

### 3. Hints on Saving Paper

*Be conscious that every word we utter or hear will leave an impression on our consciousness and provoke reactions that may or may not be beneficial. This is why the company of God and godly people is to be sought.* **Sathya Sai Baba**, *Sathya Sai Speaks VII*, Chapter 44, 252.

In this project, we discuss ways of reducing the amount of paper that we use for Sai functions.

#### **Mailings**

In a mailing about a Sai event, we should try to use as little paper as possible—but keep the mailing attractive, of course. For example, use both sides of the paper. This is easily learned and most copy shops will do it when asked.

If a mailing is just a bit too long to fit on one page, then try to rearrange the material to make it fit. Rewriting to omit needless words may also help—needless words are as bad in print as they are in speech! In some cases, saving paper in this fashion can reduce the amount of postage needed for a mailing. So money is saved, as well as paper.

#### **Handouts at a Sai Function**

At Sai functions like annual retreats/conferences, *akhanda bhajans* and *Shivarathri*, we often have handouts containing the schedule, prayers, devotional songs, abstracts of workshops and so forth. Such handouts are needed and no one means to imply that they should be eliminated. However, if we realize that most of them are thrown out after the Sai function, adding to our garbage, then we might look for alternatives and ways to reduce the size of the handouts. Try rearranging the material to make it smaller, keeping it readable and well-presented, of course. —And, use both sides of the paper.

#### **An alternative to bhajan booklets at retreats**

At some annual retreats, booklets containing the songs for the retreat are distributed. After the retreat, most of the booklets are thrown out. Four hundred copies of a 25-page booklet use up 10,000 pages, which will be used only once! Last year, instead of using booklets, one region put 100 songs on transparencies and used two projectors (one for the women's and one for the men's side). People liked this, because they did not have to constantly search for the right song. It was also cheaper and it was better for the Earth. Moreover, many of the transparencies will be used again this year. People who want song books can be invited to bring their own.

#### **Sai story**

Swami told someone in the interview room: "I never wasted even a scrap of paper in my entire life!"

#### **Story**

Teddy Roosevelt, President of the United States, was a staunch conservationist. To make his words and deeds coincide, he prohibited placing a Christmas tree in the White House. Cutting beautiful trees and putting them on display till they died did not make any sense to him. [His children smuggled one in the back door, so there was a Christmas tree in the White House after all.]

#### **Facts about paper**

Paper is made from wood. Of course, wood is a renewable source, since we can grow trees. Nevertheless, it takes energy to cut trees, to transport them to paper mills and to make paper from wood. Making paper also requires chemicals and creates toxic wastes such as dioxin. Finally, the more paper we produce and then throw out, the quicker we fill up our landfills.

Here are some statistics about the amount of paper used in the United States (taken from the book "50 Simple Things You Can Do To Save the Earth").

Every year, each office worker throws away about 80kg of recyclable paper.

Every year, Americans throw away enough office and writing paper to build a 3.5m high wall from LA to NYC.

Every year, almost 3 million tons of paper are collected from office buildings and industrial plants for recycling—and every ton of recycled paper saves 1400L of oil.