

2014

Sathya Sai Service Organisation

Republic of Ireland, Zone 9, Region 91

**SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER
NOV - DEC 2014**

Dear Devotees of Sathya Sai,

"Your mission has begun", Sathya Sai Baba announced. "Those are My words to you, My devotees. Each of you has a unique and valuable part to play in this lifetime. Only those whom I have called can serve Me".

"My mission has now reached that point of time when each of you now has work to do. This planet has a purpose in which it is held. That purpose is now unfolding before our eyes. I call you to radiate the Bhakti (devotion) within you so that its unseen power will envelop all who come into your orbit. To successfully perform your part, always remain centred on Me".

"Allow yourself to impart that purity of heart within you towards all human beings and all living things and do not reach for the fruits of your work".

"This part of My mission is performed in absolute silence. You are My instruments from whom My Love will pour. Be always aware that the moment you let your ego descend upon you, My work ceases. When you have overcome your negative unmindfulness, you will again become My Source".

"The multiplication of My Love will be felt throughout the world. I have prepared you for this work over many incarnations. I have drawn you to Me. I have made great steps in My Mission over these past incarnations. My work is ceaseless and so your work, too, is without end".

"Know that I am within and without you. There is no difference. Rid yourself of the petty matters forevermore. You are now in Me and

I am now in thee. There is no difference. My Darshan (spiritual blessings) will pour forth from Me to, and through, you. You may be unaware of this constant action. Be ever pure of heart and soul, and mankind in your lifetime will benefit from your unique qualities".

"Others, too, will join Me in this Mission when I draw them to Me. The time is approaching when all humanity will live in harmony. That time will be here sooner than one expects. Before it arrives, be prepared for whatever is needed to reveal to every living thing the true purpose of existence. It is not what anyone alive can imagine. It is beyond all comprehension. I can say that its beauty is magnificent beyond all dreams. And as each of you perform your silent work, I embrace you to My Heart and henceforth your souls shall be lifted up and your eyes will reveal My Presence within".

"This I say to all My Devotees from the Lord's Mountain Top, where all the Universe becomes one. Be about My Work, My beloved Bhaktas. Your breath will carry the scent of the blossoms of Heaven. Your example will be that of Angels. Your joy will be My Joy!"

This is a remarkable and unique statement by Swami, indicating that we as devotees, are now involved in a magnificent and exquisite purpose of a cosmic dimension. How blessed we are! Ed.

**God speaks to us through people,
not through pages. –BABA**

Shirdi Sai Baba's birthday

Shirdi Sai Baba's birthday (according to the Gregorian Calendar) falls on September 28th. Please read on for an excerpt from the 1991 discourse where Swami reveals this hitherto unknown fact about Shirdi Baba's birth.

During His Divine Discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam, on Sept. 28th, 1991, Swami revealed the following interesting details about the Trinity of Sai Avatars:

"In the former Nizam's dominions, there was a remote village called Parthi. In that village there were a couple named Gangabhavadya and Devagiriamma. They were grieving over the lack of children. In answer to their prayers a son was born on Sept. 28th, 1835. Today is the anniversary of that day. The child was Sai Baba.

His Samadhi (death) occurred on Vijayadasami day in 1918. Although this year Vijayadasami falls on Sept. 19th, in the year of Baba's Samadhi the date was different.

'The first advent of Sai was in Maharashtra. The second advent will be in Madras', Shirdi Baba said. It should be noted that when this form (Sathya Sai) made its advent, Andhra Pradesh was part of Madras Presidency. When He was asked, in what form the next advent would take place, Shirdi Baba told Abdul Baba alone: 'I will give darsan in the name of Sathya for upholding Truth.' That is the present advent.

The two bodies are different, but the Divinity is one. The first advent was revealing Divinity. The second advent is to awaken the Divinity (in

human beings). The next advent is for propagating Divinity. The three Sai's are: Shirdi Sai, Sathya Sai and Prema Sai.

The reason for relating all this is that today happens to be the birthday of Shirdi Baba (Sept. 28th, 1835). He attained Samadhi in 1918. Bodies are transient. These vestures are assumed only for the sake of devotees. Unless the Divine comes with a form, no one can develop faith in the Formless. The Divine in human form is the preparation for comprehending the Formless Absolute." - Bharathi Kasturi

When you ignore your defects and magnify the faults in others, you are practicing violence. -BABA

Forgiveness

by Valerie Dean

I grew up adoring my father who appeared to be incapable of returning affection, with the result that he became an obtainable Godlike creature towards whom I must always strive, whose slightest word of approval was manna from heaven. In the process I ignored my poor mother, as did my father. She was an alcoholic from loneliness and tending towards depression. When I was eighteen, she committed suicide.

In those teen years, I had a strong yearning towards God, not Jesus. "If you can give me one word of proof that God exists, I'll believe in Him", my father said. Of course I couldn't.

In the meantime I had discovered my father to be human, he had

feelings, and he loved me. The morning I left home for South Africa he came into my room and cried. I left, and he died a month later.

For years my mourning for my father was mixed with resentment for what he had or hadn't done, what he had said or shouldn't have said. About my mother I harboured feelings of guilt, compounded by the fact that I had wiped her from my memory, with none of the care and kindness she had undoubtedly shown me when I was younger.

It was in 1981 when I first heard of Swami, and in 1982 I went to Puttaparthi and met Him in an interview. Then, later in 1984, I made a further trip to Swami. Later I visited Indian friends in Durban and was struck by their custom of placing photos of deceased parents in the puja room. I said to a friend, "I must do that."

One day, upon returning home to my flat, my first thought was of the photos of my parents. I put them on a table in the prayer room, with a tiny vase with two or three anemones in front of the pictures and then sat and sent my parents love and asked Swami to take care of them.

The following morning the stems of the flowers were covered in vibhuti, the vibhuti appeared to be almost growing out of the stems. I was overjoyed! As the day wore on, I began to doubt. But once again, the following morning, there was a sprinkling of vibhuti on the petals of the flowers. This beautiful blessing from Swami helped me to start sending love to my parents' souls regularly and sincerely, but some negative thoughts remained.

Sometime later, a visitor mentioned that she had been to a medium, but when she had left, I said to Swami, "I'm not sure I like this but if I'm supposed to see this medium, she must give me an appointment today, otherwise I'm not going." The medium never gave sittings on Saturdays, but I was told to come.

I sat while she spoke of 'people' around me that I did not recognise. I was very sceptical. Suddenly she said, "I have someone here on a very fatherly vibration. He wants to tell you that he is sorry for having put you off the God path when you were young and that he has had to do a lot of paying off on other planes for it. He is glad you have found your way back".

I believe Swami opened the way for both of us with the vibhuti miracles. I could send out love to my father; he needed forgiveness before he could move on. My mother took longer. I worried about her because of the implications of suicide that I could not understand, and there was still guilt and only memory of ugly and unhappy times.

One night I was watching TV when something burst inside me, I literally howled out my need, "If only I could help her, Swami".

That night I 'dreamt' of visiting my mother in a place that was a cross between a mental institution and the large Victorian house where we had lived. She was sitting at what appeared to be our dining-table, sunk in despair. Even as I held to comfort her, I understood that she was still confined in the illusion of her last life and its unhappiness. She

turned to me and said, "It's always better when you're here!"

I woke up to the knowledge that during my sleeping hours I was in fact helping my mother and at the same time paying my debt of gratitude to her.

Swami had brought me forgiveness, and self-forgiveness.

If you cannot pray for the total welfare of the community around you in whom God lives, how is it possible for you to worship an invisible God?

The first thing you have to do is to look after the welfare of the living around you. - BABA

Diamonds Must Be Polished

It was back in 1990 when my late wife had her Sai experience, which was published in Peggy Mason's, Quarterly Sai magazine. She was referred to as "an Irish Catholic lady" who wrote the following; "Thank you both, oh, so very much, for writing 'The Embodiment of Love'. This was the book that swung me to total devotion to Swami. Because of my Catholic background something always held me back. Because you sorted my dilemma from a Catholic point of view, yours was the book that got rid of the "holding back" that was eternally in my mind. I owe you both a very great debt of gratitude...

One night I was awakened with this blinding light. Swami was standing there in gleaming white (it appeared to be satin). The joy and utter bliss that He brought cannot be

described, words are totally inadequate. He approached me and with vibhuti put the sign of the Cross on each eye, saying He would show me how to see properly. He then poured vibhuti into my cupped hands and it turned into several largish lumps of what appeared to be muddy glass. He said, "These are your diamonds, and your job in life is to polish them." That was it. I could hardly get to sleep for the bliss of it all, and it lasted several days".

"In the morning I still could not read the clock in the breakfast-room, myopic as ever, so obviously it wasn't physical sight He had referred to when he put on my eyes".

"But it bothered me that I had never heard of Swami robed in white. It was always saffron-red. Much later I read that Swami always wore white on His birthday! I felt I would like to share this with you because, with your book you have been instrumental in changing my life. You are two very precious people, and may Swami hold you in His love." Ed.

Realise that every human birth is a manifestation of the Divine Will.

- BABA

A Pregnant Deer

In a forest, a pregnant deer is about to give birth. She finds a remote grass field near a strong-flowing river. This seems a safe place. Suddenly labour pains begin. At the same moment, dark clouds gather around above and lightning starts a forest fire. She looks to her left and

sees a hunter with his bow extended, pointing at her. To her right, she spots a hungry lion approaching her.

What can the pregnant deer do? She is in labour! What can happen? Will the deer survive? Will she give birth to a fawn? Will the fawn survive? Or will everything be burnt by the forest fire? Will she perish to the hunter's arrow? Will she die a horrible death at the hands of the hungry lion approaching her?

She is constrained by the fire on the one side and the flowing river on the other, and boxed in by her natural predators. What does she do?

She focuses on giving birth to a new life. The sequence of events that follows are:

- Lightning strikes and blinds the hunter.
- He releases the arrow which zips past the deer and strikes the hungry lion.
- It starts to rain heavily and the forest fire is slowly doused by the rain.
- The deer gives birth to a healthy fawn.

In our life too, there are moments of choice when we are confronted on all sides with negative thoughts and possibilities.

Some thoughts are so powerful that they overcome us and overwhelm us.

Maybe we can learn from the deer. The priority of the deer, in that given moment, was simply to give birth to a baby. The rest was not in her

hands and any action or reaction that changed her focus would have likely resulted in death or disaster.

Ask yourself, "Where is your focus? Where is your faith and hope?" In the midst of any storm, do keep it on God always. He will never ever disappoint you, NEVER. Remember, He neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray. - Sathya Sai Baba

The Three Cigarettes

"Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future". - Oscar Wilde.

Former Sai student, Aravind B., related the following fascinating tale, from the 1980's.

Mr. Prithviraj had been serving in the South Indian canteen in Prasanthi Nilayam, when he was accosted by a man who asked, "Sai Ram sir, do you not remember me, you had given me tea. I am Mohammad..., remember? The cigarettes..." In a flash, Prithviraj recalled everything of the occasion of five years before. He later related the most fascinating and thrilling story of his life, which began with Mohammad being reprimanded by a Seva Dal for smoking cigarettes in the ashram. "I know that the only boss in this place is that person with the curly mop of hair! Swami has given me this cigarette and I don't know why you people do not understand me..." the man protested even as he was being pushed out.

Prithviraj was now an advocate of the Supreme Court of India, decided to invite him for tea in a nearby hotel, to hear his story. "Did Swami really give you that cigarette? I find it hard to believe that..."

"No, not just a cigarette, He gave me three!" Mohammad began by saying that he was from Calicut, and he was overjoyed to be offered an assignment that involve smuggling drugs into Bombay. He was approached by three men who said that if he was ready to transfer a crate-load of parcels to Bombay, they would pay him Rs. 50,000 on the spot, and promised a further 50,000 upon delivery in Bombay. Mohammad didn't have a motor boat and would have to row all the way from Calicut to Bombay. None-the-less he agreed to do it. Later, having loaded the boat for the long journey, he was dying to know what was inside the packets, so he slit open one and realized they contained illegal drugs!

The journey was uneventful, taking a couple of days, but rowing with all his might, Mohammad reached the Goa coastline, and it was then the trouble began. The coastguard became visible and it was only a matter of time before the search party would board his boat. It was then that another big boat, a motorboat, thundered towards him and Mohammad saw one of the most peculiar sights of his life. On the stern of the boat stood a tall fakir, who said, "I know what is there in your boat! You are in a hopeless situation and only if you take refuge in me, can you be saved." The fakir continued, "Do you know that all your bosses in Bombay are behind bars now? They cannot help you and

you will not get anything even by reaching Bombay!"

Mohammad knew that this person was definitely not related to the police, and the next statement stunned Mohammad, "You are killing children with what you are carrying. That is why you have no children of your own."

"Tell me, how you can save me?"

"There is no time, just listen to me. Get on to my boat and I shall take yours. Everything will be fine, trust me." Mohammad did as suggested. The boat was boarded by the customs and pulling out a raw mango from his shoulder bag and a knife apparently from thin air, the fakir made several slices. Fishing out the deadly hashish, ripping it with the knife, he took the white powder and applied it to the mango slices. "Would you all like some raw mango with salt? The mangos have been specially brought from Kerala. Try it... It is tasty..." The patrol officers were bewildered because the white powder was indeed salt! The police assumed that the person had added some decoy packets filled with salt so they began to scan every packet on the boat. The fakir was just smiling at their bewilderment. The coast guard people left after an animated conversation with the fakir. Soon they were gone.

Mohammad returned to his boat and checked the drugs, to find only salt! Maybe as a favour he would ask to have the salt changed back into his valuable cargo! He even thought of striking up a long-standing business deal with the fakir! "I would like to do business with you. I shall do all the hard work while you just sit with your powers! We will

make great profits. Let's split the profits 50-50. What do you say?" The fakir replied, "I don't do this kind of business. Mine is the business of the heart. Are you ready for that?"

Mohammad began to think furiously, "So this person smuggles organs!" That was a far riskier business but with the kind of magical abilities that the fakir possessed, any business was bound to be a success. "I am ready for any business. Tell me how it is done," he said aloud.

"It is very simple. You give me your heart and I will give you mine."

"But will both of us not die then?" The fakir laughed loudly. "It is not the way you are thinking. You give your heart by loving someone, by loving God. Are you ready to do that?" The question stumped Mohammad into silence. This fakir seemed to have some kind of esoteric wisdom for life too! "Now listen to what I say..." As the stranger began to dump all the packets into the Arabian Sea, they began to dissolve in the expansive waters.

"Return home now. There is nobody waiting for you in Bombay. Take my boat with you and start fishing for a living. Do not lead this kind of life." Mohammad could not believe this lucky break. Apart from the Rs. 50,000 advance which was with him, he had been gifted a new large motor boat. As his benefactor was rowing away, he called out, "Wait! Can I have your address please?" The fakir handed over a visiting card to Mohammad, with the address citing some "Congress buildings" in Bombay. Then he was gone!

Though Mohammad began to make a decent living catching fish in the new motor boat, his inner world was in total turmoil. He began to smoke, even more than before, and couldn't forget his fakir friend, so he decided to go to Bombay to seek him out. The address the fakir had given him, led him to a temple in Bombay. He had never entered a temple in his life. Strangely, nobody seemed to be surprised to see a Muslim enter a temple. It was as if that was normal! Walking in, Mohammad got a shock of his life. He fell on his knees and began to sob uncontrollably.

A kindly gentleman came to him and consoled him, asking what the matter was. "A few months ago, I met a fakir when I was at sea, now I realise I will never be able to see him again." Tears welled up in the eyes of the gentleman. This was in 1984. "You are indeed blessed sir! This 'friend' you speak of is our Baba, our God. He lived in Shirdi where he gave up his body in 1918, and I want to assure you that if you saw Him a few months ago, there are all the chances that you can see Him again." Mohammad's eyes grew large in wonder at what was said.

It was a few weeks before Onam that Mohammad saw a procession on the road with a picture of his fakir friend Shirdi Baba, being paraded in a palanquin and also saw another photo next to the Shirdi Baba, one that had a mop of thick curly hair and wore a saffron robe. Moving closer to the photo, he asked someone, "Who is this little guy?"

He was told about how Swami, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, was considered Part 2 in the "Sai series" of incarnations. Eventually his efforts led him to

procure a seat in one of the buses that would be a part of the Onam pilgrimage to Puttaparthi. During the journey he was told of the rules and regulations at the ashram. That was when he realised that Sathya Sai and Shirdi Sai were the same. Smoking and eating meat were strictly no-nos at Puttaparthi! Being a chain smoker he wondered how he would manage. He was obliged to throw away all his cigarettes.

Mohammad found himself in the darshan grounds, and watched in awe at the thousands gathered there, looking towards the orange-robed form of their Swami, Bhagawan Baba. Swami called the Kerala group, in for special meeting and out of all those devout thousands from Kerala, Swami beckoned to Mohammad to go into the interview room.

Mohammad was seated close to Swami. Looking into his eyes, Swami told him "You are smoking a lot. That is why you have no children of your own." The words hit Mohammad and he knew he had heard similar words in the past. "Give up smoking and you will have children. I will help you." Then, coming closer to his face and looking deep into his eyes, Swami asked him, "Do you recognise Me?" Mohammad stared blankly, as Swami placed His right hand on his head, right on the spot between his eyebrows, and he was transported into another time-space in an instant. He recalled the time he had lost his mare, and the voice calling him, "Chand! My dear Chand. You have lost your mare and are worried, right?" He replied, "Yes, sir..." he replied to the fakir wondering how on earth he knows his name. "She had wandered off somewhere today, and I don't seem to be able to locate

her at all." The reply came, "She is just beyond this little hillock. She is safe and is awaiting you."

Mohammad looked at Swami, and with tears in his eyes, he held on to His feet and cried out, "Swami! How I have faltered! How I have moved away from you. Please hold on to me as you have done so far. I want to reform. I want to change. I don't want to get stuck in the mire that I have wallowed in for so long. Please, my dear Lord, my Allah, keep me with you." He felt a surging joy at his self-discovery. Whatever be one's achievements in life, man will never find peace and joy till he realizes his unique relationship with God - the relationship of oneness!

It was via a smoke that Shirdi Baba had bonded with Chand, now, Swami waved His palm and materialised three cigarettes! Handing them over to him, Swami blessed him saying, "Three smokes and all will be well. Through these three cigarettes, I grant you the three greatest gifts of Karma, Jnana and Bhakti."

"It was that third and last of those cigarettes that I finished smoking now. When Sai Baba, the top-shot of this place, has permitted me to smoke, who are these people to stop me?" concluded Mohammad, who later became a Seva Dal. Prithviraj was lost in joy. What a tale the Lord had scripted. He wished that he had picked up at least the butt of the Bhakti cigarette which Mohammad discarded and had taken a puff! Suddenly, there was a commotion, Mohammad was gone and everyone seemed to be in a tearing hurry... "Swami is coming to the canteen." A few minutes later, the beautiful form glided into the canteen. Among the

many things that Swami did, He spoke to Prithviraj when He came near him, looking at him, Swami asked, "You want to smoke? To get devotion? That is only for him. No shortcuts!" So saying, Swami glided away. Prithviraj understood that in His love and boundless grace, Swami had created a new and unique way for a devotee to reach Him - via three cigarettes!

**What you are is God's gift to you.
What you make of yourself is your
gift to God. -BABA**

"OM" chanted in the Kremlin

(This article appeared in Peggy Mason's Quarterly Sai magazine, back in 1990, with information from New Zealand Sai Newsletter and an article in an Indian newspaper).

"How many people know, for example, that in January of this year (1990) some 1,000 people from 83 countries attended an important conference in Moscow, all drawn there by their common concern for the future of this planet and its inhabitants?

The conference was called a Global Forum on Environment and Development for Human Survival. It emphasized the urgent need for all Nations and all peoples to become aware of the grave peril in which we are placing the planet and life itself, by our total lack of a sense of responsibility towards our environment.

There were parliamentarians from the five continents, spiritual leaders of every denomination, economists,

sociologists and agronomists. The Secretary General of the United Nations and the heads of the four UN agencies all attended, and the conference was covered by journalists from every world press agency including the BBC - but did we hear about it?

Resolutions were taken at this important conference which reflects the deep and widespread concern for our environment, and which we hope will become binding upon all the Nations which participated. But, apart from the general concern demonstrated by such a conference of delegates from 83 countries, and the important resolutions taken, there was also an event which may well prove to be even more epoch-making: on the final day of the conference the Kremlin resounded to the sacred sound of OM...

It was remarkable enough that on each day the proceedings opened with a prayer led by one or other of the religious leaders present. Most of the sessions were held in a big hotel designated for the purpose. But on that last day it was held in the Kremlin itself. That day, too, it was the turn of a Hindu Swami to lead the opening prayers - clothed in saffron robes with holy ash on his forehead. He raised his right hand and asked all to follow him in chanting OM. He intoned, and the huge hall of the Kremlin filled with the sound of 1,000 people chanting OM!

On the top podium sat Mikhail Gorbachev, chanting OM. Shevardnadze, with a quick glance at his boss, chanted OM. The Buddhist monks, the Grand Mufti, Christians and American Indians, Jewish rabbis,

scientists like Carl Sagan, atheists by training and conviction, are talking about global survival with Catholic priests - and praying - and chanting OM - and in Moscow - and in the Kremlin! Surely there is hope for our world.

To crown it all, from our point of view, our own Dr, Jumsai gave one of his beautiful talks on Education in Human Values."

'ACCEPT THE SALARY'

An instance that demonstrated Bhagawan's respect for government rules was in regard to our salaries. When all of us moved from Ooty to Puttaparthi, Bhagawan wanted us to accept a salary. Until then we were getting an honorarium. Even though the honorarium was modest, we had no complaints as were receiving far more from Swami in terms of His grace, gifts of cash and saris and other essentials. So, in all their devotion for Swami, the teachers refused to take a salary.

We said, 'No Bhagawan, we would like to continue just doing seva - voluntary work.' Then Swami sent word the next day teachers should be paid salaries as per a new government rule. He said that if the teachers did not accept the salary, the government would misunderstand Bhagawan and conclude that teachers were being exploited and work extracted for no pay. He said, 'I know that you all are working with devotion. But accept the salary and continue to work in the spirit of seva.' Radio Sai Team.

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

"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 His life to mankind as magnanimously and 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!"

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's 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

Q. & A.

Q: What rescues a man in danger?

A: Courage.

Q: By the study of which science does a man become wise?

A: By the study of Science of Sastras, man doesn't gain wisdom. Through association with wise man or woman, a man gains wisdom.

Q: What is more noble and more sustaining than the earth?

A: The mother who brings up the children is nobler and more sustaining than the earth.

Q: What is fleetier than the wind?

A: The mind.

Q: Which is the best friend of a traveller?

A: His learning.

Q: What is happiness?

A: Happiness is the result of good conduct.

Q: When is a man loved by all?

A: When he abandons his pride.

Q: What is the loss that yields no grief but gives only joy?

A: Anger.

Q: By giving up what, a man becomes rich?

A: Desire.

Q: What is the greatest wonder on earth?

A: Every day man sees creatures die out, yet those remaining seek to live forever. The man who is to die is mourning the dead. This is the greatest wonder on earth.

The whole world is a drama. Every individual is an actor. God is the Director. It is only the Director, Who designs all the acting and the actors. Whatever may be done, it is only a manifestation of the Divine. Every human being is a spark of the Divine. Love is His natural trait. That is the goal of every living being and animal. Therefore in this drama of love, we are all actors of love. So in this drama, love is the transformation. Therefore love is our natural quality. Now, unfortunately such love is forgotten. Man is forgetting his responsibilities. He is forgetting his role. Therefore in this drama, everyone should play his role well. If not, he will lose his reputation and respect. Everyone is a spark of Divine. So everyone should express that quality of love. - BABA

Swami Manifests Himself to Protect His Devotees

During a visit to Brindavan in June 1995, a devotee approached me asking if I would share with him my experiences of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, for a project aimed at bringing out a special Volume on Baba's 70th Birthday. I told him that like millions of Sai devotees around the world my life had been transformed by our Bhagawan Baba, but I did not have any dramatic experiences which might be of wider interest of miraculous cures and materialisations. On returning to London, I approached two devotees, Mrs. Yvonne Bautista and Mrs. Gisela Robinson who I knew had unique experiences of Baba's presence. They were pleased to be part of the project and to contribute to the special volume.

The following experiences are described by the two devotees in their own words. These show the omniscience and omnipresence of Swami, and how Swami manifests Himself to protect His devotees when entreated with pure heart. The experiences also point to the needy saturated with Love, for acquiring Baba's Grace. Finally, they show that Swami's Grace transcends all barriers of religion, race, class and caste.

Case 1:

Mrs. Bautista, a Roman Catholic, works in advertising sales in Oxford. She has deep faith in Sai Baba, and calls herself a devotee in private - not used to attending bhajans and study groups. Her experience with Baba's Divine intervention relates to her daughter Michelle's recent surgery. Michelle, age 26 years,

suffers from infant problems of abnormal jaw. After two years of preparation, the doctors told her that her daughter's enlarged jaw would have to be cut open on both sides. The operation would take about eight hours.

This is how Mrs. Bautista described the experience: "I was very worried about the operation which was not only long, but bloody also. The success rate for such surgery is not high. Some people's face, due to broken jaw, looks as if an elephant had walked over it. The photographs of other patients who had gone through similar operation were not very encouraging".

"A friend of mine had given me Baba's Vibhuti. Though my daughter said she did not believe in the holy ash, I took some myself and put some under her pillow, praying to Sai Baba that the operation be successful".

"On the day the surgery was to take place, I came to know that the English doctor who was to do the operation, due to a last minute change, was replaced. This made me more anxious. I prayed hard to Baba to look after my child".

"Visitors are usually not allowed during the operation, but mid-way there was a Chinese doctor who made an exception, and took me inside. It was the first time I saw the new surgeon, he was an Indian, and had at the last minute replaced the English doctor".

"After the surgery, they showed me my daughter. Unlike other patients, she had no swelling of face. Oh my baby, she looked the same as when she was two years old, a normal

round face. Despite being under anaesthesia for that long, she did not vomit. This was a miracle, I know Sai Baba was there".

"Outside the surgery I met the Indian doctor to thank him. He was dark, short and smiling. I told him, "I have a Guru who looked after her."

He asked, "Who is your Guru?"

I said, "Sai Baba. I am a devotee of His."

He smiled, "We have known a lot about Him. I am His devotee too."

That little Indian doctor, such a lovely smile. I have never seen that man again. I am sure he is there; there are so many doctors in that hospital."

Mrs. Bautista thanks the Lord for looking after Michelle. This has renewed faith in herself and her faith in God. She used to be afraid of blood, disabled and handicapped people. That fear has totally disappeared. Now, she spends three hours a day after her regular work doing service at a disabled people's home. She enjoys this tremendously. (Recently, her daughter told her that prior to the operation, despite her earlier reluctance, she did take the Vibhuti her mother had left under her pillow. Like her mother, she has no doubt now about Baba's presence during the operation).

Case 2:

The second experience is in the words of Mrs. Gisela Robinson. She writes:

"A German friend, Ute, and myself, both from a Protestant background and living in London - were given

the unique opportunity of accompanying a blind friend - Muna, a Moslem from an Indian background - to Prashanti Nilayam in late October of 1994".

"When walking through the gate into the "Kingdom of Sathya Sai", I always ask myself why I have made this journey and what to expect from it. This particular time, "love" appeared before my inner eye. It was indeed Swami's love which accompanied us right from the very start of our journey. Much to the disgruntlement of some of our fellow travellers our plane started three hours late from London, causing us to miss our connecting flight to Madras. However, Air India provided an excellent hotel in Delhi and this unexpected stop-over gave us an opportunity to see some of the sights".

"Only the next day were we made aware why Swami had engineered this delay - Madras had been hit by a cyclone the previous evening, killing 29 people and destroying many buildings".

"In our 10 days stay, we felt very strongly how Swami's love surrounded us everywhere. The devotion our friend Muna showed when she was doing her daily puja, which sometimes lasted well over an hour - was for us hardened Westerners a very moving experience. Somehow my friends and I were given seats in line one or two most of the time, although our group quite often drew numbers much further to the back. Muna seemed to receive Swami's attention continuously. He took her letters very early on, brushing her hands lovingly. He passed, suddenly turned

round and gave her His wonderful smile. He granted her padnamaskar - a scene that brought tears to almost every eye: as she tried desperately to find His feet He literally eased His foot gently into her hand, touching her head and saying, "Poor you!"

"During the next darshan, Swami ignored our side of line one, giving His attention to the opposite side. However, He thought of us at the same time - He sent a flock of beautiful white and green birds performing an exquisite dance to the rhythm of darshan music. What a wonderful treat!"

"At the darshan, Muna bumped by mistake into a Swiss lady who initially reacted with great irritation and then, realising my friend's blindness and bitterly regretting her behaviour, showed us a ring with the OM sign which had been materialised and given to her by Swami. Muna held this ring first on her right eye, then on her left eye for five minutes each side, and prayed. I believe there was not a dry eye anywhere around us".

"Muna dictated a letter to Swami asking whether He would grant her a consultation in the Ophthalmic Department of the Super Speciality Hospital, which was opened a few days later on 22nd November 1994. Swami took the letter immediately during the darshan and forty minutes later, a student from Baba's college appeared at our flat confirming an appointment. Swami knows what is in each and every letter He accepts, (hundreds of these) during the daily darshan".

"The following day when we arrived at the hospital on time, nobody seemed to know about the

appointment. The staff tried everything to persuade us to leave and go to the General Hospital, but Muna remained determined to wait. Success was on hand when the specialist appeared - everybody seemed to know about Muna and the appointment - they even knew our names. Muna was told that she had become the first patient of the new ophthalmic wing of the hospital".

"After a thorough examination of her eyes, Muna was asked to arrange for her records to be transferred from London to Prashanti. (This was done after I left and Muna was given medicine and is now, eight months later, in Prashanti Nilayam, hoping to be seen by the specialist again)".

"Our group was blessed by an interview on 15th November. This time almost all of our group had been sitting quite far back and it took some time to dawn on us that it was in fact our group who had been called".

"Swami materialised a ring which He threw into my lap asking what it showed. As I apologised for my bad eyesight and fumbled for my glasses, He explained that it was a lingam. The ring went around the group and back to Swami, Who blew on it three times changing the motif into a Shirdi Baba. A gentleman from our group was the happy recipient. Swami then stood in front of us and seemed to be looking at me, saying: "You see, it is all in this hand, it is all in the palm of My hand."

"What a wonderful way He chose to communicate to me that a poem or mantra I had brought with me to the darshan line and which He had taken together with some letters, originated from Him. The words of

this poem were given to a friend of mind in Germany who rarely speaks English. She had woken in the middle of the night and heard this voice reciting the following in English:

You are the beginning and You are
the end,

You keep me safe in the palm of your
hand.

Your love and protection guide me
on my way,

Your grace gives additional light to
my day.

Each morning I wake up and right
from the start,

I know that You are in the midst of
my heart.

Could one ask for more confirmation as to the author of this poem?"

"Muna asked Swami whether it was in order for her to take a lot of medication - my friend and I had been a little worried about this. Swami told her that God is medication. When she asked Him which mantra was good, Swami responded, "Every mantra is good." He materialised a gold ring with three diamonds, put it on her index finger, and at the same time whispered something into her ear, "a special mantra for you." Muna was overwhelmed thanking Him saying He was Allah and kissed His hands".

"It was a miracle, as Muna later told us that the mantra which Swami had whispered into her ear was one of the ancient Islamic prayers from the Holy Koran. She was amazed that

without her telling, Baba knew that she was a Moslem".

"Muna says that until then she had been unsure of her religious tradition, but Baba's Islamic prayer reminded her that there was only one God and He was omnipresent. To follow Him, one did not have to change religion, but be a "better" whoever you were - in her case it meant being a "better Moslem".

Although love is inherently present in every cell of the human body, it does not manifest itself because of the pollution of the heart. - BABA

A Father, A Daughter & A Dog

"Watch out! You nearly broadsided that car!" My father yelled at me. "Can't you do anything right?" he added. "Please don't yell at me when I'm driving..." I replied in a measured and steady voice.

Dad had been a lumberjack in Washington and Oregon, enjoyed the outdoors, pitting his strength against the forces of nature. The years marched on relentlessly, but now he couldn't do the many things he could do as a young man. Shortly after his sixty-seventh birthday, he had a heart attack. He was lucky, he survived, but something inside dad died. His zest for life was gone. Any help was turned aside with sarcasm and insults. The number of visitors dwindled then stopped altogether. He was left alone.

My husband, Dick, and I asked dad to come and live with us, but a week after he moved in I regretted the

invitation. He criticised everything I did. Something had to be done, so the next day I rang around each of the mental health clinics listed in the Yellow Pages seeking advice and guidance. I was just about to give up, when I was told of patients who were under chronic depression, improved dramatically when they were given responsibility for a dog. Driving to the nearest animal shelter where the uniformed officer led me to the kennels, where I walked down a row of pens, each containing five to seven dogs. Finally nearing the last pen a dog in the shadows of the far corner struggled to his feet - it was a pointer, one of the dog world's aristocrats - but this was a caricature of the breed. Years had etched his face and muzzle with shades of grey, with hip bones jutting out, but his eyes caught and held my attention. I was told that he was earmarked to be put down shortly. "It's our policy, Ma'am. We don't have room for every unclaimed dog." "I'll take him," I found myself saying.

When I reached home I honked the horn twice and helped my prize out of the car as dad shuffled onto the porch. "Look what I got for you, dad." I said excitedly.

"If I wanted a dog I would have gotten one," he said with disgust on his face. "Keep it. I don't want it."

"You'd better get used to him, dad. He's staying! Did you hear me, dad?"

We stood glaring at each other like duellists, when suddenly the pointer pulled free from my grip and wobbled over to dad, and sat down in front of him. Then slowly, carefully and he raised his paw as dad's jaw trembled, he stared at the uplifted paw, as confusion replaced

the anger in his eyes, the pointer waited patiently. Dad was now on his knees hugging the animal. It was the beginning of a warm and intimate friendship. Dad named his new friend, Cheyenne, and together they explored the community, walking down dusty lanes, spending reflective moments by the banks of streams, angling for trout.

They even started to attend Sunday service together, dad sitting in a pew and Cheyenne lying quietly at his feet. They were inseparable throughout the next three years. Dad's bitterness faded and he and Cheyenne made many friends. Then one night I was startled to feel Cheyenne's cold nose burrowing through our bedcovers. He had never before come into our bedroom at night. I woke Dick and we ran into my father's room, only to find him lying still in bed, his face serene. His spirit having left quietly sometime during the night.

Two days later my shock and grief deepened when I discovered Cheyenne lying dead beside dad's bed. I wrapped his still form in the rag rug he had slept on.

We buried him near a favourite fishing hole and silently thanked the dog for the help he had given me in restoring dad's peace of mind.

At dad's funeral I was surprised to see the many friends dad and Cheyenne had made, filling the church. The pastor began his eulogy with a tribute to both dad and the dog that had changed his life, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it," the pastor read from Hebrews 13:2. "I've often thanked God for

sending that angel," he said. And suddenly I understood, that God answers our prayers, in His time... not in ours. - T. Ragu.

Be careful not to decry anyone. It amounts to decrying God. Be aware of the God within you and the God in everyone else. If you do this, there is nothing to equal the joy and peace that you will be rewarded with. I bless you, so that you may attain that bliss. - BABA

Christmas Discourse 1976

You are embodiments of living Divine Love. In memory of Jesus' birthday you must begin to change your way of living. You must honour the living memory of Jesus by beginning to act as He acted. I wish you to do this.
