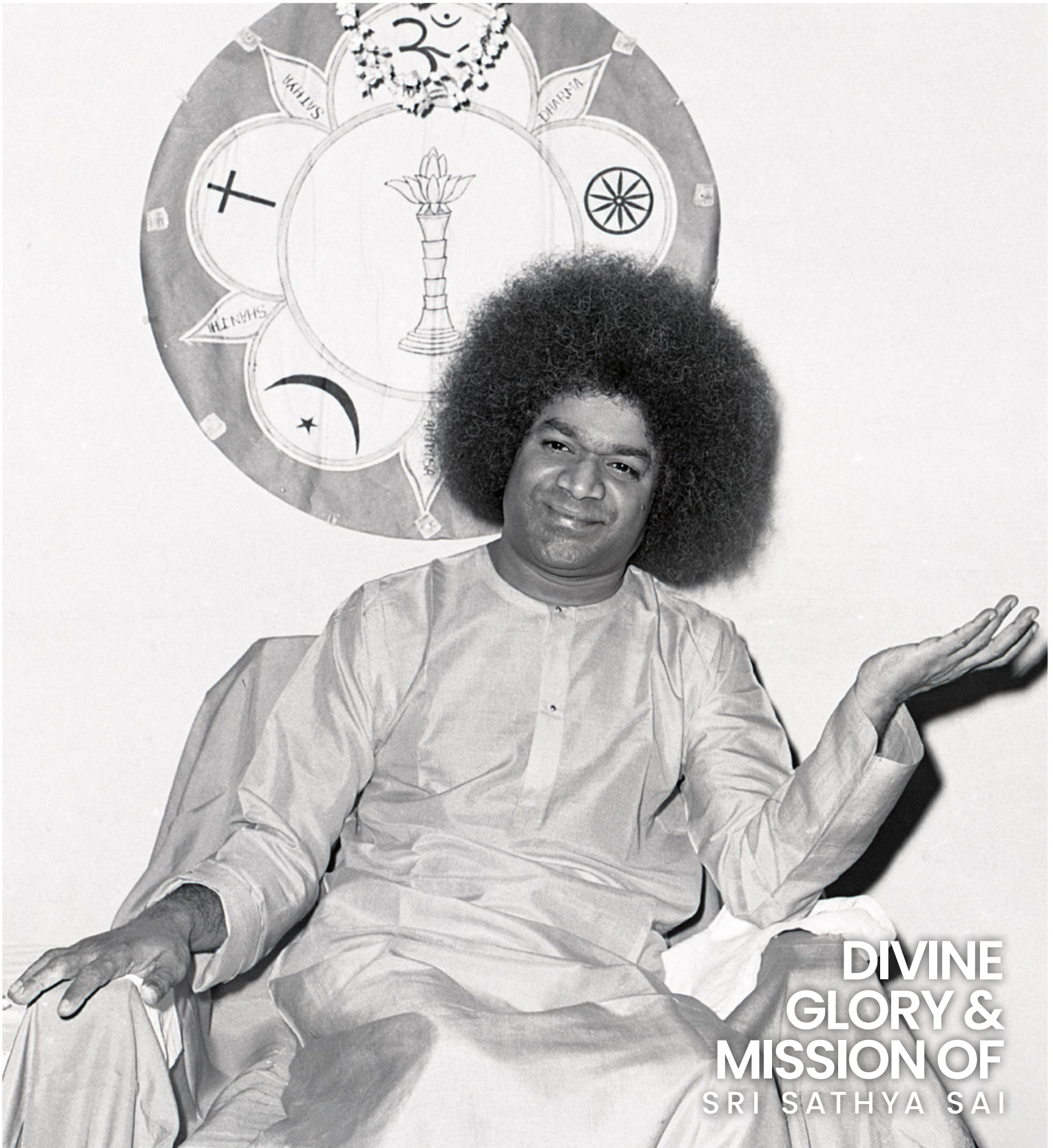


SATHYA SAI  
THE  
**ETERNAL**  
COMPANION



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2  
FEBRUARY 2024



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



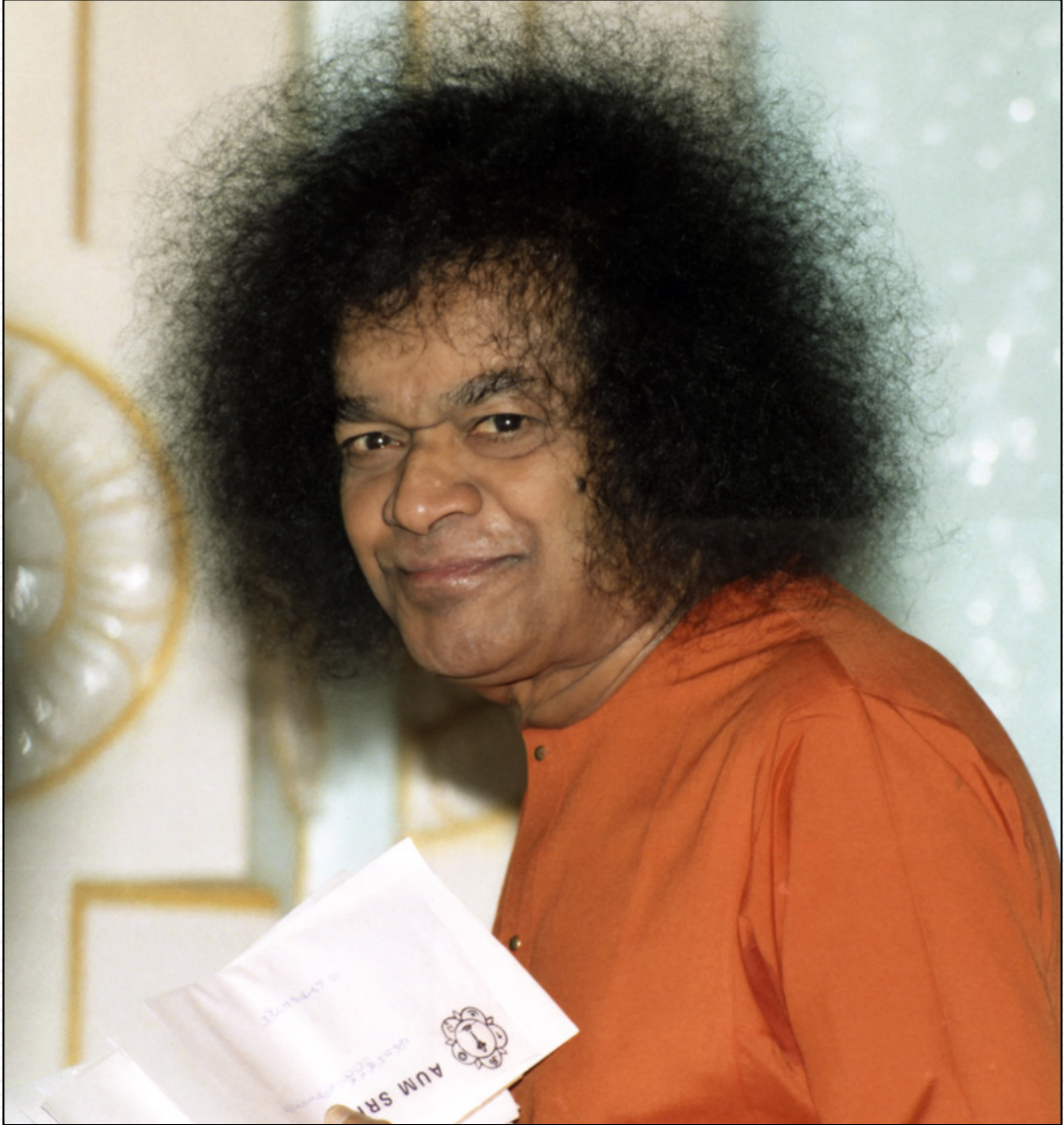


Youth should turn their minds away from distractions and concentrate on practicing human values. I always advise people to avoid wasting time, energy, food, and money. Young people should take up a job or profession and start earning money. They should know how to use it properly. Food is God. Time is God. So, you should take care not to waste them. Be good, see good, hear good, talk good, and do good. The basis for such discipline is to think good, which entails control of the mind. You must perform all actions as an offering to God. Meditation on God is one of the steps for achieving steadiness of mind.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
July 18, 1997

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DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO  
**BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA**







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# Everything is

# BRAHMAN

BHAJA GOVINDAM-PART 2

The scriptures say that one should start spiritual practices early in life so that one can use the body (which is especially strong in youth) in the service of God and the senses for the contemplation of God to attain God. *“Start Early, Drive Slowly, Reach Safely,”* says Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, emphasizing to focus on God early in life. **He says that the youth are the future of the Sai organizations and future citizens of the world.** So, they should be men and women of character. They should roar like lions and assert their Godhood.

## Fixing the Mind on Swami

Included in this issue is a beautiful divine discourse that Swami delivered on July 28, 2007, where He emphasizes that everything is divine and that the way to realize that truth is by practicing the five human values—*Sathya* (Truth), *Dharma* (Right Conduct), *Shanti* (Peace), *Prema* (Love) and *Ahimsa* (Nonviolence). He says that it is the mind which is responsible for our bondage or liberation, depending on whether we turn it toward the world or God. **Swami further assures that if one remains steady and keeps the mind still even**

**for a short period of 11 seconds, one can attain Self-realization!**

Swami also teaches us how to be happy and peaceful—*“Bend the body, mend the senses, and end the mind.”* Good company is what helps in this process, as elaborated in last month’s editorial, Ladder to Liberation. Swami promises that if one takes time and thinks of Him, He will appear before us and talk to us.

Further elucidating this truth, in this issue, Bhagawan’s letter to Charles Penn states that one experiences the presence of God when the name is remembered and the form is recollected. The name and the form of God are inseparable, and one should be steady in this *sadhana* of contemplation to win peace in life.

This issue contains a heartfelt sharing by Ms. Ellesha Wanigasekera from the USA on how she overcame all her troubles using the name and form of Swami as a sword and a shield, with ‘the army of God behind her.’

## Taking the One Step Toward Swami

Inspired by Swami’s promise to respond to every step taken toward Him, the



devotees from Australia have embarked on a wonderful initiative called '1 Million Steps To Swami' (1MSTS). It was launched on April 24, 2023, and concludes on November 23, 2025, Swami's glorious landmark 100th Birthday. **Swami says that one must think of God always, at all times, and everywhere** (*Sarvada Sarvakaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintana*). The participants or *sadhakas* take over 1,000 conscious steps daily while thinking of Swami, singing bhajans, *namasmarana* (reciting God's name), listening to discourses, etc., for nearly 1,000 days to reach a total of a million steps toward Swami. One could also listen to podcasts or the *Geeta Vahini* Satsang that our Young Adults have actively engaged in, while walking, jogging, or running. The steps taken to conduct service activities like serving flood victims, distributing blankets, etc., may also be counted toward the goal.

Ms. Linda Fonseca, who started her spiritual life as an SSE student in Venezuela, is another contributor to this issue. She highlights how she experienced Swami's presence everywhere and at all times. "God listens and shows His presence when we

practice patience and perseverance," she concludes.

Similarly, the article by Ms. Faith Hollander Braverman illustrates how the yearning of the heart always draws divine grace. She narrates her unique, memorable experiences in the early years of her visit to Swami in the 1970s, when she took one step toward Swami, and Swami took a hundred steps toward her.

**The ultimate goal of all *sadhana* and *Satsang*, of course, is to realize one's innate divinity and the divinity of everything that exists.** One should remember the teachings of the great *Advaitic* master, Adi Shankaracharya, who summarized all the scriptures and Vedanta into a pithy phrase, '*Brahma Sathyam Jagan-mithya, Jeevo Brahmaiva Na Paraha.*' (*Brahman* is the only truth; the apparent, seen world is illusory; there is ultimately no difference between *Brahman* and the individual Self, the *Atma*.)

### Explaining the Same Eternal Message in Different Ways

Swami explains this message in the 1973 Summer Showers through the Bhaja Govindam shloka:

*Bhagawan writes the original Sanskrit shloka in Telugu script and also composes a shloka in Telugu with the same meaning. Both have been presented here in His Divine handwriting.*

త్వయ సయ చాన్యత్రైకో విష్ణుః  
వ్యర్థం కుప్యసి మ యస్మిహి యోగి  
భవ సమచిత్త స్వకృత త్వం  
వాంఛ స్వచా నా ద్భవ విష్ణుత్వమ్

*Twayi mayi chaanyatraiko Vishnuh,  
Vyartham kupyasi mayyasahishnuh  
Bhava samachithhah sarvatra twam,  
Vanchasyachiradyadi Vishnutwam*

నీలో నాలో ఏ బరెయక శిష్యువె  
నుపికతొ నా కోపము వ్యర్థము  
ఎల్లద సమమై ఉల్లంబుంతు  
అపదే అనుభవమగు విష్ణుత్వము.

*Neelo Naalo nijamoka Vishnuve  
Opikaleni nee kopamu vyarthamu  
Ellada samamai ullambunte  
Apude anubhavamagu Vishnutwamu*

In you, in Me, and in other places too, there is but One all-pervading Reality. Being impatient, you become angry with Me unnecessarily. If you want to attain enlightenment (*Vishnutwam*), be equal-minded under all circumstances. Seek Lord Govinda!





## *The Supreme Lord dwells in the hearts of all living beings.*

Here, the important thing is to realize that there is only one Reality and that is Vishnu—in us, in everyone else, in everything, and in all places. Here, Vishnu does not refer to the deity with four arms but the eternal, all-pervading Reality called by numerous names like Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, Mother, Jesus, Allah, Buddha, and so on. We also call it *Brahman* or *Atman*, the Supreme consciousness or Self.

People try to search for God in temples and distant places. The scriptures advise us not to 'seek' God but to 'see' God in everything. In the scriptural text, Vishnu Sahasranaama (1,008 names adoring Lord Vishnu), **it is clearly stated that the whole universe is nothing but a manifestation of the all-pervading *Brahman*. It is sheer ignorance to go in search of God in places outside.** The Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 18: 61) delineates the correct address of God:

*ishvarah sarva-bhutanam  
hrid-deshe arjuna tishthati  
bhamayan sarva-bhutani  
yantrarudhani mayay*

*The Supreme Lord dwells in the hearts of all living beings, O Arjuna. According to their karmas, He directs the*

*wanderings of the souls, who are seated on a machine made of material energy.*

Swami, too, gave me the same answer when I asked Him for God's address, saying that the heart is God's dwelling place. He operates everything by His power. We are all puppets, and He is the puppeteer. Swami illustrates this by the incident of Queen Draupadi in Mahabharata. When Draupadi called Lord Krishna for help while she was being publicly dishonored, there was a delay before Sri Krishna came to her rescue. The reason was she called Krishna as Dwarakavasi (resident of Dwaraka) instead of calling Him *Hridayavasi* (resident of the heart). Hence the delay in response.

Every atom and moment is permeated by *Brahman* or *Atman* alone. Swami says in a Telugu poem:

*Yeddhhi Kaladanuchuntimo  
Addhi Ledhu  
Yeddhhi Ledhanuchuntimo  
Addhi Kaladhu  
Unnadhhi Okkate Daivambu Yennatikini  
Lenidayyanu Vishwambu Kanarayya*

*What we say exists does not exist. What we say does not exist, exists. Realize only one thing that always exists—That is*

*God. Realize that the universe that does not exist appears real, and all of it is a mere illusion.*

**Swami also says that if we want to experience the truth that only Brahman exists and nothing else, we need to travel with Him relentlessly with enthusiasm, energy, patience, and perseverance.**

### **The Two Obstacles**

Two significant obstacles prevent us from realizing this highest truth—anger and impatience. Shirdi Sai Baba often emphasized the importance of *Shraddha* (faith) and *Saburi* (patience) for the spiritual aspirant. Swami also extols patience and forbearance as great virtues.

When one has patience, one does not get angry. Anger leads to delusion and loss of discrimination, which finally leads to complete downfall. Thus, overcoming one obstacle (impatience) and acquiring one good quality (patience) helps us overcome the other obstacle (anger) too!

It should be remembered that the nature of anger could be *Tamasic*, *Rajasic*, or *Satwic*. For instance, the anger of sages is *Satwic*, because the intention is solely to bring transformation in the subject. It is for the good of humanity, and their anger does not affect them. It is akin to writing on water. The minute the finger is removed from the water, the writing disappears. The passionate anger of an ambitious and worldly person that is tinged with selfishness is *Rajasic*. This anger is due to ego, pomp, and ostentation. It is like writing on sand, which remains till the wind of divine grace blows and erases it. The demonic anger of an evil person whose goal is to harm others is *Tamasic*. This anger carries vengeance and hatred, which hurts not only the individual but also their families and society. It is like engraved writing on a stone that remains forever. Such anger can be overcome only by intense effort and the

divine grace of Swami. This is why one of the 108 names in *Sathya Sai Ashtotaram* is “*Om Sri Sai Kama Krodha Dhwamsine Namaha.*”(Salutations to Lord Sri Sai who is the destroyer of desire and anger)

When we sincerely pray to God, He will destroy our anger, which is detrimental to our spiritual progress. Swami teaches us many techniques to conquer anger and impatience, which is necessary to realize the highest truth. *Satsang* (company) of good people, places, things, and thoughts helps. That apart, one needs to conduct Self-enquiry into the underlying, unchanging reality. We all go through wakeful, dream, and deep-sleep (*jagrat, swapna, sushupti*) states. What we experience in one state is not experienced in the other. However, there is an underlying supportive state for all three states, and that fourth state is called *Turiya*. One should try to identify with this underlying state of *Turiya*, which is *Brahman*. Then, one will experience unity in diversity.



*When we sincerely pray to God, He will destroy our anger, which is detrimental to our spiritual progress.*



Lord Krishna says that true *Jnana* (wisdom) is to see the unchanging in the changing, Oneness in multiplicity, and unity in diversity.

### Development of Equal-Mindedness and Equanimity is the Way to Enlightenment

Achieving equal-mindedness is emphasized both by Swami and Sri Krishna. '*Samatvam Yogam Uchyate*' (true Yoga is equal-mindedness) and '*Panditah Sama Darshinah*' (a wise man is one who has equanimity) also reflect the same. Such people see the same divinity in a dog, an elephant, a wise person, and an ignoramus. They see beyond the body, mind, and intellect and see the Self-effulgent *Atma*.

This aspect of equal-mindedness is emphasized in the Bhagavad Gita in several places. In Chapter 2, speaking of the qualities of a *Sthitaprajna* (a person of steady wisdom), Krishna explains how an enlightened one sees all pairs of opposites as the same. Also, in Chapter 12, while speaking of the qualities of a devotee, Krishna emphasizes how a devotee treats heat and cold, praise and blame, profit and loss, success and loss, victory and defeat with the same equal-mindedness.

In the epochal letter to His 'brother' in 1947, Swami defines what devotion is, according to Him: ***"Those who are devoted to me treat good and bad and all the pairs of opposites as the same."***

Once we realize that the same Brahman exists everywhere and in everything, there is no question of having anger or impatience. In the famous Ishavasya Upanishad, it is said,

*Yasmin sarvani bhutani atmaiva bhut  
vijanataha  
tatra ko mohaha kah shoka  
ekatvamupashyatah*

*He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences that are Becomings, for he has perfect knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief, the one who sees Oneness everywhere?*

The profound message of this verse is to realize the all-pervading *Brahman* by developing equal-mindedness and to see unity in diversity. For this, the obstacles of anger and impatience must be overcome.

Katho Upanishad proclaims, "Arise, Awake, and Stop not Till The Goal Is Reached" (*Uthistata, Jagrata, Prapyavaranni-bodhata*). **The goal of life is to realize Brahman, also referred to as Atman and God. This goal can be achieved in this very lifetime through pure love, intense and sincere spiritual practices, and the boundless grace of God.** This boon is promised to each and every one of us by our loving Lord Sathya Sai.

Jai Sai Ram.

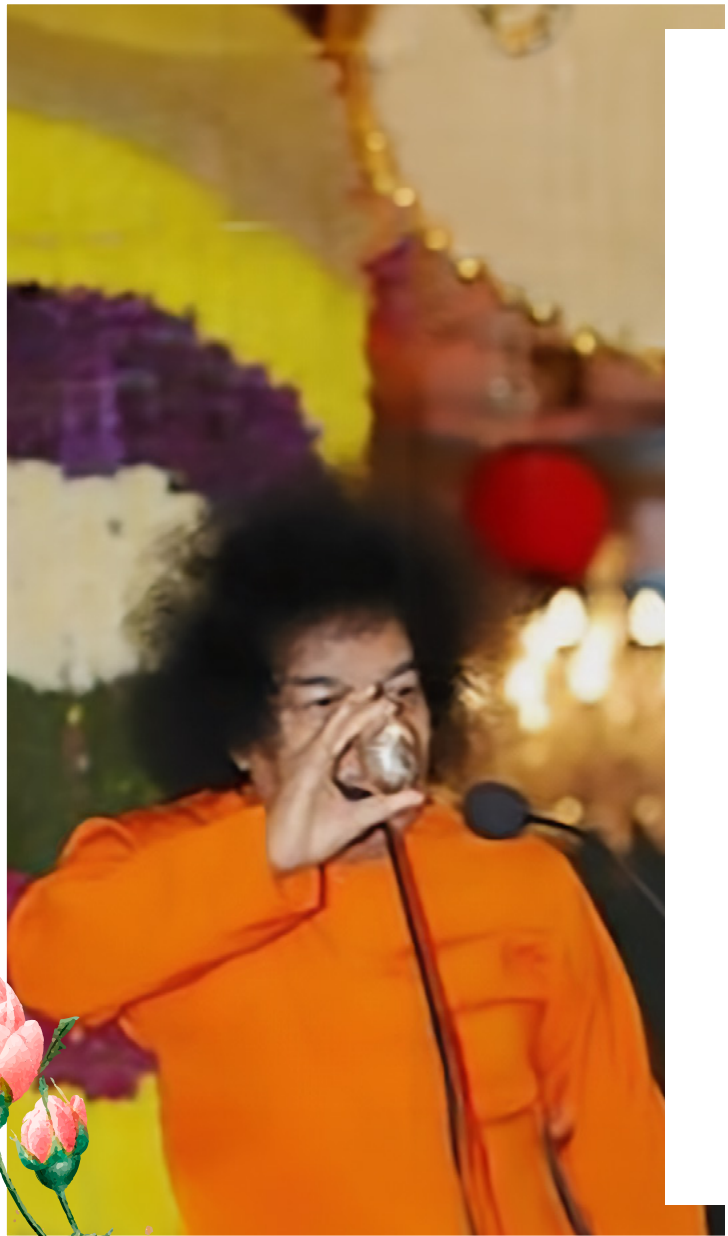


*The goal of life*  
is to realize Brahman

This goal can be achieved in this very lifetime through pure love, intense and sincere spiritual practices, and the boundless grace of God. This boon is promised to each and every one of us by our loving Lord Sathya Sai.



# Always Be Happy and Peaceful



*Sathyambunandhundi  
sarvambu srushtinche  
Sathyamandanegenu  
sarva srushti  
Sathya mahima leni sthala-  
medi kanugona  
Shudda satwa midiye  
chudarayya*

(Telugu Poem)

*The entire creation emerges  
from Truth and merges in  
Truth.*

*Is there a place in the  
cosmos where Truth does  
not exist?*

*O man!! Visualize this pure  
and unsullied Truth.*

*The real Yogis (spiritual aspi-  
rants) are those who know  
this truth.*

*O man, visualize this pure  
and unsullied Truth.*

*(Bhagawan materialized a  
Hiranyagarbha (golden)  
lingam with a wave of His  
divine hand).*

Every living being in this world, right from a germ, insect, bird, beast, or an animal, has originated out of this Truth. Nothing can ever happen without this Truth. That Truth is in the possession of the One, with this "Sathyam" (Bhagawan) (who is Truth Himself). Can anyone materialize or manifest the principle of truth, which is the pure truth, the pure essence of the Truth (*Suddha Satwam*), in this way? **Therefore, truth is everywhere. When you contemplate and think of Truth, you will also manifest this Truth.** Therefore, remember this Truth constantly and contemplate on this Truth.

**Why is this body given the name 'Sathya Sai'? The Truth (*Sathya*) originates out of Sai (Bhagawan).** Whosoever contemplates the Truth in the altar of their hearts, 'Sathyam' (Bhagawan/God) is there. Therefore, never forget the truth. *Dharma* (right action) is the reaction, reflection, and resound of *Sathya* (Truth). **There is no higher *Dharma* or code of conduct beyond adherence to the path of truth (*Sathyannaasti paro dharma*).**

We acquire different forms of knowledge through secular education. This is not true education in a real sense. True education is the truth that comes from the heart. It has no name or form. What is the form of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, and *Shanti*? These formless and immanent attributes latent in the human heart must be brought forth.

### **Everything in This World Is Divine**

The potential and the powers that are present in a human being are not found in any other living being or any god. Hence, a human being is verily God. God moves on Earth in human form (*daivam manusha rupena*). Therefore, man should consider himself divine. You consider yourself lowly, as a mere human; therefore, you make many mistakes. You are not merely human,

you are verily God. **Think you are God, and you will be God. As you think, so you become (*Yad bhavam tad bhavathi*)....**

We must love every human being. "Love all, Serve all," because God is present in all human beings. **There is no place where God is not present. God is present in the sky, water, sound, and light. So, everything is God.**

Leaving such omnipresent divinity, we worship God in the form of an idol in a temple. No doubt, you can worship those idols in the temples. There is nothing wrong with that. The God that is present in every human is also present in that stone. I do not condemn such worship. But you are God. Being God yourself, lead a life with the awareness that God is present in everyone and everything; there is nothing wrong with this.

My body is a temple filled with immense divine energy. However, a little discrimination is to be exercised in this context. You must inquire whether this energy is God or the body that is filled with energy is divine. The body is also God. God is immanent in every inch, every atom, and every cell. There is no place where God is not present. Hence, do not forget God. If you forget yourself, it amounts to forgetting God. Hence, do not forget yourself. Act reflecting your true Self.

For this reason, one is advised to practice "ABC (Always Be Careful)." You must always be careful. You must constantly inquire if you are forgetting that you are God, at any moment.

I am not energy; I am not related to any form of conscious (body) or conscience. I am I (consciousness). This feeling should be firmly established within you. Then, there will be no scope at all to entertain any negative feelings about others. But ignorant and foolish people think otherwise.



God is present in all human beings. There is no place in this universe where God is not present. These thousand heads (*Sahasra Sheersha*) (referring to all those in the big gathering) represent the divine, God. God is the cosmic form. All this (the entire gathering) is the cosmic form. Each form has its specific characteristics. In every form, there is a spark of My divinity, the eternal (*Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanatana*).

I am present in all of you. You are not different from Me. "Bhagawan is not different from you." I am you; you are Me. Therefore, don't feel that we are different from each other. **Do not entertain the thought of duality. Strengthen your love alone. Let the fruit of love ripen in your heart, and share the nectar of love with everyone.** Therefore, let that fruit of love ripen in your heart first. Only when you saturate your heart with love can you share that love with everyone. Then, all will become embodiments of love. Then, we will not hate or hurt anyone.

Today, wherever you look, you will find hatred. There are differences of opinion among people. They are not differences in the real sense. They may appear to be differences in secular life. But, all are One from the spiritual perspective. When we look at these in different ways, these differences arise, and they are all merely zeros. God alone is One (*Ekam*). All the others are zeros that are added to this One. These zeros gain value because of the One next to them. If One (God) is removed, then everyone will become zero. Hence, God is the only important entity for everyone.

### **Consider the Mind Also as Divine**

In pain and pleasure, in grief and sadness, for all these, only one is responsible, and that is the mind. Several people consider the mind to be very bad and call it the

monkey mind. "It is not monkey mind; it is mankind." Since it is mankind, it is always kind. It is the mind that gives all the bliss. It is also the mind that gives sorrow and sadness. **If only you can keep the mind in a proper state, it will not confer anything bad. Consider the mind also as divine. Then you will always be happy.**

*Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam,  
Kevalam, Jnanamurtim,  
Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam,  
Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam,*  
(Sanskrit verse)

*The eternal and absolute bliss (Nityanandam); the highest joy (Parama Sukhadam); beyond all limitations of time and space, pure consciousness, isness, all-pervasive (Kevalam); wisdom absolute (Jnanamurtim); beyond duality, Oneness (Ekam), eternal (Nityam); pure (Vimalam), unchanging (Achalam), the witness of everything (Sarvadhee sakshibhutam).*

That is the true *Atma*. You call it *Atma*, mind or conscience. We ascribe different names to the same principle. We give names according to our convenience for identification, not for the sake of truth. For example, this body was given the name "Sathyam." This name is given to the body, not to Me. I am not the body. I am not the mind. I am not the intellect. I am not *Chitta* (pure intelligence). I am not an imagination. Bhagawan is Bhagawan (the eternal...). You must develop such firm faith.

It is possible that the minds of some people tend to change due to food and recreation. Because of certain friendships and food habits, the mind changes. "Tell me your company; I shall tell you what you are." **The kind of company you choose reflects who you are. As is the company, so you become. Hence, I advise you to join good company.**



# LOVE IS GOD, LIVE IN LOVE.

*If you lead your life this way, your life will be good,  
and goodness will be conferred on you.*

*Satsangatwe nissangatwam,  
Nissangatwe nirmohatwam,  
Nirmohatwe nischalatattwam,  
Nischalatattwe jivanmukti.*

(Sanskrit verse)

*Good company leads to detachment,  
Detachment makes one free from  
delusion.*

*Freedom from delusion leads to  
steadiness of mind,  
Steadiness of mind confers liberation  
while alive.*

**Liberation can be attained, and everyone will attain it. But when? When one develops a deep and firm conviction in the truth that I am *Atma*, one will attain liberation that very second.** Swami is in me; I am Swami; think like that. Always contemplate this. However, it will be of no use to simply repeat, "I am Swami, I am Swami." It will be of no use if you say that with a fickle mind. With a steady mind, contemplate and continuously meditate on this principle, "I am Swami," I am God, I am God, I am God!" It is only when you develop such firm conviction that you become attributeless (*Nirgunam*), unsullied (*Niranjanam*), final abode (*Sanathanam Niketanam*), eternal (*Nitya*), pure (*Shuddha*), enlightened (*Buddha*), liberated (*Mukta*), and

the embodiment of sacredness (*Nirmala Swarupinam*).

When there is pollution, everything will be spoiled. Even water will turn bad because of this pollution. A specific treatment is needed to remove the pollution from water. How? It is possible with God's Name! The human body will be afflicted with several diseases on account of polluted water. It is, therefore, our duty that the physical body should also be protected to a certain extent. **What is the purpose for which the body is gifted to you by God? It is only to realize your true nature.** But you forget this purpose and concentrate your mind on the physical body. After all, what is the physical body?

The body is like a water bubble. Mind is like a mad monkey. Do not follow the mind. Do not follow the body. Follow the conscience. If you learn this, you will be sanctified. You need not pay heed to what people may say. Purity of mind leads to wisdom (*Jnana*). Only when we have purity of mind will we attain wisdom (*Jnana*).

## **Purity of Mind**

Keep your mind pure. Whenever evil thoughts enter your mind, remind yourself, "Not good; not good; not good; this is not mine." Tell yourself, "All these are not



my property; my true property is good thoughts and good ideas.” **Love, Love, Love, Love, Love, Love! Love is God, Live in Love.” If you lead your life this way, your life will be good, and goodness will be conferred on you.**

There are many people here who have a lot of illusions and delusions. No doubt, you are pure at heart. You have pure thoughts. However, a certain amount of pollution sets in now and then. So, you must ensure that it does not happen. That is the *sadhana* for you.

What is *sadhana*, truly? Sitting for meditation and doing *Japa* (recitation of God’s Name) is not meditation. What do you think meditation is? You think it is sitting and contemplating on the Lord’s Name. Not at all! **Contemplate on the sacred feelings within you. You should contemplate on your Reality, the Truth within you.**

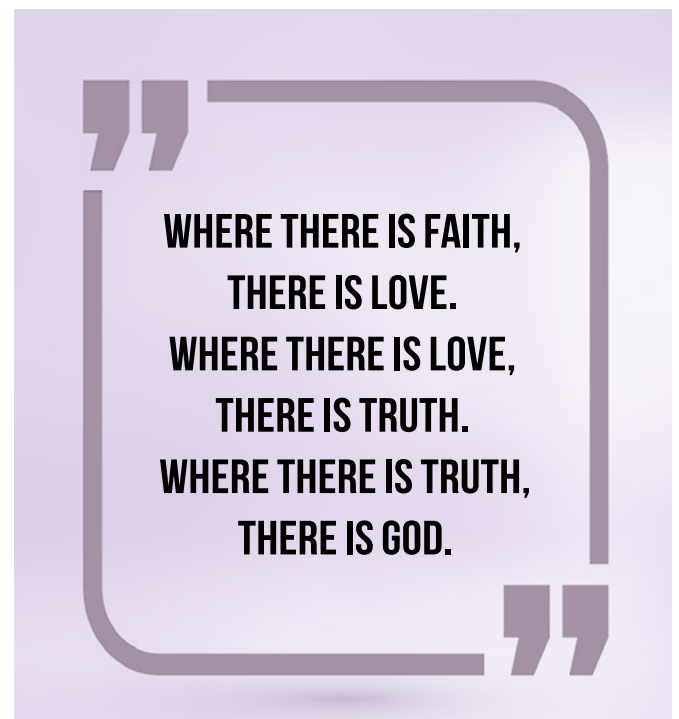
If you wish to know the secret, it can be explained through this very simple method. Make your mind steady for eleven seconds. **If you keep your mind still for eleven seconds, you can attain realization within that eleven seconds. Meditation cannot be achieved by sitting merely for a longer time. If you contemplate for eleven seconds with a steady mind, it is enough! But you are not able to contemplate even for eleven seconds.**

Within these eleven seconds, you will receive a lot. You can experience all the different worlds. Hence, do not exert unnecessary trouble and strain. You are putting your body under a lot of strain. You are wasting a lot of money, too. So, don’t waste money. Don’t waste time. Time is God. God is time. Don’t waste time. Time waste is life waste. So, don’t waste time. **Hence, whenever you find time, think of Swami. Then, I will surely come and appear before you; I will certainly appear before you.** Not only that, but I will also

talk to you, I will have a conversation with you. Swami receives many letters saying, “Swami, you came yesterday and talked to me.” You, too, can have such experiences. Develop and preserve unflinching faith in Swami. Victory will surely be yours!

### Have Faith

Although people have come as devotees, they are not able to realize the true mark of devotion. To start with, you should know what devotion is.



Truth is God. This Truth will be with you as God. So, you do not have to strive for peace or comfort. You are sitting in meditation for hours and hours unnecessarily (to realize this Truth) and suffer pain in your legs, back, and hands. Do not give scope to such physical pains. Doctors call this rheumatic pain. They are not rheumatic pains. They are the result of misguided *sadhana*. Stick to the schedule of contemplation for eleven seconds, and you will have no pain. In addition, you should observe discipline in partaking food at regular and timely intervals. About food, there are a few subtleties. You should never consume non-vegetarian food such as meat and fish. However,

“

*What is the purpose for which the body is gifted to you by God?  
It is only to realize your true nature.*

overseas devotees are accustomed to non-vegetarian food. This type of food can lead to diseases like cancer. Hence, give up such food completely. Not only that. They also like cheese very much. The more you consume cheese, the weaker you become. So, do not go after such foods. You should also not take milk in excess. Too much milk is very bad for health; one should observe limits. Milk should be diluted with water in equal proportions. The same is the case with yogurt or curd. It should not be thick but somewhat like a fluid, by adding water. You must exercise control over the food you eat. Therefore, to seek the divine, discipline should be observed concerning food. **When you regulate food and observe discipline, you will certainly have the vision of God immediately; you do not have to wait for months or years.** You can be blissful then and there and always after that. Bliss is the form of God.

This bliss is:

*Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam,  
Kevalam Jnanamurtim,  
Dwandwateetam, Gagana  
Sadrisham,  
Tattwamasyadilakshyam,  
Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam,  
Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam,  
Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam*  
(Sanskrit Verse)

*The eternal bliss (Nityanandam) confers supreme happiness (Parama Sukhadam), beyond all limitations of time and place (Kevalam), the embodiment of the absolute wisdom (Jnanamurtim), beyond duality (Dwandwa-*

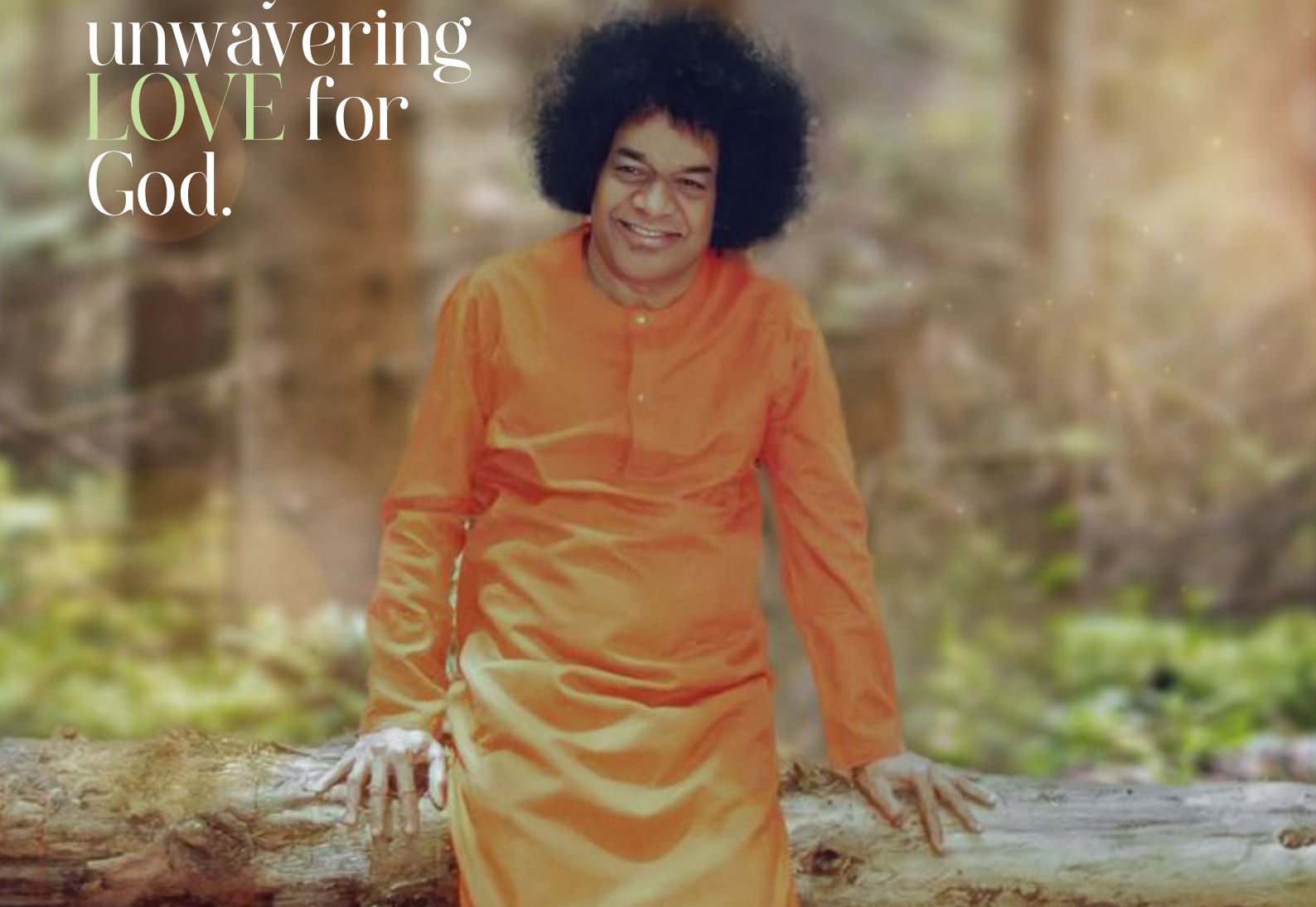
*teetam), untouched by happenings and incidents but forming the perennial base, like the sky enveloping the nature (Gagana Sadrisham), the goal indicated by Tat-twam-asi (That Thou Art) (Tattwamasyadilakshyam), the One (Ekam), eternal (Nityam), pure (Vimalam), unmoving and unchanging (achalam), the eternal witness of everything, beyond all the mental conditions, and the three gunas.*

People say, "I want bliss." Where does this bliss come from? Can you buy it in a shop or a hotel? No. Bliss comes from within oneself. Bliss is your form. When you were born, you arrived smiling. You started crying only after you were touched by worldly tendencies. Reduce your worldly attachments. Less luggage; more comfort;





TRUE  
DEVOTION  
means  
steady and  
unwavering  
LOVE for  
God.



makes travel a pleasure. We should not have unnecessary attachments. With these unnecessary attachments, you make your body weak. Worrying is also bad. Worry, worry, worry, worry! From worry to curry. Worry and curry together make the heart very weak. Therefore, stay away from worry and curry. Even if worry comes, entertain the feeling that this, too, shall pass. Whatever comes is bound to leave at some

point. It has come now, and it is bound to leave. Have that feeling. Feel that there is nothing wrong on your part. All that comes is sure to vanish—even the bodies. Have attachment to the bodies to the extent necessary, within a limit. Otherwise, the the attachment will spoil the bodies. **If we want to see God, experience God, talk to God; listen, and follow My words. You will certainly see God and converse with God.**

Devotion does not mean simply performing acts of worship, vows, or repeating God's name (*japa*). **True devotion means steady and unwavering love for God.** This love should be unwavering; it should never change. Love for God should remain constant and for love's sake. Love should always be steady and permanent. **There is nothing greater than love. Anything may happen to the body, but nothing will happen to the love within.** Therefore, love remains as it is. It is changeless, eternal, and unwavering. Therefore, we should safeguard such love. Then, you will certainly attain divinity.

Because of our association with this world, our demonic nature increases. We develop not only demonic qualities but also desire (*kama*) and anger (*krodha*), which are the worst enemies. **We should spend our time constantly in love. And we should smile with love.** When you laugh and smile, the love within you manifests naturally. But the faces of some people are so serious, long 'castor-oil faces' (sad). Always be smiling. God always smiles. At any moment, there is not an iota of worry, sadness, or sorrow in God. I always keep smiling. As I am always smiling, I do not have any suffering. Thus,

I am always healthy. You need not worry about Me. I am always keeping well.

You may feel that Swami is experiencing a lot of pain; there is no pain at all. Your love takes away all the pain. When I see all of you, this vast assembly, I feel so much bliss. Therefore, you make the pain go away and not the doctors. So many of you have come here, and I have been the recipient of love from all of you. This gives me so much bliss. You be happy. I am always happy. Seeing you gives me immense bliss. This is your good fortune.

All those who have assembled here have come with a lot of devotion and love. **There is no greater medicine than love. Your love alone is My (Bhagawan's) medicine. Your love is the most powerful medicine. And My love is the most powerful medicine for all of you.** Be happy and peaceful at all times. Be happy and peaceful and lead a harmonious family life. Do not succumb to any trivial problems and petty sorrows. Do not give scope for these. Do not worry if your wife or children or anyone else falls ill or sick. Be well, return home, and carry on happy, peaceful, and blissful lives.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
July 28, 2007







# Memories of Summer Course

BRAHMAN AND BHARAT (AND BIRTHDAY CAKE!)

**A NEW LIFE BEGAN FOR ME IN MAY OF 1973 WHEN I TRAVELED FROM** New York City to India to be in the divine presence of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. By His grace, at my first *darshan* in Brindavan, Baba looked into my eyes; I felt I had known Him forever. The trip that was planned for one month lasted 2 years and 8 months by Baba's direct guidance in interviews and by my wonderful mother's patient, loving support. This was a time of true healing and joy for me.

In early May of 1974, Swami traveled from Prasanthi Nilayam to Brindavan for the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality, which began later that month. A few ladies from overseas countries had been talking together about their hopes and prayers of attending. One day at *darshan*, Swami paused in front of me, giving me the chance to ask, "Swami, permission for the western ladies to attend Summer Course?" With a slight smile, He replied, "May 20th, not now."

For days, I pondered the meaning of those words and wondered if I had been too bold in asking Him! **Swami's seeming uncertainty keeps us surrendered and ever with Him in the present moment.**

At darshan several days later, Baba walked towards me with Dr. V.K. Gokak and asked, “*How many passes?*” I replied with the number, and Dr. Gokak gave me the passes for the group. He gave us observer passes, which allowed us to attend Baba’s evening discourses as well as class lectures without the requirement of grading. We saw Baba’s caring attention to every detail and felt overjoyed and so grateful!

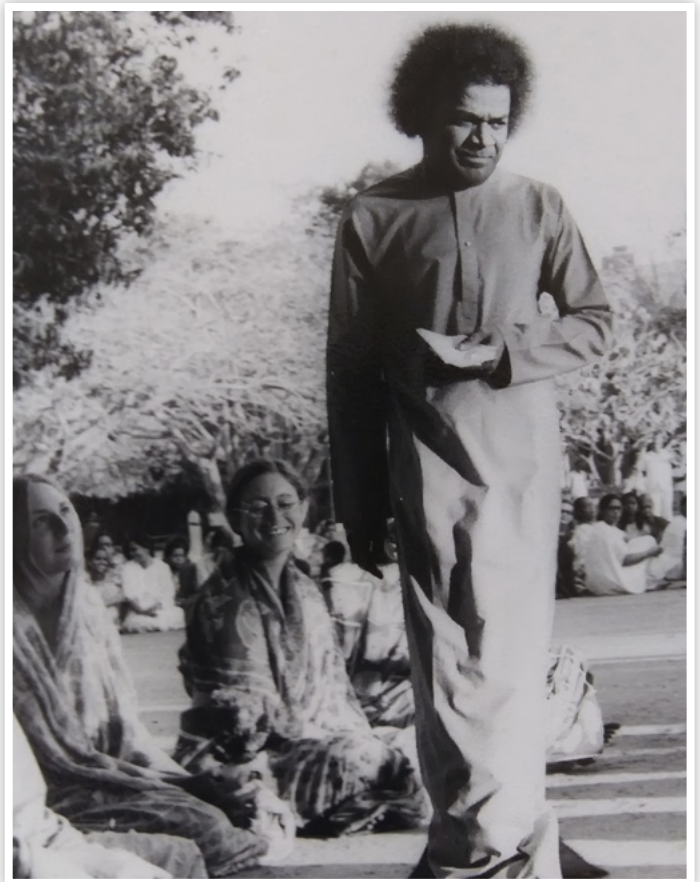
The theme of the Summer Course that year was “Brahman and Bharat.” **In the first series of discourses on Brahman (Supreme Consciousness), Swami focused on the oneness of the omnipresent divine and the divine within.** In the series on Bharat (India), we learned about the universal aspects of the scriptures and sacred traditions of India. Swami spoke on the timeless wisdom of the Vedas. He explained the inner meaning of these teachings in simple ways that we can apply in our daily lives with our varied beliefs and backgrounds. These precious discourses are published as *Summer Showers in Brindavan 1974* and available on the SSSIO website.

Our mornings began with devotional singing while walking through surrounding villages (*Nagar Sankeertan*). The bhajans ended with *Arathi* being offered to Baba at dawn as He stood on the balcony of His Brindavan residence. The sun rose in our hearts as we sang to our Lord at the start of each day. The daily program of classes ended with Swami’s evening discourses, occasional cultural performances, and final *Arathi* in the hall.

### Unexpected Blessings

After *darshan* on a breezy sunlit morning in mid-June, I went to Bangalore with a friend to take care of errands in preparation for our upcoming return to Prasanthi Nilayam. When we met for lunch, my friend surprised me with a small cake decorated with the ‘Om’ symbol; it was my 26th birthday. We

thought of sharing it with others after Baba’s evening discourse. Like a soft whisper, the thought came to mind that Baba might bless it during afternoon *darshan*!



The author can be seen seated in Brindavan, looking up to Swami.

As we entered the Brindavan ashram compound, we chose an inconspicuous place near the end of the *darshan* line. I sat holding the cake and a newly framed photo of Baba on my lap. Baba walked slowly along the entire *darshan* line, smiling and filling hearts with delight. As He came close, I shyly lifted the cake with one hand and the photo with the other! Baba touched both, sprinkling them with *vibhuti* He had just materialized. After walking on a few steps, He turned back and asked, “*Birthday?*” I answered, “Yes, Swami.” He then asked, “*Your birthday?*” I whispered, “Yes.” Baba turned back and blessed both again, saying, “*Good. Eat it!*” The day ended with Baba’s



*Having now  
reconditioned your cars,  
take Sai as your good driver  
who will drive your car for  
the rest of your lives!*



divine discourse. Afterward, we gathered in the OM SAI RAM shed around the tree. We shared cake *prasad* under the Brindavan moonlight.

It is a pure delight to recall the innocence of those times. Even now, decades later, these recollections fill me with gratitude and awe. **There may be difficult times in life when we face challenges and feel alone; it is the love of our Lord Sai that sustains us. Our memories help keep that love fresh and alive.**

#### **A Rare Discourse**

On the day before graduation, **Baba gave a discourse titled, "Who Is Sathya Sai Baba?"** We felt Swami's all-encompassing love as He spoke with a sense of urgency as if imploring us to realize the immeasurable grace in our midst. **In this discourse, Swami spoke of the themes of His Incarnation, including the unity of faiths and the one religion of love, which He defined in this way:**

*"It is the common harmonized content of all different religions of the universe. In all these components the same kind of healthy blood must flow. It is true to say that prema, or love, is the blood flowing through all the religions of the world. There is essentially only one religion and that is the religion of love. This love flows as a stream through all the religions, and this is the essence of all the religions."*

–Summer Showers  
in Brindavan 1974, p. 279

Swami closed this special talk with the message:

*"Keep the aspect of Sai in your heart. I wished to convey to you some aspects of Sai which many people want to know, although it is not possible for anyone to understand or fathom the depths of Sai. This is the background of My wanting to talk of Myself. I wished to convey to you some things which others cannot convey. From tomorrow, try to put all these into practice and enjoy the divine bliss and become one with divinity. Do not fill your head with mere information and knowledge. Fill your hearts with prema. I am hoping you will thus fill your hearts with the essential content of my discourses and prepare yourselves for meeting the future lives."*

–Summer Showers  
in Brindavan 1974, p. 290

#### **A Sublime Graduation Day**

Rain was falling as the procession began from Baba's residence. An umbrella was held above Baba, yet when He reached the platform, His hair and robe were wet. He sat on a chair beneath a canopy of garlands as we sang *bhajans*. Soon, He motioned for the presentation of student honors and speeches to begin. He presented every award and stood for photos with the recipients. As a blind student came up to speak, Baba helped him onto the stage and guided

his hands to take *padnamaskar* (touching the divine feet).

We had been well-doused with rain, followed by a cool breeze. From the direction of the Krishna statue, a beam of afternoon sunlight shone through the trees, creating a circle of golden ethereal light around Baba. Radiating from Him, the light seemed magnified and warmed us all. **I felt I was in the most sacred place on earth. Surely Gods and angels were watching with adoration the Lord's exquisite play, His outpouring of grace.**

Several honors went to students of Brindavan College. One boy said that the rain was like the tears in their hearts at leaving Baba but that their tears would create a flood. In closing, he said, "If this life is only play, I leave my heart and take my body away." As Baba sat in His chair, the sunlight dried His robe and caused the raindrops in His hair to glisten like tiny diamonds. Two full rainbows formed above us.

In Baba's commencement discourse, He spoke about the practice of *Dharma* and gave strong, loving, motherly guidance to the students returning to their places in the world. **He showered blessings and assurances of His constant presence and guidance.** Baba closed the talk with the following message:




**Ms. Faith Braverman Hollander** has been a grateful devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for five decades. In 1975, at the time of His 50th Birthday and the Second World Conference of the SSSIO, Swami told her to return to New York City and start the center known as the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Manhattan. Faith has served in various center roles, including president and SSE teacher. In 1976, Swami gave her the role of co-chair of the National Bhajan Committee. Throughout the years, Swami answered her prayers for service in many wonderful and surprising ways both in the US and in Prasanthi Nilayam, including giving the blessing of serving as a Prasanthi Nilayam Seva Dal from 1975–1985!

*"Students! You have now reconditioned the car of your body, and having reconditioned the car you must also drive it well. Because you are not good drivers, the cars were frequently out of order. The car is not kept in good condition unless you have a good driver. **Having now reconditioned your cars, take Sai as your good driver who will drive your car for the rest of your lives!** Then the car of your lives will not be spoiled. You have heard many good things. There is no need for me to keep on repeating these things again and again. I am hoping that you will constantly think of what you have learned here and put it into practice."*

–**Summer Showers**  
in Brindavan 1974, p. 296

In closing, Baba playfully led us in singing *Love Is My Form*. He then sang the *Asatoma Sat Gamaya* prayer and the *bhajans: Govinda Krishna Jai* and *Subramanyam*. During the final *Arathi*, He allowed several enormous garlands to be placed around His neck.

We made our return trip to Prasanthi Nilayam in the following days, cherishing Baba's gift of this month of learning and light.

**Ms. Faith Braverman Hollander**   
USA



# Fix Your MIND ON Swami



## **LET ME TAKE YOU BACK TO TORONTO, CANADA IN THE LATE NINETIES.**

It was a time of grunge, flannel shirts, amazing dance music, the East Coast-West Coast hip-hop rivalry, skater boys, and general angst. We listened to Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Snoop Dogg, the Beastie Boys, and A Tribe Called Quest.

There I was, a high school dropout with an identity crisis, using alcohol, cigarettes, and psychedelics to navigate my confusion and frustration with life. I was looking for a way to transcend my pain and couldn't find one. I was in an unhealthy relationship, struggled with severe insomnia, and had depression and anger issues. My relationship with my parents was strained, to say the least.

Although I was raised in the Sathya Sai Organization, I left it when I was about 13. So, in addition to being a high school dropout, I was also a *Bal Vikas* (Sai Spiritual Education) dropout. In fact, if I could have excommunicated myself from the organization, I certainly would have. Only due to my mother's insistence did I keep a photo of Swami in my bedroom. I swore that I would never go back to my former life.



**“I also learned that transformation is not about the memorable flashy moments; it’s about incremental progress, facing yourself day by day, week by week, month by month.”**

### **A Future Tense with Flimsy Friendships**

One Halloween, about a month before my eighteenth birthday, my friends and I were in line to see the Rocky Horror picture show in downtown Toronto. We were sneaking alcohol into the theatre. I had finally gotten out of my bad relationship, and as my eighteenth birthday loomed, I started to reflect seriously about my life. Standing in my drag queen costume and platform heels, bottle in one hand, cigarette in the other, I decided that I’d had enough. I was sober from that day onwards.

The funny thing about sobriety was that I suddenly had no social life. I was no ‘fun’ anymore. I was then in a weird transitional period, as I knew I couldn’t return to my old life, but I didn’t know what was ahead. At the time, I was enrolled in a third high school. My attendance was spotty, my performance was lacking, and I was on the brink of getting kicked out. It was possibly my last chance.

**I knew I had to become a better person, but I didn’t know how.**

### **Nightmare Turns into a Dream**

My parents suggested that I choose an *Ishta Devata* (*personal deity*), a form of God to focus on. This didn’t seem like the worst idea in the world. So, I started thinking of Krishna, Durga, or Lakshmi as the top three candidates to be my *Ishta Devata*. I was in no hurry to choose one. What was the rush?

One night, around the spring of 1999, I was fast asleep (for once), dreaming of my friends and I hanging out in a park. The dream was suddenly interrupted by a blaze of light. **All that was visible was a figure in an orange robe, sporting an afro, with the left hand raised. This figure communicated a telepathic message to me and departed.**

I woke up startled. It was about 3:00 AM in the morning. I said aloud to my empty room, “I think I just had a dream about Swami!”

It was Wednesday morning. I was in a state of shock for the next two days. I attended my classes and came home without speaking to a soul. By Friday morning, I had calmed down enough for the message to settle into my consciousness. **I told my parents that Swami had appeared to me in a dream and said, “Fixate your mind on Me. I will take care of the rest.”**

In that direct experience, I saw the mercy and compassion of God! I had just taken one step towards the temple, and the Lord Himself came out to meet me in the street where I stood.

### **A Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins With a Single Step**

Thus began the great love story of my life. Things began to turn around for me. I started to put myself in places where it was easy to think of God. I began singing *bhajans* and participating in (even leading!) service projects. I performed in a nonprofit musi-

cal band. I finally got some new friends who didn't mind that I was sober.

I graduated from high school as the class valedictorian and got admitted to the university of my choice. It was a new life for me, with my loving parents supporting me every step of the way.

Now, I would love to tell you that since then, I've been an exemplary devotee, and everything has gone smoothly and beautifully. But I realized, to my great surprise, that being a devotee does not mean being exempt from the trials and tribulations of life.

**I also learned that transformation is not about the flashy moments; it's about incremental progress, facing yourself day by day, week by week, month by month.** Two steps forward, one step back.

I used to have so much shame about my past. I often wondered what my life would have been had I not slipped so early. But I had to experience that dark night of the soul in order to be redeemed.

Swami Vivekananda says, "Life is the unfolding and development of a being under circumstances tending to press it down."

I have had many dark times since, as recently as last year (2023). But the difference is that

now, I have the courage to face my demons. **I have the army of God behind me. The name and the form are my sword and shield.** I don't need to cower and hide in consumption, distraction, alcohol, illicit substances, or shallow relationships. I can do battle with my inner enemies and win the war.

### **The Miracle of Transformation**

Looking back, I can't believe how far I've come from the person I was 20 years ago or even a year ago. **This is the promise God has made to each one of us: that we all have a fighting chance of living up to our divine nature.**

*"Man (manava) has to become God (Madhava); that is one's destiny, the plan and purpose of one's being armed, as no other animal is, with the sword of discrimination and the shield of renunciation."*

**–Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

January 25, 1963

Finally, I would like to say that if you had told my jaded teenage self that she would one day be sharing her story with you in this manner, she would have laughed in your face. And yet here we are. For me, this is the greatest miracle.

**Ms. Ellesha Wanigasekera**



*Ms. Ellesha Wanigasekera was born in Toronto, Canada, but spent her early childhood in Trinidad and Tobago, where her family was first introduced to Swami by the book "Sai Baba Avatar" by Howard Murphet. She was raised by the vibrant Trinidadian Sai family before migrating back to Toronto and finding her faith there. Ellesha moved to the San Francisco Area in the USA in 2018. She has subsequently served the SSSIO at the center, regional, national, and international levels, mainly in her capacity as a writer and editor. She holds a degree in English but is a CPA by profession, working in public accounting.*







# Be Steady in Your Sadhana

Prasanthi Nilayam  
16-7-65

Dear Charles,

Your letter. Good thoughts, good deeds, always yield good fruits; prayers are always answered; that is the rule. Your earnestness to help all the folks you meet, your activities regarding the construction of hospitals, your interest in meditation and mind control-have borne fruit. This contact with Bob, after he returned from India. is evidence of this.

The Guru need not always come in actual concrete form; he can prompt the higher impulses and urges through a friend or a book or an event which reveals the reality in a flash. After this awakening, the rest is mostly in the hands of the aspirant. The Guru can, at best, watch and guide. Do not get agitated or lose heart. You will be guided, however far you may be, geographically. I am as near you, as you are near me. Be steady, dear Charles, in your Sadhana and you can certainly attain Santhi.

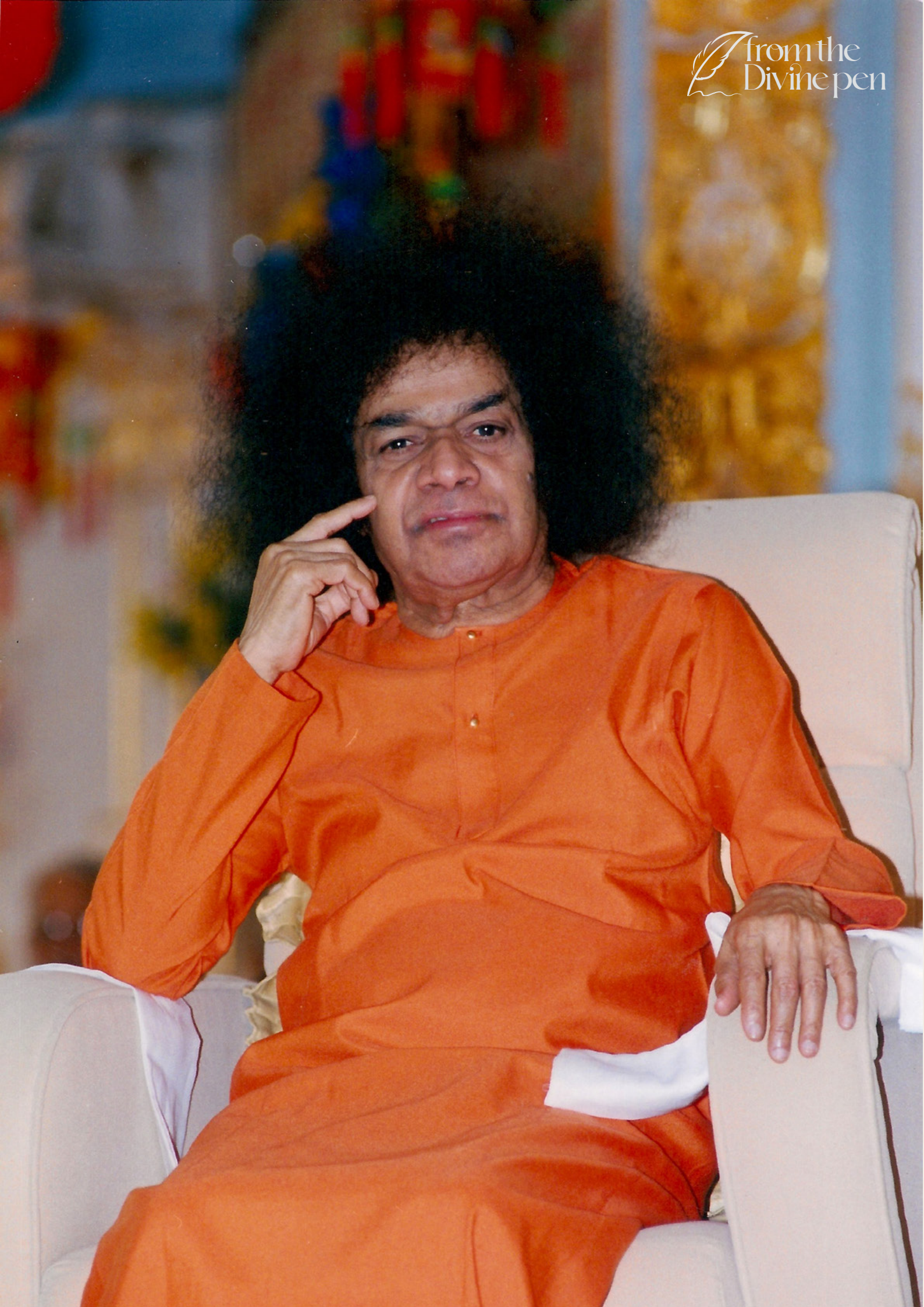
You can prepare the Edition of the Book, for the American and English readers, whom you desire to serve. Whatever is done with sincere faith has my blessings. You can also keep up this correspondence. Tell Bob that this proposal has been blessed, and it can be taken up.

Inform Bob and his wife that I am with them. When the Name is remembered, the Form is evoked; when the Form is recollected, the Name is evoked. The Name and the Form are inseparable. That is the meaning of Presence.

With blessings to you,

*with Blessings  
Sri Sathya Sai Baba.*







# LOVE IN ACTION



## AUSTRALIA In the Spirit of Christmas

Christmas can be a challenging time for families struggling with cost-of-living pressures. In the winter chill, it is the warmth of love and light of service that brings smiles. **SSSIO volunteers from the New South Wales region of Australia delivered 42 Christmas gift hampers to the Plumpton House School and 30 Christmas gift hampers to the Tregear Public School.**

Plumpton House School is a school for those with special needs. It caters support to the individual needs of students with a range of emotional and behavioral needs challenges. Tregear is located in an area where many struggling families live.

The following day, 40 Christmas gift hampers were delivered to the Tamil Refugee Care Program, which caters to the needs of Tamil refugees in Australia. **The communities welcomed the gift hampers as they provided not only much-needed material assistance but also emotional sustenance during the festive time.**



## SRI LANKA Christmas Comes Early

December 16, 2023, was a day that resonated with love and unity at Sai Mandir in Colombo, Sri Lanka. **There was a special celebration for extending love and support to 30 children from Lady Ridgeway Hospital and their 17 families.** The children participated in a delightful array of activities, including musical chair games, a magic show, and various other fun-filled moments. It was indeed heartening to witness the genuine happiness of every participant.

The children received thoughtful gift packs containing essential school supplies, a water bottle, a lunch box, and shoes or a backpack. **In addition, their families were provided with dry ration packs** to help ease their burden and bring cheer during the festive season. Special cases like single-parent families and joint or larger families were provided with additional ration pack provisions. The volunteers also lovingly prepared and served wholesome meals.







## HONG KONG

### Refuge to Refugees

As part of the SAI-100 initiative, Sai Young Adults of Hong Kong organized an essential items drive for the Refugee Union Centre on August 19, 2023, which is **Hong Kong's first refugee-led society serving over 3,000 people seeking asylum in the city.** Essential items, including medicines, warm clothes, food, and cleaning supplies, were collected and distributed to over 200 refugees. Joy bloomed on the faces of all the recipients upon receiving the bags. In addition, the Young Adults spent a lovely afternoon playing games and other activities based on Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) with 25 refugee children aged 4 to 10. **The last activity involved learning a few Human Values songs and the bhajan "I Keep Feeling Your Love in Me Over and Over Again."**



One of the Young Adults said afterward, "I loved every minute that was spent with the refugee kids. It melted my heart to see their innocence and the joy on their faces, and I truly thank Swami for giving me the opportunity to teach them about Human Values, which are going to be so important to the growth of these kids."

Ms. Adella Namagembe, the Chairwoman of the Centre, wrote in a letter of gratitude, "We are most grateful for the wonderful activity the Young Adults of the Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Hong Kong organized for our families on Saturday, August 19, 2023. Our children enjoyed the creative and fun activities. At the same time, the parents welcomed the donation of 200 Gift Bags containing items [that] will help us meet essential needs in our daily lives as government assistance remains very limited."



## USA

### Growing Seeds of Love

About 15 members of the Sri Sathya Sai Centers of Southeast Denver and Colorado in the USA spent an uplifting weekend participating in a Walk for Values and building a community garden at a local family shelter. After serving a burrito breakfast to shelter residents, the SSSIO volunteers cleared the area of weeds. They created six vegetable garden beds filled with rich soil and sprinkled them with *Vibhuti* (Sacred Ash) and sanctified rice to ensure a bountiful harvest. **They also planted a maple tree as part of the One Million (OM) Sai Trees Initiative.** Sai volunteers were uplifted by the fellowship they experienced during the Walk for Values, singing spiritual songs and building a garden with love.



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



# 1 Million Steps To Swami

*"Take one step toward Me, and I will take a hundred steps toward you"*

–Baba

On April 24, 2023, coinciding with the *Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsavam*, the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) of Australia & PNG embarked on a *sadhana* 'journey' toward Swami's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, undertaking various service and devotional activities. Since then, dialysis patients have been supported, flood victims have been cared for, and a homeless community has been assisted—across Australia. What is this unique *sadhana* that has 'moved' Sai devotees across the country, inspiring it 'moving'?

The inspiration behind the *sadhana* came from an intense yearning for Bhagawan based on the thought, **"If we take a step toward Swami, He takes a hundred toward us. So, why not take a million steps toward Him?"** Thus, '1 Million Steps To Swami' (1MSTS) was born, a *sadhana* dedicated to walking a million (1,000,000) conscious steps by every individual. Yes, by every individual! Let us be clear because 1,000,000 steps per person might sound overwhelming!

## **A 'New' *Sadhana* Based on the Eternal Concepts of Love and Service**

From Swami's teachings, we understand that spirituality is not about doing different things. It is doing things differently—with the right attitude! On April 24, 2023, we did the calculations:

- 944 days to Swami's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday on November 23, 2025
- 1060 'conscious' steps per day to offer a million to Swami



What is meant by a 'conscious' step? It is simply a step taken with awareness of Swami or divinity during a walk or a run. It is spirituality in a practical form. **While walking, jogging, or running, an individual can either listen to Swami's discourse or satsang, do Namasmarana, chant mantras, or do bhajans—anything that helps the individual feel connected to Swami.** This initiative allows everyone to participate, from a young child to a senior citizen, as an individual, a couple, a family unit, a Sai Centre, a state/regional Sai organization, and also as an entire nation!

The individual tracks the steps using a smart-watch, phone, or pedometer. If one doesn't have a digital device, there is no need to worry because an average 10-minute walk per day comprises 1,000 steps! The step count is then logged on the website, dedicating the conscious steps of this *sadhana* to Bhagawan. Once this is done, the beautiful service project gets triggered!

### **A Sadhana at Different Levels**

The challenge in front of SSSIO in Australia was to seek new service opportunities, increase awareness of existing service activities coast-to-coast, strengthen engagement with the community, and encompass the SAI-100 initiative. With Swami at the helm, leading the journey, the core team accepted the challenge!

The 1MSTS *sadhana* allows us to spiritually explore the country we call home, Australia. The accumulated steps fuel the journey

of the SSSIO, which serves as the vehicle to travel all around Australia, including remote parts and the countryside, in search of service opportunities and devotional activities.

We decided to begin the journey at the heart of Australia, its spiritual center—Uluru. Uluru and its neighbor, Kata Tjuta, aren't just rocks. They are living, cultural landscapes that are very sacred, being the resting place for the ancient spirits of the aborigines of the region. From here, we began our journey to Alice Springs, the destination for our first service project.

Indigenous people in remote central Australia are up to 30 times more likely to suffer from kidney disease compared to other Australians. Operating from its base in Alice Springs, Purple House is a home away from home for many Indigenous dialysis patients and their families. It offers remote dialysis, social support, and primary and geriatric services. We decided to undertake a service project with Purple House. The distance between Alice Springs and Uluru is 455 kilometers. This journey required taking 681,000 'conscious' steps.

The service project involved contributing beanies (head caps) based on a needs assessment. The patients undergoing dialysis feel cold as their blood drains from the body during the dialysis treatment. The beanies help to keep them warm. The SSSIO pledged 1,008 beanies and is well on target to achieve it. Purple House was very happy



to receive the beanies and gave the following feedback:

*“The beanies have arrived!! Thank you so much for sending through all the generous donations. We have been a bit short on beanies this season, so the patients were so excited to see them. I have attached a photo of me and two colleagues with them.*

*Kind regards, Katie Merriman,  
Administration & Events Assistant”*

From here, we resumed our journey to the second destination, Kalkarindji. This journey of 985 kilometers took us 1,477,500 steps. The town of Kalkarindji and neighboring communities were impacted by the floods in early 2023. Here, we organized a devotional offering of nationwide chanting of sacred Gayatri, offering prayers for their recovery and well-being.

Next, we reached the town of Darwin, 776 kilometers from the Kalkarindji. This journey took us traversing another 1,165,050 steps. One in every twenty people in the Northern Territory is homeless and does not have a good night's sleep. This is almost 12 times worse than the national average. Here, we embarked on a service project along with the 'Sunset Soup Kitchen,' an organization that serves the homeless.

The homeless community constantly needs blankets to battle weather conditions and to stay protected against bugs and insects that pester them as they sleep in the streets every night. We pledged 1,008 blankets for the homeless community.

**Along every step of the way, Swami was present, guiding and showering His boundless love. This has allowed us to commit to the service needed and meet the perceived**

**challenges confidently.** Here is a comment by one of the team members:

*In recent weeks, the core team has been extensively researching the cost of blankets and where/how to source them, i.e., KMart, Target, BigW, etc. I came across a contact who pointed me to a source that launders and repurposes blankets from airlines, including blankets used by business-class and first-class passengers. Yesterday, a few of us went to pick up blankets from this place. Prior to going, I asked her two questions:*

- *What is the cost of each blanket?*
- *How many are available for pickup?*

*Her reply was:*

- *No cost, \$0!*
- *Just bring a van.*

***Swami showed that when we have selfless intent and readiness to work, He does the rest! We collected about 250 blankets, and we now have access to a seemingly unlimited supply of blankets at no cost! This incident shows His reassurance that when we commit to His mission, we can leave the end result to Him.***

In addition to this, we were very fortunate to receive 108 blankets, also at zero cost, from the Tzu Chi Foundation. They were keen to contribute upon hearing the cause SSSIO is supporting.

This nationwide *sadhana* of One Million Steps To Swami's 100th Birthday has just begun. As members of SSSIO in Australia, we are excited, very touched, and inspired by this divine journey and our ultimate goal and destination.

**SSSIO-Australia**





# SSSIO ZONE 2B



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

## URUGUAY

**1980**

The first Sai Group started at Barra de Carrasco in Montevideo.

**1987**

A teacher and trainer from Argentina introduced the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) program.

**1990**

A Sai devotee, Mrs. Zulma Duré, together with a priest from Juan Lacaze of the Colonia Department, developed the *Center for Help to the Disabled* to support and rehabilitate people with physical and mental challenges.

Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) classes began in various parts of the country.

**2000**

The SSEHV teacher training program with a two-year course was initiated at the Sathya Sai Center of Montevideo.

**2001**

Uruguay participated in the Educare Conference held in Prasanthi Nilayam.

**1985**

Mr. Leonardo Gutter and Mrs. Mónica Socolovsky of Argentina came to Uruguay and approved the opening of the first Sai Center.

**1988**

The first Sri Sathya Sai Center at Montevideo, Centro Sai de Montevideo Este, was registered at the Culture Ministry on January 29.

**1999**

The 4th Latin American Sai Youth Camp was organized in the province of Maldonado.



Sai Youth Camp, 1999

**2003**

Sai Youth conducted the *Sai Orchard Project*, an organic gardening project.

The *First Conference of Religions* was organized by the National Coordination Committee.

## 2004

*Sathya Sai Baba Blood Donors Club* was set up in February.

## 2006

The Sai Group in Juan Lacaze, formed in 2001, received official status. It rendered service to the *Centre for Help to the Disabled*.



25th Anniversary of SSSIO of Uruguay

## 2005

Multiple public meetings were held across many cities (where Sai groups existed) as part of the 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagawan.

SSEHV Training Course was conducted from 2005 until 2019.

## 2009

The Sri Sathya Sai Center of Montevideo started the *Sri Sathya Sai Village Improvement Program* in September.



Sri Sathya Sai Village Improvement

## 2010

The Sri Sathya Sai Foundation of Uruguay was established.

## 2014

The 25th anniversary of the SSSIO of Uruguay was celebrated.

## 2018

Human Values classes for low-income children of the neighborhood were started in September at the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Montevideo.



Human Values Classes

## 2023

A public meeting was held on the SSEHV Program at Piriápolis City in the province of Maldonado.





# When Sathya Sai Calls...

**I WAS BARELY EIGHT WHEN MY MOTHER TOOK ME TO A SAI CENTER IN BARQUISIMETO, VENEZUELA**, for the first time at the invitation of a lady from the center. It was a Thursday, and we entered the hall to attend the *bhajans* (devotional singing).

The people welcomed us warmly with the greeting “*Sai Ram*,” which was very foreign to me at that time. But even as an eight-year-old, I was very impressed with how pristine the place was and the variety of beautiful idols on the altar. Everyone sat on floor cushions, and chairs were provided for the elders and those who couldn’t sit on the floor. We sat beside the lady who had invited us, the founder of that Center.

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**“I firmly believe that Swami gives us what we want so that our hearts can begin to yearn for what He came to give us.”**

The session began with sonorous chants of 'Om,' followed by 108 names of Sathya Sai Baba in adoration and worship. Gayatri mantra chanting was next, followed by *bhajans*. I was fascinated hearing the enchanting songs in a new language and wondered how it seemed to have some magic. I wanted to participate in the *bhajans* but could only clap in rhythm, unable to decipher and pronounce the words. Later, the lights were put out. I thought this indicated it was all done, and we could go home. But as I stood up, the lights came back, and they sang another song (*Arati*) while waving a flame to the photo of Sai Baba. We were given a pinch of sacred ash (*vibhuti*), after which we dispersed. I told my mom that I did not enjoy that session much. She left it at that.

### **A Childhood and Youth Well-Spent**

Months later, my mother enrolled me and my siblings in *Bal Vikas* (Sai Spiritual Education) classes. These were really fun because while we were taught about God, human values, and the way to lead a good life, we also had lots of play, games, and tasty snacks to enjoy. **I am grateful to my SSE teachers who introduced me to Swami and His wonderful teachings.**

Years later, it was a natural transition for me to grow into a Sai Young Adult. Though I had never seen Swami, I was keen to follow His teachings, which were very appealing to me. In 2005, at the national level of the SSSIO, we all started learning the Rudram-*Namakam* and *Chamakam* (Vedic chants adoring Lord Shiva) . We also enthusiastically participated in service activities organized by the Youth Wing. We would prepare and distribute food to needy people on the streets and to hospital patients. We would visit old-age homes and spend time with the elderly, uplifting their spirits. Often, we also organized tree-planting drives in the city.

In 2006, we received an email inviting all Sai Young Adults to Prasanthi Nilayam to participate in an International Youth Conference in July 2007. I was in high school, dreaming of securing a seat in the prestigious Public University in southern Venezuela. I wanted to prepare for the entrance exam, and the dates clashed with the Youth Conference! So, although I was part of all activities organized by the Sai Youth in preparation for the conference and was providing full-time support doing translations for the Sathya Sai Institute of



Education in Human Values of Venezuela, I decided not to travel to India in July 2007. In addition, I did not have a passport or a visa!

### **When He Calls, Everything Falls in Place**

But in the same year, we received another email. This time, it was an invitation to all educators and members of all Sai Institutes across the world to participate in the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Conference (SSEHV) to be held in Prasanthi Nilayam in 2008. By this time, my exam results came out, and, to my disappointment, I was not accepted by the University. But the blessing is, I was free to go to India. My mother and I were assigned the task of preparing the list of Venezuelans traveling to India. By the beginning of 2008, we had a list of 100 participants. But by June 2008, we had dropouts, and the list became half as long.

My mother had managed to secure discounted flight tickets with an agency as long as there were 60 travelers. To reach that number, my mother also added my name to the list. But I had no passport or visa! My mother reached India successfully with a group of 30 Venezuelans, and I applied for a passport, intending to lead the second contingent of 30 Venezuelans. I traveled with my father to the capital, Caracas, to expedite my passport issuance

at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The plan was to get the passport and then rush to the Indian embassy to make an appointment for my visa. It was an unnerving sight to see so many armed soldiers patrolling the Ministry. It was almost 10 AM, and I had no update on my passport. Half an hour later, I heard my name being called and rushed into a small room. I was given a yellow envelope bearing my name and told to verify that the details were correct. I was told, "If you have no issues or questions, you may exit the room."

Tears of joy streamed down my face incessantly as my passport came out of that yellow envelope! That was it? I ran out of the room, my face red and eyes brimming with tears. My father wondered what had happened. When I informed him, he, too, shed tears of joy, and we rushed to the Indian Embassy. It was then 1 PM.

As instructed, we left the application form and documents and waited. Around 4:30 PM, the consul himself came to hand over my passport. He said, "Today is Friday, and you came a bit late. There was no time to print the visa, so I gave you a handwritten one. Enjoy your trip to India."

### **Swami's Gifts to Me**

That was how my first trip to Swami materialized. It was the most memorable trip of my life, and I attended the SSEHV conference in July 2008. Swami showered

so much love and blessings on all of us. Most importantly, **He assured us that He is always with us everywhere and at all times.**

I was so touched by the experience that I prayed to Baba, “Swami, please give me the opportunity to study in the college of my dreams or allow me to stay here and study at Your University.” The very next morning, my father called the University in Venezuela for a final confirmation. The voice on the other end said an email had been sent to the candidate.

“Haven’t you seen it yet? Your daughter needs to come here and sign the papers accepting her admission. She will start this September.”

I firmly believe that **Swami gives us what we want so that our hearts can begin to yearn for what He came to give us.**

Patience and perseverance are essential, along with complete faith. He is always with us. He is always looking after us... listening to us. Believe it!

These days, I live in India, in the city of Pune. I am married to an Indian, and we have a baby girl. I am still an active member of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization and the local Samithi (Center). I lead my life inspired by what Swami said in His discourse on July 16, 1997, *“It is the privilege and duty of the young men and women to promote the welfare, progress, and peace of the world. Transform all your actions into sacred duties. Experience the love of the Divine. That is the meaning of Swami’s declaration: ‘My life is My message.’ Adhere to the ideals set before you by Swami.”*

**Ms. Linda Fonseca**   
VENEZUELA



**Ms. Linda Fonseca** was a Sai Spiritual Education (Balvikas) student in her native city of Barquisimeto, Venezuela. She also completed the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) diploma course from the Instituto Sathya Sai de Educación en Valores Humanos de Venezuela (ISSEVHVEN). She was associated with ISSEVHVEN for more than ten years as a teacher trainer, translator of materials, and interpreter. Linda graduated from the Sri Sathya Sai International Leadership Programme (SSSILP) in 2016. She is an SSE teacher for Group 1 students in Pune, India. Linda has a degree in Modern Languages with a major in International Organizations.



# from the International Sai Young Adults

In this issue, we are excited to announce the SSSIO International Sai Young Adults (YA) Leaders Retreat 2024, which will convene in Athens, Greece. Meanwhile, SSSIO USA Region 5's dynamic YAs have launched a virtual Satsang series, exploring the transformative insights of the Geetha Vahini written by Swami. In the latest InSAIde Scoop Podcast Series, Episode 3, Sister Ayishwariya discusses the nuances of discerning good and bad company, highlighting the essence of personal growth and empathy in spiritual exploration.

## International YA Leaders Retreat

With the immense blessings of our beloved Swami, the **SSSIO International Sai Young Adults (YA) Leaders Retreat 2024**, themed *"Make your Role Roar,"* is scheduled to be held from July 26 to 29, 2024, in the serene ambiance of Sai Prema, a beautiful venue situated in the historic city of Athens, Greece.

This retreat aims to unite Zonal, National, and Regional YA Coordinators and International YA Subcommittees, fostering heartfelt connections, strengthening teamwork, and charting the course for the future. **Daily spiritual practices like meditation, prayer, and devotional singing, coupled with physical activities, inspiring workshops, nature outings, seaside sojourns, shared meals, and uplifting engagements to build spiritual comradery, form part of the program.**

Stay tuned for further updates on the retreat's agenda and activities as we gear up for this sunny Greek rendezvous in the summer! More exciting details to follow soon.

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](mailto:yacoordinator@sathyasai.org)

# AROUND THE WORLD

## Geetha Vahini Series, USA

With divine grace, the SSSIO-USA, Region 5 (North Central) launched a virtual Satsang series, bringing together 120 participants for an in-depth exploration of the Geetha Vahini, written by our beloved Swami.

The inaugural *Geetha Vahini Satsang* session on December 3, 2023 marked the beginning of a recurring series scheduled for the first Sunday of each month, featuring Dr. Suresh Govind, a member of the Prasanthi Council and Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Scriptural Studies Committee of the SSSIO, as the guest facilitator.

This follows the successful four-year journey delving into the depths of another beautiful writing of Swami, the *Prema Vahini*, which culminated in a powerful sharing session in July 2023.

All are welcome to join this spiritual community as it embarks on a new quest amid worldwide turmoil, seeking ways to navigate these challenging times. The collective yearning for deeper understanding was palpable among all participants.

**The Geetha Vahini Satsang series aims to extract practical wisdom from this ancient scripture that Bhagawan expounds, guiding individuals on an introspective and transformative journey.** In the initial session on December 3, 2023, participants were encouraged to openly share their genuine feelings of despair and uncertainty, which resonated with many. The discussions centered on refining perspectives using the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita as a beacon for clarity and wisdom.

This session underscored the significance of strengthening mental resilience, drawing parallels to technology developments for adeptly maneuvering life's complexi-



ties. **Surrendering to the Bhagavad Gita's universal wisdom was likened to trusting a pilot during a flight—a pathway to serenity and joy.**

Practical strategies emerged to support this transformative journey. Participants were urged to maintain a “complaint jar” to diminish habitual grievances, fostering a positive mindset. Additionally, participants were prompted to immerse themselves in the words of Geetha Vahini, laying the groundwork for deeper exploration in subsequent sessions. A dedicated WhatsApp group was established to foster ongoing dialogue, periodic motivational podcasts, and shared insights throughout this transformative voyage.

**In essence, this Satsang series signals the start of a voyage toward self-awareness and growth through Geetha Vahini's wisdom.** Armed with practical tools, engaging discussions, and a commitment to personal development, participants embrace a transformative path toward inner peace and evolution.

For further details, kindly contact:

[reg5ya@sathyasaicenters.org](mailto:reg5ya@sathyasaicenters.org)



# InSAIde Scoop Podcast Series

Series 2022, Episode 3:  
*“Is it Right to Judge Others to Avoid Bad Company?” featuring Ms. Ayishwariya Menon*

Host Nira Sailakshmi Kanagasabai engages in a thought-provoking discussion with Ms. Ayishwariya Menon, centered on the complexities of discerning good and bad company as advised by spiritual teachings. Ayishwariya, a versatile biomedical engineer and former National Deputy Young Adult Coordinator of Malaysia, provides insightful perspectives on navigating this spiritual dilemma.

The conversation starts with a crucial question: how do we reconcile Swami’s guidance of avoiding bad company without passing judgment on others? We understand it’s not about judging individuals but understanding the impact of their company on our spiritual progress. **We need to look inward and assess how a person’s influence affects our spiritual journey rather than passing judgment on them.**

Nira raises a common concern about the thin line between judging and discriminating. Ayishwariya clarifies that while judgment stems from emotional reactions, discrimination involves perceiving things objectively using intellect. They delve into real-life scenarios, such as distancing oneself from someone with excessive drinking habits. Ayishwariya also emphasizes the importance of separating the behavior from the person, observing with-



out creating unnecessary narratives, and acknowledging how certain behaviors impact our spiritual path.

The conversation expands to encompass Swami’s teachings on tolerance, compassion and forgiveness. **Ayishwariya highlights that discerning bad company is crucial for personal growth and character development.** She shares her experience of encountering diverse individuals, emphasizing the need to mature spiritually to determine what influences are detrimental to our journey.

Acknowledging personal susceptibility to influences, they discuss the fluidity of perceptions and the importance of introspection. **The conversation underscores the significance of assessing how the company affects us at a conscious level, employing empathy, and elevating consciousness through practices like meditation in challenging situations.**

Summing up, Ayishwariya stresses the idea that personal growth shapes perceptions, urging listeners to remain open-minded and compassionate in their spiritual journeys.

You can listen to the full episode here:

[InSAIde Scoop Episode 3–YouTube](#)

# BE GOOD TO ALL SEE GOD IN ALL

I started High school this term,  
Excitement yes! And many friends I earned.  
My joyful heart bounced around.  
My feet pitter patter on the ground  
From class to class exploring  
Hoping to 'meet' the same kindness that shines  
within me  
But there was this girl, she looked at me so MEAN  
for that behavior was unseen.  
I felt sad all week,  
I even planned to treat her bad  
But Sai says to be good to all and dont be sad  
So I dropped her from my mind and IGNORED her  
once and for all.  
For some reason, time fixed the grudge, she saw me  
today and SMILED.  
I guess all she needed was a little nudge  
to realize we are all well loved.  
For the Sai in me is the same Sai in her  
and the love in me is the same love in her.

Gianna M | Group 2 | Trinidad & Tobago



## TIME WASTE IS LIFE WASTE

I have learned to manage my time, since I understood "Time waste is Life waste".  
Before when I was doing homework I used to scribble and draw on the paper which was not related to my homework. As a result it took long time to finish my work and I couldn't play or go to the park. One day I learned about the teaching of Sathya Sai that if we waste time we waste your life. So then I started doing my things properly on time and never wasted my time.

Aaradhya M | Group 1 | Philippines

The best way to Love  
god is to Love all, Serve all



Mahalakshmi | Group 2 | Thailand





Piyusha P | Group 2 | Mauritius

## Forgiveness

Forgive me my Guru, my friend, my Baba.  
I have began to learn to admit my big and small mistakes. I analyse my behaviours and reactions. I dont want to hurt anybody anymore. I dont argue with friends and my parents. Stand by me in my journey of transformation. I offer you my faults help me to change myself.

## What is Swami

### Swami is love

The grass that gently brushes your feet  
The plants that grow to provide food  
The sun that keeps you warm at day  
The moon that gives you light at night

### Swami is truth

The compliments that come from others  
The words that come from you  
The conscience that speaks within your heart  
The songs that help you learn

### Swami is peace

The calm where your mind sits within  
The environment where you stay  
The people that surround you  
The animals every day

### Swami is righteousness

The heart that keeps you on the right path  
The people that help you right your wrongs  
The books that teach you all you know  
The teachers for every word and song

### Swami is non violence

The voice that keeps you calm in a storm  
The leaders who light the way  
The warnings that you see in times of wrong  
The rewards you receive while forgiving others

Swami is everything

Swami is all  
Swami is one  
Swami is you

Sahana N | Group 2 | USA



Vaishavi | Group 2 | Mauritius

“You can hear the footsteps of Swami when Silence reign in the mind”  
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti  
Love you Swami



Dearest Baba,  
 You are the God of the Universe  
 You created everything . . . . You created me.  
 You know my thoughts, my deepest secrets,  
 my cravings better than myself.  
 So Baba, be my dearest friend.  
 I want to be immersed in Your Light and Love.  
 I want Your blessings showered on me,  
 all through my life . . . . .  
 to Love All, Serve All, Help Ever and Hurt Never!



Vihaan V | Group 1 | Singapore

**STORY** **SELFLESS** **SERVICE** | Stavyaa GIB

Suja is a Swami's Devotee. She likes to help others. Lets see what help she did during that week.

① Helping mom

② Giving food to homeless.

③ Helping parents to collect trash

④ Helping D-D

Stavyaa P. | Group 1 | USA

Nonviolence AHIMSA Don't Hurt Animals

Dhruv G | Group 1 | USA Dhruv G

Name: Sreenika grade: 3rd age: 8

ALWAYS USE TRUTH, NON VIOLENCE, Love, PEACE AND RIGHT CONDUCT.

! THANK! YOU!

Sreenika | Group 1 | USA



# 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 reached through these events streamed on the [sathyasai.org/live](https://sathyasai.org/live) page.

Please visit [sathyasai.org/events](https://sathyasai.org/events) for further details on scheduled events, local dates and timings.

Date of Online Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
February 17-18, 2024	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
February 24, 2024	Saturday	Lunar New Year (Chinese New Year)
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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YouTube



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Threads



Email



Eternal Companion email list



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



When you hold sugar in one hand and water in the other, how can you expect to get sugar syrup? One needs to mix sugar and water. This will result in a cool drink of the syrup. It will be so sweet. Likewise, we should not divide nature and God. *“Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath”* (the cosmos is permeated with the Divine). Every atom and cell are filled with the divine. Recognize this truth. To recognize this truth, whomever one sees, even if someone is one’s enemy, one should love them. Then their heart will transform. Even if someone has done harm, one should express love toward them. Their mind will change.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

November 23, 1996

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**sathyasai.org**

Love All • Serve All  
Help Ever • Hurt Never