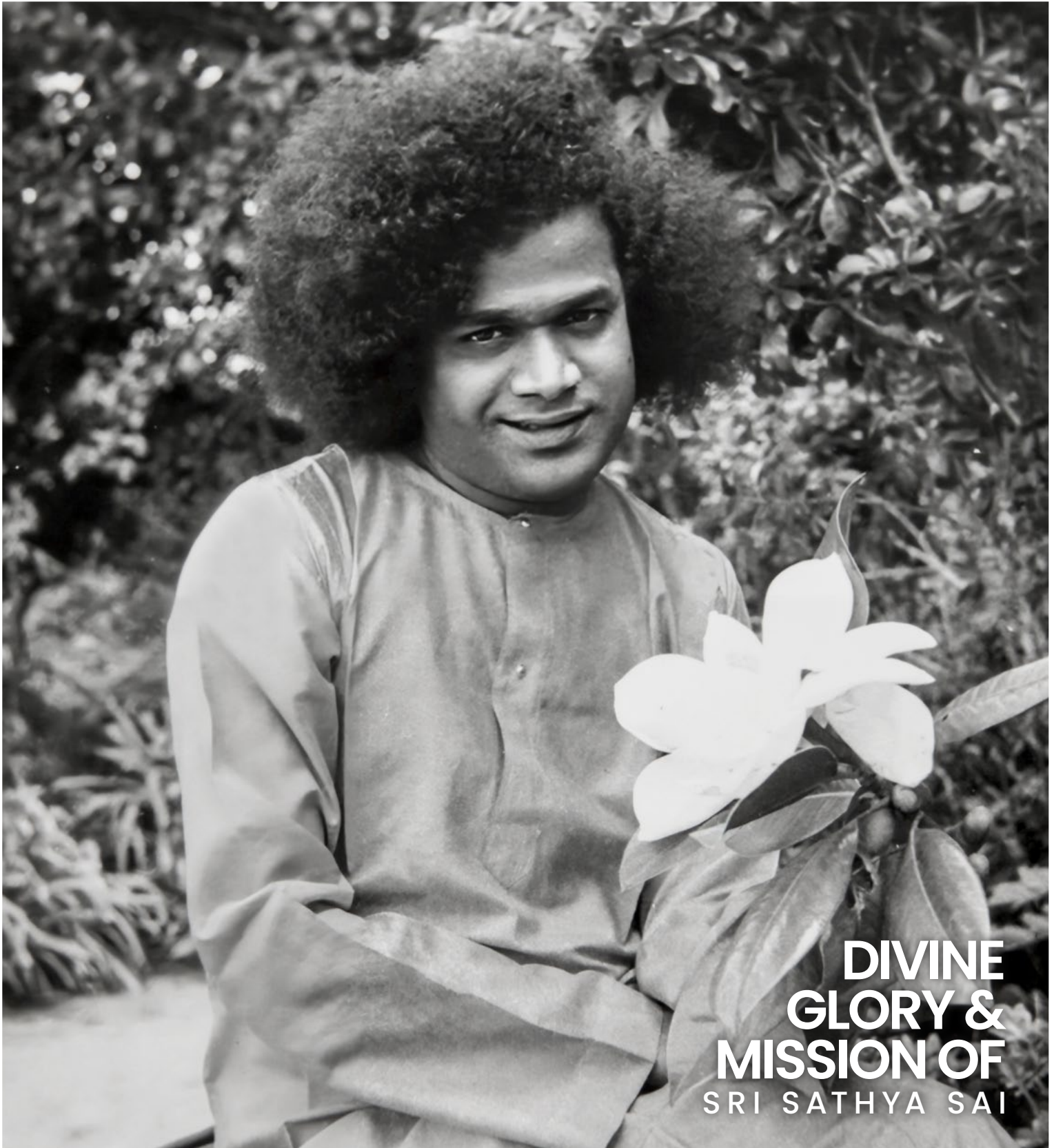


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THE
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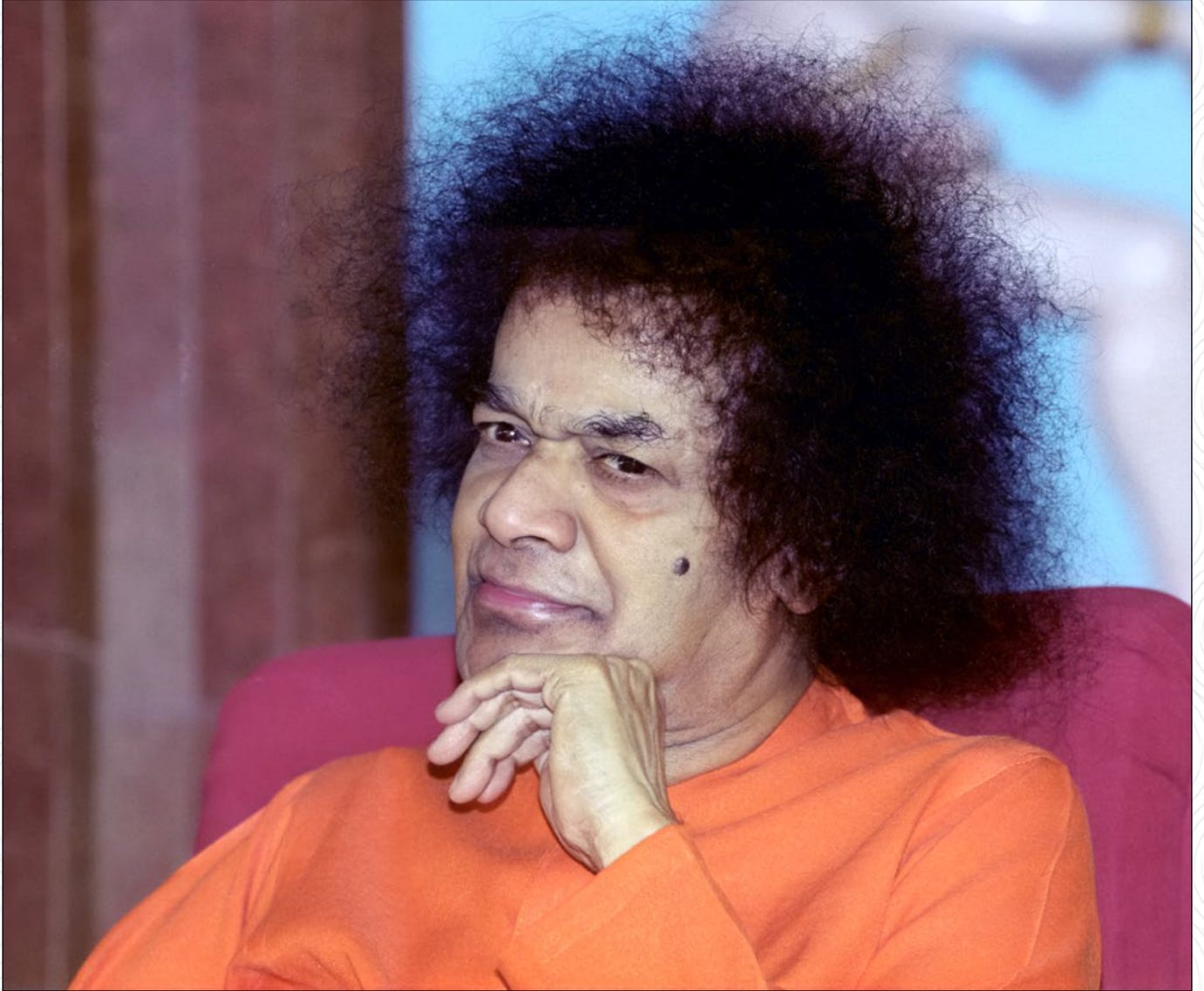


**DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF
SRI SATHYA SAI**



Shivaratri is a day when one tries to establish friendship between the mind and God. Shivaratri makes one aware of the fact that the same divinity is all-pervasive and found everywhere. It is said that Shiva lives in Kailasa. But where is Kailasa? Kailasa is our own joy, our own bliss. It means that Easwara lives in the Kailasa of delight. If we can develop that sense of joy and delight in our mind, that itself is Kailasa. How can we get this joy? It comes when we develop purity and steadiness and sacredness. Then the heart becomes filled with peace and bliss. Then your heart itself will be Kailasa and Shiva will be there in the *sanctum sanctorum* of your heart, within the temple of your body.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
February 17, 1985



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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SRI RUDRAM PART 1

Maha Shivaratri is celebrated by glorifying Lord Shiva for one's material prosperity and, more importantly, for enlightenment and Self-realization. Lord Shiva is pleased with the simple prayers of devotees, offered with a pure heart. That is why He is called 'Ashuto-sha,' the one who is easily pleased. He is pleased simply with the devotees wearing *vibhuti* (holy ash), having *rudraksha* bead (fruit from the *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* tree, which holds spiritual and medicinal significance in Hinduism, Buddhism, and other traditions), doing *abhishekam* (bathing the deity with sacred materials), and chanting the great *panchakshari* (5-syllabled) mantra, *Namah Shivaya*. In many temples and gatherings during Maha Shivaratri, the great Vedic hymn, Sri Rudram or Rudram, is chanted. **This hymn is remarkable for its phonetic grandeur and its universal approach to the divine. Rudra, to whom this hymn is addressed, is not a sectarian**

deity confined to a particular faith or religion but a supreme being who is omnipresent, manifesting in myriad forms to spiritual seekers.

What is the Rudram?

Sri Rudram can be found in the fourth *Kanda* of the *Taittiriya Samhita* of the *Krishna Yajurveda*. It is also known as the *Shata Rudreeyam* (Rudra appearing in hundreds of forms) and *Rudropanishad* (Upanishad of Rudra), which takes us closer to God and bestows the highest *Jnana* (wisdom) of oneness of God and seeing unity in diversity. Also known as *Sri Rudra Prasnah*, or more commonly as Rudram, it consists of two parts, *Namakam* and *Chamakam*. **The power of Rudram comes from the *panchakshari* (5-syllabled) mantra, *Namah Shivaya*, which is contained in the Rudram in the eighth *anuvaka* (stanza) of the *Namakam*. The central word in this mantra is 'Shiva,' which means auspiciousness.**

Baba emphasizes that while the proper pronunciations and intonations are important while chanting, sincerity and purity of the heart matter more than technical precision.

This Rudram is very popular, and it is also chanted during *abhishekam*. The *Namakam* and *Chamakam* hold profound spiritual significance and offer immense benefits to devotees who chant it. *Namakam* derives its name from the word ‘*namah*,’ meaning salutation or obeisance, which occurs 183 times. This section praises and recognizes the Lord’s omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. It guides us to dissolve the ego and aligns us with universal consciousness.

Chamakam, on the other hand, derives its name from the phrase ‘*Cha Me*,’ meaning ‘and to me,’ which occurs 358 times. It is a prayer requesting to fulfill physical, mental, and spiritual needs. *Chamakam* affirms that material prosperity and well-being are integral to a harmonious life. It reflects the philosophy that material and spiritual pursuits can coexist, provided they are aligned with *dharma* (right conduct). **Together, *Namakam* and *Chamakam* offer a holistic approach to life, establishing a balance between detachment and rightful desires.**

Chanting the Rudram is not a mere ritual but a transformative practice that aligns us with the cosmic rhythm. Its sound and vibrations purify the body, mind, and environment, while the act of offering prayers to the *Shivalingam* deepens the connection with the divine. **It is prescribed both for the fulfillment of desires and attaining liberation.**

Rudram Chanting is an Integral Yoga

Man has three instruments, mind, speech, and body. These give rise to thoughts, words, and deeds. Chanting the Rudram while doing worship and *homa* (sacrificial fire worship) purifies one’s body. The chanting purifies not only one’s speech but also the surrounding environment for the good of the community and society. Contemplating the meaning of the chants in the Rudram purifies the mind, leading to divinity. The Vedas have three parts (*Kaandas*)—*Karma* (Work), *Upasana* (Worship), and *Jnana* (Wisdom). Sri Rudram encompasses all three parts. Doing ablutions, *abhishekam*, *homa*, and ritualistic worship of offering flowers and incense is part of *Karma Kaanda*. Singing glories of the Lord through chants and prayers is part of *Upasana Kaanda*. Seeing only oneness and understanding unity in diversity is part of *Jnana Kaanda*. Some consider it the greatest Advaitic treatise. **Thus, chanting Rudram is an integral yoga combining *Karma Yoga* (Path of Action), *Bhakti Yoga* (Path of Devotion), and *Jnana Yoga* (Path of Knowledge).**

The Mahabharata describes how Lord Krishna also extols chanting the Rudram as one of the great spiritual practices. The *Namakam* has 11 *anuvakas* and the *Chamakam* has 11 *anuvakas*. Rudram constitutes the chanting of the whole *Namakam* and *Chamakam*. *Ati Rudram* involves 14,641 *Rudrams* (*Rudram* is a combination of *Namakam* and *Chamakam*

given in *Rudradhyayam* in the 5th *Prapathakam* of the 4th *Kanda* of Krishna Yajur Veda Samhita).

- Chanting *Namakam* once, followed by *Chamakam*, constitutes one Rudram.
- *Ekadasa Rudram* consists of chanting all eleven *anuvakas* of *Namakam*. The first *Namakam* is followed by the first of the 11 *anuvakas* of *Chamakam*. *Namakam* is repeated ten more times with each of the other ten *anuvakas* of *Chamakam* sequentially.
- Chanting of 11 *Ekadasa Rudrams* is *Laghu Rudram* or *Rudraikadasini*.
- Chanting of 11 *Laghu Rudrams* is one *Maha Rudram*.
- Chanting of 11 *Maha Rudrams* is one *Ati Rudram*.

How Swami Emphasizes the Importance of Rudram

On September 9, 2008, Swami initiated the chanting of the Rudram in His presence after *darshan*. He wanted everyone to learn it before His Birthday on the 23rd of November 2008. He also promised endearingly, “Those who learn it (*Rudram*) well, I will call them personally and reward them for all their efforts.”

Swami conducted *Ati Rudra Maha Yajnam* in Puttaparthi (August 2006) and in Chennai (January 2007). With His blessings and guidance, it has also been conducted in many parts of India and around the world. Swami said that in contrast to other *yajnas* (sacred Vedic fire ceremonies) where people desire to have children, prosperity, or victory, this

yajna is selfless and meant for the peace and happiness of all the worlds. **This is based on the truth proclaimed by the Vedas that everything is one, constituted by the same power or energy. This is consistent with the discoveries of modern particle physics and quantum theory that everything is energy.**

Physicist Fritjof Capra said, “Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the season and the birth and death of all living creatures, but it is also the very essence of inorganic matter. For modern physics, then, Shiva’s dance is the dance of subatomic matter.” Swami declared that Fritjof Capra is one of the seven *Rishis* (sages) of modern times.

Dr. G. Venkatraman, a great physicist from India, who in later years became a devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, writes, “In appreciation of the feelings of modern physicists for Shiva’s dance, in June 2004, the Government of India presented to the world’s leading laboratory in particle physics, a two-meter tall statue of Nataraja, representing Shiva performing His cosmic dance. This statue stands in the premises of CERN, an international laboratory located in Geneva, where many outstanding discoveries relating to the microcosm and its relationship to the macrocosm have been made.”

Bhagawan Baba speaks about the sound vibrations produced by chanting the Rudram that have a calming effect on the mind. It can alleviate physical and mental ailments, serving as a tool for meditation and



healing as well. **Baba emphasizes that while the proper pronunciations and intonations are important while chanting, sincerity and purity of the heart matter more than technical precision.** He says chanting the Rudram with love and devotion forges a connection with the divine that transcends words. During His discourse on August 9, 2006, Swami said, *“The Ati Rudra Maha Yajna is great, most sacred, and highly efficacious. The lives of the people who perform this ritual will be sanctified. Eleven priests (rithwiks) will perform the rituals at each fire pit (homakunda). There are eleven such fire-pits. Thus, there will be 121 priests in all, performing the various actions in this ritual (yajna). For each fire pit, one person will be in charge of looking after everything concerning the rituals. All people connected with the ritual will work in unison to make the ritual a success. Only by unity can anything be achieved. From unity comes purity, and divinity manifests from purity.”*

Significance of the Word ‘Rudram’

In common parlance, people think that Rudra is the frightening aspect of Lord Shiva. But its true meaning comes forth as *“Rudram Dravyate Iti Rudraha,”* meaning the “One who makes us shed tears of joy when worshipped with a pure heart is Rudra.” In both *Namakam* and *Chamakam*, there are 11 *anuvakas*, representing the five organs of action, the five organs of perception, and the mind. **When they all turn toward God, Lord Rudra makes us shed tears of joy. But if they turn toward the world and sensual indulgence, we shed tears of sorrow.**



“Rudram Dravyate Iti Rudraha” also translates to, “He who drives away sorrows (or causes the dissolution of suffering) is Rudra.” It does this by bestowing supreme knowledge. That is why even renunciants and monks, who rise above rituals practiced by ordinary householders, are enjoined to chant the *Rudram* to get the ultimate benefit of liberation.

A line that appears in the *Rudram*, *“Aghorebhyo Ta Ghorebhyo”* means that Rudra has both the terrible and the munificent aspects. Whether one is a saint or sinner, rich or poor, powerful or weak, ruler or ordinary citizen, scholar or ignoramus, one has both pleasant and unpleasant experiences in life. Rudra turns unpleasant experiences into pleasant ones if they benefit one’s spiritual journey. Otherwise, He gives the courage and strength to bear them. **By constant practice of the *Rudram*, one reaches the ulti-**





mate stage where everything is considered *Shivam* (auspiciousness) because everything is *prasad* (consecrated gift) from God. Then, the person lives in a state of bliss because there is nothing pleasant or unpleasant. Everything is simply divine.

When to Chant the Rudram

The Rudram should be chanted at least once daily. Serious and sincere spiritual seekers chant it twice or even thrice daily. It is considered highly beneficial to chant the Rudram at the *pradosha* time (twilight hours) at dawn or dusk. However, God is beyond time and space. So, the Rudram can be chanted anytime and anywhere. Of course, it is highly beneficial to chant it during the monthly Shivaratri and the annual Maha Shivaratri. In fact, the 12-hour vigil on Maha Shivaratri night is divided into four equal parts wherein Rudram is chanted in each part, accompanied by *abhishekam* to the *linga*.

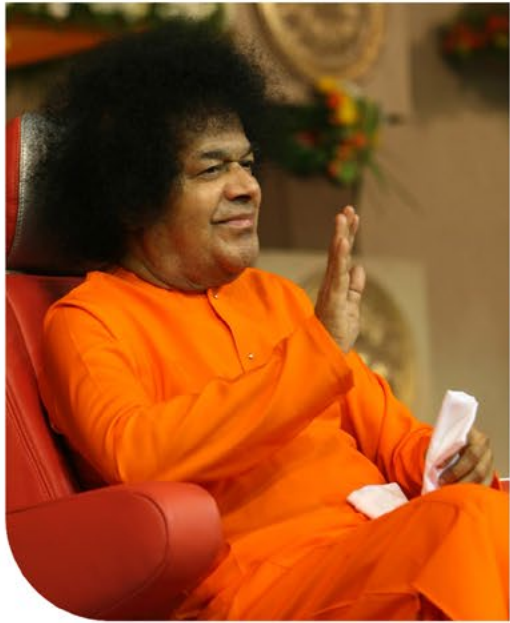
When Bhagawan Baba presented our family with the [Hiranyagarbha Linga](#) that emerged from Him during Maha Shivaratri, I asked Swami what special rites needed to

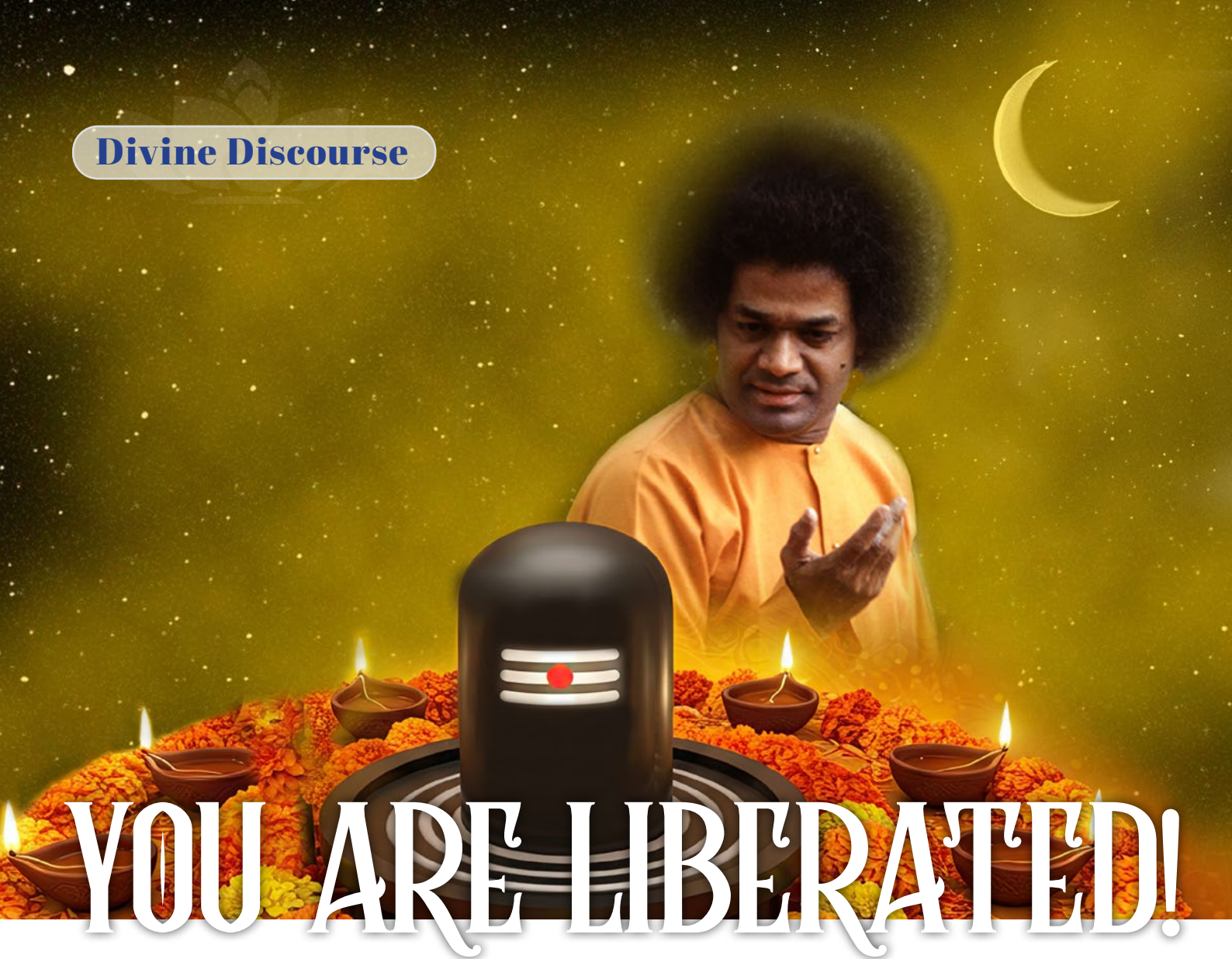
be performed. Swami told me to perform *abhishekam*. At that time, I did not know how to chant the Rudram while doing the ritual. Swami, in His infinite compassion, said that there was no need to know or chant the Rudram so long as I chant either 'Om Namah Shivaya' or 'Om Sri Sai Ram' with purity and love. That would be a substitute for the Rudram that is usually chanted, He said. I was grateful for His kindness and love, but I put all my heart and soul into learning how to chant the Rudram, along with its meaning and significance, so that I could perform the daily *abhishekam* to the satisfaction of Swami in my heart.

With the continuous and intense chanting of Sri Rudram in adoration of the Supreme Lord, we will finally realize the divinity present within us as the Atma, and we will experience *Shivoham* ("I am Shiva"). May Lord Sai bless us all on this holy Maha Shivaratri to pursue the learning and practice of the Rudram with devotion, determination, and dedication.

Jai Sai Ram.

The benefits of chanting the Sri Rudram increase manifold when done with an understanding of its meaning. This will be the subject of the second part of this editorial to be published in the March 2025 issue.





YOU ARE LIBERATED!

Do not be misled by what you see. What you do not see with your eyes is much more significant. Why waste your life without achieving its purpose—namely, knowing and experiencing the truth? **Come, come with Me, you can make your life worthwhile; you can succeed. Man has in him all the bliss and all the equipment needed to unravel it, but he is caught in dire ignorance of his inner resources.** He can have supreme peace, but he does not strive to earn it. His attempts are weakened by doubt and indecision, so they are doomed to failure. Of course, water flows underneath the ground. But how can we benefit from it unless efforts are made to dive into that source? A good deal of 'desire for sense satisfaction' must be removed before that inner spring of peace and joy can be tapped.

Your lives are essentially of the nature of *shanti* (peace). Your nature is essentially love. Your heart is saturated with truth. Rid yourselves of the impediments that prevent their manifestation. Since you do not make any attempt toward this, there is no peace or love or truth in the home, the community, the nation, and the world. The husband and the wife do not live in harmony, the father and sons are involved in factions, and even friends do not see eye to eye! Twins take different paths, for they live in a competitive world of passions and emotions. **It is only when God is the goal and guide, can there be real peace, love, and truth.** The divine must always be revered. What pleases the divine must be understood and followed.

“It is only when God is the goal and guide,
can there be real peace, love, and truth.

All Your Skills and Strength are God's Gifts

The Ramayana gives two examples of such consecrated lives: Anjaneya (Hanuman, a great devotee of Lord Rama) and Lakshmana (loving and devoted brother of Rama). **Anjaneya dedicated every moment of his life, every thought, every muscle, to his master, Rama.** When Rama sent him in the southerly direction on the mission to search for Sita, he was neither elated on being recognized as an efficient instrument nor depressed by the dangerous nature of his mission. He knew that Rama would confer on him the skill and strength needed to complete the task. All his skill and strength were 'His gifts.' He felt that to think he was too weak an instrument was an insult to Rama's omniscience and grace.

Lakshmana, too, was a mighty hero, for he developed strength in the divine presence and knew of no other strength. Once, while moving about in the forest during exile, Rama asked Lakshmana to choose a nice site and erect a *parashala* (hermitage) for Sita and Himself. Lakshmana was so taken aback at this that he fell to the ground (at Lord Rama's lotus feet) and lamented that he had fallen from grace. Rama said that on the contrary, he had 'risen' in His view, for he was asking Him to select the site Himself. That was the very reason why Lakshmana felt he had fallen: "O Rama, do I have a will apart from Yours? How could You imagine I could exercise my judgment independently and select a site myself? Tell me where and how, and it will be done. **I have no judgment of my own. I surrendered it long ago.**" **That was the reply of Lakshmana.**

Bhajan Must Become an Unbroken Stream of Bliss

You too, declare that you have surrendered, but that is a mere verbal pronouncement. If you sit in a car, you go along with it; on the bicycle, you move with it; on a horse, you go wherever the horse takes you. But, in this case, you say, and perhaps you believe that you have placed yourselves in My hands, and so, you are going along the path I have laid down. But your mind and your heart are not fully in Me, so the surrender is only in name. **As a sign of this deed of surrender and to sustain it, nothing more is needed than constant remembrance of the holy name.** No regimen of exhausting *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) is prescribed. *Smarana* (constant remembrance of God's name) is enough.

You have recited *bhajans* (group devotional singing), extolling the names that glorify God, all through the night after the emergence of the *Atmalinga* (symbol of Lord Shiva). But this is only an appetizer. *Bhajan* must become an unbroken stream of bliss on your tongues and in your hearts. It must confer on you the uninterrupted awareness of Soham—the unity of I and He, of This with That. **It is called *akhanda hamsa japa*—the unbroken *japa* of the *hamsa mantra*, *Soham* (sacred spiritual breathing practice of 'I am That').** It will ensure freedom from anxiety, fear, and grief.

Maha Shivaratri is dedicated to the dissolution of the aberrations of the mind and the mind itself by dedicating oneself to Lord Shiva. The Moon as well as the mind, whose presiding deity is the Moon, each has sixteen phases. On Shivaratri, fifteen of

these have disappeared, and there is just a sliver of the Moon in the sky. The New Moon that follows will not have even that sliver visible.

Symbol of Time-Space, Manifestation of Divinity

The mind, too, must be mastered every day until, on the fifteenth day, fifteen phases have been removed, and only a streak remains to be removed by the final effort. That is the *sadhana* that you did through the night, *bhajan*, vigil, and fast. When the mind goes, there is *moha kshaya* (dissolution of the deluding desire and attachment). *Kshaya* (destruction) of *moha* (desire and attachment) is *moksha* (liberation). *Smarana* (remembering God's name) is the surest means of mastering the wiles of the mind.

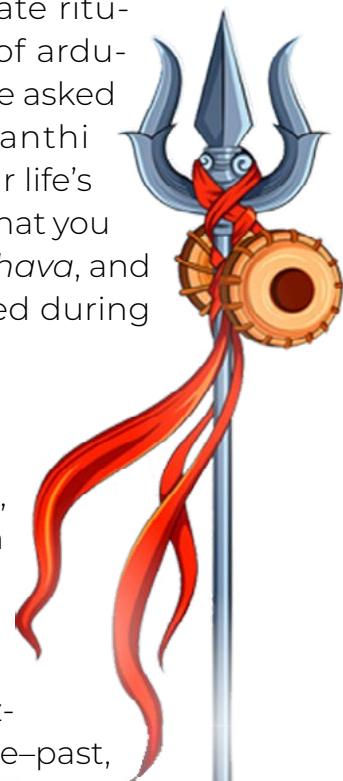
You are indeed blessed since, from among billions of people on this earth, you alone were able to come into this congregation, this Presence, on this occasion. People gather in many sacred places for Shivaratri. You were present here on this thrice-holy day and witnessed the emergence of the *Dasha Angula Swarupa* (Shiva Linga that emerged from Swami, which is ten inches). The Upanishads declare that God is *athyathistath dasha angulam*, the ten-inch-symbol of *kala* (time) and *disha* (space)—the manifestation of divinity, as described by Sage Kapila (the incarnation of Narayana Himself). When Kapila, also the personification of time and space, was born, He called upon the gods to gather in His presence and have *darshan* (divine audience). His mother, who called upon the gods, is therefore named *Devahuthi* (the one who invoked the gods). And, when the Gods

came, Kapila asked them, "Don't you know who I am?" Even now, all babies ask the same question when they are born, with a cry—*Koham?* (Who am I?)

I assure you that, having had the unique good fortune of witnessing the emergence of the Linga, which is the embodiment of time and space, you are released from the bondage of birth and death. Recollect and live in the remembrance of that moment of emergence and meditate on the significance of the Linga form. This is a chance seldom gained through the performance of *yajnas* or *yagas* (sacred sacrifices) or other elaborate rituals or as a result of years of arduous *sadhana*. When you are asked what happened at Prasanthi Nilayam, tell them that your life's mission has been fulfilled, that you could witness the *Lingodbhava*, and see the Linga that emerged during the auspicious hour.

Mystery Revealed by Shiva's Trident

The Linga, as you can see, is *dasha angulam*, ten inches in circumference. Shining with native light, it has within it the *thrishula* (trident) of Shiva, symbolizing the three phases of time—past,



Having had the unique good fortune of witnessing the emergence of the time-space-embodiment in the Linga form, I assure you that you are released from the bondage of birth and death.



present, and future, and the three dimensions of space—earth, sky, and the nether regions, as I mentioned earlier. Time is measured in units of ten. **In this Linga, too, as you can see even from where you are sitting, the color of the *thrishula* inside the Linga changes into a new one every ten minutes.** The handle of the *thrishula* denotes the One, of which the three are manifestations. This is the grand mystery that has been revealed to you.

You have witnessed the divine creation, you have seen the divine symbol, and you have shared the bliss. Out of the world's population of many crores, you alone secured this fortune. The *Shrutis* (Vedas) declare the *Purusha* (Supreme Being, God) as splendor, as *Jyothi* (divine light). You have seen the splendor when the Linga emerged. **You have seen the triple *Jyothi* in the Linga itself. No greater fortune can accrue to a man. Live hereafter as befits the recipient of this rare grace.**

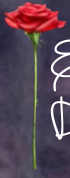
Thyagaraja, the saint-singer, sang about Rama *nama*, which is composed of two sacred syllables, 'Ra' and 'Ma,' 'Ra' being the life-sound of the *ashtakshari mantra* (eight-syllabled sacred formula) devoted to

Lord Vishnu (*Namo Narayanaya*) and 'Ma' being the life sound of the *panchakshari mantra* (five syllabled sacred formula) devoted to Lord Shiva (*Namah Shivaya*). The two syllables 'Ra' and 'Ma' became 'Rama,' the One which became Vishnu and Shiva, just as the Linga is the One from which all forms manifest. It is the primeval form that symbolizes the first emergence of the will of the divine.

I repeat that those of you who have experienced the sublimity and splendor of this divine event have thereby acquired enormous merit, which is enough to save you from the cycle of birth and death. Dwell on this mighty moment, this holy hour you were privileged to spend here, and contemplate the majesty of the event you witnessed. **Sanctify your days with sacred thoughts, words suffused with love, and deeds befitting the grace you have won this day.** Alert yourselves whenever you are prone to deviate from this responsibility. Be ever vigilant that you do not stray away, weaken, or vacillate.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
February 21, 1974





THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER

It was 1966 in Penang, Malaysia. My mother was in the sixth month of her pregnancy carrying me, and she regularly read the Bhagavad Gita. One day, it began to rain heavily when she was reading the following verse (BG 9.22):

*ananyash chintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate
tesham nityabhiyuktanam yoga-kshemam vahamyaham*

*(For those who constantly think of Me and are exclusively devoted to Me,
I provide what they lack and preserve what they already possess.)*

At that moment, there was a knock at the door and my mother wondered who had come in such inclement weather. It was an elderly lady holding a beautiful idol of Lord Krishna. She said that she had arrived from India and presented the idol to my mother. **My mother gratefully accepted the gift. Before leaving, the lady said, “If you deliver a boy, name him Krishna.”**

Thus, my name had been decided three months before I was born. My mother named me ‘Krishna Kumar’ with great joy because I was born on September 7, the holy day of Sri Krishna Janmashtami!

Sai Krishna's Entry Into Our Lives

When I was about 10, someone presented the book *Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*, the biography of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to my mother. Though we had a couple of photographs of Baba at home, we were somewhat skeptical about Swami. It was this book that started a slow transformation. My mother took to Swami first and began narrating stories from the book. Soon, we started doing *bhajans* at home. That was when my father had a dream, and Swami told him to organize *bhajans* regularly in our home at Brown Garden. The regular *bhajan* sessions we began in 1979 continue even today, and Brown Garden is a recognized SSSIO Center. **The family's faith in Swami was founded almost entirely by the book *Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*!**

In 1981, my parents, my brother, my sister, and I traveled to Puttaparthi and had *darshan* of Swami for the first time. When we got a chance to speak to Him in the *darshan* line, we asked for a family interview. Swami smiled and said, "Later." **What we didn't realize then was the promise of 'later' would materialize after 16 long years!**

The First Interview with God

My profession is blasting and clearing areas for mines, roads, construction, etc. My company always had some projects in India, subcontracted from Malaysia's IJM Corporation, which is engaged in construction, property development, manufacturing, and quarrying. So, after the first visit to Swami, we became regular travelers to Puttaparthi, Whitefield, or Kodaikanal, wherever Swami was present, sometimes thrice a year.

Every time I visited Swami, I was blessed to receive *padanamaskar* from Him and also delivered letters from our group. The first interview with Swami happened in August 1997. In the course of that interview, Swami asked me what my profession is. I replied,



"Swami, rock-blasting..." He nodded approvingly and said, "Very good." After a while, He asked the same question. I repeated my answer, and again, He responded, "Very good."

This was the time of a financial crisis that gripped much of East and Southeast Asia. Called the 'Asian Financial Crisis,' it began in Thailand in July 1997 before spreading to several other countries, with the ripple effect raising fears of a worldwide economic meltdown. My business was severely affected. But I felt Swami was reassuring me that all would be well and I should continue in the same line of business. That is what I did, and by His grace, even now, in 2024, we are doing well.

The Power of Swami's Materializations

Swami then materialized a silver ring with a picture of His bust profile. He put it on my right index finger. That was the only jewelry I wore. I wondered why He had placed it on my index finger, though. Later, I realized that whenever I signed important documents or shook hands with people, the ring was always in contact with the pen or hands. **Success followed everything that came in contact with the ring, and I was delighted.**



The ring also protected me during some of the darkest moments of my life.

When my father was admitted to the hospital in critical condition with a heart attack, the doctors said that he had just a few hours left. We frantically began to summon family and friends so that they could bid him farewell. The doctors feared that there would not be enough time for even that! So, for the first time since Swami had put it on my finger, I took off the ring and placed it on my father's finger. **Miraculously, the recovery was almost instantaneous.** My father lived for five days and could meet all family members and friends.

Later, my mother was hospitalized multiple times due to liver issues complicated by diabetes. During the three instances when she was critically ill, Swami's ring again came to her rescue. Swami says in His 32nd Summer Course discourse in May 1972 that **the objects He materializes act as a heart-to-heart connection between the devotee and Him. That is precisely what I experienced with the ring.** Finally, the precious ring got 'misplaced,' unfortunately, but I felt that it had served its purpose and returned to Swami.

On Marriage And Family

I was so beholden to Swami and inspired by Him that I decided not to get married. I wanted to only serve Swami and felt that being a bachelor was the best way to be fully

dedicated to Him, without the responsibilities of a family. But my parents were keen on getting me married. Luckily, my horoscope stated that I should not get married till I turned 30. So, I got a reprieve, but the moment I turned 30, my parents were back again looking for marriage proposals. For the next two years, none of the horoscopes of girls from the 15-16 marriage proposals matched! I felt that it was a sign from Swami that He, too, wanted me to remain a bachelor all my life, and I was very happy.

On January 30, 1998, Swami called us for another interview. During that interview, He turned to me and asked, "*Where is your wife?*" I was taken by surprise and replied, "Swami, I am not married."

"Why?" He asked.

"Swami, You only look for somebody for me then..."

"I know! I know! In the last two years, your parents have been looking at proposals. I prevented them from fruition because they are not suitable for you. I will send my devotee to you. Now, you are serving me with two hands. After marriage, you will serve me with four hands."

I had plans of coming to Puttaparthi later in the year along with the engineers of my company to seek blessings from Swami. But Swami was almost fixated on my marriage. He said, "*Now, it is January. By December, you must get married. And I love children. I want (you to have) many children...*"

The Master Planner

One of the members of the group present during that interview came to me with a marriage proposal. He said a Malayali (Indian ethnicity) girl who worked in his company and regularly attended Sai *bhajans* would be the perfect match for me. I told him to take up the matter with my parents.

I wanted Swami to be actively involved in this. He had guided me in everything in my life, but I wished He was more specific about how He would 'send' His devotee to me.

Soon, the proposal was brought to my parents and we traveled to Johor at the other end of the Malaysian peninsula, to her home. There I did not see even a photo of Swami! Needless to say, I was disappointed. I thought, "Swami, you HAVE to give me a sign if this is the right match." At precisely that moment, I looked up, and there He was! There was a picture of Swami reclining on the 'Adishesha' (divine serpent of Lord Vishnu) bed, smiling at me.

We returned to Penang, but we had to decide within a week whether to proceed with the alliance. I spoke to the girl frankly. "Look," I said, "I am fully involved in the Sai Movement. Swami has indicated many things that I will be doing in the future for Him and those are the goals of my life. Don't get carried away thinking of me as a 'successful businessman.' I am committed to growing the Sai Organization and serving Swami alone. Unless you are ready for such a life, don't agree to this alliance."

She was calm and composed in her brief reply. "It is the same for me as well. I am committed to serving Swami only." As we sat there conversing, I remembered what Swami had once told me in Kodaikanal. "A house without a wife is a forest. A house with a wife is 'for rest.'" And then, the picture of Swami resting on the *Adishesha* bed flashed

before my mind's eye. It was as if Swami indicated that this lady would make my house 'for rest.'

The final confirmation came through a dream on the last day of the 'waiting week.' In the dream, I was with the Vice-Chancellor of my University and Swami was also in the same room. He told the Vice-chancellor, "See, this Krishna has got a marriage proposal." Turning to me, He continued, "Her name is Sri Latha. Don't worry. Proceed. She is a suitable match for you."

The Blessings of a Family Committed to Sai

I met my wife on the eve of her birthday on February 21, 1998. We got engaged on the eve of my birthday. And we got married on the eve of Swami's Birthday on November 22, 1998. Swami has blessed us with four children, two sons (Sathya Saish and Sailesh) and twin daughters (Sai Shreya and Sai Rania).

Our children are key members of our Sai Center at Brown Garden. They sing and play musical instruments, and they teach SSEHV classes. They are active in rendering service and deeply committed to Swami. At first, we encouraged our children to be dedicated to Swami; now, they inspire us to continue our dedication. **As Swami said, my two hands became four, and now, a dozen hands serve Swami.** I am grateful to Swami for this family that prays together and stays together at His lotus feet.

Mr. Krishna Kumar 
MALAYSIA



Mr. Krishna Kumar serves as the Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center of Brown Garden, Penang, Malaysia. He has been devoted to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba since childhood. He graduated with honors in Electrical Engineering and was guided by Swami to embark on a business venture. Under his leadership, his company is reputed for its stellar performance in the rock-blasting industry. Mr. Kumar also plays an active role in North Malaysia's Malayali Samajam, an organization dedicated to promoting Malayali culture and language, where he has held various leadership roles. His work continues to reflect his profound commitment to both spiritual and societal upliftment.

Loving Lord Who Leaves Us Speechless

In 1976, when I was in Class VI at St. Paul's school, Ajmer (India), my friend who was scheduled to recite a Hindi poem fell sick, and I was chosen to recite it in his place. I practiced a lot, but I started shivering and stammering when I went on the stage. It was a frightening experience, and I could not complete the recitation.

Speech Difficulty Draws Me to the Divine

Stammering became such an integral part of my life that even to respond, "Yes, sir," during the attendance roll call, I had to prepare myself for about 15-20 seconds before my turn. My father, Dr. H.D. Gupta, who was working as a Children's Specialist in the Railway Hospital at Ajmer, tried his best to help, but to no avail. In 1980, Dr. K.P. Pathak was transferred from Guntakal in Andhra Pradesh to the hospital where my father was working. His wife, Mrs. Hema Pathak, suggested that I should be treated at the Nair Hospital in Bombay (Mumbai today) for speech therapy. The Pathaks were very loving and caring toward me. They were devotees of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and invited us to attend *bhajan* (devotional

singing) sessions. **Daily devotional singing was a part of our family's spiritual practices, initiated by my grandfather.** So, we started attending Sai *bhajans* and *Nagarasankeertana* (walking around the neighborhood while singing bhajans) in the railway colony where we lived.

Based on the advice given, we made an appointment in Bombay for my speech therapy. Just as my father and I started the journey, Mrs. Pathak called and advised my father to apply sacred *Vibhuti* on my forehead before boarding the train, which he did. We boarded the train to Ahmedabad (Gujarat), from where we had to take another train to Bombay. Before we boarded the 'Gujarat Mail' from Ahmedabad on May 21, 1981, there was a change in the position of the coaches. Instead of being close to the engine, the First-Class coach, in which we were to travel, was moved to the end of the train. This proved to be a lifesaver for us when the train was involved in an accident near Miyagam Karjan station near Vadodara city!

I firmly believe that it was Swami's grace showered through the *Vibhuti* that saved us that day. However, my father's name somehow appeared in the list of people who had died in the accident! Dr. Pathak and others who got this news could not gather enough courage to inform my mother, Smt. Laxmi Gupta, and my grandparents about this 'tragic news.' They kept silent, and my mother never received the 'official news.' No wonder the Pathaks celebrated our return to Ajmer in a grand manner that my mother did not understand then! Mother Sai had indeed saved our lives. **The therapy in Bombay did not help much, but our faith in Bhagawan Baba multiplied exponentially.** With much love and immense gratitude for Swami's grace, we started participating in every Sai activity at Ajmer.

The Rewards of Service and Bhajans

With Swami's immense blessing, I secured admission to the Regional Engineering College, Jaipur, and completed my bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. I continued to participate in *bhajans* and *nagarasankeertana* whenever I got an opportunity, even during my college days. In 1988, I got a job at M/s. Instrumentation Limited, in Kota. Shradha and I were married in 1991, and we were blessed with a son, Parth, in 1992. In 1993 we all went for *seva* (voluntary service) for the first time to Puttaparthi, along with the devotees from the states of Rajasthan and Kerala.

Swami was not at Puttaparthi, and so, after completion of our service, we went to Whitefield, Bangalore, to receive His blessings and do *padanamaskar* (touch His divine lotus feet). As soon as Swami entered Ramesh Hall, He enquired if we all had breakfast. When we told Him we hadn't, He instructed us to disperse and return after breakfast! **Swami knows everything and is most caring, like a compassionate mother.** So, we rushed to have breakfast, which was lovingly arranged, and soon returned to our seats. Merciful Bhagawan then gave *padanamaskar* to everyone assembled, spending much of His precious time with us. Seeing my one-year-old son in my wife's lap, He tossed him a chocolate. I am convinced that it was Swami's way of blessing my son for success in the future. Parth completed his undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning between 2010-2015 and passed with flying colors. He then completed his Ph.D. at the Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai, and as of 2024, is serving as a senior scientist in Abu Dhabi.

After returning from the first *seva*, I experienced what is probably the biggest miracle of my life. Enthused with the way Swami had

blessed us, we became even more active in the devotional and service activities of the Sai Organization in Kota. I first took on the responsibilities of the Youth Coordinator, then became the District President of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization, Kota, before Swami entrusted me with the role of the State Trust Convenor for Rajasthan. Then, I decided to sing *bhajans*. The first *bhajan* I learned was Swami's first *bhajan* gifted to mankind—*Manasa Bhajare Guru Charnam*. I noticed something amazing. Whenever I sang this *bhajan*, my voice became crystal clear without the slightest stammering! **Gradually and seamlessly, over the next few months, my stammering was totally gone! Singing *bhajans* had solved miraculously what no therapy or treatment could solve!** This is surely due to nothing but His grace and blessings.

A Few Pages from the Sai Book of My Life

In every step of my life's journey, Swami has guided me! There are numerous experiences He has granted me, and I share a few of them here. We used to conduct *Bal Vikas* (widely known as Sai Spiritual Education) classes for children and *Narayana Seva* (giving food to the needy) in a remote village called Koli-pura, on the premises of the government school there. On one occasion, I had forgotten to inform the school principal to leave behind the keys to the school for our use. It was only after reaching there with all the material that I realized the oversight. The village did not have mobile phone network

coverage being located in the mountains. But instinctively, my hand went into my pocket, and I pulled out my mobile phone. To my utter surprise, the cellular network was available in full strength! I could easily call the principal and ask for the keys. Just as I completed the call, the network connection disappeared! **Soon, a boy from the village came running with the keys, and thanks to another timely miracle, all the scheduled activities went on as planned!**

In 1999, as Swami came near me while granting *padanamaskar* after the completion of our *seva*, I said, "Swami, I want to change my job" since my company was not doing well at that time. He responded by patting my cheeks and said, "*Very, very, very happy.*" My joy knew no bounds, and I was grateful for His direction as well as His loving, divine touch. Tears were flowing down my cheeks, and my whole body started shaking in ecstasy. **The trajectory of my career took an upward path from that point in time. Today, when I look back, I see His divine hand in every stage of my worldly success.**

In 2002, we were blessed with our second child. My wife Shraddha was admitted to the hospital on February 5, 2002, and the doctor said that the delivery would be on the next day. Since my wife was eager for a quicker delivery, she took the sacred *Vibhuti* with an earnest prayer to Swami. Within the next half an hour, she gave birth to a beautiful baby girl! **The doctor was surprised at the early timing and ease of delivery! This is the power of *Vibhuti*.** In gratitude, we named our daughter Partisha. She also graduated from the Anantapur campus and is currently enrolled in the final semester for the master's degree in applied economics at Christ University, Bengaluru, India.

In August 2007, there was an All-India Conference of office bearers at Puttaparthi. Since I had a new job, I decided not to attend. But then, my wife insisted that I fly from Jaipur





and attend the conference because **nothing should take precedence over Swami and His organization**. So, I applied for leave, and by His grace, it was sanctioned immediately. Thus, I could attend the conference. On August 31, Swami showered His choicest blessings and gave one of His robes to every office bearer present at the conference with His own divine hands! I would have lost a lifetime opportunity had I not attended this event. **I am grateful to my wife for her thoughtfulness and wisdom, and I realized that a life without priority to God is no life at all.**

In May 2018, on one Saturday afternoon, my boss asked me to come by the office to finalize the annual performance appraisals of the employees. Though Saturday is only

half a working day for us, I was at the office for the performance appraisal. My wife and daughter were resting at home when two youngsters knocked on the door. Normally, my wife checks to see who has come from the kitchen window. But on this day, she simply unlocked the door, and the youngsters entered the house brandishing knives! The thieves threatened to kill my wife and daughter if they made a wrong move. My daughter somehow managed to call me, but unfortunately, my phone was in silent mode. **My wife called out to her Lord Sai, “Baba, Baba!” she shouted. And then the inexplicable happened! The thieves stopped whatever they were doing, turned around, and fled!**

Hari ananth, hari katha anantha—the Lord is infinite, and His stories, too, are infinite! There are so many more stories of His grace that I have experienced, just like many other devotees of our Baba. We are fortunate to be the contemporaries of the *Paripoorna* Avatar—Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Blessed are we that we could enjoy the *darshan* (sight), *sparshan* (touch), and *sambhashan* (conversation) with the divine Lord. **Though we miss His beautiful form, we feel His eternal presence even today, guiding us and guarding us as the eyelids guard the eyes.**

Mr. Vivek Gupta 
INDIA



Mr. Vivek Gupta is the former Convenor of the Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Rajasthan, India. He has been associated with the Sathya Sai Organization in India since 1980. He currently serves as the Hindi Resource person for the Vahini series being run by SSSSO-India. He was blessed to translate the talks of the Late Prof. Anil Kumar from English to Hindi on various occasions. He has over thirty-six years of experience in the field of Control and Instrumentation. He is currently serving as Joint Vice President and Head of Shriram Cement Works in India. Mr. Gupta received the prestigious Distinguished Instrumentation Professional Award from the International Society of Automation (ISA) in October 2016.

Let God Work Through You

Camp "Brindavan"

My Dear Rajagopal! Accept my love and blessings.

By your discretion convert all stumbling blocks of the world into stepping stones to realisation.

The energy we waste in judging others in just what is need[ed] to make us live up to our own ideals.

Assert your GOD-head. Fling into utter oblivion the little self, as if it has never existed. When the little bubble bursts, it finds itself a whole ocean. You are the whole , the infinite, the All.

Dear Raju! Out of long churning [of] this milk of the world comes butter and this butter is God. Men of heart get the butter, and the butter-milk is left for the intellectual.

Aim at a lion and miss it, rather than hunt a jackal and catch it.

Let GOD work through you, and there will be no more duty. Let GOD shine forth. Let GOD show Himself. Realise the Truth and the other things will take care themselves.

Raju! Don't worry, be happy. Swamiji is always with you, in you.

Jyoti is very good girl, make happy and give santosh [happiness].

With Love

Baba

Camp

"Brindavan"

My Dear Rajagopal! Accept my Love and
Blessings

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stumbling blocks of the world into stepping
stones to realisation.

The energy we waste in judging others is
just what is need to make us live up
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Aim at a lion and miss it; rather than
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Let GOD work through you, and there
will be no more duty. Let GOD shine
forth. Let GOD show Himself. Realise the
Truth and the other things will take
care of themselves.

~~Raj~~ Raju! don't worry, Be happy
Sevareji is always with you. in you
jyoti is very good girl make happy
and give Santosh.

With Love

Prabha



BRAZIL

There is Only One Caste, the Caste of Humanity

On June 30, 2024, the Sai Center of Natal organized a transformative event at the Municipal School in Queimadas, Brazil, as part of the SAI 100 initiative. The event served the local community, descendants of former Afro-Brazilian slaves who escaped from slave plantations that existed in Brazil until slavery was abolished in 1888. **The event featured activities emphasizing love and human values taught by Swami.**

Preparations began as early as May 1, with volunteers collecting and organizing donations of 80 bags of clothing and household items, 80 hygiene kits, and 60 food baskets. The program started with prayers, included a



square dance led by musician Carlos Zens, and concluded with joyful community interactions and distribution of the items collected.

The event was organized by 18 SSSIO members and seven public volunteers and included lunch for 150 community members, fostering joy, unity, and a sense of appreciation. **It highlighted the power of solidarity and Sri Sathya Sai Baba's message that selfless service is love in action.**



CHILE

Sustained and Committed Meal Service

On November 24, 2024, the Sri Sathya Sai Center in Santiago, Chile, celebrated the 99th year of the advent of Bhagawan Baba by serving 80 meals to attendees at the Chilean National meeting and 60 meals to needy people living on the streets.

This Sai Center has served its local community for 24 years, providing hot meals to the homeless and the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the service continues to date.

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





MEXICO

A Perfect 99th Birthday Celebration

During November 23-24, all regions of SSSIO Mexico commemorated the 99th year of the advent of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in a grand manner. More than 250 people participated in various activities, including public meetings, service projects, volunteering at hospitals, the SAI 100 project “1 Million Steps To Swami,” and devotional singing (*bhajans*).

In the central region, volunteers from the Guadalajara Sai Center organized a medical camp, serving 52 patients. They also distributed 30 food baskets.

In the Metropolitan Region, the Toluca Sai Center delivered nine infant diaper packs to the Monica Pretellini Maternal Prenatal Hospital. They also provided blankets and other essential items for mothers and babies.



In the southeastern region, the Tuxtla Sai Center delivered diaper packs and necessities to the new parents of babies born on November 23rd at the regional hospital.

In the northern region, a cleaning service was performed by members of the Monterrey Sai Center.

Sai devotees expressed their love for Swami through these service projects, exemplified by joy, enthusiasm, and devotion.



NEW ZEALAND

A ‘Fun’ Way to Serve the Local Community

In October 2024, SSSIO New Zealand hosted the ‘Rongomai Fun Day’ in Otago to serve the local community and promote the Sathya Sai Preschool. The event featured various engaging activities and entertainment, including an arts and crafts station, face painting and henna, musical performances, a ‘Master Chef’-style blind taste-testing competition, and a children’s talent show.

In addition to setting up food and informational stalls, SSSIO members distributed ‘preloved’ clothes and toys that had been donated to those in need. The event saw a turnout of around 200-225 people, including 20 SSSIO members, 6 staff from the Sathya



Sai Preschool, and 20 volunteers from various supporting organizations.

The event’s success was mainly due to the collaboration with local groups such as Otago Health, the Samoan Cultural Trust, the Samoan Church group, Tongarao College, and Strive Community Trust. Their dedication and contributions helped bring love and joy to every participant.

The *Blessings* of **PAIN**

I WOULD CALL MYSELF A REBEL AND A BIT OF A DAREDEVIL from Barranquilla, Colombia, in South America. I have been that way since childhood. I always questioned everything and needed a logical explanation to convince myself of anything. Becoming a mechanical engineer made my approach even more 'scientific' and 'logical.' I was never a devotee, nor had I worshiped any form of God, unlike my mother, who has always been very religious and devoted to God.

I once played rugby and also coached rugby teams. My club, Panteras Rugby Club, is the second oldest women's club in Colombia. I had my fair share of injuries from the game that included damage to my spine. Then came a car accident that exacerbated the injury. My intervertebral disc herniated, and some vertebrae got dislocated. They began to press on my nerves, which hurt me an awful lot! I would get cramps that would last for weeks! People usually get painful cramps for a few minutes, but my agony was a thousand times that. **The pain was a terrible daily struggle, and nothing could relieve it.**

“How can He be gone when I feel His presence so strongly in my life, in Colombia? In my opinion, Swami is more present right now than ever before.”

Overcoming Physical Pain

As an engineer, I designed and created intervertebral discs from functionally graded material. I even published academic papers on it. While the work gave me intellectual fulfillment, my physical pain did not abate at all. I could not even take a step without support. I spent a lot of time seeing doctors and seeking solutions. But the answer to my problem did not seem to exist.

It was sometime in 2011 when my mother stepped in and suggested that I see a doctor who had apparently helped me before by saving my life when I was a little kid. When I learned that she was into alternative medicine, I became very skeptical and hesitated to make an appointment to consult her. But my mother persisted and persuaded me to try her services. I finally yielded and went to her for alternative therapy. At the end of the session, I felt a miracle had happened. I had no pain! Usually, on rare occasions when I was pain-free, I would be happy for a few minutes, then the pain would return. Minutes turned into an hour, and I had no pain. I was ecstatic. I asked my mother, “How much do you have to pay for this treatment?” “You don’t worry”, she said. “It is all covered.” **“No, no!” I replied. “Every penny in my pocket is reserved for this lady because she gave me an hour of living without pain!”**

Overcoming Mental Aversion

That very night, I had an interesting dream. Let me first give the background. From birth, I have had many skin issues. It took a while to get over them, and I developed a disgust for people with skin diseases. If I saw anyone with skin disease, I would be repulsed.

In my dream, I saw dozens of people with terrible skin diseases coming to hug me! I was disgusted and tried to run but found no escape. It was a real nightmare! After all my efforts to escape failed, I finally gave up, thinking, “Maybe if I let go and hug the first person, they will stop coming after me...” I did that in the dream, and soon, there was a queue of such people with skin afflictions, and I hugged every one of them. As I did that, I seemed to overcome my revulsion toward them and could feel amazing love flowing from me. As I rejoiced, the queue ended.

The last person was a man wearing an orange gown with a curly mop of thick afro-style hair. Today, I know this beautiful form as ‘Swami.’ But in my dream, He was just a wonderful person without any skin problems. He radiated much warmth, love, and peace as I embraced Him. **It was an indescribable feeling that flooded me with joy as I hugged Him.**

When I woke up the next morning, I was not only healthy but also very happy! The

blessing of painlessness had grown into the blessing of great happiness.

Sai Dreams are Always True

After a very long time, I did not have pain, and I was elated. I didn't know how long the painless feeling would last, but I walked without support! So, I decided to go to my favorite place, the beach, and enjoy the day. I took the bus to one of Barranquilla's many beautiful beaches. Imagine my wonder when a person with severe skin problems sat down next to me. I smiled within myself since I did not feel any repulsion. I began to speak with him, and it was such an enjoyable conversation. In the end, I hugged him as I got off the bus at my stop, **and I realized that I had been cured of another life-long affliction—aversion to people with skin issues!**

I walked around and spent the whole day at the beach. It was the happiest day of my life so far. I continued to see the doctor for follow-up appointments. My recovery was so good that I started to train for rugby again! Soon, I also began to play with the same vigor and vitality as before. I also got into kitesurfing, venturing all by myself into the vast open sea among the waves and tides.

When God Enters Your Life

One day, as I got ready to go out, my mother presented me with a proposal. "Why don't you attend this event, a Sathya Sai retreat, that is happening soon? I, too, will be attending." I told her I was busy and didn't want to attend anything, not knowing that the man I had seen in my beautiful dream was Sathya Sai Baba! But my mother can be very persuasive if she feels something is good for her daughter. This event was happening in the capital city of Bogotá, she said. I finally yielded and canceled my rugby engagements. However, since

the retreat was scheduled during the holiday season, I had a change of heart and decided to visit Bogotá for vacation instead of attending the retreat.

A day or two after my mother left to prepare for the retreat, I flew to Bogotá to enjoy my vacation. I had no plans when I landed and decided to go with the flow as I always did. I walked to the bus station and got into a bus. I decided to chat with a random stranger and travel to wherever that person was headed. This is the way I have always been—a strong believer in living in the moment—and my experiences with crippling pain had made me adhere even more to that philosophy of life.

I felt drawn toward one lady and felt she would be my 'travel companion.' I walked up to her and asked, "Do you know where I can eat something?" She looked at me, a bit puzzled, and said, "There are many restaurants here..."

I continued, "Oh yes! But you see, I am vegetarian, and there are no options for me..."

Now, she seemed to warm up and said, "I am a vegetarian myself. If it is okay with you, I can share my burger..."

As we shared the burger, we began to have a conversation. When I asked her where she was headed, she replied she was going to Chinauta, a corregimiento (administrative division) of the municipality of Fusagasugá in the state/province of Cundinamarca.

As we talked more, I found out that she was headed to the Sathya Sai retreat! I was stunned! I felt this was my calling. I called my mother and asked her whether I could still register for the retreat. She asked me where I was. "I am on a bus, an hour from the retreat venue..." I replied. My mother was simply

thrilled. She told me to just come to the venue, and she would take care of the registration, accommodation—everything!

There were more surprises for me as I reached the venue. The doctor who had gifted my life back to me turned out to be Ms. Nazly Utria Guzman, who was then the President of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization of Colombia! Needless to say, I was not aware of it till then. **The biggest and most thrilling revelation came when I saw the picture of Swami and realized that He was the person hugging me in my dream! My life felt like a movie at that point, a movie so beautifully directed by the supreme being.** I now understood why I felt so happy after that dream. God had come to me!

The Eternal Companion

That retreat turned out to be a life-changer for me. I cannot even begin to explain all the transformations of my heart. It was my first Sai retreat, and after that, I have NEVER missed a single Sai retreat. There was no looking back. I found out that Swami had just taken

Mahasamadhi, but I could not believe He was gone. How can He be gone when I feel His presence so strongly in my life, in Colombia? **In my opinion, Swami is more present right now than ever before. Before, devotees were possibly attached more to His form, but now, they are more attached to His presence and His teachings.**


Swami kept giving me more and more blessings. Soon, I was appointed as the Young Adult Coordinator and I was very happy for the blessed privilege to be part of Swami's glorious mission. I also had the opportunity to travel to Nairobi, Kenya, for the [Sri Sathya Sai International Conference in June 2024](#). How that happened is another beautiful story, which could be the subject of a future article. I am just grateful to Swami for His presence, His grace, and His blessings in my life. **And I am convinced that my pains were also His blessings because they brought Swami, my God, into my life.**

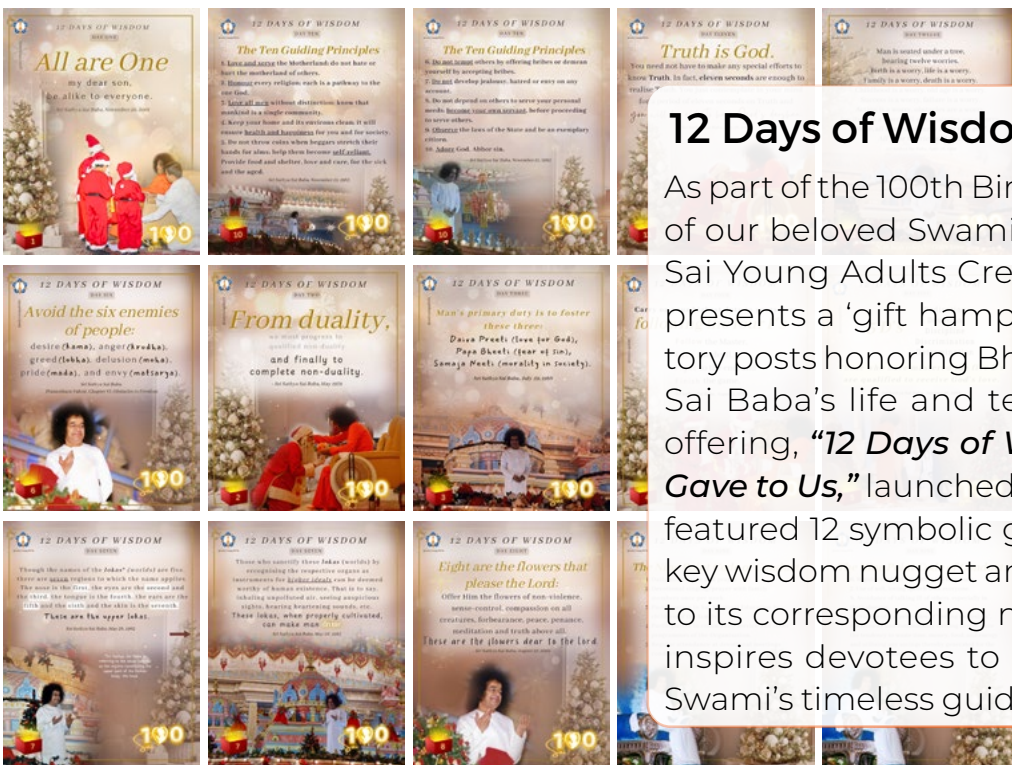
Ms. Karine Paola Angulo Ramos
COLOMBIA



Ms. Karine Paola Angulo Ramos was born in Barranquilla, Colombia, in South America. She is a Mechanical Engineer who works in industrial engineering. She and her family have been devotees of Swami since 2011. She has been the Young Adults program coordinator in Colombia since 2023.

from the
International Sai Young Adults
AROUND THE WORLD

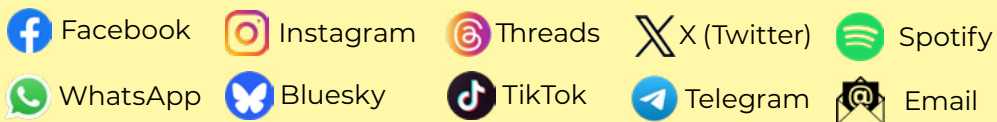
Being the last generation blessed with the *darshan* of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in His physical form and experience His boundless love, the Young Adults (YAs) are the torchbearers with the sacred responsibility to carry forth His divine mission. To this end, the YAs are embracing innovative approaches to ensure that His message of love and service continues to touch every heart. This endeavor was implemented in unique ways in different countries. In Malaysia, the focus has been on **strengthening from within**—revitalizing organizational discipline and framework to fortify the Sai mission. In contrast, Trinidad and Tobago adopted an outreach approach, **extending collaborations beyond the Organization** to share Swami’s universal teachings with the wider community. 



12 Days of Wisdom

As part of the 100th Birthday celebrations of our beloved Swami, the International Sai Young Adults Creative Media Team presents a ‘gift hamper’ of 100 celebratory posts honoring Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s life and teachings. The first offering, **“12 Days of Wisdom Sai Baba Gave to Us,”** launched during Christmas, featured 12 symbolic gifts, each tied to a key wisdom nugget and creatively linked to its corresponding number. This series inspires devotees to relive and imbibe Swami’s timeless guidance.

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Reinvigorating YAs at the Sai Center: A Pilot Study

YOUNG ADULTS PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE VITALITY OF SAI CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD. However, YA demographics vary significantly across centers, with some centers thriving and others struggling. In Malaysia, this disparity was evident, with differing YA participation across the 50 centers in the country. To address this issue, Malaysia YAs implemented a strategic pilot study to explore ways to improve YA participation.

To understand the 'landscape' and address this imbalance, systemic profiling of centers was conducted using a 'heatmap' approach to assess the 'health' and strength of YA participation at each center. Centers with 10 or more active YAs were categorized as green, centers with 5-9 active YAs as yellow, and centers with less than 4 or no active YAs as red. This heatmap identified specific centers requiring urgent attention, such as Sathya Sai Baba Center (SSBC) Cheras, which had only 4 active YAs despite being located in Kuala Lumpur, where most centers were in the green zone. The study aimed to identify practical tools that would help turn red centers into yellow and yellow centers into thriving green centers. YA leaders realized that careful mentorship and guidance were required for red centers rather than using a green center model as a one-size-fits-all template. This led to the appointment of a YA mentor from the Central region, which had many green zone centers, to provide

permanent support to SSBC Cheras. Mr. Vimal Rao Veerasamy, in his current role as the National Young Adults advisor, offered to be the YA mentor moving to SSBC Cheras from his home center. Instead of focusing on multiple centers at once, the pilot project focused exclusively on SSBC Cheras to assess and ensure effectiveness.

Step 1: Identifying Challenges

The YA mentor spearheaded efforts to reconnect with former YAs and potential participants. Using a database of former YAs, invitations were sent out for a roundtable discussion. With the assistance of Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) teachers, the invitation was also extended to past SSE graduates who are now potential YAs. Personal calls were made to invite everyone to the discussion. While there was some initial hesitation, most YAs agreed to attend the discussion and share their views. A comprehensive review revealed several obstacles, including personal commitments such as family, work, and study obligations that limited weekly participation; past grievances such as unresolved issues with elders or center leadership and organization restructuring; and shifting priorities such as moving out of the region or change in personal growth plans.

Step 2: Addressing Challenges

Identifying these challenges helped channel energy into solutions. Mentorship emphasized that consistent partic-

ipation, rather than weekly attendance, was key. Also, without invoking guilt, YAs were reminded of the center's role in their formative years in their spiritual development and how they could contribute to its growth and be part of Swami's glorious mission. The invitation to openly discuss challenges also reinforced the idea that their concerns were acknowledged and considered rather than ignored. Lastly, **YAs were encouraged to return for the sake of Swami, and His mission, focusing on the collective spiritual energy that Swami's organization fosters.** Many YAs expressed willingness to return to the center after the discussion and mentorship. Those who had difficulty returning immediately were respected for their decisions.

Step 3: Building Momentum

A sports carnival was chosen as the inaugural activity, organized by the newly formed core YA team of 20 YAs, which included returning members and YA mentors. Two months of meticulous planning went into spreading awareness, registration, logistics, and event execution. Although 50 participants were initially expected, the word spread that SSBC Cheras was revitalizing its YA community, resulting in 200 enthusiastic participants nationwide. The National Level Sports Carnival was a resounding success, exceeding expectations and rejuvenating a sense of community and collaboration among YAs. It reinforced what Swami says about sports:

"It is a distinctive quality of sports that differences are forgotten, and persons engage in games in a divine spirit of friendliness and comradery. Sports help the players not only to improve their health but also to experience joy."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
January 14, 1990

Step 4: Sustaining Momentum

The most critical aspect of this initiative was ensuring sustained momentum, including a structured calendar of YA initiatives. Quarterly programs such as *Suprabhatam* sessions, intensive *sadhana* camps, and motivational sessions were implemented. The YAs were gradually integrated into the service, devotion, and education wings of the center. Sustained mentorship and oversight were provided for 6-12 months, helping YAs transition to independent leadership.

Lessons Learned

The successful strategies from SSBC Cheras were documented to launch similar initiatives at other centers. Key takeaway messages included:

- **Personal touch matters**—while technology enables communication, personal phone calls and one-on-one engagement are more effective than mass messages.
- **Sustainable models are essential**—consistent mentorship is key to long-term success, and sometimes YAs are willing but lack direction on how to contribute effectively.
- **Energy is infectious**—the passion and commitment of a few can inspire many. Broader issues, such as increasing rental costs at Sai centers, also impact YA participation and require attention.

Overall, this initiative highlights the potential of YAs as a bridge between generations and a driving force for spiritual growth. By addressing challenges with empathy and innovation, dormant centers can become thriving hubs of activity and devotion. **This pilot study can inspire other regions and countries to adopt similar approaches, ensuring that every center flourishes and contributes to the broader mission of sharing Swami's love and teachings.**

growing together



through giving

On November 28, 2024, a group of 37 students from SWAHA Hindu College, inspired by their teacher, who also serves as the National Young Adults Coordinator of the SSSIO, Trinidad and Tobago (SSSIOTT), embarked on a journey of service to the South/South East Service Center of SSSIOTT, located 81 km away. This initiative aimed at engaging students in meaningful service to the less fortunate. Since its inception in March 2021, the SSSIOTT Service Center has been providing weekly hot lunches to various vulnerable groups, including homeless individuals, elderly and visually impaired persons, as well as children with physical and mental challenges. The group comprised 37 upper-level high school students (sixth form) aged 17-18, accompanied by 4 teachers and 15 Sai devotees. Together, they contributed to the preparation, cooking, packaging, and distribution of meals to homeless and socially displaced individuals from Court Shamrock and visually challenged persons from the Blind Welfare Association. On this day, approximately 400 hot lunches featuring fresh salad, pasta, rice, and kofta (South Asian dish of mixed vegetables) were prepared and distributed. The well-disci-

plined students approached the activity with enthusiasm, joyfully demonstrating their cooking skills.

To maximize their impact, the students were divided into three groups. Group 1 included 10 students accompanied by Sai devotees, who delivered meals to visually challenged individuals and had the opportunity to learn basket weaving from them. Group 2 consisted of 15 students who visited Court Shamrock, where they interacted with residents, gaining valuable insights into the challenges faced by the socially displaced. Group 3 comprised the remaining students who stayed back at the Service Center, serving hot lunches directly to homeless individuals who visited the kitchen.

For all the young volunteers and their teachers, the experience was profoundly rewarding and left a lasting impression.

The students, teachers, and administration at SWAHA Hindu College expressed keen interest in participating in future SSSIOTT events, highlighting their commitment to building communities and spreading Swami's message through service.

Building Faith and Family

Reflections from Guatemala

The Zone 2A YA retreat was held in Guatemala during September 20-22, 2024. Twenty-eight YAs from El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic participated in the retreat. The retreat's theme, 'Develop Self-Confidence and Faith in God,' focused on empowering participants with tools to strengthen their spiritual journey and self-confidence.

The program included workshops, panel discussions, and community service projects centered around the retreat theme. It also included discourses of Sri Sathya Sai Baba emphasizing the importance of Self-confidence, ways to cultivate it, and how Self-confidence can lead to unwavering faith in God. As part of the retreat's community service initiative, participants provided food and clothing to those in need. Additionally, a dedicated doctor attended the retreat, and his service made a significant impact, particularly when he assisted a man with a colostomy, ensuring the patient received proper care and hygiene support. All the retreat activities allowed the participants to delve deeper into Swami's teachings. Above all, **it was a constant reminder that Swami is the eternal companion and best friend, guiding and supporting everyone through every step of life.**

Ms. Sathya Sosa, the Zonal Young Adult Coordinator of the Central American countries, reflected on her experience in organizing the retreat: "The retreat was special for me because it marked my final event as the YA coordinator for this zone. I devoted myself wholeheartedly to creating a memorable and meaningful experience



for others. My goal was to foster connections among the participants, encouraging them to leave with more Sai brothers and sisters than they arrived with. Forming a family on a spiritual path not only strengthens our bonds but also reminds us that we are never alone in this journey. By the end of the retreat, my heart was filled with immense peace and joy. It was a learning experience for me as well. I realized that life's trials, no matter how challenging, are given by God only to the extent we can endure. Though I often find myself impatient, I have come to understand that God's timing is always perfect. What impacted me the most was realizing that God places the right people in our lives at the right time. Despite not having met before, we came together as one family and left with strengthened bonds and renewed determination to continue serving in His divine mission."



Mr. Pablo Saúl Vega Osorio
México



At His Feet...Basking in His Love

The first time I heard about Swami was in 2006 when I was just 16 years old. Little did I know that my life would change forever. A year later, in 2007, I had the blessing of being in His divine presence for the first time during the World Youth Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam. That experience was not only an opportunity to see Swami, but it also allowed me to experience His love firsthand. Although it was no longer feasible to speak with Him directly in interviews, as in earlier times, on that trip, I could feel how Baba cared for each of us, His youth, like a loving mother. Sai took care of every detail so we could focus on participating in the conference activities. From the moment we arrived at Prasanthi Nilayam, Swami ensured that all the youth were housed in comfortable rooms and provided everything needed for the conference: a backpack, a notebook, a pen, and even sarees for the women. We were also given privileged seating for darshan, quick access to the dining halls, and special attention by the volunteers and conference organizers. His love was palpable throughout the *Ashram*.

While participating in the World Youth Conference activities, the youth from Latin America prepared and rehearsed a cultural program to present to Swami. We were overjoyed at the opportunity to represent our countries through traditional songs and dances in His presence. We dedicated countless hours to perfecting each performance in the cultural program. Swami says that every living being will ultimately achieve perfection, and being at Prasanthi Nilayam—working in unity, detached from the world, under His loving care—was a model of spiritual life. With every rehearsal, we felt we were progressing closer to that goal.

The sacred day of Guru Poornima finally arrived, the day we would perform in front of Him. We prepared our traditional costumes; some depicted Amazonian jungle animals and birds, while others were dressed in the attire our ancestors wore during ritualistic or festive dances. Swami smiled playfully as He saw us in those colorful costumes and watched us attentively throughout the program. At the end of our performance, He invited us to take pictures with Him. We had finally reached the ultimate goal: **to be at His divine feet after a process of purification and striving for perfection.**



Pablo sitting in the center of the front row

During the final days of the conference, we were asked to sit back-to-back in rows at Sai Kulwant Hall. We didn't know exactly what would happen, but we were filled with the excitement of anticipation. Swami gave each youth an orange robe to take home as we returned to our countries. For me, this robe is a constant reminder that Swami is with me at every moment, wherever I go. It is a physical representation of His presence and a sacred object that allows me to connect with Him, especially in difficult times.

During those auspicious days, I received nothing but Swami's divine and overpowering love. **I realized that He takes care of even the smallest details, and nothing will ever be lacking if I surrender myself completely to Him** on the spiritual path.

Pablo behind the harmonium





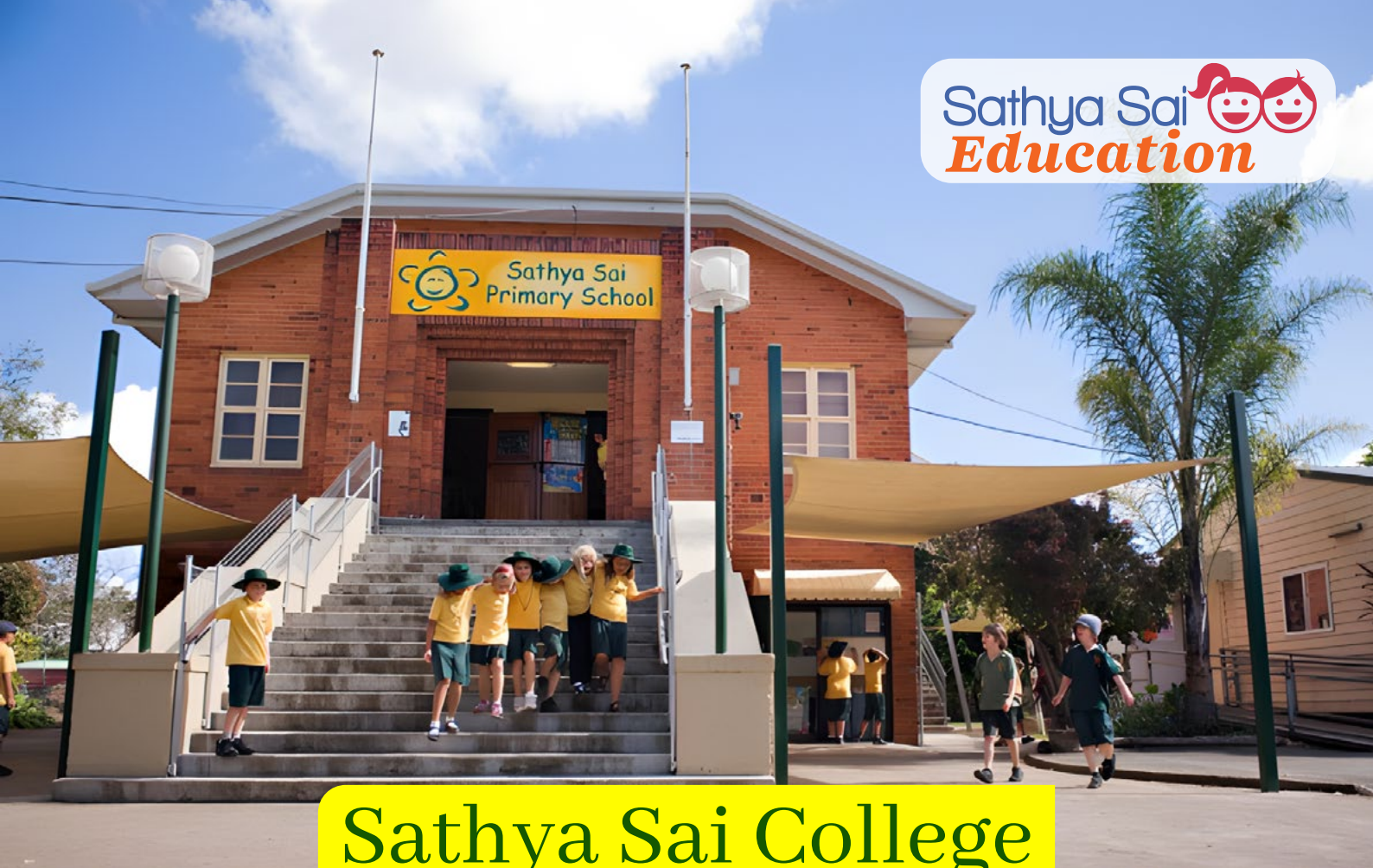
Calling for Your Articles, Poems, Audios, Videos!

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

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

It is time to open up your hearts and share the treasures gathered from Swami. These treasures only grow by sharing.

Please upload materials at: <https://sathyas.ai/upload>



Sathya Sai College Murwillumbah Australia

Every river begins as a small stream, gathering water during its journey to the ocean. That is the story of the Sathya Sai College at Murwillumbah, Australia, a kindergarten to 12th grade, non-denominational school in which the formal curriculum is integrated with the five human values of truth, right conduct, peace, love, and non-violence. The school had a humble beginning at Mt. Warning in March 1997, with nine students guided by two teachers and a principal! It was the 'heartchild' of Mr. Robert and Mrs. Wendy Cameron from Murwillumbah, who were inspired by the founder, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The couple had been blessed with an interview by Swami during which they asked Him whether they could supplement the secular education program for their children with the universal and eternal human values taught by Baba. Swami blessed them with His approval, and they immediately established the 'school' in a barn on private property! Their hope and prayer was that the Sathya Sai School would be a place of inspiration where children could discover and practice their inherent human values for the greater good of all.



Highlights in the Timeline of the School's History

1997

The school was established on private property with 9 students.

1999

The school moved to premises on Condon Street, Murwillumbah. It was a labor of love as the parents and members of the local Sai Community made great efforts to prepare the new premises.

2000

Thanks to a generous donation, the school moved to a 2-storey building on 9 Nullum Street, Murwillumbah.

2005

New classrooms were built with contributions from SSSIO members and the Australian government.

2006

To accommodate the growing enrollment, the Board of Directors purchased the adjacent block of land to construct a permanent school building with classes from kindergarten to grade 6.

2015

A property with a few classrooms was purchased in Dungay for further expansion.





2016

The Dungay property was renovated and upgraded to set up rooms for food technology and science.

2018

A secondary campus was established at Dungay with 23 Students.

2020

The buildings at Dungay were renovated and converted to incorporate facilities for carpentry and computers.

2021

The first batch of five Class-12 students appeared for the Higher School Certificate examination. Three students secured university admission, and two entered the workforce.

2022

Four new classrooms and walkways were built to accommodate the growing student enrollment.

2025

The total number of students enrolled crossed 300 for the first time.

Vision and Mission

Sathya Sai College at Murwillumbah has a clear vision—character development with academic excellence. This is based on Swami’s teachings that the end of education is character and that education must be for life and not only for a mere living.

The college aims to lay the foundation of noble character in young minds by instilling the eternal and universal values of fraternity, patriotism, sacrifice, and moral integrity so that they can become ideal leaders who shape the destiny of the nation and the world.

Impact of the Human Values Program

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Australia, and the Board of Directors of the college have introduced human values-based educational training for all teachers on a fortnightly basis. The logo of the school clearly pronounces that human excellence based on the five human values is its motto. All staff and students understand, embrace, and practice the human values taught by Bhagawan Sathya Sai Baba.

Human values classes are also held for parents every term. In fact, the school has



grown because parents want their children to imbibe these values. The impact of this program is seen in many ways:

1. There has been a continuous reduction of well-being issues at both campuses.
2. The community helpers, mainly bus drivers, comment positively on the students' behavior.
3. The service activities undertaken by the school—visiting elderly homes in the area and providing non-perishable food and toiletries to the needy—have had a positive impact on both the students and the community.
4. Local teachers are keen to enroll in the school, and those who have joined have embraced a vegetarian diet and practice meditation.
5. Staff who have left the school for family and work reasons desire to return to the school if they relocate to the area.
6. Students who had left for other schools also wish to return.
7. Other secondary schools give first preference to Sathya Sai Primary School students, but since 2018, 90% of the grade 6 students have transferred to the secondary campus of Sathya Sai College.
8. Employers prefer to hire Sathya Sai College students for part-time work during weekends and holidays.
9. Many parents have proudly shared the positive change in the behavior of school children at home.
10. The staff and parents from other schools compliment the children from Sathya Sai College at music, sports, and other events.

*T*he end of wisdom is freedom. The end of culture is perfection. The end of knowledge is love. The end of education is character.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
May 20, 1991

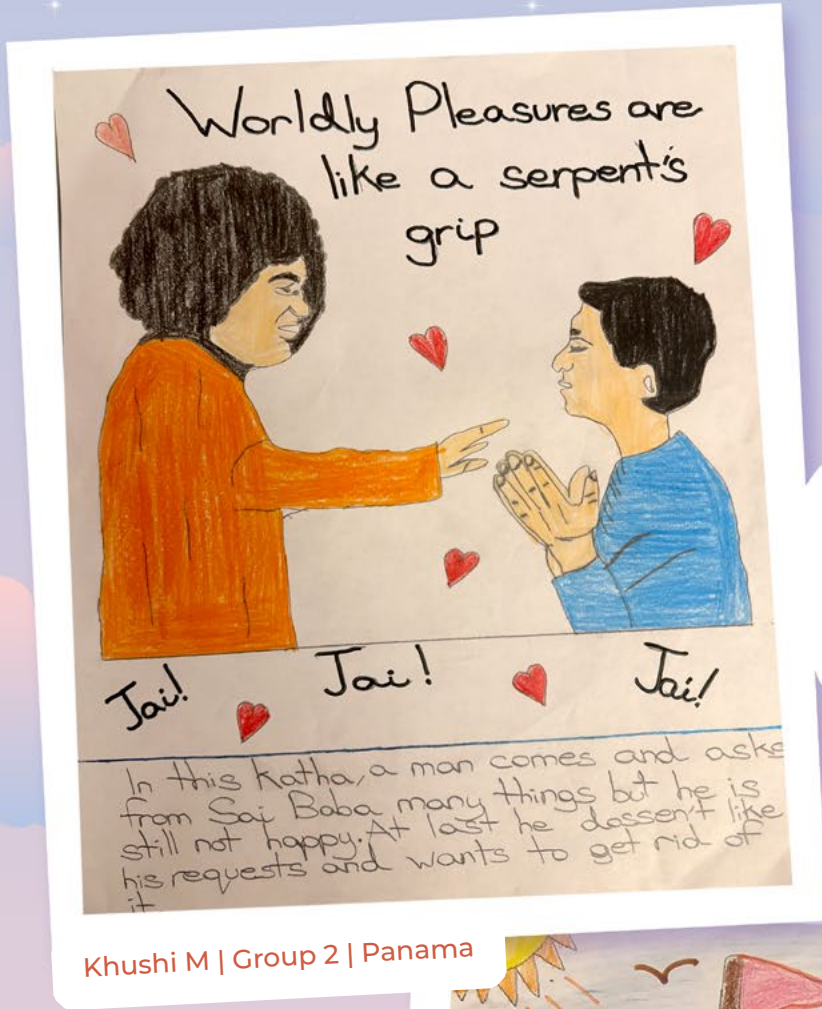
A TRIBUTE TO OUR SAI

As his unseen hands lift hearts in need
Swami encourages us to do his holy deed
His presence rests in us like a Divine seed

Dear Sai our love for you will only grow
With every breeze our feelings flow
Our hearts will shine, this you know
Like the rivers that forever flow
In every heart your presence is sure to show

Krishna A | Group 3 | Australia

SaiSruthi I | Group 4 | USA



Khushi M | Group 2 | Panama



Gayathiry P | Group 2 | Australia



Sahil C | Group 2 | Panama

Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
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
May 12, 2025	Monday	Buddha Poornima



Streaming on sathyasai.org/live and YouTube



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



Swami often reminds you of your spiritual family where Truth is your father, Love is your mother, Wisdom is your son, Peace is your daughter, Devotion is your brother, and Yogis are your friends. In the spiritual path, these are your true relatives, who will always accompany you. When you have this kind of relationship, when you treasure this kind of friendship, you will be able to break the bonds of the world and become free.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

February 17, 1985



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

