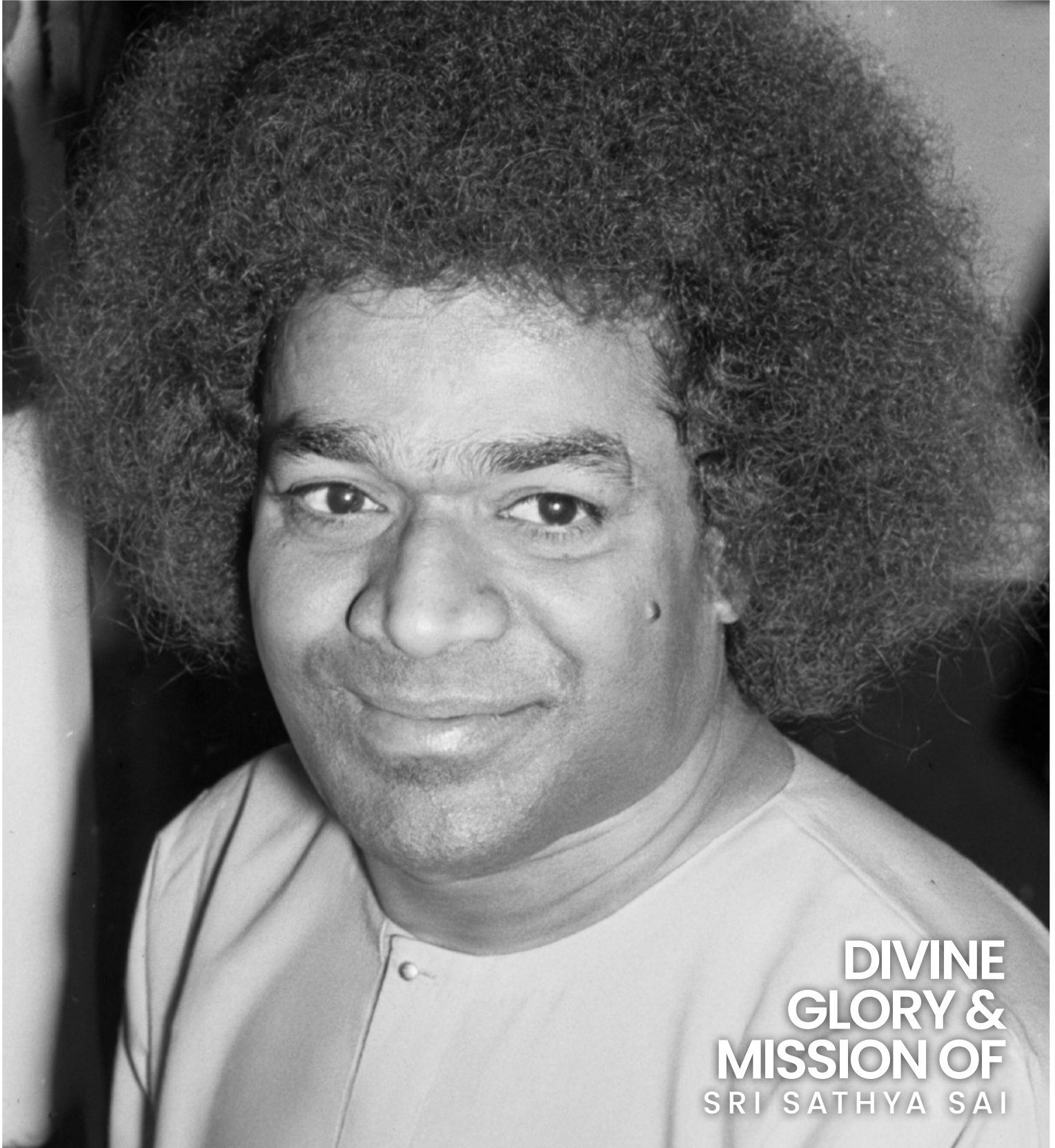


SATHYA SAI
THE
ETERNAL
COMPANION



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 9
SEPTEMBER 2024



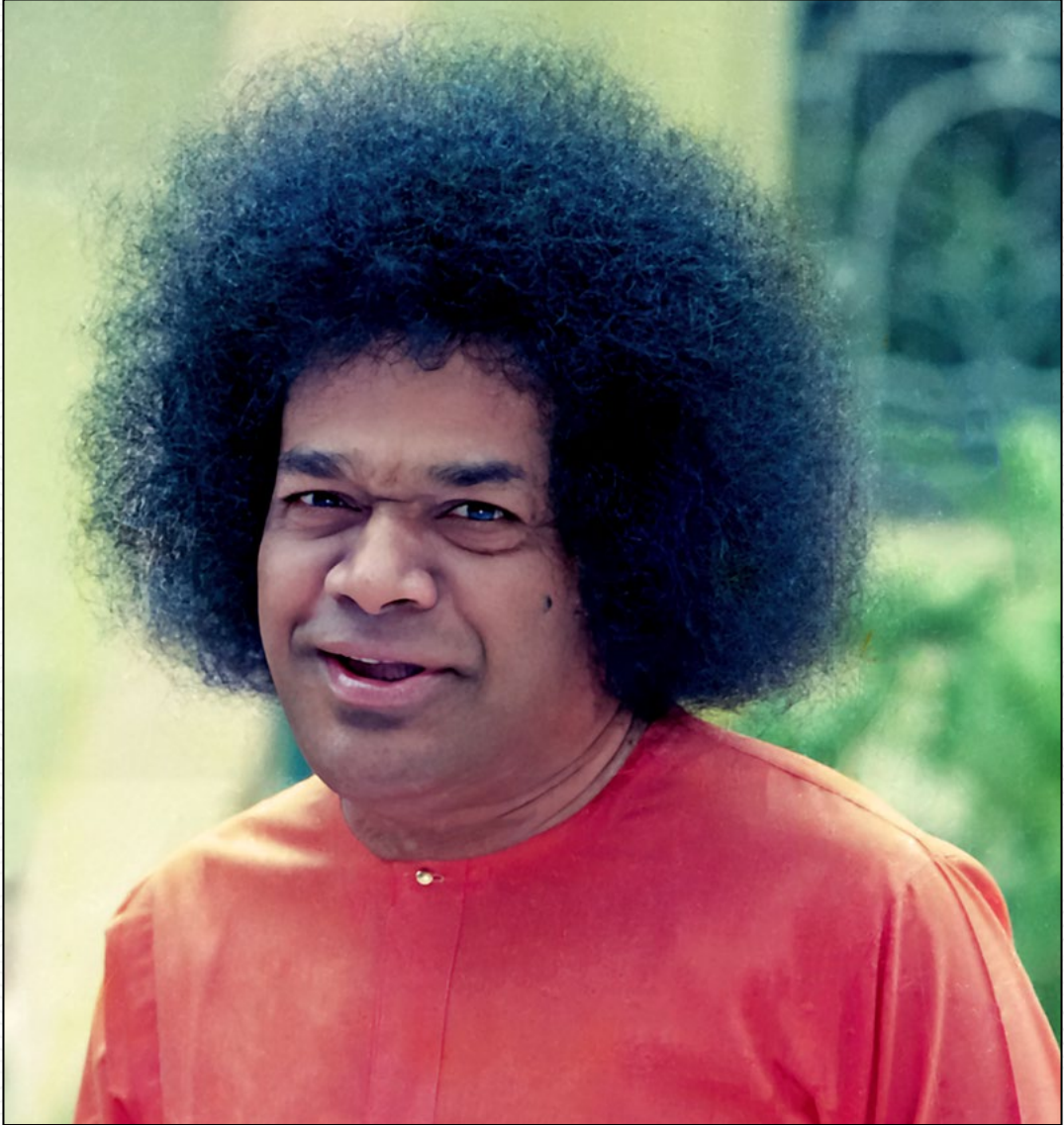
**DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF
SRI SATHYA SAI**



Love should come from within, not be enforced from outside. You should develop spontaneous love with detachment. The attitude of petitioning to God for favors should be given up. Love of God should be without expectations or seeking favors in exchange for prayers and offerings to God. The object of celebrating holy festivals is to devote the day to meditation on God. From today, give up *Swartha* (selfishness), turn your mind towards the *Parartha* (Supreme), lead a life of *Yadarnya* (Truth), and sanctify your lives. Place your faith in God and do your duty to the best of your ability. Saturate yourself with love and share it with all. If you earn the love of God even to the slightest extent, you will experience infinite joy.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

September 15, 1988



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





Volume 3 • Issue 9 • September 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 9

September 2024

- 6 Editorial**
Hands in the Society and Head in the Forest
- 14 Divine Discourse**
Love God Wholeheartedly, Part 2 – November 24, 1998
- 24 Experiences of Devotees**
I Will Always Be With You by Pundit Aum Karamchand Maharaj
The Greatest Miracle of Sathya Sai Baba by Mr. Haridarshan Sathiamoorthy
- 34 From the Divine Pen–Message from Swami**
Love Him, Love Him, Love Him
- 36 Humanitarian Service**
Love in Action–Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Sri Lanka
- 38 Glory of Womanhood**
If You Need Me, You Deserve Me by Mrs. Akhila Anupuri
- 42 Ideal Sai Young Adults**
Young Adults’ Spiritual Journey to Kenya
Faces of Resilience by Ms. Saigopini Pannerselvam
“Why Don’t My Parents Understand Me?”–Podcast Summary
- 50 Sathya Sai Education**
Sri Sathya Sai Educare Vidya Pratisthan, India
Contributions by Aayudh, Ashwin, Sahitya, Sankarshan, and Shravanya
- 58 SSSIO Events and Websites**

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

[Click here to subscribe](#)

HANDS IN THE SOCIETY AND HEAD IN THE FOREST

The profound teachings of the great Advaitic master, Adi Shankaracharya, are encapsulated in the timeless work of Bhaja Govindam. This masterpiece guides us on the path of devotion and spiritual practices that lead to liberation. A verse from this epochal work illuminates the way to live in bliss and in the state of Brahman, a state of divine enlightenment.

యోగ రతనో వా? బాగ రతనో వా?
సంస రతనో వా? సంస ల మోహనః
యస్మిన్ బ్రహ్మణో తమ తోషణం
నందతి నందతి నందత్యేవ.

*yogarato vabhogaratova sang-
arato va sangavihinah,
yasya brahmai ramate cittam
nandati nandati nandatyeva*

యోగయోగ మతి బాగ యోగ సం
'సారి యోగ సమాప్తి' త్తొక కు
వాంఛము సత్యము నమోజలంబుతో
ఆనంద కు యోగంబు ము. నందము.

*yogi-yaina mari bhogi-yaina
samsari-yaina sanyasi-yainanoo
svanthamu sathyamu
-nanubhavinchithe
anandame yanandame nandamu*

(One may take delight in yoga (union with God) or *bhoga* (worldly enjoyment); one may be delighted by company or solitude; but he whose mind delights in *Brahman* (the spiritual truth), only he enjoys real bliss and is satisfied, no one else.)

The key to perpetual bliss lies in living in the state of Brahman, in living in God. This is not a mere existence, but a life filled with divine joy and inspiration.

Swami says this beautifully as “hands in the society, head in the forest.” He repeatedly exhorts that one should not run away from society and family, considering oneself a renunciate. It is better to discharge one’s duties with dispassion and inner detachment. More than the external expression of

detachment, one's inner feelings matter more. **The example of King Janaka is apt in this context. He had many royal responsibilities of ruling a large kingdom that could easily cause attachment. Yet he remained supremely detached. That is why he is also called Videha, which means 'one who does not have body consciousness.'** Hence, his daughter, Mother Sita, is called Vaidehi (daughter of the one who does not have body consciousness).

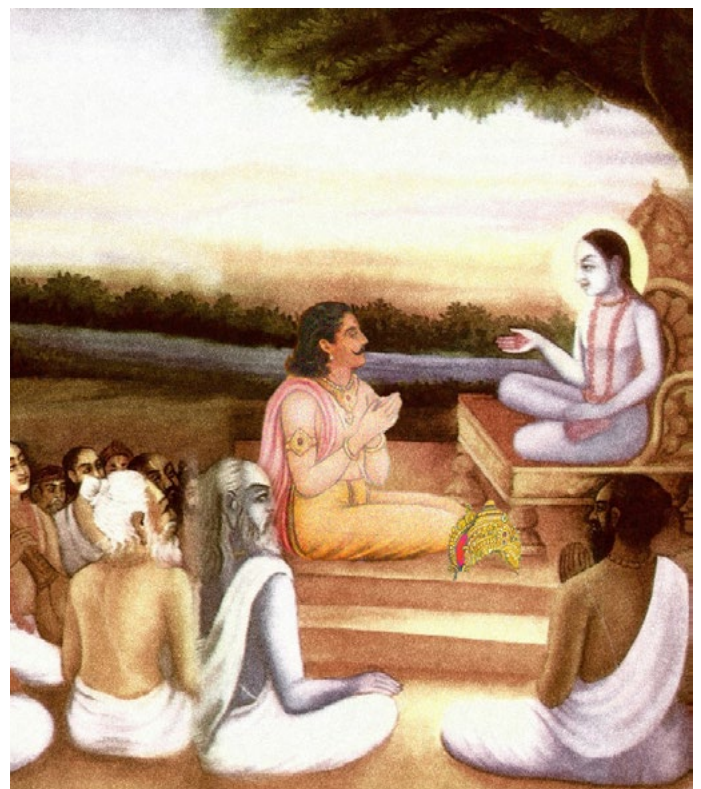
Steady Mind is the Prerequisite for *Brahmajnana*

There is a beautiful story of King Janaka, which Swami narrates in the 11th discourse He delivered during the Summer Course of 1973. The great Rishi (sage) Suka was once teaching his disciples in a forest quite close to Mithila where King Janaka lived. King Janaka learned about this and wanted to become his disciple and imbibe his teachings. Janaka went to the forest, made obeisance to Suka requesting that he be accepted as one of Suka's many disciples. Then he sought permission to attend the classes. With sage Suka's acceptance, Janaka became one of the disciples from that day.

One day, when Janaka did not arrive on time, Suka did not start his class and waited for the king. When the sage told the disciples to wait till Janaka arrived, they whispered amongst themselves and grumbled, saying that they had joined this great sage only because they believed that he gave no special importance to kings and powerful people. And now, it appears that he is being influenced by the king's wealth and power. From that day, their faith in the Guru started waning. They also became envious of King Janaka. When deserving disciples become close to the teacher, others who are not eligible for such privilege tend to become envious.

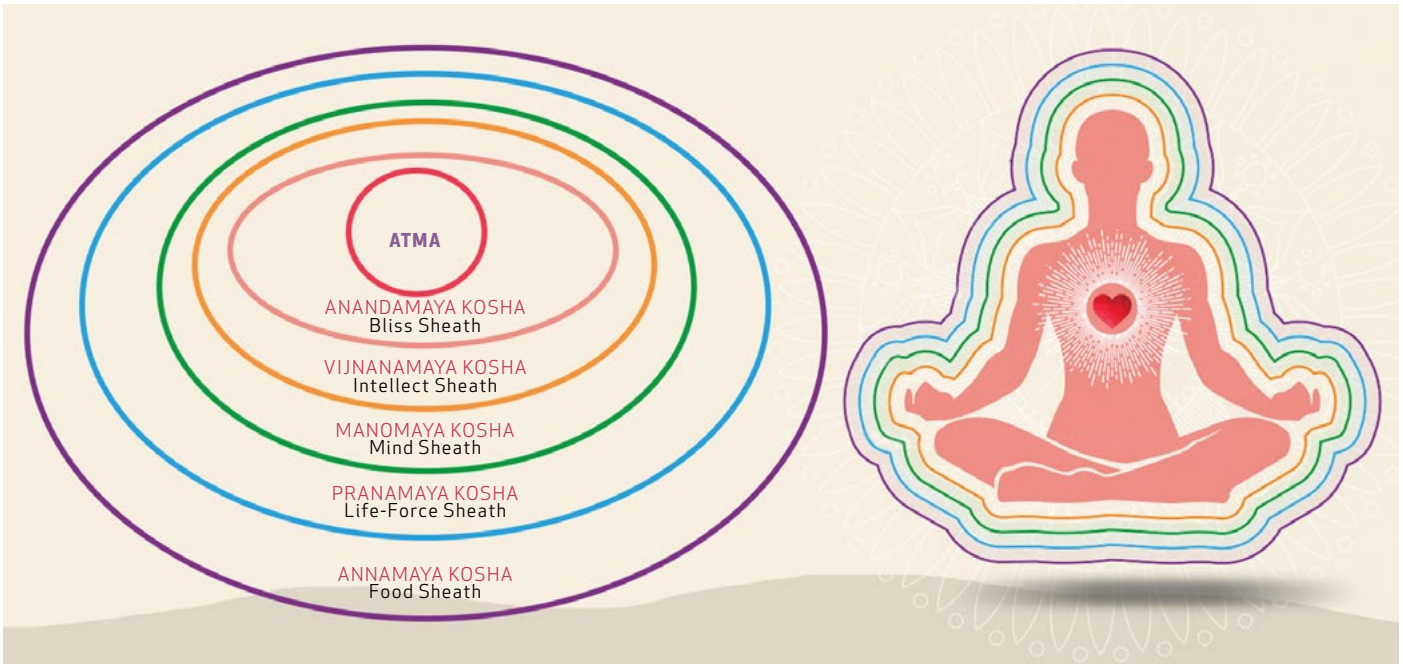
As soon as Suka saw such envy and jealousy among his disciples, he decided to teach them a lesson. At an opportune moment, all the disciples were given the make-believe news that the entire city of Mithila was in flames. As soon as the disciples heard that Mithila was in flames, each one of them began to think of the destruction it would cause to their homes, the potential danger to their parents' lives, the disastrous effect on their wealth, and so on. One by one, each disciple fled to their homes in the city, intending to save and salvage whatever they could. But King Janaka sat unperturbed, did not waver, and sat attentively in front of the guru without moving from his place.

Suka alerted Janaka that the flames appeared to spread, reaching the palace, and he suggested Janaka leave at once



It is better to teach a lesson to one person with a steady mind than a thousand people with wavering minds.

THE FIVE KOSHAS



to save the inmates of the palace. Janaka politely refused to follow his suggestion with a smile, thinking that whatever is God's will, let it be, as no one can change it. The envious disciples who ran to the city found, to their dismay, that there were no flames at all and that it was all make-believe news. They returned to the *Ashram* and reported this to Suka and learned that it was all part of the lesson that their Guru had orchestrated. Seeing the king peacefully seated, unmoved by the catastrophic news, they expressed surprise and admired the steady mind of Janaka. **Suka looked at the disciples, who were envious of the king, and told them that it is better to have one sincere student rather than many students with no stability of mind. It is better to teach a lesson to one person with a steady mind than a thousand people with wavering minds.** This is why King Janaka is recognized as a *Rajarshi*, a king and a sage who always lived in *Brahmajnana* (knowledge of Brahman).

We must consider ourselves supremely blessed and lucky to have our *Sadguru* (true teacher), *Jagadguru* (teacher of the universe), and *Gurunaam Guru* (teacher of teachers), our dear Swami, guiding us and teaching us on this journey to Brahman. The

second part of a divine discourse that elaborates on this lesson has been included in this issue.

Bhrigu's Search For Brahman

The Taittiriya Upanishad says that the *Anandamaya Kosha* (the bliss sheath) is beyond the *Annamaya Kosha* (food sheath), *Manomaya Kosha* (mind sheath), *Pranamaya Kosha* (life-force sheath), and *Vijnanamaya Kosha* (intellect sheath). It also mentions an insightful story called *Varuni Vidya*, in which sage Bhrigu learns from his father, Varuna. **Bhrigu goes in search of Brahman which is the basis for everything in the universe.**

First, he lives at the gross body level (*Annamaya kosha*) and enjoys it. He returns to his father, stating that the body and the organs (of action and perception) are *Brahman*. The father does not agree and sends him to search further and dive deeper. He becomes purer with *sadhana* and focuses on the breath—the life-force sheath (*Pranamaya kosha*). Since that is also not the answer, he now rises higher to the mind sheath (*Manomaya kosha*), which is responsible for bondage and liberation. He unravels it as a mere bundle of thoughts and replaces all negative thoughts with positive thoughts. But his father advises that it still does not reach

Brahman. With further spiritual practices, Bhrigu goes beyond the mind into the sheath of the intellect (*Vijnanamaya kosha*). Pure intellect makes one develop fundamental discrimination where one realizes what is real and what is not.

This is the reality that one prays for in the statement, “*asatoma sadgamaya*” (lead me from the unreal to the real). The external world we see is unreal. The only truth is divinity. **Going beyond the intellect sheath, Bhrigu reaches the sheath of bliss (*anandamaya kosha*). This sheath is described in the scriptures as ‘*yatho vacho nivart-hante aprapya manasa saha*’ (that which cannot be comprehended by the mind or described by words). That bliss is verily Brahman.**

How Blissful Is Bliss?

To get an idea of the magnitude and intensity of happiness in bliss, the following comparison is made in the scriptures. One unit of human happiness (*Manushya Ananda*) is when a person is physically strong, young, scholarly, wealthy, and powerful, with a noble character. Basically, one has everything that a human being aspires for.

But as the *Anandavalli* in the Veda says, a hundred times *Manushya Ananda* is *Manushya Gandharva Ananda*. A hundred times that is *Deva Gandharva Ananda*. Similarly, in steps of 100 times or 100X, we have in ascending order *Ajanajanam Devanam Ananda*, *Karmadevanam Devanam Ananda*, *Devanam Ananda*, *Indrasya Ananda*, *Brihaspathi Ananda*, *Prajapathi Ananda*, and *Brahmananda*. **So, Brahmananda is a quintillion times (10^{18} times) greater than *Manushya Gandharva Ananda*. That is why people who attain that state are unable to explain it. It is something that can only be experienced.**

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says that trying to explain *Brahmananda* is like a deaf and mute person trying to describe a

delicious dish that he has enjoyed! He can express himself only through gestures and noises. So too, one who is in bliss only radiates bliss.

The Example Of Shiva's Bull, Nandishwara

For such bliss, one should be completely absorbed in the thoughts of God. For example, consider Nandishwara, the bull and vehicle of Lord Shiva, who is also His foremost devotee. He is always facing Lord Shiva with one-pointed attention. **The word ‘Nandi’ means one who is always in *ananda* or bliss. Swami tells us that this is because he is always tuned to God. His eyes, ears, and all senses are focused only on Lord Shiva. He is not distracted by the world.**

If our focus on God is such that we are breathing God, eating God, drinking God, and sleeping God, we will be in the perpetual state of *Brahmananda* (supreme bliss). Some devotees have been blessed to experience such intense focus on Swami at least for a few minutes during personal interviews





name of Rani Rasmani was sitting and pretending to listen to the discourse while her mind was wandering around on business matters. He went straight to her and gave her two slaps. Others who witnessed this event were surprised and thought that Ramakrishna had gone mad. Rani Rasmani was also surprised and was trying to think if anything was wrong with her and why her Guru was treating her with disrespect. Truly, if one knows one's faults, one will not act in that manner. But because Rasmani did not know her fault, she was unable to realize what was wrong with her. Ramakrishna then told her that if she came there to think of her problems of litigation and not to listen to the discourse, she might as well do so in her house."

with Him. In this issue, we share the experience of Pundit Aum Karamchand Maharaj during various interviews with Swami, which is sure to delight and inspire everyone to develop such a one-pointed focus on Swami.

This one-pointed concentration is very important in spiritual practice. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita (2:41)

*vyavasayatmika buddhir ekeha
kuru-nandana
bahu-shakha hyanantash cha
buddhayo 'vyavasayinam*

(O descendent of the Kurus, the intellect of those who are on this path is resolute, with a one-pointed focus. But the intellect of those who are irresolute is many-branched and diluted.)

Concentration is the First Step for a Steady Mind

In His divine discourse on May 30, 1973, Swami narrates the story of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa that illustrates this point.

"In the midst of giving a discourse, he noticed that a renowned disciple by the

Japa, dhyana, sadhana, and other methods of Self-realization are like valuable jewels and gems. They can only be shown and given to people who have unwavering faith and a steady mind. They cannot be given, for purposes of exhibition, to people who do not even know how to concentrate on an object.

Sadhanas to Develop an Unwavering Mind

There are three kinds of *sadhana* to develop an unwavering mind. The first is the **Meena Sadhana (Sadhana like the fish)**. The second is **Mriga Sadhana (Sadhana like the deer)**, and the third is **Kurma Sadhana (Sadhana like the tortoise)**. *Meena Sadhana* can be explained by remembering that fish can survive only in water. The moment it is taken out of the water, it perishes. Thus, *Meena Sadhana* can be done only in solitude. If one sits in public, the *sadhana* will not be successful. This type of *sadhana* is called *Meena Sadhana*.

Mriga Sadhana is based on being like the deer that can stay on the land in herds. Some people can concentrate only when they are sitting in the company of others. They cannot concentrate in solitude. If they

As Swami assured us, with sincere, intense efforts and His Divine grace, we can experience Brahman in this very lifetime.

are alone, they begin to think of family problems.

On the other hand, the tortoise can live equally well either in water or on earth. **So, if we say that one's sadhana is like Kurma Sadhana, it means one can concentrate anywhere, like a tortoise; the person can concentrate irrespective of whether he is alone or in the company of others.** This is called *Kurma Sadhana*.

Swami expands on these concepts in His discourse on May 30, 1973,

“Today, there is no equal-mindedness. You are all developing only what is related to the sangha or society. In this age of youth, it is possible for you to develop intense concentration. While your body and mind are strong, you must control your organs. Otherwise, you will have a wavering mind, and you

cannot control it when you grow older. If you have a wavering mind, you will be wasting your life. If things happen contrary to your ideas, your desires, and your expectations, there will be excitement coming from within you. You should not be subservient to such excitement. You should control yourself and get an upper hand over such excitement. Then only, will you be entitled to God's grace. Be in society but remain careful to see that your faith and devotion are not perturbed. If your faith shakes, your life will become shaky. If your mind can be controlled, you can certainly do something useful, and your life will become purposeful. Whether one is in society or in solitude, if he knows and understands the nature of God, he will change into becoming one with the divine.”

So we can live in Brahman and bliss every moment of our lives everywhere when we are always connected with God through our thoughts, words, and deeds. Then, there is no difference between sacred and secular. **Swami wants us to spiritualize every aspect of our lives.**

THREE KINDS OF SADHANA TO DEVELOP AN UNWAVERING MIND

Meena Sadhana
Sadhana like the fish



Mriga Sadhana
Sadhana like a Deer

Kurma Sadhana
Sadhana like the Tortoise



Divinizing Every Activity is True Spirituality

In the beginning stages of spiritual life, we separate the sacred and secular. We have a separate time for *sadhana*—spiritual practices like *japa*, meditation, worship, service, etc., away from the mundane activities at home, at work, and in society. **But, as we spiritually progress, we realize, as Swami puts it, that there is only one work—God's work.** That is because everything in this visible universe has arisen from God alone. That is the eye-opening revelation Swami makes

in a letter that He wrote to Mr. Chatterjee in Calcutta, which has also been included in this issue. So everything we do gets connected with God.

Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita (9:27)

*yat karosi yad asnasi yaj juhosi
dadasi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurusva
mad-arpanam*

(O son of Kunti, all that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform, should be done as an offering unto Me.)

As Adi Shankaracharya says, then, every word we speak becomes a hymn in praise of the Lord, walking becomes circumambulation of the Lord, the bath becomes *abhisheka* (worship by pouring offerings on the deity), eating becomes *naivedya* (food offered to God which is then partaken as consecrated food or *prasadam*), enjoyment of the senses becomes worship, and sleep becomes meditation. Everything becomes spiritual. In all states of the mind—waking, dreaming, deep sleep—we are always connected to that universal consciousness.

When our children were still going to school, it took quite some effort for my wife to discharge the household responsibilities while attending to the professional duties of a pediatrician. She commendably took up the responsibilities of dropping and picking up the children to and from school, along with attending to her patients and cooking at home. She was left with no time for formal spiritual practices. She felt that she

was unable to spend sufficient time for her sadhana.

During one of our visits to Prasanthi Nilayam, she expressed this concern to Swami, saying that she doesn't have time for personal sadhana. Swami, with a compassionate look, told her, **"As long as you think something is spiritual and something is secular, you will never have peace of mind. Make everything divine. When you are taking care of your children, husband, in-laws, or anyone else, think you are worshipping me."** He went on to give many examples. He said that when one is cutting vegetables while cooking, one should feel that one is cutting the ego. While rolling the dough to make *chapati*, one should feel that one is expanding the heart. Similarly, while vacuuming and mopping the floor, one should think that one is cleaning away all the 'dirty' qualities of desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and jealousy.

Swami thus spiritualized every action because the essence of spirituality is getting rid of the ego, purifying the mind, and filling the heart with love.

Then, we are always connected to God. Then every word we utter becomes a mantra, every act of ours becomes an act of worship, and every place we put our foot becomes a place of pilgrimage. Then we can be the source of joy and peace for the people around us. As Swami assured us, with sincere, intense efforts and His Divine grace, we can experience Brahman in this very lifetime.

JAI SAI RAM





Love God Wholeheartedly

Part 2

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS ISSUE...

In the first part of this discourse, Swami explained the root causes of all sorrows and difficulties in the world—greed, desire, anger, and ego. These are all caused by the mind. But the same mind can confer bliss and liberation too. For that, Self-enquiry accompanied by love for God is essential. Finally, with purity, our vision of the world changes and that is enlightenment. In the second portion of this discourse, Swami dilates further on this, as He answers the questions put forth by devotees.

I have received letters from delegates to this conference seeking clarification of their doubts. What is the root cause of doubt? It is the absence of total faith. Jesus had a disciple, Thomas, who doubted everything he came across and was appropriately called “doubting Thomas.” In the path of spirituality, doubts do arise at times, even though one may have faith in God.

First question: *Did Jesus really declare that He was the Truth, the Path, and that none was superior to Him?*

Enquire into the truth yourself. Jesus was never egotistic at any point of time and never made any such declarations. There was a tax collector who recorded the conversation between Jesus and the fishermen. It was during one of those conversations that Jesus assured them that He would take care of them, but at no point of time did he mention with a sense of ego

that He was the only One and the ultimate One to protect them. He did this only with a view to increase their confidence and enthuse them into action.

At the time of His birth, three wise men visited Jesus in the manger. One of them, looking at child Jesus, remarked that He is a “Messenger of God.” The second wise man exclaimed that he is a “Son of God.” The third wise man said that He and God are one and the same. These three statements have been interpreted in varied ways. Jesus had no trace of ego in Him. He was filled with compassion at the sight of the meek and the afflicted. Paul opposed Jesus in all matters from the very outset. Once Jesus appeared in the dream of Paul and questioned him, “What harm have I done to you? Why do you criticize Me so?” This caused Paul to ponder and realize that his ignorance and ego blinded him to real-

“

Our words should come from the heart which gives complete confidence.

Such a person with full faith will have no doubts.



ity. Thereafter he became an ardent disciple of Jesus.

In every age, every noble soul had to put up with criticism. People always have mistaken notions about good and bad. If only we understand the truth in the Bible, we will come to the conclusion that there was no fault in Jesus at all. Jesus always aspired to put people in God consciousness.

At the time of crucifixion, Jesus prayed: “O Father! What sin have I committed? Why am I put to suffering thus?” When Mother Mary stood crying at the foot of the Cross, an ethereal voice was heard. “All are one, My dear Son; be alike to everyone.”

But in every avatar, this kind of philosophy has been propounded. Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita, “*Mamaivamsho jivaloke jivabhuta sanathanah*” (All Beings are an aspect of Myself). “**You are my servant; you are my devotee; salute me, and I will take care of everything for you.**” said Lord Krishna. There is this ‘I’ in the above statement, which has been coming only in the context of an Avatar. But Jesus did not say

that. Jesus implied, “I will look after the well-being of him (devotee). I am the root cause or source of everything.”

Where does this caste come from? What is caste? We think of this as the source.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna said,

“*Chaaturvarnyam mayasrishtam*”

(Sanskrit verse)

(All people of four varnas (colors) are created by Me).

What are these colors? Krishna said, “All these colors of people of different races are My creation.” We have been interpreting the term *varnas* (colors) as castes and religions. God did not say that.

What God has said is all-inclusive, not narrow-minded. So don’t give any scope for these doubts. You can be Christian, Hindu, Muslim, or Zoroastrian, but all should consider God as one. **What was the first thing Jesus said? He said that He was ‘persona.’ What does ‘persona’ mean? He said that He is an embodiment of divinity.**

This is what the British referred to as ‘person’ and the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) call ‘Purusha.’ All these terms are derived from

the same root—'persona' meaning sacred. Every human being has divinity; hence, he is called a person. This 'person' means that he is an embodiment of divinity. This is what has been referred to as 'Purusha' in Indian culture, Vedic literature, epics, and legends:

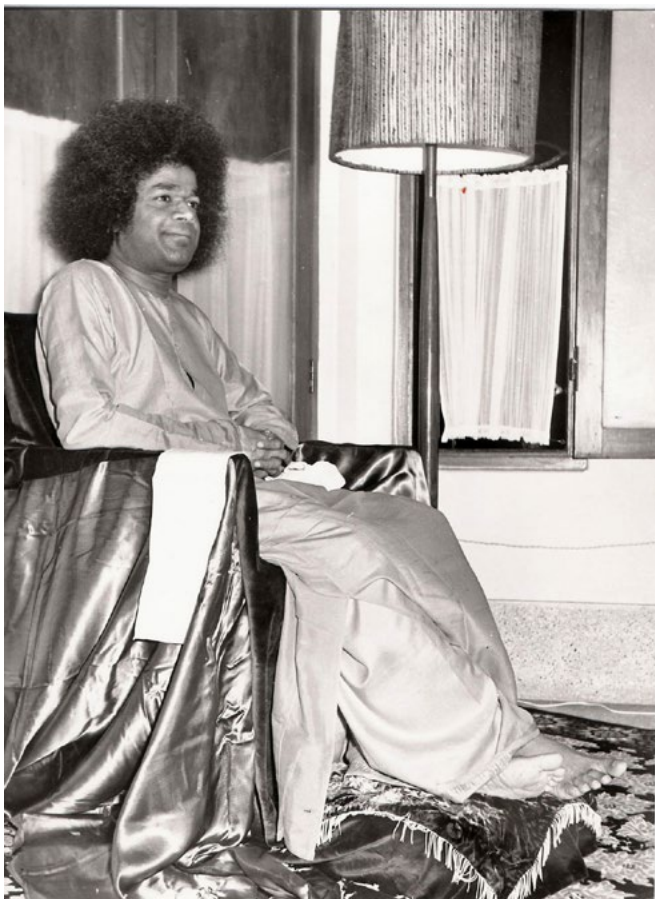
*Yal labdhva puman Ichharamo
bhavati*

*Thrupto Bhavati, Matho Bhavati,
Atmaramo Bhavati*

(Sanskrit Verse)

*(He is a true devotee who desires
and longs for God, is constantly
yearning for God, is always content,
is intoxicated by the very thought of
God, and revels in Atma, the Self.)*

Keep away from bad Company



These kinds of qualities have been attributed to the Purusha, the omnipresent divinity. There is divinity in everyone. But we see differences by seeing the unity as multiplicity. Thus, we are experiencing diversity. So, what should we do today? **We should see unity in diversity and experience oneness. You should consider that as the main objective of the Sathya Sai Organization.** We should not give scope for any differences or hatred. There should not be any differences. All have one divine principle, the same divinity. If you consider this truth, then this is the true spiritual message. But practice is essential, not just preaching.

There are two microphones in front of Me and one microphone in front of him (translator). But the sound coming from these two microphones is the same as the sound coming from that microphone. But these sounds are coming separately. The words that emanate from the microphones may differ, but the underlying sound principle is the same. Divinity appears to us in many forms. The sound that comes from every human being emanates from the navel. That navel region is the seat of Brahma or Creator.

Some people speak only from lips in order to suit the situation. Such words constitute contraction talk. Such contraction talk is equivalent to death. People who indulge in such contraction talk have no connection between their speech and heart.

Our words should come from the heart which gives complete confidence. Such a person with full faith will have no doubts.

There is divinity in everyone. Whatever someone says, one must enquire whether that truth applies to oneself or not. There is only one truth! If we question why we should search for truth, it is because in each human there are the dual aspects of truth and untruth, righteousness and unright-



“

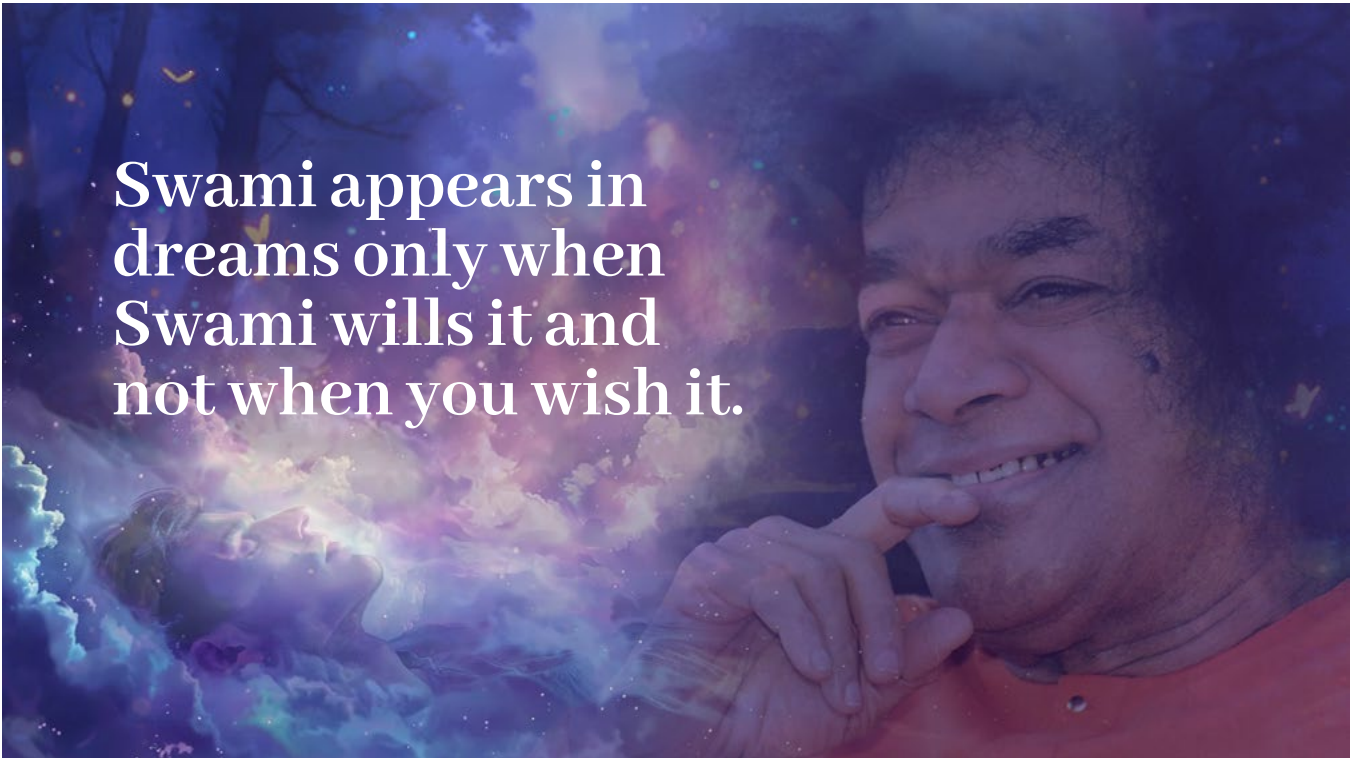
No matter what you do, consider performing all actions with an attitude of pleasing God.

teousness, nonviolence and violence. To illustrate this, consider pristine, pure, gold. After some time, you added copper to it. After some more time, you added silver. Later, you added lead, and then, you added brass. What will happen to the pure gold when so many metals are added to it? Its very nature is corrupted. The true golden luster is gone when so many metals are added, and the very nature of the pure gold becomes diminished and obscured.

That is what has become of man today. At the time of birth, man was pure and sacred. Coming in contact with others in the world, one acquires the qualities of untruth, injustice, and violence, and these qualities overlay on the Atma (Self). Then the Atma also reflects these aspects of happiness and sorrow. This is the root cause of the cycle of birth and death. **When you are one with the Self, there is no scope for birth and death. Because of bodily attachment, ego, and intellectual pride, one assumes a human form.** In this manner, human beings acquire good and bad qualities and forget their true Self. What is the reason for this change? The main reason for this is the inclusion of the impurities of undesirable

qualities, like the inclusion of base metals to pure gold. So, this product should be purified again. How to do it? Burn it in fire!! Then, all these different metals will be separated and it will be transformed back into its original pure gold form.

Man has to be cleansed by the process of *samskara* (refinement) to get rid of all the bad qualities and regain his resplendent pristine purity. Jealousy and hatred are increasing among both devotees and spiritual aspirants (*sadhakas*). **Jealousy is also increasing along with pride (ego). Because of these two impurities, one is destroying one's humanness.** How can we say that someone is human when He is not true to his word, speaking one thing to one person and another thing to another person? By incorporating all these evil qualities, he is losing his humanness, like gold losing its purity with the addition of other metals. We must strongly hold on to our faith. We must make sure that bad qualities are not acquired. Add gold to gold, which means, add good company (*satsang*) to good company (*satsang*). Don't associate with bad company which is very bad for you. To avoid bad company,



Swami appears in
dreams only when
Swami wills it and
not when you wish it.

one must get rid of bad qualities, as the first step.

*tyaja durjana-samsargam
bhaja sadhu-samagamam
kuru punyam aho ratram
smara nityam anityatam*

(Sanskrit Verse)

*(Renounce bad company;
Associate with holy company;
Do meritorious deeds day and night;
and Remember always what is
permanent and what is transient.)*

Keep away from bad company. Man's words and deeds appear to be very pious or saintly, but the actions may be demonic. Do not ruin yourself by trusting such people. People of this nature who are like impure gold, are increasing. You should always remain like pure gold. Even a small quantity of pure gold is very precious. Even a small quantity of pure gold is better than a mound of debased gold. Quality should be preferred over quantity. Half an acre of fertile land is better than ten acres of barren land, as you can grow crops on the half-acre fertile land. But we are following the wrong path and corrupting the

pure heart. We need not listen to anyone. **Follow your conscience. That is, 'Follow the Master.'** Who is your master? Your conscience is your master. **'Face the Devil.' 'Fight to the End.' 'Finish the Game.'** This is the philosophy of our life. Corrupting yourself by adding impurities and running after different gurus, you are forgetting Swami, who is your basis. Since you respect and follow the words of those who have disharmony in their thought, word, and deed, you tend to forget your Swami, your true Self. This situation is of your own making. Follow your conscience.

I never 'force' anything, and I am not forcing anyone. Why am I not forcing? The reason is that one has to follow the dictates of one's source within, conscience. Force is like a military force. **The source is the Self, which is full of love. Follow that love. Consider this as the answer to this first question: What does 'I will save' mean?**

Jesus did not say, 'I am the truth, and nothing else is the truth.' He taught with a broad perspective that all are children of God, the embodiments of truth and purity. He propagated that no one should hurt another

or abuse them with words. He preached non-violence.

Second question: *Swami appears to many people in their dreams. But why are we not getting those (Swami) dreams?*

This is a kind of naivete or innocence. You cannot just wish and think and dream of Swami. You think about many people, but do they all appear in your dream? No, they do not. It is a mistake to think that Swami has no compassion for you just because Swami is not appearing in your dreams. Dreams are nothing but reflections of the subconscious mind. But Swami appearing in dreams is very auspicious. Now I will explain the different types of dreams. There will be some bad ones and some terrible ones. Some dreams are painful, some are pleasant, and some are sad. The reason for all these dreams is that everything is collected in your thoughts from time to time. All of them get accumulated and stored in your subconscious mind. It is good that they find expression in dreams. You should think of all these dreams as the reflection, reaction, and resound of what is within you. Swami appearing in dream is not a reaction, resound, or reflection. **Swami appears in dreams only when Swami wills it and not when you wish it.**

Yesterday a man came here who had never seen Me. He was among the Moham-medan musicians who played yesterday. I said to him, "Son, do you remember that when you met with a car accident in America I appeared before you at that very instant?"

He burst out crying, "Oh! my God. I have never seen Him before, but He appeared in America." When he went back to sleep again that night, I appeared in his dream and said that he would be coming to Puttaparthi for my next Birthday. It happened accordingly. They arrived yesterday. That is what Swami's dream is like. But

among these dreams, some are confusing. One says, "Swami appeared in my dream". You may be seeing Swami, but at the same time, your feelings get mixed up with your thoughts and cause confusion. Such a dream is not true. These dreams are not willed by Swami. These are caused by eating improper food and indigestion. **When I do appear in dreams, it will be a vivid dream, and I will speak clearly.**

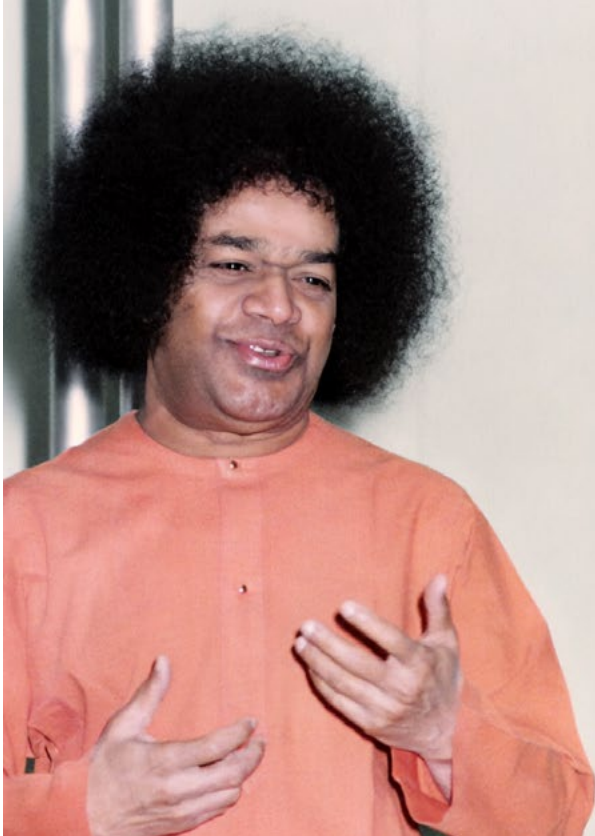
Let us say that you had a dream of going to Puttaparthi and also returning to America. Here, two or three dreams are combined into one, like other metals getting mixed with gold. So, that dream is not true. When a message is conveyed through a dream, it will be clear. But, it is wrong to think that just because I do not appear in dreams, I have no grace upon you. Swami's grace is always there.

Do All Actions (karma) to Please God

Third Question: *"Everyone is doing sadhana (spiritual practices). I should also do sadhana. But I don't have time. I am so busy with my worldly business and work that I am unable to contemplate on Swami wholeheartedly. I am unable to find time to do Swami's service activities."*

This attitude is completely wrong. Do you need some special time to think about Swami? Go to your office. There is no need to skip or stop going to the office. Do your work in the office. Do it well. Do it properly and think that it is God's work. That is also divine work. That is also Swami's work; divine service. Recognizing this, it is said, **"Work is Worship; Duty is God."**

So, you don't have to sit in a special place or position and say, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram." Whatever work you do, consider it all as God's work. It is said, "*sarvam khalvidam brahma*" (Everything is Brahman, the Supreme consciousness). "*sarva karma*



God is
omnipresent.
Service is service
wherever it is
done.
Service can be
done anywhere.

bhagavad preethyartham". (Do all action to please God). Think, "I am doing all the work for the sake of God, for pleasing God." That itself is a great spiritual practice.

You want to do spiritual practice, and you sit down to meditate. But, when you sit in meditation, are you controlling your mind at least for a second? Why do you do this sort of meditation? Why do you seek time to do something like this? Instead, take care of your housework. **No matter what you do, consider performing all actions with an attitude of pleasing God**, because every human being is bound by karma or activity (*karmanu bhandhani manushya loke*).

What is karma? Service does not mean merely sweeping the streets or taking care of the sick. *Karma* is not limited to that; *karma* means moving or action. Even inhaling and exhaling is *karma*. Your eyes are blinking; it is *karma*. You are sleeping; it, too, is *karma*. You are studying and that also is *karma*. You are eating, and it

is *karma*. Everything is *karma*. Without *karma*, one cannot live even for a moment.

Everything is *karma*, but *karma* done with a feeling of pleasing God will be meaningful. You should not discriminate between your work and divine work. Such a distinction should not exist. When you separate two things, such as you and God, it results in the separation of everything. You and God are not separate. You and God are one. We must act with such conviction. Any little work done can turn out to be great (when you consider everything as divine work). There is nothing wrong with going out on the streets to serve the needy or going to the hospital to serve the patients. But such activities are not the only activities to be considered as service. **In your office, in your business, in your duty, do your work properly. That duty is *karma*.** That work is real *sadhana*. You receive a salary from the government for your job. Is it not wrong to do some other *sadhana* without doing your assigned government work? When you get a salary, you should

perform your work commensurate with the salary. That is true service.

You must serve in the office. Correcting papers is a service (for teachers). Managing your accounts is also *karma*. Looking after your bank affairs is *karma*. Do any work, but do not consider it as separate work; do it as divine work. Do not give excuses of not having time. There is enough time in the 24 hours of the day. How much work do you do in the office in 24 hours? You do, at the most, 7 or 8 hours of work. But what are you doing after that? You sleep for 6 hours. What are you doing the rest of the time? You are looking after your own affairs. You have enough time for this. Why are you saying there is no time?

Here is a small story. A man hoping to become a great devotee prayed to God, "Swami! What is the lifespan you have given me?" God said, "Son, I have given you 80 years of life." Then he responded, "Oh, I am so happy. Then I will spend the first 20-25 years studying and playing. In the next 25 years, I will earn money. The last 25 years will be needed for adequate planning for my future and the well-being of my children. So, I am practically left with no time [for spiritual practices]. So, he asked God, "You gave me 80 years of life. All these 80 years are just enough for attending to my personal work. So, please bless me with 20 more years to think of You."

God said, "Oh, foolish man! Do you need 20 more years to think about me? No need for 20 years. Two seconds is enough for you. How? There is electricity. You need light. How long does it take to switch it on? Only one second. But, to think of me, it does not even take a second. When the switch is turned on, the light comes on. To turn on this light, do you need 20 years? Who knows for what else you will use these 20 years! All this is a sign of your laziness." **So, we only need a moment to truly think**

about God. With a steady mind, it is enough to think for a second. Slow and steady wins the race.

We should not waste time. Time is a form of God. Time is God. Do not waste time. Time waste is life waste. If you are using time wisely, that is true *sadhana*. Think of time as the embodiment of God, and you will become pure. So, it is useless to lament, "I do not have time." People are worried that there is no time to think about Swami and to serve Swami. Whoever wrote this question is a lazy person, for sure. If you get rid of laziness, you will get on to the holy path. **"Laziness is rust and dust. Realization is rest and best."** Know this truth well.

Service is Service Wherever it is Done

Fourth question: *As we are abroad, we have no chance to do much Sai service.*

This devotee hopes to come to India and stay here to serve Swami wholeheartedly. It is also a kind of laziness. To do service, why do you need to do it only in your homeland, India? **God is omnipresent. Service is service wherever it is done. Service can be done anywhere.** Moreover, it is selfish to desire to come to Prasanthi Nilayam and stay near Swami and serve Him. If you want, you can come here after retirement, and I will be happy.

But, you also have children and responsibilities to be taken care of. You have to take care of their education. You have your duty, and there are societal rules to follow. First, wherever you are, do your duty properly. Moreover, if you were to come to Prasanthi Nilayam, you may do good service for a few days. But, over a period of time, you may become a bit deluded by joining the company here. **So, there is no need to come here. Do not come; stay wherever you are and serve. Service is service wherever it is done.** Swami does not expect any service. I am doing my own work. So many

of our boys are here. Who is serving me? They are also hoping, like you, and longing like you, to serve Swami. Only some pure-hearted people will get such sacred opportunities of service.

I do not need anyone to serve me. You do your duty and service activities. I am 73 years old. My legs, eyes, ears, and hands are in perfect condition. I can do my work. Therefore, I do not expect service from others. Serve the weak and needy and consider that as serving Swami. You worry that Swami may have leg pain and how Swami can walk around. But I never get any leg pain.

I do not feel any pain. I experience it only when I take over someone's pain. Other-

wise, naturally, I do not suffer any pain. This body has no suffering. Dr. Alreja (Swami's personal physician) knows it. Whenever he checks My blood pressure, I ask, "Alreja, how much is the blood pressure?" He replies, "Swami, perfect, normal, 120/80." But my correct blood pressure is 117/78. I asked him to check my pulse. He said, "Your pulse is 68. Perfectly normal." No matter how long I talk or do anything, my blood pressure does not increase. So sacred is my body. **Purity, patience, and perseverance; the union of these three makes my body sacred.** So, none of you need to serve me. You should serve others and do the best for the welfare of your family.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 24, 1998

The concluding Part 3 of this discourse will appear in the next issue of Sathya Sai—The Eternal Companion.







I WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU

“What do you want?” Baba asked as I sat quietly, unsure of what to say.

“What do you want?” Baba asked me again, but I remained quiet.

“Why is hair so big?” Swami further enquired, and I still kept quiet.

“Youth, what do you want?” asked Baba for the third time.

“You, Baba, I want you, Baba,” I finally ventured to reply. In between these questions that Baba asked me, He was also talking to others in the interview room and had already materialized a beautiful ring for Pundit Jadunanan Mishra, a Shiva lingam for someone, a japamala for another lady, and a pendant for a Western devotee. I had seen so many miracles in such a short period that I was able to quickly elevate my opinion of Baba from Saint, Prophet, and Avatar to that of Supreme Being on earth. It was then possible for me to repeat my reply to Baba,

..we are happy to have been granted human births in this age so that we are blessed to see, touch, and speak with the Avatar of the Kaliyuga, Bhagawan Baba.

and I said, “Baba, I want you,” being fully convinced of His divinity and Avatarhood.

“Take me,” said Swami, extending out both hands. I did *padanamaskar*, and Swami gently lifted me, rested my upper body on His lap, patted my head, and said, “*I will always be with you.*”

I was moved to tears and remained happy but wonderstruck at my good fortune to be in the Divine presence, and conversing with the God of all the worlds, the Supreme Master, Lord Sai. During the entire interview, Swami watched Pundit Mishra continue to cry emotionally. Baba went into the inner interview room and returned. Pundit Mishra told Baba that he had been conducting a spiritual class for youth who were training to become pundits. **Baba said, “My blessings will be there.”** At that point, Baba called me to the inner room. Not knowing what to expect, I was a bit anxious. As He sat in His chair, He spoke to me very lovingly and softly. “*You have a lot to contribute to society. I will be there to guide you.*” Swami then ushered the rest of the devotees from Trinidad into the inner room.

This interview was granted to us on the third day of our visit to Baba’s Ashram in December 1981. Before the actual journey, we had a discussion. In October 1981, the wife of Pundit Seereram Jadunanan Mishra, Dhar-marani (Rani), whom I endearingly called ‘Mamee,’ told me that she and the pundit were going on a pilgrimage to Bhagawan Baba. They invited me to join them. I told her that I could not afford to pay for such

a wonderful pilgrimage, although I dearly wanted to see Baba. Mamee responded confidently, “**With Baba’s grace, it will happen. Don’t worry, you will join us.**”

Pundit Mishra was my guru, teacher, mentor, and spiritual guide, and his wife was like a mother to me, so I would implicitly follow any words of blessing from her lips. I was a practicing *purohit* or Hindu priest, and the income derived from that vocation was barely enough, so I felt it was impossible to go to India. Soon it seemed that there was a dramatic shift in my economic fortunes as religious work just kept coming in my direction. In a short period, I had enough money for my travel tickets and expenses. Mamee’s words came true as always, and I was on my way to see Baba in December 1981. That was the first time in my life that I was traveling outside of Trinidad and my yearning to visit India, my ancestral home, had become a reality. We journeyed via our national airline to London, then took other international and internal flights to Dubai, New Delhi, Mumbai,



and Bangalore. From Bangalore, we took a taxi to travel to Puttaparthi and the *Ashram* of Baba, Prasanthi Nilayam.

We arrived in time for the afternoon *darshan*. Swami came out and began to move ever so slowly and gracefully in front of the seated crowd near the ladies' section. I realized that at age twenty-one, I was the youngest member of the Trinidad group. So I just followed the instructions dutifully.



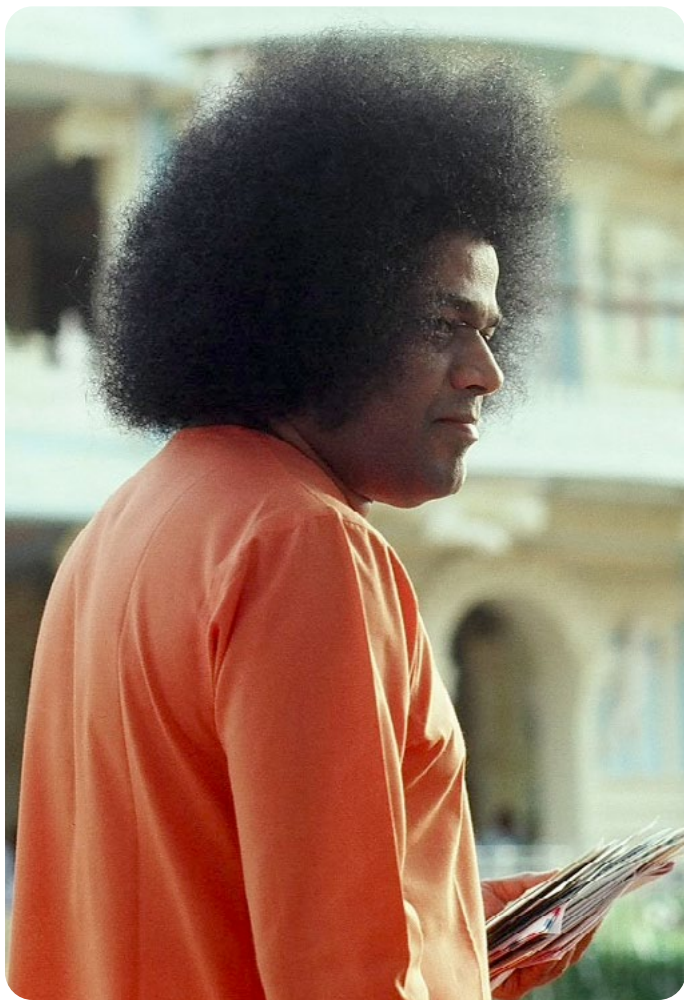
On the third day of our visit, we were seated in the *darshan* lines when Swami spoke to someone in our group, and we all were ushered into the interview room. Baba came in last and bolted the door, then proceeded to have all of us seated in two sections, men and women separately. Pundit Mishra and I sat close to Swami's feet. There were a few Westerners in the room. I was amazed at the ease and fluency with which Baba spoke Dutch, Hindi, Bengali, and English so that everyone could understand Him. **Suddenly,**

He said, "Trouble, trouble, trouble everywhere, everyone bringing trouble, but no one is leaving it here; they are carrying it back."

Swami's message was very clear: He told us to renounce all evils and follow His path of truth and human values. Baba turned to Pundit Mishra and said, "*You have a good heart but too much temper.*" As Baba spoke those words, He waved His delicate hand in a circle and materialized a beautiful golden ring embossed with an enamel image of Swami. Baba placed the ring on Pundit's finger, and it was a perfect fit.

"This will help you to keep calm Dharmarani. I know the big photograph of Shirdi Baba in your hall." With those sweet words, Swami gave her a beautiful *japamala* (a necklace of prayer beads) and gracefully demonstrated for all to see, the proper way of using it for *japa* (repetition of the holy name). He also discussed the significance of and benefits to be derived from the practice.

During the entire interview, my Guru Pundit Mishra was crying, and Swami invited some of us into the inner room. There Baba patted Pundit's head and me on my shoulders. He turned to me and said, "*You will come back with a wife. When you get married, come back with your wife.*" He then distributed handfuls of *vibhuti* packets to us. We all left the interview room, feeling uplifted in spirit, and a Divine euphoria lasted for several days. The next day during morning *darshan*, Baba looked at my Guru, Pundit Mishra, and asked, "Who is this?" Pundit Mishra said, "This is my *shishya*" (disciple) and Baba continued walking slowly. He suddenly stopped and spoke to a Sri Lankan boy who was seated next to me. The boy told us earlier that Swami had instructed him to stop smoking and that he had stopped. Baba came close, gave the boy *vibhuti*, and asked him in a stern voice that all of us could hear clearly, "*Do you still smoke?*"



“No,” said the boy.

At that point, Swami stepped back and produced a photograph that showed the boy smoking. The boy took the photograph, held it to his heart, and began to cry. All of us were struck with spiritual wonder, and now I was convinced that Swami was always everywhere seeing everything that we did. The rest of our stay was quite eventful as we busied ourselves in the daily disciplines of early rising, meditation, bhajans, and listening to lectures by Shri. N. Kasturi and other prominent spiritual followers of Swami. We spent a total of three weeks in India, and six of those days were spent in Baba’s physical presence in the Ashram, where we had many blessings and two precious interviews.

I was born in a very poor family to parents Dharamraj and Etwaria Maharaj in Ghandi Village, La Fortune, Woodland, in South Trinidad. My mother led a very pious life. She

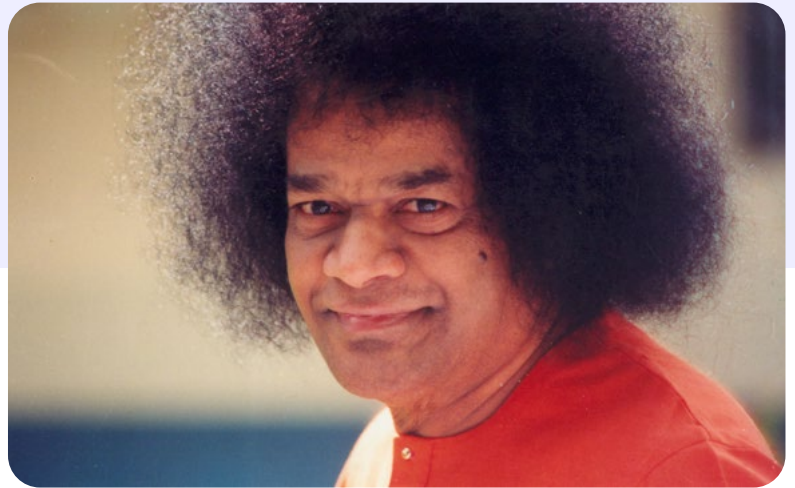
attended every class in Srimad Bhagavad Gita at the Motidass Temple in Debe, and classes in Valmiki Ramayana, Vishnu Puran, and the Mahabharata at the Krishna Mandir in San Fernando. With such deep spiritual yearning, my mother wished very deeply to have a son who would become a pundit, and she prayed to God, day and night, for that heavenly gift. Six days following my birth she had a dream in which someone wearing a white robe told her, “*Call this child Aum Aum Aum.*”

My mother named me Aum, and everyone called me by that name. Strangely, whenever my mother read the Srimad Bhagavad Gita out loud, whatever she read stuck in my childhood memory. It was later that I discovered that I was reciting the slokas from that holy book. My friend and a few relatives tried to persuade me to consume *tamasic*, nonvegetarian food and beverages, but Swami had blessed me and made sure that I never once tasted meat, alcohol, or tobacco in, any form. Baba, it seemed, was always guiding and protecting me along the road leading to Him.

After that beautiful visit to Baba with my Guru Pundit Mishra in 1981, I returned home with an overwhelming zeal to accomplish a lot in too short a time. My mother invested some funds in a business making us prosperous, but I was soon overcome with the poisonous serpent called ego. Later, some misfortunes crept into my life. By 1984, I had suffered a nervous breakdown. When my Guru returned from a visit to Swami in 1984, he visited me, and I felt better. I was at that time continuously singing certain words in a particular tune, and I did not know their source. It went like this:

*“Honay toe hotay rahey,
an- honey na hoi
Jhako rakhay Sayiyan,
mara sakeyna koi”*

“O MAN, WITH SAI AS THE PROTECTOR, NONE CAN EVER BRING HURT TO YOU.”



“Whatever will be, will be. Whatever befalls thee, O Man, with Sai as the protector, none can ever bring hurt to you.”

I had no ability to compose, and I had no idea how these lines and the tune came to my mind.

My Guru, Pundit Mishra, together with the guiding hand of Bhagawan Baba, restored my mental, physical, and spiritual life once again. I gradually returned to productive pursuits as a pundit, farmer, and driving instructor.

In February 1988, I was married in a beautiful Hindu ceremony. In December, my Guru, Pundit Mishra, Mrs. Gopaul, her daughter Princess, my wife Roshni, and I went on a memorable pilgrimage to Baba in what we called our “honeymoon visit.” We arrived at the *ashram* on December 6 and were blessed with an interview on December 9, my wife’s birthday.

I said to Baba in Hindi, “Baba, *Ye hamara dharma patni hai*,” or “Baba, this is my wife, my life’s companion,” to which He gave the most surprising reply, “*I knew her before you.*”

“What work are you doing?” asked Baba.

“I am a driving instructor,” I said.

“*You must be a teacher of character*,” Baba said, and everyone smiled at Swami’s searching questions and comments.

Our journey to Sai began long before our births, and we are happy to have been granted human births in this age so that we are blessed to see, touch, and speak with the Avatar of the Kaliyuga, Bhagawan Baba.

We feel blessed and transformed because we have, as a family under Swami’s umbrella, dedicated all our actions to Service and Love—*seva, seva, seva, and prema, prema, prema.*

May all of us be blessed by the Supreme Master to have His *darshan* (holy sight), *sparshan* (holy touch), and *sambhashan* (holy conversation), and may we dwell together in unity as one family with Unity, Purity, and Divinity.

JAI SAI RAM.

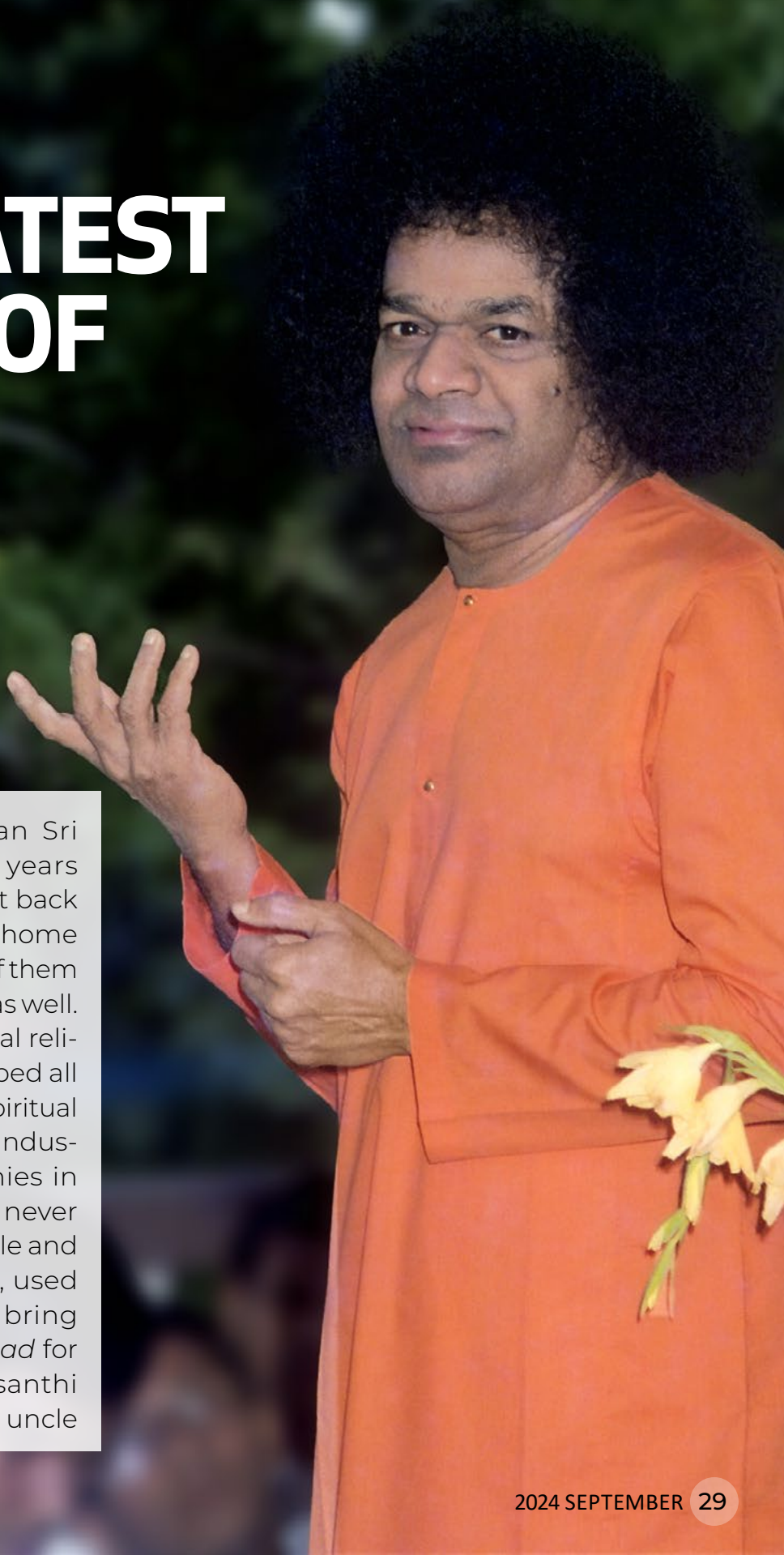
Pundit Aum Karamchand Maharaj
TRINIDAD



Pundit Aum Karamchand Maharaj of Trinidad also known as Pundit Aum was born on December 1, 1959. He was trained from the age of 10 to become a Hindu priest. He was later introduced to Shri Sathya Sai Baba by his Guru, and they both became devotees of Swami. He visited Prasanthi Nilayam several times, starting in 1981 and with his wife Roshini Maharaj in 1988. He and his wife hosted Satsang at their home 23rd of every month for many years to thank Swami until he passed away.

THE GREATEST MIRACLE OF SATHYA SAI BABA

My parents visited Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in 1969, six years before I was born. They brought back many pictures of Swami to our home in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and one of them was placed in our shrine room, as well. We were an orthodox, traditional religious Hindu family that worshiped all deities and paid respects to all spiritual personages. My father was an industrialist who operated companies in Sri Lanka. Though my parents never visited Swami regularly, my uncle and aunt, who resided in Australia, used to visit Swami regularly and bring back the precious *Vibhuti Prasad* for us whenever they visited Prasanthi Nilayam. More importantly, my uncle



I emptied a packet of *vibhuti* into a glass of water and drank it. The relief was immediate!

brought home many stories of Swami's amazing miracles and His blessed teachings. From 1981-82, I remember being impressed and inspired by these narrations even as a six to seven-year-old child. I felt very much drawn to Swami and felt that I, too, must see Him someday.

The July that Destroyed My Faith

In July 1983, a drastic and terrible sequence of events unfolded, which left a very dark stain on the glorious history of Sri Lanka. Mob violence engulfed the city for almost two weeks.

Fortunately, at that time, my parents were in the United Kingdom (UK) for medical treatment for my mother and two-year-old sister. My brother and I were left behind in the care of our grandmother, who moved into our home from her daughter's. Thanks to my father's valuable contacts and influence, there were members of the majority community who 'protected' our home by staying with us and claiming that it was their residence. Thus, our 'safe' house became a refugee camp of sorts, housing more than 45 people who had been evicted from their homes due to the pogrom. Even then, I remember climbing over the backyard wall to sleep at night in a neighbor's home for safety. I often saw my grandmother crying because her elder daughter had gone missing after their home had been looted and destroyed. Eventually, we managed to locate the children at a refugee camp and brought them back to our home.

Though I was very young, these incidents made me question the very existence of God. How could there be a 'loving' and 'all-powerful' being for such things to happen under His/Her watch? Also, between 1983 and 1985, there was a great famine in Ethiopia, where millions of people died. That further fueled my atheistic stance in my early teens.

Soon, we were also brought to the UK for our safety and returned home after six months when it was considered safe.

The Atheist Reaches Puttaparthi

My parents' faith had not been affected, and they continued to visit temples religiously. I would go to the temple only to challenge the 'Gods.' Without knowing who I was talking to, I would speak silently to the idols. "You obviously don't exist because terrible things are happening to so many people, and you are doing nothing about it. You can't do anything about it because you don't exist."

In 1989, a different kind of crisis gripped the country, affecting the southern part. This time, it was an armed revolt led by a communist group against the government. So, our father packed us off to India for a few weeks and later to Australia until things settled in Sri Lanka. My mom decided to travel to Puttaparthi, and we arrived late at night in Prasanthi Nilayam in December 1989.

Finding 'Prasanthi' Through Love and Service

We were assigned a shed to stay in, and we hadn't come prepared. We had no mattress

to sleep on, and the lights were turned off at 9:00 PM, as per the ashram rules. A kind lady offered us some Christmas cake, which was our dinner, and we slept, covering ourselves with my mother's sarees.

The next morning, we got ready and went for *darshan*. And then everything changed!

There is no particular incident I recall but even now, I can feel the surging happiness I felt in just seeing Swami and being in His presence. **We would sit on the sands in an unbelievably peaceful atmosphere and enjoy hours of bliss seeing Swami and participating in bhajans. I never felt such joy and peace in my life before**—and all of this was despite our spartan accommodation and living conditions. Within a week, our material comforts also improved as we moved from the shed to a comfortable room in the 'Round Building.'

One day, I met an elderly blind person who asked me the route to go back to his shed. I helped him all the way to his accommodation. I felt light, happy, and peaceful doing that. My cousin, who had come to Puttaparthi from Australia at that time, noticed me doing this and said, **"You did good seva (service)."** That was the first time I heard the word 'seva.' The feeling that arose in me was so wonderful that I decided to indulge in it more and more. My brother would go off to the Hill View stadium to volunteer, where the grounds were being cleared, leveled, and greened. I, too, began to look out for opportunities to do seva. As a spontaneous outpouring of the peace and joy I was feeling within, I took a vow to never touch non-vegetarian food again in my life! I did not tell my parents, but they noticed it and even mentioned in their conversations: "He visited India to see Swami, and after that, he seems to have lost taste for non-vegetarian food completely."

I also began to always carry a photograph of Swami with me, along with two *vibhuti*

packets that my uncle had given me. I don't know whether I accepted Swami as God, but my heart opened up to the reality that there is something in the universe beyond the mind and there is much more to life than the material world I see.



The Impact of the Company We Keep

I was sent to the UK for my University education. I was all alone there and did fairly well in the first year. In the second year, peer pressure and pleasure-seeking caused me to begin drinking. I irregularly attended classes and missed many assignments. In a couple of subjects, I failed the regular assessments and had to rely on doing well in the examinations to even pass. In short, I went completely astray in my second year.

Two weeks before my scheduled examinations, I developed severe abdominal pain that simply refused to subside. After a couple of days, I met a doctor who admonished me for being careless about my body and prescribed some medicines to be taken

twice a day. Unfortunately, I don't recall what the diagnosis was. What I remember clearly is that the side effect of the medicine was extreme drowsiness that always put me to sleep! That was something I could not afford to do with my examinations staring me in the face. With barely a week left before the exams, I decided to stop taking the medication. Within hours, I was in bed rolling with excruciating pain.

A Desperate Plea and the Immediate Response

The only way I could bear the pain was by eating something milk-based and drinking milk. However, the relief would last barely four hours, and the excruciating pain would return. I could not study or sleep. But, if I took the medication, I would be drowsy and fall asleep! Stuck between the devil and the deep sea, I was at my wit's end. That is when my eyes fell on Swami's picture and the two *vibhuti* packets. I recalled all the stories I had heard about the power of *vibhuti*.

With a sincere prayer, I said to Swami, "I have not been the best in behavior. But I need Your help. I vow that I will come visit You if you help me now." **I emptied a packet of *vibhuti* into a glass of water and drank it. The relief was immediate!** I quickly went to bed, hoping to get some sleep before the pain returned in a few hours. When I woke up, it was nearly 7 AM! I touched my stomach gingerly, and there was no pain! I was stunned that I had slept through the night after nearly 10 days.

I went straight to Swami's picture and said, "Swami, during the coming holidays, I shall surely come and see You. Thank you so much!"

How I Found My God

I completed my examinations and barely passed that year, but that was still a reason to celebrate the 'victory' with my friends. After returning to Sri Lanka, as per my prom-

ise, I traveled with my mother to Puttaparthi via Chennai to see Swami. I had several *darshans* in Prasanthi Nilayam, and nothing much happened.

One day, as I sat for *darshan*, I mentally said, "Swami, I came here seeking You, but You are not even looking at me. I need you to at least look at me." When Swami came for *darshan*, I hoped that He would answer my prayer. But I was disappointed again as He simply passed by me.

"SWAMI!" I screamed mentally, "I need You to look at me." It was as if He heard me because He simply stopped, turned around, and looked me in the eyes!



That was a life-changing look!

What shall I say? I cannot even begin to comprehend or explain all the things that happened within me. **There was so much love and divinity pouring out of His eyes and flooding my entire being. Every single part of my body was shivering, and tears began flowing uncontrollably from my eyes.** I could not comprehend what was happening but could experience every bit of it. Even now, as I think of that experience, I get 'goosebumps,' and a warm feeling floods my heart.

I don't remember anything else about that session that day. I kept reliving that moment over and over again—a hundred times! After that session, I found picture postcards in a shop. **I bought a dozen of them and wrote to all my friends telling them that I had found my *raison d'être* (reason for existence), that I had found my God!**

Swami's Greatest Miracle is the Transformation of the Heart

The following year, when I returned to the UK, I was completely changed. I gave up all my bad habits and swore never to indulge in wine, non-vegetarian food, and more. My outlook toward life changed dramatically from being extremely negative to highly positive. I also began spending my time reading a lot of literature by Swami and about

Swami. I quickly changed my company and dropped all bad habits. Needless to say, my academics improved a lot.

Spiritual practices became (and have remained) an important part of my life. It was my best year in college, and I returned to my motherland, Sri Lanka, in 1997 to serve her. Before embarking on my professional journey, I traveled again to Swami to express my gratitude. **Not only did I have the most beautiful *darshans* during that visit, but I was also blessed with the first-ever *padanamaskar* (touching Swami's feet) of my life. I felt so complete!**

And even to this day, I feel so blessed and complete!

Mr. Haridarshan Sathiamoorthy
SRI LANKA



Mr. Haridarshan Sathiamoorthy came to Swami at a very early age. He served in various capacities in the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization of Sri Lanka from 2000 at the center, regional, and national levels. He serves as the National Council President of the SSSIO of Sri Lanka. He is a successful Industrialist and also serves on the board of directors of several public and private companies.

You need not waste time in trying to discover Me and My Nature. Understand what I teach, not “who is the teacher,” for I am beyond your intellect and your power. You will understand Me only through My work. That is why, sometimes, in order to reveal who I am, I myself show you my “visiting card,” something that you call a miracle. Know the mystery and carry out the duty I assign you.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
February 7, 1959

There was no one to know who I am
Till I created this world at my pleasure
with one word. immediately mountains rose up.
immediately rivers started running. earth below
and sky over its head oceans, seas lands and
watersheds Sun, moon and desert-sands sprang
up from on where to prove my existence
came all forms of human beings mankind
beasts and birds flying, speaking hearing
and all powers were bestowed upon them
under my orders. The final place was granted
to mankind and my knowledge was placed
in (his) mind.

Come one come all Let us not be
ungrateful called. Let ^{us} ~~we~~ faithfully serve (SAI)
Him and Love Him Love Him Love Him

With Salutations

Sri Sathy Sai

Pam

*Love Him, Love Him,
Love Him*

There was no one to know who I am, till I created this world, at my pleasure, with one word. Immediately mountains rose up, immediately rivers started running. Earth below and sky over its head. Oceans, seas, lands and watersheds. Sun, moon and desert sands sprang up from nowhere to prove my existence. Came all forms of human beings, mankind, beasts and birds flying. Speaking, hearing, and all powers were bestowed upon them under my orders. The first place was granted to mankind, and my knowledge was placed in (His) mind.

Come one, come all. Let us not be ungrateful called. Let us faithfully serve (SAI) Him and Love Him, Love Him, Love Him.

With Blessings

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

This is the written message from Swami to Sri. R.R. Chatterji of the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Calcutta, announcing the mission for which He has assumed this human form.

LOVE IN ACTION



AUSTRALIA Queen Victoria Market Meal Service

Feeding the needy and distressed is considered one of the highest forms of devotion to God when practiced with love and selflessness. The Sri Sathya Sai Center in Melbourne, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2023, continued to feed people in need at the Queen Victoria Market, a service that has been rendered for many years.

It provides meals for about 25-30 people every Thursday, including pizza, veggie burgers, rice and curry, pasta, bread rolls, tea, and coffee. During major festivals like Christmas, festive food, drinks, and gifts are shared to make the recipients feel loved and appreciated. The meal service attracts people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, fostering acceptance and connection. SSSIO members are grateful for the opportunity to serve and share their love with fellow beings.



AZERBAIJAN Loving Dental Care

The SSSIO of Azerbaijan invited two dental practitioners from the Siberian region of Russia to offer free dental services to 22 needy people in Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan, from March 21 to 24, 2024. The attendees were educated on the importance of oral hygiene and given toothbrushes and toothpaste. The patients expressed their heartfelt gratitude, while the dental team was also grateful for the opportunity to help those who needed it most.





BELARUS Satiating Hunger and Gifting Clothes

In mid-March 2024, 16 SSSIO members from four cities in Belarus prepared a variety of delicious food, including porridge, main course, soups, tea, cakes, pies, and desserts. The delicious food was lovingly served to hungry people living near three temples, including 12 homeless people, a disabled woman, and some retirees. In addition, they also fed stray animals. A few Sai volunteers from other cities distributed food packages and clothing to the needy.



SRI LANKA A Temple of Healing

On March 2, 2024, the Gunawardanarama Temple in Moratuwa was abuzz with added energy and devotion as the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Colombo, along with the Western and Southern Regions of the SSSIO of Sri Lanka, organized a medical camp in the holy premises. The camp served around 150 patients from the Koralawalla area, including sanitation/cleaning staff, fishermen, carpenters, daily wage employees, and single-parent families.

The event was organized by a dedicated team of 5 doctors, 5 paramedics, 20 young adults, and 5 volunteers, ensuring all essential health-care services were provided. Services offered included comprehensive health checks, providing medicines, and routine blood pressure/blood sugar measurements. Additionally, patients requiring specialized attention or further follow-up were referred to specialist doctors for further examination and treatment, ensuring their prompt attention and follow-up.



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

<https://saiuniverse.sathyasai.org>

If You Need Me
You Deserve Me



I WAS BORN IN 1990 INTO A FAMILY THAT WORSHIPPED SRI SATHYA SAI BABA. So, I saw His pictures at home and accepted Him as God, just as I accepted the other deities on the altar. It was in the late nineties that I got the chance to visit Puttaparthi and Whitefield (Bengaluru) and realize that **Swami was a unique God-walking, talking, and giving darshan to His devotees!** When I had my first close darshan of Swami in Whitefield, my eyes locked with His eyes and welled up with tears. Though it was just a split second, **I felt time had come to a standstill, and I could feel Swami's love permeating me.**

After that first darshan, apart from occasional visits to Swami's ashrams: Prasanthi Nilayam (in Puttaparthi); Brindavan (in Bengaluru); and Shivam (in Hyderabad), my family's connection with Swami was limited. At home, there were many books on Swami on the shelf, where I found a fascinating children's book on His life. I also remember using pens with Swami's image on them. But that was about it. As the years passed and I moved from my teens to my twenties, I drifted farther away from Swami. I made a few bad choices and kept bad company. As life threw one curveball after another, I even became an atheist, considering divinity and God all a big sham that I had foolishly bought into in the past. Looking back, I feel remorseful and ashamed.

“In an instant, I felt connected to Him, and the seed of love that He had planted years ago sprouted into a strong sapling of devotion!”

Drifting Into Deeper Waters

My next visit to Puttaparthi was in 2011, when I was on my way to Bengaluru to enroll in a business school. At the time, Swami’s Mahasamadhi structure was still under construction. I remember feeling nothing whatsoever in my heart. I felt disconnected from God in general and Swami, especially. I did not know that the next ten years of my life would be completely disconnected from Swami, and that was my karma. **Reflecting on those ten years, now I can say how lifeless they were, how purposeless and painful they were, because of how ‘Sai-less’ they were.**

This decade of my life was turbulent, and nothing seemed to be going my way! Being ‘Sai-less,’ I also felt purposeless and lifeless. I wasn’t happy professionally and was frustrated at not finding a life partner. My parents, too, were exhausted by their search, as nothing seemed to come to fruition. I genuinely felt that I was cursed or written off God, if such a being existed!

A ‘Swimming’ Companion

Then COVID-19 happened! Lockdowns and remote work became the norm, making groom-hunting all the more difficult. One night, my father came across the profile of a man he felt was perfect for me. He asked me to get in touch with the man from Sydney and talk with him. I flatly refused at first because, thanks to the pandemic, I was finding it chal-

lenging even to speak to or meet people within India.

I spoke to ‘Abhi’ just to get my father off my back. But as we got to know each other, a ten-month-long remote courtship ensued. We discussed everything under the sun, but the topics of religion and spirituality came up only once. We both shared that we were ‘loosely religious’ as we had a respectful tolerance toward rituals for the sake of our parents. This long-distance communication ultimately culminated in our decision to get married. A couple of weeks before the wedding, Abhi was to fly to India amid the lockdown and travel restrictions. My family got busy with all the wedding preparations in India.

The Prodigal Daughter Welcomed

Just as the wedding cards were printed, my mother received a phone call from her sister who lived in Mysuru (Karnataka). My aunt said that when she was reading the Shirdi Sai Satcharitra in Mysuru, **she suddenly heard a voice say in Telugu, “Card pettali; card na deggara pettali (Place the card; place the card near me)”** “What card?” she wondered as she kept hearing the same message over and over again. Clueless, she looked at the book she was holding and **an image of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba formed on the Shirdi Satcharitra she was holding in her hand.** Since we were the only ‘Sathya Sai devotees’ in the family that

she knew, she felt that she had to convey to her sister that the first wedding card was to be offered to Swami.

When she relayed this incident to my parents, they were elated. I was in a state of shock because I had not connected with Swami for more than a decade. But I also felt a strange sense of elation and anticipation in my heart. After picking up the wedding cards, we headed straight to the Shivam mandir in Hyderabad to place the first card at the altar. I wrote "To Swami" and asked my father whether it was right. My father struck off the 'to' and wrote, "Placed At The Divine Lotus Feet Of Swami" in its place.

The bhajans were in progress when we arrived. It was my first bhajan session in ten years! It was such a cathartic and joyous experience. **The COVID-19 mask I wore was drenched with both tears of joy and remorse.** My mother, too, had a beautiful *darshan* experience during the *bhajans*. She saw a beautiful picture of Swami in a yellow robe, smiling at her with *Abhayahasta* (blessing hand). She assumed that the picture was placed near her like the many other pictures of Swami in Shivam. However, after a moment of distraction, when she looked up again, that picture was no longer there!

After the *bhajans*, as we wondered where to place the wedding card, a *Sevadal* (volunteer) told us to go past the barricade and place it at the main altar. Not surprisingly, the central picture was a full-size standing picture of Swami, and **I ended up placing the card literally at His lotus feet! In an instant, I felt connected to Him, and the seed of love that He had planted years ago sprouted into a strong sapling of devotion!**

Faster than the Speed of Thought...

Though I had rediscovered my God, I wondered how I would explain all this to my partner. He wasn't even aware of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and I wanted him connected with Swami, as well.

I went ahead and mentioned Swami and His *leelas* to my husband and his family. They didn't have much of a reaction and behaved just like someone unfamiliar with Swami would. I was grateful that at least they did not react negatively, and desperately hoped that Swami would do something to draw him into His fold.

After the wedding, we visited my husband's maternal grandmother in Tuni, Andhra Pradesh, to seek her blessings. On the first day, after a bath, I decided to say a prayer and perform worship at her altar. The altar had many deities, but my heart had been pledged to Swami. Focusing on the picture of Shirdi Sai Baba, I thought, "Swami! You are not here. So, I will look at Shirdi Baba and pray to You as You both are the same anyway..."

It was just a casual thought. But no sooner did I have the thought, **I looked up and there He was! My very own, my best friend, my Swami! It was indeed a large picture of Swami sitting in a chair.** The picture was faded and had gathered considerable dust from neglect. It felt so symbolic to me, and I immediately dusted off the picture and cleaned it.

I could not believe my eyes and was convinced that I was hallucinating! I called out to Abhi loudly and he came running. Unable to gather any words, I simply pointed at the picture. He seemed as shocked as I was. We later learned that the picture had been on the wall since the 1950s. Someone had given it to Abhi's grandfather, and he had just placed it

there! I was both thrilled and amused by this experience, and my connection with Swami only grew stronger.

Swami Does an Encore

Deep down, I wondered whether this discovery could be sufficient to pique Abhi's interest in Swami. In hindsight, I realize the utter foolishness of my thoughts and fears back then. If Swami can connect me to Him in a moment, can't He do the same for someone else?

When I moved to Australia, the first thing I discovered was a very active Sai Center just minutes away from our home. At first, Abhi would drop me off at the Center and drive away. Within months, Abhi started coming to the Center on festival days. He fell in love with the Sai philosophy and teachings. Then, in 2023, Abhi had three dreams of Swami, in three successive months. They turned out to be very meaningful and special for him personally and that was a turning point for his relationship with Swami.

We have since been on this journey to Sai together, trying to understand and practice Swami's teachings. We have



Photo of Swami at the altar in Tuni

Swami in our hearts and have conversations with Him every single day. We truly believe that Swami brought us together to walk with Him and toward Him.

Mrs. Akhila Anupuri 
AUSTRALIA



Mrs. Akhila Anupuri was born in Hyderabad, India into a family of Sai devotees. She completed her MBA and was working as a Human Resources professional in Bengaluru for a decade. After getting married, she moved to Sydney to join her husband, Abhishek. By Swami's grace and experiences, she now spends most of her time learning Swami's teachings and trying to implement them in daily life, participating in service activities and singing bhajans. Akhila and Abhishek truly believe that their union was no coincidence but a delightful Sai-incidence that was meant for them to walk together towards Swami.

from the
International Sai Young Adults



YOUNG ADULTS' SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TO KENYA

The International Conference on S-Service, A-Adoration, I-Illumination, organized by the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) from June 28 to July 1, drew more than 500 participants from over 35 countries around the world, and Young Adults were no exception. **Sai Young Adults started intense preparations for the International Conference several months before and enthusiastically traveled from several corners of the world to the blessed land of Africa, where Swami gave His divine darshan decades ago.**

Many Young Adults were actively involved in the preparations for the International

Conference, including decorating Swami's altar, media, registration of devotees, a welcome procession, a musical symphony, drama plays, service activities, tree planting, playing the role of the Master of Ceremonies, and several engaging and thought-provoking workshops. They came forward with ideas and strategies to overcome the challenges the youth faced around the world in undertaking spiritual and service initiatives. **They also discussed and deliberated on how they could take up responsibilities to advance Swami's divine mission through the SSSIO.**

When it was time to depart from Nairobi, the YAs left with fond memories and the flame of inspiration burning bright in their hearts.

Opening Ceremony–Welcome Procession, Flag March and Bhajans

On the first day of the conference, in the early morning hours, delegates gathered at the beautiful Shree Sthanakvasi Jain Sangh Auditorium to witness an exhilarating welcome procession that included a “march of human values” by children from Sathya Sai Schools of Kenya and an inspiring flag march by Sai Young Adults, bearing flags of their respective countries.

Masters Of Ceremonies and S.A.I Workshops

If all the conference programs were pearls and precious stones, the YA MCs were the strings that held them together to form a beautiful necklace! Each day, a different team of YAs took up the responsibility of ensuring a smooth and timely flow of the program. They also played a key role in conducting and facilitating the workshops. It was their diligent note-taking and compiling of the discussions that led to the finalization of summaries and presentation of the conference resolutions.

Works of the SSSIO Young Adults and a Divine Musical Symphony

“The Rhythm of Africa–Our Hearts Beat for You Swami,” was the echo of the beautiful sentiments of the YAs reflected in their soulful, multi-lingual *bhajans*. This musical symphony was interspersed with heartfelt narrations of gratitude to our dearest Swami. **An inspirational video of the works of the SSSIO young adults worldwide was presented to the audience and offered to Swami just before the musical symphony.** The YAs prayed to Swami thus:

Dearest Swami, in 1968 you blessed Africa by lighting the lamp of pure love. Please bless us to be beacons of light that dispels the darkness that surrounds us. Let us always remember that we are the light, and the light is within us. Swami, you are our mother, father, teacher, and friend. You have shown us the way with your Divine Light. You are Lord, our Love, and our Dearest Sai.

Young Adults Drama

The YA drama “Back to Godhead–An African Experience” was a confluence of many thoughts and ideas presented in an abstract manner through the lives of the African people. **The drama exhorted everyone to recognize human values as the most important aspect of our lives and to consider Swami as the only one worthy of receiving our hearts.** Young Adults from several countries wore traditional vibrant African costumes showcasing the richness and beauty of the African culture.

Another real-life drama unfolded when, due to unforeseen circumstances, the





day's proceedings were delayed. Without the slightest murmur and overcoming disappointment, the YAs sacrificed the slot for their special presentation, "Under the Baobab Tree." **Everyone was in praise of the maturity and selflessness shown by the YAs.**

SAI-100 Panel Discussion

The Social Action Initiative–SAI 100 program of the SSSIO implements 13 inspiring and engaging initiatives to serve humanity, intensify our spiritual journey, and serve everyone, including Mother Nature. On the third day of the conference, a SAI 100 panel presented the objectives and key elements of the program, creatively and interactively in the format of a TV show. The Young Adults had intense discussions on a two-phase initiative and a 6-step revival process for inspiring the YAs into action and increasing their participation in future SSSIO leadership roles. Ms. Vahinie Pillay, the International Young Adults Coordinator, presented the work of the Young Adults for the SAI 100 program.



Visit to Sri Sathya Sai School of Kisaju A Divine Opportunity

On the First of July, all Sai Young Adults had the precious opportunity to visit the Sri Sathya Sai School of Kisaju, which is around 2.5 hours from Nairobi. **They enthusiastically participated in the service activity of distributing food hampers to parents and local community members around the school. With the help of school staff, devotees, and children, around 200 trees were planted in the courtyard of the school.**



When it was time to depart from Nairobi, the YAs left with fond memories and the flame of inspiration burning bright in their hearts.





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



Faces of Resilience

Tales of Volunteering from East Africa's Medical Frontlines

Jambo (Hello in Swahili)! This year, I realized my secret childhood dream by volunteering at medical camps across three countries: Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. My sister, Dr. Priya Panneerselvam, an OB-GYN, always knew she wanted to go on a service trip, and everyone who knew her knew it too. I, on the other hand, never shared this dream, especially since I had no background in medicine. So why did I want to go? As a child, my family and I would wake up at 5 am every Saturday to make breakfast at the local soup kitchen. We would prepare delicious and nutritious breakfast spreads. **Seeing the faces of the people we served light up brought me so much joy that I looked forward to it every week. This weekly ritual cultivated a passion within me for service.**

Over the years, our weekly breakfasts at the local soup kitchen evolved into tutoring children from minority communities in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), singing songs to seniors in the convalescent home, and even teaching professional skills to women recovering from addiction. **The call to serve others, coupled with a deep yearning within, drove me to pursue this dream.**

With four suitcases and two backpacks, and after 24 hours of travel, we arrived in Kampala, Uganda. Our diverse team consisted of about 65 individuals—gynecologists like my sister, infectious disease specialists, pharmacists, pediatricians, neurologists, physiotherapists, optometrists, ophthalmologists, dentists, nurses, and general volunteers like me. Volunteers hailing from various corners of the world—including the USA, UK, New Zealand, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Australia, Sri Lanka, and beyond—came together to dedicate their unique skills to this memorable service.

Uganda probably has one of the most challenging healthcare systems which operates under resource constraints. The drinking water quality in Uganda is very poor; consequently, many people suffer from malaria, dehydration, and other illnesses.

Although Uganda is one of the poorest nations in the world, they have a saying that “they are the richest in heart.” That is what I truly experienced. One day, I was working in registration, tasked with handling over 1,000 patients. Most patients traveled miles to seek healthcare—and some had been waiting since 2:30 am. Despite the sweltering heat and relentless rain, the patients displayed remarkable patience. The patients came dressed in their best clothes—an array of vibrant and beautiful colors. It struck me deeply that these patients made an effort to present themselves with dignity. Among them was a remarkable individual—a 105-year-old man who stood tall and strong. One of the doctors remarked, “if he could live to 105 here, what’s our excuse?”

During lunch, I saw a young man about my age who was an Electrical Engineer. He came to receive care but ended up translating for other patients! You see, though English is the national language in Uganda, many still do not speak English in some rural areas. I went to him, telling him that I worked at the registration desk and that he needed to go and get his consultation NOW before we closed for the day. I also told him that he could help translate afterward. He calmly replied, “Look, how many people are waiting. How can I leave to get checked up? I have a car. I can drive myself to a clinic. But for these people, who will help them?” He refused to leave and stayed until dark without getting his check-up. **I will never forget him. His selflessness inspired me and kept me going, even on the hardest days of the camp.**

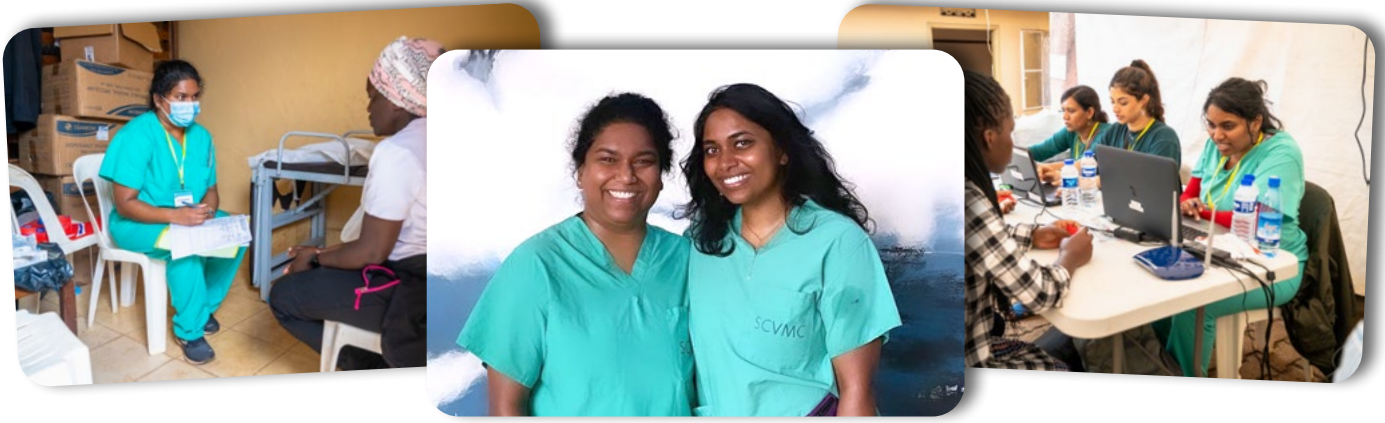
After spending three challenging but very rewarding days in Uganda, our team prepared to move on to our next destination: Vihiga, Kenya. When we arrived in early April, all the doctors in Kenya were on strike. In the hospital where we set up camp, the nurses were the heart and soul

of the facility, taking care of the patients. Our camp that day was outdoors, in the hospital courtyard, and each tent housed a different department. Initially, we faced intense heat. Suddenly, the heat gave way to a torrential downpour. The camp was flooded, with water reaching knee-high levels in some areas. Despite these conditions, we continued with our work, inspired by the calm and resolute mood of our patients.

Since I was with the physiotherapy and dental teams, I witnessed first-hand the overwhelming demand for dental care. Dr. Keaton Daya, an optometrist from Australia, shared that many had never had their eyes examined before, and several people simply needed a basic examination. **There was a young boy who was short-sighted in both eyes and was overjoyed when he received a pair of glasses so that he could finally see the chalkboard in school.**

Due to the lack of access to toothbrushes, toothpaste, and oral hygiene kits, many patients suffered from severe toothache and tooth decay. I quickly integrated into the dental team’s efforts and became one of their two permanent helpers. For many patients, this was their first dental visit, and they expressed immense gratitude for the opportunity to receive care, even if it meant lying on hard tables for over half an hour. Though we faced a few challenges in preparing for each camp, we learned from our mistakes and sought help from the communities we served. What struck me most was the resourcefulness of each community. In another camp, they created a makeshift dental chair by ingeniously fusing the metal frame of a chair with a car seat, ensuring a more comfortable experience for patients.

One of the patients my sister had seen dislocated his shoulder; it was far beyond what our camp and the hosting hospital



Author (on the right) with her sister, Dr. Priya Panneerselvam.

were capable of handling. But she and Dr. Rajesh Ramaswamy, an orthopedic surgeon from the UK, did what they could, fashioning a hospital gown into a sling for support. After an exhausting day of working under harsh conditions, we finally wrapped up the camp. And though we were hungry and tired, as we piled up into our bus and headed back to our hotel, we saw the last of our patients walking home in the darkness.

As our camp continued, I experienced the beauty and resilience of each community we served. I learned that kindness, regardless of where you are from, is a universal language of the heart. As I helped with crowd control for the dental team, I quickly realized that if you give an inch of kindness to the patients, they will give you a mile. I, along with the other volunteers, helped with the intake of patients and passed out stickers while the patients taught me Swahili as they waited in line. These patients also helped me keep track of the order of new patients and served as translators as well. One of the patients even helped calm down one of the children who needed assistance. Another woman, who was terrified of tooth extraction, held my hand during the entire procedure and confided in me that she had lost her five-year-old son earlier that year from malnutrition. I wish I could've been able to take away her pain, but all I could do was hold her hand with compassion and comfort her.

As I reflect on my time in East Africa, I realize that people like the young Electrical Engineer and the other patients who volunteered to help as translators will be the ones to ultimately bring change in their community—not us. They are the ones who will make a lasting difference. **They are the ones who will inspire future doctors, nurses, and leaders to return and serve. Despite these challenges, the experience was incredibly humbling and fulfilling. It was Swami's blessing and a true reward to have the opportunity to meet some of the most beautiful people in the world.**

As I look back on the dusty roads, the crowded tents, and the faces of gratitude, I am reminded that small acts of kindness can create significant change. Whether it's donating to local health initiatives, volunteering time, or simply spreading awareness, we all have a role to play in creating a healthier, more equitable world. I invite you to join me in taking action. Explore volunteer opportunities in your community or consider supporting organizations that work tirelessly to improve healthcare access worldwide. **Together, we can make a difference—one patient, one community, at a time.**

Let's continue to strive for a world where everyone has access to the healthcare they deserve.

Asante Sana (Thank you in Swahili).

Ms. Saigopini Panneerselvam
USA



InSAIde Scoop Podcast Series

Series 2022, Episode 9:

*“Why Don’t My Parents Understand Me?”
featuring Ms. Chahana and Ms. Jnani*

In this episode of InSAIde Scoop, the host welcomes Ms. Chahana from Malaysia and Ms. Jnani from Thailand to discuss Swami’s teachings and explore the often-challenging relationship dynamics between YAs and their parents. Chahana, a public relations practitioner and media coordinator for the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization, and Nyani, an International Relations Coordinator at the Thai Public Broadcasting Service, share their insights on the topic. The central question addressed is why YAs often feel misunderstood by their parents, highlighting the various concerns and expectations of parents regarding academics, career paths, social circles, and life choices.

Chahana and Jnani delve into the generational and environmental disparities that shape these misunderstandings. Chahana emphasizes the inherent differences in perspectives between individuals, which are further complicated in a parent-child relationship due to the generational gap and differing life experiences. Parents often feel that their views should be followed due to their life experiences, whereas YAs, raised in a different environment, may see things differently based on their contemporary environment. Jnani adds that the societal and cultural context in which parents



grew up differs vastly from the liberal and progressive views of the younger generation, leading to natural disagreements. She suggests that understanding these differences can help bridge the gap, aligning with common values.

Both offer practical advice to foster better relationships with parents. Jnani recommends cultivating compassion, empathy, and patience, suggesting that understanding and calm communication can eventually lead to mutual understanding. Chahana underscores the importance of respect, honesty, and effort in building relationships. She advises YAs to communicate openly with their parents, consider their perspectives, and align their actions with their inner convictions. **They both agree that with time, faith, and understanding, YAs can help their parents see and accept their viewpoints, creating healthier and more supportive relationships.**

You can listen to the full episode here:

[InSAIde Scoop Episode 9–YouTube](#)

Sri Sathya Sai Educare Vidya Pratisthan

A beacon of divine wisdom in Himachal Pradesh, India



Like the beginnings of all great rivers, the Sri Sathya Sai Educare Vidya Pratisthan school in Himachal Pradesh, India, also began as a small stream. And like all great rivers, this establishment too has its source in an 'eternal spring.' During an interview in Prasanthi Nilayam in 1981, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba blessed the noble intentions of a few devotees from the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh to start a free school to benefit children living in remote regions near Dharamshala. Nothing much happened for the next 29 years after that. **But then, in 2010, Swami's visit to Simla in Himachal Pradesh brought inspiration that 'sprang' from a few devoted hearts.**

Soon after Swami's plane took off from Simla, the project was launched by a few devotees. Mr. Gorakham and his wife, Mrs. Kausalya Devi, generously provided their small house to function as the school premises, and 33 of the neediest children were admitted to the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. **Today, this hallowed home of learning provides secular and values-based integral education to 191 students from nursery to 10th grade, completely free of charge.** Of these students, 131 reside in the school's hostel, as their family homes are located in remote areas. Even the hostel facilities, including meals, are provided completely free to the students.

True Learning Centered on Spirituality

The school is built on the foundation of Bhagawan's divine teachings. **In addition to their academic learning, students learn to love God and to pursue a life of human excellence and service to the community, thus striving for the highest ideals of education.** Every day, school begins in the early hours before dawn with *Suprabhatam*, a song to awaken the divine within the heart.

Between classes, children practice meditation in the classrooms. The classes end with *bhajans* and *Arati*.

With Swami's Grace, the children are taught to embrace their heritage of Indian culture and spirituality by joining local religious festivals. Students also regularly participate in community activities in *Veda* and *Gita Shloka* chanting, *bhajans*, cultural dances, Chinna Katha, and speech competitions. The school offers extensive programs in yoga, sports, arts, and culture. **The children also excel in extra-curricular activities and regularly win prizes at district and state levels in athletics, yoga, folk dance, and Ekanki (one-act play) competitions.**

Goodness Attracts More Goodness

The impact of the school was well reflected in the stellar character of its students, and consequently, there was a rush for enrollment. By 2014, the school had new buildings and was also enrolled into the 'Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini' program, which was initiated by Swami during His 85th Birthday celebrations in 2010. It was the 50th Sai School in India to be inducted into the program which





was spearheaded by Mr. Satyajit Salian. In 2019, the graduates of the first batch of the school, along with the students, presented a cultural program in Prasanthi Nilayam, and that was when the tremendous progress made by the school was recognized.

To instill devotion into the hearts of every student, the school organizes:

- Weekly *nagar sankeertan* in six towns or villages, which attracts local students and parents.
- “From Cleanliness to Divinity” program, where temples and landmarks are cleaned by the students.
- Over the past 11 years, annual *bhandara* and *prasad Narayan seva* for 300–400 visitors of the Maa Bagdu Devi Temple.
- Since 2015, *Narayan seva* by providing halwa and fruit to 400–500 people in Lam Dal on the holy occasion of “Radha Ashtami.”

The school’s exemplary service activities include:

- Blood donation camps.
- Sri Sathya Sai Ganga Project in 2016 to provide free drinking water to its children and the Khalui and Badag villages.
- Led by parents, constructing a 450-meter road to the school for easier access.
- Joining a seven-day mega medical camp in the tribal area of Pangji, in Chamba District, in 2016.
- Donation of 10 solar lights to light up a 450-meter route in Khalui village in 2018.

- Distributing food to 251 families in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Construction of three playgrounds in nearby areas, one of which was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of the state.
- **Sri Sathya Sai Annapurna Seva since 2022 at a hospital in Dharamshala, where the students help cook for about 1,500 family members/attendants of patients each month.**
- **The Sri Sathya Sai Kalpa Taru (tree-planting) project has been ongoing since 2023, when the children planted 1,500 trees.**

The school supports higher education for 20 students, college expenses for 25 children, coursework for 23 children, and their living expenses. The most senior students are completing B.Sc. Nursing, M.Sc., and Music degrees.

The Nursery Teacher Training program was initiated in 2020 with 19 students, and now the third batch has 13 female students.

The Sri Sathya Sai Educare Vidya Pratisthan seeks Swami’s blessings to continue to be a harbinger of the divine mission in Himachal Pradesh, India, under the guidance and support of the SSSIO.

For further information, please contact the SSSIO at info@sathyasai.org





The SSSIO awarded a Certificate of Recognition to the school board of trustees on June 12, 2024.

YOU ARE MY DIVINE FRIEND



Sai Ram. I offer my Humble Pranams at the Divine Lotus Feet of Our Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Today, I will graduate out of the SSE program, but I will hold Swami's teachings with me forever. This moment is a significant milestone in my spiritual development. The lessons and values I have learned during my time in the SSE program have shaped me into the person I am today.

As I reflect on my journey through this program, I am filled with gratitude. Gratitude for the guidance of our beloved Swami, for the support of my gurus, and for the love and encouragement of my family. Each of you has played a vital role in my development, and I am deeply thankful.

The SSE program has been more than just an educational experience. It has been a journey of self-discovery, of understanding the deeper meanings of life, and of learning to live by the principles of love, truth, right conduct, peace, and non-violence. These values are the foundation of a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Swami has always taught us that education is not just about acquiring knowledge, but about building character. As Swami says, "The end of wisdom is freedom. The end of culture is perfection. The end of knowledge is love. The end of education is character." These words remind us that true education goes beyond books and exams; it is about developing the inner self and living a life of integrity and compassion.

As I stand here today, I feel a deep sense of responsibility to carry forward Swami's teachings. The wisdom I have gained through this program has given me the freedom to think independently and make choices that align with my values. The cultural richness I have experienced has guided me towards striving for personal and collective perfection. The knowledge I have acquired has taught me the importance of love and empathy in all my interactions. Most importantly, my education has shaped my character, where I learned the values of honesty, perseverance, and selflessness.

I carry forward the wisdom that grants me freedom, the culture that guides me towards perfection, the knowledge that fosters love, and the education that builds my character. I am deeply grateful for this journey and excited for the future.

Thank you, and Sai Ram.





Letter

Dear Swami,

You are my divine friend. You are always there for me and you never leave my side. I am so thankful to you for always answering my prayers and guiding my decisions. One way I foster friendship in

my daily life is by always being kind to everyone around me, even if they are not my friend. You've taught me to "love all," so I constantly try to apply that to my life.

Even when I am mad at someone, sending them love and being kind to them helps the friendship continue. Thank you for being my divine friend, and for always protecting me.

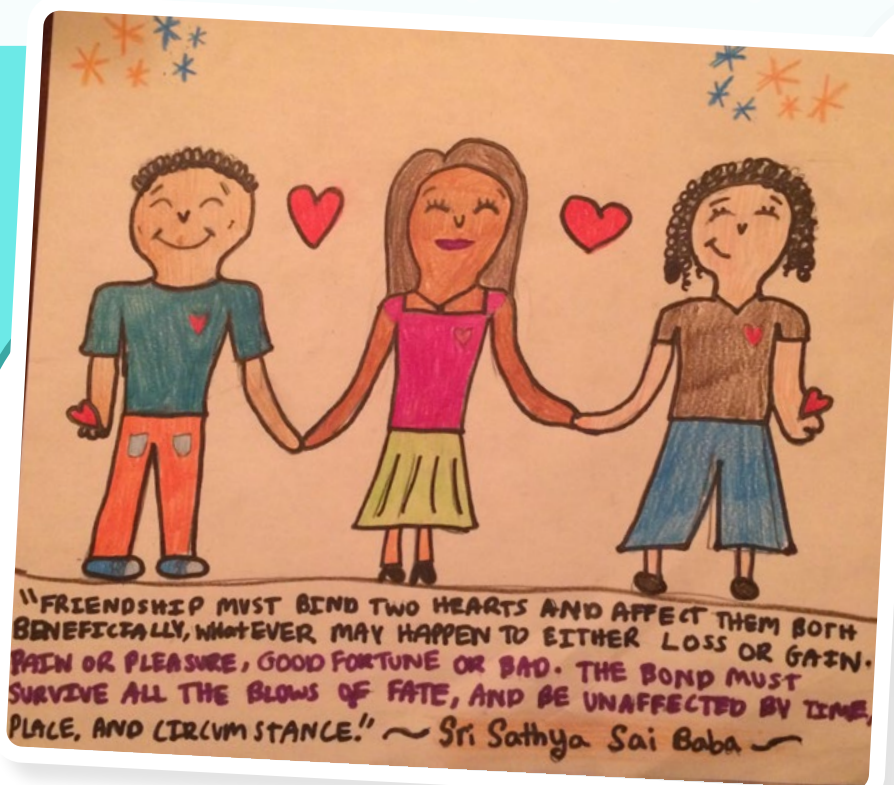
Love,
Sahitya



I would like to share my experiences from this summer. I had a tough time making friends in summer school. I love reading and talking about animals, but I realized some people like talking about Pokémon and video games. I did not know much about this topic, so I came home crying and pretty much got into a big fight with my mom about getting a video game and throwing away my books. Then, my mom and I had a long and important discussion. She showed me pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and asked me if they looked the same. No, they did not! Then she asked me if I could fit them together. Lo and behold! They were a perfect fit. Then we started talking about unlikely friendships, like that of a tapir and a capybara at the San Diego zoo. I also learned a lot about the friendship between Rama and Hanuman. They looked nothing alike. They wouldn't have even spoken the same language. Rama was very kind and humble even though He was born a prince. Hanuman was extremely hardworking and devoted. These characteristics may have been the reasons for their friendship. The friendship between Sudama and Krishna was also something that inspired me. Sudama had nothing while Krishna was a wealthy king.

I also read story about the friendship between a pencil and an eraser. It was hilarious and proved the same point. You don't need to look or act the same to be friends. I learned that if I am patient and kind and just myself, I will have everlasting friendships.

Sankarshan R | Group 1 | USA



Shravanya S | Group 3 | USA

Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
October 12-13, 2024	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
November 9-10, 2024	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Bhajan
November 23, 2024	Saturday	99th Birthday of Sri Sathya Sai Baba



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](#)



Perform your daily activities keeping God as your goal. Only then will your human birth find fulfilment. We should strive to attain the grace of God and not be deterred by difficulties and losses. When you have God on your side, you can achieve anything. All your difficulties and suffering will vanish in a trice. When such omnipotent Divinity is within us, why should we be worried about trivial matters?

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
August 19, 2004



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

