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Sathya Sai Service Organisation

Republic of Ireland, Zone 9, Region 91

**SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER
JAN - FEB 2015**

Dear Devotees of Sathya Sai,

It was back in the early 1970s when I first heard of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and I spent the following years studying His teachings, giving talks to a number of "esoteric" groups and finally establishing, and chairing the Sai Organisation in Ireland. Those were wonderful days of discovery and enlightenment, and meeting new people who were equally interested in learning about the Avatar of this wondrous age. For me it was, and still is, an age of discovery, as I have learned so much from Sai's discourses and writings.

But, I feel, it is essential not to forget Who Swami is, and still is - Lord Krishna, Who comes in human form, from age to age, to rescue, guide and test mankind. During the course of a conversation with Arjuna, Krishna informed him:

"O Arjuna, I know all beings of the past, the present and those to come in the future. But no one knows Me! Concealed as I am by the power of My Creation, I am not manifest to all. The bewildered world does not recognise Me - birthless and changeless!"

"Deluded by the manifestations of the three Gunas (characteristics inbuilt into Creation), the world fails to recognise Me, the Imperishable, Who transcends the transient aspects of creation".

"Verily, this Divine illusion of Mine (Maya) is hard to surmount. But those who take sole refuge in Me, pierce this veil! Lord Krishna continues, "Not knowing My transcendent nature as the Sovereign Lord of the entire Universe, fools slight Me when I

incarnate in diminutive human form".

"Vain are the hopes, actions and knowledge of those witless ones who have embraced a fiendish, demoniacal and delusive attitude. But the great ones, O Partha, guided by their (latent) Divine nature and knowing Me as the Imperishable Source of all beings, worship Me with their Minds always fixed on Me."

These are wonderful words from the Supreme Being of our world and universe. Let us all try to live up to His expectations of us, and believe that these words were not just for Arjuna, but also for all those who call themselves His Devotees. Ed.

If you want God, you must surrender yourself to God. If you want both God and the world, you get the Devil. - BABA

The First College for Women

The first college for women was built and inaugurated by Swami in Anantapur, on July 22nd 1968. This gives young women in India, the same educational opportunities, to qualify as doctors, surgeons, business people, with equal status as their sisters in the West. Few Colleges opened with the imposing array of equipment, books, furniture, and a skilled and enthusiastic band of teachers. On that occasion Swami announced the establishment of one or two Colleges in each State of India, later to be knit together into a University. Sai Baba stated, "The

prompting behind this College is not the search for reputation or the desire to propagate a cult, or hope for monetary profit... Each child born in Bharat (India), has the right to know and benefit by this precious heritage. Agriculture is for living; Atma-culture is for success in life. An educational system that keeps children away from God - the only Refuge, the only Kinsman, the only Guide and Guard, - is a system where the blind are engaged in blinding those who long for Light".

"Women are the bulwarks of spiritual culture. But, as is evident from the attitude and behaviour of educated women today, they are fast succumbing to the flimsy attractions of froth and frippery, cheap and shoddy literature and sensual films... I desire that you should shine forth as recipients of the special attention we bestow upon you. Do not enter the fray of political controversies. Remember Swami's exhortation, 'Education without character is a great danger'."

Religion is a path to God and a mode of the mind. There are as many religions as there are minds. If you can unify minds, you can unify religions; but it is an impossible task.

One man's mind prefers Krishna, another likes Siva, another prefers the Formless Allah. I never call upon people to worship Me, giving up the Forms they already revere.

I have come to establish Dharma and so I do not and will not demand or require your Homage.

Give it to your Lord or guru, whoever He is;

I am the Witness, come to set right the vision. - BABA

The Question of Saving from Death

Sri Aurobindo

There happened in the latter part of 1953, an event almost as dramatic in its way as Christ's raising of Lazarus from the dead.

I heard of it from a number of people, including the man most closely concerned, the "Lazarus" of the case, Mr. V. Radhakrishna. Later, I had the facts carefully presented by his daughter, Vijaya, who was an eyewitness, and, who wrote down the details at the time of the happening.

Radhakrishna, a factory owner and wellknown in Andhra Pradesh, and aged about sixty years. In 1953 he paid a visit to Puttaparti with his wife and daughter, Vijaya, and the latter's husband Mr. K.S. Hemchand.

Radhakrishna at this time was suffering from gastric ulcers, with various complications - he was in a very bad way, which was his main reason for visiting the Ashram. He had known Swami for some time, and as it was the festival of Dasara, he was given a room in the same building where Swami lived, and spent all his time in bed there. Once when Swami visited him there, he said he would prefer to die rather than go on suffering the way he was. Swami just laughed at this.

That evening Radhakrishna went into a coma and his breathing was

that of a dying man. Alarmed, his wife dashed off to see Swami Who visited him saying, "Don't worry. Everything will be alright", and left. The next day the patient was still unconscious and his son-in-law brought a male nurse who failed to find any pulse, and after further examination, said the patient was near death and that there was no possibility of saving him.

After an hour the patient was very cold and relatives could hear the "death rattle" in his throat and watched him turn blue and stiff. This time Vijaya and her mother went to visit Swami in His dining room to tell Him that the man was dead. Swami laughed and walked away. After a while, Swami visited the patient, and without doing and saying anything, left again.

On the morning of the third day the body was as a corpse, dark, cold, stiff and beginning to smell, and other people at the ashram were now coming to request the removal of the corpse. She reported this to Swami, "Do not listen to them, and have no fear; I am here," He advised and said that He would come down to see her husband soon.

Time passed by and minutes dragged on into hours, then Swami appeared at the door wearing a shining smile. It was then two thirty in the afternoon of the third day. Upon seeing Swami both Vijaya and her mother burst into tears and were like Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, weeping before their Lord, Who they felt had come too late. Gently He asked them to leave the room, and He closed the door behind them. Nobody knows what happened in that room, where

there was only Swami and the "dead" man.

After very few minutes the door opened again and Swami beckoned the waiting ones inside, as He stroked the patient's head and said to him, "Talk to them; they're worried." Turning to the wife, Swami said; "I have given your husband back to you, now get him a hot drink."

When she brought it, Swami Himself fed it to Radhakrishna slowly with a spoon and He remained there, strengthening the man he had "raised", and then He blessed the whole family, placing His hand on Mrs. Radhakrishna's head and left the room.

The next day the patient was strong enough to walk to Bhajans. The gastric ulcers and complications had vanished forever.

**Love is Selflessness and
selfishness is lovelessness.**

-BABA

Who Among Men...

After praying for an appropriate response to a hostile question from a member of the audience at a public gathering, Dr. Michael Goldstein, the then deputy Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba World Council, spoke these words:

"Who among men knows what we have thought, felt, done and even dreamt?"

Who among men can transcend the physical laws of the universe as we know them?

Who among men can uplift the spirits of the ignorant, the suffering, and the spiritual seekers with a smile, a word, a glance, or a touch?

Who among men has given as selflessly, always giving and forgiving, never getting and forgetting?

Who among men can speak the eternal truth, spontaneously, with ultimate authority?

Who among men can melt the most cynical and hardest of hearts into the sweet, innocent love of a child?

I have witnessed all of these qualities in Swami.

What would you call such a man?

For me, He is God!"

What other task have I than showering Grace? By Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan, you share in that Grace. When that melts and this melts, the two can merge. Treat Me not as one afar, but as one very close to you. Insist, demand, claim Grace from Me; do not praise, extol or cringe. Bring your hearts to Me and win My Heart. Not one of you is a stranger to Me. Bring your promises to Me and I shall give you My Promises. But first see that your promise is genuine, sincere; see that your heart is pure, that is enough. -BABA

A Sai Lesson

A female devotee was once sitting near Shirdi Baba, when a leprosy patient in advance stage of the disease, came to Baba and saluted Him. The patient's body was stinking. When after a while he started to leave, a thought passed through the devotee's mind, "Thank God the stench has cleared." The moment this thought came to her, Baba looked at her piercingly and asked for the suffering devotee to be called back.

The person again, with great effort, climbed the steps before Baba. Baba asked him what was there in his pocket. The dirty packet had pedas, which he had brought for Baba, but feeling embarrassed had not given it to Him. Baba took one and ate it. The second peda He gave to the same female devotee and told her to eat it. She had to obey Baba's command.

Baba wanted to teach her that compassion is needed in such situations and also complete trust in God!

From "Miracle Called Shirdi Sai Baba"

There is no nobler quality in the world than love. It is wisdom. It is righteousness. It is wealth. It is Truth. - BABA

The One to Come...!

It was back in the Summer 1993, that the following was published in Peggy Mason's "Sathya Sai Baba" magazine.

It related to the significant increase of all nationalities and faiths who are now visiting Prasanthi Nilayam, and in particular those of the Muslim faith. A correspondent wrote in particular of the Muslims, from Iran and the Middle East, and their numbers had increased day by day.

One Iranian gentleman was questioned regarding this, and after much hesitation, gave the following reply. "In Islamic Theology, the Age of Islam as a religion, is just 1400 years. Prophet Mahommed has assured his followers that towards the end of the 14th Hizara, God would send to this world a Super Being, which he termed Mahadi (Mahdi or Mehdi), which means a Guide. The Prophet had also given his followers elaborate signs and marks of identification of the person Hazarat Mahdi". He also told me that the detailed sayings of the prophet can be traced in the 14th chapter of the 16th volumes having been translated into Persian.

All these signs and marks of identification, as given by the Prophet, are present in the person of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. A few months later the same gentleman met me again at Puttaparthi and he gave me a Persian book entitled, "Tulu Azeem Tareen Kursheed Dare Hind" ("The Rise of a Great Glorious Sun on the Horizons of India"), published by him. The book contains quotations from that old book, Bihar al-Anwar!"

I got this Persian book translated by a Muslim friend of mine, Nawab Tousif Ali, into English, and persuaded Dr. Mrs Bashiruddin, Professor of English at the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women at Anantapur, to get it published on my behalf,

after she had ascertained the authenticity of the work and going through the contents of the original work. I therefore sent a copy of this booklet called, 'Some Sacred Prophecies of The Prophet'.

However, in my 1986 article I mentioned an Iranian lady who by chance had come across a large volume on a bookstall in Teheran, being one of the 25 volumes of the Discourses of Mohammed, of which 16 are in Persian. She said, "I opened this book at random and the first words I read were 'he has a mole on his cheek'. As I read on I found this book contained everything I had seen in Sai Baba". The translation of the title was, 'The Great Teacher that was promised.'

Asked by his disciples whether he, Mahommed, was not 'Master of the World', he replied he was not, and that no prophet of God who had ever come to this world had come with the power with which HE will come.

The prophet also referred to the decline in true spirituality among his followers, when he told them, "You can never find Him, because at that time you will be so bad that you cannot recognise Him. Only a handful of you will find Him. Christians and other people of other religions see Him, but Mussalmans will be so bad that they will not find Him, not till 9 years before His passing from this world. You will be spending much money on your mosques but no one will go there to pray. You will make much art for the Koran, but no one will understand it. The real teachings of Moses were hidden in a cave in Antioch, and the Master of the World will give the real teachings."

At this point, it is worth mentioning the early history of the Muslim faith and its early struggle for acceptance by the people.

The Prophet Mohammed died in 632 AD, leaving no son or successor. Fractures appeared in Islam, so a strong hand took control with the selection of Mohammed's close friend, Abu Bekr. However, the selection over-rode a man who was a blood relative; Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law. Two more caliphs were chosen, also, by election before Ali succeeded to the leadership of Islam. Ali was not strong enough to hold the wild desert tribes together, so after 5 years he was killed by a poisoned sword, at Kufa, in Iraq. He left two sons, Hasan and Husein, who inherited a divided empire. Hasan abdicated and died in Medina (669AD), some suggested by his wife. His brother Husein, was slain later in his effort in unification, at Karbala, in Iraq. So ended the House of Ali.

They were Shias; believing in the theory that these men were sacred by virtue of their blood. They also claimed that the first three Caliphs - Abu Bekr, Omar and Othman, were usurpers as were all those Caliphs after them. There was a Persian curse: "Oh God, curse Omar, then Abu Bekr and Omar, then Othman and Omar, then Omar - then Omar!"

The majority of Muslims are Sunnis (those of the Faith) - or traditionists; whereas the majority centred in Persia and India, are Shias, or "dissenters", rigid and fanatical, with their own Mosques, festivals and interpretation of the Koran. The Shias and Sunnies are further

separated by their own schools of mystical theology. Iraq is the holy land of Shia, because Ali and Husein are buried there. Thousands go annually to their sacred cities, in Iraq - Najaf, Karbala, Kadhi-main and Samarra - mostly from Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

A grave near these holy cities would cost hundreds, while one further, costs little!

Shia pilgrims go every year to holy cities in Persia, India and Afghanistan, while Sunni pilgrims go to Mecca and Medina.

(As a final note of interest, Elijah was later John the Baptist, and later still Mohammed! Ed.)

Human body is meant to serve others, not to indulge in selfish deeds. - BABA

U.K. Sai devotee relates a personal message from Swami!

This incident took place back in the late morning of November 23rd, 2008. Swami was in His Golden Chariot on the occasion of His 82nd Birthday.

Cherie Bluett relates this fascinating event as follows; "I had been going through a particularly rough time emotionally, having been left in Arunachella, Tamil Nadu, India, by my then partner, who had left to go to Nepal, to get a new visa for India and was due back in a few weeks. However, after a few days I received a phone call from him telling me he would not be

returning. Our relationship was over!"

"I felt so alone, hurt and angry, and my heart was so broken. For two weeks I sat and cried, feeling so sorry for myself. Every day, after only a few hours sleep, I rose from bed miserable, and sat under Swami's beautiful picture and asked Him, "Why, why." so many times. I just couldn't understand why. The pain was unbearable. I had never known so much pain in my heart, it felt like it would go on forever".

"One day I started to think about suicide... just a bit! I was thinking I'd be better off dead, and that feeling became stronger and stronger. I really began to think more and more about ending it all, and this coincided with the fact that I was running out of money!"

"Just then as the feeling was getting so strong that this might really be the only thing to do, when my phone rang. It was a friend who was staying in Southern Asia with his beautiful partner. He cried so much trying to tell me that his beautiful partner had just jumped to her death, while he was out. All I could do was cry, barely able to speak... so we just cried together. It was difficult to say 'goodbye'".

"Back in my little room I sat once again in front of Swami's picture. I decided to get the drugs needed and do what it took to take away the pain, as life for me now was unbearable. My mind was now completely made up, and before the end of the day I would also be joining her and Swami. And, just at that moment the phone again went 'beep' to let me know that I had a text message. After a while I went to

see who it was, thinking that it would be more news to do with my friends in Southern Asia. But it was not. It was a text that changed everything!"

"The message read: 'Know there is higher purpose for all that happens in your life. See a 'negative' event as a positive opportunity to live only for love in every moment, Baba".

"I had a very strange feeling inside as I read it, one of disbelief, as it was so intimate, with such a depth. As I read it, I thought "who has sent me this?" As you know the way a text comes, you cannot see the whole text, as I hadn't scrolled down to the bottom. Then I saw Swami's Name, and I wondered who had sent me such a beautiful message from Swami. So I went through my whole phone trying to match the phone number to any in my phone, and there was no match".

"Then it really dawned on me fully. There was only one other person who knew at that moment, what I had made up my mind to do. That was Swami! I had not spoken to anyone about what I'd been thinking to do. So I decided to ring the number. The phone rang and then I heard the most beautiful sounding bell give three rings, with a moment's space between the church bell rings, and a perfect English speaking female voice answered. She said, 'I'm sorry but the phone is not in attendance at the moment but if you would like to ring again at another time your call may be answered'. Then she hung up".

"Tears rolled down my cheeks as the realisation dawned on me that it really was Swami Who had sent me the text message, and that queer

feeling I had inside me when reading it was Him turning me inside out. I was refusing to think that He loved me enough to let me know He was with me always and that if I just held on to Him, I would be alright. He had sent me a text to let me know that He loved me so much. It left me reeling as I had been feeling so unworthy and so unloved, and here was God, telling me the opposite. Over the days that followed I shared the text with as many as I could, especially my friend suffering in Asia. I know it helped many people to continue on, even strangers, to know that really God is always with us. It was like I had been released from a nightmare of thinking that this pain was endless. I slowly recuperated and then went on to try and live the message that God had given me".

"Swami has given me more messages since then but not by the phone. You see, that day I couldn't hear Him in my heart, I was so bound up in my pain, so He found another way to reach me. I am still very grateful for those beautiful words to remind me of how to live each moment, because it is possible to go on and learn to love the self, as the Self is God. This Oneness I could now understand. Bit by bit we chip away at the false self to find our own beauty. It's not fast and it's not always easy, but without the pain how would I ever have found God's Love, over and over again in life? And each and every time He is always there... for each and everyone of us."

There is no happiness greater than that obtained from sacrifice.

Only those who sacrifice are children of immortality, because they live forever. - BABA

ANIMALS AS 'WAR HEROES'

The wearing of a red poppy to commemorate the fallen soldiers of the First World War is familiar to many on these isles.

However, few may be aware of a similar remembrance for the other "unsung heroes", - the many animals that died serving in wars. Through their deeds of remarkable bravery, suffering and death, they served alongside their human heroes. The following words appear near a memorial in London's Hyde Park, to honour animals for their service in war. "Many and various animals were employed to support British and Allied Forces in wars and campaigns over the centuries, and as a result millions died. From the pigeon to the elephant, they all played a vital role in every region of the world in the cause of human freedom. Their contribution must never be forgotten." One might also add, "Especially as they had no choice in the matter and were not consulted beforehand" (Animals don't start wars ...humans do!). Consider the bravery of Mary, an avian member of the National Pigeon Service during World War I, was missing and it was presumed that she was killed. She had never been late before and those who knew her were sure that only death could stop her. And in a way it had. She had been attacked by a hawk and her neck and right breast were ripped open. Although it took her four painful days to do it, she got through the enemy lines. During her next

mission, Mary was absent for three weeks. She must have braved hunger, pain and predators while she was too weak to fly and had lain on the ground, trying to nurse her wounds. This time she had three pellets in her body and part of her wing shot off. Later, a 1000 pound bomb exploded outside her loft, killing most of the people in the area but Mary somehow survived. The need for brave carrier pigeons was so great that Mary was again returned to active duty. On her last mission, the tiny survivor was discovered with a wound that had opened up the side of her head and neck as she tried to bear her message to the allies. She was given stitches and nursed back to health.

(Taken from 'Peaceful Kingdom: Random Acts of Kindness by Animals' by Stephanie Laland)

One could say she was one of the lucky ones in that she miraculously survived.

In World War II, Cher Ami, another famous pigeon messenger returned to base, despite being severely wounded, carrying a message that saved 194 lives. Another unsung hero was Bob, a dog on the frontline in the Bore War. He carried water to troops under fire. He filled water bottles that were strapped to his back by lying down in a stream, returning them to the men when they were full. A dog named Peggy, during World War II, trapped in a collapsing building, rescued a baby who was suffocating under fallen plaster. Peggy dug a hole for the baby to breathe through and waited with her until help arrived.

These are just a few of the hundreds of thousands of "heroes" of war; cats, donkeys, elephants, pigs, dolphins, sea lions, apart from horses, dogs and messenger pigeons.

Finally, just a footnote on St. Francis, the patron saint of animals, said, "Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough. We have the higher mission to be of service to them wherever they require it."

Indeed, Mother Teresa had a great love for St. Francis, she said: "Because he had a great love for animals, he used to talk with them and play with them - and scold them if they did harm to anybody. I love animals, too. Animals are such simple creatures of God's beauty."

Tolstoy: "Where there are slaughter houses, there will be battlefields."

Pythagorus, 6th century, Greece: "As long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed he who sows the seed of murder and pain cannot reap joy and love."

Linga is a symbol of the beginningless. It means that, in which all forms and names merge, and that, towards which all names and forms are proceeding to attain fulfilment. It is the fittest symbol of the all pervasive, the all knowing, the all powerful. Everything is subsumed in it.

-BABA

Smile At the One You Love

Mother Teresa often gave people unexpected advice. When a group of Americans, many in the teaching profession, visited her in Calcutta, they asked her for some advice to take home to their families. "Smile at your wives," she told them. "Smile at your husbands".

Thinking that perhaps the counsel was simplistic, coming from an unmarried person, one of them asked, "Are you married?" "Yes," she replied, to their surprise, "and I find it hard sometimes to smile at Jesus. He can be very demanding!"

The Meaning of Bhajan

The word "Bhajan" has been derived from the Sanskrit root "Bhaj", which means to render service. Bhajan singing is indeed a mode of providing service for the audience to purify their mind and heart. - BABA

Death Is Certain

Lord Krishna said to Arjuna: "For everyone who is born, death is certain". When Walter Cowan died in the U.S., Swami sent a telegram to Mrs. Cowan, "Walter arrived in good shape." He was the same Walter whom Swami had resurrected 19 months earlier in Madras. "Accept the inevitable", He said.

Sai Baba declared that: "Immortality does not imply that one can avoid death and continue living in the physical body for all time. It means that one's name and fame will shine in the memories of people if

his character and achievements are noble and beneficial."

Swami spoke many times on the issue of death and whenever, wherever and however it happens, as regards to the death of President Kennedy. "Consider Kennedy! How death was lurking around him waiting for the chance! Did he not have men guarding him - soldiers, security men, body-guards? But it was all in vain. So, while life persists do good, speak soft and sweet, never injure or insult another, serve those in need and keep the image of God, ever before the mind's eye."

To sum up, Swami's recipe for facing death is as follows: live every moment as if it were the last, fully, intensely, purposefully, selflessly and joyfully, so that we are too busy to worry about death. When death comes, welcome the click with a smile.

And in conclusion He said: "Work as if you were to live a hundred years, pray as if you were to die tomorrow."

If you do not repeat the name of God with love in your heart, you cannot experience Bliss! Also, if you do not feel God in your heart, you cannot obtain My Grace.

-BABA

OUR JUDGEMENT DAY

I frequently think of the many people who are suffering ill-health, in hospitals, or at home, frightened of what is refer to as "the judgement day"; that day when they believe God

announces those who go to Heaven, or those who go to Hell!

What a sad way to spend one's last days on Earth! In fear - in a hopeless conclusion to a life spent on Earth. But is it true? So many people believe so. Fortunately, it is not what Swami says, "God is Love", and He cannot go against His own nature.

"God is not involved in either rewards or punishments," Swami says, "He only reflects, resounds and reacts! He is the eternal unaffected witness! We decide our own fate - do good, be good and you get good in return. Be bad, do bad deeds, you reap bad results. Do not thank or blame God - thank yourself, blame yourself."

Swami also stated, "We create our own world, ourselves. The real world is within us, that is the spiritual, Divine world. Nothing else really exists."

Swami's close devotee, Dr. Gokak, said, "In Swami you recognise your real Self. Then come the tears of self-recognition, tears of joy, gladness that you have your long-lost Self."

Not too long ago, Swami made the following important response to a question which had been on the minds of many people, in relation to disasters and tragic events of recent times. "In the great drama of Cosmic life, the Cosmic Director, God, is also an actor. The Cosmic play is governed by certain rules and regulations. Because He is the Almighty, God cannot behave in an arbitrary manner. His actions have to be in accordance with His role in the Cosmic play. There are certain rules as to how one should act

according to the time, the place and the circumstances. He cannot behave according to His whims just because He is all-powerful. For instance, the officer who lays down the rules for controlling traffic, cannot disobey them on the ground that he is their author. Likewise, the Creator has to conform to the rules laid down by Him for Creation".

"Not recognising this truth, men, who are involved in worldly ways, ask questions as to why in certain situations, God did not use His limitless powers to avert certain untoward events. These arise out of a narrow conception of things without understanding how the Divine operates. They are only concerned about themselves and their interests," said Baba.

Referring to those who constantly seek of the future or live in the past, He states, "...they must concentrate on the Present, which is a product of the Past and the parent of the Future. Live in the Present and be happy!"

This article is intended to be a comfort to those who are plagued by fear of the future and what it may hold for us. As Swami frequently said, "Be Happy! Be Happy!"

Action with Love is right conduct. Speak with Love and it becomes Truth. Thinking with Love results in Peace. Understanding with Love leads to non-violence.

- BABA

Swami's Time Check!

Many readers may be familiar with the details of the passing of Walter Cowan in India, when Swami "resurrected" him so that he could get back home to the US.

But it may not be generally known that when Walter did finally pass away in California, Swami sent his wife a telegram that stated simply, "Walter has arrived in good shape. Baba"

At a later date, when Walter's wife, Elsie, journeyed to India, she woke one morning and felt convinced that her husband was in the room. When she asked Swami that day about it, He replied; "Yes, yes. I brought Walter to see you."

"Was it at six o'clock?" asked Elsie.

"No," said Baba, "It was actually five minutes to six."

Man lives by getting and forgetting. God lives by giving and forgiving. - BABA

Are You Taking Life Seriously?

"The day of awakening is not far off and when it comes there will be revelation of the true power of God. This will be the signal for a great move forward and for the weeding out of those who are now ready to accept the challenge of the moment. It will be just so, mark My words, but few will listen, very few".

"After the storm, there will be a new beginning and a new atmosphere. It will be completely different, a new age, the age of Love,

harmony and co-operation, replacing the age of war, fighting, hatred, jealousy, greed and all the negative aspects of life. Everyone should prepare now for this change, for I promise you it will come and those who are ready will survive."

(This is a shortened version of an article that appeared in "Sai Marga", in Sri Lanka, Nov. 1995, by David Jevons).

Here, he said, I would share with joy a dream that my daughter, Diana had. She is a real Swami's child. She regards Swami as her God-father and has been out to see Him twice. Anyway, here is her dream, as she related it to her mother. One morning Diana, our daughter, came into our room and said, "I had a strange dream last night in which I was sitting on the roof at one end of the house and Sai Baba was sitting at the other end. I waved at Him, lost my balance and fell, and then I woke up." That was the end of the dream. On the very next morning she wandered into our bedroom again and said, "You know the dream that I told you about yesterday, well, I had it again last night, only this time I was more careful. When I waved at Baba, I held on firmly with my other hand and so I did not fall off this time. He waved back at me and I then asked Him what I should do. He replied asking me, 'What do you want to do?' I replied, 'I don't know. What do You think I should do?'" Baba replied, 'I want you to do whatever you want to do.' I thought about this for a moment and then said, 'Can I go to Africa?' and He replied, 'Yes'. I then asked Him, 'Can I go to America?' and He again said, 'Yes'. Lastly, I said, 'Can I go to India?' and He said, 'Certainly.' So I

then said that I would like to go to India. The next thing I knew was that I was in India in the front row of the darshan line, at Swami's Ashram and He was coming towards me smiling and saying, "You see, I told you that you could do anything you liked." I then felt myself getting out of my body, going right up above the world and looking down on the earth. Swami was with me and we were talking. He said to me, "Isn't it perfect?" I said to Him, 'No, it isn't. You have people killing each other, hating each other and disease is everywhere.'

Swami then said, "Go a little higher and look at the Earth from further away." I did this and then I could see the Earth not only as it is now, but as it was and as it will be. I really could see everything, not just the Earth but its place in the Universe as well, and from that perspective I could see that it really was perfect, that everything that happened, truly did have a reason, meaning and purpose, and that, in the end, everything balanced out. Unfortunately, while you are alive, you can never see the whole picture. You have to wait until after you die to understand it more fully. Swami then said, "Now, do you understand that imperfection is ever perceived, it does not actually exist. The problems that you see are just karma being balanced. The world is absolutely perfect!"

Now, that's some dream for a thirteen year old. I, of course on one level, can understand what Swami is saying, but on another level, I am aware that many people are suffering and I find it hard to come to terms with that suffering, even if it is a part of God's plan. I am also amazed at just how many people

here in the Western world, place so little value on human life. It seems to me that we have failed to teach the value of life to our children. We have devalued the purpose of our incarnation and with this in mind, I would like to quote from a conversation between John Hislop and Swami. I remember, when I read it many years ago, that its significance took my breath away. For the first time in my life, it put human life into perspective. Never again would I take human life for granted.

Hislop: Swami, from the standpoint of the individual, what is the value to the individual of having a body? He lives and dies, why should he care? Science says that there are many planets where there will be much the same life.

Swami: In all the universe there is no other planet that has human life or a similar life form.

Hislop: In that case Swami, there has to be something very special and unique about life in the physical body.

Swami: There is life throughout the universe. To God the universe is one. Rebirth can never be in other regions of the universe. Always the rebirth is on earth.

Hislop: Swami! What does that mean to the individual?

Swami: The expression of life on earth is upward through the human to the Divine. By virtue of human birth, the next step is the full realisation of the Divine. Human life is sacred and most appreciated as having the highest value.

Hislop: Considering the individual, Swami, can it be said that what Swami is saying is that human birth is some sort of a special opportunity to get free from birth and death?

Swami: Quite right. That is the case.

Hislop: Swami, then that is it! That is the secret! That is the unique feature of being born into a body!

Swami: Yes, that is the unique feature.

Hislop: Swami! Are there other regions throughout the universe where there may also be an escape from birth and death?

Swami: Only on earth may this take place. In no other planet or region throughout the indescribable vastness of the universe does this opportunity exist. It is unique and is limited to this earth.

Hislop: Swami! Wonderful! How sacred is this earth! How infinitely precious is human birth.

Swami: That is so, but people have no appreciation or understanding of it. They do not know.

Hislop: Swami! May this great life secret be told to the devotees? At Sathya Sai Baba Centres, they should know that even five minutes wasted time is a tragic loss in the face of the magnificence of this opportunity.

Swami: Yes, you may tell. The question that you have raised is of great importance and the answer may be told.

So what we are hearing here from Swami is that life on earth is unique; it is a precious gift.

You are the embodiment of God. Fill yourselves with the thought of your almightiness, your Majesty and your Glory. -BABA

Faith Leaders Universal Declaration against Slavery

The signing of the Declaration against slavery is a historic initiative, with the leaders of most world religions, gathered in the Vatican, representing the congregations of followers and supporters of over half the world's population, against human trafficking and slavery.

This august gathering of ten major religions was chaired by Pope Francis, on Dec. 2nd, 2014. The gathering, including Amma, Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, signed the Joint Declaration of religious leaders against modern slavery, at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

Pope Francis commented, "Inspired by our faiths, we have gathered together today because of one historical initiative and one concrete action: to declare that we will work together to eradicate the terrible surge of modern slavery in all its forms. The physical, economical, sexual and physiological exploitation of men, women, boys and girls is currently linking millions of people to dehumanisation and humiliation. Every human being - man, woman, boy and girl - is an image of God. God is love and freedom that is given freely in interpersonal relationships; therefore, every human being is a free individual, whose life is for the

good of others, living in equality and fraternity.”

This gathering represented the Christian Churches, Islam, Buddhists, Orthodox Churches, and the coordinator of the Jewish community in South America.

Amma stated: “We are honoured and thankful that His Holiness Pope Francis has gathered us here today under the auspices of the Global Freedom Network. I am optimistic that all global faiths are united together to inspire both spiritual and practical actions towards society ending the horror of slavery and human trafficking.”

Later, Amma joined Pope Francis and ten other world religious leaders in a ceremonial signing of a declaration against human trafficking and slavery, which is a major blot on human society today.

(Sai devotees should be able to detect the “hand of Swami” in promoting this initiative! Ed.)

Man is Divine, he has the Lord dwelling in his heart, yet he is bound, miserable, limited, weak, agitated.

Why? He is ignorant of his reality. He imagines himself weak, limited, bound and he is so shaped by the mind, which is the source of that imagination. -BABA

The Ganga Darshan by Sandra Levy
 (“Facets” Spring 1991)

One afternoon, a few weeks before Baba’s 65th Birthday, we were all

sitting in the Mandir courtyard waiting for darshan, when heavy rain began to fall. Many people got up immediately and left the courtyard but most, including the ladies in our group, smiled as if they wouldn’t let a bit of rain bother them, and sat tight. As the downpour continued, the situation became more and more comical and light hearted.

A lady sitting beside me raised her hands to Heaven and exclaimed exuberantly, “This is Ganga! From Shiva’s head!”

By now we were all soaked to the skin, and rivulets of water flowed around us. We began to wonder whether Baba would come out or not. Someone started to chant the AUM, whether to quieten everyone down or to attract Baba’s attention, I don’t know. So we sat in the torrential rain, giggling and chanting AUM, for all the world like a fan-club crowd waiting for its hero - an unheard-of event in the normally quiet and decorous darshan procedure. By now, we were sitting in two inches of warm water and still it poured. Our faces were washed clean of make-up, our hair plastered to our heads, we surrendered to the warm rain, abandoning our desire to keep dry, or not-wanting to get wet. Even those with macs and umbrellas gave up hope of keeping dry. It was a complete baptism.

Suddenly, Baba appeared. A delighted murmur ran through the crowd and such a wave of love and gratitude flowed towards Him that we seemed to forget our (relatively) rowdy behaviour and lifted His hands gently in blessing, smiling an ineffable smile. As He stepped off the

verandah, we all started to clap - another unheard of event at darshan... Baba actually blew us a kiss! Something I have never seen Him do. After a brief darshan and a chat to the boys on the verandah, Baba disappeared again, and thousands of dripping ladies stood up laughing and wringing out their heavy, rain sodden draperies and foam cushions like sponges.

It was a very special darshan.

The catastrophe which has come upon Man will be averted. The New Golden Age will come. I shall not fail; it is not in the nature of Avatars to fail! -BABA

The Sarva Dharma Design

On December 1st 1980, Swami blessed the group of Jewish devotees with an interview. During this He mentioned that the Jewish people were an ancient people who received the direct word of God through the Torah, which He said was very similar to the Vedas. He stated that since the Jewish people had not been a significant religious group in India, the Sai emblem representing the five major religions of India had not included the Jewish symbol. From then on He gave permission for the overseas centres to include the Star of David in their Sai emblem in recognition of Judaism's role both as a world religion and as a people with a great spiritual tradition, who through their bible, the Hebrew Testament, have had a profound influence on the course of humanity. A six-symbol design for a Sai emblem was

proposed to Bhagavan for use by American centres, and He promptly approved it. SJL.

I do not want you to extol Me. I shall be happy if you rely on Me.

-BABA

I wish you and yours, every Blessing for a Peaceful New Year.
