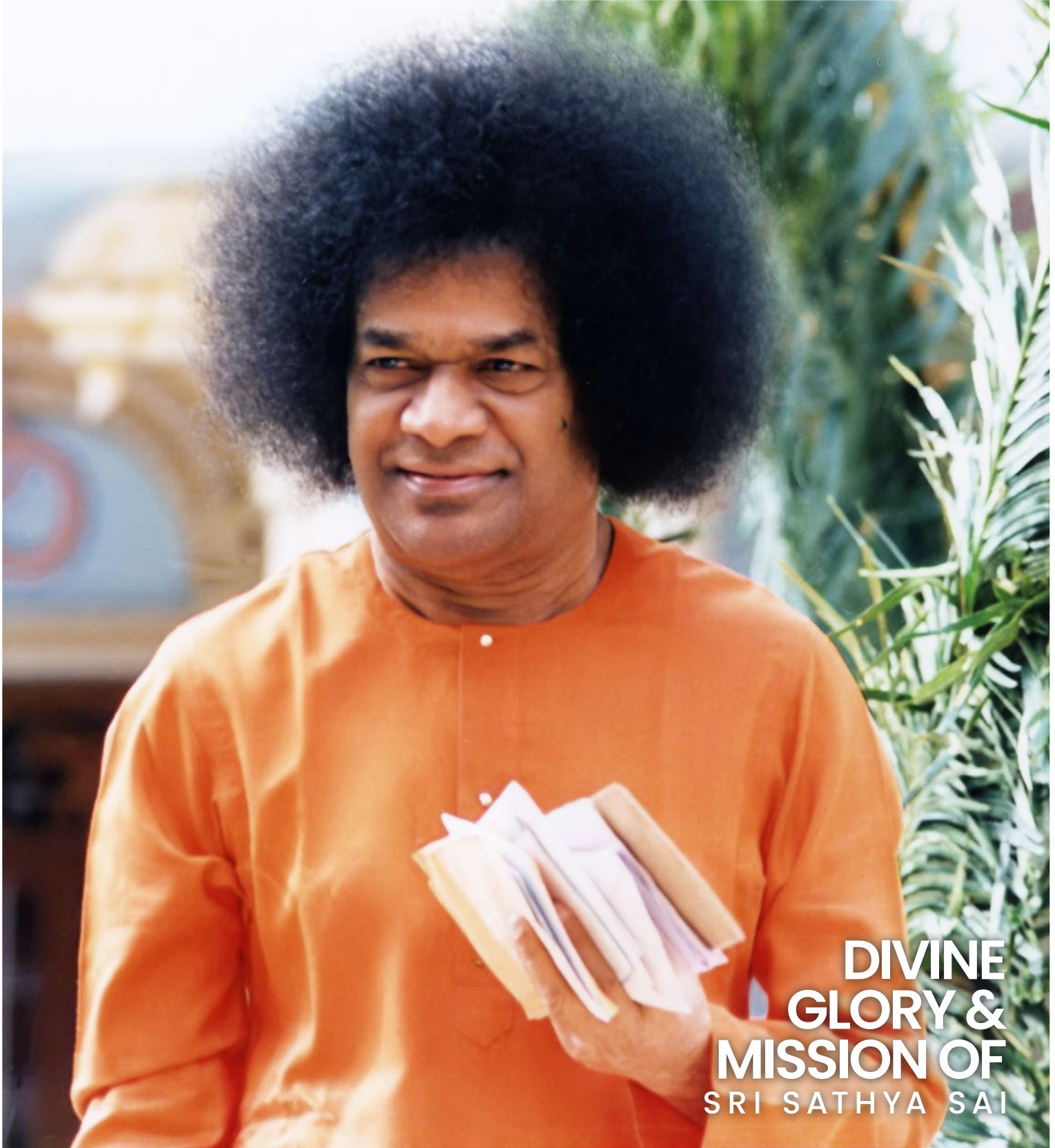


SATHYA SAI
THE
ETERNAL
COMPANION



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 8
AUGUST 2024



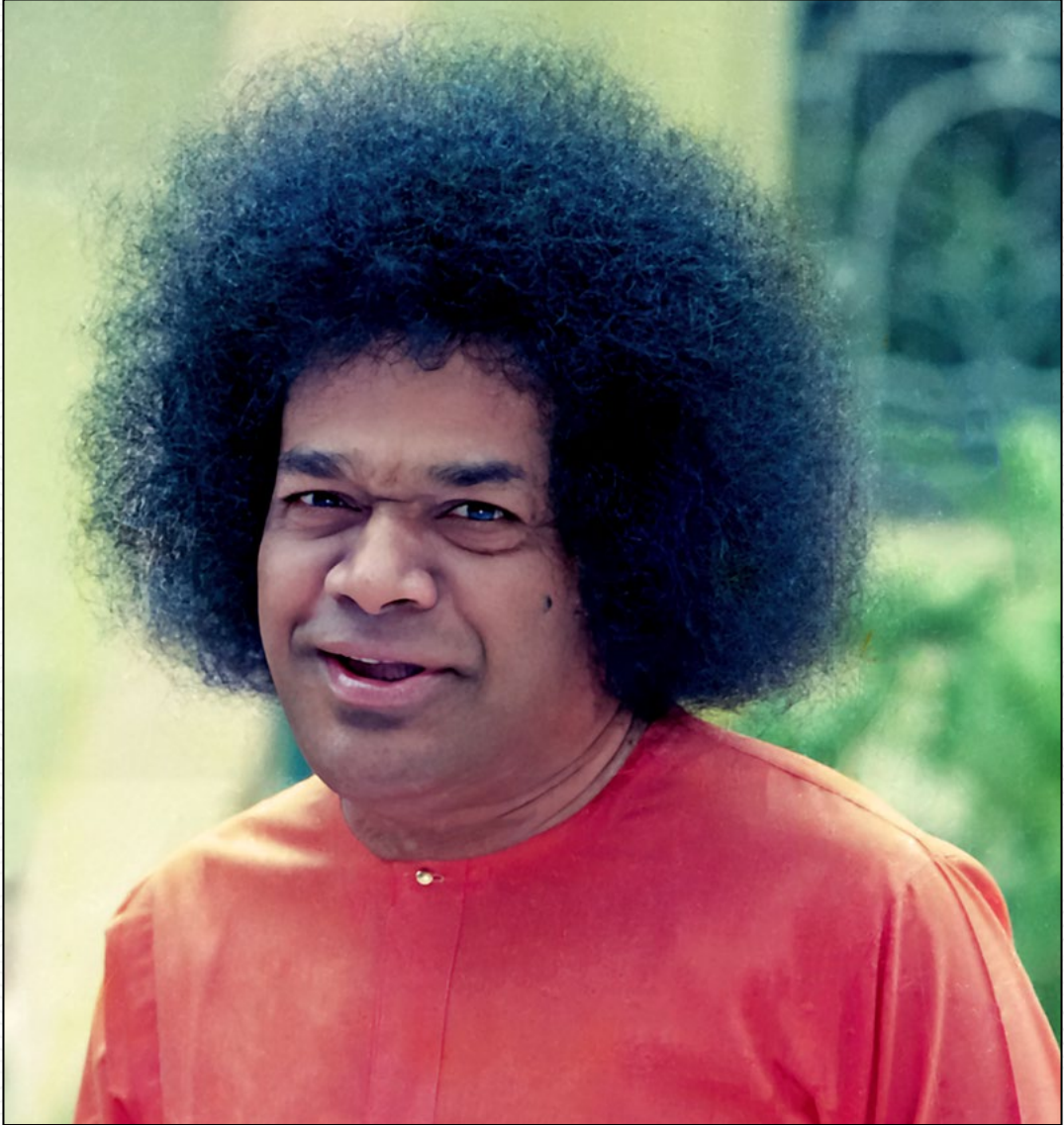
**DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF
SRI SATHYA SAI**



Krishna is the embodiment of Love. Hence, Love is the virtue He appreciates most. Love has to turn into concrete acts of compassion. Cultivate compassion and develop sympathetic understanding, until you reach the goal of merging in the embodiment of Love, Krishna. There are many among you who are engaged in *sadhana*. What is the basic purpose of *sadhana*? Each exercise of the spiritual aspirant (*sadhaka*) is a stream that moves on to the sea of Grace. Believe that the love that prompts you to serve and sympathize is a spark of the Love of God.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

August 14, 1979



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





Volume 3 • Issue 8 • August 2024

ISSN 2831-6908 (Online)
ISSN 2831-6916 (Print)

Copyright © 2024 Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation
Riverside, California, USA

The views and opinions expressed in the articles in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not reflect or imply in any manner expressed, construed, or otherwise the opinions of the editor or publisher.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any manner without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

To request permissions, please contact the
publisher at info@sathyasai.org

Editor: Dr. Narendranath Reddy
Published by: Sri Sathya Sai International Organization

sathyasai.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume 3 • Issue 8

August 2024

- 6 Editorial**
Para Bhakti: Supreme Devotion
- 14 Divine Discourse**
Love God Wholeheartedly, Part 1 – November 24, 1998
- 22 Experiences of Devotees**
Repetition of God's Name by Ms. Joy Thomas
A Train of Thoughts and Experiences in Life With God by Mr. Sunil Kasturi
- 30 From the Divine Pen–Message from Swami**
Assert and Manifest Your True Nature
- 32 Sri Sathya Sai International Organization**
International Conference, Nairobi, Kenya, June 28-July 1, 2024
Divinity Everywhere by Mr. Ashok K. Sakhrani
- 44 Humanitarian Service**
Love in Action–Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, and USA
- 46 Glory of Womanhood**
The Journey to God Comes Full Circle by Ms. Daniella Danilov
- 50 Ideal Sai Young Adults**
Veda Webinar with Swami Chidananda
Summer Showers Series: Experiencing Equanimity with Dr. Sunder Iyer
“Can I be Both Loving and Tough?”–Podcast Summary
A Farewell Gift by Ms. Shruti Lakkaniki
- 56 Sathya Sai Education**
Contributions by Hanisha, Nivi, Rahil, Rishab, Samriddhi, and Vrithika
- 58 SSSIO Events and Websites**

Subscription for **Sathya Sai – The Eternal Companion** is Free

[Click here to subscribe](#)

PARA BHAKTI SUPREME DEVOTION

We celebrate the birthday of Lord Sri Krishna, the *Paripoorna Avatar* (Descent of the Lord with all 16 divine attributes), on August 26, 2024. God has no birth or death, no beginning or end. That is why our beloved Swami, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, says that the true birthday of Lord Krishna is the day we experience His divine love. **Lord Krishna is the embodiment of love, and so, His birthday is the day when divine love is born in our hearts.** The sole aim of human birth is to realize our true nature, which is divine love. That is why Swami says that love is the source, love is the path, and love is the goal.

According to Bhagavata Purana (the glory and story of Lord Sri Krishna), the fifth goal of life (Purushartha), apart from the main four—*Dharma* (right conduct), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (desire), and *Moksha* (liberation)—is *Para Bhakti* or supreme devotion. **This is love for love's sake. Para Bhakti is considered equivalent to Jnana** (supreme knowledge) by the lovers of God. Let us derive inspiration from a few blessed souls who attained God through *Para Bhakti*. One of the best ways to enjoy God's love and glory is

by listening to the stories of His love for devotees and the devotees' love for Him.

The Power of His Stories

This facet is exemplified by the story of the great sage Veda Vyasa. He codified the Vedas and wrote the epic Mahabharata. In fact, the Mahabharata itself contains two great scriptures. The first is the **Bhagavad Gita**, the conversation between Lord Krishna and princely warrior Arjuna, which is the essence of all the Upanishads. The second is the **Vishnu Sahasranama**, 1008 names of Lord Vishnu, given by the prominent statesman, devotee, and great hero, Bhishma. Despite writing the great epic Mahabharata, Vyasa was restless, unhappy, and not at peace because, while writing the epic, his mind had to dwell on evil characters like Duryodhana, Dushasana, and Shakuni. This polluted his mind with impure thoughts. That was when he was blessed by a visit from the celestial sage, Narada, who gave him the remedy for his malady. **He advised him to write the Bhagavata Purana, the sweet stories of the Lord. This is the elixir for parched hearts, the panacea for all the problems of the world. These stories remove all the impurities from**



our hearts and elevate us to enjoy divine bliss.

When the noble king, Parikshit listened to the stories from sage Suka for a week, he was liberated from the cycle of birth and death. The scriptures also speak of the story of king Khatvanga, who contemplated on God with intense love for less than an hour and attained liberation. That is the power of *Para Bhakti* (supreme devotion). Listening to stories of such bhakti inspires, invokes, and nurtures love for God within us.

Unmatched Love of the Gopikas

The highest and best example of supreme devotion is set by the Gopikas, the paragons of virtues extolled by all the great masters. They had pure, unsullied, divine love for Lord Sri Krishna. They loved His name, His form, and His sports. Such was their intense love that they lamented that their eyelids were a hindrance because when they blinked, they momentarily lost the darshan of their beloved Krishna!

Swami, in His divine discourses and also in private conversations with devotees, extols

the devotion of the Gopikas. Once, Krishna feigned that he was suffering from a headache for which the cure was the application of the dust from the feet of a devotee to his forehead. The celestial sage Narada went on a mission to collect the dust from Krishna's consorts, Sathyabhama, Rukmini, and others, whom he regarded as great devotees of the Lord. But all of them refused to give the dust from their feet because they considered it sacrilege and sinful to have such dust applied on the Lord's forehead. Ultimately Narada visited the Gopikas, who did not have the slightest hesitation to offer the dust from their feet if only it would give immediate relief to the Lord, regardless of the potential consequences to themselves. The Gopikas did not discriminate whether it was right or wrong for them to offer the dust from their feet. Their only concern was to give relief to their Lord by any means. **They jubilantly declared, "Our entire life is dedicated to Krishna. His joy is our joy."**

Such was the spirit of oneness with which they offered the dust of their feet, and at that

very moment, Krishna was rid of His ailment. By the time Narada reached Krishna, the Lord was beaming with smiles. Krishna told the sage, "You are boasting that you are devotees of the Lord. But none of you have the utterly selfless devotion of the Gopikas."

Narada realized his folly and foolishness, seeing the purity of the love of the Gopikas. Experiencing such outpourings of love, **Narada realized that it was not possible to separate Krishna from the hearts of the Gopikas. It is said that one who knows Brahman becomes Brahman. In the same way, the Gopikas became one with Krishna by knowing Krishna through and through.**

Experiencing Krishna's Omnipresence

The Gopikas had realized and experienced the omnipresence of Lord Krishna. When they saw the clouds, they would be reminded of the beautiful complexion of Lord Krishna. When they saw the leafy trees and bushes, they were reminded of the beautiful hairlocks of Lord Krishna. When they saw the creepers embracing the trees, they contemplated their relationship with Lord Krishna. Their thoughts, words, and deeds were always focused on Lord Krishna and Krishna only.

Swami speaks particularly about the Gopikas, Suguna and Radha. In those days, there was no electricity. People in the village used to go to the house of Nanda, chief of the village and Krishna's father, and light their oil lamps from the first lamp lit in Nanda's house. A newlywed daughter-in-law called Suguna once arrived in that village. Her mother-in-law instructed her to go to the house of Nanda and get her lamp lighted from theirs, as was the tradition. When Suguna went to the house of Nanda and lit the lamp, she saw Krishna in that flame. Enchanted by this divine vision, she lost body consciousness. She fixed her gaze on that beautiful form of Lord Krishna in the flame

and was lost in bliss. She did not even realize that her fingers had caught fire, having touched the flame as she was lost in total bliss. In the meanwhile, other ladies from the neighboring houses had also arrived to light their own lamps. They were wonderstruck upon witnessing this precarious scene. **They noticed that Suguna was not moving away from the flame even though her fingers were burning. Then they realized that she was having a vision of Lord Krishna in that flame.** They even sang a song describing the incident, which Swami would sing melodiously.

The other noteworthy Gopika that Swami speaks about is Radha. Swami has also written a play depicting her devotion, *Radha Bhakti*, which was enacted by His students. The climax of that play is a story that Swami narrates in many discourses. Before giving up her mortal coil, Radha was sitting on the bank of the sacred river Yamuna and feeling very sad that Krishna was not with her. She intensely prayed to Him to grant her His divine *darshan*. She sang, "O Krishna, speak to me and fill my heart with bliss. Distill the essence of the Vedas and make the eternal music emanate through your flute, O Krishna." **When she sang like this, Krishna appeared and fulfilled her desire by playing on His flute. While listening to this divine melody, she breathed her last. Her *Jeevan Jyothi* (life principle) merged with Krishna.** Krishna threw the flute away and never touched it again.

Swami says that the word Radha itself demonstrates the Krishna consciousness in which she always lived. If we repeat the name "RADHA" rapidly and continuously, we get the next word as "ADHAR" (basis), the next as "DHARA" (ceaseless flow), the next as "ARADH" (worship), and finally back to "RADHA." **From this, we can see that Radha is one for whom the worship of the Lord is the basis of life. One who does**

this *aradhana* (adoration) continuously is Radha. One who always has the thought of God is Radha.

Uddhava Humbled

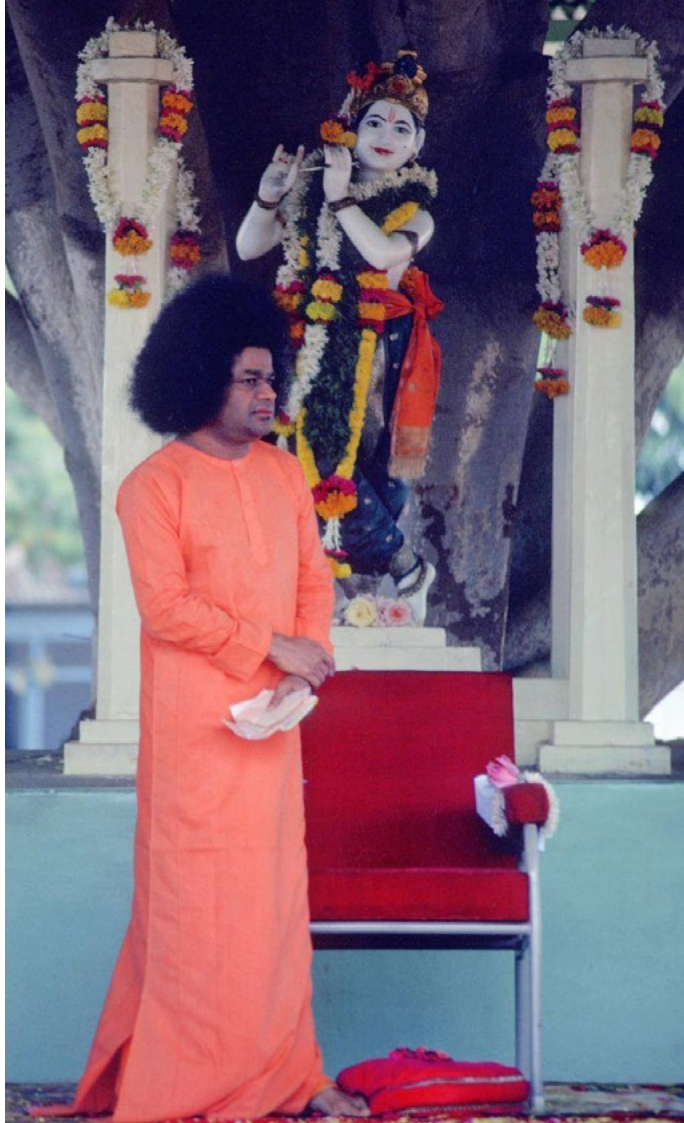
When Krishna left for Mathura, the Gopikas were languishing in grief, unable to bear the separation from their beloved Lord. They were all the time eagerly looking towards Mathura to see when Krishna would return. To console them, Lord Krishna sent his friend and great devotee, Uddhava, to them. Like in the case of Narada, the stated reason was for the Gopikas to be consoled and educated, but the hidden motive of the Lord was to make Uddhava realize what true devotion is. Uddhava was a great devotee, but he had the subtle pride of knowledge.

One day, the Gopikas espied a cloud of dust in the distance and thought that Krishna had at last relented and was returning to Gokula. They saw a chariot with a man seated in it. The chariot stopped, but there was no Krishna in it. With their hearts dedicated to the Supreme Lord, the Gopikas were not inclined even to look at the strange visitor, who was none other than Uddhava.

The moment Uddhava got down from the chariot, he started delivering a long exhortation to the Gopikas. "Oh, ye Gopikas! You are ignorant of the *shastras* (sacred literature). You have no wisdom. Like silly, dumb people, you are pining for Krishna. If you know the *shastras*, you will realize that Krishna is ever with you. He resides in your very hearts. Instead of taking delight in the Krishna that dwells within you, you are pining for the physical form of Krishna. This is due to your ignorance. I shall teach you the science of Yoga for which Krishna Himself has sent me."

The Gopikas did not consider it proper to speak directly to a stranger. They adopted an intermediary and addressed a bee to reply to Uddhava. The Gopikas said, "Oh, bee! These words (of Uddhava) are adding fuel to the fire that is burning in us because of our separation from Krishna."





Swami says that we must yearn to not just be ‘near’ to the Lord but also ‘dear’ to the Lord.

was stupefied when he realized the Gopikas’ single-minded devotion to Krishna.

The Lord’s True Instrument

The ‘murali’ or flute of Lord Krishna is an ideal for all devotees to aspire to. It is not only near to Him but also dear to Him. **Swami says that we must yearn to not just be ‘near’ to the Lord but also be ‘dear’ to the Lord.** Swami says that the flute is always at the Lord’s lips and with Him for three reasons:

1. The flute is straight, without any crookedness. This conveys that one must have harmony of thought, word, and deed.
2. The flute is completely hollow. This implies that one must not be filled with ego.
3. The flute is very light. This connotes that one must not be heavy with worldly desires.

How to Make Krishna My Own?

Lord Krishna had two chief consorts, Satyabhama and Rukmini. In fact, Swami’s grandfather, Kondama Raju, constructed a temple for Satyabhama in the village of Puttaparthi when she appeared to him in a dream, getting drenched in the rain. Satyabhama is known for her intense love for Lord Krishna. But in the beginning, she was very possessive of Lord Krishna and wanted to have him all for herself and be able to control him. She was very beautiful, and she thought that she could use her beauty and wealth to capture Lord Krishna all for herself. Can God be ever bought for money? No! Love alone can capture Him, but Sathyabhama did not recognize this truth. The other consort, Rukmini, was pure and *sathwic* in nature. She was humble and kind.

Uddhava then held out to the Gopikas the letter Krishna had sent to them and said, “Here is Krishna’s message to you. At least read that.” One Gopika immediately wailed, “We are burning in the fire of agony caused by Krishna’s absence. If we touch His letter, it may be burnt to ashes. We dare not touch it.” Yet another Gopika said, “The tears from our eyes will stain the pearl-like letters in Krishna’s epistle. We cannot endure seeing His message.” Uddhava then said, “At least listen to my message. I shall teach you the knowledge of yoga.” Another Gopika answered, unable to control her grief, “Oh, bee! We have only one mind and that has gone with Krishna to Mathura. If we had four minds, we could turn one to yoga, another to some other subject, and so on. **But the only mind we have has been surrendered to Krishna. We have no room for any yoga lessons.**” This message is famously known as *Bhramara Geeta* (The Song of the Bee). Uddhava

Lord Krishna wanted to teach a lesson to Satyabhama. Sage Narada appeared on the scene at this stage, and the matter was placed before him. Narada is the one who imparts wisdom. He decided to stage a small drama. He asked for a big double pan weighing scale to be brought and then invited Krishna to sit on one of the pans and declared that the Lord could be bought for the right price. Krishna, of course, knew very well what Narada was up to and smilingly obliged the sage. Narada then asked Sathyabhama to place gold on the other pan. She was told that if she could match Krishna's weight in gold, He would be hers completely. Else, she would lose Him forever! Satyabhama kept piling all the gold from her treasury. But lo and behold! No matter how much gold was placed on the other pan, the scale could not be balanced to equal the weight of the Lord. Sathyabhama felt utterly frustrated.

In desperation, she ran up to Rukmini to seek advice, who at that time was engaged in the worship of Tulsi (holy basil). After hearing what Sathyabhama had to say, **Rukmini remarked, "God belongs to all and resides in every being as the eternal indweller. No one can have a monopoly on God, nor is it good to even entertain such a desire."** All the gold was then removed from the pan, and Narada now asked Rukmini to try balancing the scale to match Krishna's weight. Rukmini replied, "O sage, I believe Krishna's form can be balanced only by His sacred name, and that is what I am going to do." Narada was not ready to accept such a scheme and said, "The form is visible and tangible, whereas the name is not. I want you to match Krishna's form with something that has a form." Rukmini agreed to this suggestion.

She took a Tulsi leaf in her hand and prayed, "O God, You are worshipped with leaf, flower, fruit, and water. If you are truly pleased when You are offered pure love instead of any of these, **I pray that You be balanced**

by Your Name, and then tilt the scale with this Tulsi leaf." So praying, Rukmini said, "Krishna!" Immediately, the scale balanced, even though one of the pans was empty, because the name of Krishna equals the form of Krishna. Rukmini then placed the Tulsi leaf on the empty pan, and the pan with Krishna went up instantly; the Lord had been more than matched!

This is a valuable lesson on the power of the name of the Lord and the fact that offering even a leaf with love from one's heart wins the grace and love of the Lord.

Four Lessons from Draupadi's Devotion

The other example is that of Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas. She was a lady of noble character. The wicked Kaurava brothers humiliated her in the royal court's public assembly by trying to disrobe her. There are many lessons to be learned from this single episode.





The **first lesson** is that God is our only refuge. In that assembly were many great and valorous elders like Bhishma and Drona, including her own five strong and brave husbands, Dharmaraja, Bheema, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. But nobody could come to her rescue. That is when Draupadi turned to her beloved Lord Krishna for help, and He provided her with an endless supply of sarees, which the wicked Dushasana was unable to remove to disrobe her. **This incident shows that, ultimately, real help comes only from the Lord and not from anyone or anything in this world. That is why Swami would often say that the only friend and the best friend for everyone is God.**

The **second lesson** we learn is that whatever we do for God comes back to us a hundred-fold. Once, Lord Krishna cut his finger and needed a bandage. While everyone went looking for a bandage, Draupadi promptly tore her new saree and used it as a bandage for the Lord's finger. For that little act of spontaneous love, she was rewarded with an unending supply of saree. **That is why**

Swami says that if we take one step toward him, he will take a hundred steps toward us.

The **third lesson** we learn concerns the true dwelling place of the Lord. When Draupadi called out to Lord Krishna to come and save her honor, there was a delay in Krishna's response. When she asked Krishna why he was delayed, Krishna said that he responded as per her thoughts. When she prayed to Krishna to protect her and called out to Him as *Dwarakavasi* (resident of Dwarka), *Brindavana Sanchari* (one who wanders in Brindavan), etc, Krishna had to travel all the way from Dwarka and Brindavana, true to the words of her prayers. **But when she addressed Him as *Hridayavasi* (indweller of her heart), He manifested before her that very moment. Where does God live? He lives in your heart. Therefore, there is no use calling Him with the feeling that He dwells somewhere outside.**

In Bhagavad Gita (18.61), Lord Krishna says that he is the indweller of the hearts of all beings.

The **fourth lesson** we learn from this incident is about total surrender. When she is

being disrobed by the wicked Dushasana, Draupadi tries desperately to hold on to her saree to avoid being disrobed. When all her efforts are of no avail, she realizes that her only recourse is the Lord. At that moment, she lets go of her grip on the saree and raises both her hands in total surrender to the Lord. **Upon total surrender, the Lord immediately responds and comes to her rescue to save her honor.** Since Draupadi is always absorbed in Krishna consciousness, she is also called Krishnaa. She had pure love for Krishna, and Krishna saved her honor on many occasions.

The Strength Behind Draupadi's Patience and Forbearance

Once, during the exile of the Pandavas, Sage Durvasa visited their hermitage with thousands of his disciples. He informed the Pandavas that they were going for a bath in a nearby river and would return and have food with them. The Pandavas were gripped by panic and anxiety as to how to provide food to so many guests when they had nothing in the hermitage to serve them. Though they had been blessed by the Akshayapatra (mystic vessel given by the Sun God that provides an inexhaustible supply of food), it would cease to supply food once it had been washed for the day. Unfortunately, the vessel was already used, washed, and put away. Fearing the curse of Sage Durvasa, renowned for his quick temper, Draupadi prayed fervently to Krishna to save them from this embarrassing predicament. Krishna promptly appeared on the scene and asked Draupadi to give Him something to eat. Draupadi replied, "Krishna, if we were living in Hastinapur, I would have certainly given

You a sumptuous feast. But alas! We live in a forest living on roots and tubers. In such a situation, what can I offer You?" Krishna told her to look into the vessel, which she had already cleaned, to see if there were any food particles left in it. She did accordingly and found a tiny piece of leaf sticking to the vessel. **Krishna ate that leftover leaf. As soon as He did so, the hunger of Durvasa and his disciples was satiated, and they went away without bothering the Pandavas. In this way, Krishna saved the Pandavas from the curse of Durvasa.**

All this was possible because of her complete and intense faith in Krishna and devotion to Krishna.

This incident shows that once we please the Lord, everyone is pleased. Always in life, one should work to please the Lord, not worrying about the comments, criticism, or compliments of other people.

It is said that *Bhakta* (devotee), *Bhagawan* (God), *Bhagavatam* (stories of the Lord), and *Bhakti* (pure love for God) are equally sacred and sanctify our lives. **Contemplating the lives of these exemplary devotees is a source of inspiration and nurtures divine love in us.**

Even as we celebrate Krishna Janmashtami, let us pray incessantly for that pure, unsullied, and unconditional love for our Lord, Sai Krishna. May we draw inspiration from the *Para Bhakti* of these stalwart devotees and achieve the ultimate goal of our lives—to merge with Him.

Jai Sai Ram!

Love God Wholeheartedly

Part 1

*Maanam hithwa priyo bhavathi
Krodham hithwa na sochathi
Kaamam hithwa arthavan bhavathi
Lobham hithwa sukhi bhavathi.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

*(A person becomes lovable by giving up his ego.
When one gives up anger, he will have no sorrow.
By giving up desire, a person becomes rich, and by
giving up greed, a person becomes happy.)*

Embodiments of Love! You should conquer whatever is the root cause of sorrow and happiness (develop equanimity). As long as a person has an ego, no one, including one's wife and children, will love him wholeheartedly, though they may pretend to do so just to adhere to social conventions. **As long as there is anger in an individual, grief is inevitable. Anger is the cause of sorrow in a person.** As long as there are desires, your wishes will not be fulfilled.

When you rid yourself of greed, desire, anger, and ego, you will be loved, and your sorrow will be eliminated. Then your desires will be fulfilled, and you will experience happiness. **These four qualities (greed, desire, anger, and ego) are the root causes**

of all sorrow and difficulties in the world.

They drown people in sorrow and cause restlessness. If we inquire why people undertake spiritual practices, we will find that people take up spiritual practices to attain comfort, happiness, and peace. However, these spiritual practices do not confer bliss, happiness, sorrow, or sadness. When we conquer the source from which bliss and sorrow arise, then both bliss and sorrow are destroyed.

What is the origin of bliss in you? From where does the sorrow originate? You have to conquer the origin of bliss and sorrow. That origin is the mind. Bliss originates from the mind. Our sorrow originates from the mind. Vedanta has declared that the mind is the cause of bondage and liber-

“

Love is the fundamental basis or the inner aspect of these nine paths of devotion. Love is the key to everything.



ation (*Mana eva manushyanam karanam bandha mokshayoh*). **For bondage and liberation, and for bliss and sorrow, the mind is the source. Once you control your mind, you will grow beyond the dualities of sadness and bliss and experience a life of equanimity.** However, the way you desire bliss is the same way you should desire sorrow. When you welcome both pleasure and pain with the same feeling, same attitude, and same joy, you will experience equanimity.

When we truly inquire, the pleasure that comes from sorrow is more permanent than the pleasure that comes from joy. When we look at the lives of the pious saints and inquire into the lives of ideal men, they were able to find supreme peace only out of sorrow. All those whom you believe to be the ideal men in this world were able to obtain this joy from sorrow.

Whomsoever you believe to be great, even those great people have attained this greatness only through sorrow. So, every ideal man, woman, human being, and noble person experiences bliss from

sorrow. *Na sukthath labbyathe sukham* (happiness is not derived from happiness). One cannot get happiness from happiness. It is from sorrow that we get happiness. It is imperative that every person recognizes this truth. But people desire happiness, not sorrow. This is very contrary to the spiritual path. People desire the fruits of meritorious deeds and do not want the result of sinful deeds. It is said in Vedam:

*Punyasya phalamichchanthi
Punyam nechchanthi manavah
Na papaphalamichchanthi
Papam kurvanthi yathnathahah.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

(The seeker hopes for the fruit of good deeds. But they are not coming forward to perform meritorious deeds. He says no to the fruit of sin or the consequences of sin. Even though he says no, knowingly indulges in sinful deeds.)

This is contrary to real spiritual practice (*sadhana*). Whatever you hope for, you must make every effort for it. You do not want the fruits of sinful actions, yet you indulge in them. Do not undertake such

actions; today, however, spiritual practices continue this way.

Love is the Undercurrent of the Nine Forms of Devotion

For the spiritual seeker, there are nine paths of devotion to attain divinity or experience Self-realization.

*Shravanam kirtanam Vishnu
smaranam pada-sevanam
Archanam vandanam dasyam
sakhyam atma-nivaedanam.*
(Sanskrit Verse)

*(Listening, singing, remembrance,
serving the Lord's Feet
Worship, salutation, servitude,
friendship, surrender).*

When you delve deeper into these nine paths of devotion, love is the very life and the cardinal principle or the underlying current. If one does not have love, one does not like to listen to God's glories. One cannot do *bhajan* if one does not have love. One cannot chant Lord Vishnu's name if one does not have love. **In this way, love is the fundamental basis or the inner aspect of these nine paths of devotion. Love is**

the key to everything. But how can one attain the principle of Brahman? Brahma means *Brihat Swarupa* (the all-pervasive cosmic principle). The aspect of the philosophy of Brahma is all-pervading. Where is the birthplace of Brahma? The Puranas describe him as born from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Who is Vishnu? Vishnu is all-pervading. Lord Vishnu and Brahma are called *Atma* (Self). What is Self? *Atma* was born from 'Ahasu.' What is *Ahasu*? It means daylight. When this 'Ahasu' begins, the darkness disappears. So, if we want knowledge to dispel darkness, we must shine a light. So *Parabrahma Swarupa* (Form of Supreme God) is named '*Divya Jyoti Swarupa*'—Embodiment of Divine Light. He does not have a name. It is called *brihat*. God is light.

God is the brilliant radiance, the Effulgent One (*Prakasha*). What should we do if we want to experience this effulgent aspect of God? *Prakasha* (God) is named '*Sath*.' All else perishes. '*Yadrishyam Thannashyam*,' all that is seen is bound to perish.



SURRENDER



LISTENING



SINGING

FRIENDSHIP



REMEMBRANCE



Nine Forms of DEVOTION

SERVITUDE



SALUTATION

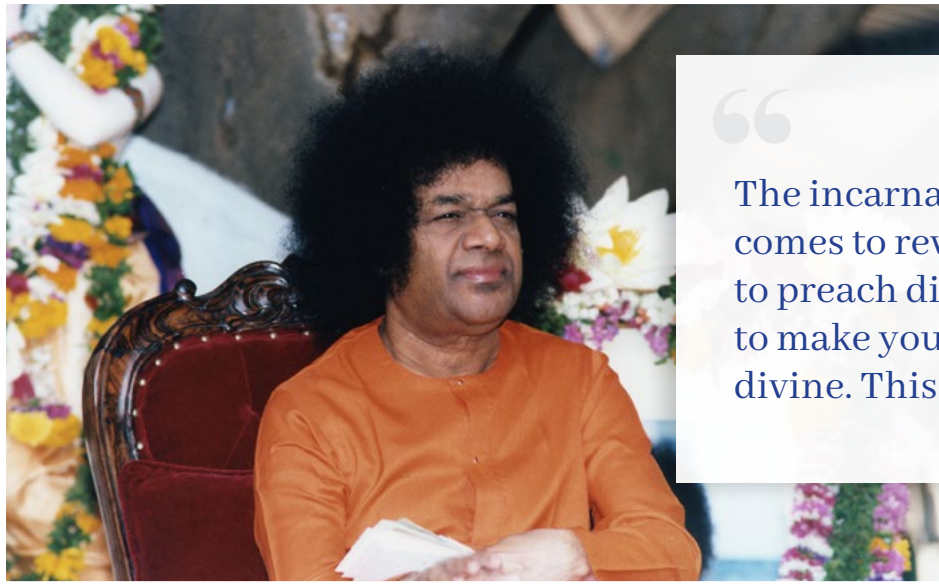


WORSHIP



SERVING THE LORD'S FEET





“

The incarnation essentially comes to reveal unity in diversity, to preach divinity in unity, and to make you realize that you are divine. This is the goal of life.

*Asthiram jeevanam loke,
asthiram yavvanam dhanam
Asthiram dara puthradi
sathyam keerthi dvayam sthiram*

(Sanskrit verse)

*(Life in this phenomenal world is impermanent; Youth and wealth are transient; Wife and children will pass away; **Only Truth and reputation are permanent and eternal**).*

Everything is perishable and decaying. Everything disappears. But what remains is only the truth. That is why Brahma, the cosmic form, is called Truth. From that truth came wisdom. This wisdom and truth are all-pervasive. That is why Veda says Brahma is 'Truth, Wisdom, and Infinite' (*Sathyam jnanam anantam Brahma*).

Why does God incarnate?

What should man achieve today? This truth is wisdom. Wisdom is infinite. Infinity is the form of *Brahma*. Names are many, but the all-pervading divinity is one. That is 'Sath.' What should we do to attain this truth? Follow the truth. What is truth? Truth is permanent and does not change in any of the three periods of time - past, present, or future. Anything can change, but truth cannot change. Truth remains the same in the past, present, and in the future. Why is God incarnating? When

such a question arises from a spiritual perspective, the answer is that the incarnations essentially come to reveal unity in diversity, to preach divinity in unity, and to make you realize that you are divine. This is the goal of life. This is our destination. We must believe that diverse forms of humanity are all one. Bodies may differ. Countries may differ. Humans can be different. Ways of life can be different. But all is one. That is *atma tatvamu* (philosophy of Self). That is called conscience. Every person has this conscience from head to toe. Everyone has the same Self (*Atma*) that you have. Also, whatever Self is in everyone, that Self is there in you as well. The goal of spirituality is to recognize and apply this truth.

Everything is the Self

But today, man, due to attachment to the body, forgets his real nature and considers one as many. Even though there is only one, he sees it as many and different from him. That is ignorance. Spirituality is to make one realize unity in diversity. Incarnations have come to make one realize this truth. "My child, everyone is not separate; all are one. My Self is reflected in all of you (*mamatma sarvabhuta antaratma*). All these bodies are like mirrors. Where did this mirror come from? This mirror is made from clay (earth). These mirrors are

The mind is the root cause of everything.

The mind is the one that brings sorrow, sadness, as well as bliss, and peace to us.



the shapes of this soil (clay). As far as these reflections are concerned, they are mortal. So, immortality is attained only when we transcend death by going beyond the identification with mortal forms.

One should try hard to recognize the divinity in this unity. All mirrors are made of clay (earth). We need to transmute this material body into a conscious being. There is no need to do any other *sadhana* to attain this consciousness. It is a mistake to think that we are achieving it because we strive for it. **Your form is the form of the Self; your joy is the joy of the Self; everything is the Self.** But you are not making enough effort to recognize the truth of the Self. There is fire. Fire is fire when you use it properly. But when it is neglected, this fire gets extinguished, as the ash covers it. But if the ash is blown away, the fire appears again. In the same way, in every human being, the Self continues to burn like a fire. Because you are careless sometimes, this fire gets covered by ash. If you practice chanting the divine name, the ash will disappear, and the fire will reappear. No effort needs to be made for this fire. It is enough to blow away the ash covering it. What is covering the

ash? It is pride, anger, desire, attachments, and bodily attachment that are growing out of control in the human being.

Self-enquiry is the Way to Realize the Truth

It is this attachment to the body that increases the ego. You cannot achieve anything as long as the ego prevails. Getting rid of ego is true humanness. A human does not have any ego at birth. He develops it gradually. **Thinking "I and Mine," one develops ego and attachment. 'I-ness' and 'my-ness' are the ego and attachment that cause bondage. One becomes blissful when one gets rid of these two obstacles. This happiness is not attained by any other special *sadhana*.** All other spiritual practices may only give temporary mental satisfaction. However, it is impossible to attain the eternal truth in this impermanent life and ephemeral world. All experiences and feelings are temporary. They are not true and eternal. The wisdom of the Self is true and eternal. This Self is eternal and true. This is within you. You are the Self. You should develop and grow such feelings day by day. **Trying to find out who you are by questioning is**

'information,' but searching, and knowing by Self-enquiry 'who am I' is 'transformation.'

Bozzani mentioned that no one is asking themselves the question, "Who am I?" On the contrary, every human being is asking others, "Who are you? Who are you?" But they are not trying to find out who they are. What do you get by asking others, "Who are you?" This gives information only. There is no benefit from acquiring just information. If you know who you are or who I am, that will lead to transformation. **So, asking, "Who are you?" is for information,**

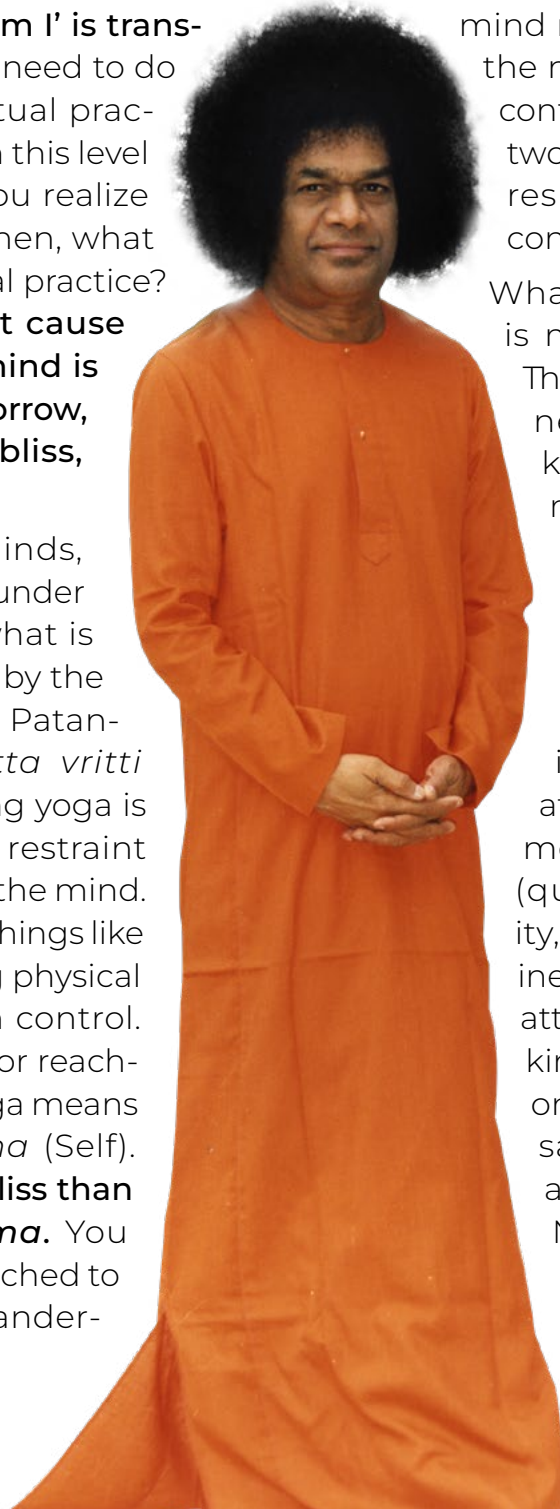
and knowing 'who am I' is transformation. You don't need to do any *sadhanas* (spiritual practices) when you reach this level of transformation. You realize who you really are. Then, what is the need of spiritual practice? **The mind is the root cause of everything. The mind is the one that brings sorrow, sadness, as well as bliss, and peace to us.**

If we master our minds, everything will come under our control. This is what is beautifully explained by the Master of yoga, sage Patanjali as, "*yogah chitta vritti nirodhakah*," meaning yoga is the cessation or the restraint of the fluctuations of the mind. Yoga does not mean things like Hatha Yoga, involving physical postures and breath control. Yoga means arriving or reaching the goal of life. Yoga means union with the *Atma* (Self). **There is no greater bliss than the union with *Atma*.** You are holding on or attached to the body. You are wander-

ing, holding onto the mind, and inquiring with intellect but not reaching the proximity of *Atma*. If you reach the Self, the highest, there is no further journey; that is the last station. That is the station (*Atma*) you should reach.

The body is the first stage, senses the second, and the mind is the third stage. The next stage is the intellect. Beyond the intellect is *Atma*. You are not even reaching the stage of the intellect. You are traveling only to the level of mind. What is this mind? The mind is the conglomeration of senses. You are suffocating your mind mired in the senses. Hence, the mind becomes the cause of confusion and depression. These two (confusion and depression) result in losing the fuse that connects with *Atma*.

What is this body? This body is made up of five elements. This can never be the permanent truth. You might not know what happens at any minute because anything can happen at any minute. Do not rely on the body, which is not eternal and permanent. Due to attachment to the body, attachment to money is also increasing. Due to the attachment to wealth, attachment to *gunas* or attributes (qualities like *satwa*—serenity, *rajas*—passion, and *tamas*—inertia) is increasing. Due to the attachment to these *gunas*, all kinds of infatuations arise, and one is deluded. However, it is said that today, education and money are important. Neither education nor money is bad. Rather one should see



if there is good or bad in the person who utilizes them.

This is water. What is the color of the water? It is clear and pure. If the water is put in a red bottle, it appears red. This red color is not the water's color but the color of the bottle. If the same water is put in a black bottle, it will appear black. This black color is not the color of the water, but again, it is the bottle's color. If the same water is put in a white color bottle, it will appear white in color. Likewise, education and money are like pure water. If it is introduced into a gentle heart, with *satwa*, it will appear pure. If introduced into the heart with *rajo guna*, it will appear red. But this red color is not the color of the water but the color of the bottle. If this water is put in a black bottle, it is *tamo guna* (dull and ignorant qualities). It looks black. So, this white, red,

and black are human emotions and not the fault of sacred education, nor the fault of money.

Similarly, people are unable to recognize the truth about the right path. They say that this person is bad, and that one is good. They criticize that this is bad and that is good. These good and bad things are the effects of your mind and not the effects of people from outside. **When the vision is pure, all creation appears pure. So, what do we need to change today? We need to transform our vision. If the vision is holy, all creation will appear pure and holy.** So, first, we must change our vision. Our heart needs to be purified. Through such spiritual practices, one can see the unity in diversity.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 24, 1998

This is the first of three parts of the divine discourse.
The next two parts will follow in subsequent issues.







REPETITION OF GOD'S NAME

SOME TIME AGO, I FOUND MYSELF FACING WHAT SEEMED TO BE AN IMPOSSIBLE DILEMMA. Both choices open to me were equally repugnant. Not only were they disastrous for my finances and my relationships, but both were contradictory to the teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, whom I wholeheartedly embraced as my preceptor. There seemed to be no way to avoid acting on one of the choices, yet both seemed so wrong that I found myself indecisive. For several days and nights, my mind ruminated on the alternatives and the various possible outcomes of either choice.

Then, I became increasingly agitated. Finally, in great distress and emotionally, I prayed to Baba to clearly guide me on the proper action. The desire to be free of the problem and the unhappiness I felt was so great that it mattered little which way

I chose as long as I had done the best I could under the circumstances.

One evening, I repeatedly asked Baba for an answer until I fell asleep. I woke up in the morning with the same old dilemma, and pleaded aloud, "Oh, please, Baba, please tell me what to do." **The thought that came to me vividly at that moment was completely unexpected. It was, "Just repeat the Name."** I sat down in disbelief and continued speaking aloud to Baba, retorting vehemently, "That's no answer!"

I waited expectantly, hoping for a solution that was a little more down-to-earth. "After all," I reasoned, "I could repeat the name of God nonstop for twenty-four hours, or even twenty-four days, and even then, I would still be faced with this problem." But no further direction came. Somewhat resigned that I must proceed without Baba's intervention, I thought, "Oh, well, if I do as instructed, at least I can postpone

Repetition of the name erases the thought of the symptoms from the mind, and when they no longer exist in the mind, they no longer persist in the body.

taking action for a little longer.” So, I began to repeat the name I love, “Sathya Sai, Sathya Sai...” All day, I kept on repeating His name. **When my mind kept recalling the problem, I responded by repeating Swami’s name out loud for a while. When bedtime arrived, I fell asleep easily and the beloved name echoed peacefully in my dreams.**

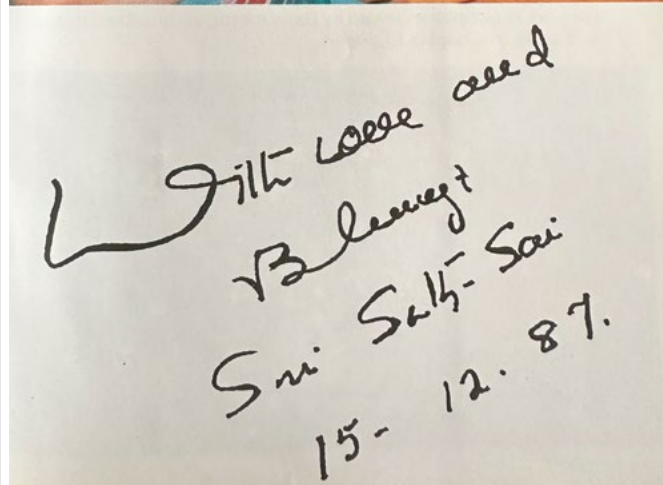
On waking up the following morning, I was still repeating the name, but, at another level, I looked inward for an answer to my predicament. My mind began to search for the two alternatives it was trying to decide between, and a feeling of strangeness overcame me. There was no change in external circumstances, yet all sense of urgency left me. From a firm conviction that I must decide and act immediately, I now felt there was no need for me to do anything. As I repeated His name throughout that day, the problem did surface a few times in my mind, but instead of becoming fearsome, it now seemed more like a dream that had come to pass.

In a very short time, even the memory of the dream disappeared. No decision was made, no action was taken, and no miraculous solution appeared. Yet, the problem simply dissolved miraculously, and I cannot even recall it now!

When this article began to take form, I petitioned Baba again for His help. “Where did the problem go?” I asked. Waiting quietly this time, my expectant heart received a gentle response, **“When you removed the problem from the mind, you eliminated it from the only place that it existed.”**

I recalled several discussions that I was privileged to have with Baba in His interview room at Prasanthi Nilayam. During one

interview, I asked for His help with a relationship. I had been estranged from my only son due to a philosophical difference, and there was nothing I could do about it. Baba expressed compassion and told me, *“Put all your attention on your Center activities.”* After two years, during which I served as president of a Sri Sathya Sai Center, focusing on the Center’s activities, a letter arrived from my son affirming his love for me and stating that he felt that the bond between us could never be broken. The letter arrived on the last day of my term of office and came as a complete surprise since I did nothing to



Opening page of Ms. Joy Thomas’ first book, *Life is a Game, Play it*, blessed by Swami.

bring it about. **Nothing, that is, except remove attention from the pain of separation and place it on our oneness with Baba.**

The memory of those gentle words comes to mind again: "When you removed the problem from the mind, you eliminated it from the only place that it existed."



Continuing to recall conversations with Baba, I remembered asking Him what to do about my chronic health condition. **He smiled lovingly and answered, "Forget it!"** This was certainly not the answer I had expected or one I could easily understand. The physical condition certainly was not imaginary. It could be weighed and measured. It had persisted for over fifty years. It caused emotional and physical pain. It inhibited movement. It affected almost everything I had to do. How could I possibly forget it?

Repetition of the name (*japa*) had been effective when dealing with financial and

relationship problems, but it could not possibly mitigate a physical problem of these proportions. Actually, instead of forgetting the problem, I almost forgot the advice until recently I happened to see a television interview with Herbert Benson, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine at Boston's Beth Israel Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and Director of the hospital's Division of Behavioral Medicine and Hypertension Section. Dr. Benson has authored two successful books, *The Relaxation Response* and *Mind/Body Effect*, outlining the benefits to the body of stress reduction through meditation. In this interview, however, he said that he had recently discovered a remarkable new technique which, when combined with meditation, measurably and dramatically improves health. "This technique," he said in the interview, "is the repetition of the name of God--whatever name you love." He went on to say that he had, under carefully controlled conditions, documented the strengthening of the healing effect when the "Faith Factor" (repetition of the name) was added to the "Relaxation Response" (meditation) and that it did not matter which name of God was used as long as it was one in which the person had faith. I recalled the numerous occasions on which Baba had said, "Call Me by any name; all names are Mine."

Dr. Benson has now written a new book, *Beyond the Relaxation Response*, published by Times Books, in **which he relates how he came to recognize the benefits of repeating God's name, or a meaningful prayer, and the results that have been witnessed when this "new technique" is added to standard meditation.** He outlines the resultant sequence of events which he has observed in his practice as follows:

- There is less concern about the symptoms or the illness; in other words, the anxiety cycle is broken.
- The symptoms become less severe.

- The symptoms are present less of the time, and short periods of complete relief are noted.
- The periods of relief become longer.
- The symptoms are completely gone or remain in a fashion that no longer interferes with everyday activities. In fact, I have found that many patients have difficulty remembering their original symptoms.

“The time duration for a person to experience these full benefits is quite variable. For some, it can be as short as one to two weeks. For others, up to a year is required. Most people can expect improvement to occur in approximately four to six weeks.”

Repetition of the name erases the thought of the symptoms from the mind, and when they no longer exist in the mind, they no longer persist in the body. Baba’s instruction to “Forget it!” was His instruction to me,

and His advice to someone else might be different. Nevertheless, those words could have meaning for others as they follow His injunction to repeat the name of God. Baba has promised that all illusions will be dispelled and that His mission will be accomplished. A Course in Miracles echoes this promise by urging students to “Repeat God’s Name, and all the world responds by laying down illusions.”

Now, in addition to repeating the name, I have a little daydream in which I indulge frequently. I imagine myself saying, “You know, I used to live in some sort of form which took me from place to place. I needed it almost all the time. As a matter of fact, there was virtually nothing that I could do without it. It seemed paramount to my existence then, but now I can’t remember what it was.”

Ms. Joy Thomas 
USA

If you live on the level of the body and the individual, you will be entangled in food, fun, and frolic, in ease, envy, and pride. Forget it, ignore it, overcome it--you will have peace, joy, and calm. On the divine path, there is no chance of failure; it is a path on which every milestone is a monument for victory. It is the path of love.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
April, 1972



Ms. Joy Thomas and her husband, Mr. Raye Thomas, ventured to India in 1983 in search of a living Master. Their search led them to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and they were blessed with many miracles. Ms. Thomas is best known for her series of 5 books based on the lines in a popular quote by Swami, “Life is a Game, Play it. Life is a Challenge, Meet it. Life is a Dream, Realize it. Life is Love, Enjoy it.” In addition, she wrote two more books entitled *Life is Awareness* and *Life is a Journey from the Self to the Self*. She served the Sathya Sai Organization sincerely and was the President of the Cherry Valley Sathya Sai Center in Southern California. She remained deeply committed to the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba till her demise on April 17, 1999.

A TRAIN OF THOUGHTS *and* EXPERIENCES IN LIFE WITH GOD



Our whole family was in Bombay (Mumbai today) for a wedding in 1990. After the wedding, we had our return tickets booked to Madras (Chennai today) via the Bombay Express train. After the wedding festivities, we were all chatting when a member of the extended family said that they would be returning home to Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram today) via the Bombay Express.

“Oh! That’s simply impossible because we are taking that train to Madras. You are wrong”, I said confidently. My father added in support, “I asked my nephews to book these tickets to Madras precisely for this day because I have an important work-related meeting there. You better check your tickets lest you end up on the West Coast of India instead of the East Coast!” We all laughed aloud. But the gentleman was gentle and insistent, “No! I am pretty sure that the Bombay Express is going to Trivandrum tomorrow.”

When we called up my cousins in Bombay, they said that once we left, the man also disappeared, and they could not even get the chance to thank Him! I know that Swami came to board us on the train to Madras that day.

“As if it goes to different places on different days!” I mocked him.

“Indeed, it does! On most days of the week, it goes to Madras, but some days, it goes to Trivandrum.”

Panic Mode

There was silence now as we digested this new piece of information. A quick check revealed that the gentleman was right and we were wrong. The Bombay Express was indeed going to Trivandrum the next day. It would be leaving for Madras in a few hours, but we had tickets only for the next day's train! My cousins had overlooked this in booking the trip, and we were in panic mode now.

My mother was the only one who remained calm. She told my father, who didn't believe in Swami back then, “Pray to Him, and He will make a way to ensure that you attend your important meeting.” Father was very tense and sat frozen while the rest of us prayed to Swami. Again, it was my mother who said, “We should just go to the station. Swami in my heart says so.” “And do what?” my father asked, continuing, “We don't have tickets for today's train.”

Nevertheless, with no better idea, we packed up and left in a hurry to the railway station. We tried to get some tickets, at least in the 'unreserved' compartment of the train. But all our efforts were in vain. That was when a Muslim gentleman wearing a cap came to us and introduced himself as 'Shahul Hamid.' With nothing to lose, we told him of our predicament. Thinking for a moment,

he reassured us, “Don't worry. I know all the ticket collectors on all trains. I can get you in.”

Tickets and Much More

We got suspicious that he may be a cheat. Once again, it was my mother who prevailed. She strongly felt Swami's hand guiding everything and asked Him what we should do. He asked for 300 Rupees (a big sum those days) promising to fetch tickets for us. He fixed a rendezvous point for all of us to meet in the next fifteen minutes. The train was due to leave very soon, and we agreed. My father handed over the money to Hamid, and he left in a hurry. We walked to the rendezvous point, repeating 'Sai Ram, Sai Ram.' The minutes ticked by, but there was no sign of the gentleman. Then, my mother started singing bhajans. My concerned cousins were also there, tensed about the possible outcome. There was barely a minute left before the train would depart, and I was convinced that we had been taken for a ride!

As my mother revealed later, at this point, she prayed to Swami, “Dear Lord! If the train leaves and we are standing on the platform, I don't know what face I will show my husband. He does not believe in you, but I do. This is a moment which I can use to bring You into his heart.” Just as the train was about to start, Hamid came rushing out of nowhere. He thrust the tickets into our hands, along with an envelope, and started to load our luggage onto the train. “Hurry up and get in,” he urged. We boarded the train in a hurry and wanted to offer some money

life without God, is a hopeless end.
But life with God is an endless hope!



to him in gratitude. “You simply get in now,” he said. “I shall take what is due from these boys.” My cousins nodded, and we hopped onto the train.

Amazingly, we got reserved seats on the train, and after reaching our destination, my father made it to his all-important meeting. We opened the envelope that the gentleman had given us. It contained the entire 300 Rupees that we had given him! When we called up my cousins in Bombay, they said that once we left, the man also disappeared, and they could not even get the chance to thank Him! Yes, I use the capital ‘H’ for ‘Him’ because I know that **Swami came to board us on the train to Madras that day, just like He was there to ensure that my father boarded the train of faith and devotion toward Him!**

The Changeless Constant in Storms of Life

From that day onward, we were regular in our adoration and worship of Swami. My father was convinced of His divinity and love. In fact, on many occasions, he would

remind my mother of Swami’s ways when she got worried! It was wonderful to see my parents move as co-travelers in their journey toward Him. **Their life situation kept changing, but not their commitment and devotion to Swami.**

Almost 25 years after Shahul Hamid rescued us in Bombay, my parents were in Austin, Minnesota, in the USA, where they managed a property. My sister lived with her family in Winona, about 80 miles away from them. My parents would regularly visit her in their blue hatchback car and spend happy time with the grandchildren.

One day, as they were returning from my sister’s place, they got caught in a storm. Bhajans were playing in the car, and my parents continued to drive, unruffled. After all, they were on I-90, the longest interstate highway in the United States—more than 3,000 miles long! But then, it happened!

On the way, a flash flood suddenly hit them, and the car got pushed across the west lanes in the opposite direction! The flood carried the vehicle into a big ditch, and water began

to fill the car from the front. The doors, unfortunately, got jammed and would not open, not even budge! The car engine completely shut down and there was no way to even roll the windows down! My parents unbuckled their seat belts and moved to the back seats, which were at a relatively higher level. But the car was filling up fast with water, and there was nobody in sight.

As the water hit their ankles, my mother lamented, “Oh! I think this is it. Our lives are ending. How I wish our kids at least knew that this is happening to us...” She was completely calm, though. My father replied, “We are all sparks of the divine. **If this is our time to go, we should do so by focusing on Swami. We should use this opportunity in contemplation of Swami.** Let us not worry about it and rise above it from within...”

Keeping calm, smiling at each other, they began to chant loudly, “Sai Ram, Sai Ram.” Even as they continued to chant, they felt the joy filling their hearts and rising along with the water levels in the car. It was a crazy scene, and my parents might have gone mad. But then, as Swami says, **“Of all the madnesses that afflict man, God-madness is the least harmful and most beneficial.”** They were blissful in their madness for Swami.

Life With God

Suddenly, a face appeared at the window. It was a police officer. He asked my parents to move back and wielded his baton with great strength to break the window and force open the door. He got my parents out of the car just before the car completely went underwater.

“How did you get here?” My mother asked the police officer who had come from the opposite direction. He replied that something just prompted him to come and look at this stretch of the highway. My parents looked at each other, and they knew that ‘Shahul Hamid’ had come again—in the form of a cop, this time!

The next day, the local newspaper headlined a story titled, “Miracle Saves Immigrant Couple on I-90.” The world read about it and acknowledged this miracle of our Swami, our Eternal Companion.

Indeed, life without God is a hopeless end. But life with God is an endless hope!

Mr. Sunil Kasturi 
USA



Mr. Sunil Kasturi lives in Oakland, California. He has been active with the Sai organization in Chennai growing up, and across three regions in the United States. Sunil emphasizes the power of uniting our voices in singing His praise. Sunil served as the director of a children’s play that was offered in Swami’s Divine presence as part of the USA National pilgrimage in 2010. This play had 100+ SSE kids from all 10 regions of the United States. He’s also led unison singing offerings at Prashanthi Nilayam as part of the USA pilgrimage in 2017. He is a management consultant and leads a boutique consulting firm, Propeller, with offices across the country.

Assert and Manifest Your True Nature

30-8-75

After long searches here and there, in temples and in churches, in earths and in heavens, at last you come back. Completing the circle from where you started, to your own soul and find that He, for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for whom you have been weeping and praying in churches and temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries shrouded in the clouds in nearest of the near, is your own self, the reality of your life, body, and soul. That is your own nature. Assert it, manifest it.

It is Truth and Truth alone, that is one's real friend, relative. Abide by Truth, tread the path of righteousness and not an hair of your body will ever be injured.

Meditation is nothing else, but rising above desires. Renunciation is the power of battling against evil forces and holding the mind in check.

With Love and Blessings

Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

PRASANTHI NILAYAM P.O.
ANANTPUR DT. (A.P.)
PHONE NO: 30.

30-8-75

After long searches here and there, in temples and in churches, in earths and in heavens, at last you come back. Completing the circle from where you started, to your own soul and find that He, for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for whom you have been weeping and praying in churches and temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries shrouded in the clouds in nearest of the near, is your own self, the reality of your life, body and soul. That is your own nature. Assert it, manifest it.

It is truth and truth alone, that is one's real friend, relative. Abide by truth tread the path of righteousness and not an hair of your body will ever be injured.

Meditation is nothing else but rising above desires. Renunciation is the power of battling against evil forces and holding the mind in check.

With Love and Patience
Sri Sathya Sai Baba




SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Nairobi, Kenya | June 28 - July 1, 2024

Divinity *Everywhere*

I had the privilege of visiting Sai Prema Nilayam in Los Angeles, USA, in April 2023 and Jaffna, Sri Lanka, in September 2023 for international conferences of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO). I learned two important lessons at these conferences:

- In Los Angeles, at Sai Prema Nilayam, I quickly realized that the conference was a pilgrimage to our beloved Guru and God, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, made possible only because He called us.
 - In Jaffna, I learned the value of the conference to His devotees. Although Jaffna is geographically near Prasanthi Nilayam, I discovered that many Sri Lankan devotees had never traveled to the *ashram* for Swami's *darshan* when He was in physical form. I implicitly understood that by blessing the conference in Jaffna, He was revealing His eternal presence to His devotees in their home countries.
- 

So, when the SSSIO conference in Kenya was announced in December 2023, I instantly knew this was a blessing my beloved Sai was bestowing not only on His devotees in Africa but on the continent itself. **It was 56 years ago, in June 1968, that Swami landed in Nairobi, and hence, it was fitting that He would 'return' to that same city in June 2024 as the Formless, Timeless Sai.**

I confess that I was initially hesitant as I had never been to Africa. It seemed a very long journey to make from Hong Kong. I knew little about Africa and even less about Nairobi. Yet, soon I heard that many overseas delegates were registering for the conference. One Saturday morning, my wife 'decided' my flights needed to be booked. When she made the online bookings, I found that I had the last available seat in the cabin on the last Singapore Airlines flight I could take to Nairobi to reach the conference on time.

I supposed Swami had held that seat and decided the minute when my booking just had to be done, if not by me, then by my wife! I immediately knew He wanted me to go to Kenya.

A few days before my departure, protests against a government legislative bill broke out in Nairobi, and there were reports of violence on the news. I was not deterred. **The Lord had called, and He would keep us safe—I was certain.**

For all my trepidation, the journey was a memorable one. When I landed in Nairobi, I received a WhatsApp message informing me that the government had just withdrawn the bill, and the streets had gone quiet. Thus, He reassured me that He would ensure my safety. Throughout my stay, I never encountered any disturbance.

The trip to the hotel was an eye-opener. The highway was impressive, and the streets were lined with buildings of all kinds. It was quite different from the misperceptions and apprehensions about Africa that had been

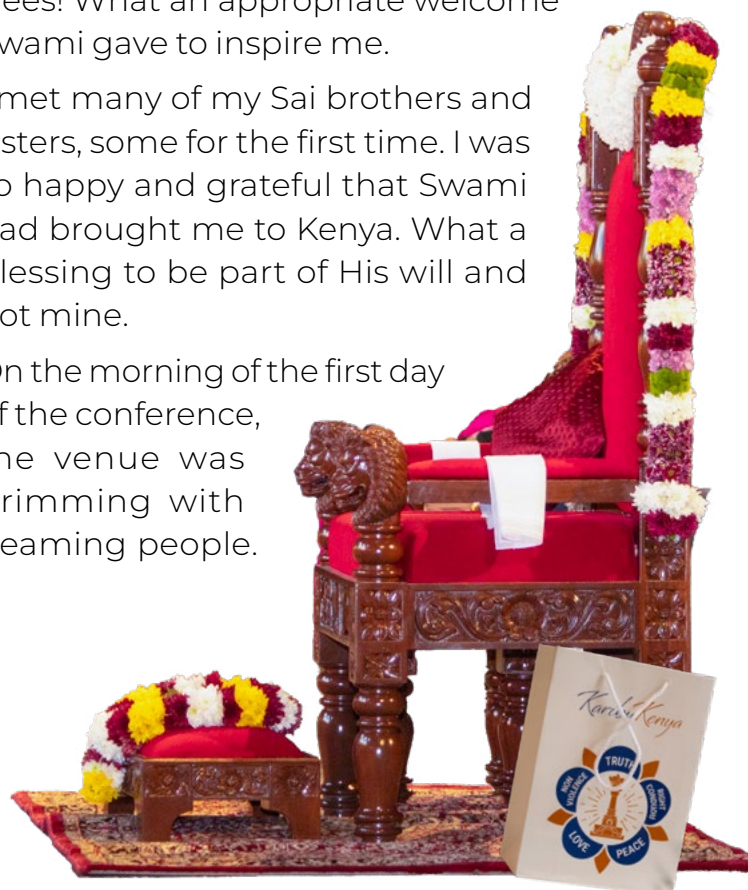
festering in my subconscious mind over the years. The hotel was a smart boutique hotel with a comfortable room. The arrangements were inviting, just as He intended.

The next day was the day before the conference. In the bright daylight of the morning, I saw Nairobi properly for the first time from my hotel room window. What struck me instantly was how many beautiful trees there were around the hotel, with luscious greenery all around. That afternoon we were shuttled to the auditorium where the conference would commence the next day. The drive was a revelation. I just fell in love with the trees everywhere. From the balcony of the conference building and on the grounds, **I saw even more trees! As I believe that Swami is in all His creation—in His trees—I knew I was witnessing Divinity everywhere.**

I was going to make a short presentation at the conference on almost 500,000 trees planted around the world by the SSSIO as part of the SAI 100 initiative, and all I could see around me that first day in Kenya were trees! What an appropriate welcome Swami gave to inspire me.

I met many of my Sai brothers and sisters, some for the first time. I was so happy and grateful that Swami had brought me to Kenya. What a blessing to be part of His will and not mine.

On the morning of the first day of the conference, the venue was brimming with beaming people.





Everyone was happy to be there. As I entered the auditorium, I saw Swami's chair majestically placed in the center of the hall, just in front of the stage. The proceedings of the conference were to be offered to Him, our Divine Mother and Father.



No sooner had we settled into our seats than the celestial glory of the Sathya Sai Avatarhood was revealed. Five African boys from the Sathya Sai school in Benin, dressed in yellow/orange dhoti and with folded hands, chanted the *Veda* with perfect pronunciation and intonation. They did not need any sheets to read from as they confidently demonstrated their devotion to Mother Sai. **His divine instruction and inspiration to learn the Veda had reached the 'four corners of the world.'**



The Kenya Police Band then played the Kenyan and Indian national anthems, embodying the pride and ideals of the two nations and cultures. The blessings of an African village leader followed. Although I did not understand the inspiring words he spoke, the rich tradition and sacredness of his blessings were evident. **Finally, the parade of flags of the 38 countries represented at the conference came to pass, a reflection**



of the unity that His name brought under the banner of SSSIIO. All this brought to the fore the grandeur of the event, one that our beloved Swami would undoubtedly have been happy with.

The conference theme was **Service–Adoration–Illumination (SAI)**. These three subjects are the modern sequel to the timeless message our beloved Sai gave in the Bhagavad Gita in His avatar as Lord Sri Krishna: *Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Jnana Yoga*. Each day of the conference was dedicated to one path of *Yoga*.

The three days were filled with divine messages instructing every participant to give up desiring the world and realize God within. This is truly the ultimate purpose of every life and of the Sathya Sai Organization. One need not seek one’s purpose anywhere else.

In the excerpt of Swami’s Divine Discourse given on November 11, 1968, Swami exhorted devotees to conduct Self-enquiry to find out if they have the three qualifications to offer



Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of SSSIIO

service: compassion, humility, and sacrifice. He explained that action, forgetting the self, and recognizing divinity in everyone is service. **The simplicity and sublimity of these words have the potency to touch any heart and transport the listener on the path of self-transformation and self-purification!**

In his inaugural address, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of SSSIIO, explained that people suffer grief because they pursue material wealth. He emphasized the importance of giving priority to God in one’s life. As he spoke, the Prime Cabinet Secretary of the Government of Kenya, H.E. Musalia Mudavadi entered the hall.

The Prime Cabinet Secretary was paying his second visit in three months to witness the Sathya Sai Mission in Africa. In March 2024, he addressed members of the SSSIIO’s Medical Team during their nine-day medical camps, which served 5,600 people in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. In his address later in the day, **he said Bhagawan’s five human values stood out as the “global constitu-**



H.E. Musalia Mudavadi,
Prime Cabinet Secretary
of the Government of Kenya



Ms. Namgya C. Khampa,
Indian High Commissioner
to Kenya

tion” of the world! He also spoke of the solidarity of the SSSIO with Kenya.

As the SSSIO’s work in advancing the Sathya Sai Mission around the world was being shared with delegates, the Indian High Commissioner to Kenya, Ms. Namgya C. Khampa made her entrance. **In her address, she said Sri Sathya Sai Baba belongs to the world and that the Sathya Sai template of service to humanity had spread to the world.** She also stated His message is a message of seeking divine truth. Ms. Khampa concluded by saying the healing touch of Sri Sathya Sai Baba needs to spread

across the world to transform individual behavior and governmental and non-governmental action!

As such inspiring words emanated from prominent ‘non-devotees,’ one’s heart started to melt with gratitude that the Kali Yuga Avatar, in His Grace, had accepted us as His devotees. This was just the beginning of the flow of acknowledgments for Bhagawan’s work.

Other senior officers of the Prasanthi Council and Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation spoke over the three days, as did leaders from Zone





9 of the SSSIO and African devotees from across the continent. Mr. Leonardo Gutter reminded all delegates that they had to be alert and do their part with faith and confidence in Swami and with love. Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya reminded everyone that when Swami returned to India from His trip to Africa, He declared: "The Universe is My Mansion." Mr. P.V. Sambasiva Rao, the Chair of Zone 9, spoke of his personal journey and the spiritual journey of all devotees in Africa in their quest to realize the Sai within.

From Africa, we heard speakers from Nigeria, Kenya, Benin, Ghana, South Africa, and Gabon. They spoke of how the Sathya Sai Mission is moving forward in Africa. The speakers represent a continent that has basked in the light of divine love lit by Bhagawan Himself in 1968.

Additionally, **the conference was blessed by the participation of senior members of the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya on an inter-faith panel—Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist faith leaders who spoke of "Service as a Pathway to God."**

The hearts of delegates rejoiced when they heard the testimonials of an African student, a teacher, a parent, and an alumnus of the Sathya Sai School in Kisaju. These were all inspiring, moving, human stories of what it means to experience the true miracle of Sai as He transforms the lives of those associated with His "miracle schools." **What more proof**

of His divinity is required when He accepts a poor young African boy and teaches him to Love All, Serve All, and Help Ever, Hurt Never. He then instills in him an intense desire to serve humanity with a university education in medicine and surgery, all sponsored by the generous support of SSSIO rendered in His name.

The panel of four doctors spoke on "Health-care, Medical Mission through S.A.I., an





internal journey.” They spoke of Swami’s five principles for delivering healthcare to the underprivileged, the work being done in Africa and around the world, and how this is inspiring ‘non-devotees’ to offer their medical expertise at SSSIO medical camps.

On Day 2, the floodgates of our hearts broke when we heard, “For Swami, higher learning is higher yearning, not higher earning.” How much more simply can such eternal messages be delivered?

In His divine discourse of July 20, 1996, Swami says, **“Whoever you offer your respect, it goes to God. Whoever you reject, it is a denial of divinity. God is a cosmic form, all**

eyes and heads are His.” Let these words inspire our most intense *sadhana*.

On this day, Dr. Anupom Ganguli spoke of the divine mission of the SSSIO and laid out for every devotee what he or she can do to serve with adoration.

If the heart was not already inundated with divine inspiration, during Day 2, the Governor of Machakos County, H.E. Wavinya Ndeti said in her address, “We thank God for you (SSSIO). We ask God to give you more so you can take care of the people.” She invited the SSSIO to show the teachers in her county how SSEHV can be taught in every classroom.

“We thank God for you (SSSIO). We ask God to give you more so you can take care of the people.”



H.E. Wavinya Ndeti,
Governor of Machakos County
of the Government of Kenya





Dr. Eluid Kipchoge, Olympic Marathon Gold Medalist (2016 and 2020)

On Day 3, we were blessed to have Dr. Eluid Kipchoge, a two-time Olympic Marathon Gold Medalist (2016 and 2020), address the delegates. He said, **“Education is the equalizer of life. Your organization is spreading education in Africa and the world.”** What a tribute to the Sathya Sai Mission from a true champion of the world.

On this day, the inimitable Dr. Suresh Govind hosted a segment with the leads of the SAI100 initiatives so that all delegates at the conference and around the world could be updated on the tremendous enthusiasm and work of SSSIO centers around the world. They are ensuring the successful completion of every initiative intended to bring real change to communities around the world and transform hearts.

Each day, workshops were held on the three subjects of the Conference theme. Every devotee had the chance to share thoughts and hear what others brought to the conference. On Day 3, summaries of all workshop reports were also shared with the delegates.

As always, the end of the conference was a fresh beginning: to take the inspiration of the Sathya Sai Mission into every heart, home, nation, and continent. This is the work Bhagawan has given to us for our own sake and to uplift humanity and the world at large.





One must applaud the hard work and dedication of Zone 9 countries for their tremendous accomplishment in hosting the conference and the many arrangements that befit Sai's loving and gracious hospitality. The uplifting guidance and contribution of SSSIIO leaders were in keeping with the task Bhagawan gave to oversee all Sathya Sai Centers. The support of skilled international devotees over the three days of exuberance also cannot be overstated.



On the fourth and last day, international delegates were taken to the two Sathya Sai Schools in Uthiru and Kisaju. The first is a modest school in an underprivileged area in Nairobi. **It is a powerful example of the enormous impact Sathya Sai education is having around the world.** The young students were respectful, disciplined, and eager as they sang songs and welcomed their guests. The teachers are an inspiration—their dedication reveals why teaching is the noblest profession. The SSSIO delegates made a humble offering of stationery, school supplies, and game balls to the students.

The impressive school in Kisaju occupies a large plot of land in a rural area distant from Nairobi. Although it has faced and overcome some challenges recently, it is a beacon of hope to the district's leadership and people. The leadership of Zone 9 and the international leadership of the SSSIO are dedicated to its success.

My last full day in Kenya was a personal gift from Bhagawan. In the morning, I was driven to Nairobi National Park, which was a unique experience. We drove around the park for about two hours, watching the animals in their natural habitat, and saw some fascinating scenes of God's creation free from



human interference. As the park is on the outskirts of the city, I captured a magnificent view of the city skyline in the morning haze. We then drove for about one and a half hours to Lake Naivasha, a stunning 198 sq km freshwater lake in Nakuru County. It is surrounded by volcanoes and is home to various types of wildlife, including hundreds of species of birds and many hippos. I took a boat ride on the lake to Crescent Island, which is located on the lake.

Nothing prepared me for Crescent Island. When I arrived, I was told there were no more guides and that I should just walk by myself and see the free-roaming animals. But Swami had a blessing for me. Soon, I saw a security guard who spoke to me about the animals on the island and the natural vegetation. He then summoned his colleague, Daniel, who volunteered to be my guide. What a difference that made!

Not only is the island stunningly beautiful and open, but the lake and mountains surrounding it add to its majesty. It is a tranquil game sanctuary gifted by God. Having Daniel with me allowed me to be at ease when exploring God's wonderful creatures and their uniqueness and beauty. I saw different types of antelopes and gazelles,

which I would never have appreciated before. I walked close to them and the ostriches, zebras, waterbucks, and giraffes. I observed many hippos in the distance. I saw close-up the magnificence of the eagles, bluebirds, and butterflies. Thankfully, I missed the foxes and pythons, the nocturnal creatures who were resting underground to hunt in the dark. The acacia trees were stunningly beautiful, as were the barbed wire cactus and other plants.

I explain this experience of my last day in Kenya in some detail because that day, **I once again saw divinity everywhere, just as I had on the first full day in Kenya.** I bow with gratitude to my beloved Bhagawan for bringing me here and revealing to me the splendor of His creation after He opened my heart to His presence everywhere through the environmental work He assigned me in the SSSIO.

But more than the first and last day when I saw divinity everywhere, I bow to my *Guru* and God for allowing me to experience divinity everywhere throughout my stay in Kenya. With Loving Sai Ram,

Mr. Ashok K. Sakhrani
CHAIR, ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE, SSSIO



Mr. Ashok Sakhrani's journey to Swami began in 1981 and there has been no looking back. He joined the Hong Kong Bar in 1987. Having served the SSSIO in various capacities, he currently serves as the Zone Chair of Zone 5 countries. He is also a member of the Media Committee and IP Committee, and Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Committee.



Distribution of essential food supplies and tree-planting by delegates at the Sathya Sai School in Kisaju formed the beautiful conclusion of the International Conference.

LOVE IN ACTION



THAILAND A 'Cool' Way to Serve

SSSIO members of the Prashanti and Rajdamneon Centers in Thailand observed Easwaramma Day with a unique, thoughtful, and sweet act of service in keeping with the simplicity, kindness, and large-heartedness of Mother Easwaramma. They distributed delicious ice cream to 106 workers at a construction site! This gesture of kindness was a welcome relief for the recipients toiling in the intense heat. Brimming with joy, they thanked the Sai volunteers for their kindness. In the evening,



devotional singing was organized, followed by a 40-minute video of a presentation by the SSE children. The program concluded with a sumptuous dinner.



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO Serving the Hungry

On March 24, 2024, the National Ladies Wing of the SSSIO in Trinidad and Tobago organized a food and hamper drive at the Sai Nilayam premises to serve nearby communities lacking adequate food. Ten volunteers provided essential meals and food hampers to 35 persons from the community. The compassionate and impactful service was well-received with gratitude. This program was conducted in collaboration with the Longdenville Sathya Sai Primary School and the Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) Garden of Blooms.





USA Where the Young Help the Young

On February 10, 2024, SSE children from the Sri Sathya Sai Centre of Seattle Eastside, Washington, U.S.A., participated in a service project called 'Pantry Packs'. The project provides food packs to food-insecure students to take home every weekend. The children, along with their teacher and parents, packed over 600 food packets containing nutritious items like beans, fruit cups, granola bars, oatmeal, peanuts, milk, noodles, fruit squeezes, pudding cups, and fruit rolls. The students worked efficiently and enthusiastically, assembling the packets in two hours. The SSE children felt uplifted to help every needy student.



USA Books and Toys for Girls and Boys

The Sri Sathya Sai Center in Beaverton, Oregon, U.S.A., organized a successful Toy and Book drive between March 17 and April 12, 2024, to donate items to children at the West Women's and Children's Shelter. The initiative, which gained momentum beyond the Sai network, resulted in a large collection of toys and books. The children sorted and packed the items, and Sai Center members delivered them along with lunch to the shelter. The whole exercise highlighted the power of community service



in bringing people together in joy and gratitude, and the importance of teaching children about sacrifice, giving, and appreciating what they have.

For more stories of loving service by volunteers from around the world, please visit the Sri Sathya Sai Universe website:

<https://saiuniverse.sathyasai.org>

The Journey to *God* Comes Full Circle

“The journey to God is merely the reawakening of the knowledge of where you are always, and what you are forever. It is a journey without distance to a goal that has never changed. Truth can only be experienced. It cannot be described, and it cannot be explained.”

–ACIM (A Course in Miracles)

I WAS BORN IN BAKU, AZERBAIJAN, A REPUBLIC OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION, to a Jewish Father and Christian Mother. My parents, however, did not practice their religions. My father never went to the Temple, and my mother went to the Church occasionally. However, I was aware that I am Jewish because we observed the holiday of Passover. But then, I didn't even know its significance, and no one explained it to me. All I knew was that we were not allowed to eat regular bread for a week and instead had unleavened flatbread, Matzah. Much later, when I was about 13, I learned about the history of Judaism, along with my sister, in Jewish Sunday School.

Whenever my mother went to Church, she would take me with her. However, she never spoke much about Jesus. She observed the festival of Easter by cooking a special meal but never mentioned Christmas or its significance. The Christmas tree that we joyously decorated every year was not done as part of religion but as our New Year's celebration!

“My search for God was over. I found what I was looking for. My God, My Baba, and my true Self.”

A Path to God through Israel

I knew there was a God for as long as I could remember. My earliest awareness of God was around the age of five. I had a connection that I simply couldn't explain. **It was just a sense of knowing that there is God and that God is my Father who loves me and everyone else.** Sometimes, I would hear remarks about a judgmental and punishing God, but I just 'knew' that was far from the truth because it was not my experience of who **God was—Love and Gentleness!**

One Sunday at the Jewish School, I heard about an organization that supported and assisted youth immigrating to Israel. I welcomed the opportunity to travel to Israel as my 15th birthday gift, and with 40 other kids, I boarded the airplane to Tel Aviv. Upon arrival, we were assigned to different schools, and I traveled to the north of Israel, which was surrounded by mountains and forests. It was a serene and peaceful place, and the people were friendly and welcoming.

In school, we studied the Torah (Jewish Holy Scripture) daily, in addition to academics. We prayed and sang for God, and I developed an intense yearning for God. One day, when everybody was at lunch, I sneaked into the Temple and stood before the Torah scrolls. I could feel God's spirit upon me. I knew God was real, but somehow I also knew that this was not my path to Him!

I completed school, lived my life, and lived my dreams. But life was wonderful only because I wasn't aware of how miserable I was! When I was 24, one of my best friends invited me to attend a guided meditation for world peace. During that session, in my inner vision, I saw the lights and divine figures. **Something clicked, and I immediately realized that this was my path to God!**

Introduction to Sathya Sai Baba

The teacher who guided the session was named 'Tikva.' The name meant 'hope', and that is what she offered me. Whatever she taught, she did it based on the principle that God is love and is present in all our hearts. I was inspired and signed up for the courses on meditation and alternative healing that she taught. It was at her school that, for the first time, I saw a picture of Sri Sathya Sai Baba! I asked her, "Who is that scary-looking man with big hair?" **"He is my Guru," she replied, "He lives in India and is an Avatar, God descended to earth."** I just heard her out and did not feel the slightest inclination or desire to meet this 'Avatar' or even to know more about Him.

It was around this time that my acting career started to pick up. I got cast in a feature film alongside a few famous actors in Israel. However, since I didn't have proper training in acting, my director suggested that I go to Los Angeles to study under Lee Strasberg and upgrade

my skills in acting. Without thinking twice, I took this advice, left everything—my career, my friends, and my family behind—and moved to the USA.

I was staying at my cousin's place in Los Angeles. One morning there was a heavy package for me from the United States Postal Service. It was a Russian edition of 'A Course in Miracles' (ACIM), a psychological mind-training book based on universal spiritual themes. The goal of this course is the attainment of inner peace through forgiveness. I started to take the course sincerely, attending workshops and study groups. I learned how to relinquish thoughts based on fear and adopt new thoughts based on love. Going beyond the senses, I was guided to perceive the truth through forgiveness and surrender. **I learned that God is my life, my source. God is everything to me—my mother, my father, and my friend.**

One day, after attending the ACIM study group in Anaheim, I found that my car had broken down. One of the attendees kindly offered to let me stay overnight. When I entered his house, I couldn't believe my eyes! It was filled with pictures of Sathya Sai Baba! My friend explained that he had regular devotional meetings at his place. I felt the energy in his house, and I knew it was an invitation. There was no room or corner in the house without a picture of this man's Swami! That night, I slept in a guest room surrounded by Swami's portraits, and I knew He was calling me.

Travel to Puttaparthi

A month later, a friend who lived in Australia suggested that we could go to India and perhaps meet in Puttaparthi. This felt like the continuation of the invitation for me. I was very curious about Baba, though I didn't think of Him as anything more than a saint.

So, in March 2011, I was on my way to India along with my mother. Three days before our departure, we learned that Bhagawan Baba had been hospitalized! When we arrived at Puttaparthi a few days after Shivaratri, Swami continued to be in the hospital! We went to the Mandir and sat through the prayer and bhajan sessions. It felt beautiful, and the unity of the voices opened up my heart. Tears would flow copiously during many such sessions. After 21 days, it was time for our departure, and we still hadn't seen Swami! Three days later, we heard that Bhagawan had attained Mahasamadhi!

The 'Dream' Darshan and Sai's Center

I returned to Los Angeles and continued with my ACIM study. In November 2011, I had my first dream of Bhagawan! He was sitting, surrounded by devotees in a circle. Though He didn't speak to me, He gazed at me penetratingly. I simply knew He was calling on me to travel back to India.

Once again, in 2013, my mother and I decided to go to Puttaparthi. This time, we arrived a few days before Maha Shivaratri and had a blissful time. My mother was very happy, and I was glad to see her surrounded by like-minded, spiritual people. Again, after spending 21 days, we returned home.

This time, after my return, I decided to attend a Sai Center and participate in Center activities. On the same day, I went to the Whole Foods Market on Sunset Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue, where I saw a man with *Vibhuti* on his forehead! I walked up to him joyously and asked, "Are you by any chance a Sai Devotee?" He happily affirmed it and gave me directions to a Sai Center nearby! The next week, I attended a devotional meeting at the Hollywood Sathya Sai Center. Every-

thing looked familiar, and the people were nice and friendly. I felt at home and started attending the Center meetings regularly and participating in a variety of service projects.

Sathya Sai is My Jesus and His Organization My Church

I used to have many dreams about Lord Jesus. In one of my visions, Jesus led me by hand to a flight of stairs. At the top of the staircase was a throne of God, and Baba was sitting on the throne! I looked at Him, and I realized that He was God. I was thrilled at this discovery because it had taken me so long to come to this realization.

According to ACIM, prayer is a medium of miracles. I had been praying to God to come into my life, and He had answered my prayer. Though He did not come to me in a form I was expecting, it was a form that was right for me!

From 2014 onward, I started dreaming about Baba regularly. In one of the dreams, He came to the Hollywood Center, sat on His chair, and granted *darshan*. He pointed to me to sit in the front. I knew right away that He wanted me to serve as an officer in the organization. A few months later, I was offered the position of Devotional Coordinator and I simply couldn't refuse. I accepted it as an honor and a blessing to serve God. After all, hadn't He already shown His plan for me?

My Initiation and Divine Experience of Oneness

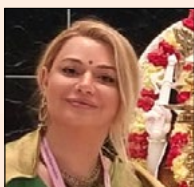
In 2016 I had another dream in which, one by one, devotees came to Baba and received His blessings. When my turn came, I just took *padnamaskar*. Swami then put His hands on my head and said, "Om Sri Sathya Sai Baba Namaha." It was the first time He talked to me, even though it was a dream. I began crying and woke up with tears of joy! **I knew this was my initiation and that I had received a *mantra*.**

On the same day, as I sat meditating on His form, I heard an inner voice say, "Say My Name." So, I chanted, "Om Sri Sathya Sai Baba Namaha." Again, the voice told me, "Say My Name." Again I chanted. This was repeated again and again, "Om Sri Sathya Sai Baba Namaha." And suddenly, I felt Bhagawan's presence and His voice saying, "Say My Name!" Now I felt His presence within and all around me. The voice kept repeating persistently, and I kept chanting. I was in total bliss. There was only God, and I was Him, Sri Sathya Sai Baba!

Then I asked myself, "If I am Sai Baba, where is Daniella?" I realized that she did not exist, and I laughed. I stayed in that bliss for a few days before I slowly got back to my small self-identity. However, this experience stays with me forever.

My search for God was over. I found what I was looking for. My God, My Baba, and my true Self.

Ms. Daniella Danilov
USA



Ms. Daniella Danilov was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, and lives in Hollywood, California, USA. She works at Lee Strasberg Institute as a teacher and Method Acting Instructor. Daniella became first acquainted with Sri Sathya Sai Baba in her early twenties while completing her master's degree in Reiki. After her first trip to Puttaparthi in 2011, she started to attend a Sai Center regularly and served in many positions. She is the President of the Hollywood Sai Center.

from the International Sai Young Adults

Veda Webinar with Swami Chidananda



As part of the Sri Sathya Sai International Veda Subcommittee program, regular webinars are hosted online with inspirational speakers who bring forth valuable Vedic knowledge and share their wisdom. on May 18, 2024, the YAs had the blessed opportunity to have Swami Chidananda as the guest speaker on the topic, “You and Your Personality–Fragmentation to Integration.” Many profound inspirational thoughts were shared during the session, with quotes from the Vedas. One such example taken from Kathopanishad, 1.3.3 in the Yajur Veda is, **“Know your intellect to be your driver.” Swami Chidananda emphasized the importance of knowing our own selves and realizing our inner potential** as stated in the Sama Veda (Chandogya Upanishad, 6.8.7), *“Tat Tvam Asi”* (“that thou art”). Emphasizing the power of the mind, Swami Chidananda exhorted its control and use in beneficial and divine ways. Similarly, he guided all to look after their bodies and monitor how they spend their time daily. He stressed the importance of consuming appropriate food, having sufficient sleep, focusing on the right things, and assessing the quality of our actions. He concluded his speech with the message: *“sangachhadhwam samvadadhvam sam vo manaamsi janatam”* (Rig Veda, 10.191), which means, **“May you move in harmony, speak in one voice, let your minds be in agreement.”**

Overall, it was a very informative and thought-provoking session, which led to multiple questions from the listeners who were keen to know and understand more.

The YAs are very grateful and indebted to our dearest Swami for giving us these priceless opportunities of webinars with eminent speakers who continue to inspire and motivate.

Visit <https://sathyasai.org/ya/veda/> to see the archive of Veda webinars.

Summer Showers Series: Experiencing Equanimity

On February 26, 2024, the Young Adults (YAs) enthusiastically launched a limited series of the Sri Sathya Sai International Leadership Program (SSSILP), the 'Summer Showers 2024'. This series of five engaging sessions was tailored to dive deep into topics based on feedback received from the SSSILP alumni. The first session was held on March 2, 2024, with the topic of self-love and personal growth presented by Dr. Sunder Iyer and the SSSILP Co-Lead, Mr. Raegan Moodley.

Dr. Sunder Iyer is a distinguished alumnus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and an ardent devotee who served as a personal attendant to Swami and was blessed with personal interactions with Him. In a world often driven by external validation and material success, Dr. Iyer's wisdom offered a refreshing perspective on the journey of self-discovery and empowerment. Speaking to the Sai Young Adults, he reflected on the essence of core beliefs and the power they hold in shaping reality. Sharing some of his experiences with Swami, he emphasized the significance of self-awareness and putting thoughts into action.

At the heart of Dr. Iyer's message was the concept of 'plugging into the source'—the inner Self. He illustrated this with the example of everyday objects that exist in our consciousness before they manifest physically. This principle, according to Dr. Iyer, extends to all aspects of life, from relationships to personal achievements. By nurturing positive thoughts and emotions and aligning them with our core beliefs, we can bring about desired changes in our lives.

Iyer's narrative was deeply inspired by his years spent with Swami, where he learned the importance of internal validation over external acknowledgment. He encourages us, the YAs, to adopt a similar mindset, fostering a clear and focused intention that attracts the universe's resources to fulfill our aspirations. Just as great leaders rose to great heights from humble beginnings by staying true to their inner convictions, we too can transcend our limitations and manifest our true potential.

Dr. Sunder Iyer's insights inspire us to look within, and to question and redefine our core beliefs. If you would like to know more about the upcoming sessions, please contact the SSSILP Committee at sssilp@sathyasai.org.



InSAIde Scoop Podcast Series

Series 2022, Episode 8:
“Can I be Both Loving and Tough?”
featuring Mr. Ragulan and Mr. Nen Chan Samuth

In this podcast episode, Mr. Ragulan from Sri Lanka and Mr. Nen Chan Samuth from Cambodia discuss balancing love and toughness in our actions. The conversation kicks off with the question of whether one can be both loving and tough, emphasizing the common dilemmas people face when they are either too loving or too tough.

They share their perspectives on the potential problems of being too loving. Samuth points out that excessive love can lead to attachment, being taken for granted, and ultimately personal frustration and hurt. He stresses the importance of loving unconditionally, as Swami teaches, to avoid these pitfalls. Ragulan reflects on his own experiences and stresses the importance of examining one’s intentions and motives when choosing to be loving. He underscores the need for love to be unconditional and how self-reflection on one’s motives can help manage expectations and avoid disappointment.



The discussion then shifts to the problem of being too tough. Both of them agree that while toughness is necessary in certain situations, it can lead to isolation and lack of warmth if not handled properly. Samuth highlights the importance of using toughness to improve situations rather than to control or demean others. Ragulan shares a personal story where a leader’s balanced approach of being loving yet firm taught him a valuable lesson about leadership. He emphasizes that being tough should not involve negative energy but should focus on clear communication and maintaining positive intentions. The episode concludes with practical tips on balancing love and toughness, emphasizing Self-love, patience, positivity, and thoughtful action.

You can listen to the full episode here:

[InSAIde Scoop Episode 8–YouTube](#)





A Farewell Gift

Growing up in India, I had the opportunity to attend *Balvikas* (SSE). Although my parents weren't devotees of Sathya Sai, they believed that these classes would strengthen my character and instill human values in me. Like my parents, I, too, didn't believe in Swami but would attend *Balvikas* as I made many friends, and we would always play after classes. While the incentive to go to classes was my friends, incidentally, I also got a better understanding of the Sai community.

A couple of years later we relocated to Florida, USA, and lived in the same neighborhood as another family which happened to be devoted to Swami. We were always invited for *bhajans* and *satsangs* at a nearby Sai center, and eventually, we started to attend these sessions. I would stare at Swami's picture with suspicion, doubting whether Swami was truly God or not. However, when the devotees at these sessions would share miracles wherein Swami had saved them from a calamity or cured them of an illness, it piqued my curiosity about Swami. Was it just a coincidence that so many people had experienced His miracles and felt devotion and love towards Him? It felt like there was something more for me to explore, and I should probably give Swami the benefit of the doubt. **I slowly opened up to the possibility that Swami is Guru, God, and Guide as**

I introspected and pondered on these stories and miracles. I, too, wanted to experience Him in the same way that these devotees had experienced His love.

Around this time, my uncle got married to a Sai devotee. When they paid us a visit to seek my parents' blessings, my aunt was thrilled to know that our neighbors were Sai devotees as well. Upon visiting their home, my aunt liked a beautiful life-size picture of Swami at their altar, and my neighbor graciously gave that picture to her. While we all were happy for my aunt, I was a little sad that despite being near my neighbors, I hadn't received a picture of Swami from them!

That night, I had a heart-to-heart conversation with this new picture of Swami, "Everyone loves You so much and they have all experienced You through some miracle or the other, while I have experienced nothing. Are You God just to people who have seen You? Are you not divine for someone like me who has never had the opportunity to see You?" With jealousy and anger, I cried myself to sleep with the mindset that God just didn't like me. The next morning, I woke up with my aunt giving me a farewell gift in the form of a rolled-up poster. As I unrolled the poster, I was pleasantly surprised to see Swami's beautiful countenance and smile beaming back at me. **Not only had Swami heard my entire monologue with Him the previous night, but also responded by giving me an even bigger picture of Himself than I expected.**

This incident was all that I needed to realize Swami's omnipresence. Since then, every picture of Swami that I have received has been a constant reminder to me that **not only does He hear and respond to our prayers, but He will give us what is right for us without us even asking, at the right moment.** My relationship with Swami continues to be the greatest gift in my life, making each day special.

Ms. Shruti Lakkaniki 
USA

Follow the @saiyoungadults accounts on social media

 Facebook  Instagram  Telegram  Threads  X (Twitter)

 Spotify

 Mailing List



Sai Young Adults

<https://sathyasai.org/ya>

yacoordinator@sathyasai.org

The Guru



Where questions swirl and fears collide,
stands a friend, steadfast and true,
A guiding light shining through
There is Swami, forever with you.

He hears my giggles, wipes my tears,
Stands with me, always near.
In every game, in every song,
With Swami, I know I can't go wrong.

When I feel small, unsure, or scared,
Swami's my friend, who's always cared.
He holds my hand, shows me the way,
In His love, I'll always stay.

Samriddhi G | Group 3 | USA



Hanisha G | Group 3 | Panama



Nivi A | Group 1 | Online SSE



Rahil | Group 4 | Canada



Vrithika V | Group 1 | Online SSE

Dear beloved baba,

Sairam, my name is Rishab Praveen from Canada going to Toronto–York Sai center. Our beloved Sai Gurus would not have started the SSE program with you, and I think that based on what you have done to humanity, you are an inspiration for all of us. You always prioritize others instead of yourself, showing what kindness you can show to your blessed devotees. I just want to be like you, helping others in need, spreading kindness to all around the globe and putting their bad situation before mine. I know you can show me the path of what success means to me, kindness, seva, truth, non-violence and many more important values of life. I am passing on the message from many devotees to take some time to have gratitude for you. Even though we cannot visit you today, I want you to know that all of us value you in our hearts.

Rishab P | Group 3 | Canada

Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
August 17-18, 2024	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri 
October 12-13, 2024	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri 



Streaming on sathyasai.org/live and YouTube



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.**



Facebook



Instagram



WhatsApp



X (Twitter)



YouTube



Spotify



Telegram



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](#)



Have no desire, empty your mind of all cravings, become hollow and straight—become a flute, and Krishna will breathe through you sweet melody to still the agitation of the world. Cleanse the heart with the water of *Prema* (Love) and the detergents of prayer and contrition so that the stains of desire might be removed. Then, God will pour His Grace into it. You should give up attachment to the external world (*lokabhranthi*) and attachment to the body (*dehabhranthi*), if you yearn for God.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
September 8, 1966



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

