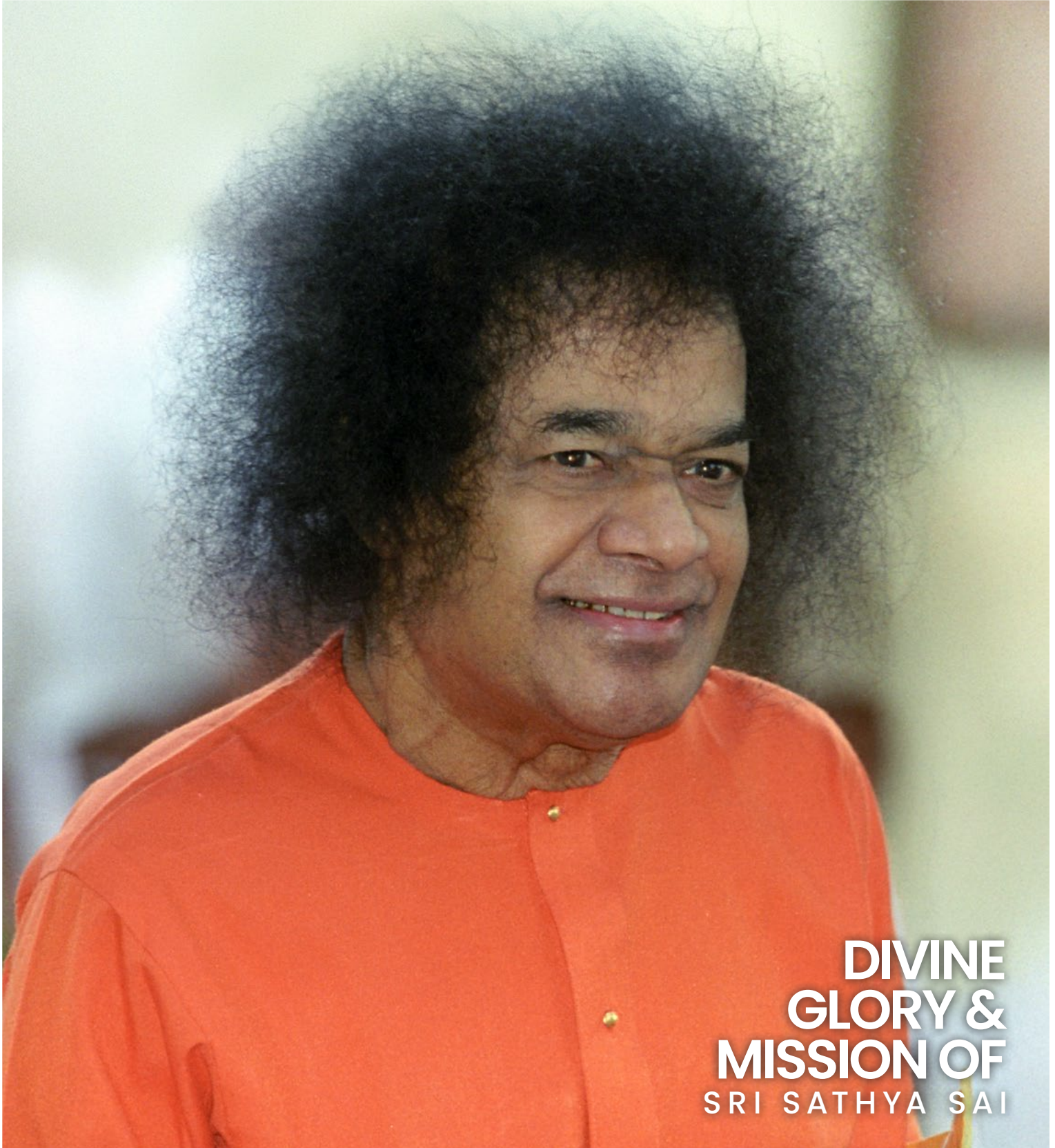


SATHYA SAI
THE
ETERNAL
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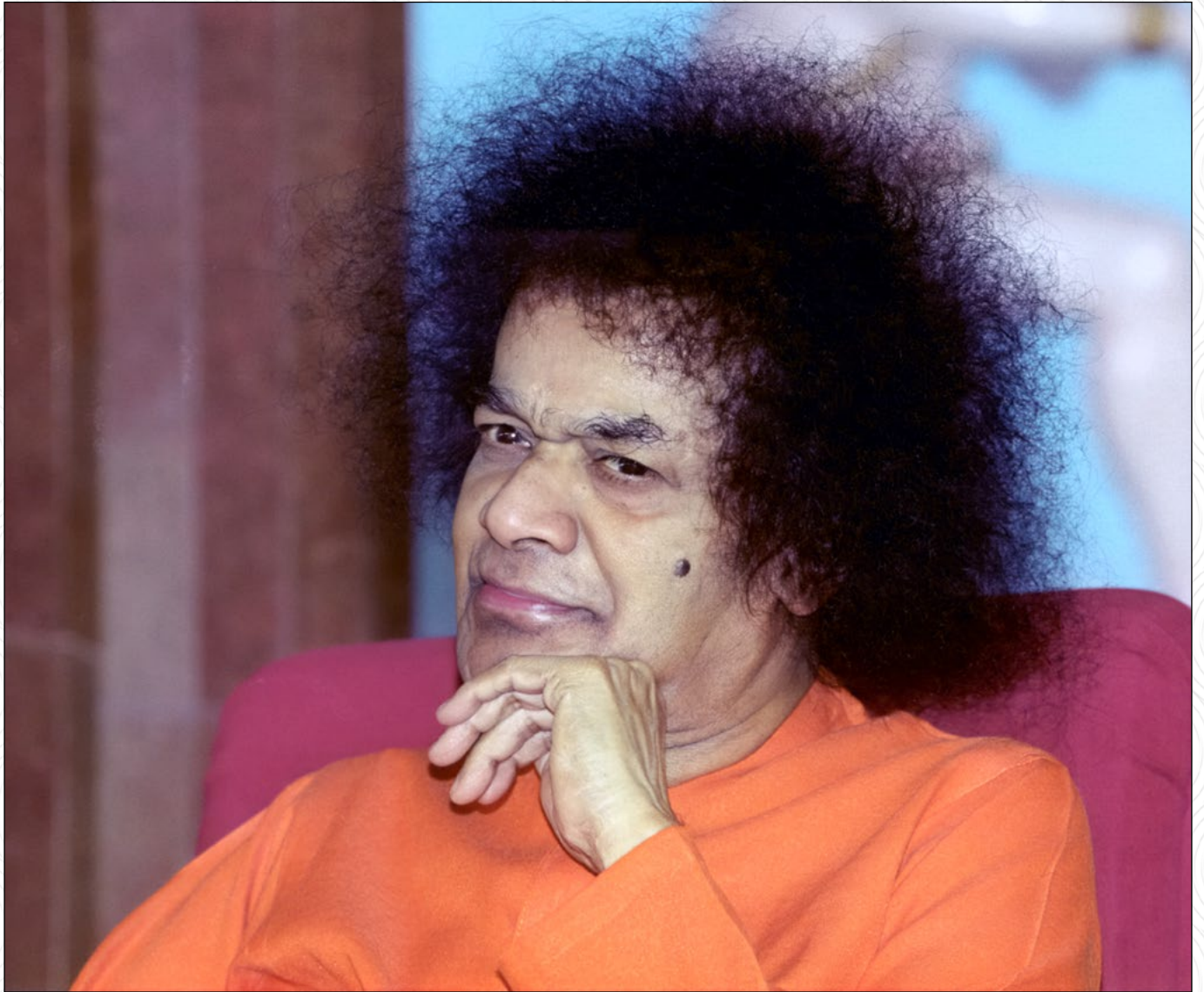


**DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF
SRI SATHYA SAI**



Man comes into the world so that he may bask in the presence of God through the exercise of love and the cultivation of love. The earth is a great enterprise, a busy factory, where the product is love. By means of spiritual practice (*sadhana*), it is possible to produce love and export it to millions and millions of people in need of it. The more it is shared, the deeper it becomes, the sweeter its taste, and the greater the joy. By means of love, one can approach God and stay in His presence, for God is love, and when one lives in love, he is living in God.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
January 1, 1971



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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LAW OF KARMA AND HOW TO TRANSCEND IT

Karma, the universal law of cause and effect, has been the cornerstone of spiritual philosophy across many traditions. It governs the moral and ethical framework of life, ensuring that every thought, word, action, and intention results in consequences. While deeply rooted in Sanathana Dharma (Hinduism), Buddhism, and Jainism, the concept of karma resonates universally and finds interpretations across different spiritual traditions. Karma is often commonly used to refer to one's fate or destiny. **But the real meaning of the word 'karma' (derived from the Sanskrit root 'Kru', which means 'to do') is 'action.'**

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba explains the karma principle simply by saying, "As is the action, so is the result," reminding individuals of their responsibility to perform the right action. Lord Krishna dwells at length on the concept of karma throughout the Bhagavad Gita in various chapters, including Sankhya Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga. **Lord Jesus' teaching of 'As you sow, so shall you reap' aligns closely with the concept of karma.** Lord Buddha talks about transcending karma through the 8-fold path where the emphasis is on right view, right intention,

right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Karma and Its Types

What exactly is this 'karma'? Human beings are endowed with mind, speech, and body. Thus, they can perform 'karma' in thought, word, and deed. All of them have their consequences. When we want to understand karma, we need to understand action at these three levels. According to Vedanta, there are three kinds of karma.

Satwic Karma is done without any selfish or egoistic motive, without concern for the fruits thereof, and as an offering to the divine. Such people serve in the name of the divine and win God's grace.

People indulging in *satwic karma* entertain noble thoughts for the welfare of not just family and friends but the entire humanity and all creation. *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (The whole world is one family) and *Samastha Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the worlds be happy) are their foremost thoughts and prayers. Accordingly, **their speech is truthful, limited, and sweet.** Whatever they say is to help others. Their deeds are always helpful to others. **They are involved**

in noble endeavors, compassionate deeds, and selfless service and provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and aid to the less fortunate and those in need. They also spend time in the company of saints, sages, and good people as they are lovers of God.

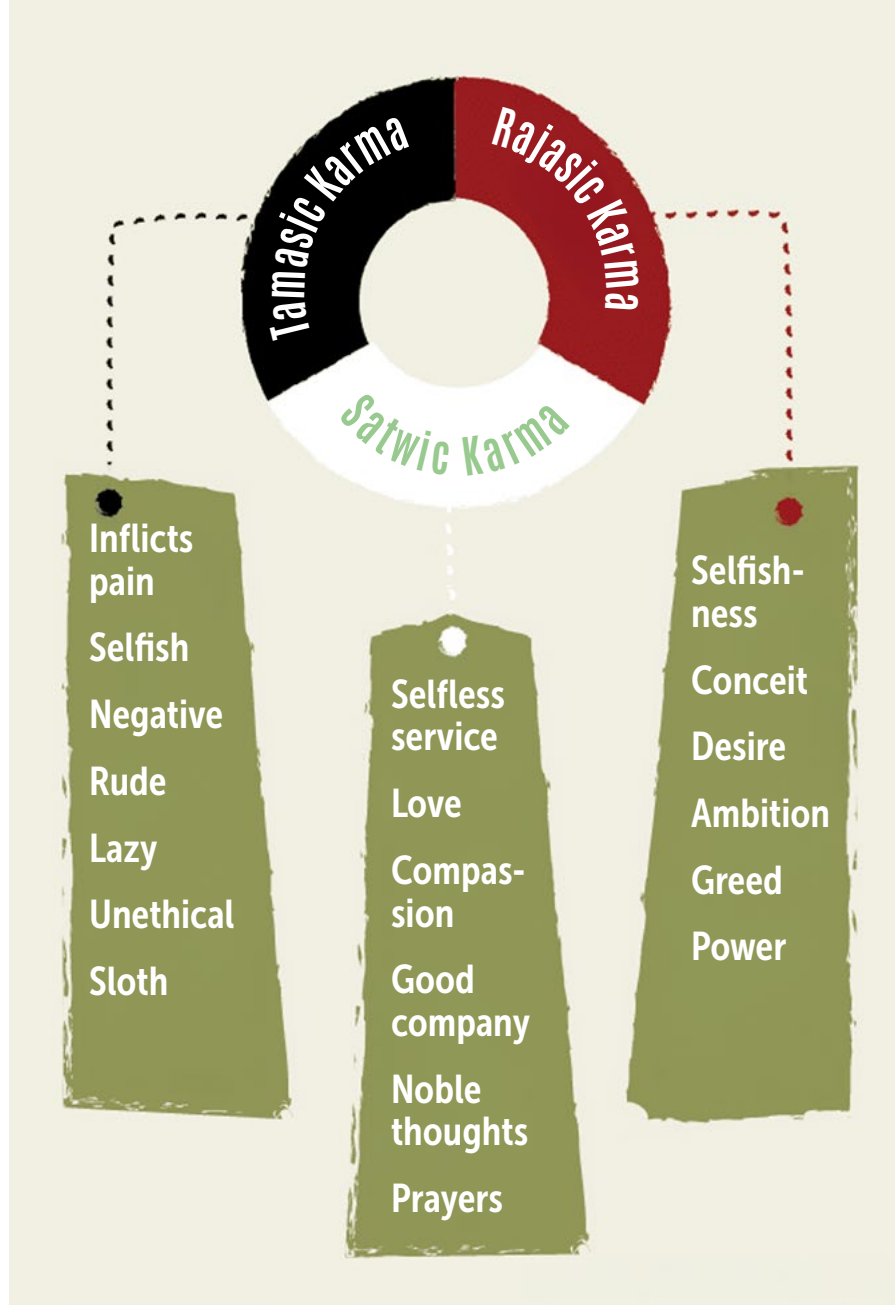
Rajasic Karma is done out of selfishness, conceit, and self-interest. Most actions done by common people in daily life fall into this category. Almost everyone in the world indulges in *rajasic* actions.

People indulging in *rajasic karma* are engrossed in thoughts filled with excessive desires and ambitions. Their speech is rude, aggressive, boisterous, and hurtful. The objective is usually self-aggrandizement and display of pomp and show. *Rajasic* deeds are driven by ambition and greed. They aim at worldly success at all costs, even disregarding *dharma*. Many people, especially in the corporate world and politics, succumb to these deeds for profits, power, name, and fame.

Tamasic Karma, apart from being done for selfish motives, also causes harm to others. They lack compassion, inflict pain on others, and are driven by narrow-mindedness, primarily from self-interest.

These people are evildoers. They always indulge in negative and harmful thoughts. Their words are rude, filthy, and unbecoming of a human being. They inflict pain on others with their words. *Tamasic* deeds reek of apathy, inertia, laziness, and sloth. Such actions are anti-social, unethical, intended to harm others, misappropriate possessions of others, and go against all scriptural injunctions.

It is clearly proclaimed in the scriptures that *satwic* thoughts, words, and deeds give us joy, peace, and tranquility. *Rajasic* thoughts,



words, and deeds cause restlessness, pain, and sorrow. In contrast, *tamasic* thoughts, words, and deeds keep people immersed in ignorance and manifest demonic nature without even a glimpse of truth and divinity.

The Different Categories of Karma

Over time, karma gets accumulated. These are categorized into three groups based on their temporal influence on the soul and its transmigration.

Sanchita Karma is the accumulated karma from all previous lifetimes stored as a vast reservoir of impressions (*vasanas*). This represents the totality of all actions, both good and bad, that bear fruit.

Prarabdha Karma is the portion of *Sanchita Karma* currently manifesting or giving effect

in the present life. It is this karma that determines the circumstances of one's current existence, such as birth, health, relationships, and life experiences.

Agami Karma is the karma generated by actions in the present life that will bear fruit in the future. This karma results from our thoughts, words, and deeds in our present life.

Together, these three types of karma weave the tapestry of human existence, binding individuals to the cycle of birth and death (*Samsara*). These karmas bear fruit in different time frames which can even span across births. In His divine discourse on August 31, 2001, Swami gave an example of the way karma works across cycles of birth:

"The young Vamana (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu) walked towards the site where Emperor Bali was performing the sacred ritual. Vamana, was brilliant and effulgent, and everyone looked with wonder at his great youthful beauty. Vamana was the very personification of an attractive magnetic field. Ratnamala, the daughter of Bali, saw the young boy and developed a desire in her mind to have Him as her own child and fondle Him in various ways. But, in the meantime, as you know, Vamana had pushed Bali down into Pathala (netherworld). This event turned her love for Vamana into hatred, and she felt that she could kill the child herself. The all-knowing

Vamana noticed what was passing through the mind of Ratnamala and pronounced 'Tathaasthu' (so be it)...

He told Ratnamala, "Mother, you first desired to breastfeed Me. But seeing your father's downfall, your desire turned into hatred. You felt like feeding poison and killing Me. You will be born in Dwapara Yuga as Poothana (a demoness) and feed Me with poisonous milk, but you will die."

One can clearly see how Ratnamala fulfilled both of her desires as Poothana. She fed Lord Krishna her breast milk as a mother but also tried to poison and kill Him as a demoness filled with hate. So, one should be extremely careful in what one thinks, speaks, or does, even if it is momentary.

Swami says that the present is the seed, which is the result of the past and the basis of the future. Therefore, to ensure success, we should live in the present.

Vedanta explains the concepts of **sanchita karma, prarabdha karma, and agami karma** with an interesting and clear analogy of an archer and his arrows. Let us take the example of an archer with a quiver full of arrows. The arrows represent **sanchita karma** accumulated over many lifetimes that have not been exhausted or 'canceled.' When the archer releases arrows from the bow, he has no control over them until they reach the target. The discharged arrows



“Remove the two fangs of the snake and it becomes harmless. Ahamkara and Mamakara (I and Mine) are the two fangs that come attached to all our actions, causing bondage.

represent *prarabdha karma*, which is currently being experienced in this lifetime. There is a third category of arrows that are neither in the quiver nor discharged but placed on the bow, ready to be launched. The archer can choose the target and trajectory of such arrows before shooting them. These arrows represent *agami karma*, present actions that create future karma.

This analogy captures the dynamics of past, present, and future karma. It reminds us of the importance of living mindfully, as our current actions shape our future.

The Chains of Karma

Karma is inscrutable, subtle, and inescapable. This is why spiritual masters have provided various paths to transcend the grip of karma and achieve liberation. Bhagawan Baba explains that human birth is a rare opportunity to break free from the cycle of birth and death. He states that the body is given as an instrument to realize the divine. So, one should use it for sacred purposes, remembering that life is impermanent, and the goal of life is to achieve Self-realization, transcending karma.

Tamasic, *rajasic*, and even *satwic karmas* bind the individual to the cycle of birth and death. While *Tamasic karma* is akin to an iron chain, *rajasic karma* is like a silver chain, and *satwic karma* is comparable to a gold chain. While the chains vary in their desirability, they all bind a person. Thus, it is emphasized that one should be fully free and not be bound by any kind of chain. **Initially, one should become *rajasic* to break free from the iron chains of *tamasic karma*. From here, one should progress to being *satwic* and finally, go beyond all three *gunas* (attri-**

butes) to the *trigunateetha* (beyond the three attributes) state.

Let us explore the various ways we can transcend the laws of karma and be liberated in this very lifetime. Lord Krishna and Bhagawan Baba have expounded on this in detail. There are three major paths—Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Jnana Yoga.

Karma Yoga

This is the path of selfless action (*nishkama karma*). The idea here is to perform every action in the proper spirit, so that karma transcends to become *karma yoga*. There are many rules given by Lord Krishna to achieve this. The first among them is, as He says, “*Yogah Karmasu Koushalam* (Yoga is perfection in action).” **Whatever we do, say, or think should be perfect, as per divine standards** (BG 2.50). The next teaching is (BG 2.47):

*karmany-evadhikaras te ma phaleshu
kadachana
ma karma-phala-hetur bhur ma te
sango 'stvakarmani*

(You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction.)

We are obligated to act from birth to death. But the results of the actions bind us. There is a unique explanation given only by Bhagawan Baba compared to the traditional explanation given above and all other commentators who say that you are entitled only to perform duties and not the fruits of your actions. **Swami says that to get out of bondage, one should willingly give up and not hanker after the fruits of action (that**

one is entitled to) by dedicating them to God.

In another verse (BG 2.41), Krishna says,

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

*(O descendent of the Kurus (Arjuna),
the intellect of those on this path is
resolute, and their aim is one-pointed.
But the intellect of those who are irres-
olute is many-branched.)*

Swami presents Arjuna as the ultimate example of one-pointedness. People nowadays, in the name of multi-tasking, become scatterbrained. **One should be focused on the present, absorbed in the particular action one is performing, with single-pointed devotion.** The next important concept is covered in another verse (BG 2.38):

*sukha-duhkhe same kritva labha-
labhau jayajayau
tato yuddhaya yujyasva naivam
papam avapsyasi*

*(Fight for the sake of duty, treating
alike happiness and distress, loss and
gain, victory and defeat. Fulfilling your
responsibility in this way, you will never
incur sin.)*

Whenever we perform actions, we are bound to get results that vary widely. **One should have the equanimity to face all kinds of results.** Such equanimity will ensure that the actions or karmas don't bind us. Finally, when we act, the doership should be given up, as stated by Lord Krishna (BG 3.27):

*prakriteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani
sarvashah
ahankara-vimudhatma kartaham iti
manyate*

*(All activities are carried out by the
three modes (gunas) of material
nature. But in ignorance, the soul,
deluded by false identification with the
body, thinks of itself as the doer.)*

The ego is what makes man think that he is the doer. Constantly remembering that God is the operator and we are just instruments or machines ensures we are not bound by karma. Swami says there are two reasons why karma binds us—*ahamkara* and *mama-kara* (I and Mine). **The first makes us think we are the doers, while the second makes us hanker for the fruits of our actions.**

Further elaborating on this, Swami says a snake has poison in its fangs. Remove the two fangs of the snake and it becomes harmless. *Ahamkara* and *Mamakara* are the two fangs that come attached to all our actions, causing bondage. Remove them, and all actions become harmless and one is free. In this connection, there is a beautiful explanation of karma (action) and *akarma* (inaction) (BG 4.18):

*karmanyakarma yah pashyed akar-
mani cha karma yah
sa buddhiman manushyeshu sa
yuktah kritsna-karma-krit*

*(Those who see action in inaction
and inaction in action are truly wise
amongst humans. Although perform-
ing all kinds of actions, they are yogis
and masters of all their actions.)*

This is a very subtle and profound concept.

The sages, saints, yogis, and even Avatars are involved in many activities. But these activities are *akarma* and not karma because such people have no doership. Hence, no action binds them. However, some people don't do any work but still get bound in karma! This is because of their feelings of doership and enjoyership.

Ultimately, the purpose of action is to achieve purity of the heart (*chittasya shud-dhaye karma*). That is why Swami says, "Purity is Enlightenment." To achieve this, one should always be engaged in sacred activities. Swami says that there are five *yajnas* (sacred sacrificial rituals) that one can perform—*Deva Yajna*, *Pitru Yajna*, *Bhuta*

Yajna, Manushya Yajna, and Rishi Yajna. Therein, we express gratitude to the gods, parents and ancestors, the five elements and nature, peers and friends, and sages and saints.

Thus, one can overcome the laws of karma through Karma Yoga or Nishkama Karma (desireless action).

Bhakti Yoga

This is the path of divine love. Swami says that if you have intense love for God, you are never bound by the law of karma. **The grace of the Lord can burn any amount of karma.** Everyone is born because of karma, and karma arises out of desires. Markandeya is an excellent example of how karma can be overcome with *bhakti*.

Markandeya was the blessed son of the sage Mrikandu and his wife, Marudmati, who had prayed to Lord Shiva for a child. The Lord gave them a choice: a virtuous son with a short life or an unworthy one with a long life. They chose the former, and the virtuous son, Markandeya was born, but he was destined to live for only 16 years. Despite knowing his fate, Markandeya grew up as a devout and learned child, deeply devoted to Lord Shiva. As his sixteenth birthday approached, his parents were heartbroken knowing the impending doom, but Markandeya and his parents remained steadfast in their faith and love for Lord Shiva. On the final day of his destined life, Markandeya sat in deep meditation and embraced his Shiva Linga, chanting Shiva's name with intense divine fervor. When Lord Yama, the god of death, arrived to claim him, he threw his noose, which accidentally fell on the Shiva Linga. Lord Shiva is *Mrutyunjaya* (one who has conquered death). He was angered when Yama put the noose around Him! He emerged from the Linga and struck Yama, saving Markandeya's life. Moved by the boy's devotion, Shiva blessed him with immortality and eternal youth. **Markandeya and his parents**



Lord Shiva saves Markandeya

worshipped God with great devotion. Thus, they could change even the *sankalpa* of God, and, as a result, Markandeya could live eternally (*chiranjeevi*).

Narrating the above story in a divine discourse during the 1972 Summer Course, Swami also gave another example to show the potency of God's grace:

*“There is an injection bottle. It will be written that the medicine inside can be used up to 1970. That bottle is there even in the year 1972 and the medicine is also there in the bottle, but the medicine will have no potency. It cannot serve its purpose. In the same way, in our destiny, there may be medicine or prarabdha, but by the grace of God, we can weaken its effect or blunt its effect. Even though it is there, it cannot trouble us. We can become beneficiaries of God's grace; we need not be afraid of either prarabdha, sanchita, or agami (karma). **If God is pleased with our devotion and worship, He will certainly annul the bad effects of prarabdha and sanchita karma.** There-*

fore, the most important thing we have to try is to earn the grace of God, by which we can overcome all these bad effects.”

Lord Krishna advises Arjuna beautifully in a verse (BG 8.7):

*tasmat sarveshu kaleshu mam
anusmara yudhya cha
mayyarpita-mano-buddhir mam
evaishyasyasanshayam*

(Therefore, always remember Me and do your duty of fighting the war. With mind and intellect surrendered to Me, you will definitely attain Me; of this, there is no doubt.)

In the ‘battlefield’ of life, when we ‘fight’ thinking of the Lord always, karma cannot affect us, and we escape unscathed. There was a time when we went through a serious family crisis in Los Angeles. I told my daughter that the law of karma is inexorable, that we all have to pay our dues and that we can only pray to the Lord for strength to endure the crisis. A few weeks later, during our visit to Prasanthi Nilayam, Swami called us for an interview and admonished me, saying that it is wrong to think that one has to always pay for one’s karma. **He said, “When My grace is there, all karma will be wiped out in a trice just as a mountain of cotton can be burned away instantly with a single lighted matchstick.”**

The experiences of Prof. Madhusudan Mohanty and Dr. Amarnath Shenoy, which have been included in this issue, clearly show how Swami can protect and wipe out our problems, miseries, and karma in a trice. Here, it is also apt to remember the greatest reassurance from Lord Krishna, often quoted by our dear Swami (BG 18.66):

*sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam
sharanam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksha-
yishyami ma shuchah*

(Abandon all varieties of dharmas and surrender unto Me alone. I shall liberate you from all sins; do not grieve.)

The Lord assures us that surrender to God liberates us from all sins and karma. When we surrender, God gives us everything we need, as shown in the article in this issue, by Ms. Rachna Desai about her experiences. Such surrender is attainable with intense love for God, which is the hallmark of Bhakti Yoga.

Jnana Yoga

Jnana Yoga is the path of wisdom. Swami declares this as the royal road to transcend karma and achieve liberation. Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi, the great *jnani* of recent times, the sage of Arunachala, approached karma from the perspective of self-enquiry. He taught that karma operates in the realm of one’s ego, body, and mind. But when one realizes that one is the pure Atman, karma loses its relevance. He emphasized that the concept of karma is meaningful only as long as one identifies oneself with the body, mind, and intellect. **He said, “Find out who it is that has karma. Then, karma will drop away. Through the method of self-enquiry, asking ‘Who Am I?’ one transcends the ego and attains liberation.”**

Sri Ramana also addressed the inevitability of *Prarabdha Karma*. He explained that the karma responsible for the present life must play out like an arrow already released from a bow. **However, by abiding in the Self, one remains unaffected by the experiences brought by *Prarabdha Karma*.**

Lord Krishna says (BG 4.19):

*yasya sarve samarambhah
kama-sankalpa-varjitah
jnanagni-dagdha-karmanam tam
ahuh panditam budhah*

(The enlightened sages call those wise, whose every action is free from the desire for material pleasures and who have burnt the reactions of work in the fire of divine wisdom.)

It does not matter how much the load of one’s karma is—*sanchita*, *prarabdha*, and *agami*—it can all be burned away in the fire



BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

PRASHANTI NILAYAM (A.P.)

Date.....

PRAYER

Oh! Lord! Take my love and let it flow in fullness
" Take my hands and let ^{or devotion to thee} them work
incessantly for thee
" Take my soul and let it be merged in one
with thee
" Take my mind and thoughts and let them
be in ~~same~~ tune with thee
" Take my everything and let me be an
instrument to work.

With Love and Grace
Baba.

of wisdom. The darkness in a cave that has lasted thousands of years will be gone in an instant when a lamp is lit. **Similarly, the moment the lamp of Jnana is lit, all our karma will disappear instantly.**

We are all born bound by the law of karma, and there is a clear way out of karma by following any of the three spiritual paths—Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, or Jnana Yoga. The best would be to follow a combination of all three, an integral yoga whose different aspects are dilated upon beautifully by Swami in a New Year discourse that has been included in this issue. This integral yoga is also embodied in **the Lord's Prayer that Swami has written for the redemption of humanity.**

Oh, Lord! Take my Love and let it flow in fullness of devotion to thee.
Oh, Lord! Take my hands and let them work incessantly for thee.
Oh, Lord! Take my Soul and let it be merged in one with thee.
Oh, Lord! Take my mind and thoughts and let them be in tune with thee.
Oh, Lord! Take my everything and let me be an Instrument to work.

Let us, with intensity and one-pointedness, follow any or all of the three paths prescribed by Baba, the great scriptures, and great masters, and transcend the law of karma and attain liberation in this very lifetime.

Jai Sai Ram.



Heroes Not Zeros

Pandit Sathyanarayana Avadhanulu could have spoken for a longer time, but he stopped rather suddenly, perhaps to give Me more time. You must not grow restless when others speak; for whoever speaks here is giving you the nectar of the Vedas or *Shastras* (scriptures), which is ever sweet and liberating. Moreover, he said we met here this evening since it is New Year's Day, the first of January 1964! **Well, this is a delusion within a larger delusion!** This day is welcomed as marking some big change, as if yesterday was quite different for it belonged to 1963, and today is distinctly different, since it is 1964! This day is celebrated by people with picnics, gambling, drinking, and feasting. They attend cinema shows, wear new clothes, give presents to each other, and greet everyone with joy and merriment. They expend and exhaust their money, and their energy in the pursuit of frivolity, thrill, and excitement.

All this is due to the custom that views this day as unique. In fact, the 'year' is just a convention. There are as many New Year's days as there are days in the year. Many communities and countries have their own calendars, distinctly different. It is not the first of January or the first of *Chaithra* (the first month of the Telugu New Year) that is unique. The year is just a name to indicate the number of months, and the month for counting the number of days. The day indicates the number of hours, the hour is a period counted in minutes, and the minute

is a name for sixty seconds. **Each second is new. It is a gift, a chance, an opportunity, a thing to be celebrated, to be used for your uplift. Each second is a fresh chance given to you for training the mind, refining the intellect, purifying the emotions, strengthening the will, and becoming convinced that you are the deathless Atma (Self, the Infinite Consciousness).**

Be Like the Lotus with Head High Above Waters

Be thankful to the Lord that He gave you time and the work to fill it with. He gave you food, as well as the hunger to relish it. But that does not entitle you to engage yourself in action indiscriminately. When you build a house, you install a door in front. What is the purpose of the door? To admit all you welcome and to keep out all you do not want. It has a double purpose; you do not keep the doors wide open for all to come in whenever they like. So too, select the impulses, the motives, and the incentives that enter your mind; keep out the demeaning, the debasing, the deleterious. Admit the highest wisdom of the scriptures, the wisdom drawn out of the

crucible of experience, called *anubhava jnanam* (experiential knowledge).

All water is not potable; the stagnant pool is to be avoided. The flowing river is better. Select the water and drink. Use the mosquito curtain, but ensure mosquitoes do not get in when you go to bed. Keep them out; do not imprison them inside the net. Sail in the boat that floats on water, but do not allow water to enter the boat. **Be in worldly life, but do not allow it to get into you. Use the doors intelligently to let in those you want and keep out those you do not want.** The lotus, born in slime and mud, rises through the water and lifts its head well above the water; it refuses to get wet, though water is the element that gives it life! Be like the lotus. By action, done with such care, the vision gets clarified. Man is blinded by the objective world, and he believes the world to be real, meaningful, and worthy of pursuit. Cataract grows in the eye and robs it of vision. The cataract is the enemy of the eye. **Ignorance, the cataract of the inner eye, blinds the intellect and robs it of its wisdom. So, it cannot see the divinity that is your real nature.** It misleads you into having the impression



Be like the lotus

that you are human (*manava*), whereas you are verily God (*Madhava*).

Tread the Path of Liberation

The rope is mistaken for a snake, and the perceiver flees in fear. The truth is, it is not the 'eye' that sees; there are many whose eyes are good as far as doctors can diagnose, but they cannot 'see!' The eye sees because it is illuminated by a spark from the rays of the Sun. The scripture says, '*chaksho suryo ajayatha* (from the eye of the Supreme Being, the sun was born).' The soul is the driving force of all senses; the eye is but a window through which the soul peeps out at the external world. What use is the eye when the vision is not correct and when you do not have *samadrishiti* (equal vision)? ***Samam* means Brahman, the absolute reality; *samadrishiti* means seeing only Brahman, the One in all things at all times.** This *ekatvam* (oneness) is the basic truth. All other experiences are partial, distorted, and false. Dwell on that in your meditation. Fix it in your inner consciousness. That is the path to liberation, which you must start treading, and today is as good a day as any for doing so. You have meditated too long on riches, status, salary, children, relatives, fame, and the standard of living. They are all of minor interest, momentary value, and dubious profit. **Meditate and fix your urge on the *nithya* (eternal), the *sathya* (real), the *nirmala* (pure), and the *nischala* (immovable).**

The Eternal Charioteer

Pandit Avadhanulu referred to some incidents mentioned in the Mahabharata, and so, I, too, shall mention just one point that will make you appreciate the Mahabharata even more. The Lord had *maya* (illusion) as His consort, so to speak, and He had a son called *manas* (mind). This *manas*, to continue the parable, had two wives:

pravritti and *nivritti*—attachment and detachment. Of course, 'attachment' was his favorite wife; she had a hundred children. 'Detachment' was ill-treated and neglected, and she had five children. That is the symbolism of the Kauravas (hundred sons) and the Pandavas (five sons) of Mahabharata. Though the children all lived in the same kingdom, ate the same food, and learned from the same teacher, their nature differed widely. The Kauravas, children of 'attachment,' were greedy, cruel, self-centered, and vain. Of the five Pandavas, each one represented a supreme virtue so that they could be said to symbolize *sathya*, *dharma*, *shanti*, *prema*, and *ahimsa* (truth, right conduct, peace, love, and non-violence). Since they were so pure and born of 'detachment,' the Lord became their guide. **In fact, the Lord**



“Forget the things that you do not want to remember. Bring to memory only those things that are worth remembering. That is the way to achieve spiritual progress.

will guide whoever installs Him as their *sarathi* (charioteer). He will not consider that position inferior. He is the *Sanathana Sarathi* (Eternal Charioteer) who has come to be the charioteer of all. He is the Lord for all who seek a master, a support. The soul is the master in everyone, and Krishna is the universal soul, personified.

Let the Lord Shape Your Mind

The Upanishad says two birds sit on a tree. The *jeevatma* and the *paramatma*—the individual soul and the supreme soul—are the two birds on the tree of this body, this world. One bird eats the fruits of the tree, while the other simply looks on as a witness. But the wonder is that the two birds are really one, though they appear as two; they cannot be separated since they are two aspects of the same entity.

Steam in the air cannot be concretized; it has no shape or form, but it is the same matter as ice, which is hard, heavy, and cold. Similarly, *nirakara* and *sakara* (without form and with form) are just two ways in which the One manifests itself. The minute hand of the clock is the individual soul, the bird that eats the fruits. It goes round and round, but the hour hand moves silently and slowly, with a certain dignity. The hour hand can be said to be the supreme soul. Once an hour, the two meet, but the individual soul does not get that consummation fixed forever. It loses the precious

chance and so must go round and round, again and again. Liberation is when the two merge and only One remains.

When the obstacles in the path of truth are overcome, deliverance is achieved. That is why *moksha* (liberation) is something that can be won here and now; one need not wait for the dissolution of the physical body. Action must not be felt as a burden, for that feeling is a sure sign that it is against one's nature. No action that helps your progress will weigh heavily on you. Only when you go counter to your innermost nature do you feel it as a burden. A time comes when you look back on your achievement and sigh at the futility of it all. **Before it is too late, entrust your mind to the Lord and let Him shape it as He likes.** Assign to your mind the task of serving the Lord, and it will grow tame. You do not hand over to the goldsmith a very nice ornament; you give him the ornaments you feel are broken or dented or gone out of fashion for repairs or reshaping. Similarly, give the Lord your mind that certainly needs repair, if not complete reconstruction.

Man Should Have No Fear

Illusion affects the mind. It is like a fierce dog that will not allow anyone to approach the Master. You can manage to bypass it only by assuming the *rupa*, or form of the Master, which is called *sarupyam*,

or by calling out for the Master so loudly that He comes down and accompanies you into the house. Stated another way, it is by winning His Grace, which is called *sameepyam* (proximity). Illusion is His pet, and so it will not harm you if He orders it to desist from harming you. The Master comes to save not just one good man from illusion but the entire mankind. Of course, He has to assume a form that man can love, revere, and appreciate. He can give joy and courage only if He speaks the language humans can understand. Even as it is, many are afraid to approach Me, for they know I am aware of their innermost thoughts and deepest desires. But let Me tell you that only helpless animals have fear. **Man, who is a child of immortality, should have no fear.** People pray before stone images of the snake god, but when the actual snake appears in answer to their prayers, they run away terror-stricken from the shrine! The Lord manifests Himself only to shower grace, never to strike terror. On the banks of the river near Lucknow, there was a sage who addressed dogs, crows, and men equally as God; he had realized the unity of all in the divine essence. That is the result of divine knowledge, or intense *bhakti*, where you do not see anything other than your *ishta devata* (chosen deity) wherever you turn. Be ever in that divine

bliss, the bliss that comes from God-consciousness, always and everywhere. That is the eternal bliss (*Nithyananda*) that the wise enjoy.

Like the silkworm that spins from out of itself the cocoon that proves to be its tomb, man spins from his own mind the cage in which he gets trapped. But there is a way to escape, which the spiritual teacher (*Guru*) can teach you, or the God in you will reveal to you. Take to the path of spiritual practice that will bring relief. Do away with the roles of clown and clout, which you have acted through all ages. **Take on the role of the hero, not the zero! Forget the past, do not worry about possible errors or disappointments. Decide and do.** Some spiritual teachers advise you to keep a daily diary, where you note down every item of evil that you did; they ask you to read it as a spiritual exercise and resolve to correct yourself. Well, reading it and writing it will only tend to impress it on the mind more effectively. It is better to substitute good thoughts for bad and cleanse the mind of all evil by dwelling on righteous deeds and holy thoughts. **Forget the things that you do not want to remember. Bring to memory only those things that are worth remembering.** That is the way to achieve spiritual progress.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
January 1, 1964







THE DIVINE Pull

FOR MOST OF MY LIFE, I HAVE NOT BEEN A SPIRITUAL PERSON.

My father, however, was always sincere in his daily worship. As a kid growing up in Mangalore, I found playing games and spending time with friends to be more important than prayers. The teenage years were mostly spent in frivolous and playful activities. It was in those years that I first heard the name 'Sai Baba.' I also heard that there were two Babas. From my limited understanding, one was a fakir from Shirdi, and the other a 'faker' from Puttaparthi. In retrospect, I realize how misguided I was, covered with a heavy cloud of *maya*.

Soon, I joined the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) course. Those years were just a blur of youthful pleasures and entertainment. I watched movies, hung around with friends, ate out in restaurants, gossiped about various things, and did nothing remotely connected with spirituality. Then, from 1999 to 2004, I lived in Chennai, doing my master's degree program in Dental Surgery (MDS). In 2006, I got married, and while I practiced dentistry, my wife pursued her post-graduate program from 2007-2010. We regularly visited beaches and also passed Swami's temple, Sundaram, on many occasions. But I never even knew of its existence back then! My whole focus was on the nearby Sathyam movie-theater complex. My wife, on the other hand, was devoted to Shirdi Baba. She worshipped him at the altar of her heart because I wouldn't allow her to keep His picture at our altar.

In 2010, we moved back to Mangalore after my wife's post-graduation, and I became a professor at a local college.

The Power of Satsang

It was only in 2011 that I heard again about Sathya Sai Baba since His Mahasamadhi was a major news item in the newspapers. I read it casually and did not feel anything. It was just the passing of another person on earth from my perspective. But His work on me had just begun.

I had to regularly visit my university, located in Trichur, Kerala. There, I met a classmate from my BDS college days. I discovered that he was a follower of Sai Baba and a staunch one at that. At first, I thought that he was talking about Shirdi Sai Baba. But when I learned who he was referring to, I asked, "But is Sai Baba real? Isn't it only Shirdi Baba who is genuine?"

"What are you saying!" he retorted, continuing, "**I have been going to Swami since 1999, and my life has changed because of Him.**"

With that, he shared his experiences and thoughts about 'his Swami,' and unknowingly, I was participating in *satsang*. Whenever I visited Trichur, I listened with great interest and was intrigued by His stories. But once I returned to Mangalore, I would go back to being my old self, mostly an atheist, agnostic at best. It was during this period that we were blessed with a son and a daughter.

The Benevolent Baba

Our son had a lot of difficulty in his speech development. After a while, we got worried and started speech therapy for him. The arrival of our daughter helped because he became a bit more active with her around. However, he was still far from being able to learn like other children of his age.

My wife resumed reading *Shirdi Sai Satcharitra*, which she used to do regularly before our marriage. She would pray for our son, but I wondered how 'a mere man' could help. However, she would not be bothered much by my taunts and mockery. Then, she installed a picture of Shirdi Sai Baba in the shrine at our home and would reverentially bow down to Baba daily. I would always mock her devotion and laugh within myself at her absurd beliefs.

She also began to watch a television serial on the life of Shirdi Baba every day at 7 pm. I did not come in her way but kept myself busy with my responsibilities as a dentist and a professor. **One day, my son came up to me and started saying, "Sai Baba, Sai Baba." I realized that unbeknownst to me, my children also had fallen in love with Sai Baba.** Then, pointing to every deity in our shrine, he said, "Papa! See Sai Baba. This is Sai Baba... This is Sai Baba." While I did not give any place among the gods to Sai Baba, for him, all Gods were Sai Baba!

It didn't stop there. This little boy with a speech impediment would make great efforts to tell me stories of Sai Baba in his

own words. He also recalled other characters from the Shirdi Baba TV serial and joyfully spoke about them. He even influenced my daughter, who began sharing Baba's stories with me. Though I never placed my faith in Him, **Baba was a benevolent protector, guarding our family!**

Swami Enters My Shrine and My Life

It became evident to us that our son needed specialized care for his speech. We decided to enrol him into an occupational therapy school at Trichur. On May 2, 2022, we admitted him and returned home. While I was at Trichur, I once again enjoyed the good company of my classmates, and my heart was filled with stories of the newer Sai. In June 2022, my wife and daughter traveled to Bangalore for a few days to attend a wedding. That was when I did something totally unthinkable—I brought home photos of Shirdi Baba and Sathya Sai Baba and placed them on the altar!

I contacted my friend and bought several books on Swami. I also began to call him and discuss Swami on the phone. The *satsang*, which was limited to Trichur, now came home to Mangalore as well, thanks to cellu-

lar technology! **The few days passed like a breeze, with so much joy and contentment filling my heart. That is the power of *satsang*! Swami had softened my heart and pulled me close to Him.**

When my wife returned, she was in for a real shock! While she was thrilled to have her Shirdi Baba on the altar, she did not recognize my Swami! I had no explanation to offer to her. She wondered what had happened in her absence but didn't pursue the matter. She was kinder to me than I had been to her concerning her beliefs in Baba! I would secretly read Swami's books till, a few months later, my wife also came into Swami's fold.

Swami is with Me Every Day

One day, a tall *sadhu* (holy person) in ochre clothes came to my clinic. He began telling me about Shirdi Sai Baba, although there was nothing in the clinic to indicate that I knew Sai Baba. **He gave me a picture of Baba and said something like, "He will always protect you."** After that, he asked for money just like Shirdi Baba used to ask for *dakshina* (offerings). I gave him some money. He pointed to my bag and asked for it. I said, "That one is mine, please; I need

He does not do anything for '*pradarshana*' or show.

He does it all for '*nidarshana*,' or demonstration of His immense love.

it.” “Okay! Give it to me when I come for Diwali...,” he said. Then, he gave me a *rudraksha* (sacred rosary) bead, told me to keep it safe, and left.

I kept the *rudraksha* bead along with the two Baba photos on my altar. Every day, before setting out to work, I would touch all three and seek blessings. A few months later, the *rudraksha* bead fell and, to my shock, broke into pieces! I sat down and collected the scattered pieces. Even as I did that, a thought made me wonder if that was a message or was it a bad omen.


Soon, I was on my way to work, driving with a colleague on a road being expanded into a six-lane expressway. Wherever the construction was ongoing, vehicles were diverted into a service lane. As I drove into one such lane, a construction truck traveling at high speed emerged from the construction area and missed hitting my car by millimeters!

If the vehicles had collided, I would have been killed or seriously injured! I pulled the car over to the side and took some deep breaths. My colleague who was with me was also visibly shaken. But thankfully, we were both safe and sound. For a few moments, we sat in silence in shock, digesting the fact that we had been miraculously saved. I now understood why the *rudraksha* bead had shattered. I was convinced that it had taken the impact of the collision. It had delayed my departure from home by a few seconds, causing me to be saved from the collision!

Earlier, I would have called this miracle a coincidence. **But now, I realize God mostly**



works in silence and behind the scenes. He does not do anything for ‘pradarshana’ or show. He does it all for ‘nidarshana,’ or demonstration of His immense love. Today, I experience many such divine ‘coincidences’ frequently, and it comforts me to know that my Baba is with me. It has been two years since my journey with Swami began, and He continues to pull me ever so closer toward Him in His own way. I hope that as I go nearer to Him, I also become dearer to Him.

Dr. Amarnath Shenoy
INDIA 



Dr. Amarnath Shenoy lives in Mangalore, Karnataka, India, with his wife and two children. He became a devotee of Swami after the Mahasamadhi. He is a dentist by profession, and Professor and Head of the Department of Endodontics at a dental college in Kasargode, Kerala. He is passionate about writing poems and is actively involved with the activities of the local Sai organization in Mangalore.

You are Our Sole Refuge

IT WAS AROUND APRIL OR MAY OF 2003 THAT I DEVELOPED A STRANGE SICKNESS that made me feel always exhausted. Any work, however little, physical or mental, would make me feel extremely fatigued and sometimes dizzy. I became very concerned when my sleep was affected, and the illness became so severe that I had no sleep at all! That was when I started seeing several doctors.

Although all blood tests, cardiac tests, and brain scans were normal, I was not normal. I slowly lost confidence and completely abandoned my academic research projects, barely managing to teach my classes to keep my job. It was scary because I was the only earning member of my family, with three boys in school and college. I stopped teaching even my favorite Bal Vikas (Sai Spiritual Education) classes which I used to enjoy. My family and friends noticed something seriously amiss and were desperate to find a solution.

Finally, a Diagnosis?

Ever since we relocated to Los Angeles in 1990, my family has always regarded Dr. Narendranath Reddy and his wife, Dr. Hymavathi Reddy, as our spiritual mentors. Their remarkable close association with Baba and their wise guidance based on Baba's teachings during Center study circles always





Doctors speak of vitamin deficiency. I will call it the deficiency of Vitamin G, and I will recommend the repetition of the name of God, with accompanying contemplation of the glory and grace of God. That is the Vitamin G.

inspired me. Dr. Reddy treated my father, free of charge, when my father visited me in 1998. Mrs. Reddy was the pediatrician for my three sons. Not finding any other alternative, I sought Dr. Narendranath Reddy's advice for my health. After the examination, he prescribed some medications for good sleep. **Realizing that I was fearful, he reminded me of Baba's assurance, "Why fear when Baba is here," and consoled me that I should be fine soon with Baba's grace.** Several Sai friends visited me at home to cheer me up and suggested different remedies. Some friends suggested doing *japa* and chanting *mantras* while sleeping. I did everything religiously, but the situation did not improve. I once again visited Dr. Reddy out of desperation for a solution to my miserable situation. After listening to me patiently, he recommended very calmly, and with full confidence, that I should take 'Vitamin G' and assured me that it would work. I was overwhelmed with joy as I felt that I finally found a true panacea for my chronic malady. However, all the medical stores I visited informed me that such a vitamin did not exist! I even asked a few people with medical backgrounds, and they too were unaware of it. I kept wondering why Dr. Reddy prescribed such a rare and hitherto unknown medicine. But for some strange reason, I did not go back to him to seek clarification.

It was nearly a year later when there wasn't much improvement, that I turned to Swami in utter desperation. I decided to start reading the book series, *Sathya Sai Speaks*,

from Volume 1. Swami's words were truly nourishing. I kept reading on and on, even when everyone in my family was fast asleep. Not too soon after, I was reading Volume 5. **When I turned the page to Chapter 10, I was in for a shock—the name of the Chapter was Vitamin G!** Immediately, Dr. Reddy's prescription flashed in my mind. With the joy of discovering my remedial panacea, I finished reading that chapter non-stop in a few minutes. Herein Swami says, *"Illness is caused more by malfunction of the mind than of the body. Doctors speak of vitamin deficiency. I will call it the deficiency of Vitamin G, and I will recommend the repetition of the name of God, with accompanying contemplation of the glory and grace of God. That is the Vitamin G."*

I felt that Swami had stopped me from asking Dr. Reddy about Vitamin G because



Get your daily dose of Vitamin-G by clicking [here](#)



Dr. Madhusudhan Mohanty in the first row behind the yellow microphone.

He wanted me to inculcate this spiritual regimen by reading His discourses.

Swami's Message for Me

This discovery certainly helped me turn to Swami, although my physical condition, sleeplessness and fatigue, did not improve. Even a personal interview with Swami in January 2004 did not relieve me of my health problems. Soon, it was December 2004, that time of the year when I would normally visit Puttaparthi for my teaching assignment at the university. I wondered how I could travel to Puttaparthi and be there alone, away from my family. But I felt that the guilt of losing Swami's blessing of serving Him would make me feel even worse. I felt that if I had to die, it would be better to do so at Swami's lotus feet. So, I kept praying to Swami to show me the way. The compassionate God that He is, He heard my prayer of helplessness and came to my rescue. My good friend, Binayak, volunteered to travel with me to Parthi. We flew to India on January 12, 2005.

Everything seemed stable till Binayak left for Bhubaneswar on January 18, after which I started my teaching assignment. I felt lonely, and then the problems began! In fact, I had to miss a few precious *darshans* due to my physical exhaustion. During the *darshans* that I had, Swami looked at me

several times, but there was no interaction. Through these looks, He was probably giving me the energy required to endure the pain during this difficult time, thereby helping me continue my *sadhana* of incessant *namasmarana* with total surrender to Him. By Swami's grace, I completed my teaching assignment and returned to Los Angeles. Another year passed by with no significant improvement in my health. In December 2005, my family was part of the USA group from the Sai Centers of Glendale and Arcadia that traveled to Puttaparthi and sang before Swami on December 26. My family returned to the USA on January 1, 2006, and I stayed back to finish my teaching assignment.

Sometimes, I felt weak and dizzy during my classes. In those helpless moments, I would turn to the chalk board and chant His name mentally while praying to Him to teach through me. Somehow it worked, and my students never felt that I was sick. In fact, they enjoyed my teaching and even asked for extra classes! I could not believe that I was still teaching. I knew it was Swami who was teaching through me, and He was trying to teach me something that I could not understand at that time.

It was January 14, 2006, the sacred Sankranti Day, when Swami delivered a divine



Just by accepting my letter and looking into my eyes, Swami had instantly taken away all the physical and mental sicknesses that had crippled me for nearly three long years!

discourse. The message seemed to be directed just to me. He said,

“Lay all your responsibilities on God and discharge your duty.”

“You are in God. Do everything for God.”

“Tell yourself, ‘I may be physically weak, but I attend to all my duties.’”

The Struggle Continues

My classes at the Institute started on January 16, 2006, as usual. That day, I found out Swami had already left for Whitefield Ashram (in Bangalore) at around 11:30 am without any prior notice! We were told that He was not likely to return before the Sri Rama Navami festival in April. All my hopes of giving Him a letter explaining my health situation were shattered! **I was left only with the option of following His command, “lay all your responsibilities on God and discharge your duty.”** But how could I lay all my responsibilities on Swami and discharge my duty when I am unable to do my job to my satisfaction?

I contemplated on His statement over and over and **I realized that part of my problem might be originating from my sense of doership. I was probably stressing myself too much by focusing on how I was doing rather than believing that it was all Swami’s work and that He was doing it through this body.** I tried sincerely to give up the feeling of doership for my actions as I continued to pray to Swami for help. Since my hand-written letter to Him was too long, I typed it to make sure that it fit on one page and was easily readable. I placed the letter at Swami’s feet at my altar and planned to show it to

Him at Whitefield on my way back to the United States.

It was January 19, and I was walking leisurely toward Sai Kulwant Hall to attend the bhajans scheduled at 5:00 pm. Suddenly, the *darshan* music started. It meant only one thing—that Swami was entering the *darshan* hall! I could not believe it because Swami had left only three days ago and was supposed to return only after Sri Rama Navami. Everyone started running toward Sai Kulwant Hall. Lo and behold, Swami was there! I was very happy that Swami was back. Unfortunately, however, I did not have my letter, which I had left at Swami’s altar in my room. Still, I had a blissful *darshan* because I was missing Him so much.

Divine Relief in an Instant

The next morning (January 20, 2006), I left my room to go to Sai Kulwant Hall leisurely at around 7:25 am because I knew that Swami would not come that early, even if He came. Suddenly, I heard the *darshan* music coming from Sai Kulwant Hall at around 7:30 am, announcing Swami’s entrance to the *darshan* venue. I started running so that I could reach there before Swami entered the hall. I entered through the VIP gate and found that Swami’s car had already passed the ladies’ side and was approaching the men’s side. I had no time to think where I should sit. I ran toward the verandah and sat on the outer edge. The outer verandah was completely empty. I did not even have time to see if anyone else was sitting on the inner veranda. As soon as I sat down, I found Swami’s car passing almost in front

of me. I took the letter from my pocket and held it out in my outstretched hand for Him.

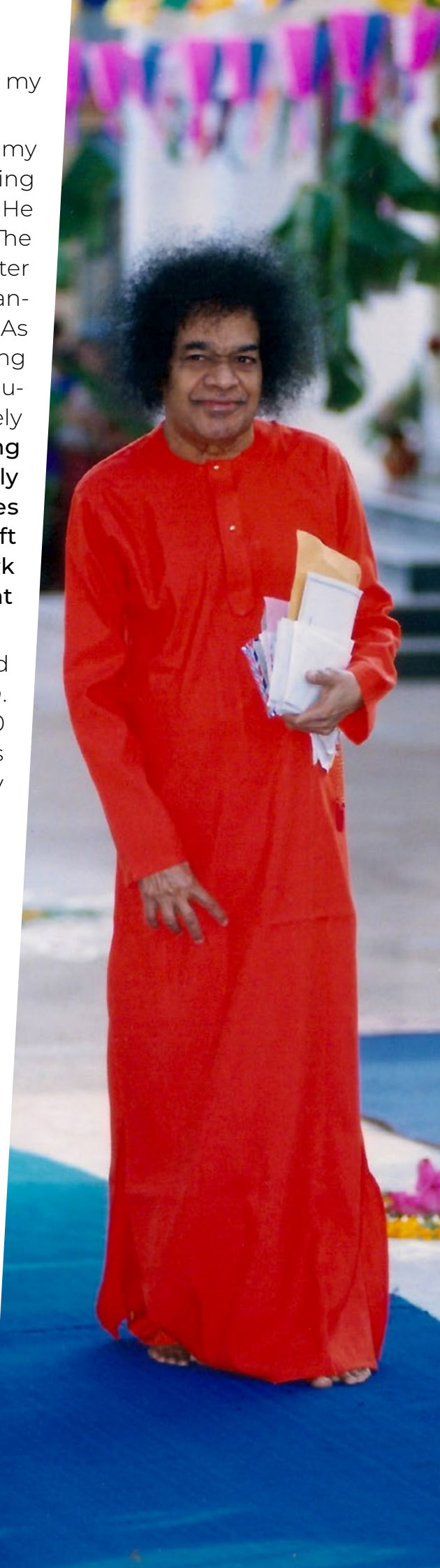
Swami's car stopped right in front of me. He looked into my eyes and motioned to Mr. Nitin Acharya, accompanying Him during *darshan*, to take my letter. What a blessing! He accepted my letter, smiled at me, and moved forward. The car came onto the verandah, and He took another letter from probably the only other devotee sitting on the verandah at that time. Then He left the *darshan* grounds. As I sat there overwhelmed, I felt great joy and peace surging within me. I was filled with tremendous energy and enthusiasm as if I had never been sick before! I could scarcely believe how wonderful I was feeling. **Just by accepting my letter and looking into my eyes, Swami had instantly taken away all the physical and mental sicknesses that had crippled me for nearly three long years! I left Sai Kulwant Hall full of energy, continued my day's work like any normal person, and even slept like a baby that night, for the first time in a long time.**

The next morning, January 21, imbued with renewed energy and vigor, I enjoyed another beautiful *darshan*. In the afternoon, Swami granted *darshan* around 4:30 pm and left Sai Kulwant Hall. As we eagerly waited for His return, to our dismay, we were told that He had already left for Whitefield!

God's Master Plan is Unfathomable

No one knew why Swami returned to Parthi for 48 hours after leaving Parthi only three days before. As far as I am concerned, my loving Mother Sai came all the way, enduring a long and tedious journey and physical hardship, only to rescue me from the unbearable misery in which I was drowning. Just as Lord Narayana rushed to rescue Gajendra (the king of elephants) after hearing his piteous cries for help in total surrender, and as Lord Krishna promptly responded when mother Draupadi prayed with her hands upraised in total surrender in the royal court of Kauravas, so also, my Sai responded when His child was on the verge of collapse and cried out to Him in total surrender.

Much later, I wondered, "Did this ever happen to any other Sai devotee?" That was when I read about the experience of a young man, Arvind, from Calcutta, who attempted to commit suicide by jumping from the Howrah bridge over the river Ganges (*Tapovanam*, chapter 9, section "Suicide averted," pages



194-195). When he was about to jump, he heard a loud voice telling him to “come to Puttaparthi.” That word Puttaparthi kept ringing in His ear continuously, so he could not commit suicide. Instead, he bought a train ticket immediately at Howrah Station for Bangalore and started his journey to Puttaparthi. He reached Bangalore railway station, where the station master told him Swami was at Whitefield. He did not have to go to Puttaparthi for His *darshan*. But following the voice of his Caller, Arvind insisted on traveling to Puttaparthi. To his surprise, when he reached Puttaparthi at 8:00 pm, he found that Swami had already reached there an hour ago at 7:00 pm. The next day, Swami gave an interview to this young man. He assured him that everything would be alright and that he should never think of committing suicide. After this, Swami left for Whitefield! When He was asked why He made such a quick trip to Parthi, He said that He went to bring rice from Parthi for the participants of the summer course! Such is the way of God. **He can go to any extent and do anything to save His children when they cry out for help in total surrender!**

Lessons for Life

I learned a few life lessons from this ordeal of three years.

Swami is the almighty and He can do anything by His will. By just taking my letter, He took away my chronic and serious illness that had crippled me for three years.

Everything happens in life as part of His master plan, all for our good. The three years of travail taught me to do continu-



ous namasmarana, take ‘Vitamin-G’, and do all work as Swami’s instrument without the feeling of ‘doer-ship.’

Swami has infinite patience in treating and teaching us, however stubborn we may be.

Swami’s love is like that of a thousand mothers and despite everything, if I pray to Him with all my heart, He will always respond.

In conclusion, I pray to Swami, our true savior, to bless us all so that we can always keep His sacred name on our lips, keep His beautiful form in our mind’s eyes, and do His work joyfully as His instrument, knowing fully well that He is the true doer and we are nothing without Him.

*Anyatha Sharanam Nasthi Twameva
Sharanam Mama
Tasmat Karunya Bhavena Raksha
Raksha Sai Eshwara*

(I have no other refuge. Thou art my sole refuge.

Sai Eswara! Out of compassion, please protect me.)

Prof. Madhusudan Mohanty, Ph.D. 
USA



Dr. Madhusudan Mohanty is a professor of Economics at California State University, Los Angeles, USA. His earlier research focused primarily on pure economics topics. He now focuses mostly on how human values influence one’s economic and psychological wellbeing. He has been actively teaching Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) at the Sri Sathya Sai Center, Glendale, California, since 1992. He served as the SSE coordinator, devotional coordinator and the president of the Sathya Sai Center of Glendale. Currently, he is serving as the SSE coordinator of the newly established SSE program at Sai Prema Nilayam, Riverside, California.

You are God

5.4.88

Camp "Brindavan"

Dear Rajagopal! Accept my love and blessing. How are you? Don't worry about your health. God is always with you, in you, around you. Be always happy.

Bend the body, mend the senses, end the mind. This is the process of attaining immortality.

Where there is faith there is devotion,
where there is devotion there is purity,
where there is purity there is God,
where there is God there is bliss.

God is with you. You are God. Why worry? Raja! I am sending prasadam with your wife. She is very worried about your health. She is very good woman.

With Blessings,

Baba



5. 4. 88
camp "Porindavan"

Dear Rajagopal! Accept my love
and Blessing. How are you? don't worry
about your health. GOD is always with you,
in you, around you, Be always happy,
Bend the body, mend the senses, and the
mind this is the process of attaining immorta-
lity. where there is faith there is devotion
where there is devotion there is purity
where there is purity there is GOD
where there is GOD there is Bliss.

GOD is with you. you are GOD. why worry?
Raja! I am sending prasadam with your
wife. She is very worried about your health
she is very good woman!

With Blessings

Baba



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Building Harmony through Interfaith Meetings

“Service is Love in Action,” says Bhagawan Baba. Selfless love expressed as action is noble service. The community of Sarajevo witnessed such service on October 26, 2024, when an Interfaith Prayer Meeting was held at the Church of Saint Antoni Paduan. The event was organized by the Franciscan Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The SSSIO was represented by Mr. Sefik Avdagic, devotional coordinator for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The meeting drew many participants, including religious leaders, political and diplomatic figures, and people of diverse faiths. **Mr. Avdagic delivered a speech on Swami’s universal message of love, highlighting the principle of selfless love and emphasizing His words, “Love All, Serve All.”**



Representatives of all faiths from the community, including Jewish, Catholic, Muslim, Protestant, Adventist, Hare Krishna, Baha’i, and Sathya Sai, joined the event. Also present was the Chairman of SSSIO Zone 6, Mr. Adriano Bratovic. The meeting emphasized unity and peace, inspired by Pope John Paul II’s 1986 initiative in Assisi. Sarajevo, known for its multicultural history, was selected to host the interfaith meeting due to its rich and ideal history. The meeting concluded with the chanting of *“Asato Ma,”* a prayer for universal peace that resonated powerfully within the church.



RUSSIA

Sharing the Warmth of Love in Siberian Winters

“Service to Man is Service to God,” says Sathya Sai Baba. The SSSIO of Zone 8 **conducted the Zonal “Serving the Needy” project in the Siberian region of Russia, guided by the spirit of divine love, knowing that feeding the hungry is offering food to God.** In mid-October 2024, 22 people from 7 cities distributed warm and nutritious food near temples, lodging houses, stores, and city streets. The vegetarian menu included porridge (rice, corn, buckwheat, peas), stewed vegetables, fresh salads, homemade pastries, pancakes, gingerbread, sweets, hot herbal tea, and Kisel.



The day saw the first snowfall of the season, ushering in winter. Despite the chilly conditions, there was a strong sense of care and dedication, and Swami’s grace was felt throughout. Many in need came forward, grateful for the food and warm hospitality, often requesting additional servings. The volunteers served 118 meals and, following the event, also distributed warm socks, adding to the joyful and compassionate atmosphere.



MEXICO

The Garden of Values Bears Fruits

The Garden of Values in the Don Bosco community, San Luis Potosí, Mexico, entered a new phase of environmental education and spiritual practice by the planting of 50 fruit trees. This project, a tribute to the 100th year of the advent of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, aligns with the values and practices of the SSSIO of Mexico. **Started on August 15, 2024, the garden aims to promote the human values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love, and Nonviolence by fostering environmental sustainability through planting trees.**

The project began with land evaluation and selection of native fruit trees, followed by a workshop on compost for the local youth.



Preparations included soil cultivation and installing a drip irrigation system to conserve water. A highlight of the project was the active involvement of Don Bosco's youth, who learned sustainable agricultural practices such as hydrogel production. At the inauguration ceremony, community member Tío Pepe encouraged everyone to practice Sathya Sai's human values and live in harmony with nature.



SRI LANKA

Joy to the World Through Joy to Children

Tomorrow's world is built on the welfare and progress of today's children. Hence, Swami always emphasizes that children should learn and practice human values. Accordingly, SSSIO's Sathya Sai Seva Centre in Jaffna in the Northern Region of Sri Lanka organized a special service on November 2, 2024, at Karunalayam Children's Home in Neerveli, Jaffna. This was an offering to Swami for His 99th Birthday, to bring love, joy, and hope to 21 children, many of whom are orphans or come from single-parent families.

The day began with prayers, bhajans, and the chanting of the Gayatri Mantra, creating a peaceful and uplifting atmosphere. Sai volunteers led interactive discussions, encouraging the children to share their thoughts



and actively participate. Team games and a friendly cricket match followed, filling the day with laughter and bonding. Then a nutritious lunch was served to all the participants.

The event, made possible by the dedicated work of 16 Sai volunteers, was a heartfelt tribute to Swami's values of love, compassion, and selfless service. It was a day of joy that beautifully conveyed Swami's message of love and service, touching the hearts of both the volunteers and the recipients.

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



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

BRAZIL

1970s

Professor Jose Hermogenes, a Brazilian writer, teacher, and promoter of Hatha Yoga in Brazil, discovered Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in his travels to India. He and his wife, Maria, began to share about Baba in Brazil, also presenting the video, 'Aura of Divinity,' during the 1980s.

1986

First 'official' group of devotees from Brazil traveled to Puttaparthi and were blessed with an interview with Swami. They received *vibhuti* from Swami, which was distributed in Brazil to many people who experienced miracles.

1987

Prof. Hermogenes led a second group of 28 devotees to Prasanthi Nilayam, and Swami granted them an interview in which there was a young woman who had lost more than 80% of her vision due to eye disease. He manifested a yellow *lingam*, instructing her to do *abhishekam* to it and wash her eyes with that sacred water from the *lingam*. He also asked her to do regularly distribute the sacred water to others who need it. Not only was she completely healed, but dozens of others were cured of glaucoma by the *lingam* water.

The first Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center in Brazil was established in Rio de Janeiro, in the Vila Isabel neighborhood.



Professor Jose Hermogenes and his wife, Maria



Healing Lingam



Establishing the Brazilian Coordinating Committee

1989

The Brazilian Coordinating Committee of the SSSIO was established on April 23, 1989, by Dr. Michael Goldstein and Mr. Leonardo Gutter, with three Sai Centers (two in Rio de Janeiro and one in São Paulo) and one Sai Group (in Niteroi, RJ) serving devotees of the region.

1992

The Sai Foundation was established to manage the property of the Sai Organization in Brazil, including publications, audio-visual media, and registered trademarks.

The First National Congress of the SSSIO of Brazil was held in Mendes, State of Rio de Janeiro.

1993

The first Sathya Sai School in Brazil was established in a very impoverished community in the Vila Isabel neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro. This was the first Sathya Sai School in Latin America and the third outside India, after Zambia and Thailand.

Sathya Sai School, Vila Isabel



Sathya Sai School, Goiás



2000

The Sathya Sai School of Goiás was opened.

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education of Brazil (ISSEB) was established to support and supervise Sathya Sai schools and disseminate Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Program through congresses, seminars, and courses, especially for educators. By 2024, more than 10,000 people had completed these courses.

2002

The Sathya Sai School of Ribeirão Preto, in the state of São Paulo, was started.



Sathya Sai School of Ribeirão Preto

2005

The first Sathya Sai Medical Camp was conducted, serving about 700 people, mainly in the specialties of dentistry and ophthalmology.

2007

A group of 18 Young Adults from Brazil presented a dance in the divine presence of Swami at Prasanthi Nilayam on Guru Pournima day. The performance was entirely created and produced by the young adults, from choreography, costumes, and music to the painted display panel.



Young Adults

2009

Bhajans were sung by 300 Brazilians for Swami on Guru Pournima day in Prasanthi Nilayam.

2014

In April, ISSEB held its 10th National Congress at its headquarters in Ribeirão Preto, titled "Human Values for an Integral Education," attended by 150 educators from various schools including the five Sathya Sai schools.

2015

In March, the Zone 2B Pre-World Conference was held in Brazil, with special guests Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Mr. Leonardo Gutter, and Mr. John Behner in attendance. About 200 SSSIO members from South America, including 35 youth, attended the event in Mendes, Rio de Janeiro. The conference was broadcast live online over two Sai web-TV channels.

In October, the Brazilian Sathya Sai Foundation participated in an interfaith meeting promoted by the municipality of Petropolis (City of Peter). The event was held at the historic Crystal Palace, with an estimated 9,500 people in attendance.



Singing during Guru Pournima



Pre-World Conference

2017

The Sathya Sai School of Ribeirão Preto received a congratulatory message from the City Hall for its 15 years of service, citing the human values in the school syllabus as an effective tool to build the character of students.

2019

Five days of Public Outreach events (Public Meetings, EHV introductory course, Interfaith Meetings, Walk for Values, and Community Service) were organized in Ponta Grossa, southern Brazil.



Public Outreach Events

2021

The Sai Foundation of Brazil distributed Sai literature on human values and Swami's universal spiritual teachings to inmates of a prison in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

2022

The Federal Senate of Brazil, the Upper House of the National Congress, honored the contribution of the ISSEB for its tireless work over 22 years in developing values-based education in Brazil.



Federal Senate of Brazil

2023

The Ambassador of India to Brazil visited the Sathya Sai School of Goiás, appreciating the values-based education founded on Swami's teachings.

The 12th National Congress of the SSSIO of Brazil, with the theme 'Divine Presence', was held in Rio de Janeiro from April 21 to 23, 2023.



12th National Congress

2024

The students of the Sathya Sai School of Vila Isabel shared inspiring values-based messages of Sri Sathya Sai Baba during the annual Walk for Values around the neighborhood on World Human Values Day, April 24.

The



Greatest Gift-Giver
of the Universe

I LOVE GIVING GIFTS. I LOVE SELECTING SOMETHING SPECIFICALLY FOR A PERSON AFTER CAREFUL THOUGHT AND CONSIDERATION, wrapping it up in paper that is perfect for the occasion, and then presenting it at the perfect moment to see the recipient open the gift and smile with joy. This is one of my favorite ways of expressing my love for someone.

Recently, while driving to a birthday party with such a perfect gift on the seat next to me, **I realized that the best master gift-giver of them all is my dear Swami.** My mind turned to the many gifts He has given me in life, sometimes wrapped in obviously beautiful wrapping paper, at other times hidden underneath a lesson I needed to learn. **But every time, I realize that the gift has been carefully hand-selected by Him for me with great thought and presented to me at the perfect moment for the right occasion.**

“He gives us exactly what we need, and when we need it, carefully wrapped in love and delivered in a way that is perfect for us.”

Receiving the Gift I Asked For

On my birthday in 2000, I was blessed to be present in Puttaparthi. Being young and somewhat arrogant, I decided that my birthday gift from Swami would be *vibuthi* from Him. I went for morning *darshan*, almost expecting the crowds to part so Swami could walk up to me and materialize *vibuthi*, just for me. However, I ended up at the back of the hall and did not receive even a glance from Swami! During the afternoon *darshan*, it was even worse as I was seated even further back. Dejected, I walked back to my room, thinking what a fool I was to expect Swami to give me *vibuthi* just because it was my birthday.

Suddenly, at that very second, I heard a family friend call my name. When I went over to her, she said, “I heard it was your birthday today, so I want to give you this. My brother got an interview with Swami yesterday and received this *vibuthi* from Him. I want you to have some of it.” I stood there stunned as this ‘aunty’ poured *vibuthi* into my hand.

Thank you, Swami, for the perfect birthday present. It was what I had asked for!

The Gift of Not Getting What I Asked For

In 2012, I applied for an internship that I desperately wanted. I was elated when I made it to the final interview round.

Before the interview, I intensely prayed to Swami to be selected. Unfortunately, the interview was a disaster. I headed back home in tears. To avoid making conversation or even eye contact with anyone, I put on my headphones as I boarded the bus. There was no music playing on my phone—the headphones were merely for diversion. Yet, when I settled into my seat, Swami’s discourse began playing! Instinctively, I tried to pause or shut it off, but my screen was frozen, and the audio continued! **In the discourse, Swami talked about His grace and how we should love His uncertainly.** My mind stopped focusing on everything that had gone wrong in the interview, and I just listened to Swami’s comforting words. I understood then that I needed to surrender to His will as He knew what was best for me.

I did not get the internship I had prayed so intensely for. Instead, I got matched with an even better program, where the mentors took a sincere interest in my academics and career, aligning my projects with my interests. I discovered the field I wanted to pursue as a career, and the program gave me the benefit of a strong network that would help me achieve my goal. **Though this program was not what I had asked for or wanted, it was exactly what I needed.**

Thank you, Swami, for the gift of not giving me what I asked for!

The Gift of Getting More Than I Had Asked For

Later, in 2012, I applied for admission into several master's degree programs. However, the programs I was accepted into were in other parts of the country, and I wondered where I should go. I was leaning towards Pittsburgh, USA as it had the best program in my opinion. I prayed to Swami for guidance. That night, I had a dream that I had arrived at the Pittsburgh train station, and right there, **on the counter, was a picture of Swami, arms raised in blessing. It was a unique picture, the likes of which I had never seen before.** I took this as His direction to proceed to join the Pittsburgh program.

I put all my faith in Swami, moved to Pittsburgh, and checked into a hotel. I got laughed at when I enquired about apartment leases because it was close to the start of the academic year. After almost a week of running into dead ends in my search, I was ready to pack up and head back home. Just one final apartment visit remained on my list. As I sat in the leasing office expecting the worst, a friend texted me, "I came to know you are apartment hunting. Don't worry about anything. Swami is with you." I had barely raised my head from my phone when the smiling leasing agent told me one apartment was available!

We went upstairs to check it out, and it was perfect—a beautiful, clean apartment in a safe building. I asked the agent about bus routes to campus since I did not bring my car, and she said she did not know any bus routes. When I stepped outside, there was a bus stop right in front of my new building! I boarded a bus and found that it not only dropped me off on campus but also right across the street from my department. Serendipitously, there was also a grocery store right next

to my building, and all the new friends I made also 'happened' to live close by! **Swami had arranged everything and gave me much more than I could have anticipated.**

Once settled in my new city and school, I decided to look up the closest Sai Center and figure out how to get there. Imagine my surprise when I found that the center was not in the suburbs as I anticipated, but just a couple of miles away, within the city! That fall afternoon, I walked over to the Sai Center and quietly took a seat in the back. **When I looked up, I was shocked to see that Swami's picture on the altar with both arms raised in blessing was exactly the same picture I had seen in my dream!** Tears rolled down my cheeks as I understood there was no reason to worry; my divine Mother had been with me the entire time.

Thank you, Swami, for giving me more than I asked for!

Getting The Gift I Never Asked For

My family and I traveled to see Swami in December of 2010. On the last day of our visit, I wanted to write a letter to Swami and found that I only had yellow legal pad paper with me. I quickly wrote a letter and gave it to my brother, from whom Swami had been taking letters throughout our visit that week. During *darshan*, I craned my neck to see if Swami had taken my letter. Due to the Christmas rush, Sai Kulwant Hall was full, and Swami was just an orange dot surrounded by throngs of people. Bhajans began, and Swami sat on the veranda in His chair. As the devotees blissfully enjoyed His *darshan*, Swami began opening and reading letters from the stack He had placed next to Him. About halfway through the *bhajans*, my heart skipped a beat when I saw He was hold-

ing a yellow paper in His hand! **No doubt, my dearest Baba took His time reading my letter and even flipped it over to read what I had written on the back. I remember my last line had been, "Let me be your instrument, Swami."**

I thought that the blessing of seeing Swami read my letter was the end of that beautiful experience. It was actually just the beginning! Swami decided it was time to see if I truly meant it when I asked to be His instrument.

When I returned home after the trip and opened my inbox, I found many emails saying I had been nominated and selected as the Young Adult Ladies' representative. My first reaction was to vehemently say "No!" I felt I did not have the leadership ability, inspirational presence, or skillset that my predecessors had to spearhead the YA program. Yet, as I soon learned, Swami had called, and I had to respond. I nervously stepped into this new role and, over the course of this experience, found that serving as the YA representative was what I needed most at that point in my life. **My focus and foundation became Baba when a thousand other distractions in the world could have easily led me astray. My confidence and Sai family grew, and my life and heart were full.** Even as my term in this role ended, this was a gift from Swami that kept on giving. I continued to be involved in the organization

and Sai activities and was consistently anchored to Swami, no matter what was happening in my life or the world.

Thank you, Swami, for the gifts I never even asked for!

Reflecting on these instances and thousands of others, it is clear that Swami is the master gift-giver! **He gives us exactly what we need, and when we need it, carefully wrapped in love and delivered in a way that is perfect for us.** How incredibly blessed we are!

Yet what are we doing with these gifts? Are we recognizing the priceless experiences, lessons, and love that He gives us? Or are we placing them on a shelf, not recognizing their worth? And what are we offering back to our dearest Bhagawan? Are we making our lives a gift back to Him?

In His discourse on November 23, 1968, Swami says, *"I require from each of you no other gift, no more valuable offering, than the heart I have endowed you with. Give Me that heart, as pure as when I gave it to you, full of the nectar of love I filled it with."*

Let us shape our lives to be His instruments and make the most of this incredible opportunity we have been given.

Ms. Rachna Desai 
USA



Ms. Rachna Desai is blessed to have grown up in Swami's fold. Born and raised in Southern California, she attended Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) and participated in regional pilgrimages to Puttaparthi. She served as the Female Young Adult Coordinator for the SSSIO USA, Region 8. Rachna supported the Sri Sathya Sai Free Medical and Dental Clinic as Clinic Operations Manager and currently serves as an SSE teacher. She is mother to an energetic 6 year old and works in healthcare administration.

from the
International Sai Young Adults

AROUND THE WORLD

Cooling Hearts and Quenching Thirsts, Hong Kong

On August 31, 2024, the Sai Young Adults (YAs) of Hong Kong organized a heartfelt service initiative titled **'Let's Beat the Heat Seva'** in Sham Shui Po, aimed at supporting the local street sleeper (homeless) community.

Nine young adults came together to provide much-needed relief from the sweltering summer heat by offering refreshing cold beverages and snacks to those in need.

In preparation for the seva, the YAs came together before the event to pack all the drinks and desserts into insulated foam boxes with meticulous care to ensure that the refreshments remained cool throughout the day. The group transported boxes filled with coconut water, bottled water, and cold tofu puddings to a garden in Sham Shui Po, where many street sleepers reside in makeshift cardboard tents. Upon arrival, the team navigated the garden with trolleys, distributing refreshments to approximately 120 street sleepers. Each interaction was filled with smiles, gratitude, and connection, reminding everyone of the importance of community support. The YAs showcased incredible unity and resilience, ensuring that every detail was thoughtfully addressed. They hope that through similar initiatives, they can make a positive impact on the lives of the less fortunate. ❤️



Sowing Seeds of Hope

Germany



Hohnstein, a picturesque town in East Germany, is renowned for its lush landscapes within the Saxon Switzerland National Park. However, the effects of climate change and deforestation have threatened its biodiversity and increased the risk of soil erosion. To restore the area's natural beauty and ecological health, the YAs of Northern Europe, in collaboration with SSSIO Germany, organized a **tree-planting initiative** from October 18 to 20, 2024. The event was timed to coincide with the auspicious weekend of Avatar Declaration Day, and 15 volunteers, including five YAs, came together to plant trees and contribute to Hohnstein's reforestation efforts.

The volunteers gathered on Friday evening for dinner and bhajans, along with a reflec-

tive session, discussing questions like: *How can you 'sow' your love for Swami this weekend? How do you feel Swami's love in your daily life?* Over the weekend, the group braved the challenging terrain, supported by favorable weather, and planted an array of European larches, Scots pines, Douglas firs, silver firs, grey alders, and red beeches. These trees were carefully selected to enhance the forest's resilience, sustainability, and biodiversity. After two days of dedicated effort, **1,910 trees were planted**, leaving each participant tired yet full of vigor and fulfillment.

Through their actions, the volunteers not only contributed to Hohnstein's ecological health but also **honored Swami's teachings on the intimate bond between humanity and Nature.**

"The scientists are trying to stop the breakup of the ozone layer, but they are unable to find a remedy. The actual cause for this situation is that more carbon dioxide is let into the atmosphere, which normally is absorbed by the plants and trees which can assimilate the gas and supply oxygen by the natural process of photosynthesis. But, because there is deforestation to an alarming extent, the extent of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has considerably increased. Therefore, the remedy for this situation is intensive afforestation, growing more trees everywhere and protecting the existing trees without destroying them for other purposes."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
January 21, 1993

A SPECIAL FUN DAY



FIJI

Sai Young Adults from the capital city of Suva, Fiji, hosted a **heartwarming 'Fun Day' for children with special needs** on September 21, 2024. This event brought together children from across the Central Division of Fiji, filling the day with fun, food, and love. This year, the 'Fun Day' marked the revival of this decade-long annual activity that had been on a hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the approval of the Department of Welfare, Fiji, which oversees social services and protective support for vulnerable populations, a total of 104 children and 36 caregivers from five special homes attended the event. The participating organizations included the Hilton Home, Harland Hostel for the Deaf, St. Christopher's and Moana Clare Homes, Dilkusha Home, and the Fiji Society for the Blind. The SSSIO YA volunteers collaborated with others in a spirit of unity to ensure a memorable day for everyone.

They meticulously planned a variety of games and activities tailored to the diverse abilities of the children. It included arts and crafts, face painting, musical chairs, treasure hunts, board games, balloon activities, bow and arrow games, ring toss, dominoes, bingo, and soft toys for toddlers. Care was taken to ensure that the activities were designed to be inclusive and enjoyable for everyone.

The day commenced with light, healthy snacks alongside indulgent chocolate and strawberry milkshakes available from a pop-up booth. This was later followed by a hearty lunch prepared by the families of the YAs and dedicated adult volunteers from SSSIO. The planning of every Fun Day is also a learning experience for SSSIO members to be better at getting the right quantity of food to align with Swami's teachings, 'Waste Not, Want Not.' All the guests were provided with packaged food, fruits, milk packets, and snacks as take-aways, ensuring that everyone left with a little something to remember the day by.

Achieving Paramatma Through Your Duties



“The Vedas are a means of establishing a link with the Divine. Those who have studied the Vedas must dedicate their lives to promote the Vedas. Only then would they be serving the cause of restoring the glory of Bharat’s ancient heritage.”

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba
September 28, 1987

The SSSIO International Sai Young Adults Veda Programme organized a webinar on September 28, 2024, on the topic **‘Achieving Paramatma Through Your Duties.’** Maha-Mandaleswar Swami Abhishek Chaitanya Giri Maharaj, head of the Shri Jagadguru Sanyas Ashram in Rishikesh (India) and a Chief Monk guarding the Vedanta lineage of India, was the distinguished speaker at the webinar. This enlightening webinar delved into the timeless teachings from the Bhagavad Gita, which transcend religion and shed light on how duty, or *dharma* (right conduct), can lead to spiritual liberation. The session explored the philosophy of *Karma Yoga*, emphasizing the transformative potential of fulfilling one’s responsibilities with devotion and detachment.

The Role of Duty in Spiritual Growth

At the heart of the webinar was the idea that duty is not a burden but a path to spiritual enlightenment. Swami Abhishek highlighted how the Bhagavad Gita frames *dharma* as an essential tool for tran-

scending the limitations of worldly life. By performing duties selflessly and dedicating their outcomes to *Paramatma* (the Supreme Being), individuals can turn their actions into acts of worship. This approach not only leads to personal fulfillment but also aligns with the ultimate goal of human existence—liberation (*moksha*). Through such a perspective, even the most mundane responsibilities gain profound spiritual significance.

Karma Yoga: A Path of Action and Detachment

Swamiji explained that *Karma Yoga* is the art of performing one’s duties with dedication and efficiency while remaining detached from the results. This philosophy helps individuals navigate the challenges of life with a sense of purpose and equanimity. When duty is seen as a means to connect with the *Paramatma* rather than a source of personal gain or validation, it becomes a spiritual practice. Drawing from the Gita, Swamiji emphasized that attachment to outcomes creates bondage and suffering. However, recognizing that all joy

and fulfillment come from *Paramatma* allows individuals to shift their attachment from the material to the Divine, fostering *Bhakti* (devotion) and inner peace.

Practical Wisdom for Modern Life

The session provided practical insights to incorporate these teachings into daily life:

1. **Reframe Perspectives on Happiness:** Recognize that even pleasures derived from material success are ultimately gifts from *Paramatma*. This shift in perspective builds gratitude and devotion.
2. **Face Failures with Courage:** Fear of failure often stems from concern about others' judgments. By focusing on learning and growth, individuals can rise above the fear of imperfection.
3. **Seek Inner Validation:** Instead of looking for approval from others, turn to the Divine for fulfillment. Seeking external recognition only leads to dependence,

whereas seeking *Paramatma* fosters true freedom.

4. **Balance Action and Detachment:** Like a lotus leaf untouched by water, one can remain engaged in worldly responsibilities without being bound by their outcomes.

Swami Abhishek concluded the webinar with a powerful message: performing one's duties with the right attitude not only helps navigate life's challenges but also paves the way for liberation. This path, rooted in right conduct (*dharma*) and devotion, transforms suffering into spiritual growth and connects the individual with the infinite joy of *Paramatma*.

The webinar ended with a Q&A session wherein Swamiji answered all the questions of the YAs. The webinar can be accessed on the SSSIO [YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) and also on the archive of webinars on [sathyasai.org](https://sathyasai.org/ya/veda) at: sathyasai.org/ya/veda.



View the archive of SSSIO International Sai Young Adults Veda Programme webinars at:

- sathyasai.org/ya/veda



In honor of Swami's 99th Birthday, Young Adults from around the world embraced the initiative 'Promise to Swami'—a personal pledge to uphold His divine legacy. These promises included: committing to a dedicated *sadhana* (spiritual discipline), imbibing His core teachings, and taking actionable steps to live His message.

Explore these heartfelt pledges from the YAs on the Young Adults playlist on YouTube:

<https://sathyas.ai/youtube-ya>



As we journey toward the 100th Birthday of our beloved Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the International Sai Young Adults will be offering 100 precious gifts to Swami—wrapped not in paper, but in His timeless wisdom, infinite love, and boundless inspiration.

This 'gift hamper' will feature 100 heartfelt posts from the International Sai Young Adults Creative Media team, encapsulating His divine mission and legacy—a legacy that inspires us to live ideal lives and deserves our collective honor.

Follow our social media channels (see [page 49](#)) from now until November 23, 2025, as we unveil these timeless treasures. Let's reflect, share the love, and celebrate together!



Ms. Nivedha Panchalingam
Canada



Melodies of Devotion: My Connection to Sai

Swami never fails to evince His divine, boundless love—whether we seek it, ignore it, or even attempt to escape it. He first entered my family’s life through my grandmother. No matter where she lived, Swami found ways to keep her close, connecting with her through bhajan sessions and satsang during her travels. Through her devotion, Swami made His way into the hearts of all my family members.

As a child, my grandmother introduced me to Swami by teaching me bhajans and simple mantras to chant. The first few sparks of love for music blossomed there. Although I did not fully understand who Swami was then, He already had His hold on my heart. I was three years old when I enrolled in the *Balvikas* program (now known as Sai Spiritual Education internationally). Everything was new to me—the environment, the people, the school, and even the Gurus. Yet, when the opening prayers and *bhajans* started, I felt a sudden sense of belonging. Swami had given me a source of comfort through melodious music.

As I grew up, my passion for music deepened within Swami’s fold. I attended bhajans every week with my grandmother, where I intently listened to new bhajans and the melodic variations of every line and marveled at the fluttering keys of the harmonium. But beyond musical perfection, the devotion behind the singer’s offering was evident in the tears in the singers’ and listeners’ eyes. At that moment, I realized that music was not only a conduit of devotion for the singer but also provided an opportunity for all to feel Swami’s unconditional love through *keert-hanam* (devotional singing).

Whenever I got the blessed privilege to sing, I would close my eyes, take a deep breath, and feel His presence envelop me. Every note of the line held a deep meaning, giving me a way to converse with Him and clear all my doubts. Music became my prayer, my connection, and my sanctuary to feel His pure love. The Sai center also nurtured my musical skillset, giving me an opportunity to play the harmonium and also help others learn how to connect with Swami through music.

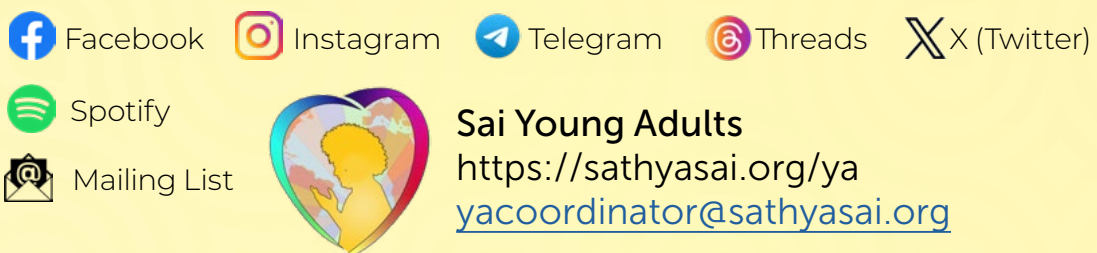
As my final year of high school rolled around, I started prioritizing academics and extracurriculars that would benefit me after my schooling. But soon, I felt the consequences of this shift—I noticed myself losing focus in school, not having the same clarity as I usually would, and constantly felt an overwhelming sadness. This started affecting not only my grades but also my relationship with the people around me. I found my relation-

ships with my friends and family turning cold, and I often felt stressed. Quickly, I ran back to Swami, whom I had forgotten but who was my life support, and asked Him for clarity and guidance.

Not long after, I was offered the role of one of two devotional wing coordinators at our Sai Center. The role would bring in responsibilities that would influence how people are connected with Swami. My short stint away from music and Swami made me realize the gravitas of the role in creating a divine atmosphere for all the devotees to connect with Him. It was also an inspiration for me to serve others in the Sai community. However, the thought of taking up such a significant responsibility at the age of 18, alongside school work, seemed daunting. I questioned if I should accept these additional duties. I prayed to Him to make this work out for me, and with faith in His assuring words, *"You do My work, and I will do yours,"* I accepted the role, determined to give it my all.

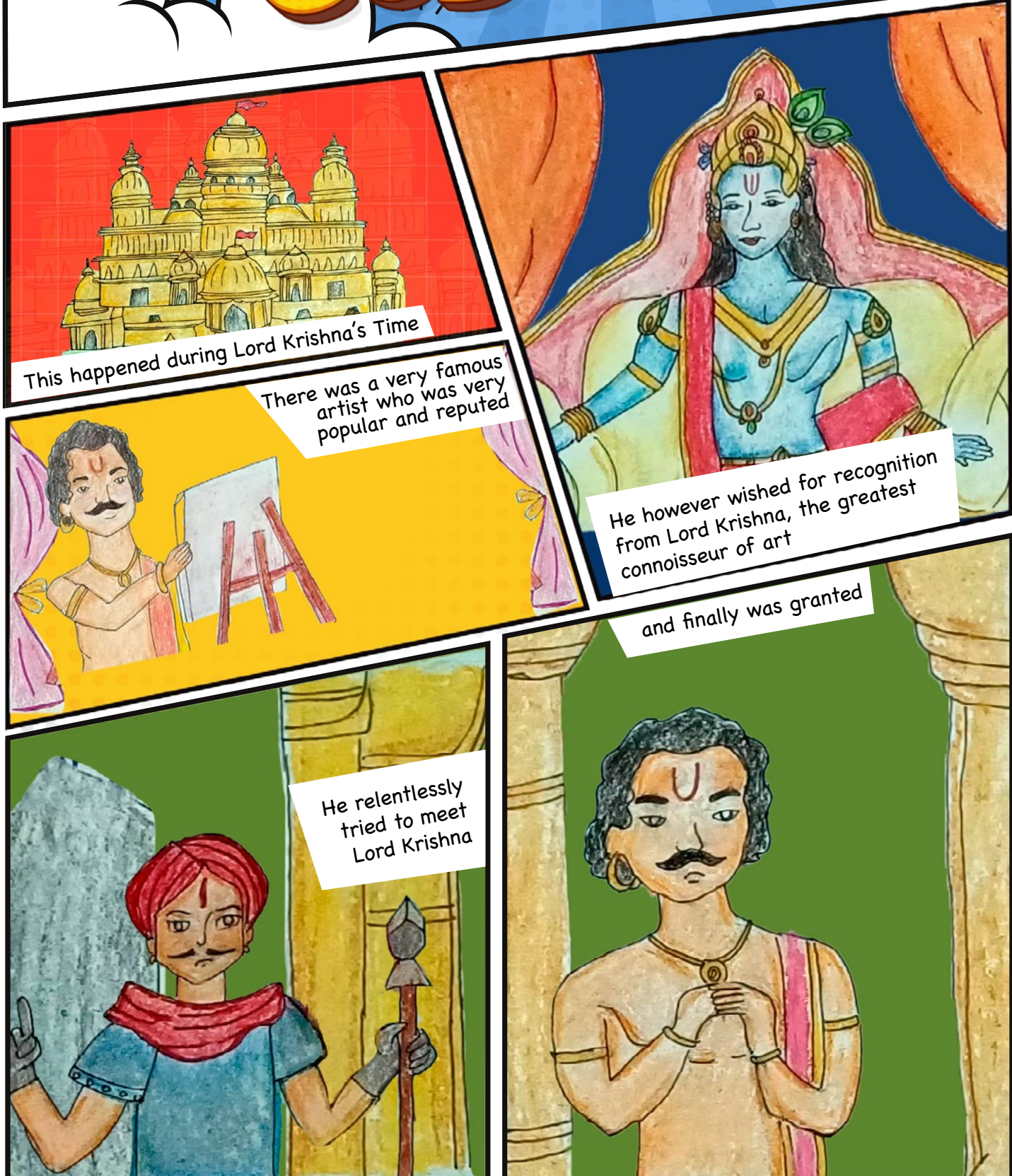
The experience has been transformative in countless ways. For example, it helped me develop essential skills such as public speaking, time management, leadership, and being a team player, along with giving me a protective, loving environment for self-growth with an understanding and encouraging Sai family. It has taught me and continues to guide me on how to be an ideal human being in everything I do. Taking His teachings with me every day, I strive to represent Swami with excellence in the world outside my Sai Center. He has given me the tools to grow as an individual and to make a positive impact in the world. My only prayer is to give back to Swami and His work as much as I have received from Him and His endless love.

Follow the @saiyoungadults accounts on social media



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

DRAWING GOD



This happened during Lord Krishna's Time

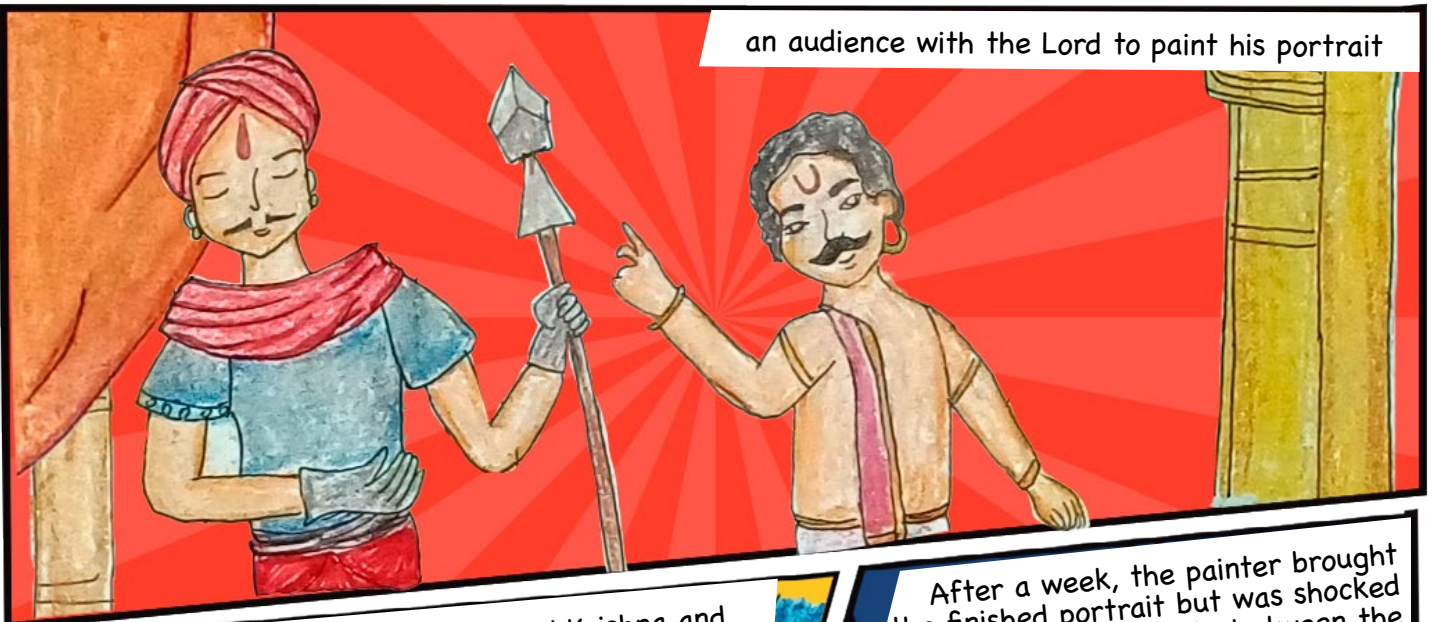
There was a very famous artist who was very popular and reputed

He however wished for recognition from Lord Krishna, the greatest connoisseur of art

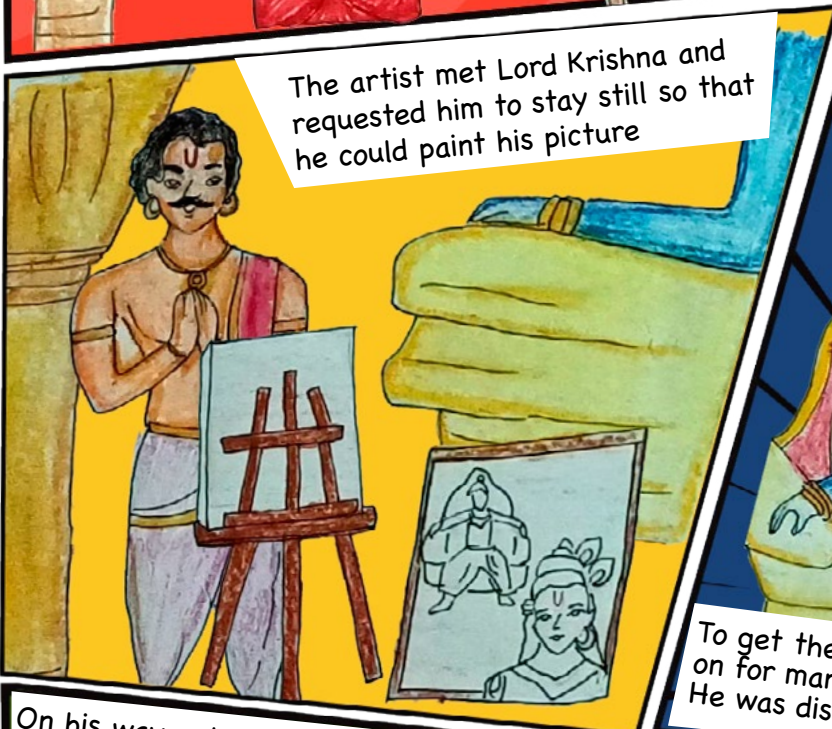
and finally was granted

He relentlessly tried to meet Lord Krishna

an audience with the Lord to paint his portrait



The artist met Lord Krishna and requested him to stay still so that he could paint his picture



After a week, the painter brought the finished portrait but was shocked at the lack of similarity between the real Lord Krishna and his painting.



To get the job done, this went on for many such weeks. He was disappointed.

On his way out he met sage Narada



It is a silly attempt to paint Lord Krishna

for the Lord has no fixed form. He changes His face every second. Narada advised him a solution.

The painter told Lord Krishna, the painting would be an exact image of the lord.



The mirror reproduced an exact replica of Lord Krishna

MORAL: You can not describe God. Your attempts will fail. But when you make your mind pure and clear with love and devotion, you will have the true vision of the Lord.

Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
January 29, 2025	Wednesday	Chinese New Year
February 15-16, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
February 26, 2025	Wednesday	Maha Shivaratri
April 12-13, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
April 24, 2025	Thursday	Aradhana Mahotsavam



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.**



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



One's heart should be emptied of all evil and kept pure by right action. It may not be possible to escape the consequences of one's good and bad actions. But even a mountain of sin can be wiped out by winning the Grace of the Divine. Hence one should strive to earn the love of God, which is all-embracing and all-powerful. From this Sankranthi day, dedicate yourselves to the cultivation of good qualities and righteous action and develop that pure devotion that will redeem your life. This is my message and my benediction for you.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

January 13, 1984



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

