Logging-on to Sai Baba: the poetics of sacred globalization

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Abstract
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the leader of a progressive religious movement steeped in the Hindu tradition. The Sathya Sai Baba Organization claims to have over thirty million members in approximately 170 countries. The dedicated followers of the movement believe Sai Baba to be an avatar or incarnation of God in human form. Sai Baba utilizes the Internet to transmit his universalistic philosophies around the world. With this digital universe, devotees can log-on to a multitude of official Sai websites that act as training ground for achieving liberation of the mind and soul. This path of devotion that Sai Baba teaches his followers has its foundation in Hinduism's sacred scriptures. The Sathya Sai Baba Organization is attempting to restructure the Hindu tradition, marketing a new hegemony fit for global consumption. The organization is one of many spiritual movements that have embraced globalization and become part of the religious landscapes of the World Wide Web. Using websites as field sites, I conducted an in-depth case study on the cyberspace activities of this organization. This annointment of cyberspace as sacred space illustrates how the Internet can be a powerful source in cultural production. The religious subculture that links a global network of Sai Centers and dedicated participants utilizes information technology to spread the ideology of the movement. The Internet has the potential to change how social scientists engage in data collection and cultural documentation. The fieldwork that I conducted in cyberspace and during interviews with my consultant reveals the Internet as both a vessel for sacred space and a venue for a 'cyberperformance' that is shaped by the poetics of sacred globalization.

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Sathya Sai Baba at summer schools (translated into English) Summer School Discourses for students on Indian Culture and Spirituality at the Brindavan (Whitefield) ashram. The Vahinis, written by Sri Sathya Sai Baba (translated into English). An Introduction to Shri Sai Satcharitra: When life of Sai Baba is being discussed, prime literature which comes to our mind is 'Shri Sai Satcharitra'. Though Sai Baba lived on alms and possessed nothing in the name of property, He left a great treasure for us in the form of 'Shri Sai Satcharitra'. At the divine wish, Shri Hemadpant (Govindrao R. Dabholkar) was given Holy task of noting Sai Baba's supernatural deeds. Though considered as 'Biography' it is more of an 'Autobiography' written by Sai Baba Himself. He kept His boon bestowing Hand on Hema