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The Enigma of Islam ...Enlightened By Sai

Dear readers, the religion of Islam has suffered so much misunderstanding among both adherents and non-adherents alike. The aim of this Cover Story is to clear the mist of these misconceptions in the Light of the Teachings of Sathya Sai Baba.

This has been done in four major parts: Part one deals with the Divine Call of the Prophet and the True meaning of Islam: ([Mohammed, The Prophet of Allah](#)); Part two brings out the quintessential Essence of Islam ([The Essence of Islam](#)); the third section explores the foundation on which the Pillars of Islam are built ([The Five Pillars of Islam](#)); while the last section ([The Call Of Sai](#)) is a string of garlands which bears testimony that Sai Baba is the fulfillment of the Prophecies of the Holy Prophet [Peace Be upon Him].

To make this story an experiential awareness for you, we, in Heart2Heart, have carried out extensive interviews of outstanding Muslim devotees from different parts of the world. Their mind-boggling revelations have been interwoven throughout this Cover Story to make the narrative inspiring and convincing. May your heart beat to the Call of the Prophet as you read.



**Listen To Audio
Of The Muslim
Call To Prayer**

(1.36 MB)

PART 1: MOHAMMED, THE PROPHET OF ALLAH

**"Allah sent forth to them a Prophet among them who shall declare to them
Thy Revelations and instruct them in the Book and in Wisdom and purify them;
Surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise One" (Qur'an 2:129)**

The Holy Prophet Mohammed Bin Abdullah (Peace be upon Him) just like all the holy ones who have realized the unity of Divinity, never reacted to criticisms because he knew that children do not throw stones at trees that are barren. His life and example were the very message which he preached.

The Prophet's Pure Self

The Prophet used to take a certain route to preach the Message of Allah to the people. Along this route there lived one woman whose heart could not take in the message of the Prophet. Day and night she was lost in thought brooding and planning how to injure the Holy one. At last she came up with a stratagem. "Although I may not be able to stop him from preaching this strange doctrine," she thought to herself, "I am going to disturb his peace and ignite the fire of anger in his heart."



Even before the rays of the sunrise had entered her windows, she was busy sweeping her house. She carefully collected all the garbage in a basket and placed it on the roof of her house waiting eagerly for the Prophet to pass that way as was his custom everyday. Her

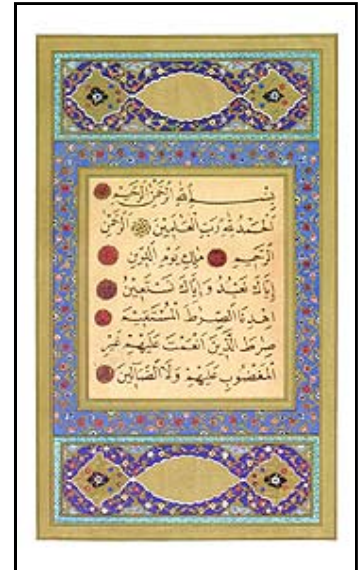
intention was to provoke the Prophet to anger, and to disturb his peace so that he can be an object of laugh and scorn to people.

Everyday, she would stand by her window listening for the approaching footsteps announcing the coming of a man dressed in clean white clothes. She would then climb to the roof of her house taking the basket in her hand and throw the garbage on him as he passed. **But much to her dismay, the Prophet used to continue on his journey without saying a single word, or looking up to see who was pouring the garbage on him. The Prophet was the same in praise and blame.**

This routine continued and the woman became more determined to provoke the Prophet. The Prophet did not want to disappoint the woman and so he continued to walk down the street everyday, instead of picking an alternate route and prayed for the woman to recognize the Truth.

☪ **Love Never Hurts; Love Heals the Hurt**

One morning, the Holy Prophet did not receive his usual shower of garbage as he was passing by her house. So he stopped and looked up; he did not find the woman on the roof. This worried him because he thought something must have happened to her. So he knocked at her door. "Who is it?" asked a feeble fainting voice. "Muhammad Bin Abdullah" was the reply. "Can I come in?" The woman was apparently very sick and feared that Mohammed had come to take revenge on her for what she had been doing. But the love she felt in the voice of the Prophet made her allow him in.



First Surah of the Holy Qur'an

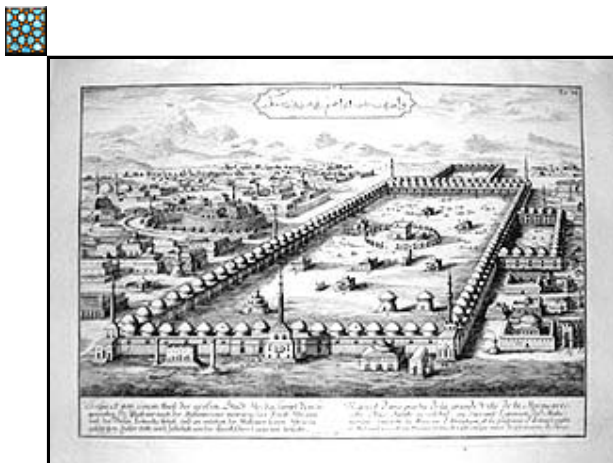


Audio Clip Of Song: 'He Was Mohamed'

(3.95 MB)

Mohammed entered the house and told the woman that not finding her on the roof had worried him, and he thus wanted to inquire about her health. On finding out how ill she was, he gently asked if she needed any help. Overwhelmed with the power of love which poured forth into her soul as the Prophet spoke to her, she forgot all her fear and asked for some water. He kindly gave her some and prayed for her health, while she quenched her thirst. She was then gripped with remorse for being so cruel to him in the past, and she apologized for her mean behaviour. **Mohammed immediately forgave her and thereafter came to her house everyday, cleaned her surroundings, fed her and prayed for her, till she was on her feet again. The kind attitude of the Holy Prophet transformed her totally and through that she recognized the message of Love and Peace which the Prophet preached.**

☪ **The Making of a Prophet**



A 16th century depiction of Old Mecca

This episode is only a glimpse of the glorious life of Prophet Mohammed (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon Him). His heart, undoubtedly, was an Ocean of Love .

Born in the year 569 AD in the city of Mecca in Arabia the Prophet became an orphan in childhood. He knew neither the care of a mother nor the protection of a father. And this experience was the first preparation for the child who was born to sympathize with the pain of others. As a boy, he was a cowherd and looked after his cows with intense Love. This reminds one of Lord Jesus who called himself "the Good Shepherd" and Sri Krishna who is adored as the Divine Cowherd Boy.

Once while looking after his herd, a cowherd came to him and said, "I will look after your herd; you may go to the town and enjoy yourself. And then you must take charge of my cows, and I will then go for a time." Young Mohammed said, "No, I will take charge of your herd. You may go, but I will not leave my charge." This same principle was shown all through his life.

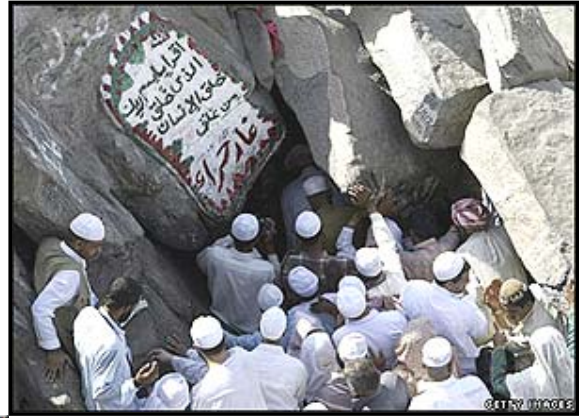
The Prophet was not learned; he could neither read nor write. Yet he became the repository of all Wisdom because he realized That, which when known, everything is known, and without which all knowledge is a bondage; namely, the knowledge of Allah. To become a perfect model for the fullness of the Divine Message which he carried, the Prophet experienced all aspects of life - as an orphan, a shepherd, a merchant, a warrior, a politician, a King, a husband, a father, a brother, a son and even as a grandson.

☪ **Of Whosoever it is Allah's Will to Guide: He expands his Heart into Islam**

The turning point in his life came when his life had taken a downward spiral, in spite of all it could offer. He then sought refuge in solitude. Sometimes for hours, at times for days and weeks, he retreated into a cave on the mountain of Gar-e Hira. There, absorbed in meditation and contemplation, he sought to enter the cave of his heart. Patient as the Prophet was, he continued the search for Truth. It was at the age of 40, in the month of Ramadan, that he received his first revelation from God. It came in the form of the Voice of the Angel Gabriel - that word of inner guidance in the heart of all. The Voice said, "Cry out the Sacred Name of Thy Lord." (Surah 96:1)



Jabal al-Nur, the Mountain of Light, at the top of which is the sacred Hira Cave



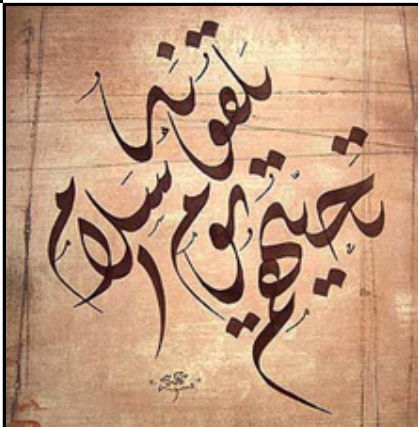
A closeup of the Cave of Hira where the Prophet spent days and weeks in Prayers

The message filled him with awe, and he humbly said in reply that he was unlettered, and unable even to read. Then God opened his heart, filled it with Divine Wisdom and spiritual knowledge, and then illuminated his being with Divine Effulgence. And as he began to follow this advice he found the echo of the Divine Word in everything; it was as if the Sky, the Earth, the Moon and the Universe, all said the same Name that he was repeating.

The angel came to Mohammed and asked him to read. The Prophet replied, "I do not know how to read". The Prophet added, "The angel caught me and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'what shall I read?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created all that exists and has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.'" (96.1, 96.2, 96.3) HADITH 'REVELATION' Volume 1, Book 1, Number 3: as narrated by Aisha.

Gradually, the Prophet's heart became tuned with the Infinite. He realized his soul to be One, within and without, and the call came to him to go forward into the world and carry out the command of God; to glorify His Name; to unite those who are separated; to awaken those who are asleep, and to harmonize one with another. As it is written in the Holy Qur'an,

"Alif Laam Raa; This Book which we have revealed to you so that you may lead the people from out of darkness into light, into the path of the Mighty, the Glorious." (Surah 14:1)



A page from the Glorious Qur'an

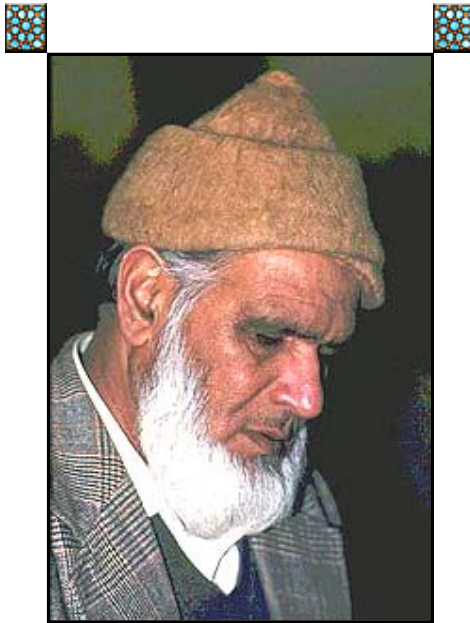


In the Original Arabic Language

Thus the Prophet started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One" and that complete surrender to Him is the very goal life.

These messages were given to the Prophet (Peace be upon Him) in portions over a period spanning approximately 23 years (610 AD to 622 AD). He was 63 years when the revelation of the Qur'an was completed and the language of the original message was Arabic.

☾ Who is a Muslim?



A Muslim is a person who has conquered his mind

The term "Surrender" is the hallmark of Islamism. The word Islām is derived from the Arabic verb *Aslama*, which means to surrender. **It means that a Muslim is one who has totally surrendered his entire mind to God. Anyone who has been able to realize this state of being with God is a Muslim, irrespective of the person's creed, country, caste, or colour.** The Qur'an gave examples of such Holy ones – Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus etc, who reached the state of complete surrender to God and referred to them as Muslims.

"Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian, but he was sound in the faith, a Muslim and not of those who add gods unto God." [Qur'an 3:60]

"Behold! Allah said: 'Oh Jesus! Verily I will cause thee to die and I will take thee up to Myself and deliver thee from those who believe not.'" [Qur'an 3:55]

Thus, Islam is a word which denotes not a particular religion but a state of mind, the state of total surrender to the Will of God. The Prophet, therefore, did not see himself as founding a new religion, but as restoring the foundations of Islam which had been there from time immemorial. The Qur'an declares:

"Nay, whoever submits himself whole-heartedly to Allah, and he is a doer of good to others, he shall have his reward from his Lord. And there is no fear for such people nor do they grieve." (2:112) -*

"Say to those who have received the Book, and to the common folk, "Do ye surrender yourselves unto God?" If they become Muslims, then are they guided aright: but if they turn away – thy duty is only preaching; and God's eye is on His servants." (Qur'an 3:19)

☾ The True Meaning of "Surrender"

How then do we come to this state of 'total surrender to God' which makes one a true Muslim? The Qur'an declares that to Allah belongs the whole of Creation. What can one give to Allah that does not originally belong to Him? The Heavens and the Earth, and all that is contained therein are His! Time and the Life, which it holds in its womb, belong to Allah; Eternity and the Death, which it holds in its tomb, belong to Allah. So what is this object that we must surrender, that is not Allah in the first place? How can you surrender that which does not belong to you?

"Allah said: 'The son of Adam hurts Me by abusing Time, for I am Time; in My Hands are all things and I cause the revolution of night and day.'" [Hadith No.351, Vol. 6]

The true essence of surrender, therefore, is to loose this false idea that anything belongs to you. And it is the little "I" that is responsible for this false claim. When one succeeds in destroying this sense of "I" and "mine" which, according to the Qur'an, separates "gods from God" one feels one's primordial oneness with the One. The little illusory will of man dissolves completely in the Universal Omnipotent Will of Allah. When this happens, one attains Islam. This is a type of death - the death of the ego - which is known in Islam as "*Fana*" (annihilation).

"In Islam, the expression *salaam* is used as a form of greeting. "Sa" in this term signifies the combined expression of *Saalokyam*, *Saameepyam* and *Saayujyam* (Seeing the Divine, Being near the Divine and Merging in the Divine). When these three expressions are combined and merged into one – "La" signifying merger – you have *Salaam* (the merging of the many in the One)"

– Divine discourse of Sri Sathya Sai Baba on 25th December 1991

☾ Islam is the Highest Form of Worship

We see from the above that Islam is the essence of all religions. Islam, as this total dissolution of the ego, is the very essence of Christianity, symbolized by the death of Jesus on the Cross to teach humanity how to cut across the "I" on the tree of life so as to realize the resurrection of the Immortal Spirit. St Paul attained this essence when he said: "It is no longer 'I' who lives, but God living in me". (Galatians 2:20)

"Are they desiring some religion that is not Allah's? All in earth and heaven have surrendered to God either by compulsion or on their own." [Qur'an 3: 83]

In Hinduism there are nine steps to the realization of Oneness

with God. And the ninth and final step is Surrender. Hence in Hinduism, "Islam" - this state of total surrender to God - is the final and last stage of worship. This is the reason why Islam is regarded as the final and last message of Allah to humanity, because it represents that highest and final form of worship on man's journey to God.

And because Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) is the vehicle of this 'last' message, he is regarded as the final messenger of Allah. The inner meaning is that the last Prophet, which is truly this final call which awakens us to the path of total surrender - is within us.



The Mosque next to the Taj Mahal

"Mohammed is not the father of any man among you, but he is the apostle of God, and the seal of the Prophets and Allah is full of knowledge." [Qur'an 33: 40]

And once we abide by this inner call, once we destroy the root cause of our separation with the One, which is the ego, we reach that highest state of realization where we are One with God. It is this root ego which makes false images of God, and thereby separates or joins "gods to God". This is the fundamental sin in Islam. It is also the "original sin" in Christianity, namely, Adam's forgetfulness of his oneness with Yahweh. When one thinks that there is more than One, then one tries to join or separate that which is inseparable. But there is indeed only One and He is Allah.

"Islam denotes the social community whose members have achieved supreme peace through surrender to the All-merciful, All-powerful God and who have vowed to live in peace with their fellowmen. Later, it came to be applied to communities that considered themselves separate and different and so hostile to the rest. Islam taught something higher. It directed attention to the One in the many, the unity in diversity and led people to the Reality named God."

– Sri Sathya Sai Baba (SSS Vol. 16, P 80)

Beloved Sathya Sai Baba has drawn so many Muslim devotees from different countries to His Lotus Feet. With the Power of His Divine Love, He transforms them and makes them realize the very essence of Islam. Natalya Kandaurova is one of these such privileged souls. She is a devout Muslim from Kazakhstan and a member of 'The International Association of Healers', and an 'Honorable Healer' of Kazakhstan. Having been saved four times from the clutches of physical death, Naytalya narrates to us her transformative experiences with Sathya Sai Baba as she journeys on the path of Islam.

Transforming Experiences



Ms. Natalya Kandaurova, Kazakhstan

I had not heard anything about Sai Baba before. One night He came in my dream and told me, "Come to Me soon. Don't be late. You will come to Me in two weeks with 6 more people".

The next day, one of my patients came to see me and casually mentioned about her friend who had been arranging trips from Alma-Aty to India, Prashanthi Nilayam in particular. I took her phone number. In three days I bought my ticket to India.

I went there with a group of seven others. I asked the organizer to show me the picture of Sai Baba. You will not be surprised - He was the same person who came in my dream.

The Pillar of Orange Light

Ever since then, Swami is my heart and life, and for all my family. Swami assured me that He will always be with me, giving healing energies as a column of bright orange light in the center of my room where I see my patients. I always request my patients to stand in the middle of the room. I seldom tell my patients about this Divine Phenomena since only a few can see this column of

orange light; but invariably the healing has very positive results.

On the first pilgrimage to Swami I came here for a month. After three weeks, Swami came again to my dream and said, "Now you can go". So we decided to spend the last week visiting some other sacred places in India. On our last day Swami went out round the ashram in His car. As the car was passing us, Swami looked at me and lifted His Hand in His benevolent gesture of Blessings. I felt very happy to receive His bountiful blessings and benedictions. Swami's Love is so dear to my heart.

Learn How to Die Before You Die

Truly speaking, my spiritual awakening happened five years before I came to Swami. At the age of 33, I had nearly died four times and had undergone three cancer operations. Then, my doctors said I had only one or two months to live. Needless to say, I was shocked to hear this medical verdict and was crestfallen when I went to sleep that day. That night I had a prophetic dream that changed my whole life.

The late Kazakh poet, Abbay, came to my dream and said, 'You will read the Holy Book Qur'an. You will heal people. Your path is Islam'. In the morning I started spontaneously reciting prayers from the Qur'an in Arabic!

I had never learnt Arabic and when I asked people what I was saying, they remarked that these are recitations of the *Fatihai* and *Ihlas*, which are prayers from the Qur'an.



**Listen To Audio
Clips Of Chants
From The Qur'an;
Surah 001**

(1.32 MB)

We All Come From Love

For six months after this, I was in a quandary; I was puzzled and beset by doubts. I was a Christian by birth, and my parents had baptized me when I was still very young. I knew fully well how serious it would be to change my religion.

After 6 months of heart-rending doubts, Jesus Christ came to me in an incredible dream and said, 'We all come from Love. We have the same ancestors - Adam and Eve. It does not matter which path you choose as long as you are on the way to God'.

So at the age of 33, after so many trials and tribulations in my life, I took the religion of Islam into my heart and soul. The word Islam means 'surrender' and a Muslim means 'someone who has surrendered to God'. When we take our life trials with surrender and love, they can no longer be the cause of suffering but mere tests or exams in the open university of life. It took me five years to come to terms with my ambitions and egoism, and learn the valuable lessons of surrender and acceptance of all life circumstances as the Will of God Almighty. Only then I was ready to meet my spiritual teacher. As a matter of fact, a teacher will call his disciple only when he is ready.

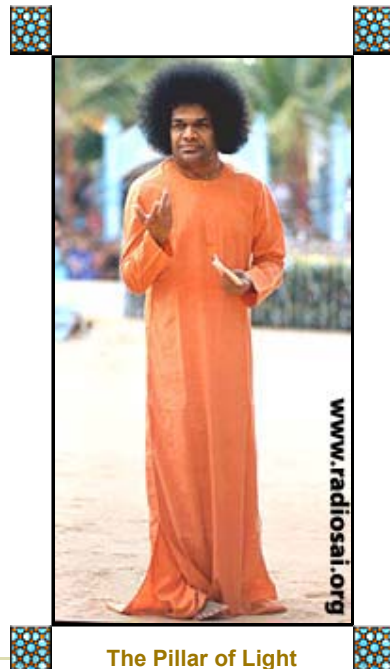
So my spiritual life encompasses Christianity, Islam and the teachings of Sai Baba. I don't see any contradictions between any religions. The rituals may be different but the purport of all religions is the same: love all; hurt none; forgive others; find the cause of all that is happening in your life within yourself. We should not be idle and passively wait for God's Grace.

We should constantly make an effort on the way of self-transformation by helping others and dedicating all our actions to God. The main tenets of all religions are the same. Don't be angry; don't worry; love the world around you; be respectful to elders.

God is One

For the last 7 years ever since I have adopted Islam, I do Namaz five times a day as all Muslims are supposed to do. I also repeat Christian prayers and Sanskrit mantras. In our 'Center for Spiritual Development of Academic', there is a big altar in the center where you can see symbols and prayers from all major religions. All day long we play music and prayers from different religions.

Our visitors can listen to Gregorian songs, music from the Qur'an, Egyptian and Jewish music, and also bhajans. Followers of all religions come to the center and each one can find something familiar to him or her, and also learn something about other religions. This



The Pillar of Light

helps many realize that God is One, but we worship Him in different ways and pray to Him in all languages.

☾ PART 2: THE ESSENCE OF ISLAM – 'LA ALLAHA ILLA ALLAH'



Arabic inscription for *La ilaha illa allah*

“Truly, your God is truly One.” (Qur’an 37:4)

“In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Say He is Allah, the One and Only, Allah, the Eternal, He begetteth not, and He is not begotten;

“And there is none like unto Him.” (Qur’an 112)



**Listen To Audio
Clips Of Chants
From The Qur’an;
Surah 112**

(0.65 MB)

The most fundamental and the heart of God’s revelations to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) in the Qur’an is faith in the unity of God. This is expressed in the primary *Kalimah* of Islam as “God Alone is” (*La ilaha illa allah*). This beautiful phrase is the bedrock of Islam, its foundation and essence. The Prophet

himself said that this verse alone constitutes one third of the whole of the Qur’an. It is the expression of this belief which differentiates a true Muslim from a *kafir* (non-believer).

“A man heard another man reciting in the prayers: ‘Say (O Muhammad): “He is Allah, the One.” (112.1) And he recited it repeatedly. When it was morning, he went to the Prophet and informed him about that, as if he considered that the recitation of that Sura by itself was not enough. Allah’s Apostle said, “By Him in Whose Hand my life is, it is equal to one-third of the Quran.”

(Sahih Bukhari, Volume 9, Book 93, Number 469)

God is One, there is no second. God is One, the Only. There is nothing apart from Allah. Only Allah exists. To think that there is something apart from Allah is the mark of an unbeliever who joins ‘gods to God’ (Qur’an 3:57). This is the message of the Glorious Qur’an.

☾ Three Possible Misconceptions:

The First Misconception: “Your God is different from my God”

There are three possible misconceptions of this fundamental Truth expressed so powerfully throughout the pages of the Qur’an: God is One and Only. The first misunderstanding is to think that one’s own God is the true God, the One, and that the ‘gods’ of other people are false. The Qur’an declares that there is Only One God and this One and only has so many Names; yet He is beyond every attribute. God is not different but He has different Names.

“To whichever Name you call upon Him, to Him belongs the most beautiful Names,” (Qur’an 17:110)



**Audio Clip Of
The 99 Names
Of Allah**

(4.33 MB)

“God is One; there are not many Gods, one for each tribe among men! Love is One; it transcends caste, colour and creed, if it has to be genuine. Truth is One; there cannot be two. For, two can only be One, occurring twice. The Goal is One; for, all roads must lead to the One God. Why then should men quarrel and fight over the Eternal and the Absolute?”

- Sathya Sai Baba (Divine Discourse 12th
October 1983)

“A Jew came to the Prophet and said, ‘O Muhammad! Allah holds the heavens on a Finger, and the mountains on a Finger, and the trees on a Finger, and all the creation on a Finger and then Allah said, ‘I am the King.’ On that Allah’s Apostle smiled till his premolar teeth became visible, and then recited: ‘No just estimate have they made of Allah such as due to Him.’”(Qur’an 39.67)

(Sahih Bukhari, Volume 9, Book 93,
Number 469)

“Allah laughs about two men who kill each other but both enter paradise.” [Hadith, Shakir 5:51]

When anyone says: “Your God is different from my God”, “Your religion is different from my religion”, “Your belief is different from my belief”, that person has not understood the fundamental Truth of Islam because he divides the Unity of God.

☪ **The Second Misconception: "God and His Creation are Separate"**

The second misunderstanding of this basic Truth of the Qur'an is to see God as different from His Manifestations. This misconception arises from the illusion that seeks to separate that which is inseparable. Like the Sun and its rays, the Ocean and its waters, the Tree and its branches, God is not different from His creation, although God is beyond His Manifestations. **God is the Existence from which all things derive their existence. Everything that is, is in God because God alone is. To say that something exists outside God is to join 'gods unto God'.** It means that a particular thing can exist outside Existence and this is a contradiction - The contradiction of those who join 'gods unto God'. The Holy Prophet resolves this contradiction so beautifully in the Hadith when he stated:

"My Lord! You are The First; Nothing is before You. You are The Last; Nothing is after You. You are the Outward; Nothing is over You. You are the Inward; Nothing is inside of You. Help me to pay my debt and keep poverty from me." (AI –Hadith 57/3)



Like the Tree and its branches, God is not separate from His Creation

The Truth is that everything is God, yet God is beyond everything. The Holy Bible conveys this same principle of Oneness when it is said in Acts of the Apostles:

"In God we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

In the Bhagavad Gita, which is the essence of the Vedas, Lord Krishna had given a very beautiful and apt analogy to explain the unity of God and His creation. Let us suppose we are looking at a big tree. In this tree we see a number of leaves, branches, roots, fruits and so on. But though we see all this, we do not call the flowers by the name of the leaves, nor do we call the leaves by the names of the fruits or roots; we use an appropriate name for each part of this single big tree.

The branches are branches but they do not become fruit. Similarly, the leaves do not become roots. When we want to enjoy the fragrance of the flowers, we must smell the flowers and not the

"The foremost need today is for everyone to realise that God is One. This is what Jesus and Mohammed proclaimed. The word "Allah" really means the One Supreme which contains everything in the Universe. This is the primary message of the Vedas ...The essential truth of all religions is that God is one. Jesus proclaimed the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. One can have only one father, not two." – Sathya Sai Baba

The recognition of this oneness in the entire and diverse aspects of Divinity is really the basis of *Tawheed* (Islamic Monotheism) in Islam. The term *Tawheed* is derived from the Arabic verb *Wahhada* which literally means "unification" or "asserting oneness".

Allah is the Seed for all beings. We are witnessing all these different forms and parts of the Tree, although they have arisen from the same Seed. So also we are experiencing different aspects of the one God. God is only One. There is nothing outside of Him.

☪ **The Third Misconception: "I am Different From God"**

The third misunderstanding of the basic Truth of Islam - He is Allah, the One and Only - is to see God as different from oneself. Again, it is this sense of difference that joins 'gods unto God'! **When one thinks "I am separate from God" one creates an illusion which seeks to separate that which is inseparable and to join that which was never apart. And this illusion is the delusion that blinds man to the vision of the One in the many and makes him an enemy unto Himself who is none but Allah.**

☪ **The Mind is the Culprit for these Misconceptions**

The root cause of this delusion is the mind. It is the mind that separates, joins and divides. It is the mind that projects God outside of itself, and thereby, is deluded that God is different and separate. When this mind is surrendered completely to Allah, one becomes one with the very essence of Islam: '*la allaha illa allah*' - God is One and only. When God is One and Only, where is the second to compare with Him?

Thus Islam forbids the making of images of Allah because it is just not possible to make images of Allah when one has attained Islam; that is when one's mind has been completely dissolved in Allah. It is the mind that creates mental images of Allah. And it

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God is ONE

is the same mind that confuses the image it has created as the Reality which is uncreated. To confuse the Reality with its image is the idolatry which the Prophet was sent to abolish.

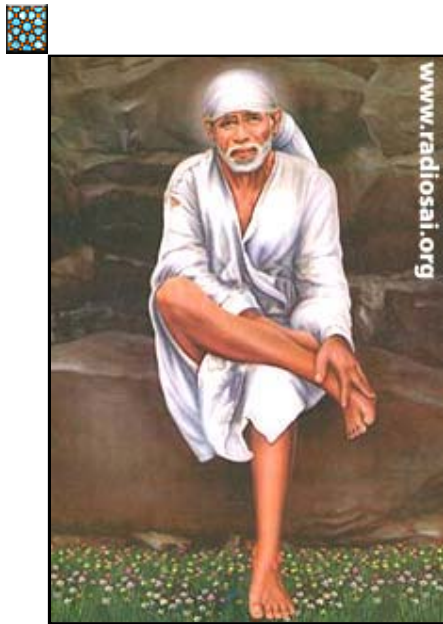
And the root of this idolatry is the mind. Once the mind is there, it will always create images because the very nature of the mind is imagination. Even when you think of Allah as "Nothing-ness" or "Emptiness", this "emptiness of nothingness" is also a subtle form of image which you have created in your mind. Allah is beyond "Nothing-ness", Allah is beyond "Some-thing-ness", and Allah is beyond any mental attribute that we can ascribe unto Him. For there is no likeness unto Allah! (Qur'an 112) Consequently, it is only possible to have no mental image of Allah when one succeeds in removing the mirror of the mind. But as long as the mirror is there, it will always reflect images.

Islam teaches that it is only possible to remove the mind when one has totally surrendered his will to the Will of Allah. When this happens, there will no longer be any difference between Allah and His Servant.

Allah's Apostle said, "Allah said, 'I am to My servant as he thinks of Me.'" [Hadith No.502]

Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi is venerated as the reincarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi who was regarded by the Muslims as a Muslim and by the Hindus as a Hindu. In the story below we see how Shirdi Sai Baba revealed the Oneness of God and proved to both the Muslims and the Hindus that this Unity can only be realized by one who has totally surrendered himself to God.

Allah Malik! Datthaathreya Malik!



Shirdi Sai Baba

A controversy arose among the local people in Shirdi as to whether Baba was a Muslim or a Hindu. At one time He used to say: "Allah Malik! Allah Malik!" (Allah is the Master) At other times, He would say "Datthaathreya Malik!"

Whenever He shouted "Allah Malik!" Muslims used to come to Him in the Masjid. His appearance was very much like that of a Muslim; hence, many Muslims used to come to Him. Hindus also used to come and offer incense to Him. The Muslims did not approve of what the Hindus were doing. The Hindus did not like the way Muslims revered Baba.

Consequently, bitterness developed between the two communities. One day, Mhalaspathi was sitting near Baba and serving Him. Mhalaspathi was the priest in the Khandoba temple. The Muslims, who were opposed to the presence of a Hindu priest near Baba, came with sticks and beat up Mhalaspathi.

At every stroke, Mhalaspathi cried out: "Baba!" "Baba!" Each time he shouted the name of Baba, the blow was borne by Baba. Finally, Mhalaspathi fell to the ground.

Baba came out. Muslims had great reverence for

Baba. Baba roared at the Muslim crowd: "Saithan! On the one side you worship Me and on the other you beat Me. Is this your devotion?"

Baba was bleeding all over the body. The Muslims saw it and asked Baba who had beaten Him.

"Did you not beat Me? Did you not beat Me?" said Baba pointing to several men in the crowd. They said: "We did not come near You at all. We only beat Mhalaspathi."

"Who is in Mhalaspathi? I am in him," declared Baba. "He has surrendered to Me and hence all his troubles are Mine."



"They worship Allah but they beat Allah"

Progeny of the Same Mother

On hearing this, the Muslims fell at Baba's Feet and craved His forgiveness.



"Whatsoever you do to anyone, it is unto Allah you do it"

Baba then summoned the Hindus and Muslims and told them: "Dear Children, you are all the progeny of One Mother."

Thereby Baba demonstrated the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. He wanted all differences of caste and creed to be eschewed.

What mattered for mankind was the heart. One who is only concerned about his creed will never discover the Divine.

You must seek the Divine within you. Baba pointed out that all caste and creed distinctions related only to the body and mind and that one should go beyond these two to attain the Unity of God.

(Sathya Sai Baba discourse, 25-12-1985)

* The God of Islam

In every age there were people who held the idea of a Formless God. This idea is called Islam. The realization of God as He is, beyond Form, beyond Name, beyond all attributes and images is the highest stage of worship. Yet it is not possible for all to at once reach this exalted state of the worship of the Attributeless and Formless God without going through the stage of worshiping God with Attributes and Form.

This is because the goal of uniting or merging the individual limited will of man into the Universal Infinite Will of Allah is a gradual process. **For anyone to come to that complete surrender to Allah which the Qur'an talks about, that person must have passed through stages of transformation, sublimation, and total annihilation of the mind. As long as one is attached to the body-mind complex which steeps him in body consciousness, one would not be able to understand and reach the Attributeless and Formless Supreme.**

The Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet (the authentic sayings and actions of the Prophet Mohammed [Peace be upon Him] are like the two legs of Islam. These two Books of Allah give a well structured and step by step laid out spiritual principles which transform the savage mind into a civilized person in the primary school of Spirituality , sublimate the civilized mind into a moral person in the college of Spirituality, and annihilates the moral mind into a Divine person in the University of Allah 's Universality.

* The Formless is Understood Through the Form

It is important to realize that the goal of Islam is to lead man to the correct understanding of the nature of God. Every mental image of the Almighty limits God to a particular Form and Name. Islam teaches that God, in His true nature, is beyond Name and Form. But to realize this Formless, Omnipresent and Unchanging aspect of Divinity, one has to pass through a process of mental surrender which leads from the Form to the Formless.



"Read with the Name of thy Lord"
Qur'an 96:1

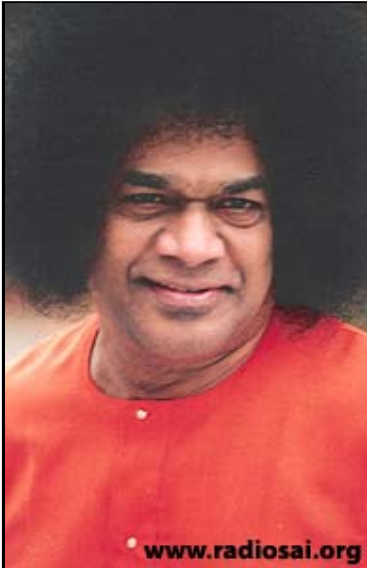


Beloved Swami gives us an apt example to illustrate this process. He says that let us suppose you want to teach the word "chair" to a small child. If you merely utter the word "chair" it does not become clear to him what this form is. However, you can show him a chair and ask him to look it over carefully, all around. While he is doing this you repeat the word "chair". The form of the particular chair you used to teach him the meaning of the word may be impermanent (that chair may change); but the word "chair" and the type of objects it represents will remain. Unless he sees the impermanent form, he will not learn the permanent word "chair". The permanent element is understood through the impermanent one. Therefore, though Divinity is Formless, you have to associate it with a particular Form to understand it.

Little children must be taught with the help of big letters scrawled on boards and slates. Temples , images, rosaries, statues, flowers, etc, are the slates and boards, for children in spiritual progress. But, even if we play with a toy elephant we cannot get the experience of contacting a live elephant, can we? The Formless Godhead can be understood only when we have rendered ourselves formless! But as long as we are still immersed in the world of qualities, we have to attach ourselves only to God with Attributes.

* Left – Right - Left – Right

We can therefore describe Islam as the end of a journey. To walk on this path and reach



Leading man from the form to the Formless

this end we need two legs. Both legs cannot be on the ground at the same time, else we will not move. Similarly, both legs cannot be in the air at the same time otherwise we will be flying and this is not possible. Hence, in order to progress on the spiritual path and reach the goal which is 'Islam', one leg must be on the ground at a time, while the other is in the air. We need to move from the 'Form', - that is left leg on the ground, - to the 'Formless' - that is right leg in the air. And from the 'Formless', that is right leg in the air, - to the 'Form' again. Both processes are possible and progressive until we arrive at the end of our journey which is Islam, where no movement is possible, because you have reached Allah who is Omnipresent, and no movement is necessary because there is no place where Allah is not.



The Masjid al-Nabawi - Tomb of the Holy Prophet in Medina



A Painting of the Holy Quran that Adorns the Poornachandra Stage at Prashanthi Niliyam

The Personal God is an expression, a symbol, a representation to help the child on the path of spirituality to realize the Impersonal Formless God. The Impersonal and Formless God personates and assumes Form and Attributes in order to guide and teach the child how to move from the Form to the Formless. This is the very Nature of the Divine, for Allah says in the sacred Hadith: "I am just as My servant thinks I am". This means that Allah who is Formless, Attributeless, and Nameless, condescends to be remembered in any Attribute, Form, or Name, or concept, or image, which His devotee thinks of Him.

The Prophet said, "Allah says: 'I am just as My servant thinks I am, and I am with him if he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too, remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a group that is better than they; and if he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.' [see Hadith No. 502 and Sahih Bukhari, Volume 9, Book 93, Number 502, & 583]

In this process, the Incomprehensible Allah becomes comprehensible in the mind of His Devotee. The art of remembering God is a mental process. And it is impossible to invoke God in the mind without the aid of an Attribute or Name or Form or concept or idea or image.

Remember Allah as you remember your fathers; nay with an even stronger remembrance. [Qur'an 2:200]

☾ Burst the Balloon of Body Consciousness

Air is Formless, but it assumes the form of the balloon. Allah is Formless, but He assumes the Form in which His servant remembers Him. The same formless air is present inside, as well as outside the balloon. Balloons differ in size and color, but the air within them is one and the same.

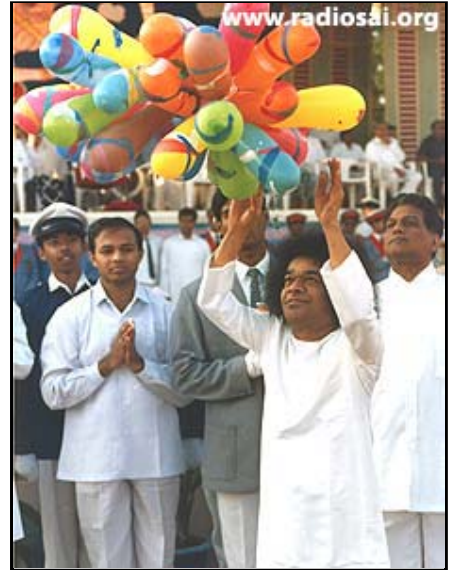
The body can be compared to a color balloon. The air within the balloon can be

compared to conscience or mind, and the all-pervasive air to the Universal Consciousness or Allah. When more and more air is blown into the balloon, ultimately the balloon bursts and the air within (mind) merges with the air outside (Universal Consciousness).

Similarly, the Religion of Islam helps man to expand his mind with Love until the balloon of attachment to body, name and form bursts and the conscience within merges with the Consciousness outside.

The difference between conscience and consciousness is only in quantity, not in quality. The difference between the will of man and the Will of God is only in quantity, not in quality - for "When Allah decreeth a thing He only saith to it: 'Be', and It is." (Qur'an 19:37 ; 3:55)

Imran Musakhanov is another privileged Muslim who has experienced the transformative Power of Sai Baba's Love. He was born in a very devout religious Muslim family in Dagestan, a Muslim Republic in the south west of Russia . Imran tells us stories of his fascinating encounters with Sai Baba and how he was able to harmonize the worship of God in Form and the Formless Divinity.



Both are One: The Air Inside the Balloon and the Air Outside

Know The Dreamer



Mr. Imran Musakhanov, Russia

I started reading books from Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and so on from my early childhood, thanks to my parents who were broadminded and gave me this freedom. I wanted so much to progress on the path of Self-surrender to Allah. But I did not have a clear idea how it should be done.

Then Swami graciously came to my dream even before I heard about Him. It was a bright and vivid dream which I can still remember in all minute details. I found myself in a jungle at night time. It was pitch-dark. I looked around and saw a dim light in the distance. Like a moth I went towards the light. Soon I came to a temple on the outskirts of the jungle.

I later realized, the temple had a dome similar to the three domes of the Museum of All Religions here in Prashanti Nilayam. Another thing that struck me was that it had many architectural features from different religious traditions. It was like a combination of a Mosque, a Hindu Temple , a Church and a Buddhist Temple , all in one. The doors were wide open and I went inside. There, in a big hall, I saw many people sitting silently in meditation. Some were sitting cross-legged as *yogis*, others on their knees according to Muslim tradition. I was curious to know what these people are doing. What were they meditating upon?

Then, I noticed that they all started bowing down and prostrating with a lot of love and devotion to somebody. The earth started shaking and I could hear dramatic sounds of thunders from behind. I turned around and saw a hallowed old man in a dark blue mantle with a hood covering His head. I could see some curly black hair under the hood. He had a stick in His hand and was surrounded by a group of His disciples. That scene had such a powerful impact on me that I fell on my knees and spontaneously bowed down to Him. On their own accord my lips whispered, "God! God! God!" The old man was looking straight into my eyes. His eyes were very serious, and yet, very Compassionate. I can well remember those remarkable eyes. I can now see those very eyes every time Sai Baba looks at me.

He lifted His left hand with a finger pointing up and said, "You should! You should! You should!" He didn't say *what* I should do, but in my heart I felt that I should strive for God-realization.

I did not know at that time who that God was, but I started putting more

efforts on the way of self-transformation. A few years after that dream, or rather inner-view, I met some people who told me about this great spiritual Master who lives in India.

I started studying His books and took active part in the activities of our Sai center in Mahachkala.

It took me almost a decade to come to Prashanti Nilayam and pay my homage to His Physical Form. I understand fully well that Sai permeates the whole Universe, which He Himself created for His pleasure. But for the pleasure of devotees and for our benefit, He has assumed a Human Form so we can feel our kinship with God which will help us progress and evolve faster.



Cosmic Consciousness Embodied

When the Disciple is Ready, the Master will Appear

Before I could have Darshan of the Master of all Masters, Swami graciously gave me the privilege to meet other teachers from other religious traditions.

Swami gave me the opportunity to meet a Sufi master, Sheik Mahmoud Baba. He lives in a small village called Bilingy, 170 km from Mahachkala, in the south-east of Dagastan, Russia. He is from the Islamic Sufi tradition and is one of the four most highly regarded holy men in Dagastan. Many people come to see him, even in large groups and he has the reputation of being a loving conduit for praying to Allah for healings and spiritual blessings – in Islam this is called *Dua*, prayers interceding for others. He spends most of the day in the *zearat*, a small mosque next to his house, and can be found engrossed in prayers, and recitation of God's Name.

I met Mahmoud Baba through some friends and started to see him regularly. We have become good friends. Mahmoud Baba is a very tall man who is 80 years old. He looks like an angel, as he has a long grey beard, always wears white and carries a rosary.

The first time I went to his house, I noticed many pictures and small statues of Sai Baba and Shirdi Baba in addition to other Indian sages. I asked Mahmoud Baba for his opinion of both Sai Baba and Babaji (who was made known to the world by Swami Yogananada and is known as Payigambar Babaji Hizri, the Eternal Angelic Baba), and the Muslim saint replied that he saw no difference between them, but that he saw Sai Baba as 'King of the World'.

How Shirdi Sai Baba Came to Mahmoud Baba



From Shirdi Baba to Parthi Baba



Whenever we met Mahmoud Baba, he would talk a lot about Shirdi Sai and Sathya Sai Baba. He told us an interesting story about how he heard Shirdi Baba's name for the first time. He had made a Holy Pilgrimage to Mecca in 1996 with his disciples.

He was buying some rosaries from a small shop. There were many people around and then he felt somebody lightly pat him on his shoulder. He turned around and saw an old man with a white beard in shabby clothes. He looked like a mendicant.

This old man leaned over to him and whispered into his ear, "You know, My Name is Shirdi Sai Baba," and he replied, "Ok, thank you for telling me that" and continued looking at the rosaries.

But the old man stayed put and said to him again, "You know, I am from Puttaparthi". Mahmoud Baba replied that he didn't know where Puttaparthi was, trying to put an end to the conversation, but the old man did not budge.

Mahmoud Baba felt that maybe He was in need of some money as He was wearing shabby clothes, so he told one of his disciples, to give the old man some money. The disciple was reluctant to give money away, as there were so many beggars around. But Mahmoud Baba insisted that he should

give something to this old man. Finally the disciple reluctantly gave a few coins into Baba's hand. Shirdi Baba looked at the coins, kept them in His bag and moved away into the crowd, vanishing into it.

Mahmoud Baba then intuitively realized that this old man was a Divine Being, and he scolded his disciple for being hesitant in giving something to the One who sustains, guides and guards all living beings. So he sent him to find this Divine man as he wanted to talk to Him. But despite much searching, he was nowhere to be found.

How Sathya Sai Baba Came to Mahmoud Baba

A few years later, a group of Muslims came to visit Mahmoud Baba. They had heard about Sai Baba and His hospitality to Muslim pilgrims, and had come to clear up their doubts about the authenticity of this Holy Man of India.

After being asked about this matter, Mahmoud Baba said that he didn't know much about Sai Baba, he had only heard His name, but he would pray to the Almighty Allah for guidance in this matter. So, in their presence he turned towards the Kaaba and started praying to Allah.

As a reply to his prayer he had a vision in which he saw an extraordinary person with Divine attributes, who was surrounded by a large group of disciples. As soon as they appeared, the earth started shaking and there were dramatic lightning and thunders in the sky. Immediately he realized that Sai Baba was a Divine Incarnation.

Turning around to the visitors he said to them, "Sai Baba is a Divine Person, you should certainly go and see Him, actually, all should go and see Him". Since that time Sai Baba started to appear to him in different forms and spent a lot of time with him, eating with him, and instructing him about different religious matters. He would even give minute details about the proper practice of Muslim rituals. He became his best friend, guarding and guiding him.

"Who Is Sai Baba To You?"

On many occasions, large groups of seekers would go to see Mahmoud Baba for his blessings and guidance. Once, I was part of a big group going to visit him. We were travelling in a bus and I was talking with a friend about Swami. We were discussing Swami's stories and Miracles. We didn't know that a well respected orthodox Muslim, who had established a *madrasin* Mahachkala, was nearby us, and actually listening to what we were talking. Growing impatient with our conversation, he told us "Don't you know that Sai Baba is not recognized by the Muslim authorities?" After some discussion we concluded that we should ask Mahmoud Baba about this matter, as he was a holy man of great wisdom.

When we reached the presence of Mahmoud Baba and sat with him, the central theme of his talk was: Sai Baba of Shirdi and Sathya Sai Baba. He recounted many stories about them. The orthodox Muslim grew more and more confused on how a well-known and much respected Muslim Sheik should believe in Sai Baba, since He is not recognized by the Muslim authorities. Finally, rather bewildered, he put a straightforward question to Mahmoud Baba: "Who is Sai Baba for you?" Mahmoud Baba's face became serious; he looked deep into his eyes and said, "He is the Greatest Being".



This answer left the man even more confused. Seeing his predicament, Mahmoud Baba told him compassionately, "You know, my son, this is a mystery. It is not revealed to many. Even some great sheiks and *Mahasiddhis* are not aware of this fact".

After this conversation, Mahmoud Baba requested everybody to join him in *Namaz*, in which he was bowing down to the Images of Sai Baba.



"Call Me by any Name..."



After the Namaz, I explained to the orthodox man that Mahmoud Baba actually prayed not to the Image itself, but to the Universal Spirit that it represented.

From The Formless to the Form and From The Form to the Formless

Mahmoud Baba requested some followers of Sai Baba to bring him some pictures and statues of Shirdi Sai Baba and of Sathya Sai Baba, which he installed in his *zeerat*, and started worshipping and praying to them.

God is all pervasive, all peace and all powerful

After some time, the Muslim community became concerned

about this situation, seeing that he was not only praying to idols but also to Saints not recognized by the Muslim authorities. So, the authorities came to visit him in his *zeerat* and told him that he should not pray to idols as it was against the Muslim tradition, and that Shirdi Sai Baba and Sathya Sai Baba were not recognized by the Muslim clergy.

To this Mahmoud Baba replied: "You see, so many people come to me with many problems and ask me to pray to Allah for them. Whenever I pray to Almighty Allah, He comes in the Form of Sai Baba and helps the people, healing them and solving their problems. So, why do you think it is not proper to pray to this Image of Sai Baba?" After this reply, the authorities left without saying anything further.

But many respected people of the republic kept on requesting him to oblige with the clergy and remove the idols as it was against the tradition. Seeing this, Mahmoud Baba said "If you want me to remove the Idols, so be it" and he removed the Idols from his altar.

Sometime after this incident, Swami came to his dream and told him, "Don't you know that this is My temple? Reinstall the Idols and continue your worship". So it was that Mahmoud Baba installed back the idols and continued his worship as before, with the same steadfast love and devotion.

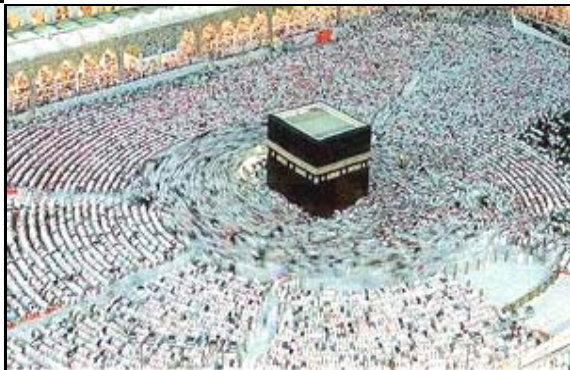
Wherever You are, I am There

My friends and I requested Mahmoud Baba to come with us to Prashanti Nilayam for Swami's Darshan. He said, "I would love to go and see Swami in His actual Physical Form, but Swami told me to stay here and continue to give spiritual guidance to the seekers".

☆ PART 3: THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The whole of Creation is made up of five elements. We see the imprint of this spiritual pentagon in the very constitution of man: in his five senses, five organs of action, five vital airs, five sensations, etc. Truly speaking, Creation is built on Five pillars; namely the Five elements. But the pillars of the outer physical world are only a reflection of the inner spiritual foundation. Beloved Sathya Sai Baba tells us that these five spiritual pillars which are the bases of the inner and outer worlds are: Truth, Peace, Love, Right Conduct, and Non-Violence.

The Religion of Islam is based on these five spiritual pillars: **Shahadah** which relates to Truth; **Salah** which relates to Peace; **Zakat** which relates to Right Conduct, **Sawm** which relates to Non-Violence and **Haji** which relates to Love.





The Kabah at Mecca



With One Voice and One Heart they call on Allah



* Shahada: the Basic Creed of Islam



**Listen to audio of
the chant:
la allaha illa allah**

(2.35 MB)

The *Shahada* is the first pillar of Islam. It is a declaration of the Truth: "*La allaha illa allah; Mohammed rasulul allah*" which means "God is One and Mohammed is His Prophet." This Truth is not only the basic pillar of Islam and indeed of all religions, but also the very foundation of Existence. All the Religions declare that God is One.

Once a Scribe came to Jesus and asked him which is the greatest Commandment in the Jewish scriptures and Jesus replied:

"Listen oh Israel , the Lord your God is One. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your strength. And your neighbor as your self." (Mark 12:29)

"There is no Commandment greater than this", Jesus told the Scribe.

In the Vedas and other scriptures of Hinduism, the Oneness of God form the basis of *Advaita* which is the soul of Hinduism: *Ekam Sath Vipraah Bahudaa Vadanti* – Truth is One, but Sages interpret it in many ways. *Ekam Eva Adviteeyam Brahma* – God is One not many.

The second part of the *Shahada* states that Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah. Who is a Prophet? A Prophet is a messenger of God. Who is a messenger? A messenger is one who carries the message. Hence, a messenger is a vehicle of God.

The inner meaning of this is that each one of us has the potential of becoming the Prophet of God. This happens when our hearts are emptied to carry the message of Allah; The Glorious Qur'an says: "whosoever it is Allah's Will to Guide: He Expands his heart into Islam." (Al-An'am 6:125) Hence, the means of this self-emptying is Islam – that is complete surrender to Allah until one's heart becomes a house of revelations. Al Ghazali mentioned it in the *Ihya Ulum al-Din* that the Prophet said that Allah had told him:

**"Neither My Heaven nor My Earth can contain Me.
Yet the Heart of My devotee contains Me."**

Professor Abdul Razak Baburao Korbu merged in the Lord on May 27, 2000 at his residence at Jaisingpur, Maharashtra , India . Prof. Abdul's wife is a very devout and orthodox Muslim and had great difficulty believing in the reality of Sai Baba. Below is a story of how the All Compassionate, All Merciful Sai dissolved her fears and brought her to the realization of the Islamic Truth: God is One.

The Divine Invitation



Beloved Sai Baba had invited me to bring my wife to Puttaparthi. My wife blatantly refused this request. I pleaded with her so many times using many persuasions: 'I am not forcing you to go to any temple at Puttaparthi, or to do *namaskar* to Sai Baba or to bow at His Feet. You will just accompany me. Is it not said that the wife should see the husband as a spiritual head?'

My wife retorted sharply: "Don't quote the scriptures for your advantage. Why are you forcing me to go there?" "I am not forcing you", I said. "It is Sai Baba Himself who has called you." Then, to my greatest relief she said, "Alright, I will come on the condition that I will



When Love takes a Form...



not do *namaskar* in front of anyone and I will not bow down to anyone's feet."

On the second day of our arrival Sai Baba called us for an interview. My wife entered the interview room with a taciturn face. She did not do *namaskar* or bow down at Swami's Feet. However, on Swami's Face was a celestial smile. I tried to apologize to Swami saying: "Baba, Please forgive her." And Swami said: "Keep quiet. You talk too much." My wife gave me a strong look of disapproval.

God is the Doctor of Doctors

Below is an English translation of the brief conversation between Baba and my wife in Hindi.

Baba: "How are you, my *bachhi* (child)?"

My wife did not feel like answering, but the word '*Bachhi*' made her open up. Looking at the floor, she answered.

Naseem: "I am fine."

Baba: "How many children do you have?"

Naseem: "Four. Three sons and a daughter."

Baba : "What do they do?"

Naseem: "Two are practicing law. Two are studying. Daughter is doing medicine."

Baba: "Very good. I am very happy."

After this my wife felt better, but I was uneasy. Then Baba turned towards me and enquired about my teaching at the college.

Baba: "Abdul, tell me if you desire anything from Me."

Abdul: "Nothing Baba. But"

Before I could complete the sentence, Baba indicated by His Hand to stop talking. Although Baba told me to ask, I was not in an appropriate state of mind to do so. Naseem was sitting in the meditative position of *Namaaz*, with face looking down and both hands folded on her knees.

To my wife, Baba said again "*Meri bachhi*" (My child). It was very touching when Baba called her "*Meri bachhi!*" Naseem became slightly relaxed and for the first time raised her head to look at Baba. In a very casual manner, Baba asked her, "Don't you want your own son?"

His Love Pulls us Beyond the Barriers of Religion

Now I became completely relaxed. With this question, Baba gazed into Naseem's eyes without batting His eyelids. Naseem was transfixed with her eyes looking at Baba only. This Divine communion went on for a short time. Then suddenly, as if pulled by some invisible force, she fell at Baba's Feet and plaintively murmured, "Oh! *Mere Baba*" (Oh! My Baba).

Her whole body was trembling. She was profusely weeping and washing Baba's feet with her tears! I was about to go near her and help, but Baba signaled me to sit quiet. Baba picked up His handkerchief, wiped His face and lips, and sat at ease.

Except for the sound of Naseem's sobbing, there was pin-drop silence.



Surrender at His Feet

After a few minutes, Baba said "*Utho mere bachhi*" (get up my child). Naseem managed to get up and sat up. In her hand she held a corner of Baba's robe which was hanging on the floor.

And Allah Says, "Be" and It is

Baba looked at me, kept His hand on my left shoulder and told me to sit next to my wife, who was still sobbing. Continuing to look at me, Swami said, "This lady is pregnant from this moment. She will deliver a very intelligent son on a nationally important day. She will deliver one more son on another important day."

Oh! My jaw dropped and I was amazed. Slowly speaking, I said, "Baba, the doctors confirmed that....." Cutting off my sentence, Baba said, "What doctors? Doctors – I am the Doctor of doctors!" Naseem and I both understood, and both of us fell at His Feet again. In this manner, Naseem did '*Sai Namaz*' prayers twice.

As a prologue to this Divine Drama, I have to narrate that I married my second wife, Naseem, about eight years back. She did not bear any child for a long time so we consulted gynaecologists at Kolhapur who declared that it is not possible for her to conceive due to blockages of tubes, O-Rh-negative blood, etc. But Naseem loved my first wife and her four children without any reservations. And the children too loved her very much. That was the reason why when Baba asked, "How many children?" She gave a firm answer, "four".

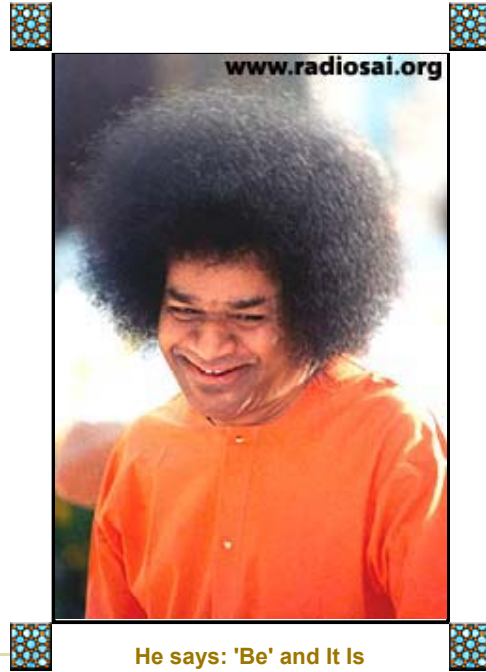
After returning from Puttaparthi, on the second day I went to Dr. (Mrs.) Meenatai, and told her that Naseem is pregnant and will deliver a son and later on a second son. Meenatai looked at me doubtfully as she had thoroughly checked Naseem just prior to our leaving for Puttaparthi.

Then I narrated to Meenatai all that had happened at Prasanthi Nilayam. She and her Bhadre family members were devotees of Sai Baba of Shirdi. She was suspicious of Sathya Sai Baba. However, she said, "I do agree that this is possible only with the Divine Omni Will."

On the appointed date, I took Naseem to the clinic. After carrying out necessary medical examination they reported "the pregnancy has been clinically confirmed."

In this manner, as per Baba's Divine Will, Naseem gave birth to her first son on October 2, 1993 coinciding with the birth centenary of Mahatma Gandhi – a nationally important day! Swami Himself performed the naming ceremony and gave him the name 'Sai Baksh' which means "Sai's Gift".

Naseem gave birth to her second child, a boy, on November 19, 1994. This day is the birth date of Indira Gandhi! The naming ceremony was done at our home and the boy was named 'Sai Kalam' as per Baba's wish. The sacred verses of Quran are called 'Aayat' and the second line of 'Aayat' is called 'Kalam'.



He says: 'Be' and It Is

(Dear Reader, because of the limited scope of this cover story, we do not intend to go into the details of all the Five Pillars of Islam and other concepts like "Jihad". But we would love to offer it to you as another Cover Story at a later date, provided you let us know if you would really like such an article. Please write to us at h2h@radiosai.org)

☾ PART 4: THE CALL OF SAI

In this present age, humanity is witnessing an unprecedented Phenomenon in the history of Creation. Can the children of Adam see? Will those born from the womb of Eve perceive? For Allah says to His Prophet (Peace be upon Him) in the Glorious Qur'an:

"Of whosoever it is Allah's Will to guide, he expands into Islam; And of whomsoever it is His Will to send astray, his heart He made closed and narrow as if it were engaged in sheer ascent." (6:125)

So that:

"Hearing and hearing, they fail to understand; seeing and seeing, they do not perceive; they have closed their eyes and their ears cannot hear because their hearts have been blocked; lest they turn to Me and let Me heal them."

(Mathew 13: 14 -15; Isaiah 6:9-10)

What signs do the men and women of this generation seek; because they seek the wrong things? What wonders do the children of this age require, because they search at the wrong places? What proof do the children of God need, because they knock at the wrong doors?

Hear the clarion call of Sai. Awake! Arise! Realize your Oneness with Allah. Sai Baba has come to lead us to the sublime heights of Islam. Sai Baba has come to take us to that complete surrender to the Will of Allah. Sai Baba has come to teach us the art of "Die-mind" whereby it is not possible to create images of That which has truly, in its essence, cannot be confined to an image.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, Surah Ale Imran, chapter 3: v 63-64:

"Oh people of the Book! Why disbelieve the signs of God of which yourselves have been witnesses? Oh people of the Book! Why cloth ye the Truth with falsehood? Why wittingly hide the Truth?"

Many Devout Muslims who have recognized the resonance of the Islamic Wisdom in the teaching of Sathya Sai Baba believe that now is the time to come to terms with ourselves by the signs of God which we

have been witnesses:

Say He is Allah, the One and Only. Say He is Allah, the Absolute Eternal. Say He is Allah, He begets not nor is begotten.

Say He is Allah, there is nothing like Him. Say He is Allah, He says, "Be" and it is!

Not only this! Sai Baba leads devotees world over to an experiential awareness of the Oneness of Allah; to a lived example of His Omnipresence; and to the pragmatic import of His Omnipotence.

Based on their first-hand experiences and the revelations they have received, they strongly believe and urge others to adhere to the call of Sai:

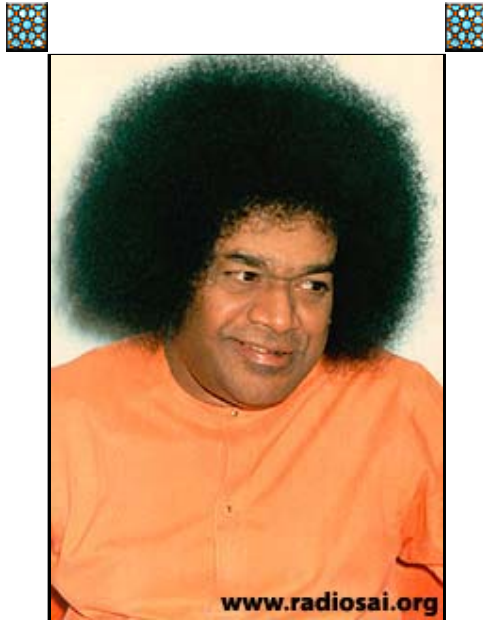
Here is yet another experience of Professor Abdul Razak Baburao Korbu who is one of the witnesses to these signs of God.



Allah is Great!

Say He is Allah Who Holds the Heavens and Earth in One Finger and Who says 'Be' and It Is

Sai Baba called me for an interview. Within the interview room, Beloved Swami put a question to me which captured me fully:



"I know you have faith...
But do you really believe in Me?"

Baba: "I know that you have faith in Me, but you do not believe in My Power with which I create articles. Is it not so?"

I could not think of anything to say. In a way, I was happy that finally this topic has surfaced as I was still not fully satisfied on this account. I wanted to see and experience it myself. During the past five years, I spoke of Baba and about Baba to scientists, doctors and other learned persons.

I could not answer their questions on creation of objects from sheer Will. I felt it maybe because I did not experience it or I had no adequate knowledge about it due to my half-hearted efforts.

Abdul: "Forgive me, Baba. It is so."

Baba: "Your absence of belief in My Power of Creation is genuine and inquisitive also. I like your frankness and love you. It is very good that you do not take anything for granted. Your faith in Me is not blind; very good. Now I am telling you to ask Me for anything and I shall give it to you here and now. Take your time and ask for anything you desire."

Now I had a break. I had seen a number of objects created by Baba and handled them also. I was convinced about the genuineness of the articles, but I was not sure whether Baba Himself created them. After thinking for a while, knowing very well that there were very few Muslims among Baba's devotees, I decided to ask for an impossible article no one has seen so far!

Abdul: "Baba, please give me such a thing which embodies in it the entire Universe and only my own religion is shown on it."

Baba: (With a sweet smile) "Abdul, do you really think that you have put an impossible request before Me?"

Without a reply, I kept on staring at Baba.

Baba: "Look at My Palm. Do you see anything in it? Nothing is in My palm or behind it. You can verify it."

Baba turned His Palm upside down, His cape was above the elbow. I could not dare to hold His Hand. Then Baba caught my wrist forcefully and moved my palm from around His palm to His

elbow.

Baba: "Now, go on looking at the centre of My palm for some time."

Within seven to eight seconds, the skin in the centre of His palm opened up and I saw a round large sized object coming out of it, soon the skin became normal as before and there was a beautiful luminous ring there.

Baba: (In Hindi) "You pick it up and give it in My hand. Before that have a careful look at it."

As ordered by Baba, I picked up the ring and inspected it very carefully. It had a crescent moon and a star engraved in gold. I put it back in Baba's palm.



The revealing Ring materialised by Swami for Abdul

Abdul: "Baba, I cannot understand anything about this ring. Please explain."

Baba: "You are only born as a Muslim. You do not understand anything about Islam."

That was the truth. I am not a religious person in the true sense.

Baba: "I have made this gold ring in *Asta konas* (Octangular), embedded *Nava-ratnas* (nine gems), both represent the Universe, and in the middle of the *navaratnas* I have put the Islamic symbol of the star and crescent in emeralds (green gem stones.)"

Abdul: "Baba, where is the Muslim religion on this ring?"

Baba: "Look at these green stones. That is your religion. Now I will put this ring on the fourth finger of your left hand as your right hand finger is disfigured."

With this talk, Baba put the heavy ring on the said finger. Ah! It fitted perfectly. I bowed down again at His feet, now with plenty of tears. After a few minutes, I followed Baba to the outer chamber. Baba told the nine foreigners, who were waiting in there, about the ring and described me as "My naughty devotee?"

I came to the outer veranda. The fourth finger of my left hand became heavy with the ring which had a heavy sparkling beauty.

Prof. Kasturi's attention was drawn to it at first. He raised my palm, examined the ring minutely and exclaimed, "I have never seen such a beautiful creation by Swami so far! These are *navaratnas* (The Nine Universes). But what is this in the middle green portion of the ring? Is it Aum?"

Dr. V. K. Gokak, who also examined it, said, "It is not Aum certainly. Whatever it may be, this ring is an exquisite beauty. I am also witnessing such a creation by Swami for the first time." A few other devotees also saw this ring and touched it to their foreheads and eyes.

I had almost lost my speech, finding it difficult to utter even a single word. As I came into the Darshan hall, a very large number of devotees surrounded me, amongst them were many foreigners.

One of them was a bearded American devotee. He came near me saw the ring closely, took my hand with the ring, put it on his chest and said, "*All Hum do Allah!*" (Oh! God, your pastime is fathomless).

I was astonished by this and asked him to tell me more. He answered, "I am a Muslim. The ring reveals that you too are a Muslim." I asked him again, "How did you make this out?". He said, "Can you read Arabic?" When I answered in the negative, he clarified, "It is inscribed in the middle all in green." I further asked, "What is the meaning of the inscription?" He answered: "It is 'Allah' in Arabic."

At that time I came to know that Baba has inscribed the word "Allah" in the centre of the green emerald stone. I had asked Baba for my religion, and Baba blessed me in this wonderful manner! Who else but Allah that can Say, 'Be' and It is! To Him we bow down in worship.

Once Sathya Sai Baba wrote on the cover of The Holy Qur'an for a Muslim devotee – "I am in you and around you. Be happy." He signed below without mentioning the date.

Dr. Zeba Basheeruddin, a Professor of English from Hyderabad who served for many years in Sri Sathya Sai University, initially thought the 'I am' in the inscription referred to the physical body of Sai Baba, but changed her opinion later when Sai Baba revealed His Omnipresence to her. When Sathya Sai Baba says "I" He does not refer to His physical body but to the Universal Eternal Consciousness; the 'I AM THAT I AM'. (Exodus 3:14)

Below is an account by Dr. Zeba Basheeruddin.

Say He is Allah, the Omnipresent

"I had once engaged my three children in a difficult task, as I was unable to attend to it myself. Many hours had gone by; but the children had not returned. I was worried about their safety. With emotions of fear mingled with hope, I sat at the doorstep scanning the street. Sensing my tension, my mother calmly started chanting '*Ayatul Kursi*' [Lines in Koran ensuring safety and security].

After some time, she closed her eyes and remained silent. Minutes ticked by; but there was no sign of the children coming. The silence aggravated my tension. Why did mother stop praying? What could have happened? After a seemingly long spell of fifteen minutes, mother opened her eyes and asked, "Does your Baba have large eyes?"



The Omnipresent Sai



"Yes, He has." I replied.

The next query was, "Has He got thick hair neatly set around His head?"

The third one threw more light on the identity. "Does He wear a long *Kurta* reaching down to His Feet?"

Definitely the description was that of Baba. What she told me after that was extremely important as far as I was concerned. She revealed, "As I was chanting the prayers from Qur'an, I had the vision of your three children in my inner eye. Baba was also with them."

Oh God! Oh my God! What a relief! What a fool I was to be worried! I informed mother that Baba had promised to protect the children right from their birth.

My mother, who firmly believed in the Formless Allah, was not a Sai devotee. She explained that Sai Baba's promise was not referring to His Physical Form, but to the Power of His Omnipresence. Sai is *Al Hafiz* [The Protector].

The children were back safe and sound, within an hour." [Sai Baba – Mercy to the Worlds P. 19, 20.]

Mrs. Sarojini Palanivelu in her book 'Miracle and Spirituality' relates the story of a Muslim lad from Tamilnadu who called to Allah with all his strength to save his father from the pull of evil habits and how Allah responded as Sai.

Say He is Allah Who Runs to the Devotee in any Name He May be Called.

His father was a notorious ruffian and hence he was compelled to keep aloof from the company of his classmates. Boys of his age despised him branding him as the son of a rowdy. Whenever he tried to mingle with others, they ostracized him.

The tender heart ached. One day, interspersed with sobs, he managed to convey the cause of his sorrow to his mother. His mother said, "Yes, your father is what they say he is."

Innocently, the boy asked, "What shall I do to reform my father?"

'Pray to Allah' was the instantaneous reply.

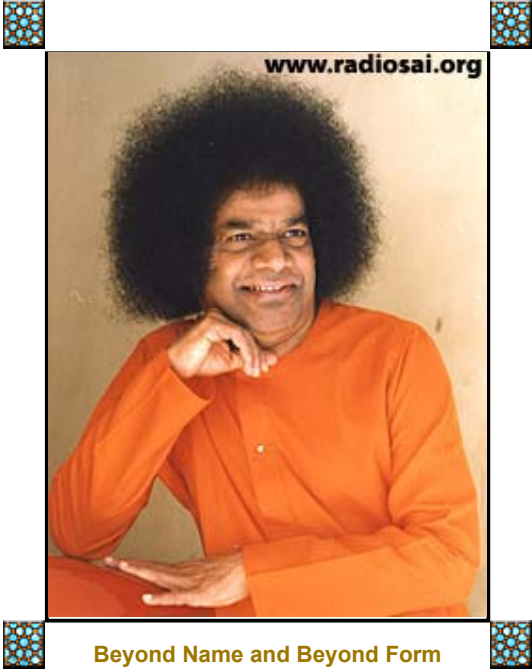
The boy started chanting 'Allah...Allah..' as if in severe penance.

One day, Sathya Sai Baba appeared in his father's dream and said, "Come to Puttaparthi; bring your family too." At first the father, who had no awareness of Baba, paid no heed. But Sathya Sai appeared regularly in his dreams asking him to come to Puttaparthi.

Spotting this boy in the rows for Darshan, Sathya Sai approached him and lovingly embraced him. He materialized a pearl necklace for the boy and patting on his back said, "Now your father is a good man; be happy." [P. 96,97]

☾* The Golden Age – The Godly Chance – The Gift of God

For those who have opened their hearts to the light of Baba's universal teachings,



Beyond Name and Beyond Form

the One who leads all to the fulfillment of true Islam is here.

The One who sent Jesus Christ to the world is here. The One who taught Arjuna the Sacred *Bhagavad Gita* is here. He is Sathya Sai Baba.

He has come to lead humanity back to its Divine Source. He has come to reestablish the ancient and Eternal foundations of all the religions: The foundations of Truth, Love, Right conduct, Peace, and Non- Violence.

He declares:

"I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular religion. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause; nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this Universal unitary faith, this Atmic principle (principle of the Oneness), this path of love, this Dharma of Prema (nature of love), this duty of love, this obligation to love." – Sri Sathya Sai Baba

May all be One. May all realize the One. May all live in the Oneness of Allah.

"Each should practice his own religion sincerely. A Christian should be a good Christian. A Hindu should be a good Hindu. A Muslim should be a good Muslim. Let each one be a true practitioner of his religion" – Sri Sathya Sai Baba



**Listen to the audio
of the Sai Bhajan:
Allah Ho Akbar**

(592 KB)

Author: Father Charles Ogada, a Catholic Priest of the Order of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers and an ardent devotee of Sai.

Dear Reader, how did you like this story? Was it inspiring? Did it help you in anyway? Would you like more such cover stories based on the religion of Islam or any other religion? Please write to us at h2h@radiosai.org. Thank you very much for your time.





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The Enigma of Islam

...Understanding its True Glory

VOLUME II

SALAH: THE FLAG OF ISLAM

Dear readers, in the first volume of *The Enigma of Islam – Enlightened by Sai* which we had in March 2008, we recall the very quintessential essence of Islam, which is the Oneness of Allah. "Allah is One. There is none apart from Allah," says the Quran emphatically:

"Truly, your God is truly One."

- *The Holy Qur'an, 37:4*

"In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Say He is Allah, the One and Only, Allah, the Eternal, He begetteth not, and He is not begotten;

"And there is none like unto Him."

- *The Holy Qur'an, 112*



The Unity of God is most fundamental and the heart of God's revelations to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) in the Qur'an. This is expressed in the primary Kalimah of Islam as "God Alone is" (*La ilaha illa allah*).

This beautiful phrase is the bedrock of Islam; this is its foundation and essence. The Prophet himself said that this verse alone constitutes one third of the whole of the Qur'an and it is the expression of this belief which differentiates a true Muslim from a *kafir* (non-believer).

Islam, therefore, is pure *advaita*, the philosophy of non-dualism. But this philosophy is not an academic idealism. Islam is a way of life. It represents that state of consciousness where one has realised the Oneness of Allah.

The first pillar of Islam, the Shahada gives us a revealed knowledge of the Oneness of Allah (we covered this in our first article on Islam). The rest of the four pillars in this religion tell us



'In the Name of Allah'

how to realise this Unity of Divinity. The foremost among these four is *Salah* which builds the foundation of faith in Allah through prayer. This, truly, is Self-Confidence.

The second pillar is *Sawm* which creates the walls of total dependence on Allah through fasting or putting a ceiling on desires. This is Self-Satisfaction. The third is *Zakat* which builds the roof of Self-Sacrifice through charity given to the needy. And the fourth is *Haji* which gives the bliss of Self-Realization through association with the Holy. Thus, the last four pillars of Islam are the practical aspects of Islam which groom the faithful in Self-Confidence, Self-Satisfaction, Self-Sacrifice and Self-Realization.



Prayer comes easily to Muslims - Young or old

In the present cover story we shall concentrate on how *Salah* (Prayer) brings the devotee to the Unity of Allah. This has been done in four major parts:

☾ **Part One: Islam, The Path of Total Submission** – This section x-rays the very nature of the mind, which is actually the root cause of our feeling of separation from Allah, and explains how total surrender of this mind to Allah is the only way to the realisation of the Oneness of Allah;

☾ **Part Two: Dikr, The Essence of Salah** – This article deals with the most effective tool with which the tree of the mind can be uprooted, which is the Name of God;

☾ **Part Three: Key to the Secret of God's Name** – This part gives very practical suggestions on how to unify the three levels of consciousness with the Name of God; and

☾ **Part Four: The Power of God's Name** – This final section is a crown of gems which bear testimonies of the Power of God's Name.

☾ PART 1: ISLAM, THE PATH OF TOTAL SUBMISSION

“Nay, whoever submits himself whole-heartedly to Allah, and he is a doer of good to others, he shall have his reward from his Lord. And there is no fear for such people nor do they grieve.”

- The Holy Qur'an, 2:112

To preserve the Unity of Allah, Islam lays great emphasis on total submission or surrender of one's will to Allah. In fact, Islam is all about 'Total Surrender of the Mind to God'. A true Muslim is a person who has surrendered his/her mind completely to Allah.

The reason for this is very evident. The Unity of Divinity is attained only when the mind is surrendered. The mind is at the very root of the our

illusionary impression that we are separate from the Oneness of Allah. It is the mind that makes one think that he/she is different from their brothers and sisters, diverse from creation and in fact, singular from Allah Himself. Once you think you are different from Allah, you make yourself another god! And so, there is multiplicity of gods and you begin to "join gods with Allah" as Qu'ran warns us against. It is the mind that creates this false impression of 'others' where indeed there are no others.

**"Follow what thou art taught by inspiration from thy Lord:
there is none but Allah: and turn aside from those who
join gods with Allah"**

- The Holy Qur'an, 6.106

It is the mind that sees many where there is only One and creates this grand illusion of many gods! It separates that which, in essence, is inseparable and joins that which, in Truth, is not composite. Just read the story below and it will become clearer.



A Koran manuscript from the 16th century with Sura Maryam (19th chapter of The Qu'ran)

Where there is Unity, there is Love; Where there is Difference, there is Hate



Is teeth the true culprit?

One afternoon, a person was eating a delicious meal. Then, all of a sudden his teeth bit his tongue and there came out oozes of fresh blood. If you were this person, what would you do?

What is the natural reaction when one meets with such a 'mishap'? Surely, one does not get a pair of pliers to pull out the culprits, namely, the set of teeth! Or does one beat the teeth in retaliation for what it has done to the tongue! There is absolutely no sense of reaction or retaliation or revenge. The only feelings that arise at such times are those of how to heal and comfort the tongue, and of means to stop the bleeding. In fact, one is tempted to swallow one's own blood!

Why are there no feelings of hate and anger, or judgements and condemnation on who is right and who is wrong? It is because one feels no sense of difference between the teeth and the tongue. There is a natural feeling of Unity. And where there is

Unity, Love flows spontaneously. And the power of this Love heals every hurt.

But imagine that 'another' person (remember there is no other!) has just given you a blow on your mouth and your tongue is oozing with fresh blood! What will your reaction be? Surely, a strong feeling of revenge will begin to well up within you. And this may be followed by acts of retaliation, or at the least, a suppression of fitful anger.

Why are the reactions in both cases of the injured tongue different? This is because in the first case, there is a feeling of Oneness; while in the second, there is a feeling of difference or separation.

What is the cause of this different feeling in the second case? It is the mind! Once this mind goes, One can feel the whole cosmos as One's own body, and His reaction in both cases will be the same; that of Love and Healing. This Love is beyond good and evil, and it is beyond judgment and condemnation. Love is beyond the duality of opposites, because there is only One. He is Allah. *La ilaha illa Allah*, there is none but Allah.

The Mind is the Cause of the Sense of 'I am Different'

Once we were engaged in a medical camp (using Sai Ram Healing Vibronics) in a remote village in Nigeria. One day, a person came to the camp with an injured limb.

While cultivating his farm in the thick of the jungles, he had cut his left hand with the machete and the wound was quite severe. Then, the following interaction

followed:

Fr. Ogada: What happened to your hand?

Mr. Okonkwo: I cut it while clearing the bush for cultivation.

Fr. Ogada: Well, we shall give you all the medicine you need only if you are able to give correct answers to all the questions I ask you.

Mr. Okonkwo: Go ahead Father. I am ready.

Fr. Ogada: Did your left hand cut itself or was it the right hand that cut the left?

Mr. Okonkwo: My right hand cut the left.

Fr. Ogada: What did your left hand do when the right cut it? Did you give the axe to the left to cut the right in revenge?

Mr. Okonkwo: (laughing) No Father, there was no such thought in my mind.

Fr. Ogada: Why? What did you do when the right hand cut the left?

Mr. Okonkwo: The right tried to stop the flow of blood from the left.

Fr. Ogada: Now tell me sincerely, Mr. Okonkwo. If it were your wife that had cut your left hand with the axe leaving you with such a severe wound, what would you do?

Mr. Okonkwo: To tell you the truth, Father, I would chop off her head!

Fr. Ogada: Why? Is it not the same injury caused by your right hand? Why would you react differently when it was your wife?

Mr. Okonkwo: Father, a man does not kill himself unless his mind has gone crazy.

Fr. Ogada: Right, you got the answer. But you think that your wife is different from you. You think that your wife is not your Self.

Mr. Okonkwo: It is obvious because our bodies are different.

Fr. Ogada: What makes you think so?

Mr. Okonkwo: I see it.

Fr. Ogada: What makes you see it?

Mr. Okonkwo: My mind.

Fr. Ogada: Why do you say 'my mind' instead of 'my eyes'?

Mr. Okonkwo: Father, if I were blind, still I would 'see' the bodies as different.

Fr. Ogada: Good, Mr. Okonkwo. So your mind makes you react to your wife differently and it is the same mind that makes a man to kill himself when it goes crazy?

Mr. Okonkwo: You are right there, Father.

Fr. Ogada: What to do with this mind?

Mr. Okonkwo: I do not know Father.

Fr. Ogada: Try to get rid of it. Cut it with the axe! (This is the holy war which the Prophet of Islam preached.)

Mr. Okonkwo: Hum! How do I kill my mind?

Fr. Ogada: Surrender it to God. Only God can.

Mr. Okonkwo: How do I surrender my mind to God?

Fr. Ogada: By making it to think of God at all times. God's Name is the Axe.

Mr. Okonkwo: If I think only of God, who will take care of my family?

Fr. Ogada: God! That is what remains once the mind is surrendered.



God's Name is the axe

Mr. Okonkwo: Father, this is another medicine which you are giving to me!

Fr. Ogada: A greater medicine. We give you the first only as bait for the second.

“Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of Truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection”

- The Glorious Qur'an, 9.29

The total annihilation of the mind - to bring the mind to complete submission to Allah, the Supreme Self, is the Holy War, the Jihad that the Prophet tirelessly propagated.

If we realize this important truth:

- That every Muslim is enjoined by the Holy Quran to fight the unbeliever until they are in a state of total submission (Qur'an 9:29)
- That this unbeliever is one who joins gods unto God by thinking that there is something apart from Allah (Qur'an 3:57)
- And that this culprit who joins That which has no parts and separates That which is indivisible is none other than the mind

Then we cannot but accept:

- That the real Jihad for a Muslim is the war against one's mind,
- That anyone who is engaged in this Holy war is a true Muslim,
- And that one attains Islam only when one has conquered the mind and has brought it under total submission to the Will of Allah



The national mosque of Nigeria

'Islam' is the state of total submission of the will to Allah. But what is this will that must be brought under complete surrender? What is it that wills? It is the 'I' – the individuated consciousness. This 'I' or 'ego' is also at the root of the mind. Without the 'I' there is no willing and without the act of willing, there are no thoughts. Without thoughts, there is no mind. And without the mind, there are no images. Without images, the illusion of separation disappears and what remains is Allah who has no second.

The Way of Islam is the process of submitting the will to Allah. Willing occurs when the 'I' moves out of Itself as 'I am this' or 'I am that'; 'I want this' or 'I want that'. When the will is submitted to Allah, there is no willing and there is no wanting.

In this state of stillness, the individuated "I – Consciousness" dissolves in the Universal undifferentiated Existence. The small "I" that separates disappears and what remains is the Universal "I AM". This Universal "I AM" is Allah. "Allah is That which IS". Allah is pure Existence. Everything that is, is Allah. There is nothing apart from Allah.

Once we destroy the root cause of our separation with Allah, which is the ego, we reach that highest state of awareness where we realize that there is none apart from Allah and that we are not and cannot, and have never been separated from Him. We are One with God.



**Heart and mind in Allah****Worshippers at the Kabah in Mecca**

The fundamental sin in Islam is to join “gods unto God” which amounts to the disunity of Allah’s Oneness. This sin is called fundamental because it is the root of all other sins. This is also the “original sin” in Christianity, namely, Adam’s ancient forgetfulness of his Oneness with Yahweh.

When one thinks that there is more than One, then one tries to join or separate that which is inseparable. It is the mind that separates. It is also the same mind that tries to join that which it has separated.

Once we succeed in surrendering this mind to God, we not only uproot the very root of all sins but we also attain the goal of Islam: namely the Unity of Divinity. The primary duty of a Muslim is to attain Islam which entails the total annihilation of the mind. This is referred to in Islam as “Fana”.

"Holy is the warrior who wrestles ("struggles") with himself"

- Prophet Muhammad

 **First Understand the Nature of the Mind: It is like a Handkerchief**

"The mind is a bundle of thoughts. Look at this handkerchief. You call it a cloth; but it is, in fact, a bundle of threads. The threads constitute the cloth. If you want to do away with the cloth, you should remove the threads one by one. Similarly, if you remove the thoughts, the mind is dissolved"

- Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 33

Our beloved Baba has in many of His Divine Discourses compared the mind with the handkerchief. The mind is like a veil that covers the Oneness of Allah. Because it covers, the mind also separates.



But we must first find out the basis or root of the mind. Once we are able to get to the root of the mind, then it is very easy to uproot the mind permanently from its very source.

But since the mind is like the handkerchief, let us first find out the basis for the handkerchief? The handkerchief has been woven from intricate webs and interlocks of single threads. But where have the threads come from? The threads are made from the cotton.

Hence, the handkerchief cannot be made without the cotton. The cotton is the fundamental object that forms the basis for the thread and the handkerchief. But where has the cotton come from? It has come from the cotton tree. Without the cotton tree, there would be no cotton and without the cotton there would be no threads and handkerchief.

When we inquire further, we discover that even the cotton tree has grown from the cotton seed. The point is that even when all the handkerchiefs in the world are burnt, and all the cotton trees cut down, new handkerchiefs could always be produced once we have the cotton seed.

Mind covers the Oneness of Allah, explains Baba, here through a garland



destroying the basis of the veil, all other efforts will yield only a temporary result.

 **The Seed of Desire**

The mind is like the handkerchief. The threads are the thoughts. When the single threads of thought are woven together, they form an intricate web of strong desires which are binding and blinding. Where has the thoughts originated? They have arisen from the root “I” thought. Without the root “I” thought, no other thought is possible. The root “I” thought may be regarded as the cotton which forms the threads of thought. Beyond the root “I” thought, there is a feeling of “I” ness which is not a thought. It is a feeling or awareness of being which has its source in the Heart. This “I” ness is the tree of life. It is the tree which produces the cotton of the “I” thought which in turn form the threads from which the veil of the mind is woven.

Now we notice that in the deep sleep state, there is no feeling of “I” ness! There is total ignorance or darkness. The tree seems to be dead but alas the seed is still alive! And immediately we wake up from deep sleep, the seed sprouts up again into a tree and within seconds one is cut up in a web of desires. This is also what happens in deep meditation when one reaches the state of thoughtlessness. But because the seed has not been destroyed immediately, one wakes up from deep sleep or from deep meditation, and one is caught up again in a web of thoughts and desires.

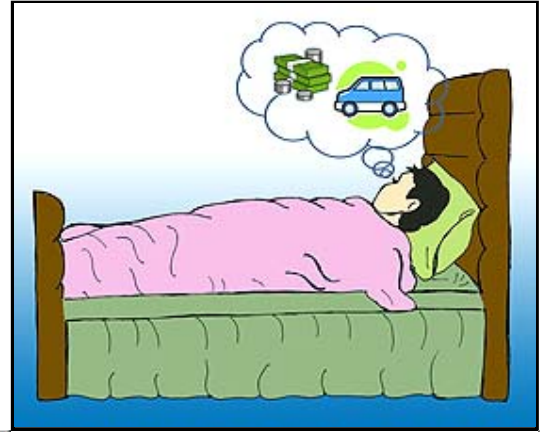


What is this seed of desire? It is the “I” impulse or the primal urge to create.

Until this seed is roasted or destroyed, it is impossible to get rid of the mind.

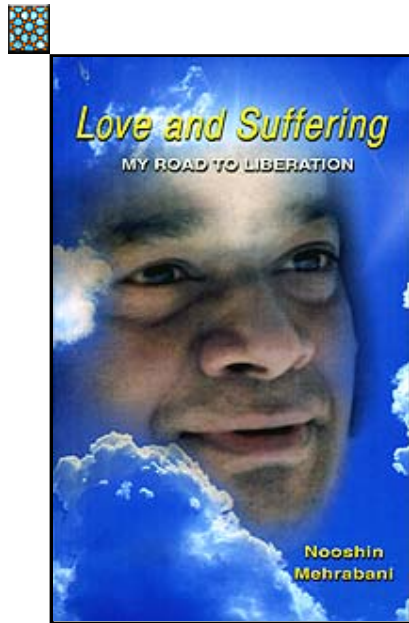
How does Islam annihilate this seed - the "I" impulse? The first and foremost tool is **Salah** - the second pillar of Islam. But before we get into this, let us have a short break and recreate our souls with a few heavenly stories narrated by Ms. Nooshin Mehrabani on the Power of Prayer.

Nooshin is a Muslim. She was born in the capital city of Iran and worked in the United States as a journalist and reporter for Iranian TV in Los Angeles, California. In her book "Love and Suffering: My Road to Liberation", she tells us how Divinity came into her life at a time when her only need was God and how this encounter transformed her especially through the Power of Prayer.



Our seed thoughts are alive even when we sleep

Prayer Breaks Bad Habits



Ms. Nooshin Mehrabani's latest book

Because of what we see happening in the world today, I pray all the time. There is power in prayer. I learnt from Baba how important it is to pray. Prayer is talking to God all the time. I just talk to God. I talk to Swami all the time.

Our son was just 3 months old when my husband decided to return to Iran. The government had confiscated his properties, and he hoped to reclaim them. After we came to Iran, my husband found his old friends, and unfortunately started again his old bad habits.

Because of this I was very unhappy and sad. At that time, the Iran-Iraq war was going on and my married life was falling apart. I had no peace inside or outside.

One day I prayed to God to give me peace of mind. I remember, that afternoon I had visited a friend and she knew how I had hit the bottom in my life and had gone through so much pain and suffering because of my husband's problems with drugs. She gave me a little *Vibhuthi* (sacred ash) that Swami had given to her and said, "Why don't you ask Sai Baba? Maybe He can help you."

This was the first time I ever heard His name. The same night I used the *Vibhuti* and I prayed, "Oh Sai Baba, I

don't know who you are and how much power you have, but please, if you can, help my husband." And then, I went to sleep.

In the Light of Sai

Around 3 o'clock in the morning, someone began to shake my shoulders to wake me up. On the wall across from me was a beautiful white light, shaped like a diamond. It was glowing like the Sun. Inside was written an "Aum" sign, in light. I didn't know what "Aum" was at that time. But I kept repeating, "This is Sai Baba's light. This is Sai Baba's light."

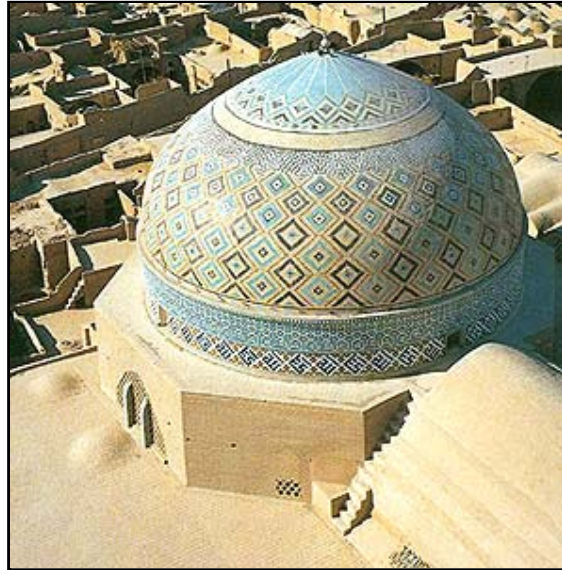
After five minutes the light faded. Nine o'clock in the morning when I woke up again, my husband gave me very good news; he had decided to change his bad habit. I was so shocked, because I knew it was extremely difficult to quit that habit. I was so happy. This happened surely as a result of this effulgence of God

which entered our room.

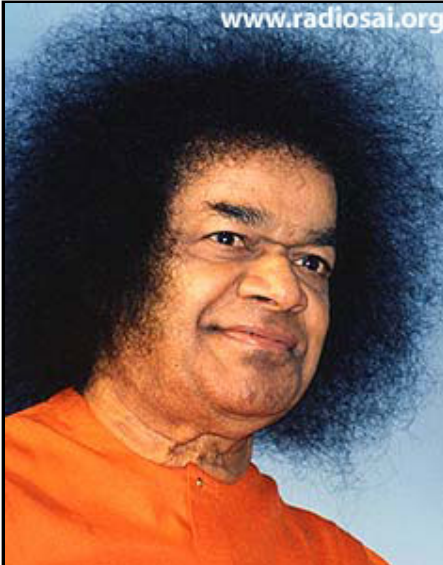
Prayer can Cancel Cancers

When I returned from my first visit to India to see Sai Baba, I found that my mother-in-law had been taken to sixteen doctors. Every physician had given the same diagnosis - cancer and tuberculosis. She was 75 years old at that time and very sick.

Everyone was afraid to go near her because of the contagion. They thought she would die. But in my heart, now I had Swami and I knew I could ask Him anything. I took one of the *Vibhuti* bags Swami had given me during the interview and dropped it on my mother-in-law's chest and prayed to Swami. I gave her a pendant with Swami on one side and Shirdi Baba on the other, and asked her to wear it all the time.



The mosque at Yazd, Iran



"I give you liberation"



That night, after I came home I slept as I was reading Swami's book. In the middle of the night, I woke up and remembered my mother-in-law. I started to pray to Swami. I opened up my hands and reached for Him in front of His picture, asking for His help. The room was very dark, but as soon as I started to pray the tips of my fingers began to glow with a blue light.

Then, within me, I knew that my mother-in-law would not die. In the morning, I called my sister-in-law and told her that we should take my mother-in-law for another x-ray. That same week we took her to a new doctor – a specialist – and she had another test. As soon as he saw the x-ray film, he said, "She doesn't have cancer, only tuberculosis." I knew that Baba had helped her. After eight months, she had no sign of the disease. Today, after 10 years, she is still alive!

A few nights after the good news about my mother-in-law, Swami came to my dream. He made so much *Vibhuti* for me that it filled both my hands. He told me to eat it. He was lying down on the bed and I was sitting on the floor in front of Him. Very lovingly, He asked me,

"What do you want?" I said, "Baba, I want peace of mind." He said, "I already gave it to you. I give you liberation." I didn't know what liberation was at that time. But I said, "Thank you, Baba," and I woke up. We should always ask God for one thing in our prayer: Liberation.

Prayer – the Miracle of Sai-naz

My love for Swami was growing – and so were the problems in my life. Swami had become my constant companion and friend, the only one I had. I placed His picture all over my house, because I wanted to see Him everywhere I went - looking into His eyes, His face and talking to Him all the time. My life was all about Swami.

Now, He gave me the opportunity to do much service. I was very grateful to be able to work once a week at a hospital for mentally and physically challenged children. Another devotee friend of mine and I spent each Thursday with the children, feeding them and hugging them.

Abandoned in God's Temple

There was this new child whose parents had abandoned her in a mosque in Northern Iran a few months earlier. She was found and taken to a hospital where the doctors diagnosed her as having microcephaly.

Through a genetic disease, her brain was smaller



than normal. Not knowing anything about her parents or her background, the hospital staff had named her Sanaz. I fell in love with this little girl. Since she had been left in a mosque, I thought her parents had prayed that God would care for her, and perhaps her soul had a close connection to God.

After three months the nurses recognised the bond that Sanaz and I had developed. They informed me that this little girl was all alone in the world. They asked if I would like to take her home for a weekend and give her some time with a family. My husband agreed.

I was so excited and bought beautiful clothes to dress her in when I picked her up. Three different times I tried to take her home. Each time I went I found that she had been sent to children's hospital for one illness or another. On the third week, I was told that she had bleeding in her stomach and that the hospital would be keeping her for more tests.



The Grand Bazaar Mosque
in Tehran, Iran

Nobody but God



The little miracle that is Sanaz



I was worried. I found the address of the hospital and went to visit her. There was only one other child in the room with Sanaz and she looked so little and lonely. I had purchased a beautiful doll for her, but it was me she was looking at. As soon as she saw me, she called me "Mom." This was the first time I heard her talk! I hid my tears as I held her.

She had nobody but God in this world to help her. I went to see her at least three times a week. I prayed to Swami about her all the time, asking Him to help her. She was seventeen months old, but her legs were so weak; she was unable to stand. None of the doctors or nurses thought she would get any better or that her life would be very

long.

I asked the nurses if they knew of an orphanage who could take Sanaz in her condition. But there was none. I looked all through Tehran, but no place would even consider Sanaz.

I asked the authorities to let Sanaz come and stay in my home for a few months. There, I would be able to take her to private doctors and give her the care and love she needed. Finally, one day, an ambulance arrived at my house with little Sanaz in the back, covered with a hospital blanket. I was glad I was going to be able to take her to the private doctors.

On the first night, I gave her a bath. My son was so excited to meet the little girl I had talked about so much. At night Sanaz slept with me in my bed, while my husband graciously moved to another room. Sanaz and I felt so bonded together, like she was my own daughter.

Every night before I went to bed I kissed Swami's picture next to my bed and placed His *Vibhuti* into my mouth. Sanaz joyfully did the same thing. The second word I heard her say was "Baba". She had *Vibhuti* every night before she went to sleep and every morning she woke me up, calling, "Mom, Mom!"



Sanaz bathed not in just water, but love!

I used my connections to make appointments for her with some of the best specialists we had in Tehran. They all told me the same thing - "Don't waste your time. Don't bring her here anymore. She won't get better." But in my heart, I didn't want to give up hope. Swami had taught me the power of prayer.

Sanaz had lived with us for two months already. Then, one day I had a call from one of the orphanages. They told me to bring Sanaz there that very day. Our whole family cried, but legally we had no choice, and Swami also had not given His permission for us to adopt her. This was one of the most difficult times of my life. I took her to the orphanage, where I was told not to come back for at least one month. They wanted her to adjust to this place as her new home, which would be easier if she did not see me.

We have to Pass Through our Destiny

I went to bed with tears that night. But this was the night that Swami broke His silence and came to my dream. I told Swami how much I loved this baby. Swami looked at me in a very stern way and asked, "Are you a hero?" "I'm not, but I'd like to be," I answered. "No. No. No." He said, shaking His head. He was not at all happy with the answer I had given Him. After some time He called me to sit next to His chair. He placed His hand on my head and smiled. That was my answer. Swami did not want me to change Sanaz's destiny or her *karma*. One important lesson I learned was that I shouldn't be attached to the seva I am giving for others.

But Prayers can Change even our Destiny

I kept up my prayers to Swami for Sanaz. I asked Him at the very least to let her walk and talk and do the basic things of life. After one month, I began to visit her regularly in the orphanage. All the caretakers knew how much I loved Sanaz. I was relieved to see that they paid a lot of attention to her and gave her so much love. After four months I decided to take a picture of Sanaz to Swami directly and ask for His blessing. When Swami finally called us for an interview, I did not have a chance to speak with Swami or to ask Him to bless her picture.



This was the only time I left the interview room with tears in my eyes. I had gone all the way to Puttaparthi to ask Swami to bless her, but had returned from the interview room disappointed.

Every day I took the picture of Sanaz to darshan. I was almost always in the last line and had no opportunity to ask Swami for a blessing. Finally, with one week left before I returned to Iran, Swami came to my dream. He stood in my room, and I immediately thought to give Him the picture of Sanaz to bless – now that He was so close. I went to get the picture, but when I came back I saw that Sanaz herself was already with Swami. She was walking around Him, playing. Swami



Finally... walking!



said, "You wanted to talk about her? She's walking now." Then I woke up. In my heart I knew then that something would happen.

The day after my return to Iran I went to the orphanage to see Sanaz. The caretakers were happy to see me, but they told me, "Wait here. We want to show you something."

I will never forget this sight. Sanaz was wearing little red shoes; the caretaker was holding her hand and she was walking! This was one of the most beautiful days of my life. I began to cry, thanking Swami for hearing my prayers, for healing her.

I got permission from the orphanage to take her back to the specialist to check on how she had progressed. The doctor could not believe it was the same child he had seen a few months before. When he measured her head, he found that her brain had also grown: something quite unusual. The heads of children with microcephaly usually remain very small.

Our True Birth Certificate

Sanaz lived in that orphanage for four years. During that time she learned to talk with no problem, she could now eat and do little things by herself.



When she was six, they sent her to

another girls-only orphanage, where she was able to go to school. The last time I visited her, she was learning how to read and write.

Swami has been taking care of her all this time. Looking back, I remember a dream my husband had during the time Sanaz was living with us.

We were all walking in a forest. He saw a piece of paper in his path and picked it up. It was a birth certificate for Sanaz. The name, however, was "Sai-naz". What a beautiful confirmation that she, like all of us, is God's child and her destiny is in His Hands.



Sai-naz - Her destiny in His hands

Author: Father Charles Ogada, a Catholic Priest of the Order of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers and an ardent devotee of Sai.

END OF PART-1

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Dear reader, how did you like this article? Did it inspire you in any way? Would you like more such stories on other pillars of Islam or any other religion? Please write to us at h2h@radiosai.org. We look forward to your feedback, comments and suggestions to help us serve you better.

- Heart2Heart Team





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The Enigma of Islam

...Understanding its True Glory

PART 2: DIKHR, THE ESSENCE OF SALAH

Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) said:

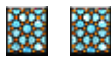
"Everything has its polish and the polish of hearts is the Remembrance of Allah."

"For those who believe, and whose hearts find Rest in the remembrance of Allah, for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find Rest."

- The Holy Qur'an, 13:27-28

The Obligation of Five Prayers

In the sacred Hadith (words and deeds of the Prophet), it is narrated by Ana bin Malik how the angel Gabriel took the Prophet through the seven gates of Heaven (which are the seven *chakras* of the Hindu religion and the Seven churches of the book of Revelation in the Christian Bible) until he reached the Lote Tree beyond which none may pass. Then Allah approached and came closer to the Prophet. Among the things which God revealed to him was "Fifty prayers were enjoined on his followers in a day and a night."





A page from a Koran
from the 18th century



A manuscript from a
commentary on the Hadith

But as the Prophet was descending he met Moses at the entrance of one of the gates of Heaven. (The sixth gate) Moses stopped the Prophet and told him to ascend back to Allah. Moses knew that the followers of Mohammed cannot keep this command of fifty prayers in a day and a night. The Prophet went back and prayed to Allah, and Allah deducted for him ten prayers. Each time the Prophet returned, Moses sent him back to Allah to request Him to reduce the prayer. After the fifth ascent Allah had reduced the enjoined prayer to five times.

Again Moses sent the Prophet back to Allah to reduce the prayer one last time. (Moses knew from his own experience how hard it was for his people to keep the ten commandments of Yahweh). But when Mohammed ascended this time, Allah did not withdraw His Word but gave the Prophet a promise: "Every good deed will be rewarded as ten times, so it is fifty when you perform five prayers."

- Hadith, Book 001, Number 0314

The inner meaning of this story is that one should begin with the requirement to pray five times a day at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night fall until the whole of one's life becomes an uninterrupted awareness of Allah's Presence.

One should, in the beginning at least, remember Allah five times a day until one's consciousness is totally unified with the Name of Allah in the three levels of awareness. For, Allah says to His Prophet (Peace be upon Him) in the Glorious Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, chapter 4:v103:

"Then when you have finished the prayer, remember Allah while standing and sitting and lying down"

In other words, the very goal of **Salah** is to remember Allah at all times of the day and night, and in the three states of consciousness – while waking (that is standing), while dreaming (that is sitting) and while sleeping (that is lying down).

All prayers and worship, all rituals and spiritual disciplines have this final goal: **Dhikr** - the Remembrance of Allah. **Dhikr** is the Soul of Islam. Without remembering Allah, according to the Prophet (peace be upon him) the whole of man's actions and indeed the whole of his life is a mere waste. In the Hadith, Bukhari, Abu Musa al-Ashcari related that the Prophet said:

"The difference between the one who makes dhikr and the one who doesn't make dhikr is like the difference between the living and the dead."

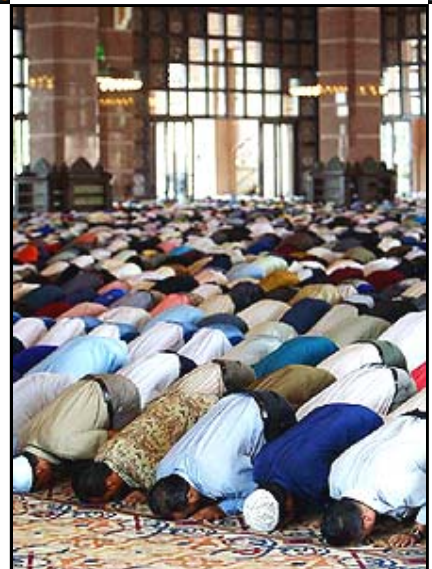
- Hadith, Book 004, Number 170

Muadh ibn Jabul also said that the Prophet stated:

"The people of Paradise will not regret except one thing alone: the hour that passed them by and in which they made no remembrance of God."

The Prophet, peace be upon him, would often tell his Companions:

"Shall I tell you about the best of deeds, the most pure in the sight of your



Surrender and Prayer -
The Soul of Islam

Lord, about the one that is of the highest order and is far better for you than spending gold and silver,... The Companions replied, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Remembrance of Allah."

- Hadith, Narrated by Tirmidhi, Ahmad, and Hakim

Why is Remembrance of Allah so important? The mind can only surrender at the feet of a Superior Authority. This Authority which has the power to subdue the mind is the Name of God.

The nature of the mind is sound. The vibrations of thought waves in the mind produce very subtle sound which cannot be heard by the physical ear. Nevertheless, the inner ear can hear these sounds. In fact, the physical sound is only a resound of the sound of thought. The interval between two consecutive thought waves is the gate to Silence. The Name of God is the key to this gate. The Name of Allah is the key to the Infinite. To enter this gate is to enter the Heart of Islam. For, Allah says to His Prophet (Peace be upon Him) in the Glorious Qur'an: Al-Anaam, chapter 6.v125, **"Of whosoever it is Allah's Will to guide, he expands his Heart into Islam"**. The 'Heart' here means Absolute Silence. When the mind is unified with the Name of God, it dissolves into Silence. This is because the Name of God is the Primordial Sound of Silence.

"Chanting of God's Name (Namasmarana) is the easiest path to liberation."

- Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 35 p.87

☾ Allah, the Primordial Sound of Silence

God is Silence. Silence cannot be described. The moment you describe it, it ceases to be Silence! It is neither being nor non-being. It is not emptiness and it cannot be described as something. It is That which is beyond attributes.

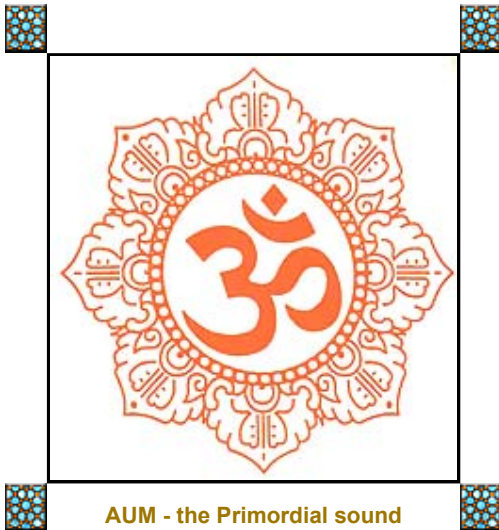
"Remember Me and I will remember you."

- The Holy Qur'an, 2:152

Every sound is born from the womb of Silence. Every sound dies too in the tomb of Silence. The whole of creation as sound has emerged from the womb of Silence and will finally dissolve in the tomb of Silence. The first Sound that arose from the womb of Silence is the Name of God. And from this Primal Sound, the whole of Creation came forth. It is also through this Primal Sound that the whole of Creation will return into Silence.

The Name of God is the Primal Sound which leads one back into the Soundless.

Different religions refer to this Primal Sound of Silence by different Names: Allah, Aum, Jesus, Rama, Krishna, etc.



AUM - the Primordial sound

In the Mandukya Upanishad (chapter1:v1) of the Sanathana Dharma (ancient Indian religion), it is said:

**AUM, the Word is all this, the whole Universe
All that is past, present and future is indeed AUM
And whatever else there is, beyond the threefold division of Time
That too is AUM**

Again in the Gospel of St. John (Chapter 1:v1) of the Christian Bible, it is said:

**In the Beginning was the Word
And the Word was with God
And the Word was God...
All things were made and came into existence through It
And without It was not one thing made
That has come into being.**

The Name of God therefore is both the efficient and material cause of the Universe. Everything in the Universe is a vibration of God's Name. Every atom in the Cosmos is a resound of the Primal Sound. The Heart of Creation beats with the Name of Allah. When the mind is unified with God's Name, it becomes one with the whole of creation; one with the music of being and becoming; one with the all-pervading Sound Stream

which has no direction because you cannot point where it is coming from. When the mind is unified with God's Name, like the Prophet (Peace be upon him), one will begin to hear the echo of the Divine Word in everything; as if the Sky, the Earth, the Moon and the Universe, all said the same Name that he was repeating.

"The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein praise Him, and there is not a thing but hymneth his praise; but ye understand not their praise. Lo! He is ever Clement, Most Forgiving".

- The Holy Qur'an, 17:44

In this state of Oneness, one's heart expands into Islam.

☾ How does Dikhr Annihilate the Seed 'I' Impulse?

The Prophet said, Allah says:

"I am just as My Devotee thinks I am. I am with him if he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too, remember him in Myself, and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I mention him in a better group in My presence. If he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.' "

- As narrated by Abu Huraira in the Hadith, Volume 9, book 93, number 502

Our Beloved Sathya Sai Baba reiterates this same Truth:

"Remember that with every step, you are nearing God; and God too, takes ten steps towards you when you take one step towards Him. There is no stopping place in this pilgrimage; it is one continuous journey, through day and night; through valley and desert; through tears and smiles; through death and birth, through tomb and womb.

When the road ends, and the Goal is gained, the pilgrim finds that he has traveled only from himself to himself."

*- Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 8
(22-7-1968)*



"When you take one step...God take ten steps"

How does one unify the mind with the Name of God? This is the most practical question for which Prophet Mohammad's paradigm is the best solution.

WIFE = Worries Invited For Ever = Thoughts

Like the deer yearning for running streams my heart longed to behold the Physical Divine Presence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I was by then an associate priest in a parish in the archdiocese of Lagos, Nigeria. This dream came true in September, 2001. Just to set my eyes on Him who has stolen my heart was all I desired.

On the second day of my visit, I was sitting among other devotees in the second row waiting for His *Darshan*. Then, He came and stopped in front of me. He was looking at me with an everlasting Love. When He broke His Silence, the following conversation took place:

Swami: "Where do you come from?"

Me: 'Swami, from Nigeria". (Truly we came from God)

Swami: "How many are you?"

Me: "One, Swami". (Yes, there is only One; Allah)

Swami: "Go!" (Go means to let go of everything that separates you from the One)

After His *Darshan*, Swami came and ushered all those He had called into the interview room. I was sitting at a far end of the room. Truly, I was totally lost in the beauty and bliss of His Form. Swami was busy talking to other devotees and materialising different objects for them. Then, like a thunder from the blues, He turned to me and asked: "How are your wives?"

This question woke me up from my sleep of bliss. One could imagine the confusion that the Lord threw me into. Here I was, a catholic priest, without even one wife. On the other hand, I knew without a doubt that He knew me inside and outside, and that there was nothing I could hide from Him. I also knew that the Lord does not waste words and that every Divine utterance is replete not only with inner meaning and also with the power to actualise this meaning in one's life.

I opened my mouth several times and simply closed it without saying a word. The rest of the devotees in the interview room were wondering why this African was not answering Swami's question. Then the Lord ignored me in my ignorance. I was glad that the rest did not know that I was a Catholic priest and was not supposed to have even a wife and not to talk about wives!

WIFE = Wisdom Invited For Ever = Allah

On another occasion, Swami had called a number of Muslim devotees for an interview. During this interview, one lady threw a question to Swami:

"Swami, why is it that Mohammed married eleven wives?" Swami looked up with surprise in His face and said: "Mohammed...?" "Eleven wives!..." No, No. Mohammed had only one wife!...Allah."

When I heard this story, I understood in an instant what Swami meant by asking me, "How are your wives?" True marriage is that state of Divine union where one's mind has been totally unified with God.



True marriage is union of one's mind with God

Until this state is realized, no one can say he has no wife. Since your wife is what you think. Although the Prophet had many wives, truly he had none because his one thought was Allah. Whereas the priest was unmarried but he had many wives since many thoughts occupied his mind. When the mind is filled with thoughts, the mind is full of worries. When the mind is filled with God, it is turned into a house of Wisdom.

"O ye who believe let not your riches or your children divert you from the Remembrance of Allah. If any act thus, the loss is their own."

- The Holy Qur'an, 63:9

"Listen Oh Israel, the Lord thy God is One. And thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy entire Mind and with thy entire Heart and with thy entire Strength"

- Deuteronomy, Chapter 6:4

To love God with the entire mind happens when one has unified the 'I' Consciousness with the Name of Allah. This requires integrating the three levels of consciousness with God's Name. The 'I' consciousness is operative in the waking and dreaming states and remains as a latent seed impulse in the deep sleep state. When the 'I' consciousness is operative, one is mindful of the 'I' as the 'doer' and 'experiencer'. From dawn to dusk and vice versa the 'I' parades itself as: 'I am a doctor' and 'I am a Professor', 'I am a husband', 'I am a devotee', 'my property', etc. But once the 'I' has been unified with the Name of God, one is only conscious of God.

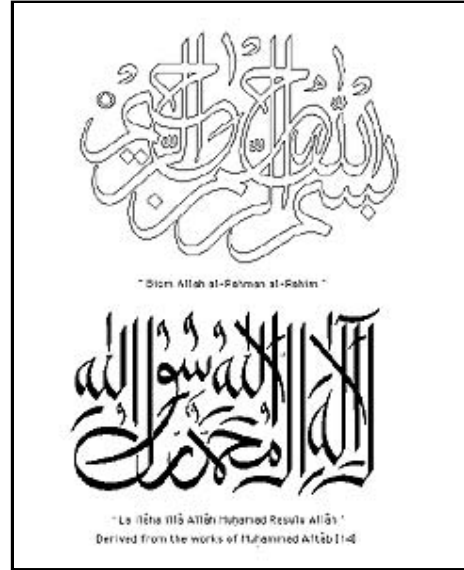
"I forgot myself so that I may remember You."

When this unification is attained, the three levels of consciousness become automatically integrated with the primal Sound of Silence. Then, the little individuated "I" is replaced with the Name of God. The cry of "I", "I", "I" turns into a Divine call: "Allah", "Allah", "Allah". The self pride of "I am this" and "I am that" turns into a Divine glorification: "Allah is this" and "Allah is that". The greed of "This is Mine" and "That is yours" is converted into **La ilaha illa Allah: there is none but Allah.**





"Allah" - The mightiest
and the mysterious



[above] bismillahi ir rahman ir rahim
[below] la illaha illah llah

Islam is attained when the "I" forgets itself in the remembrance of Allah. St. Paul attained this essence when he said: "It is no longer "I" who lives, but God living in me". (Galatians 2:20)

"Do not say, 'I am nothing'; neither say, 'I am something.' Do not say: 'I need such and such a thing'; nor yet: 'I need nothing.' But say: 'Allah,' and you will see marvels."

- Muly al- cArabi ad-Darqawi in, Letters of a Sufi Master

Author: Father Charles Ogada, a Catholic Priest of the Order of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers and an ardent devotee of Sai.

END OF PART 2

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- Heart2Heart Team





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The Enigma of Islam

...Understanding its True Glory

PART 4: THE POWER OF GOD'S NAME

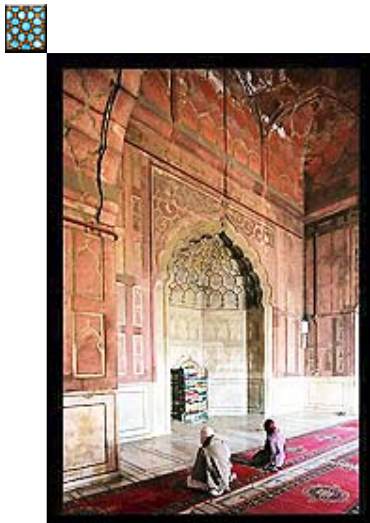
"The divine Name is highly potent. Each one of the several names of God has one type of power specific to it. If you wish to make good use of this power and derive lasting benefit out of it, you have to participate in Akhanda bhajan (unbroken chanting of God's Name)".

- Sathya Sai Baba

The goal of Islam, and indeed of every religion, is to lead man into the Eternal Presence of Allah which is beyond the three states of consciousness. We attain this Holy Presence when the seed "I" impulse which is the cause of the three states is annihilated.

The final annihilation of the seed "I" impulse happens in meditation. When the mind has been totally unified with the name of God during the waking and dreaming states, through the harmonization and integration of the Primal Sound into every action and through the power of auto suggestion, during meditation, it becomes very easy for the mind sink into Silence.

The constant and unbroken remembrance of Allah's Name during the waking state and the habit of falling asleep with the Name of Allah endows the mind with the all important quality of one pointed focus.



'Enter into the space-less-ness of Silence.'



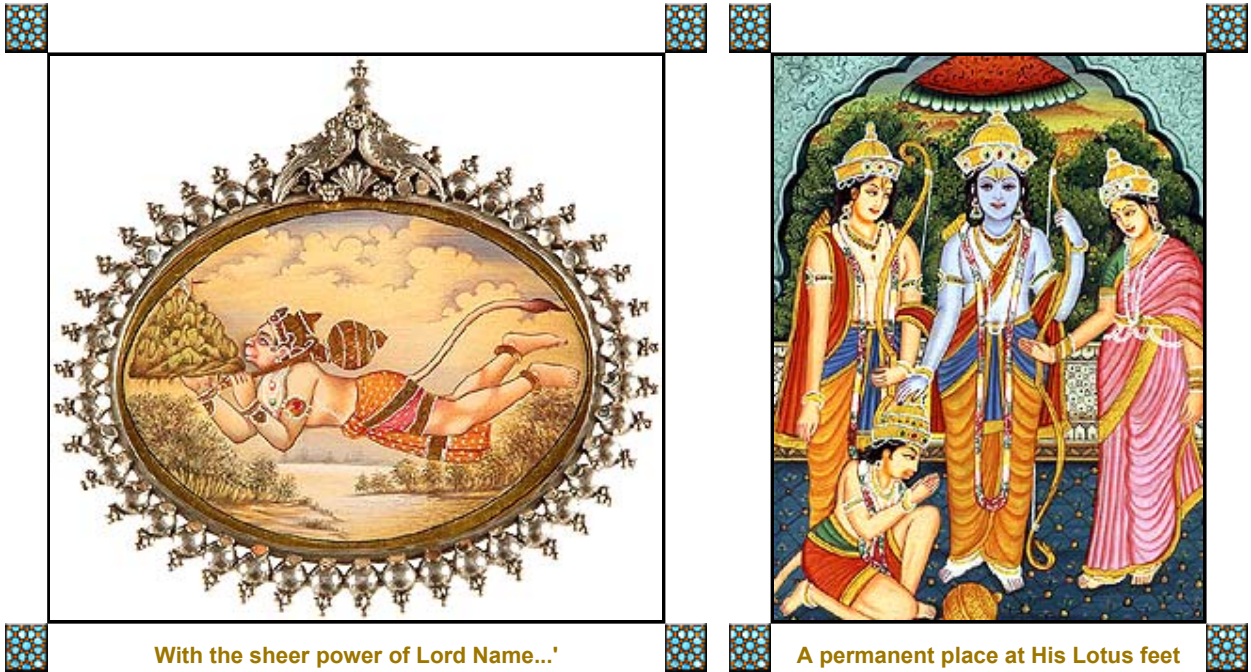
The dome of the Great mosque, in Paris

God's Name is the arrow – this one pointed focus - that helps us escape, with one leap, the gravitational pull of the mind and enter into the space-less-ness of Silence.

The Science of matter tells us that the physical universe is governed by the laws of gravity. But we must realize that the gravitation of the mind is infinitely more powerful than the physical gravity. In fact, the only gravity is the mental gravity because it is the mind that bears the weight of the body. When there is no mind the body becomes weightless. The body levitates! It is the Name of Allah that helps us escape the gravity of the mind. When we sit in meditation with the single Name of God, we are able to cross the world of thought, and enter the paradise of Allah's Presence.

☾ **The Power of Lord Hanuman**

The power of Lord Hanuman lies in chanting of the Name of Rama. His whole consciousness was completely unified with the Name of Rama that it could be said that Hanuman was Rama and Rama was Hanuman. This is the Power of God's Name! This is the Power of Hanuman! With the Name of Ram, Hanuman lifted the mountain harboring the Sanjivini herb – the elixir of life – and brought it to Rama to save the life of Lakshmana.



With the sheer power of Lord Name...'

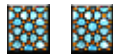
A permanent place at His Lotus feet

With the Name of Ram Hanuman set ablaze the entire city of Lanka with the fire of right conduct. With the Name of Ram the monkey mind of Hanuman was transformed into an illumination of Divine Love! With the name of Ram every hair, every cell, every atom in the body of Hanuman resounded with the echo of the Divine name Ram, Ram, Ram. With the Name Ram Lord Hanuman was able to cross the ocean of Lanka with just one leap. This means that when our minds are unified with the Name of God, we are able to cross the ocean of birth and death with just one leap. Such is the power of the Divine Name!

Our Beloved Swami told the dazzling story, when Hanuman demonstrated beyond any doubt, the power of the Divine name.

☾ **More Precious than Silver, More Costly than Gold, More Beautiful than Diamonds**

"Vibhishana came forward with a dazzling necklace of gems, which the Lord of the Sea had offered to Ravana. Sita accepted it. Its brilliance shone all over the vast Hall and struck everyone as a unique string of gems. But with the necklace in her hand, she cast a questioning glance at the face of Rama. Rama knew what was passing in her mind. He said, 'Sita! You can grant it as a gift to anyone among those here who deserves your grace.' Sita thought just for a second and looked at Hanuman. Becoming aware of the compassion in her look, Hanuman approached her in great humility and stood before Sita with bowed head. The necklace was given by Sita to Hanuman.





Sai creates the pearl garland gifted by Mother Sita to Hanuman



Attaining the Lord through the power of His Name

"Hanuman turned it around many times in his hand, its dazzle enrapturing everyone in that vast assembly. He was struggling to discover its special quality, with unslaked curiosity. He plucked every gem, put it between his teeth, and placed it adjacent to his ear, and with a face indicating disappointment, he threw the gem away in disgust! All eyes were watching this peculiar behaviour with increasing amazement. They were stunned into silence and inactivity. Until he treated the last gem in the same cavalier manner, no one dared interrupt or condemn.

They could only protest in whispers among themselves! 'Who is this monkey that treats the diamond necklace so lovingly and so compassionately presented to him by Sita?' was the question on most lips.

Even Vibhishana was sad that Hanuman had so brazenly insulted the priceless jewel that he had brought. 'He has pulled it to pieces and cast the gems aside,' he told himself. Everyone in the Hall surmised the reason for this strange behaviour in his own way. At last, one vassal Ruler could not restrain himself. He rose and gave vent to his resentment: 'Peerless Hero! Why did you break that necklace of gems into so many bits? Was it right to do so? Tell us the reason why? Give us some explanation and remove our doubts.'

☾ **Nothing I Desire Compares with You!**

Hanuman listened to him patiently and replied. 'Oh King! I examined each gem in order to discover whether each had in it the sacred Name of Rama. I could not find it in any gem. Without that Name of Rama, they are but stones and pebbles.

'So, I cast them on the ground.' The ruler was not silenced by this. He asked, 'Hanuman! If it is your desire that in every article and particle there should be the Name of Rama, are you not asking for something impossible?'

Hanuman replied. 'Of what good, of what profit, is anything which has not in it the Name of Rama? I have no need of such.' The valiant hero, Hanuman, dismissed the argument of the ruler thus. The ruler, however continued his objections. He said, 'You would not wear anything that has not got in it the Name of Rama. Well, you are wearing your body. You are carrying it about with you. Prove to us that you have the Name in it.'

☾ **When God gives Himself...**

Hanuman laughed aloud. He said, 'I shall prove, see!' He pulled a single hair from off his forearm and held it very near the ear of the Ruler. He could hear the Name, Rama, Rama, Rama uttered by the single hair! At this, he was overcome with a sense of wonder. He fell at the feet of Hanuman and prayed for pardon.

Rama called Hanuman near himself and warmly embraced him. He asked him, 'Hanuman! What can I offer you on this occasion? I have no gift worthy to be given to you. I am giving you myself as my gift to you.' Then, he offered his body to be clasped by Hanuman's hands. The assembly was moved into shouts of 'Jai' at this unique act of Grace. They praised Hanuman and declared that there was no one to equal him in all the worlds. They praised the devotion and dedication of Hanuman."

**I died as a mineral, and rose a plant,
I died as a plant, and rose again an animal.
I died as an animal, and rose a man.**



'Of what good is anything which has not in it the Name of Rama?'

Why then should I fear to become less by dying?

I shall die once again as a man,
To rise an angel, perfect from head to foot.
Again, when I suffer dissolution as an angel,
I shall become what passes the conception of man.

- Rumi

☾ The Name of God Gives a Quantum Leap in Consciousness



The magic of God's Name cannot be described. Its wonder cannot be explained. It is the one thing which, when you have it you have everything - and without it everything you have is worthless. It is the secret of creation's evolution.

In a recent discourse on November 13, 2007, our Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has revealed through a very interesting story, the power of God's Name and its ability to give a quantum leap in consciousness when it is chanted only once.

Chanting the Name of God only once means that the whole mind has been unified with God's Name so that the only thought in the mind is the uninterrupted Sound of Allah.... Or one's chosen Name.

When this Primal Sound is sustained, without the wavering of the mind and without any interruption, Sai Baba says that there is a transmutation in consciousness; a leap from the animal consciousness to the human and from the human to the Divine.

The Power of Rama's Name



"Oh Narada, go to a crow and utter the word 'Rama'. Let the crow repeat the name."

Once, sage Narada approached Lord Vishnu and prayed, "Oh Lord! People speak very highly about the efficacy of Rama's Name. Will you kindly explain?"

Lord Vishnu wished to demonstrate the power of the Name of Rama by an illustration. He therefore advised Narada, "Oh Narada, go to a crow and utter the word 'Rama'. Let the crow repeat the name."

Narada went to a crow and said, "Oh crow, your entire body is black, without a trace of whiteness. Hence, chant the Name of Rama

just once."

The crow uttered "Rama", and immediately it fell down dead. Narada was sad that the crow died just by chanting Rama's Name once.

He went to Lord Vishnu and informed Him of the crow's death. Lord Vishnu told him, "Don't worry. This time, go to the beautiful peacock that was just born and ask it to chant the Name of Rama once."

As per the instructions of Lord Vishnu, Narada went to the newly born peacock and said, "Oh peacock, your beauty and grace are enchanting to the entire world. You are very lovable

and attractive. Please utter the word 'Rama' just once."

The moment the peacock uttered "Rama", it also collapsed immediately. Narada again went to Lord Vishnu and reported the death of the peacock after chanting the Name of Rama just one time. Lord Vishnu again advised Narada, "Narada, a cow in the shed nearby just gave birth to a calf. Please go to that new-born calf and ask her to chant Rama's Name once."



"Please utter the word 'Rama' just once"

Narada did accordingly. As



As soon as the new-born calf heard the word "Rama", it also dropped down dead.

soon as the new-born calf heard the word "Rama", it also dropped down dead.

When Narada informed Lord Vishnu, Lord Vishnu again instructed him, "Narada, this time, go to the King's palace, where a baby boy was just born. Ask him to chant Rama's Name once."

Narada was very much afraid to approach the newly born prince, since the crow, peacock, and calf had died just by listening to the word "Rama" once. He pleaded with Lord Vishnu to spare his life, since the King would put him to death if something happened to the new-born baby by chanting the Name of Rama. But Lord Vishnu insisted that Narada obey His

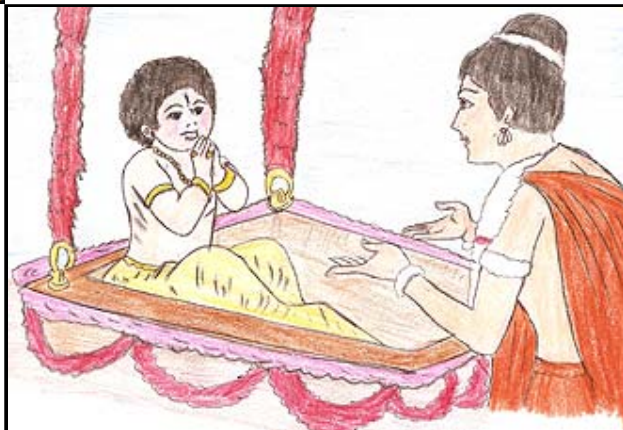
command.

Narada went to the palace and asked the newly born prince to chant the Name of Rama once. The prince saluted sage Narada and informed him that by the mere chanting of Rama's Name just once, he was transformed from a crow to peacock, from a peacock to a calf, and from a calf to a human being as a Prince.

He expressed his gratitude to sage Narada for initiating him in the Name of Rama.

It is only the Divine Name that confers human birth on a being. It is evident from the illustration narrated above that the birds and animals were able to get a human birth by listening to the holy name just once. Thus, the Name of God confers a human birth, which is considered to be a rare gift.

Unfortunately, no transformation is taking place in humans, in spite of repeating the divine name several times. You should chant the divine name wholeheartedly, with full faith. No doubt, people today are repeating the holy name, but not with love and steady faith. They are chanting the Name of God with a wavering mind. There can be no transformation by such fickle-minded repetition of God's Name, in spite of doing it for hours together.



The prince thanked and saluted sage Narada

The chanting of God's Name has to be done with absolute concentration and steady faith like a *yogi*. One can achieve great transformation if the mind is steadily fixed on the Divine Name.

May Allah bring Rest to our Hearts through Remembrance of Him!

Author: Father Charles Ogada, a Catholic Priest of the Order of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers and an ardent devotee of Sai.

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