



Canadian
Sathya Sai Newsletter
SPRING 2010

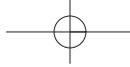


CANADIAN PILGRIMAGE TO PRASANTHI
DETAILS INSIDE.....



MAHA SIVARATHRI ISSUE





**Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Organization
of Canada**
www.sathyasai.ca

Central Coordinator
Dr. V. P. Singh

*The Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Organization of Canada is part of
a worldwide spiritual movement
to awaken in all people the
awareness of their inherent divinity
and to encourage the practice
of the universal principles of
Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love
and Non-violence through personal
example and selfless service.*

**Canadian Sathya
Sai Newsletter**
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**See inside back cover for
subscriptions and guidelines
for editorial contribution.**



MAHA SIVARATHRI 2010

The lesson of Sivarathri is that devotees should foster good and sacred thoughts. They should be filled with godly thoughts. They should seek to become one with the Divine by reflecting on their inherent divinity. If you constantly chant the name of God, God realization will come in due course.

Whatever other things they may possess, people suffer from lack of peace and bliss. These two can be obtained only from God. It is for these two that people should pray to God and not for anything else, because God alone can give them. When these are secured, all other things will come of their own accord by the grace of God. People should yearn for God. All other desires are worthless.

~Baba

(From Discourse: Feb 26, 1998)





CANADIAN

Sathya Sai Newsletter

Official publication of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organization of Canada

Maha Sivarathri ~ Spring 2010 ~ Vol. 23, No. 1

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“Every night is marked by darkness. But tonight it is Sivarathri (the holy night of Lord Siva). What is the difference between Rathri (night) and Sivarathri? For the man who has recognized his divinity, every night is Sivarathri. For the man immersed in worldly concerns, all nights are the same. That night is marked by darkness. This night is marked by light. Spirituality is the lighthouse that spreads light for the man who is full of despair, immersed in insatiable desires. The name of God is the lighthouse. By chanting the name, the bearer of the name can be realized.”

~Baba



GOD IS ONE

People ascribe different names and forms to God. In fact, God is only one. He is beyond all names and forms. He takes on a name and form according to the wishes and aspirations of a particular devotee. When you contemplate on the form of Jesus and wish to see Him in that form, He manifests before you as Jesus.

God permeates the entire universe. He is present in every human being, nay in every living being. That is why human values are considered to be so sacred and important. It is not enough to simply say you have a human body. In keeping with the human form, one should also cultivate the human values of sathya (truth), dharma (righteousness), santhi (peace), prema (love) and ahimsa (nonviolence).

You should not tell a lie under any circumstances. If you adhere to truth, righteousness will follow. Where truth and righteousness go together, there is peace. Where there is peace, there will be love too. There can be no place for violence when there is love. Truth and Love are the embodiments of Divinity.

God has no desires and aspirations. He is selfless. Everything you see in the outside world is a reaction, reflection, and resound of your own inner being. This is a cloth (showing a handkerchief). Strictly speaking, this is not a cloth; it is a bundle of threads. The threads woven together assumed the form of a cloth. Similarly, the thoughts and desires of a human being make the mind. They, in turn express themselves in the

form of speech. The words lead to actions through the sense organs. In the process, man entertains certain bad thoughts and feelings.

God is omnipresent. The sky is God and the earth is God. God is immanent in every human being in the form of breath (Soham). Only when you realise the true nature of God, can you be considered to have acquired jnana (wisdom). Jnana is not mere bookish knowledge. Several educated people have acquired vast knowledge from textbooks, but who is a jnani (realised soul) in the real sense? Only the person who has realised, "I am not the body, I am not the mind; I am God," is a real jnani.

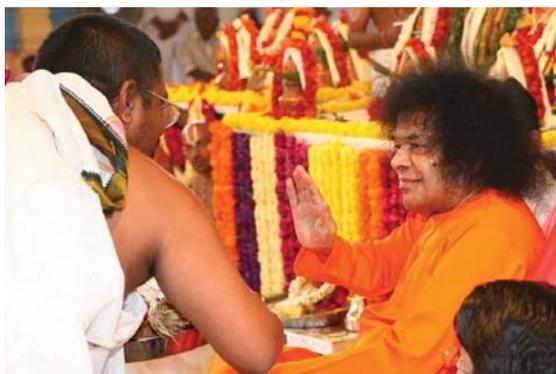


You are bound by two things: 'I' and 'mine'. That is the human bondage. If you can get released from these two bonds, what remains is 'you' only. Suppose you ask God, "Who are you?" He will reply, Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman). Every individual should remind themselves, "I am Brahman, I have no other name." You must constantly remind yourself that you are playing your role in the cosmic drama and your real nature is that you are an Embodiment of Divine Self (Atma Swarupa). Hence, do not worry about the past. Past is past and future is uncertain. You are aware of only the present. Hence, live in the present. That is the only reality.

-Sri Sathya Sai Baba

(Excerpts from Christmas discourse 2009)

Unity of Faiths



I am deeply humbled by the invitation to address you at this special 28th Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai University. I consider Swami to be divine, omnipresent, our constant friend and companion.

Today I am addressing graduating students of this very special university and I would also like to include all devotees of God, because in our hearts we are all Swami's students.

We have experienced Swami lovingly saving us at the very last minute where ever we are, showing His command over time and place.

Seeing Swami materialize an object is to bear witness to the truth that "Creation (the universe) is a projection of God's will." Our knowledge about Swami's love and mastery of time, space, and matter, is not a thought or book knowledge. It is a knowing born out of actual living experience with Swami. It is practical knowledge. No earthly treasure can buy it. Yet it is freely given to you by Swami. It is His precious priceless grace!

Mind is the key. It is the cause of our

bondage or liberation. Follow the conscience, it leads us to serving society. Through service we find God in society and feel fulfilled!

In February 2005, Swami materialized a gold ring for my wife. It had a rectangular surface and from one side we saw the inscription Om. We noticed that from different sides the same lines looked like words in different languages. One looked Arabic. Swami said that they were names of God.

I knew the mystery of the different names would unfold in time. A close friend became ill his wife was disabled. They couldn't care for themselves. They sank into despair. We traveled 2000 miles to work hard for a week cleaning their home and moving them to a safe place. Their home was in such disarray and so dirty that we had to wear protective masks when working there.

Swami was in our thoughts, words, and deeds, -- and as we established cleanliness and purity in the setting, and in our impulses, we saw signs of Swami's divinity in the smiles on our dear friends' faces. While at the desk of our motel, the clerk noticed Sharon's ring "Do you know what that means?" she asked. "It is the name of God, Allah," she said. Service brought insight! Subsequently we learned the meaning of each word as we turned the ring in different angles. From one angle it was Om, from another Allah, from another I am I, from another El, a name of God in the Jewish religion.

Swami was teaching different names but one God, and that by serving we see our unity in

diversity. Deeper grew the wisdom in the course of service.

Sharon and I went to St. Petersburg to speak at the Russian National Sai Conference about a year and a half ago. Swami teaches self-management, family management, local community service even service in the world community.

We told the ring story and showed pictures on a large screen. Muslims in the audience were deeply moved and cheered. They were happy to see that Swami had recognized them by materializing their holiest word. We were so happy to play a part in bringing happiness.

Professor Jafar Malaev from Dagestan had the widest smile of all at the conference. I'd never heard of Dagestan. How could I have met Professor Jafar but in the expanding orbit of Swami's love?

He was a Muslim and Chancellor of a large university with an enrollment of 30,000 students. He was impressed by Swami's love and educational programs. "How can I bring your teaching to my university?" He asked. Swami simply said, "You are the educator. Find out for yourself."

There's a major lesson for us here! We must integrate the teachings through the power of practice. It is up to us. Constant integrated awareness, Hands in society and Head in the forest, integrate the two into one!

Jafar said "We must rise above anger, violence, and revenge, if we are to survive. Problems such as in the Middle East between Palestinians and Israelis must be solved with love." Then taking my hand in his, and looking deeply into my eyes, he said, "We must stop fighting and learn to love each other! Sandweiss I love you." I was sincerely touched and responded, "and Jafar, I love you."

Swami's ring brought us together!

Jafar is Muslim and I am Jewish. I pray that this love generated by Sai, enters into the age-old conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, Muslims and Jews. Only through Swami's love, we are His messengers. We gain confidence in the possibility of pure love bringing world peace.

Our place is with Swami, to be worthy instruments of His love. The issue is not that we don't know His teachings. Swami has firmly placed them in our hearts! The problem is one of losing will and determination over the long haul, of getting and forgetting our close relationship with Swami. Hold tight and be ready to serve. Here is a story about sacrificial love ever ready to serve Swami.

Pure love is most precious. It is the beginning and the end. When everything impermanent is removed, love only remains. Swami tells us that Creation, Preservation, and Dissolution, emanate from this pure love. Pure love brings beauty to the character harmony to the home and peace to the world.

Swami has come to give us this pure love as He has said, "I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts and to see that it shines day by day with added luster."

Swami has showered his pure love on me in overflowing abundance today. He has allowed me the honor of being Chief Guest and the opportunity to speak to you today. The invitation came as a complete shock. I know that many are better qualified, but Swami allowed me the honor. It is an expression of His pure love, a love that operates beyond the realm of human comprehension.

We might ask if Swami's love can actually bring peace to our troubled world. It is one thing to see the miraculous appearance of Super Specialty



Hospitals, mammoth clean water projects, revolutionary educational programs, spiritual centers all over the world practicing service and love. It is something else altogether to really consider that Swami can actually bring world peace. Although Swami has said that in a short time we will have world peace, it seems almost impossible. But let us be open to the possibility of this impossibility because Swami can do anything! We must seriously prepare for the moment when Swami picks any of us out of the crowd, as He picked me today, and

places us in a position to actually influence world events. By singing His name, serving His children, studying His eternal wisdom we must prepare ourselves for the day He picks us.

Swami, as we approach the year leading to Your 85th birthday, I pray for a year of pure Love, let Your glory shine on our hearts like a million suns setting our love aflame.

~**Samuel Sandweiss, MD**

Excerpts from Convocation Address

Nov. 22, 2009

Likhita Japam

“Write daily in a notebook your chosen Mantra or Guru Mantra for half an hour. When you write the Mantra, observe Silence. Write the Mantra clearly in ink. On Sundays and holidays, write this for one hour. This is Likhita Japam. You can develop a wonderful power of concentration.

The benefits of Mantra-writing or Likhita Japam cannot be adequately described. Besides bringing about purity of heart and concentration of mind, Likhita Japam gives you control of Asana, control of Indriyas, particularly the sight and the tongue, and fills you with the power of endurance. You attain peace of mind quickly. By prolonged and constant practice the inherent power of the Mantra (Mantra-Shakti) will be awakened, which will fill your very existence with the Divinity of the Mantra.

In Mantra writing, there is no restriction about any particular script. It may be written in any language.”

~ Swami Sivananda

Japa Yoga



Canada Sai Pilgrimage 2010

August 16-26, 2010

"I do not accept from you flowers that fade, fruits that rot, or wealth that is transient. Offer me the lotus that blooms in your manasarovara - the clear pellucid waters of lake of your inner consciousness; give me the fruits of purity and steady discipline."

~Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Our Beloved Swami says "Every living being is on a pilgrimage – whether it is aware of it or not." However, as mere human beings we fail to understand this profound statement. The Divine resides in our heart. With every breath and with every sigh we are getting nearer and nearer to God.

Because of His immense love for us, Swami wishes us all to be physically present in Prasanthi Nilayam. This indeed is a rare call from Divinity to His precious children from around the World. How fortunate, how blessed are we as Canadians to be included in this Sublime Call and we are destined to be in His Divine Presence from August 16, 2010 to August 26, 2010.

How can we thank our Swami? How can we show our gratitude and appreciation? We must have faith and devotion as our only support on this steady march towards this pilgrimage. As Sai brothers and sisters we must have unshakable unity, love and understanding as we plan and prepare ourselves. There are so many things we can learn from

our spiritual discipline when we are surrounded by kindred aspirants and devotees.

As pilgrims, no doubt we are elated with joy and enthusiasm in going to Prasanthi as a Canadian Sai Group. However, we must maintain equipoise and equanimity at all times. We must not only focus on going on this pilgrimage but also what we will come back with and how this would affect all of us. A spiritual change must come about.

They say that a mere sight of a pilgrim who has returned from a holy place gives much merit. The Lord is calling His chosen ones to be a part of His greater plan which is slowly but surely unfolding each and every moment. Are we truly worthy to be a part of His divine mission? For undergoing spiritual change we must allow the Hand of Swami to guide us in all our activities in thought, word and deed. And in doing so, let us become beneficiaries of attaining divine bliss.

Let us offer ourselves to Swami, in this way there will not be room for disappointments. Leaving everything to God's will is the highest form of devotion. Whether we lose or gain, have pain or pleasure, our faith must be unshaken. Whatever happens, we must accept it as His gift. Let us all demonstrate with love and humility the sacred and invaluable teachings of our Beloved

"Siva is inherent in every thought, word and deed, for He is the energy, the power, the intelligence that is behind each of them." ~Baba

General Guidelines

Are We Ready?

We are very fortunate and blessed for the opportunity to be with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam. Considering some of us may be travelling for the first time, in order to simplify the unknowns of such a pilgrimage, and to allow the emphasis to rest on spiritual, rather than physical and material considerations, the following suggestions are set out to help prospective pilgrims.

Personal Sadhana

Focus on the intent of this pilgrimage, by internalizing, writing Swami's name (likhita japam), chanting Gayatri Mantra many times per day, Namasmarana, contemplate on Swami and aim to remember Him at every moment, reading of Sai Literature and following the Nine Point Code of Conduct.

Group Sadhana

Lovingly participate in all group sadhana activities organized by your centre as part of this pilgrimage.

Pre-Trip Information:

Passport and Visa (please check present rules): Ensure well ahead of time that you hold a Passport that is valid at least 6 months after your arrival back in Canada. Visas are needed to enter India depending on the type of passport you hold. Anyone who is traveling without an Indian passport requires a visa. The cost of a six month multiple visa is \$62 (cdn). The cost for a one year visa is \$100(cdn). Devotees have the option of applying for their own visas or consult the travel agent if they

will provide this service. In either case all devotees traveling **MUST** have their visas by the end of May, 2010. Please check with the Indian High Commission office if necessary. Keep a photocopy of your passport with visa and the ticket independent of your travel documents.

Immunization (Medical committee to validate)

Recommendations are cholera, typhoid, tetanus, malaria, polio, and hepatitis. Consult with your local Travel Health Clinic.

Health

It is wise to obtain an adequate Travel & Medical Insurance Coverage. You may also take the following with you: Band-Aid, mosquito repellent, vitamin tablets, pain relievers, diarrhea and sickness tablets, Imodium or gravol, Tylenol, anti-bacterial cream, cough suppressant. If you have had a recent fracture, which is not completely healed, please inform your physician that you will be traveling by air. (There could be serious injury from blood clots) If you are under medication remember to take a full supply with you and make a note of the full pharmaceutical name and dosage as well as the brand name in case you need replacements. Always consult the Ashram doctors if you are in any doubt.

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT that if you suffer from anything more than mild diarrhea/fever, to consult our medical staff and if the condition persists for over 24 hours (but sooner if you feel necessary) as these illnesses can prove serious if not properly treated early on.

@ Prasanthi Nilayam

Registration and cost (Costs for rooms to be re-confirmed)

The travel and accommodation group will arrive in Puttaparthi approximately two days ahead of time to make all arrangements for registration and accommodation. Upon your arrival at the Ashram the accommodation team will already be there to greet you and direct you to your room. If the ashram is very crowded, you may be asked to share a room with others and you may also have to sleep in dormitories (Sheds).

Devotees who are donors of rooms will need to submit their I.D. card number. Please be aware that the cost for accommodation is 60 rupees per day for donors and 120 rupees per day for non-donors. It is essential to provide the accommodation team with the following particulars by April 30th 2010:

- 2 passport size photographs
- A copy of your passport biodata
- Donors are required to submit their ID card number

Currency

Traveler Cheques are safer than cash; however you can take some cash with you. You can exchange Dollars to Rupees (Indian currency) at the bank in the Ashram, or at the airport in their port of arrival. Do not exchange large amounts of money at any given time.

A money belt is recommended whilst traveling, to carry all valuable documents. Note: Ensure travelers cheque numbers are kept separate from traveler's cheques. Convenient banking facilities

are available in the Ashram. You are required to present your passport each time you cash traveller's cheques or change money.

What you may require?

Nowadays virtually everything can be bought at Puttaparthi, most of it at shops inside the Ashram. However a few things may be worth taking such as: Air freshener spray, insect repellent, wet wipes, sun cream, talcum powder, toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving set, makeup and shampoo and toilet paper. A heating coil with a two pin plug for making cups of soup/tea or a kettle with dual voltage. (Note India uses 220 voltage so you will require a transformer for electrical items that is not 220 volts)

Food storage plastic containers, sealed water container, water bottle, tin opener, notebook writing paper and envelopes, pens, scotch tape, Ziploc bag, string, clothes pegs, coat hangers, plastic bags, tissues, nail clippers, sharp knife, matches/lighter, flash light (essential).

Take a Combination/Digital lock so that if several people sharing a room can get in, or take a padlock with at least three keys. It is advisable to take at least one pair of sheets/pillow cases; you can buy these in Puttaparthi shops outside the ashram. **(ALL SHARP OBJECTS, LIQUIDS AND GELS HAVE TO BE PACKED IN THE CHECKED BAGGAGE)**

Bedding

Most rooms (not the sheds) are furnished with beddings but we must bring our own bed sheets and pillow covers. You can also purchase a

cheap flock mattresses, cushions and pillows @Puttparthi to sleep on, but many devotees take a sleeping bag and/or inflatable mattresses. Metal frame beds can be purchased/rented in the Puttparthi village.

Shopping

The shopping complex has the following departments: bakery, cool drinks, ice-cream, fruits and vegetables, groceries, bank, book store with CDs & DVDs, clothes and sari store and other sundry items. Do not bargain in the Ashram shops. All items are priced at cost. There should be no need to leave the ashram as almost everything is available inside.

We have to be patient, humble and respectful. These facilities are staffed by volunteers and are there to serve many devotees.

Shops are open for very limited time and the shopping for women and men are at different timings.

Women: 9:30am to 11:00am

Men: 6:00pm to 7:30pm

(Timing are subject to change. please re-confirm timings)

If anyone has to leave the ashram for any emergent medical need, the individual should inform the Team Lead and have another companion accompany them.

Laundry

Dhobis (registered laundry men and women) are allocated to different residential areas in the Ashram.

Clothes collected in the morning are returned, washed and ironed the next morning. Charges are fixed. Rs 2/- per large item and Rs 1/- per small item. Dhobi's itch can be avoided by washing your own under garments.

Some Ashram Rules

1. Remember that room lights must be switched off at 9pm.
2. Sleep early and have sufficient rest to stay focussed on the day's events.
3. Be respectful of others sharing your room and neighbours and keep noise level to a minimum.
4. Do not speak loudly and do not play loud music.
5. Keep your room tidy and clean at all times.
6. Switch off the electricity and water supply whenever you leave the room.
7. Lock all doors and keep valuables safely locked away.
8. Men and women are strictly not allowed to visit each other's rooms.
9. Do not hang your under garments in the public area or along the corridor for drying.

Sri Sathya Sai Book and Publication Trust

Book Store:

There is a large selection of books in several languages available at the book store. Subscriptions to Sanathana Sarathi are also available @ the Trust Office. Open daily from 8:30am to 11:30am and from 3:30pm to 7:00pm.

Bank

A branch of The State Bank of India is located in the Ashram. Foreigners require their passports for banking transactions.

Post office and Telephone

There are facilities in the Ashram for making local and overseas calls. There is also a Post office within the Ashram.

Travel Agency

Indian Airlines has an office in the Ashram where bookings can be made.

General Hospital (please re-confirm timings)

Equipped with 100 beds, it is located to the South of the Mandir. Normal Medical facilities for investigation, treatment, hospitalization, etc. are available. An out-patient department operates on all working days (except Sundays and Holidays) from 8:30 - 10:30am and 3:00pm - 6:00pm for routine cases, however, the Out Patient Department is open at all times for emergencies.

Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences (Super Specialty Hospital)

Situated 6 kms away from the Ashram, on

the main road, this hospital provides highly specialized diagnostic services, treatment and hospitalization for diseases related to Heart, Kidney and Eye at this moment of time. All treatment is completely free of charge.

Canteens (Dining Halls) (Please re-confirm timings)

Devotees are expected to partake of the sacred food served in the Ashram canteens and only cash in Indian currency is accepted.

There are different canteens catering to South Indians, North Indians and Westerners @ separate locations within the Ashram. Men and women are not permitted to eat together in the Canteens. They are served in different locations within the same building. Ashram canteens only serve satvic vegetarian food.

Observe that the Seva Dal Volunteers who participate in cooking and serving are not motivated by the needs of livelihood or greed, but by the lofty spirit of love and service.

The Canteens are open for Breakfast at 6:30am to 8:30am, for lunch at 11:30am to 1:00pm, for tea 3:00pm to 4:30pm and dinner at 6:30pm to 8:00pm. North Indian Canteen is only open for Lunch and dinner. The food supplied in these canteens is blessed by Bhagavan Baba daily.

Bakery

Brown/white bread, cake, sweet/salty buns, puff rolls, cookies, pizzas are available at the posted timings.

“Food offered to God is free from the negative vibrations that influence the individual in subtle ways. Since food has impact on our feelings and thoughts, you have to be vigilant at all times.” ~Baba

Code of Conduct in the Ashram

All pilgrims must read and follow Ashram

Guidelines (posted in each room/dormitory.)

1. Be mindful that you are representing your country and how you conduct yourself reflects upon your country and as Sai Pilgrims, our conduct must be exemplary and disciplined at all times during our stay in the Ashram.
2. Focus on the intent of this pilgrimage, to be in the Divine presence of Swami and experience His Darshan(sight of the Lord), Sparshan(Lord's touch)and Sambhashan (Communication/conversation with the Lord)
3. Be respectful to all pilgrims.
4. Do not unnecessarily socialise with pilgrims or residents, especially of the opposite gender inside or outside the Ashram.
5. Pilgrims, who are assigned duties should be responsible and discharge them conscientiously with humility and devotion.
6. Pilgrims are advised not to go outside the Ashram unless it is a real necessity. They must inform their centre coordinator.
7. Do not spend money unnecessarily.
8. Youth and children should not go alone outside the Ashram, they should inform their centre coordinator and follow instructions.

Dress Code:

Dress in modest, clean and sober clothing at all times. Whites are mostly preferred. Your attire reflects your love and respect for Bhagavan. Wearing of shorts or sleeveless shirts is strictly prohibited.

Women are required to dress down to their ankles and wrap their fronts with a proper shawl. Tight or see through dresses are not permitted as also beach or sportswear. Avoid garish clothes. It is best to get yourself a pair of local sandals. Do not display unorthodox hairstyles. Do not wear large obtrusive hats especially in the Darshan line. Above all, clothe yourself to neither attract nor distract others.

You are likely to spend at least three hours or more a day sitting on the ground so clothes should be comfortable and not tight fitting. A mat is very useful. Cheap light sandals or flip-flops are needed in the Ashram. Do not take jewelry, paper, pens, cell phones or video games when going for Darshan.

Wear the Canada scarves provided during the Darshan time.

Males:

All SSE children, youths and adults are expected to wear 'whites' for darshan. The prescribed attire will be available through your Sai Center.

Females:

If you do not wear a sari, you should wear a long kaftan or a long sleeved blouse and long skirt or Salwar Kameez with Dupatta (shawl). Western type trousers are not advised. To maintain consistency committee is looking into buying 2 sarees for each female pilgrim. Please check with your Center Coordinator for details.

Power of Darshan

“Never take lightly the transformation that is taking place as I walk among you. All that My eyes fall on will be transformed. Always find a



quiet corner after My Darshan, where you may enter the stillness and receive the completion of My Blessings. My Energy goes from Me as I pass you. If you proceed to talk with others, immediately the precious energy is dissipated and returns to Me unused.

Rest assured that whatever My Eyes see become vitalised and sent transmuted. You are being changed day by day. Never underestimate what is being accomplished by this act of Darshan. My walking among you is a Gift, yearned for by the Gods of Highest Heaven, and you are receiving this Grace. Be Grateful. These Blessings you receive will express themselves in due time. But also remember that to whom much is given, from him much will be demanded.”

~Baba

Personal Transformation

"Well you have the chance to see, experience and be sanctified by the Incarnation of The Lord; this chance you got as a result of the accumulation of merit in many previous lives. That merit has brought you here when I have come down. For this chance, Rishis and Devas have prayed long in the past."

~Baba

As we travel on this journey from various parts of Canada to Prasanthi Nilayam, we must constantly remind ourselves that we are traveling as Canadians and not belonging to one city or a particular Province. We leave all our differences and become one family to focus on personal transformation.

The tests and challenges will continue when we are there. But we must not forget the power of prayer! Let us pray to Swami to guide us so that we may work together in harmony to

strengthen the purity, unity and divinity in each one of us. Let all of our interactions with each other be infused with love and understanding. Above all, let us pray for the strength to surrender to His Will. Let the Bounty of His Divine Love and Grace shower upon every one of us!

Let us remember that, special seating for Darshan, and the opportunity to present the Canadian group's offerings depend on our collective prayers and exemplary behaviour.

"Use every little experience as a teaching tool. Put out of your mind any belief in chance or accident and know that everything that happens here, down to the smallest thing, is an out-pouring of My limitless Love and tailored especially for you. Notice the line you get, the state of your health and body, the way you feel, wash, eat, and look whom you meet and how. Observe especially your reaction to situations. Just as in school, some will be teaching tools, others test to show how you are doing. See if you accept the whole experience with calm equanimity."

~Baba

Seva Sadhana

The Seva wing would also like to help us with focussed seva activities dedicated to this pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam, the Abode of Heavenly Peace. Participation in the spiritual sadhana and seva will purify us and prepare for our Holy Pilgrimage.

Ceiling on Desires – National Seva Project

Ceiling on Desires is our chosen Seva, as we prepare for the Pilgrimage to Prasanthi. It is suggested that the following Seva should be undertaken by all the pilgrims in Canada before going to Prasanthi.

Individual Seva: Money saved should be set aside for donation to Swami's service projects or worthwhile local projects.

Group Seva: The savings accrued should be donated for some Seva. Each Region or Centre could adopt its own group project for using the money accrued from Ceiling on Desires.

Make a group donation to Swami's Hospital to buy medical equipment/supplies.

All the savings should be collected by the Seva Team Lead of the Centre and used as suggested above.

Devotees who wish to make cash donations should do so to the Service Coordinator of their Centre who will keep detailed records of all such transactions and must forward these donations to the National Service Coordinator who in turn forward these donations to our Central Coordinator with the detailed records of all such transactions

Our Central Coordinator will present these

donations to Swami on behalf of all the Canadian devotees.

Please note that as it is a Ceiling on Desire's project, the donation has to come from the practice of curbing excessive desires..

One suggestion is that each female pilgrim takes with her 4 new saris. We would be able to collect a large number of saris as a group and that they could then be donated in Prasanthi. This will bring unity of purpose in the group and will go a long way in our prayers at His Divine Lotus Feet.

All the Pilgrims are urged to take part in their centre's seva activities and perform selfless service. Service begins at home. Please take serious interest in volunteering for helping out in the centers as well as at home.

In Prasanthi:

Ceiling on Desires should continue during our entire pilgrimage. The saris collected by female pilgrims and brought with them from Canada would be donated as a group donation to Easwaramma Women's Trust in Prasanthi.

In addition, once we arrive in Prasanthi, there will be other group Seva opportunities. In all our Seva Sadhana, we should always serve God in man and with Love, Humility and Reverence at His Divine Lotus Feet

~Saroj Naidu

National Spiritual Coordinator

Bhajan Mala



Singing aloud the glory of God and charge the atmosphere with divine adoration...this is why I insist on group singing of the names of the Lord

~Baba

Congregational singing is the epitome of Divine Love. Renowned as a sacred tool for mental, emotional and spiritual up-liftment, bhajan singing purifies an individual's mind, speech and actions. When immersed with singing in unison, devotees harmonize the feelings of Love and Devotion to the Divine by merging themselves with the Lord. This feeling manifests into inner ecstasy.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, lovingly referred to as Swami, has always emphasized the significance of devotional singing in order to purify one's Self and merge into the beauty which is the Lord. Swami is the Poorna Avatar. Therefore by chanting His name and concentrating on His form, He will appear.

In commemoration of Swami's 84th birthday

the Youth of the Middlefield Sathya Sai Centre, enlisted the youth and devotees in organizing the first-ever Bhajan Mala. Under Swami's divine guidance, the youth became Swami's instrument in which the Middlefield Sathya Sai Centre was able to intensify their love for Swami and dedicate all actions to Him. The Bhajan Mala commenced on September 1st 2009 until November 23rd 2009 for Swami's birthday celebratory bhajan at the Centre.

The Bhajan Malas encompassed one-hour filled with continuous bhajans dedicated to Swami for 84 days at each youth and devotees homes. Each bhajan started promptly at 7:30 p.m. and ended at 8:30 p.m. for 84 days, with the 1st and 84th bhajan days held at the Middlefield Sathya Sai Centre.

The Bhajan songs were sung passionately, devotees clapped enthusiastically, and the Tabla was played fervently. Overall, the atmosphere was charged with harmony and divinity which expressed an intense vibration of love and devotion to Swami. Each bhajan symbolized an exquisite bead of love which was entwined in unity for 84 continuous days. This garland of Love, Mala, has been presented at the Lotus feet of our dearest Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, on His 84th birthday.

After the daily one hour bhajan in rejoicing Swami's love, a soothing musical tape of the mantra was played instilling a sense of serenity to the mind, body and soul. The tranquil rhythm of the mantras guided devotees to remain concentrating on Swami's omnipresence while they wrote in the

Likhita Japam book “Om Sri Sai Ram”, while other devotees mediated on Swami’s Divine love. After the completion of the 84 days, 108,000 “Om Sri Sai Ram’s” had been recorded by devotees and presented to Swami on His birthday. Writing in the Likhita Japam book has the same significance as chanting Swami’s name and concentrating on His form. This creates vibrations in the mind and body, which then transcends into the atmosphere. The Divine energy from each devotee manifests from their heart as Swami’s abode is within all our hearts.

The responses from each bhajan mala were positive with experiences ranging from growing garlands to Divine vibrations. A few of these leelas have been shared and experienced amongst devotees. Many devotees have noticed that the garlands they placed on Swami’s pictures have miraculously grown and continue to grow without any alteration to the density and freshness of the flowers. This is a blessing from Swami for not only the participants of the bhajan mala but also for the entire world.

Given the outcry of LOVE for the Lord on some days, parallel bajans were held at different devotees homes at the same time. On the 22nd three bajans were held at different devotees home all at the same time. With the devotees desire we ended the 84 days with 90 bajans.

Countless devotees experienced strong vibrations in their homes; many felt Swami’s presence so strongly that they reported they saw Swami’s form next to his photo during Aarti and the scent of fragrance wafting through the air. The bhajan mala had a profound effect as a pathway to spirituality and transformation for the devotees, as some disciples that never attended bhajans request to have monthly bhajans in their homes and others felt the Love

and Joy of Swami has been instilled into their homes.

Through Swami’s blessings, we were all able to participate in this beautiful experience. The bhajan mala allowed devotees to contemplate on the power of Swami’s Love. Our Sai family sang in unison, concentrated on the Divine form and name together, and released the sacred vibrations and Divine energies with all our hearts merged as One.

Ron Naidoo

Youth Co-ordinator
Middlefield Sathya Sai Center
Region 2 Ontario

Festivals ~ 2010

Feb. 12	Maha Sivarathri
March 16	Ugadi
March 24	Sri Rama Navami
May 6	Easwaramma Day
July 25	Guru Poornima
Sept. 2	Krishna Janmashtami
Sept. 11	Ganesh Chaturthi
Oct. 17	Vijaya Dasami
Nov 13-14	Akhanda Bhajan
Nov 23	Bhagavan’s 85th Birthday
Dec 25	Christmas

Spiritual Practice Program

All devotees are invited to join in spiritual preparation for the Pilgrimage whether or not traveling to Prasanthi Nilayam. The primary purpose of the pilgrimage is to deepen our practice and understanding of Swami's teachings and enjoy His Darshan, so that we grow to be aware of Him all the time, everywhere. Let us all build a sense of selfless unity by joining in spiritual preparation for the Lord's Darshan in Prasanthi Nilayam in His Physical Presence.

Sai Baba has said He is happy when devotees put His teachings into practice. Based on that, the three-step National Framework of Spiritual Preparation for the pilgrimage is based.

Spiritual Practices Preparation Framework in Three Steps:

1. Understand spiritual principles of a Sai teachings.
2. Put one or more of them into practice.
3. Share experiences and practice ideas @the Center Study Circles.

Each Center is encouraged to select several Discourses for study circles in the upcoming months. Focus discussion on identifying aspects of living an ideal life according to the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba. Put one or more spiritual principles into practice in your life.

Each devotee and center should strengthen an existing spiritual practice or begin a new one that contributes to leading an ideal life according to Baba's teachings. Given the multitude of tendencies, inclinations, and capacities among devotees, Sai Baba has described many spiritual practices that can lead to self-realization. This includes the ideal

practice of service dedicated to the Lord.

Sample practices:

Individual Devotee Practices

1. Keep a spiritual journal or log describing your experience of human values
2. Sacrifice negative qualities (e.g. anger, lust, attachment, greed, pride, envy) and experience your human values of love, truth, right conduct, peace, nonviolence
3. Sacrifice excessive desires (related to time, energy, food, money). Use savings for Seva projects.
4. Begin a new spiritual practice or strengthen an existing practice. e.g. Namasmarana, Meditation, Gayathri Japa, Likhita Japa and studying Swami's teachings.

Center or Group Practices

1. Reinvigorate center study circles. Discuss Swami's Words on living ideal lives based on practice of human values.
2. Design activities focusing on the universality of Sai Baba's teachings so that there is more participation from multicultural population in Canada.
3. Participate in center and national service projects in preparation for the Pilgrimage.

Devotees and centers are invited to share their experiences of practicing the Sai ideals by submitting articles to Canadian Sathya Sai Newsletter. Also, share your ideas of how to practice spiritual principles effectively.

~Editor

(Adapted from the USA Pilgrimage Website)

Daily Activities@Prasanthi Nilayam

Swami has laid down the daily schedule to be followed in the Ashram. Every activity of the ashram routine is suffused with deep spiritual significance.



Ashram schedule (subject to change)

5:20am. *Omkar and Suprabhatam*

5:40am. *Veda Chanting and Nagar Sankeertan*

Around 7:00am. *Morning Darshan, but Swami has been coming out around 9AM lately*

9:00am. *Bhajans*

9:30am. *Arati*

10:00 to 11:00am. *Spiritual Talk*

Around 3:00pm. *Evening Darshan*

5:00pm. *Bhajans*

5:30pm. *Arati*

After evening Arati: *Meditation for Overseas Devotees*

7:45pm. *Video Show*

Canadian Sathya Sai Newsletter going ONLINE in 2011

*Due to escalating printing and mailing costs coupled with declining subscribers, it is impossible to continue to produce the Canadian Sathya Sai Newsletter in its present format. At the 2009 Central Council meeting in Edmonton, Council has recommended a change to an online format starting in 2011. Until then, we will continue with the present Print format and have the online edition also available to the subscribers. **I request all the subscribers to update their e-mail addresses by sending them to <sainewsletter@shaw.ca> for future notification of On-Line editions when available.** Print editions of Birthday Issue may be made available through the Book Center dependent on the interest of members and Sai Centers starting in 2011. I thank all the Canadian Sai Family members for their support and encouragement in the last 23 years of this publication. It has been a privilege and a joy to serve His Lotus Feet through this humble offering. Thank you Swami for this opportunity to serve you.*

~Editor

Sai Family News

Tenth Anniversary of Sathya Sai School of Canada

The current school year 2009-2010 marks Sathya Sai School's Tenth Anniversary since its inception in the year 2000. The small school which began in 2000 with faith and much anticipation has blossomed into a full-fledged elementary school that is integrating Human Values with academic learning. Its educational activities are directed towards becoming a worthy model school for values education in Canada.

The Celebration involves the School Supporters Appreciation Night on March 5th, Character Education Seminar for local principals, government and education department officials on March 4th, and the School Parents Night on March 3rd, 2010.

(Sathya Sai School Newsletter)

I said many years ago, Sathya Sai School is the crown Jewel of the Sathya Sai Organisation of Canada and it has to be nurtured and supported at any cost. Due to the hard work and dedication of many selfless individuals, we have a world class School in Canada today.

Congratulations to all the students, dedicated parents and the staff of Sathya Sai School of Canada from the Canadian Sathya Sai Newsletter.

~Editor, CSSN

Spiritual Retreat ~ Ontario Region 1 ~

One Day Annual Spiritual Retreat

Hosted by Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centres of London and Windsor.

**SATURDAY ~ June 26, 2010
7:00 am to 6:00 pm**

LOCATION:

**Komoka Community Centre
(near London, Ontario)**

THEME:

LOVE AND SACRIFICE

Presentations and activities for adults, youth and children

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, and Beverages & Snacks served

NO FEES, however pre-registration is required. Please contact your Center/SDG President for more details*.

Please note that the discipline and dress code are to be observed as per Prasanthi Nilayam guidelines as in the past retreats (i.e. No Shorts or Jeans)

FOR FURTHER DETAILS, PLEASE CONTACT:

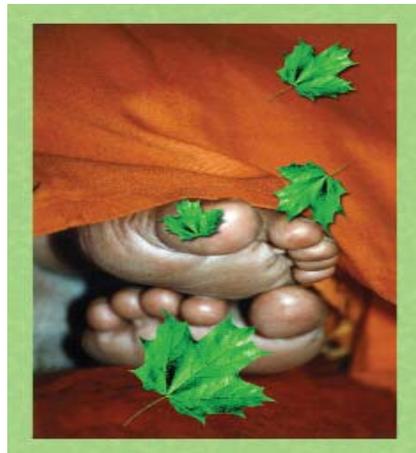
Kailash Nath Dhir,
President,
Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of London
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(519) 657 8810

<kdhi7836@rogers.com>

Nine Point Code of Conduct

1. Meditate and pray daily.
2. Have devotional singing and prayer with family members once a week.
3. Participate in Sathya Sai Education programs organized by the centre for children of Sai devotees.
4. Participate in community work and other Sai organization programs.
5. Attend at least once a month group devotional singing organized by the centre.
6. Study Sai literature regularly.
7. Speak softly and lovingly to everyone.
8. Do not talk ill of others.
9. Practice Ceiling on Desires and use the savings for service.



Ten-Fold Path to Divinity

1. Love and serve the motherland; do not hate or hurt the motherland of others.
2. Honour every religion; each is a pathway to the one God.
3. Love all men without distinction; know that mankind is a single community.
4. Keep your home and its environs clean; it will ensure health and happiness for you and for society.
5. Do not throw coins when beggars stretch their hands for alms; help them to become self-reliant. Provide food and shelter, love and care for the sick and aged.
6. Do not tempt others by offering bribes or demean yourself by accepting bribes.
7. Do not develop jealousy, hatred or envy on any account.
8. Do not depend on others to serve your personal needs; become your own servant, before proceeding to serve others.
9. Observe the laws of the state and be an exemplary citizen.
10. Adore God. Abhor sin.