mind on one track to the exclusion of everything else. The teachings of the Theosophical Society which saw a

common core of Truth in every religion and had a place in it for teachings of all religions fascinated me. The meetings of the Theosophical Society in Colombo, which I began to attend, gave me excellent exposure to the basic teachings of the different faiths. This involvement in Buddhism and in the Theosophical Society was the pattern of my religious orientation when I came with my family to the UK in 1968. Within two years, I made contact with the Theosophical Society in Letchworth and began attending their meetings quite regularly. It was my wife, who in 1983 took the first steps on the path to SAI. She had been told of Sri Sathya Sai Baba by a friend of the family, who was a devotee. She began attending Sai Bhajans and Symposia with this lady. I sometimes provided the transport for them, but had no desire initially to move in the direction of SAI. Sometime later, my wife took our younger children to attend the Balvikas classes held fortnightly at the Sai Centre. I actively encouraged them to attend these, because they provided and Education in Human Values and even transported them to these classes myself. In due course, as a result of the Bhajans and Symposia she attended, my wife brought home books from the Sai Centre Library. The first book that I read was Dr. Sandweiss' "The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist". While reading it, I found that I was beginning to develop a feeling of attraction towards the personality and teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This led me on to read other books, like Howard Murphet's "Man of Miracles" and "Sai Baba Avatar".

It seemed to me that what initially developed in my mind as a glimmer became a shaft of light. Here was an individual living in our time Who was demonstrating as Jesus Christ did during His life on earth, miraculous powers which indicated superhuman faculties of Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience. What is uniquely outstanding about His teachings is His not wanting people to give up their chosen religion and taking Him as a replacement for what they are giving up.

What I found most attractive and appealing in His teaching, is His concept of "Sanathana Dharma" -the common basic fundamental body of Truth which is at the heart of all major religions of the world. If this is completely understood there is no need for any individual who is drawn towards SAI to make any changes in his religion and its practices. It appeared to me that it was this concept of the essential unity in the diffuse diversity of religious teachings that I was looking for when I felt drawn towards the Theosophical Society. In SAI, it gained its fullness of expression and it is possible for a follower of SAI to declare that he is a citizen of the World of Religion who can be perfectly at ease in any Temple or Church or Mosque or Synagogue.

In due course, there developed a compelling urge to read more and more about The Sai Life and Teachings. I actively purchased such books and read them avidly. As I continued to read these, the greater was the love and veneration that developed towards SAI. Greater was the realisation that His Teaching was

the ultimate illumination that dispelled the darkness from my journey into the world of Spirituality. I have not yet made the physical journey to the Feet of SAI at Puttaparthi, but the mental and spiritual rapport that has developed towards SAI has the extraordinary quality which makes me feel that after all my wanderings, I have come home and am at peace with myself. The home I refer to is the warm encompassing fold of this unique Individual Who has become at the same time, my Guru, My Father, my Mother, my Lord and my God. (Sai Centre of Hatfield, quarterly magazine 1997).

You are the divine, encased like Me in human flesh and bone! Only you are unaware of it! You have come into this prison of incarnation through the errors of many lives. But I have put on this mortal body of My own free will.

You are bound with ropes by three attributes and you have moved this way and that by the desire. I have no desire except the one to make you desireless.

- BABA
