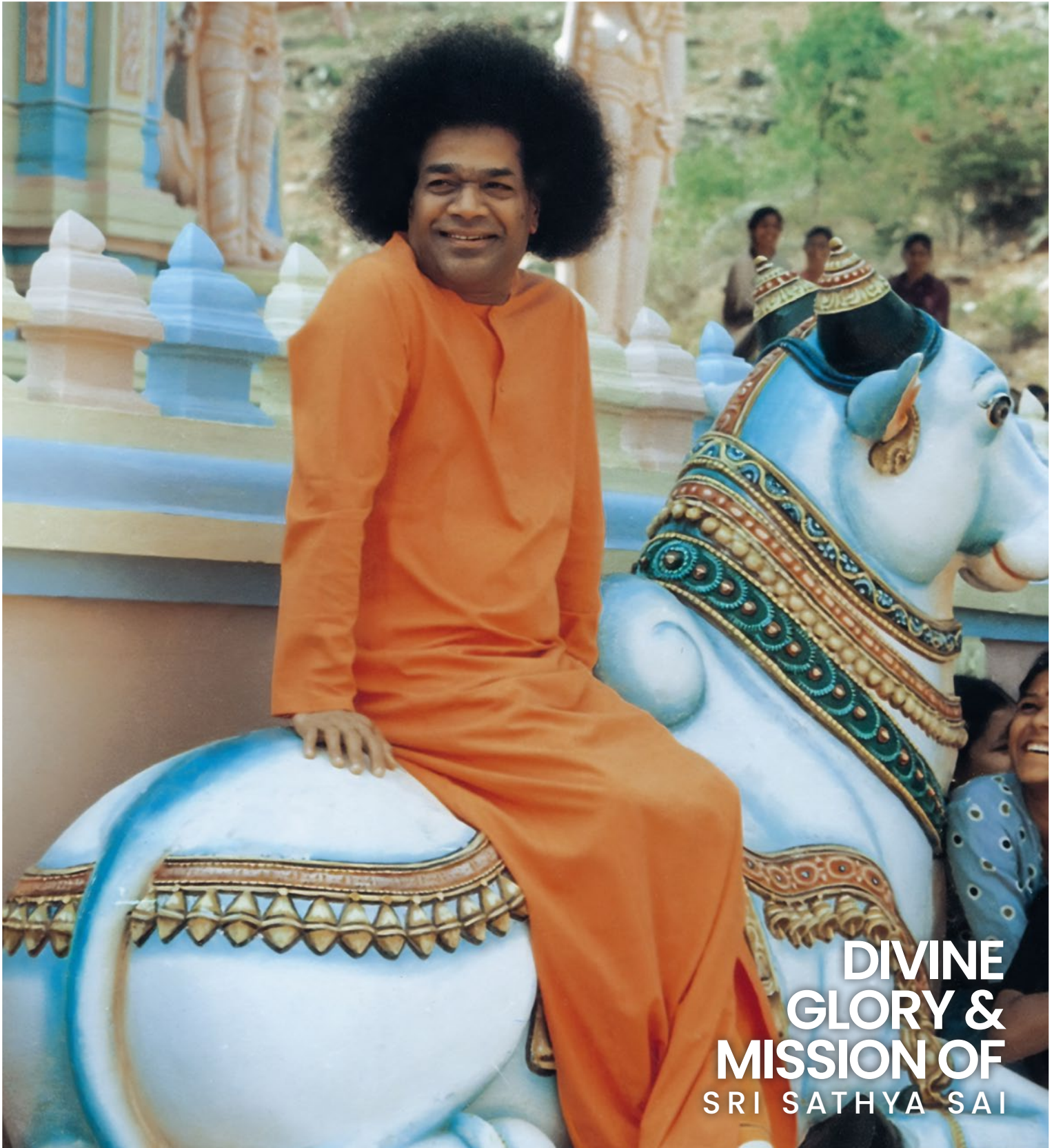


SATHYA SAI
THE
ETERNAL
COMPANION



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3
MARCH 2024



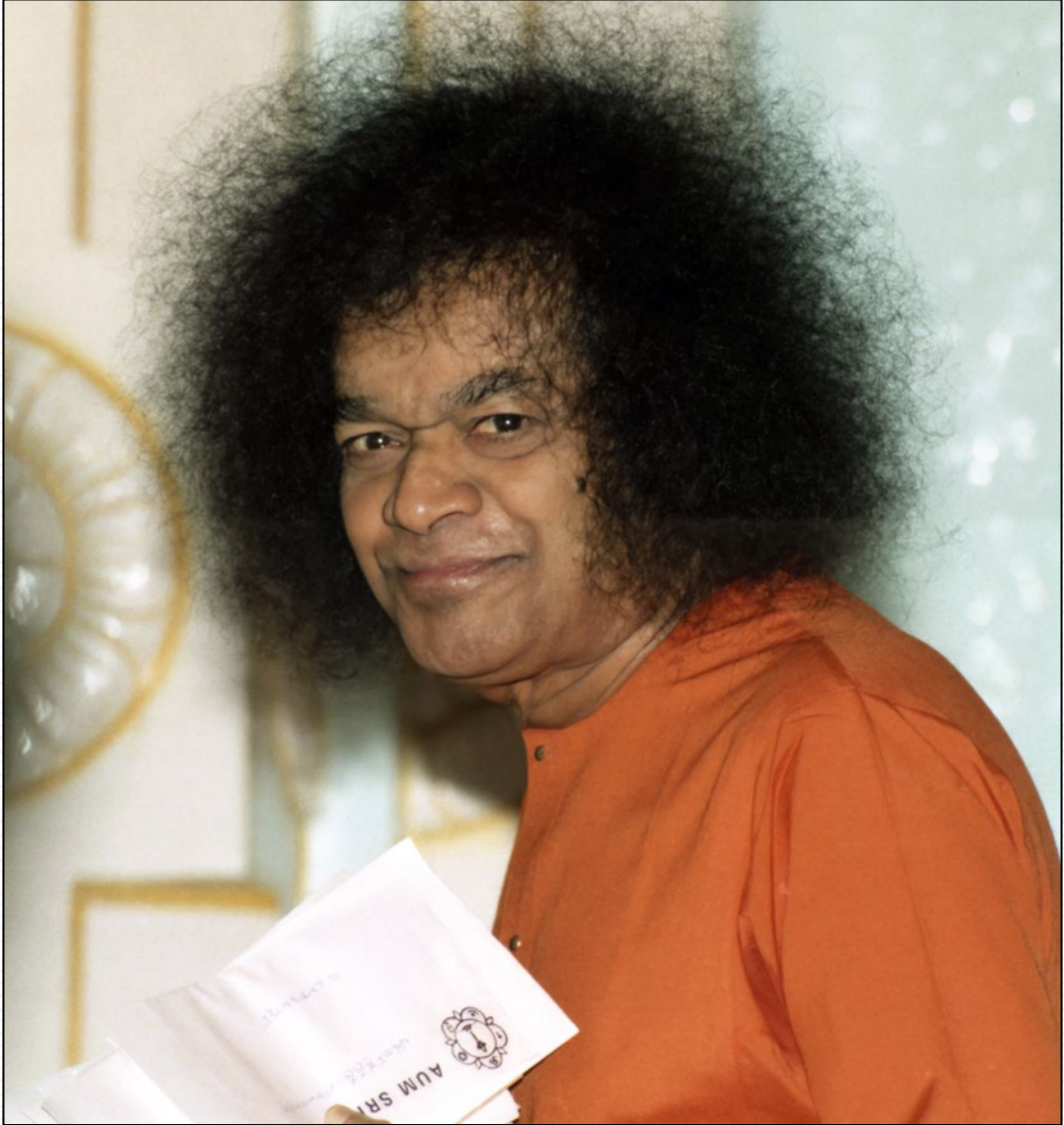
**DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF
SRI SATHYA SAI**



If you make the slightest effort to progress along the path of liberation, the Lord will help you a hundred-fold. Shivaratri conveys that hope to you. The moon, which is the presiding deity of the mind, wanes, until on the fourteenth day after the full moon, it is just a tiny crescent of glimmering glow. The mind too must be starved into that condition, so that the person becomes free.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

March 4, 1962



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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Anything that is associated with 'His' Story alone is worthwhile to preserve as 'History'. We are all blessed to have experienced the love and grace of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and continue to experience the same in our daily lives. That is why Swami is our Eternal Companion.

The editorial team of the 'Sathya Sai–The Eternal Companion' magazine warmly welcomes articles and poems based on authentic personal experiences with the Avatar of the Age, our beloved Bhagawan. You may send in your contributions as a document, audio file, or video file. Apart from being published in the magazine (if selected), these contributions may also be published in the SSSIO's digital media channels. All of these contributions will be safely stored for posterity in the SSSIO's digital archives by the SSSIO Archive Committee.

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Maha Shivaratri

THE DAY OF LINGODBHAVAM
(EMERGENCE OF LINGAM)



The Lingam (sacred form of Lord Shiva) is in every one of you. In the Angam (body composed of limbs), there is Jangam (movement of the mind toward external objects); in Jangam, there is Sangam (through this movement, there arises attachment); in Sangam there is Lingam (through attachment and consequent suffering, the individual learns the need for and the efficacy of the Lingam, or God, who is His innermost core). Witness the Atma Linga (Spirit of the Soul) that emerges; derive bliss therefrom.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
March 9, 1967

Shivaratri (the night of Shiva) is an important festival for all spiritual seekers. It comes on every 14th day of the dark half of the lunar month when the moon is waning. On the 14th night, only a thin sliver of the moon is visible, and it disappears completely the next night. This is called the *Maasa Shivaratri* (monthly Shivaratri). **The sacred Maha Shivaratri (the Great Shivaratri) is celebrated once a year on the 14th night of the dark half of the auspicious month of *Magha*,**

which usually comes around February or March. In the divine discourse of February 7, 1959 included in this issue, Swami beautifully explains the inner significance of Maha Shivaratri. There are many spiritual practices associated with this holy festival, including keeping an all night vigil, observing a fast, and chanting the Sri Rudram–Namakam and Chamakam—which glorifies Lord Shiva, adoring various divine attributes.

From childhood, I was drawn to Lord Shiva. Whenever I had a chance to sing, I would select bhajans that glorify Him. On several occasions, out of His infinite compassion, Swami gave me opportunities to sing Shiva bhajans in His presence and, on one occasion, even accompanied the bhajan by playing cymbals! I feel overwhelmed whenever I recall those blessed moments. So, it is not surprising that Maha Shivaratri holds a special place in my heart, and over the years, I made it a point to be with Swami and bask in His glory every Maha Shivaratri.

In December 1984, Swami called our family for an interview. During that interview, He waved His hand and created a unique oval greyish-white stone, a *Linga*. Holding it up, He looked around the room and asked, “Do you know what this is?” Watching the miracle, we all sat silently with bated breaths as He continued, showing the translucent side of the Lingam, and said, **“This is the moon—Chandrama Manaso Jatah (The Moon is born from the Mind of the Supreme Brahman). By worshipping this, your mind will be under control.”** Swami graciously blessed me, and I reverentially received the precious Linga and began worshipping it ever since regularly with all sincerity.

The Linga

It is fascinating to note that in temples, Lord Shiva is rarely worshiped in human form, unlike other divine forms such as Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Kartikeya, Goddess Durga, Goddess Saraswati, etc. Be it Somnath, Kedarnath, Srisailam, Rameswaram, or any other holy spot associated with Lord Shiva, He is always worshiped in the cosmic aspect, in the Linga form. The Linga does not have a head, arms, or legs. It is a form that represents the cosmic aspect of Lord Shiva. One cannot discern where the Linga begins and where it ends. It is symbolic of the Lord, who is infinite. There is even a scriptural story of its emergence that highlights this very aspect, describing how even Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma failed to locate the beginning and end of the Linga.

The Lingodbhava

During His Maha Shivaratri discourse in February 1969, Swami explains *lingodbhava* (emergence of Linga) in greater depth, saying,

Since thousands pray here, and elsewhere in lakhs and crores, the Linga is emanating from Me so that you may derive the bliss that pervades the world through Lingodbhava. The manifestation of the Linga is a part of My nature. These pandits (scholars) explain it as reminiscent of an epochal event in the past when Shiva challenged Brahma and Vishnu to gauge the height and depth of the Linga form that He assumed. They failed and had to accept defeat. But the Linga emerges as a result of prayer and My grace.

*You have to recognize in this event a glimpse of divinity, a sign of infinite grace. **Just as Om is the sound symbol of God, the Linga is the form symbol or the visible symbol of God, the most meaningful, the simplest, and the least endowed with the appendages of attri-***



(Left to right) Crystal Linga, Stone Linga and Hiranyagarbha Linga.

butes. *Linga* means that in which this jagat (world of change) attains *laya* (mergence or dissolution), *leeyathe*. All forms merge in the formless, at last. *Shiva* is the principle of dissolution for all names and forms of all entities and individuals. So, the *Linga* is the simplest sign of emergence and mergence.

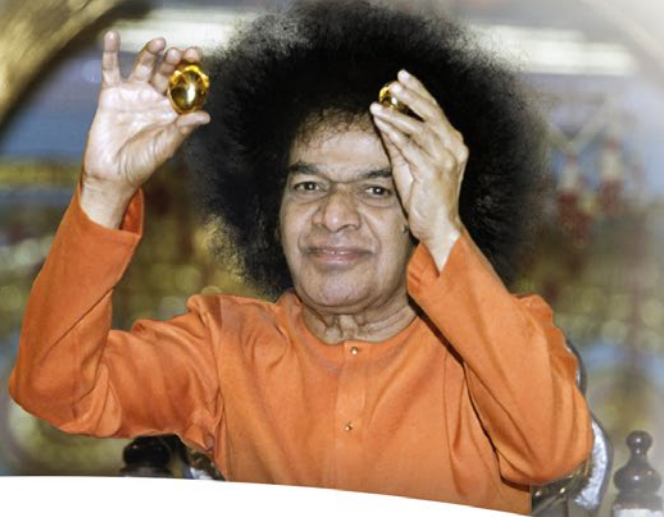
One of the most popular etymologies of the *Linga* is “*leeyathe gamyate charah-caram idam sarvam yatra Linga iti abhidhi-yate*” which means “in which all movable and immovable (sentient and insentient) things merge and move toward is understood as the *Linga*.” Swami shortens this and says, “*leeyathe gamyate iti Lingah,*” which means **Linga is that in which everything in the world merges and becomes one. So, all names and forms ultimately merge in the *Linga*.**

Swami brings out the *Linga* on Maha Shivaratri day to reveal that He is the source of all names, forms, and beyond. There are many types of *Lingas*, made of clay, sand, stone, crystal, gold, silver, mercury, and other metals.

There are twelve *vyotirlingas* considered to be very special, as explained in the article ‘*Saishwara and Someshwara,*’ in this issue, with details on how Swami reenergized Somnath *Linga*, one of the *vyotirlingas*. The very name *vyotirlinga* means ‘the *Linga* which illumines.’ When we visit these temples with devotion and faith, the darkness of ignorance is removed, and we are illumined.

The five elements, earth, water, fire, wind, and space, are also considered as *Lingas* (*Pancha Bhuta Lingas*). There are five temples in South India that represent these





Lingas. The 'Prithvi (Earth) Linga' is Ekambareshwar in the town of Kanchi, the 'Aapa (Water) Linga' is Jambukeshwara in the town of Thiruvanaikal, the 'Agni (Fire) Linga' is Arunachaleshwara in the town of Tiruvannamalai, the 'Vayu (Wind) Linga' is Kalahasteeshwara in the town of Kalahasti, and the "Akasa (Space) Linga" is Chidambareshwara in the town of Chidambaram.

Every particle and every atom of the universe is verily a manifestation of Lord Shiva, as mentioned in the Rudram. The whole cosmos is a manifestation of Linga (*Brahmanda Linga*), and *Atma* (Self) itself is considered a Linga (*Atma Linga*). That is the ultimate experience one is assured when one worships the linga sincerely and chants the Rudram with devotion.

The Unexpected Bonus

In 1999, I arrived at Prasanthi Nilayam a few days before Maha Shivaratri. It wasn't crowded like the Shivaratris of yore because Swami had discontinued doing *Lingodbhavam* (manifestation of Linga from the mouth) publicly in 1977.

That year, we were all in for a divine surprise. Devotees gathered from around the world and observed the sacred night-long vigil, singing *bhajans* and chanting the Rudram. Swami arrived in the morning and sat on the dais, enjoying the *bhajans*. To the astonish-

ment of everyone, He blessed the gathering with *Lingodbhavam*, and the whole atmosphere in the hall became electrified. A thrill coursed through all of us who witnessed it. Adding to the magnificence of this unexpected episode, **Swami mentioned in His discourse that those who had witnessed the emergence of the Shiva Linga from Him would be liberated and not have any more births!** This proclamation was such an unexpected divine blessing because *moksha* comes only after attaining *Jnana* through intense *Atma Vichara* (Self-enquiry).

Since then, I became even more committed to be with Swami every Maha Shivaratri. It was distressing to witness Swami going through a painful physical trauma during the *Lingodbhava*. However, when I expressed my concern to Swami, He said, "*The mother suffers labor pains during delivery. Despite that, when the baby is born, the mother is full of joy. So, too, this has to happen, and after it happens, it gives great joy to Me and the devotees.*"

Hiranyagarbha Comes Home

The Linga is worshipped by ceremoniously bathing it with water, milk, curds, honey, ghee (clarified butter), turmeric, sandalwood paste, saffron, and many other materials which have a deep inner significance. **This is called *Abhishekam*. Broadly, this represents the offering of the five elements**

Hiranyagarbha Linga is present in everybody's *hridaya* (spiritual heart) and is on the right side of the body. The principle of Hiranyagarbha permeates My whole body. It assumes a form when I will it. Whoever has seen this Linga at the time of its emergence will not have rebirth.

along with our bodies, minds, and souls to the Lord. The Linga is also worshipped with *vibhuti* (sacred ash). In the early years, on Maha Shivaratri, Swami used to shower a silver idol of Shirdi Baba with heaps of *vibhuti* that He would produce miraculously by swirling His hand into an empty, upturned pot.



Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Dr. Hymavathi Reddy, and Smt. Chellamma with Swami in the interview room in February 2004.

Another significant offering is that of the sacred trifoliate bilva leaves. They signify the offering of the three gunas (attributes), namely, *satwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas* (*purity, passion, and sloth*), across the three periods of time (past, present, and future), the three states (wakeful, dream, and deep sleep), and the three types of bodies (gross,

subtle, and causal). The whole universe and our lives are in the realm of all these triads, and the offering of the bilva leaves is a prayer to take us beyond all of them to the supreme *Parabrahman*. **The Linga is a representation of this supreme *Parabrahman* beyond name, form, attributes, time, and space.**

My parents were blessed and fortunate to live in the *ashram* for nearly two decades, and they were blessed with many interviews with Swami. During one interview, my mother, Smt. Chellamma, boldly appealed, "Swami, please bless us by gifting one of the Lingas that have emerged from You?" We were taken aback at her frankness and simplicity, but Swami obligingly responded saying that He would fulfill her desire. It was left at that, and we pretty much forgot about it.

A few years later, in 2004, Swami did the *Lingodbhavam*, which became a sacred feature of Maha Shivaratri by then. A couple of days after Maha Shivaratri, He called our family for an interview. My father was unable to join us. To avoid travel strain he stayed behind in the USA following Swami's directive. Swami surprised us by blessing us with the golden Hiranyagarbha Linga! Placing it in my hands, He said, "*You wanted a Lingam, right? This is the one that emerged from Me on Maha Shivaratri day.*"

He continued, "*This is Someshwara Lingam. You should perform Abhishekam daily to this Lingam.*"

I replied, "Swami, we do not know the *Rudram*, the most sacred chant for worshipping Lord Shiva..."

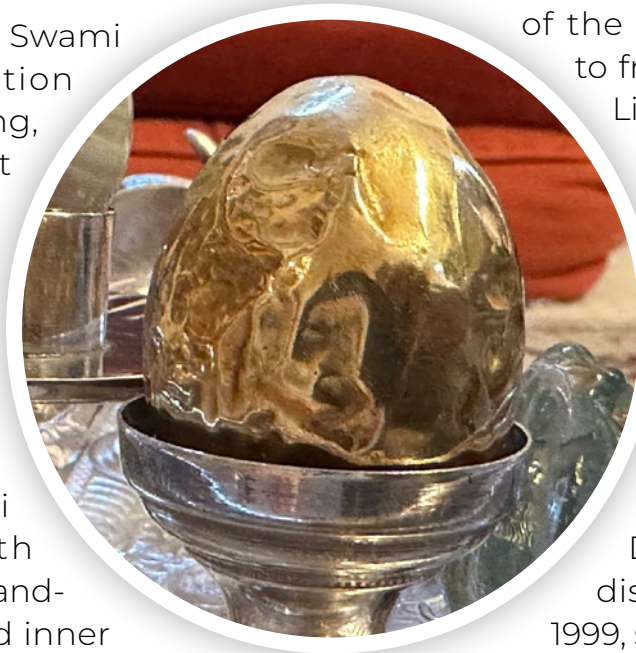
"Don't worry about that," He reassured us, **"just chant 'Om Sri Sai Ram' or 'Om Namah Shivaya' and perform the Abhishekam. You are a doctor, and you will be seeing many patients in your practice. You may distribute the Linga Abhishekam water to anyone who may need it."**

While I am grateful to Swami for His simple solution regarding the chanting, I felt that He was just being a loving parent. Wanting to be a good child, I sincerely started learning the Sri Rudram and, by His grace, learned the entire Namakam and Chamakam (Sri Rudram) along with developing an understanding of its meaning and inner significance. Where there is a will, there is a way. This is also exemplified by the perseverance of our young adults who continue to embark on programs to learn the Sri Rudram. The experiences of the young adults described in a couple of reflec-

tions in this issue show their determination and will to participate in various activities of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization.

Many amazing cures and astounding miracles have occurred (and continue to occur) in devotees who partake this Linga water. Even patients with dreaded conditions like cancer and stroke were healed! That is all due to the grace and omnipotence of Swami, expressed through the Linga, and the strong faith of the devotees. We continue to freely share the precious Linga water to anyone who requests it. Indeed, this shows the omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence of the Lord, which has been further highlighted in an article by Mr. Cosby Powell in this issue.

During His divine discourse on February 15, 1999, speaking about the Hira-nyagarbha Linga, Swami said, "*Hira-nyagarbha Linga is present in everyone's hridaya (spiritual heart) and is on the right side of the body. The principle of Hiranyagarbha permeates My whole body. It assumes a form when I will it. Whoever has seen this*



Linga at the time of its emergence will not have rebirth. One should see its form as it emerges. In order to sanctify your lives, such sacred manifestations have to be shown to you every now and then. Only then can you understand the divinity in humanity.”

Birth of the Someshwara Gayatri Mantra

One blessed day, as I was doing the sacred ritual worship of the Lingam in a prayerful and contemplative mood, I had a sudden flash of intuition. Without conscious effort, the words just flowed out of me,

*Om Someshwaraya Vidmahe
Suvarna Lingaya Dheemahi
Tannah Sai Prachodayat*

The way it emerged I felt quite sure that I wasn't the author or even had any conscious thought about it. Knowing intuitively that it was something of great significance, I noted it down. On my very next visit to Puttaparthi, I shared with Baba the profound experience He granted me. I also showed Him the piece of paper with the Someshwara Gayatri Mantra written on it. Swami glanced at it and studied it. Then, He struck off the last line and, in its place, He wrote **Tannah Sarva Prachodayat, replacing Tannah Sai Prachodayat. Swami is thus not only the**

unseen inspiration but also the direct, literal author or source of this **mantra**, which is:

*Om Someshwaraya Vidmahe
Suvarna Lingaya Dheemahi
Tannah Sarva Prachodayat*


Om–The primeval sound, representing the formless Divine without attributes and name.

Someshwaraya Vidmahe–We know You as the Lord of Soma (moon), who is the presiding deity of the mind.

Suvarna Lingaya Dheemahi–We meditate on that bright golden lingam, which represents the supreme Divine in which everything merges.

Tannah Sarva Prachodayat–May the Lord, who is everything, grant me the knowledge of the Supreme.

During a subsequent visit, we brought a card printed with this Gayatri Mantra in Sanskrit, Telugu, and English. Swami seemed pleased, and He even signed that card–*With Love, Baba!* So, the next time we came to see Him in December 2004, we got the *mantra* engraved on silver plates and offered them to Swami. Swami gently reprimanded me for ‘wasting money,’ but He was happy with the love with which we offered them. He

<p>सोमेश्वर गायत्रि ॐ सोमेश्वराय विद्महे सुवर्ण लिंगाय धीमहि तन्नस्सर्वः प्रचोदयात् ।</p>	<p>సోమేశ్వర గాయత్రి ఓం సోమేశ్వరాయ విద్మహే సువర్ణ లింగాయ ధీమహి తన్నస్సర్వః ప్రచోదయాత్ ।</p>
	
<p>Someshwara Gayathri Om Someshwaraya Vidmahe Suvarna Lingaya Dheemahi Thannah-Sarvah Prachodayaath</p>	



even distributed them to a few students and some long-time devotees.

The Linga came from Him, the Gayatri came from Him, and He finally 'authenticated' it with His divine signature as well! What a precious blessing!

The Eternal Travel Companion

'Shiva' means auspiciousness, and 'Ratri' means night. 'Shivaratri' is the auspicious night. The prefix 'Maha' means 'great,' and Maha Shivaratri occurs once every year (on the *Chaturdashi* of the *Magha* month), while every month there is a Shivaratri (on the *Chaturdashi* night). However, **Swami tells us that any night that becomes auspicious by thinking of God, chanting or singing His name, and doing His work is Shivaratri.** Such are the practical and simple teachings of our Beloved Lord, Sai Shiva. In the same vein, Swami offered me a practical solution through the gift of a third Lingam.

In 2006, I was getting busier and busier with the activities of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization at Swami's behest. I had to travel extensively, which kept increasing. During an interview that year, Swami again pleasantly surprised me by creating a *Sphatika* (crystal) Linga, which is small in size and easy to carry. Swami gave it to me, saying, "You travel a lot. This is a travel Linga!"



So, whenever we travel as a family, we carry all three Lingas. But when I travel alone, I carry the "travel Linga!" It is a constant ardent prayer in my heart that the Linga and Lord Sai Shiva travel with me on the ultimate journey of life.

With continuous and intense spiritual practices in the adoration of Lord Shiva, **we will finally realize the Lingam is within us as Atma Linga, and we will experience Shivo-ham ("I am Shiva").** May Lord Sai bless us all on this holy Maha Shivaratri to pursue our spiritual practices with devotion, determination, and dedication.

Jai Sai Ram.

Narendranath Reddy, M.D.
EDITOR





The Moon and the Mind

THERE ARE MANY STORIES IN THE SCRIPTURES TO explain the origin of the Shivaratri (the night of the emergence of the linga form of Shiva) festival. Some of them were presented by the people who just spoke to you. Another story is that this is the day on which Shiva performed the cosmic dance in His ecstasy, with all the gods and sages taking part in the cosmic event. When He consumed the deadly poison that emanated from the 'ocean of milk' in response to the prayers of the worlds which it threatened to destroy, the heat of the toxic fumes was well-nigh unbearable, even for Him. So, it is said the water of the holy Ganga river was poured on His matted locks uninterruptedly. **This is the explanation for the *abhisheka* (ceremony of pouring consecrated water, oil, milk, etc., on the sacred linga),** which is offered in all Shiva temples for hours on end and, in some places, without interruption. Still, Shiva was only partially relieved from the scorching heat.

Hence, the cool moon was placed over His head, which gave some relief. Then, Ganga was placed on the matted locks. That was of great help. After this, Shiva performed the cosmic dance with all the gods. That is the story, but all this did not happen on a particular day. So, Shivaratri cannot be said to commemorate that day. Some say that Shiva



was born on this day as if Shiva has birth and death like any mortal! There is the story of a hunter who sat on a Bilva tree on the lookout for animals to hunt and, without any intent to worship, unwittingly dropped the Bilva leaves of that tree upon a linga below and thus attained salvation. This only explains the importance of this day. But it does not explain the origin of the celebration! Besides the great Shivaratri (Maha Shivaratri), a Shivaratri occurs every month, dedicated to the worship of Lord Shiva. So, what is the significance of the sacred *ratri* (night)?

The Close Affinity Between Mind and the Moon

The night sky is dominated by the moon. The moon has 16 phases (*kalas*), and each day, when it wanes, a fraction of it is reduced until it is annihilated on the new moon night. After that, each day, it waxes by a fraction until it completes itself on the full moon night. The moon is the presiding deity of the mind. "Out of the mind of the Godhead, the moon was born (*Chandrama manaso jatah*)."¹ There is a close affinity between the mind (*manas*) and the moon; both are subject to decline and increase. The waning of the moon is symbolic of the waning of the mind, for the mind has to be controlled, reduced, and finally destroyed. All spiritual exercises are directed toward this end. The mind must be destroyed so that illusion (*maya*) may be rent asunder, and the reality revealed. Every night during the dark half of the month, the moon, and symbolically its counterpart in man, the mind, wanes, and a fraction is diminished, its power declines. Finally, on the four-

teenth night, there is just a wee bit left, that is all. If the spiritual aspirant makes a little extra effort that day, even that bit can be wiped off, and mastery of the mind can be achieved. **The fourteenth night of the dark half is called Shivaratri, for that night should be spent in the repetition of the name of Shiva and meditation on Shiva, without any other thought of food or sleep. Then, success is assured.**

Once a year, on Maha Shivaratri night, an extraordinary intensification of spiritual practice is recommended so that the body or corpse (*shavam*) can become God (*Shivam*) by the elimination of the mind. This is the purpose of Shivaratri. So, it is foolish and even harmful deceit to imagine that just "keeping awake" is the essential thing in its observance. People try to escape sleep on this night by playing cards, attending non-stop cinema shows, or watching plays and dramas. That is not the spiritual exercise that should be intensified on Shivaratri. That is a travesty of the vow of "sleeplessness." It vulgarizes you and encourages evil and sloth, wickedness, and hypocrisy.

Symbolic Meaning of Words Used in Scriptures

On Shivaratri, the mind must be reduced to nothing. Lingam means that in which this world attains nothingness, that into which this world goes. **Examine the linga; the three primordial qualities (*gunas*) are represented by the three-tiered platform; the lingam above symbolizes the goal of life.** Lingam means "symbol," the symbol of creation, the result of the activity of the three qualities and of the Brahman

“Just as Om is the verbal symbol of God, the lingam is the symbolic form of the Godhead. It is just a form.

(Supreme Reality), which permeates and gives it meaning and value. When you worship the lingam, do so with faith in this symbolic significance. Every word and every form used in the spiritual texts has a symbolic meaning, which gives it value. For instance, the word *prapancha* (visible universe), which you use so freely to indicate this “created world,” means “that which is composed of the *pancha-bhuthas*—the five elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and space.” Take another word, *hridayam*, which is used for “the heart.” It means *hrid* (in the heart) and *ayam* (He). That is to say, it means not the organ that pumps blood to all parts of the body but the seat of God, the altar where Shiva is installed, the recess where the lamp of wisdom is lit. Again, Shiva does not ride on an animal called, in human language, a “bull!” The bull is only a symbol of *dharma*, standing on the four legs of truth, right conduct, peace, and love (*sathya, dharma, shanti, and prema*).

Lingam is the Symbolic Form of the Godhead

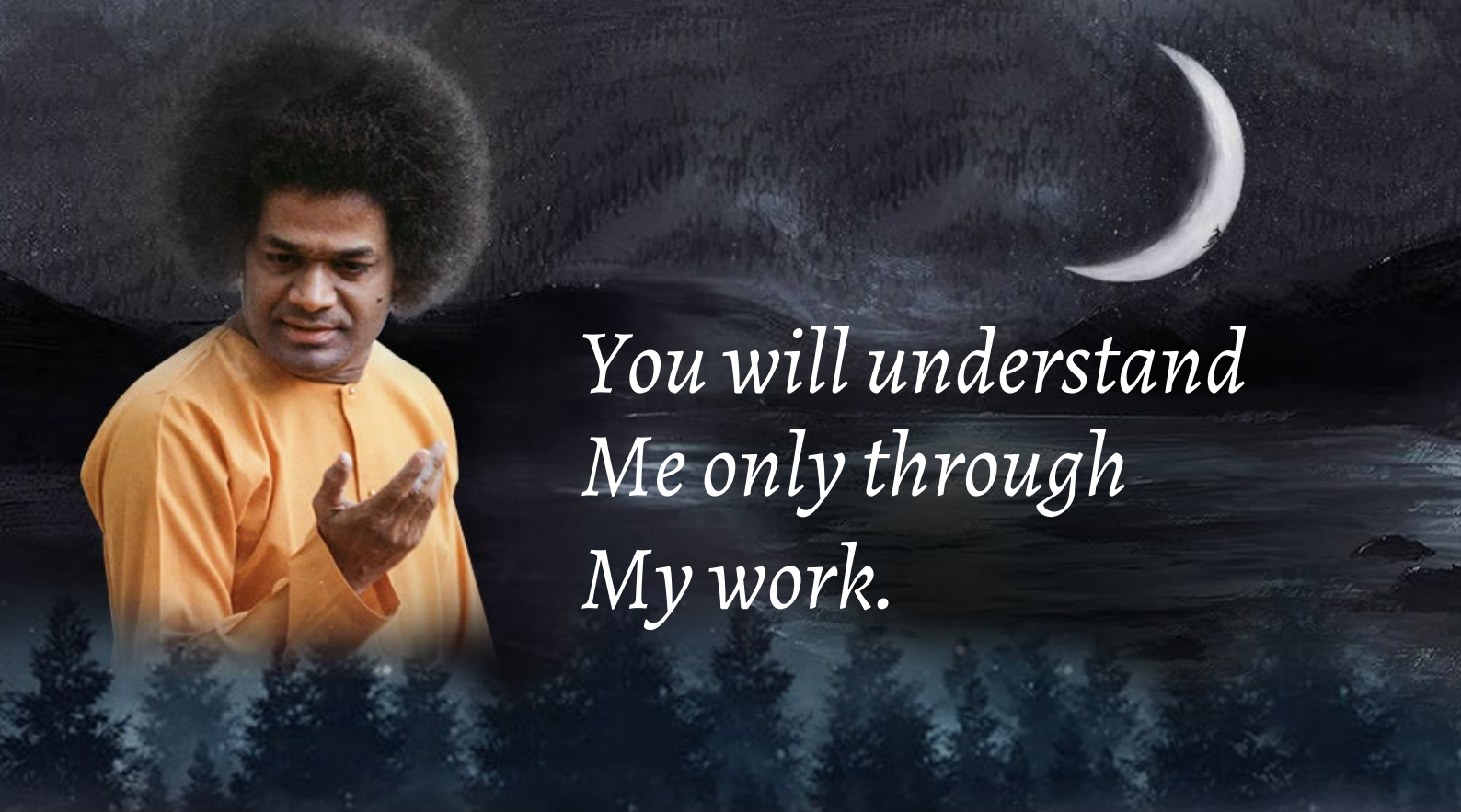
The three eyes of Shiva are the eyes that reveal the past, present, and future. Shiva alone has all three. The elephant skin that forms His cloak is just a symbol for the elemental, bestial, and primitive traits that His grace destroys. He makes them powerless and harmless; in fact, he tears them to pieces,

shreds them, so to speak, and makes them ineffective. His four faces symbolize peace, fierceness, auspiciousness, and zeal (*shantam, roudram, mangalam, and utsaham*). In this way, realize, while worshipping the lingam, the inner significance of the many attributes of Shiva. Meditate thus on Shiva this day so that you may get rid of the last lingering vestiges of delusion. **Just as Om is the verbal symbol of God, the lingam is the symbolic form of the Godhead. It is just a form.**

Everything is delusion (*maya*), and to grasp it, you must deal with delusion. Otherwise, you cannot realize the deluding power. God is as immanent in the universe as life is immanent in the egg. The chicken is in every part of the egg, and so, too, God is in every part of the world. I prefer the description ‘Inner Ruler of All (*Sarva-antaryami*)’ to the description ‘Innermost Soul of All Beings (*Sarva-bhuta-antaratma*).’ All persons are in this hall, but each one has no hall in him—is it not? In the same way, all are in Him, which is better than saying He is in all. It is delusion (*maya*) that binds and

limits you; all spiritual exercise is to conquer delusion. A bit of iron will sink in water, but if beaten and made hollow, it will float. So **beat the mind and make it hollow. Then, it will float on the sea of worldly life.** Above all, have discrimination, and do not be led into taking any false step.





You will understand Me only through My work.

Grow Not Only Physically but also Spiritually

You need not waste time trying to discover Me and My Nature. Understand what I teach, not who is the teacher, for I am beyond your intellect and your power. **You will understand Me only through My work.** That is why, sometimes, in order to reveal who I am, I Myself show you my “visiting card,” something that you call a miracle. Know the mystery and carry out the duty I assign you. In the next fifteen years, many young people now growing up will shine as devoted aspirants in the spiritual field. They know that each of them is eternal, truth, and pure and that they are children of immortality. They are growing in discrimination and detachment and are purifying themselves by repetition of the name of God. But the elders are laughing at these children because they have taken the godly path. Perhaps they will be happy if their children loiter in the streets in groups, smoking, swearing, and staring at posters! The elders should be elated that their children are on the royal road to absolute joy and contentment and that they

will be serving themselves and the world much better.

You do not know how to make an ornament out of gold, and so you give it to a goldsmith. Why worry if he melts it, beats it, pierces it, pulls it into a wire, and twists and cuts it? Let Him, who knows the art, shape the child into an ornament of society; do not worry. You must grow day by day, not only physically but in spiritual life, too. How long are you going to stay in primary school, writing down the letters of the alphabet? Get up, demand an examination, pass, and move forward to a higher class!

The Individual Soul Must Master the Inner World First

You are now sitting on the floor of the hall. Seek the means to see the top floors, too. Progress! Come forward! Then Shivaratri becomes an auspicious night for you. Otherwise, it is just another night (*raatri*) wasted. Many people might discourage you and say that meditation and worship can be taken up after you reach a ripe old age as if they are the prerogatives of or

special punishments for the aged. Enjoy the world while you can, and then think of the next—that seems to be their attitude. The child takes its first few steps in the comparative safety of the home. It toddles about inside until its steps become firm, until its balance is perfected, and until it can run about unaccompanied and without fear. Then only does it venture out into the streets and the wide world beyond.

So, too, the living being must master the inner world first and become impervious to temptations. It should learn not to falter when the senses trip its steps; it should learn to balance the mind, not to make it lean more to one side than the other. After mastering this discriminatory wisdom, it can confidently move out into the outer world without fear of accidents. That is why there is this insistence on “sleeplessness” or vigilance. **You cannot claim to be educated or grown-up unless you have mastered the science of self-control and destroyed the root cause of delusion.** It is not this night alone that you should spend in the thought of Shiva; your whole life should be lived in the constant presence of the Lord.

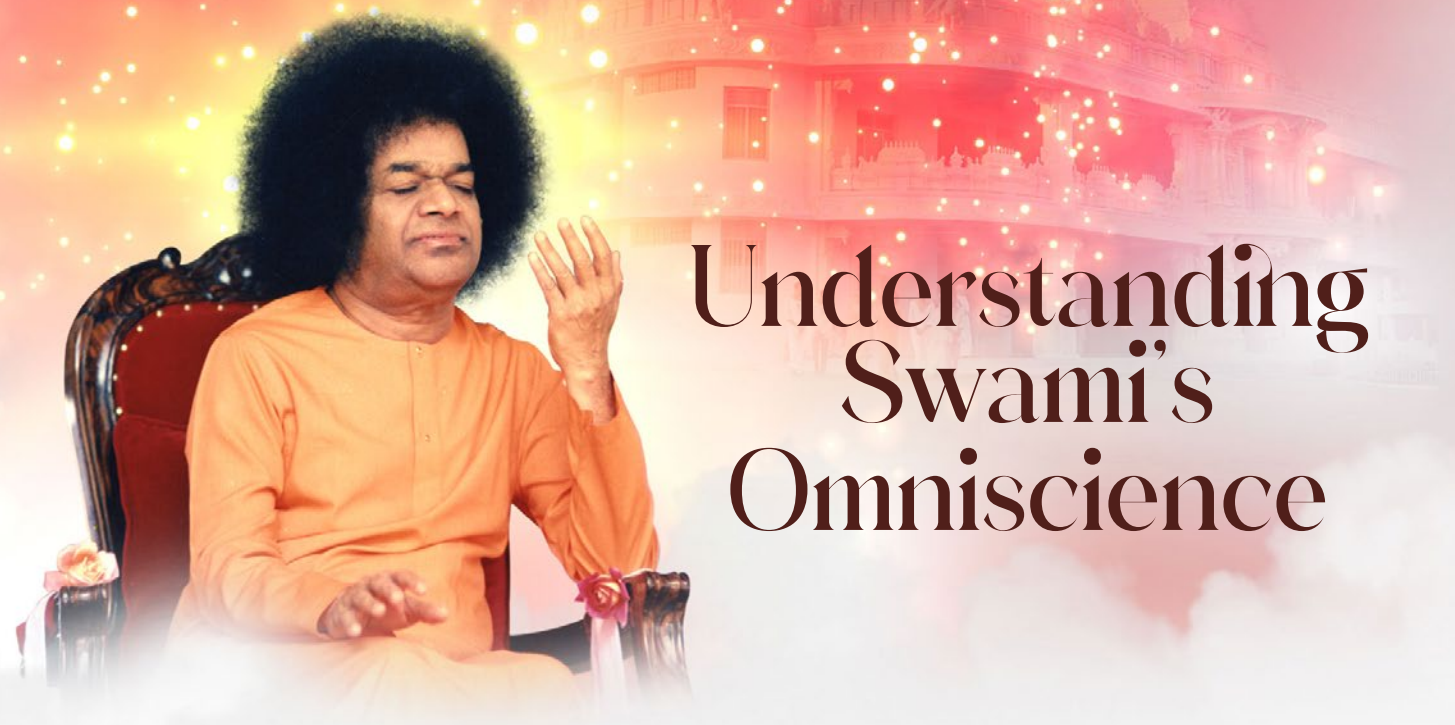
Man's Basic Nature Seeks Inward Contentment

Do not tell me that you do not care for that bliss, that you are satisfied with the delusion and are not willing to undergo the rigors of sleeplessness. Your true nature, believe Me, abhors this dull, dreary routine of eating, drinking, and sleeping. It seeks something. It knows it has lost something, namely inward contentment (*santushti*). It seeks liberation from bondage to the trivial and the temporary. **Everyone craves for liberation in their heart of hearts. And it is available only in one shop: contemplation of the highest Self, the basis of all this appearance.** However high a bird may soar, sooner or later, it has to perch on a treetop to enjoy the quiet. So, too, a day will come when even the most arrogant, the most willful, the most unbelieving, and even those who assert that there is no joy or peace in the contemplation of the highest Self will have to pray, “God, grant me peace, grant me consolation, strength, and joy.”

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
February 7, 1959







Understanding Swami's Omniscience

I am always aware of the future, the past, as well as the present of every one of you. So, I am not moved so much by pity. Not that I am hard-hearted, or that I have no daya (compassion)... Since I know the past and the background, My reaction is different. If only you knew, you too will react differently.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

November 26, 1964

ALL SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS HAVE A BEGINNING. I would like to think that mine began the first time I saw Swami, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It was during Christmas 1979. My wife, my two-year-old son, Aaron, and I traveled to see Swami. We were new to the scene, and my knowledge of Swami was limited to what I learned from reading the book *Sai Baba: Man of Miracles* by Howard Murphet.

I was very anxious to see Swami because, after reading the book, I felt that He was God incarnate. But there was nothing like seeing Him to get convinced of that. We arrived in Bangalore (Bengaluru today) from Atlanta, Georgia, USA, and found that Swami was stationed at Brindavan, Whitefield. So, we went to the Brindavan *ashram* and were seated in the *darshan* lines. Back in those days, there was a distance between Swami's residence and the tree under which *darshan* and *bhajans* were held. As Swami was walking toward us, I saw a glow of light around him. He was lit up so brilliantly that the sight touched

“I understood that Swami’s omniscience is not just about Him knowing everything but also knowing how to respond, whom to respond to, where to respond, and when to respond because He is aware of the past, present, and future.”

me somewhere deep inside. I knew instinctively that very moment that He was God. There was no doubt in my mind, and I was firmly convinced. That was the beginning of my spiritual journey, my search.

First Experience of Omniscience

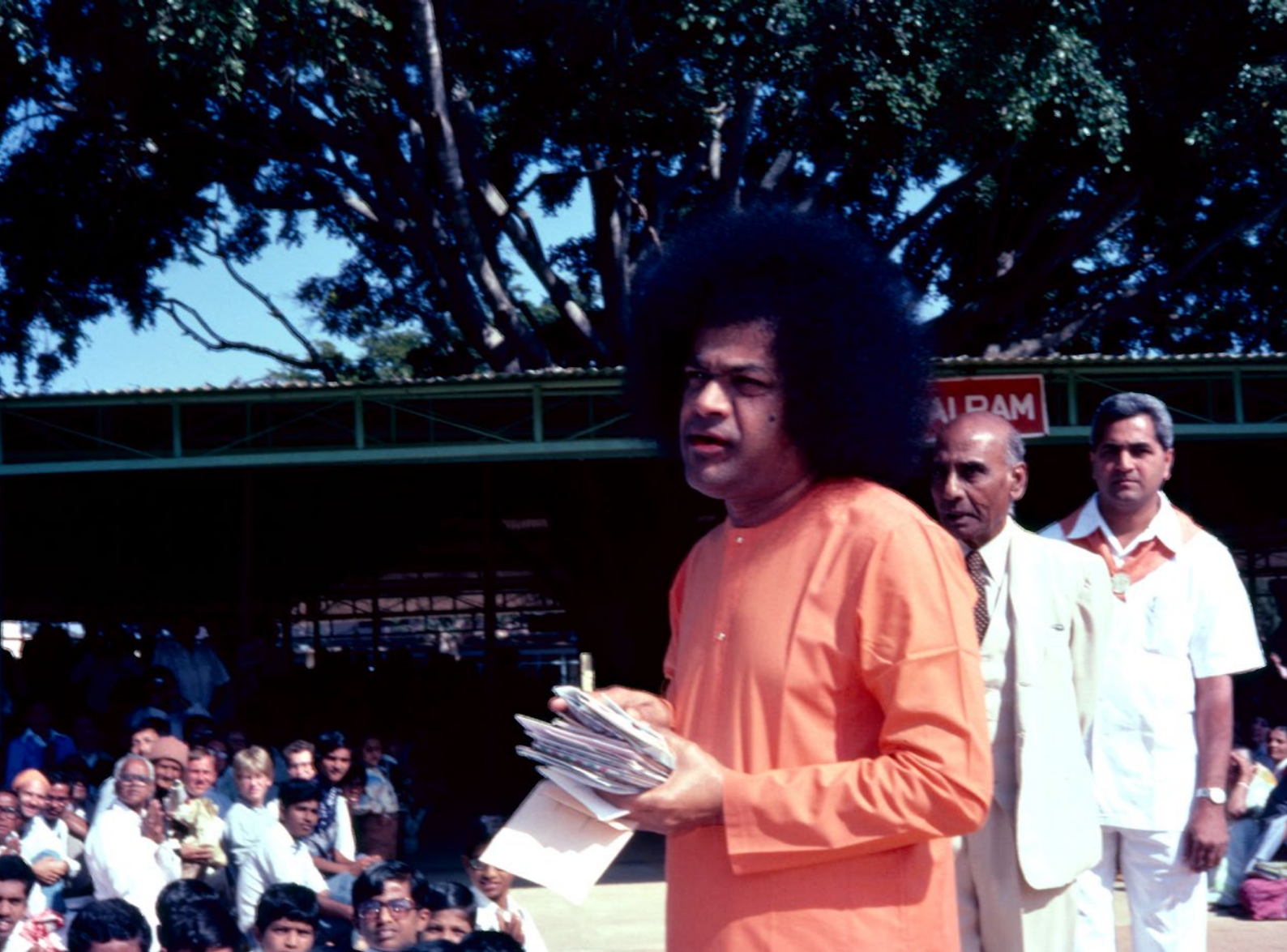
One of the first significant incidents that happened to me after this experience was when I attended a discourse that Swami delivered. Though I do not recollect the details of the discourse, the experience was transformative and revealed another facet of His divinity.

My wife suddenly became ill with dysentery. I had purchased some *vibhuti* from the *ashram*, and I wanted to get it blessed by Swami to make her better. So, in the evening, I took it with me to the venue where Swami would give the discourse. We had been going for *darshan* for many days, and I was used to seeing hundreds of people in the venue. But when I arrived, thousands and thousands of people had gathered for the discourse. I could not believe how many people were there! Luckily, the Westerners had separate seating, and therefore, I sat in a relatively prominent place. I saw Swami on stage and heard the discourse. After the discourse, as Swami exited the venue, He came toward where we were seated.

I was so enamored by His presence that I forgot about the *vibhuti* that I brought for His blessings. Swami passed by me and moved away from me, passing about eight



or nine people. That was when I suddenly remembered the *vibhuti* and, in my mind, cried out, “Swami, *vibhuti*!” That very instant, Swami stopped. He turned around and made a beeline back to me. With His right hand, He lovingly blessed the *vibhuti*, turned back, and continued to walk. I was stunned and started wondering how Swami could hear or know what I was thinking among the masses of humanity. **Obviously, His omniscience was still new to me at that time! This experience did a lot to reinforce my faith in Him.**



The Second Experience of Omniscience (and Omnipotence)

After my first trip, I constantly thought about Swami. I wanted to see Him again. Since I was in real estate, I had the freedom to leave my business, travel, and pick up work again when I returned. So, I was back in India barely four months after my first visit. This time, my two-year-old son, Aaron, went with me, but not my wife. Just before we left, the last thing my wife told me was, “Be careful, and watch that Aaron doesn’t get sick!”

Being the sole parent on the trip, I was very careful with what he ate for the first five weeks of the trip. When the last week arrived, I became a little lax, and I agreed to his wish to try some street food in Bangalore. I let him have cotton candy and some other stuff that he liked. As you might have already surmised, he became ill. And his situation

worsened pretty quickly. With my medical background, I knew that it was something far worse than dysentery. Since Aaron was extremely sensitive to medications, I was wary of taking him to a doctor who would prescribe strong medicines, the drugs of choice in those days, that could affect his liver or kidney. However, over the next few days, the situation worsened, and I felt that it had become life-threatening.

There was mucus and blood in his stool, which was very watery, too. I was very concerned. But, I had absolute and complete faith in Swami. So, whenever it was possible to take Aaron for *darshan*, we went, and I hoped for a cure from the Lord. Swami did not do anything about it. So, it became a struggle between me as a father and me as a devotee!

It was the day of the last possible *darshan* before I had to take him to a hospital. With great concern and a feeling of utter helplessness, I went for *darshan*. I had faith that Swami would somehow do something about the situation. I was sitting in the front row, but Aaron had to run to the washroom very frequently. The bloody mucus discharge continued. It was awful.

When Swami came for *darshan*, He came toward where I was seated. He was gazing at me, and I fell on my knees and said, "Swami, my son is very, very ill. Will you please help?" His response was to push against us and speak to some Italian devotees who were seated behind us! I was holding Aaron in my arms, and Swami was pushing us back into the crowd, literally!

"When did you come? How many of you?" Swami asked the Italians seated behind us.

I was thinking, here is Swami, chatting with the Italians when I was having a life-and-death situation in my family. He looked at me again, and I repeated, "Swami, my son is very, very ill. Will you please help?" He simply turned and walked away, and I thought, "Well, here we go with the drama!"

I knew I had to go to the hospital now. Out of respect, I waited for Swami to get back

to His residence. At that time, Aaron had to use the toilet again. I took him to the toilet, and wonder of wonders! He had a perfectly normal bowel movement! After that, he came out and started running about, playing as if he had never been sick!

Swami Always Does Everything for the Highest Good

It goes without saying that I was elated—both as a father and a devotee! I was overjoyed with how Swami took care of the situation.

Whatever I do is for your own good, not for Me. In fact, even the food I partake is for you only. The water I drink is for you. Thus, all the activities I undertake are for your good only. Those who realize this truth will be benefited. Their lives will be sanctified.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
February 16, 2007

I understood that Swami's omniscience is not just about Him knowing everything but also knowing how to respond, whom to respond to, where to respond, and when to respond because He is aware of the past, present, and future.

Mr. Cosby Powell 
USA



Mr. Cosby Powell is a graduate of the University of Georgia School of Pharmacy in the USA. He practiced pharmacy for several years before working in real estate development. He came to know of Swami in 1974 after seeing a film about Him by Richard Bock. Mr. Powell first visited Swami in 1979 and returned 14 times to see Him from 1979 to 1991. Between 1981 and 1991, Mr. Powell took many pictures and videos of Swami, resulting in 8 videos on Swami and His teachings, available on YouTube and bookstores.

Mr. Powell was fortunate to have many interactions with Swami through the years, including interviews and personal interactions.

Saishwara & Someshwara

THE 17TH OF MAY, 1970 WILL REMAIN ETCHED IN THE HISTORY OF BHARAT (INDIA) IN GOLDEN LETTERS. It is the day when one of the holiest of Lord Shiva shrines, Somnath, was revived with a promise of security by the *Shiva-Shakti Avatar*, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. On that auspicious day, streams of cars and buses arrived at the great Somnath temple on the coast of Saurashtra (India) to witness Swami opening the *Digvijayadwar* (gateway of ultimate victory) of the magnificently renovated temple of the ancient Someshwara shrine.

This ancient temple is situated on the spot sanctified by Vedic rituals. It is the holiest of holy sites—and also lauded in the epic Mahabharata. The place is called Somnath on account of the *Sparsha Linga* in the temple, which was worshiped by Soma (the Moon God), who is the presiding deity of the mind. It is associated with the penance of the Pandavas (the five noble sons of Pandu) and the divine lives of Lord Krishna and his brother Balarama. The temple attracted a broad spectrum of worshippers of Shiva and spiritual seekers, like the Shivayogis, who had specialized in Somavidya, and the Pasupata sect of Shiva worship founded by Lakulisa 1,700 years ago.



Amazing History

History documents that the temple was built and rebuilt on the same sacred spot whenever it became dilapidated due to age or whenever it suffered from depredation. The third of this series of calamities transpired when it was destroyed by the Muhammad of Ghazni, ruler of the Ghaznavid empire, in 1026 A.D. It is said that the fifth rebuilt temple, too, met with the same fate at the hands of the invading rulers of Delhi. On Diwali Day, 1947, when the Indian Army entered the territory of the Nawab of Junagadh, where Somnath is situated, a leader of independent India, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, gave a clarion call, **“We have decided that Somnath should be reconstructed. This is a holy task in which all should participate.”**

The temple was rebuilt entirely with generous donations from devotees. The Maharaja,

Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja, who later became an ardent devotee of Bhagawan Baba, also supported the temple construction. It was he who laid the foundation stone for the temple in 1950. Though the construction was labor- and resource-intensive, he persevered in his mission. Finally, he crowned the beauty of the temple by erecting a mighty tower.

The Sanctity and Sacredness of Somnath

Many Hindu texts detail the most sacred pilgrimage sites of Lord Shiva, along with a guide for visiting the site. The best known were the Mahatmya genre of texts. Of these, Somnath temple tops the list of *jyotirlingas* in the Jnana Samhita—chapter 13 of the Shiva Purana. This oldest known text with a list of *jyotirlingas* elaborates the following:

*Saurashtre Somanatham Cha Srishaile Mallikarjunam
Ujjayinyam Mahakalam-Omkaaram-Amaleshvaram*

At Saurashtra is Somnath and at Srisailam is Mallikarjuna. At Ujjain is Mahakala or Mahakaleshwar, and at Omkareshwar are the *lingas* Omkareshwar and the Amaleshwar or Mamaleshwar.

*Paralyam Vaidyanatham Ca Dakinyam Bhimashankaram
Setubandhe Tu Ramesham Nagesham Darukavane*

At Parli is Vaidyanath, and at Dakini is Bhimashankar. At Setubandha is Rameshwar, and at Darukavana is Nageshwar.

*Varanasyam Tu Vishvesham Tryambakam Gautami-thate
Himaalaye Tu Kedaaram Ghushmesham Ca Shivaalaye*

At Varanasi is Vishwanath, and at the bank of river Gautami or Godavari is Tryambakeshwar. At Himalaya is Kedarnath, and at Shivalaya is Grishneshwara.

*Etaani Jyotirlingani Sayam Pratah Patthen-Narah
Sapta-Janma-Kritam Papam Smaranena Vinashyati*

Those people who meditate upon these *Jyotirlingas* during the evenings and mornings will have their sins committed across seven births destroyed by such remembrance.

The Golden Day

By 1970, the new temple, called Mahameru Prasad, had been completed, and, in place of the original *linga*, the temple priests installed a new stone *linga*. The entrance Gopuram, named after the late Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, who was also the President of the Somnath Trust, was ready for inauguration by Bhagawan. The late Jam Saheb had prayed intensely to Swami that He should inaugurate the Gopuram. Years of prayers and yearning finally yielded fruit, and the Rajmata of Nawanagar was delighted when Baba agreed to travel to Saurashtra (in Gujarat) to fulfill the prayer of the royal family.

It was a landmark event in the history of Somnath that deserves to be inscribed in letters of gold, for **Bhagawan had declared that He would reveal the real Somnath that day.** No wonder there was an immense gathering of eager spiritual aspirants seeking *darshan* not only at Somnath but all along the 290-kilometer route from Jamnagar to the shrine—at Rajkot, Junagadh, and a host of other towns and villages.

Bhagawan opened with a silver key, the lock on the exquisitely carved and embossed door of the imposing *Digvijayadwar* (named after Jam Saheb Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja). Then, He proceeded along the red carpet through the festooned passage to the main temple. Entering the holy

shrine, Swami created 108 golden *bilva* leaves (sacred leaves of Lord Shiva) and 108 golden flowers with a mere wave of His hand. The devotees in His entourage reverentially touched the leaves and flowers. He then showered them on the four-foot-high *Linga* installed in the shrine while a group of Pundits chanted the sacred Vedic mantras.

Touch of the Sparsha Linga

A few minutes later, Baba waved His hand again. Lo and behold! There was a flash of light, and the *Sparsha Linga* of Somnath lay nestled in His hand. According to the Skanda Purana, the *Sparsha Linga* is a *Swayambhu Linga* (formed on its own) 'as bright as the sun' and 'the size of an egg.' **This *linga* of great prowess situated underground was now resting in the divine palm!** That was the authentic Someshwar He had promised to reveal, nestling for untold centuries underground, under the main upper *linga*, away from the hands of desecrators, plunderers, and foreign invaders.

After revitalizing it with His divine touch, He then materialized a silver *peetham* (pedestal) and installed the *linga* thereon. He did not return it to its earlier invisible abode as He had done in Badrinath. Instead, **He declared that from now on, this temple shall ever remain free from any attack. No despoilers from any quarter shall lay their evil hands on this temple. There is no**



Swami in the sanctum sanctorum of the Somnath temple on May 17, 1970.

danger to it anymore. He was therefore making this linga freely available for public *darshan* and worship by devotees.

Bhagawan gave the Sparsha *linga* with the *peetham* to the chief priest so that it may be worshiped uninterrupted henceforth. The devotees gathered were all delighted. Then, with the trustees of the temple, the Collector (government official), and the local officers, Baba went around the temple and unfurled the flag on the 150-foot-high tower over the shrine. Thousands of devotees expressed their reverence and gratitude to Baba as He gave *darshan*.

The word 'Somnath' can also be understood as *Sa* (with) + *Uma* (Goddess Parvati) + *Nath* (Lord Shiva), which is indicative of the

Ardhanareeshwara (Left side of the body is Goddess Parvati and the right side is Shiva) or *Shiva-Shakti* that Swami represents. *Jyotirlinga* can be understood as *Jyoti* (light) + *Linga*, which means the *linga* of light! Is it any surprise that Prof. Kasturi records the appearance of the *Sparsha Linga* as a streak of blinding light? Indeed, the devotees were blessed on that holy day to witness both—the *Jyotirlinga* and the *Someswara Linga*!!

How Sainath Took Jam Saheb to Somnath

Swami indeed arrived at Somnath only after Maharaja Jam Saheb passed away. However, He traveled with this noble devotee to Somnath in a mysterious manner! Before Jam Saheb was introduced to Swami in 1965,

he suffered from multiple serious ailments. The leading members of the medical fraternity had lost all hope for his recovery. Just when the family felt all was lost, the family guru, 'Guru Maharaj,' came to Jam Saheb and presented him with a picture of Swami, saying, "My job as the Guru is to lead you to God. This is God incarnated on earth. Pray to Him, and all will be well."

With complete faith in the words of his Guru, Jam Saheb began to pray to the picture. Barely a few hours passed when a devotee of Sathya Sai Baba arrived from Puttaparthi. Handing over a few packets of *vibhuti*, he

said, "Swami has sent *Prasadam* for you." This action was astounding because, obviously, Swami had given him the *vibhuti* long before Jam Saheb had even started praying to Him! Needless to say, he recovered and braved the travel to Puttaparthi to express his gratitude to Swami.

In the interview that ensued, Swami blessed Jam Saheb and asked him, "*What do you want?*"

"Swami, I know my time is up, and my life is ebbing away. I request you to give me an extension of time to complete my responsibilities."

Swami replied, "*I shall give you one year. Complete all that you need to and be ready.*"

Exactly one year to that day, Jam Saheb left his mortal coil. Minutes after his passing away, a message arrived from Swami: "*Tell Rajmata [his wife] that I have personally taken the soul of Jam Saheb to Somnath temple.*"

Many months later, Swami traveled to Bombay and graced the residence of the Rajmata of Jamnagar. Rajmata's daughter, who was in the dining room while Swami sat in the adjoining living room, had a fleeting thought, "Swami said that He took my father's soul to Somnath. I wish He would give me some confirmation about this."

Just then, the door opened, and Swami was standing in the doorway. However, when the daughter looked at Him, unmistakably, it was the face of her father! He smiled, and her father's face



Rajmata Gulabkunverba Saheba,
wife of the Jam Saheb, with Swami.




IMAGE COURTESY: SOMNATH.ORG

stayed on for a few moments before reverting to Swami's smiling countenance. The confirmation was instantaneous, and she was elated that Sainath had indeed taken her beloved father to Somnath!

The devotees that had gathered in the Somnath temple on May 17, 1970, burst out in exuberant jubilation, "Jai Bolo Bhagawan Sri

Sathya Sai Baba Ji Ki Jai (Victory to Lord Sri Sathya Sai Baba)." Let us also celebrate and be grateful for the blessings of the supreme Lord Sai, whom the Yogis have worshiped, whom devotees have yearned for, and who has touched our lives too!

Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya 
INDIA



Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya comes from a family that has been devoted to Swami from early 1960s. He completed his Bachelor of Science from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, receiving a gold medal. He also holds an M.S. (Chemistry) and an MBA from the SSSIHL. He worked for Radio Sai from 2007 to 2021. Aravind has authored five books on Swami. He was Swami's photographer for nearly five years. Aravind has dedicated his life to serving Swami and sharing His teachings through various media channels. He is presently part of the SSSIO Digital Media team and mentors the Young Adults.

Keep On Trying

November 12, 1971
at 9 A.M.

To Hislop,

To try to meditate, to try to become quiet, to try to relax, keep trying. Every positive effort that you make, is not in vain. Every single brick added to a temple made of brick brings that temple closer to completion. So keep trying and one day all of a sudden you will pierce the lower realms of your mind and enter into contemplation and you will be able to say: "Yes, I know, I have seen. Now I know fully the path that I am on." Keep trying. You have to start somewhere. The self you cannot speak of, you can only try to think about it, if you care to, in one way. Feel your mind body and emotions, and know.

With Blessings

Baba

(Note from Sai Baba hand-delivered by messenger to Jack Hislop at the ashram)

To Hislap.

12. 11. 71.

at 9. A.M.

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if you care to, in one way: feel your mind
body and emotions, and know.

With Blessings

Baba

LOVE IN ACTION



EL SALVADOR Health is Wealth

On November 17, 2023, SSSIO volunteers in El Salvador organized a health camp at the Cantón Las Flores School Center in Jayaque. The camp provided healthcare services to the local community while providing young volunteers with the opportunity to grow spiritually and also gain practical experience in the field of healthcare. Health professionals provided medical consultations to assess the general health status of patients. The young adults volunteered to do the screening and physical check-ups by taking blood pressure, body temperature, and weight of patients. They also assisted in the distribution of medications prescribed by the doctors, lovingly explaining and giving clear instructions to the patients on how to take the prescribed medicines.



INDONESIA Service to Man is Service to God

On January 20 and 21, 2024, the Sai Study Group Lampung in Indonesia distributed 41 wheelchairs to physically disabled individuals who could not afford them. Since 20 of these individuals were unable to even come to the venue, Sai volunteers delivered 20 wheelchairs to their doorsteps. This initiative was supported by the Sai Study Group Bandung and Saatnya Aksi Ikhlas (SAI). The volunteers committed to visiting the recipients every month to ensure that the wheelchairs were in good condition and to provide other necessities like diapers, medications, and groceries.



For more stories of loving service by volunteers from around the world, please visit the Sri Sathya Sai Universe website: <https://saiuniverse.sathyasai.org>



THAILAND

Act of Gratitude: Donating Blood

In His discourse on January 1, 2004, Bhagawan Baba says, “...every drop of your blood is the contribution of your parents. You owe your existence in this world to the love of your parents. Hence, whenever there is a need for blood donation, you should come forward to donate your blood. Thereby fulfill your obligation to your parents and society.”

In line with this divine directive, on January 21, 2024, the SSSIO volunteers in Thailand partnered with several local organizations to conduct a blood donation drive in Bangkok. More than 200 people enthusiastically participated in this camp and donated life-saving blood.



USA

“Angels of Light” to the Rescue

The White Memorial Hospital in downtown Los Angeles was abuzz with love and service on December 3, 2023, as members of the SSSIO-USA Pacific South Region (Region 8) enthusiastically hosted a vision camp for low-income people who were deprived of proper vision care. The 4-hour event was organized in collaboration with the Lions Club of downtown Los Angeles.

Venturing out after a hiatus of a few years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, more than 35 SSSIO members, including Young Adults and eight optometrists from the White Memorial Hospital, volunteered at the camp, providing free vision tests to about 125 individuals. The patients were delighted to receive the correct prescription glasses. They also received food packets containing rice, beans, pasta, and nuts, which the SSSIO volunteers had lovingly packed.

The recipients had tears of joy as they could see more clearly after many years of suffering from blurred eyesight. Some called the volunteers “Angels of Light,” expressing their heartfelt gratitude for the priceless gift of clear vision. The SSSIO volunteers, in turn, were grateful for the opportunity to serve and assist in improving their precious eyesight. It was indeed an ‘eye-opener’ on not taking one’s eyesight for granted.



SSSIO ZONE 2B



ARGENTINA • BOLIVIA • BRAZIL • CHILE • COLOMBIA • ECUADOR • PARAGUAY
PERU • URUGUAY • VENEZUELA

ARGENTINA

1948

Adelina del Carril de Güiraldes, wife of the famous Argentine novelist and poet Ricardo Güiraldes, met Sri Sathya Sai Baba at the invitation of an Indian Maharani.



Sathya Sai Center, Uriarte

1979

Mr. Ananda Giri, Ms. Monica Zocolosky, and Ms. Marta Basan traveled to Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami blessed Ms. Monica with an interview in which He told her to start a Sai Center in Buenos Aires.

1980

The first Sai Centers were founded in Buenos Aires and Córdoba.

1985

A new Sathya Sai Center was opened in Córdoba with a multifaith stupa similar to the one in Prasanthi Nilayam. Sai Centers also sprung up in La Rioja, Catamarca, Tucumán, Santa Fe, La Pampa, Entre Ríos and Chubut.

Argentine television aired Richard Bock's film, *Aura of Divinity*, every three months in different parts of the country. Discussion groups were organized to share Sai Baba's teachings.

1986

The first Coordinating Committee for the Sai Organization of Argentina was established with Hugo Baldi as president

1983

The first Argentinian group traveled to Prasanthi Nilayam.



Sathya Sai Center, Córdoba

1987

The Sathya Sai Baba Foundation of Argentina was established to assist with myriad service activities. The Central Council of Latin America was created at a meeting in Buenos Aires, where Mr. Leonardo Gutter and Mr. Nassin Michaan were nominated as Central Coordinators.

Mr. Ricardo, a partner in a firm specializing in publishing accounting books, was blessed with an interview in Puttaparthi. He began publishing Sai books in Argentina.

1989

A large public meeting was held at the Obras Sanitarias Stadium in Buenos Aires to share Swami's message and love. The event featured popular artists and musical stars, including famous songwriter/singer Alejandro Lerner and actress/singer Marilina Ross.

1992

The Central Council of Latin America established 17 Sai Centers and 46 Sai Groups in Argentina and Coordinating Committees in many South American countries.

The Sri Sathya Sai Baba Foundation of Argentina started a Girls' Sai Home on Helguera Street and added a second building in 1993 on Costa Rica Street for use as a Center to undertake service activities.

1993

Land was purchased in Recreo Santa Fe by Ernesto Masin and Albina Keppel and generously donated to Sri Sathya Sai Baba Foundation of Argentina for service activities. Since then, a service house has served the community of native people—teaching SSEHV, providing clothes and food, providing medical care, hosting knitting workshops, sewing, baking, etc.



Serving the community



SSEHV Activities

1998

The first Central Council of Argentina was established with Jorge Hadad of Córdoba as its president, along with 6 Regional Coordinating Committees.

2000

The Institute of Education in Human Values was created to establish new Sai Schools and administer existing ones.

2001

SSSIO members opened the Mahatma Gandhi School in March. (Argentina prohibits using the names of living persons. Hence, the school could not be named after Baba.)



Mahatma Gandhi School

2004

A hall was built in Tucumán, Las Talitas, for service, including the distribution of food and clothes, conducting monthly pediatric clinics, and SSEHV classes. The service continues to this day.

Public Meetings continue to be held, as instructed by Baba.

2005

Over 200 Sathya Sai books were published in Spanish.

Sathya Sai devotees lovingly initiated regular service to the residents of Florencio Varela, an extremely impoverished neighborhood in Buenos Aires, providing food and healthcare thrice a week.

2009

The Sai Baba Foundation began to offer services at schools, providing school supplies and food hampers, which continues to date.

2010

The SSSIO collaborated in the construction of the San Ignacio school of the Guarani community. It also provided regular supplies and meals, which continue to date.



Public Meeting, Buenos Aires



Books at Uriarte Center



Service to residents of Florencio Varela

2012

20th anniversary of the service at SSSIO's Noccan Kani House (located 20 kilometers from Santa Fe, near a settlement of about 2,000 aboriginal people), where medical care is provided bimonthly along with biweekly meals, SSEHV classes, and distribution of other essentials.

2018

Representatives from SSEHV programs in Ecuador, Colombia, and Argentina participated in The International Congress on Education for Character on June 13–14, jointly organized by The University of Navarra, Spain, and Austral University, Argentina.

2019

A public conference titled 'Human values, keys to change our lives towards a better world' was organized at the San Martín Cultural Center by the SSSIO in Buenos Aires. More than 130 people attended.

Weekly radio program from Rosario radio station completed ten years of regular radio shows on the life and teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The station recorded 555 inspiring programs, along with 274 interviews.

2021

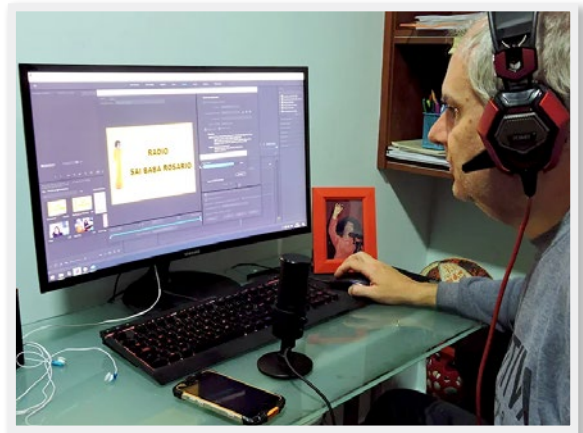
SSSIO volunteers built a classroom, a kitchen, a dining room, and a bathroom for a small indigenous community of "Pindoty-I" in the Misiones province, also providing electricity and drinking water.

2022

More than 200 people attended a public meeting in the city of Pinamar, province of Buenos Aires, eager to hear about the life and message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.



Celebrating at Noccan Kani House



Weekly radio program, Rosario



Community Center at Pindoty-I

Where is Sathya Sai Baba Now?




ONE DAY, I WAS IN A DEPARTMENT STORE, COMING DOWN THE ESCALATOR, WHEN IT SUDDENLY STOPPED. I fell face-down and

injured my nose. Blood started flowing down my nose and stained my clothes. As I was in this difficult situation, out of nowhere, a young woman appeared. She was dressed in plain brown attire and advised me to hold my nose in a particular way to help stop the bleeding. She said, "Your nose is broken in three places. Just hold it like this until you reach the hospital." I thanked her, and she left. I reached the hospital and got first aid immediately. After a day of waiting, they finally X-rayed my head and said, "Your nose is broken in three places." Now, I wonder who could diagnose what had happened to my nose better and faster than an X-ray machine with no equipment whatsoever!

I firmly believe it was none other than Baba!

We have to remember that God can do anything. He can take any form He chooses.

He has come to my aid in many ways, just like that over the years. I have had many different experiences where He has revealed who and what He is. It can be any form—He can be the stars; He can be the person



“We can experience Him everywhere. There’s not a time when we don’t, and there is no place where He is not, no matter what the situation.”

next to you. He’s unlimited, and we try to limit Him with our minds only because we don’t know any better. **But when we find Him in our heart, then we experience unlimited love, and that is what He is to me, pure love.** But this understanding has taken time to dawn. It has arrived as a culmination of a beautiful journey.

Beginnings in the Church

I think I went regularly to Church even before I was born! As a child, missing Sunday school was not an option. Rain, snow, sleet, and storms could not stop me. Every Sunday, I was there and knew that there was a loving, protective power present. We called Him Jesus at that time. Though I was raised as a Protestant Christian, the concept of Jesus that we learned, in my opinion, was not complete. It was lacking in depth and missing His universal love, compassion, and forgiveness.

As I sat quietly and searched inward, I realized that there had to be more. I some-

how always felt that we are all connected in some unique way, shape, and form. As I searched for the basis of that feeling, I, too, had the usual questions that many young people have, like “Why is there suffering? Why is there hurt and harm?” I think that is what led me to Eastern philosophies and the study of the incomprehensible law of *karma*.

The Search and Discovery

We were a small group of spiritual seekers in Brooklyn, New York, who started sincerely seeking God. We were explorers of philosophies. That was when two of our members in that group returned from India with amazing stories. They had met a ‘miracle man,’ and they shared their profound experiences. As a group, we knew by then that God could be in any form, anywhere. We just had to find Him someplace on the earth. I thought, “Oh! Could this really be possible? Could Jesus have come back?”

It was divine will and providence that I laid my hands on a copy of Howard Murphet's classic book, *Sai Baba: Man of Miracles*. While reading it, an amazing miracle occurred. **I saw a little Baba and a little Jesus! Right on the book! They graciously merged into one.** It was then that I knew for sure that we were on the right track.

About that time, many more people in California came back from India with stories of a holy man who could do all kinds of things, from making sacred talismans like rings, pendants, and idols of God to raising the dead! **But what impressed me most was that He transformed the heart and did not ask for money.** I think that was one of the key distinctions, and it caught our attention. Here was a person who was giving unconditional love like Jesus did, free, at no charge!

Sai Alone Suffices

It was love at first sight when I saw Swami, and soon, we visited Swami whenever we could. In the early 1970s, when the Poornachandra Auditorium was being built, Swami taught me a profound lesson. While visiting Swami, we got the opportunity to

participate in the construction of the hall. Dr. Hislop oversaw the work of the group of devotees from the USA.

That was a time when a lot of different gurus were visiting the United States, and we would visit them and attend the spiritual meetings they held. We got to know of one such guru coming to the USA after New Year's Day. I began conversing about this with Reverend Mary. Reverend Mary and her husband had come with us the first time that we went to India. But afterward, only Mary would come with our small group. Even as we were discussing this topic, suddenly, a hush fell around us. There was pin-drop silence, but at that time, the topic was so important that we leaned toward each other and continued talking in whispers!

Just as we turned around, Swami was right there! He was standing near us, resplendent in all His beauty, wearing a bright orange robe. As we focused our entire attention on Him, **He looked into our eyes and said, "I am enough for you."** Then, He left us and proceeded to walk over to the Australian group. Mary and I looked at each other and said, "I guess that's the answer!"



See Him in All, All in Him

I held a high position at work, and unconsciously, it led to a sense of self-importance. That expressed itself in making my clients wait for me to show that I was important. When people would come in for appointments, I wouldn't see them right away; I would make them wait.

The next time I was in Prasanthi Nilayam, when we were standing outside, Swami told us to come in that morning. When we reached there on time, we were kept standing and waiting. We waited and waited for quite some time, wondering why Swami was not calling us in. After a long wait, a *sevadal* (volunteer) came and asked, "Did Swami call you?" I said, "Yes, He did!" He rushed back, and finally, Swami came to the door and called us inside. I had learned my lesson.

After that, when I got home, nobody had to wait for me anymore. If they had an appointment, I was available right away. It was another among many lessons He lovingly taught me. No reprimand, no stern action! Just by example. That is His grace for all of us!



Ms. Anne Sohani first met Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in 1973 in Whitefield. He allowed her group to follow Him to Puttaparthi a few days later. Swami permitted them to start the Brooklyn Sai Center that year. She was appointed to the American Council of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization when the Council was formed in 1975. She served on the Council from 1975–1995. Anne held numerous SSSIO positions over the years, including serving as the first Regional President of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the SSSIO-USA. She was an SSE teacher at the Brooklyn Sai Center from 1987 to 2003. Her husband Bisu and she were blessed to stay with Swami six months a year during 2005–2010. She merged with Swami on November 15, 2019.

Sathya Sai's Address Today

The last time we visited India after *Mahasamadhi*, He was kind enough to give us an experience of His omnipresence. I don't know how to describe it, but suddenly, we saw that He was in our hearts, in the trees, in the buildings, in everything around us, above us, below us, and within us. And at that moment, after knowing Him for over forty years, I finally realized what He had been telling us all along—***find Me in your heart, find Me in your heart.***

Where is Swami right now? Right at this moment, **Swami is everywhere, including my heart and yours.** Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita that He resides in the hearts of all beings (*ishvara sarvabhutanam hriddese arjuna tishthati*). We can experience Him everywhere. There's not a time when we don't, and there is no place where He is not, no matter what the situation.

Ms. Anne Sohani 
USA

*Based on a talk given by the author.
View the full video [here](#).*

from the International Sai Young Adults

In this edition, as the Sai Young Adults (YAs) leaders prepare for the upcoming YA Leaders retreat in Greece, we take a moment to look back at two inspiring personal journeys of our YAs. These individuals triumphed over obstacles to attend YA retreats, and Swami's guidance played a crucial role. Also, with Maha Shivaratri approaching, our subcommittees are developing an exhilarating musical video. Additionally, we bring you another captivating installment of the InSAIde Scoop series, delving into the theme "Who Am I and Who is *Maya*?"

Updates from Around the World

Preparations are underway for the **SSSIO International YA Leaders Retreat 2024, themed "Make your Role Roar," to be held from July 26 to 29, 2024, in Athens, Greece.** In our YA Reflection section below, two Young Adults from Argentina (Zone 2B) and South Africa (Zone 9) share their experiences from previous YA retreats. Watch for updates on the retreat's agenda and activities as we prepare for this exciting Greek rendezvous in the summer! More details to follow soon.

On March 8, in celebration of Maha Shivaratri 2024, collaborative efforts between the Ocean of Music and Sri Sathya Sai International Young Adults Veda Program subcommittees will culminate in the release of an exhilarating musical video featuring Vedic mantras and Stotras. **Watch for the unveiling of this musical extravaganza on all our YA social media platforms in sync with the festival.**

Follow the @saiyoungadults accounts on social media

 Facebook  Instagram  Telegram  Threads  X (Twitter)

 Spotify

 Email



Sai Young Adults
<https://sathyasai.org/ya>
yacoordinator@sathyasai.org



Mr. Kashir Singh
South Africa



God's Delays are Gateways to Greater Joy

It is said that God's delays are not His denials. Most of the time, **the delay is actually a wait for the perfect time because Swami wants to give us the best.** When we have that faith and hold on patiently, the fruits are always sweet.

I was in the second year of my master's degree, and for a host of reasons, it seemed unlikely that I would get the chance to attend the World Young Adults Festival in 2016. Due to health reasons, I was away from the university for the majority of my first year, so I was behind in my studies. Being a student also meant that I did not have the financial resources to travel internationally. Regardless of these obstacles, I yearned to attend the 2016 World Young Adults Festival, and every night, I would go to bed praying and crying to Swami to please help me overcome these obstacles.

However, despite my prayers and deep yearning, the likelihood of taking time off from my studies or being able to afford travel costs to attend the 2016 World Young Adults Festival seemed very bleak. This dejection was further compounded when I had a dream of Swami telling me that the time was not right! However, I remained resolute and kept praying for a miracle with faith that Swami would answer my prayers.

About ten days before the World Young Adults Festival commenced, I had another dream of Swami. He told me that it was time to book my flights, and I woke up immediately from my dream in the middle of the night. I logged in to book the tickets, and to my surprise, the flights were cheaper than they were nine days ago! I could not believe my good fortune and was overcome with joy and excitement. Even as I was booking my ticket, I remembered that there was still the hurdle of taking time off from my studies at the university.

I began preparing a proposal to present to my supervisor so that he would allow me to take some time off. At our next meeting, just as I was about to present my proposal, my supervisor turned to me and said that he was taking his son on a holiday and that if I needed to take time off, now would be the ideal time! Imagine my thrill when his holiday dates coincided precisely with my 'holy day' dates of the 2016 World Young Adults Festival! Needless to say, by Swami's divine will, everything fell into place, and ten days later, I was on my way to attend the 2016 World Young Adults Festival.

At times, we may not be able to see the big picture and may not understand why certain delays or misfortunes are happening. But in these dire times, I have learned to surrender to Swami and trust in His divine will.



Ms. Natalia Uehara
Brazil



“Test is My Taste”

Reflecting on this profound phrase, “Test is My Taste,” by Swami, I’ve come to realize how it perfectly mirrors my recent journey, especially in the lead-up to a significant Sathya Sai Conference in Mexico. This phrase has been my guiding light through a series of personal and professional challenges, reminding me that every hurdle is an opportunity to experience the divine.

August 2023 was a period marked by trials. I faced the fear of losing my job while simultaneously moving to a new home with my partner. I was also recovering from recent eye surgery and nursing a broken foot. Amidst these personal challenges, I was actively involved in leading various initiatives for Young Adults in the SSSIO, navigating challenges that arose within the group. These obstacles, I began to realize, were not just hindrances but also Swami’s way of testing my resilience and equanimity.

One of the most daunting tasks was obtaining a visa to Mexico. The application process required proof of financial stability, a seemingly impossible condition given my recent unemployment. Anxiety and uncertainty clouded my thoughts, but a deep intuition and unwavering determination to attend the conference kept me going. Miraculously, as resources and support began to appear out of nowhere, I was reminded of a thought shared by Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya in his blog: “God tests us to elevate our spiritual growth and maturity; those who endure find peace and rest in life.” This became increasingly evident as assistance poured in from various devotees, aiding in the visa application and travel arrangements. Funds materialized just when they were most needed, bolstering my faith in divine providence.

Despite the support, there were moments of profound discouragement. Preparing for the trip felt like a Herculean task. At such times, I just kept telling myself to proceed ‘one step at a time.’ Upon arriving at the conference, all lingering doubts simply faded away. Meeting fellow devotees from around the world in person, whom I had previously only seen through Zoom, was inspiring. **The conference felt like a gathering of a hundred souls united in the mission to share Swami’s love. The collective energy of the attendees was jubilant. This experience reignited my inner motivation and underscored the importance of being in the company of fellow devotees.**

Our involvement in the organization often intertwines with the personal and professional aspects of our lives. These experiences not only strengthen relationships but can also pivotally influence our destinies. The energy and vibrations from those we encounter equip us with the skills, competencies,

and inner peace needed to persevere on the spiritual path.

Now, more than ever, I understand that **every test is indeed an opportunity to taste the divine grace of God.** Instead of perceiving tragedy, I see opportunity. Instead of resenting the weight of responsibilities, I feel grateful for the pressure, for it signifies elevation to higher spiritual heights by the divine. I remind myself of what Mr. Kishor quoted from *“Sri Sathya Sai Anandadayi, Journey with Sai,”* a book by Mrs.

Karunamba Ramamurthy, an ardent devotee of Swami from the early years, **“I am starting a Seva Samithi. Members who perform selfless service will be liberated from the cycle of birth and death; this extends to their descendants as well. However, the test will be severe. Let’s see how many withstand and emerge victorious.”**

Reflecting on this, I embrace each challenge as an opportunity to come closer to God.

InSAIde Scoop Podcast Series

Series 2022, Episode 4:
“Who Am I and Who is Maya?” featuring Mr. Vishwar Ravichandran

The podcast delves into the concept of *Maya*, describing it as the illusion where ‘what seems to be real is unreal, and what seems to be unreal is real.’ *Maya* is compared to a dream or mirror, and they emphasize the idea that the world is an illusion. **They explore the teachings of non-duality, stating that dualities are unreal, while non-duality recognizes the oneness of everything.**

Mr. Vishwar Ravichandran shares insights from Swami, explaining that the body is like a water bubble and the mind a mad monkey. Emotions are temporary guideposts, not meant to be held onto. The conversation leads to the understanding that our true Selves are one—the indi-

visible eternal Atma—and our essence is love. **Swami encourages the expression of pure, unconditional love as the true purpose of life.**

The discussion also touches on the five affirmations Swami provided for daily chanting, emphasizing the realization that “I am God” and the importance of aligning with this truth amid life’s challenges and illusions like social media standards. They acknowledge the ongoing journey of self-discovery and staying connected to the real Self amid the play of *Maya*.

You can listen to the full episode here:

[InSAIde Scoop Episode 4–YouTube](#)





Demid | Group 1 | Russia



Sati | Group 2 | Russia



Lena | Pre SSE | Russia





I'm grateful to Swami for my spiritual path, for the chance to know myself and learn about the world.

SSE classes transform me into a better person. I learn a lot from them and they help me in my life.

Katya F | Group 4 | Russia

I'm happy that Swami guides me on my spiritual path and that He helps me in the time of troubles.

SSE classes give me the knowledge which can help me in my life. They make me more confident and happy.

Veronika B | Group 3 | Russia



I am grateful to Swami for the whole world, for a wonderful kind family and for showing me the spiritual path!

In SSE lessons I learn how to act in different situations in a righteous way. They give good experience and useful knowledge. Om Sri Sai Ram!

Maria O | Group 2 | Russia



I'm happy I have joined Swami's Organization. He helps me explore the spiritual world.

The SSE classes give me knowledge useful for life.

Arina K | Group 3 | Russia

I'm thankful to Swami for good company, for this world, for my friendly family and that I have met Him.

SSE classes give me spiritual knowledge which I practice in my life.

Alyona O | Group 3 | Russia



Upcoming SSSIO Online Events

SSSIO has been conducting online events to share Swami's love, message, and works with everyone around the world. Hundreds of thousands of people have been touched through these events streamed on the sathyasai.org/live page.

Please visit sathyasai.org/events for further details on scheduled events, local dates and timings.

Date of Online Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
March 8, 2024	Friday	Maha Shivaratri
April 13-14, 2024	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
April 24, 2024	Wednesday	Aradhana Mahotsavam



[Streaming on sathyasai.org/live](https://sathyasai.org/live)



Stay in touch with SSSIO news and activities, by visiting the SSSIO websites and following/subscribing to the various communications channels below. **Click on each icon or name to visit the site.**



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- [Sri Sathya Sai Universe](#)
- [Sri Sathya Sai Humanitarian Relief](#)
- [Sri Sathya Sai Young Adults](#)
- [Sri Sathya Sai Education](#)
- [Healthy Living](#)



This is a sacred Shivaratri, an auspicious night. From now onwards, there should not be any inauspicious feelings entering the heart. Contemplate on the auspiciousness of this sacred Shivaratri day and strive to merge in the embodiment of auspiciousness. On this day, I shall pardon all your mistakes committed knowingly or unknowingly. With immense bliss, I confer Grace on you so that you may sanctify your hearts.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

March 7, 1978



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never