

SATHYA SAI
THE
ETERNAL
COMPANION



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APRIL 2025



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



Everyone should realize that the divine is equally present in all. The name of Sai is proclaimed by trees when they wave their heads. The birds in their chirping call upon man to remember Sai's name. The flowers in spreading their fragrance declare the glory of Sai. The bees when they hum announce the bliss in Sai's name. "Sai!" is the sound that reverberates from the sky and earth. Sai can be experienced everywhere. "Sai" is not one's name. "Sai" is the indweller residing in the heart of everyone.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

July 18, 1989



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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Editorial

Maya

PART 1

Maya is a spiritual concept commonly discussed in Vedanta and other schools of Indian philosophy, including Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. It is interpreted in various ways by different spiritual traditions. Even within Vedanta of *Sanathana Dharma*, *Advaita* (non-dual philosophy) explains it differently from the devotional schools of *Vishishtadvaita* (qualified non-duality) and *Dvaita* (duality). It is a complex concept to grasp, although it is a fact. **We can gain an insight into the concept of Maya through the life and teachings of various masters, philosophers, saints, sages, and Avatars.** Like God, Maya has no beginning, no end. It is an enigma. It is commonly translated as 'illusion' or 'delusion,' but this is fallacious. Let us begin to understand the concept of Maya based on what the Avatars have proclaimed.

The Avatars on Maya

Lord Krishna, the *Paripoorna Avatar* of the *Dwapara* Age, has gifted the world with the *Bhagavad Gita* (BG), which is the essence of all the Upanishads and contains the nectar of eternal wisdom. The verse often quoted by scholars when discussing Maya is (BG 7.14):

*daivi hyesha guna-mayi mama
maya duratyaya
mam eva ye prapadyante mayam
etam taranti te*

(My divine Maya, consisting of the three gunas (attributes of nature), is very difficult to overcome. But those who surrender to Me can cross it easily.)

Maya is part of the divine nature. It is part of God, as Lord Krishna declares. It comprises the *gunas*—*Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Thamas*. But God is beyond these three *gunas*. So, once

The only way to overcome Maya is through knowledge, which reveals that Brahman alone is real and the world is *mithya*.

we surrender to God, we go beyond the *gunas* and Maya. All phenomena at the individual and universal level are manifestations of the Maya of God. At the universal level, Maya is responsible for creation, sustenance, and dissolution. At the individual level, Maya is responsible for our various experiences in the waking, dream, and deep sleep stages.

God and Maya are explained by the analogy of a poisonous snake. While the poison can hurt everyone, it does not harm the snake. **Similarly, Maya is part of God and can affect all phenomena in the universe and creation but cannot affect God. God transcends Maya.**

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the *Paripoorna Avatar* of this Kali Age, says in a discourse on September 8, 1966,

“The veil of Maya (illusion), however, hides from man the face of God, which is shining from every being and thing around him. Maya is of the nature of thamas (darkness and ignorance). In deep dreamless sleep, the Self alone exists, but it is there supervened by Maya or ajnana (ignorance) only. You are not aware then that you are Brahman; that is the difference between the jnana (spiritual wisdom) and the sushupti (deep sleep) stage. The jnani knows he is one with Brahman; the person in deep dreamless sleep does not know this. Everyone experiences it, so it is universal.”

The *Advaita* philosophy proclaims, “*Brahma sathyam jagan-mithya jivo-brahmaiva naparah* (Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal. Jiva is none other than Brahman).” This *mithya* is Maya. But *mithya* is wrongly understood to mean ‘non-existent’. The closest translations of *mithya* are ‘real unreal’ and ‘apparently real.’

In His discourse on September 8, 1966, Swami says,

“We cannot pronounce it as a-sath (non-existent), for its effects are everywhere; we cannot pronounce it as sath (existent), for when the reality is experienced, there is no duality at all. From the standpoint of wisdom (*jnana*), Maya is unreal; in the vision of the enlightened saint, Maya is absent. It is a peculiar, *anirvachaniya* (indescribable) phenomenon.”



Maya According to Advaita, Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita

A beautiful example in *Advaita Vedanta*, propagated by Sri Adi Shankaracharya (a renowned Vedic scholar, philosopher, and teacher) is the perception of a rope in darkness. The rope cannot be seen because of the darkness. Similarly, in the darkness of ignorance (*Avarana*), the rope that is the Truth is not seen. And then, because of the tendencies of a wavering mind (*Vikshepa*), one projects one's own ideas on the rope. Somebody might perceive the rope as a snake and be scared to death. Someone else might see it as a beautiful garland. **Avarana and Vikshepa are different aspects of Maya. The instant light shines upon it, we see the rope in its true form—only a rope. When wisdom dawns, Maya disappears.**

However, we cannot claim that the perceived snake, or the garland that people 'saw,' is unreal. During the experience in the darkness, they were real! But the rope was non-existent then! Similarly, we identify with the world and body-mind complex, forgetting our real nature, the Atman. **When the**

Advaitin (practitioners of non-dual philosophy) says, "This world has no existence!" what does it mean? It means that the world has no absolute existence. It exists only in the mind. The *Advaitic* school of thought postulates that the minute we acquire *Jnana*, Maya disappears.

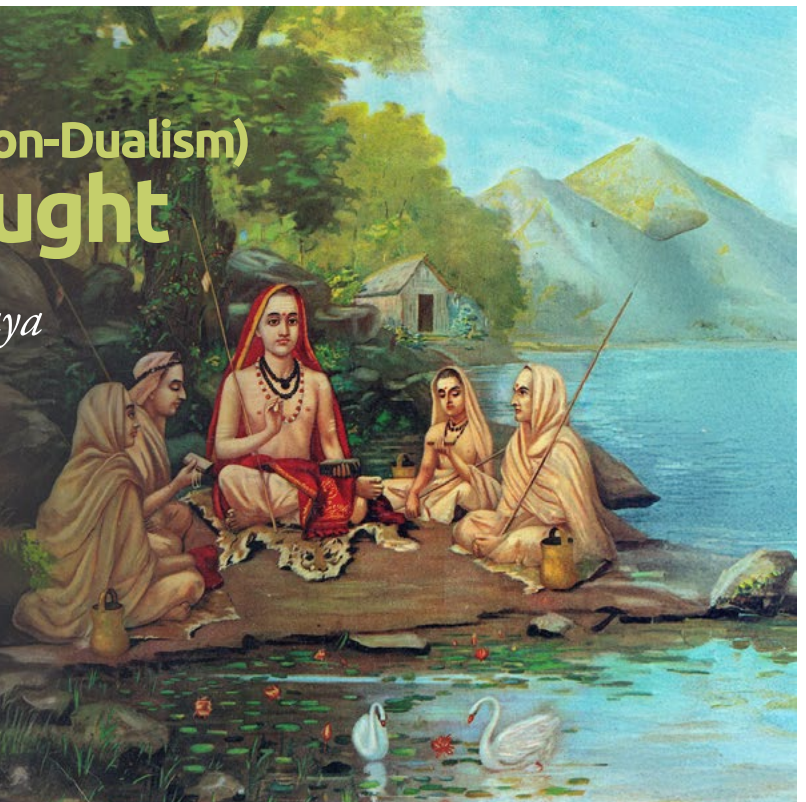
There are the two devotional schools of thought—*Vishishtadvaita* (qualified non-dualism), established by Sri Ramanujacharya, and *Dvaita* (dualism), propagated by Sri Madhvacharya – both of which believe that Maya exists. A good example is a display screen. On that screen, various pictures and movies are projected. Once the projection stops, only the screen remains. The screen is Brahman, and only it exists. But we have to accept that the pictures are also Brahman because they are on the screen!

In summary, **for the Advaitins, Maya is mithya. It is neither Sath (truth) nor Asath (untruth).** It is that which is real when one is in ignorance and unreal when wisdom dawns. The rope looks like a snake, and the mirage in a desert looks like a body of water. Once knowledge is gained, these are no

The Advaita (Non-Dualism) School of Thought

The only way to overcome Maya is through knowledge, which reveals that Brahman alone is real and the world is mithya.

Sri Adi Shankaracharya



longer perceived. On the other hand, for the Bhaktas (devotees), Maya is the divine power, the divine mother who is also called the great Maya, or *Maha Maya*! They pray to the Mother, "Please do not delude me by your world-bewitching Maya, but lead me to the light and the Truth."

Saints and Masters on Maya

A great sage and Hindu philosopher, Sri Ramana Maharshi, aligned with *Advaitic* philosophy, emphasized direct experience over philosophical debate. He described Maya as the false identification of the Self with the body rather than the Atman (true Self). The way to overcome it is by *Atmavichara* (Self-enquiry). Once the ego is gone, Maya disappears, revealing the ever-present reality of the Self.

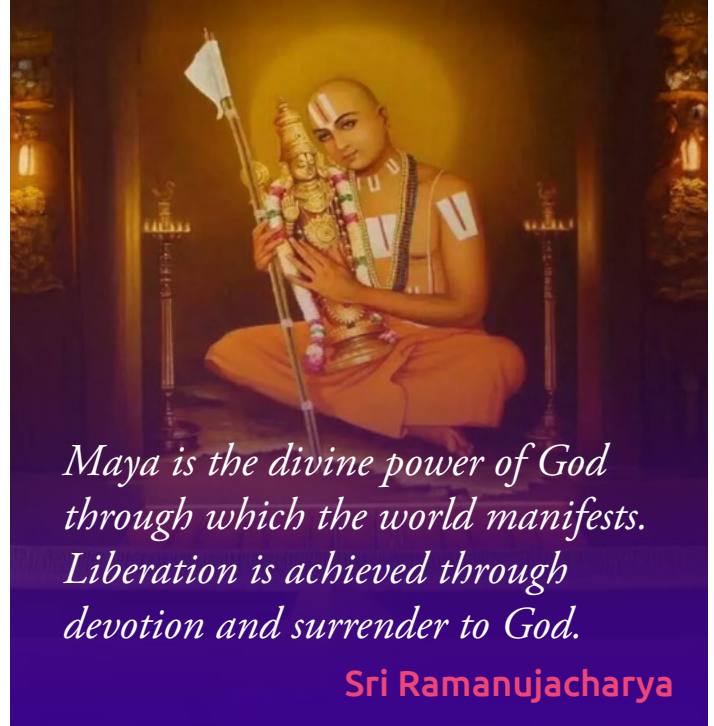
Sri Adi Shankaracharya defined Maya as ignorance that veils the true nature of the Self (Atman or Brahman). According to him, Maya is *anirvachaniya* (indefinable) and causes duality, making people believe in the reality of the material world. The only way to overcome Maya is through knowledge, which reveals that Brahman alone is real and the world is *mithya*.

Sri Ramanujacharya considered Maya to be the divine power of God through which the world manifests. Instead of rejecting Maya, he accepted it as a part of God. He termed the world as a dependent reality and not an illusion. He said that liberation is achieved through devotion and surrender to God.

Adi Shankara's guru is Sri Govindapada, who is a disciple of Sri Gaudapada. The theory of *Ajatavada*, a profound philosophical doctrine, was introduced by Sri Gaudapada. *Ajata* means unborn, and *vada* means doctrine. *Ajatavada* asserts that creation never truly happened—the world, the individual self (*jiva*), and even the idea of birth and death are Maya.

Unlike traditional Vedantic views that the universe emerges from Brahman, *Ajata-*

Vishishtadvaita (Qualified Non-Dualism) School of Thought



Maya is the divine power of God through which the world manifests. Liberation is achieved through devotion and surrender to God.

Sri Ramanujacharya

vada holds that the universe was never created at all. It only appears due to illusion, like a dream or a mirage. Brahman is the only reality, and everything else is a mere appearance. There is no real bondage and no real liberation—only an imagined experience of both. Just as dreams appear real while we are dreaming but vanish upon waking, this world appears real due to ignorance but dissolves upon Self-realization. Since the world is unreal, any explanation of it is also ultimately illusory.

There is an incident that shows the *Ajatavada* principle in practice. Once, a Vedic scholar prayed to Swami to release him from the cycle of birth and death. Swami replied, "When were you born? When do you die? You were never born and will never die. You are verily the Atman. When you realize that, you get released!"

Maya is the power of Brahman. At the universal level, *Mahamaya* (divine power) is responsible for creation, sustenance,

and dissolution. At an individual level, it is responsible for various experiences and states. At the individual level (Yoga Maya), we have two types of Maya as described by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a divine incarnation, **who says that Yoga Maya is both a binding force (*Avidya Maya*) and a liberating force (*Vidya Maya*).**

1. *Avidya Maya*—This aspect of Maya keeps us distracted and ignorant.
2. *Vidya Maya*—This aspect of Maya shows us the path of light and who we really are.

Here is an analogy of the mother that describes *Avidya Maya* and *Vidya Maya* aspects of Brahman. When the mother is busy with her chores, she engages the child by making him busy playing with toys. The child is caught up in these toys and games. People who are caught up in sense pleasures are akin to the child. After playing for a while, the child gets tired and restless, and then nothing else but the mother's company makes him happy. With longing, the child runs to the mother, and the mother gives herself to the child. This situation is comparable to people tired of sense pleasures and longing for the divine. **This is the journey from *Avidya Maya* to *Vidya Maya*, seeking God. It takes man away from bondage and grief to freedom and joy.**

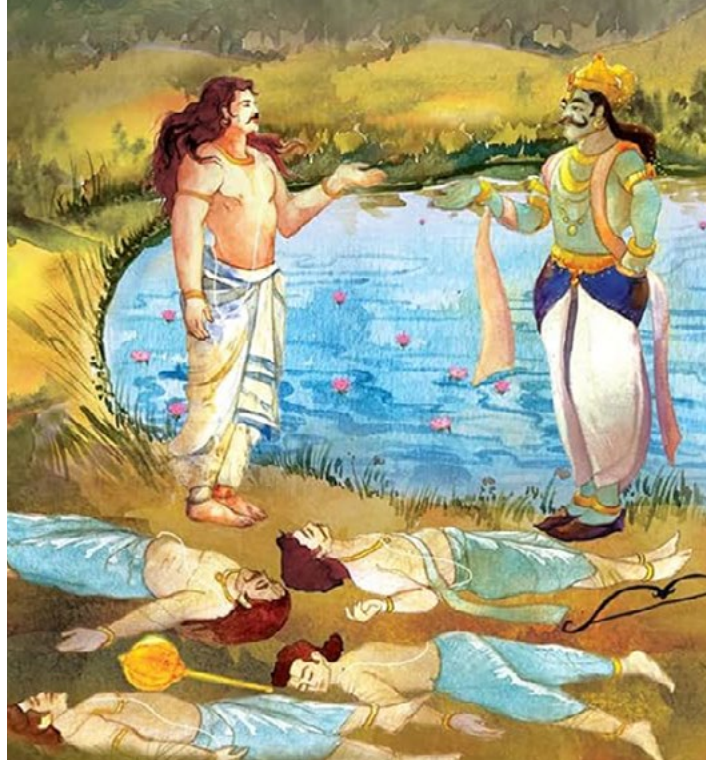
Mahamaya (Maya at the cosmic level) has no beginning and no end since it is part of Brahman, which has no beginning and no end. As long as God is present, Mahamaya, too, exists. But Yoga Maya (Maya at the individual level) has an end. The minute we are enlightened, Yoga Maya disappears.

Using Death to Understand Maya

In the Mahabharata, there is a profound episode known as the *Yaksha Prashna*, where Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava, answers the riddles posed by a mystical *Yaksha* (a celestial being). One of the most famous questions the *Yaksha* asks is,

What is the greatest wonder in this world?

Yudhishtira responds that people see others dying every day, yet they believe they will live forever.



“What is the greatest wonder in this world?” Yudhishtira responds, “Day after day, countless beings die. Yet, those who remain continue to live as if they are immortal. **This is the greatest wonder.**” It is Maya that makes people believe so!

Swami Vivekananda also explains Maya using the phenomenon of death,

“Then, there is the tremendous fact of death. The whole world is going toward death; everything dies. **All our progress, our vanities, our reforms, our luxuries, our wealth, our knowledge, have that one end—death. That is all that is certain.** Cities come and go, empires rise and fall, and planets break into pieces and crumble into dust to be blown about by the atmospheres of other planets. Thus, it has been going on from time to time with-

out beginning. Death is the end of everything. Death is the end of life, of beauty, of wealth, of power, of virtue, too. Saints die, and sinners die; kings die, and beggars die. **They are all going to death, and yet this tremendous clinging on to life exists. Somehow, we do not know why we cling to life; we cannot give it up. And this is Maya.**

Is This Real or That Real?

Swami says, *“Life is a dream; realize it.”* We all go through the four stages of *Jagruth* (wakefulness), *Swapna* (dream state), *Sushupti* (deep sleep), and *Turiya* (beyond the three states). We have both wonderful dreams and terrible nightmares. The minute we wake up, we think they are unreal. But while they are being experienced, they are real! So, we cannot say that they are unreal or real. They are the ‘real-unreal’ or ‘apparent reality.’ Swami narrates the story of King Janaka to illustrate this concept.

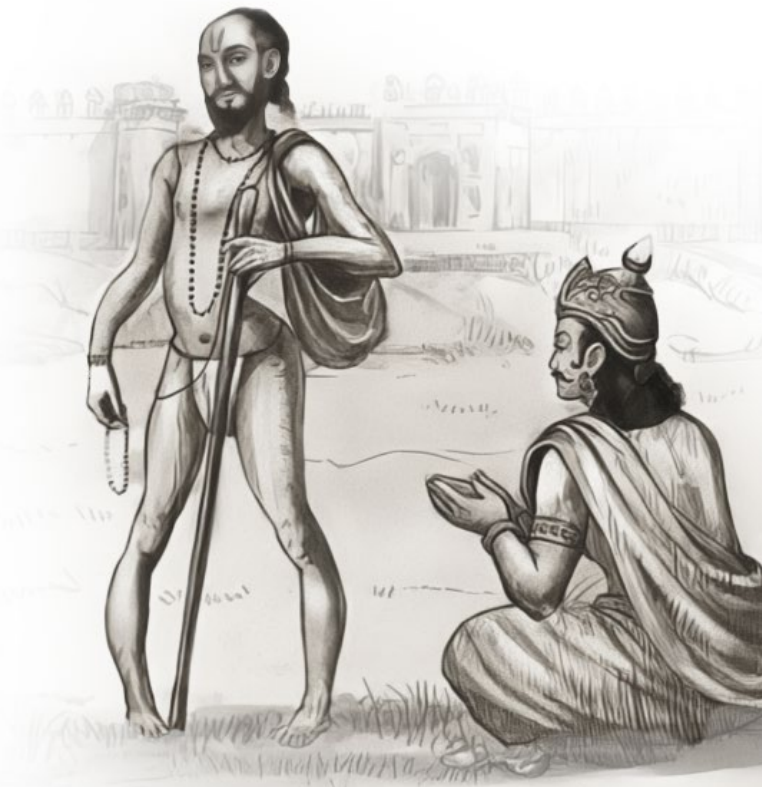
King Janaka used to gather many rishis in his palace and take delight in discussing spiritual problems with them. He was adept in *sadhana* (spiritual practice) and attained the highest stage of *samadhi* (state of equanimity) through Raja Yoga. One day, while in the royal court with the queen and the maids, he fell asleep while conversing with them. He had a dream during that sleep. He dreamt of being deprived of his kingdom and roaming half-mad, hungry, and deserted in the jungle, begging for food from whoever he met. Then, he came upon some men washing dishes and vessels after a feast. He ran toward them, seeking some crumbs, and they gave him a little rice scraped from the vessels. He was about to put it into his mouth when a big bird swooped down and snatched it from his grasp. He cried out in pain and grief. The queen heard his cry and woke him up.

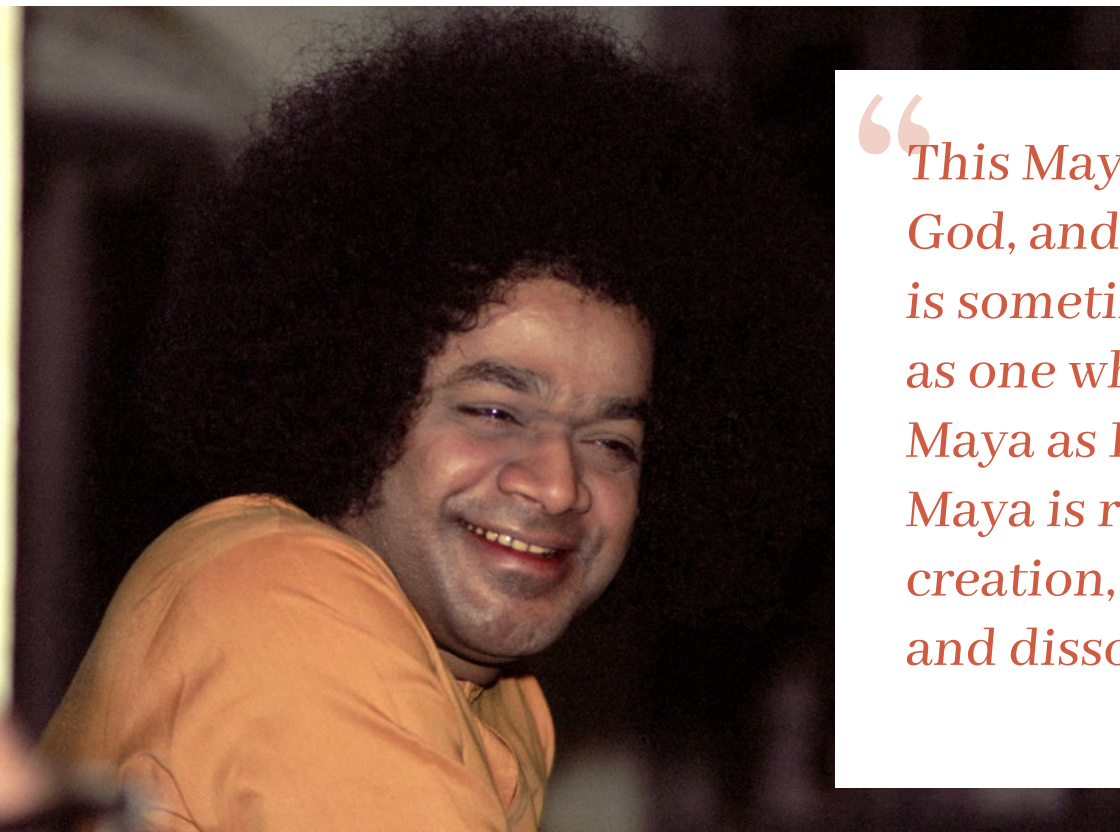
Of course, when he woke, he knew he was the King. He also remembered that a second before, he was a beggar in the dream. He

questioned within himself, “Which is real—is this real or is that real?” To every inquirer, he asked the same question, “Am I a king or a beggar?” He wanted everyone to tell him which was real. The queen and others were frightened at his behavior and sent for the ministers. With them came Sage Ashtavakra, the wise preceptor. He realized the situation as soon as he saw the King. When the King asked the same question, **he answered, “Oh King! This is unreal; that too is unreal. You, who experienced this as well as that, alone are real.”**

Avatarhood Proclaimed After Declaring “Maya Has Gone”

On October 20, 1940, the 14-year-old Sathya cast aside the school books He was carrying and announced, ***“I am no longer your Sathya. I am Sai.”*** His sister-in-law came out of the kitchen and looked outside; she was almost blinded by the splendor of the halo which she saw around His head! **Baba refused to enter the home and addressed her, “I am leaving. I do not belong to you; Maya has gone; My devotees are calling Me; I have My work. I cannot stay any**





“This Maya is a tool of God, and therefore, God is sometimes described as one who wears Maya as His cloak. This Maya is responsible for creation, maintenance, and dissolution.”

longer.” Thus, the Avatar, at His will, can don the mask of Maya and also remove it.

He moved out into the garden of the bungalow of Sri Anjaneyulu, the Excise Inspector of the area, who was very attached to the young Baba. He sat on a rock amid the trees. People came into the garden from all directions, bringing flowers and fruits. By now, the anxious parents rushed to Uravakonda and visited Him. Little Sathya simply said, “*They are Maya.*” Mother Easwaramma pleaded, “Sathya, speak to your mother!” A few minutes of silence ensued, after which Swami asked, “*Who belongs to whom?*” It was not a question but a pronouncement. Baba continued, “*It is all Maya; it is all Maya.*”

Swami Himself provided the solution to Maya through His very first *bhajan*, which He taught mankind. The grove resounded with the voices of hundreds, singing in chorus the lines Sathya Sai taught them - **Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam**, which

means “O Mind! Adhere to the feet of the Guru by singing His glory and take refuge at His feet, which enables one to cross the unconquerable ocean of *samsara*.”

Maya as a Tool of God

Though Maya has to be overcome to realize one’s true nature, it is wrong to consider Maya as something negative. We have already seen that *Vidya Maya* shows us the light and leads us to God.

In His divine discourse in June 1978, Swami says,

“God’s actions can be described as leelas (divine plays). No one can determine the nature of such leelas. It is also not possible to understand them. Only after the event has taken place, can one realize its significance. Because such leelas are generally covered by Maya, man is not able to recognize the divinity that is responsible for them. Because of this Maya alone, man is not able to recog-

nize the divine connection between man and man. All attachments arise because of Maya. If there is no Maya, the progress of mankind itself will come to a standstill. In any respect, Maya is not bad. In fact, Maya is very helpful for individuals who understand the different aspects of Maya. For one who does not understand the same, it can bring about great harm. In fact, Maya is very necessary for man and can be the royal path in the search for God. For an individual who does not understand the aspect of Maya, it will be a very difficult path.

*Take the example of a cat. When it catches hold of its kitten, it does so to take it to a place of safety. On the other hand, when the same cat catches hold of a rat, it is to kill the rat. **For those who***

do not understand this aspect of divinity, Maya is like a cat catching a rat. For those who understand God, Maya will be a great help, like the cat that takes hold of the kitten. This Maya is a tool of God, and therefore, God is sometimes described as one who wears Maya as His cloak. This Maya is responsible for creation, maintenance, and dissolution.”

In this editorial, we have explored what Maya is, based on what Avatars, saints, masters, and philosophers have said.

Let us explore the different ways in which Maya manifests and what we should do to overcome it and reach our ultimate goal in the second and concluding part 2 of this editorial in the next issue.

Jai Sai Ram.



Who is **SAI?**

GOD is inscrutable. He cannot be realized in the outer objective world. He is in the very heart of every being. Gemstones must be sought deep underground. They do not float in the air. Seek God deep within yourself, not outside, in the tantalizing, kaleidoscopic nature.

The body is granted to you for this high purpose. But you are now misusing it, like the person who cooked his daily food in the gem-studded gold vessel he received as an heirloom. Man extols God as omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, but he ignores His presence in himself! **Of course, many people venture to describe the attributes of God and proclaim Him to be such and such. But these are their imaginations and the reflections of their own predilections and preferences.**

“My power is immeasurable; My truth is inexplicable, unfathomable. I am announcing this about Me, for the need has arisen.

Who can affirm that God is this or that? Who can affirm that God is not of this form or with this attribute? Each one can acquire from the vast expanse of the ocean only as much as can be contained in the vessel he carries. From that limited quantity, they can grasp only a little of that immensity.

Each religion defines God within the limits it demarcates and then claims to have grasped Him. Like the seven blind men who described the elephant as a pillar, a fan, a rope, or a wall because they contacted just a part and could not comprehend the appearance of the entire animal, so too, religions speak of a part and assert that their vision is complete and total.

There is Only One Religion, The Religion of Love

Every religion tends to forget that God is all forms, all names, all attributes, and all assertions. The religion of humanity is the sum and substance of all these partial faiths, for there is only one religion—the religion of love. The various limbs of the elephant that seemed separate and distinct to the blind seekers of its truth were all fostered and activated by one single stream of blood. **The various religions and faiths that feel separate and distinct are also all fostered by one single stream of love.**

The optical sense alone cannot visualize the truth. It gives only false and fogged information. For example, many observe My actions and start declaring that My nature is such and such. **They are unable**

to gauge the sanctity, majesty, and eternal reality that is Me. The power of Sai is limitless; It manifests for ever. All forms of ‘power’ are resident in this palm of Sai.

But those who profess to have understood Me, the *yogis* (spiritually advanced persons), the *pundits* (scholars), the *jnanis* (enlightened persons), all of them are aware only of the least important, the apparent, external manifestation of an infinitesimal part of that power, namely, the “miracles!” They do not want to contact the source of all power and all wisdom, which is available here with Sai at Brindavan [Whitefield Ashram]. They are satisfied when they secure a chance to exhibit their book-learning and parade their scholarship in Vedic lore, not realizing that **the person from whom the Vedas emanated is in their midst, for their sake.** They even ask, in their pride, for a few more chances!

‘Defeats’ Experienced by Avatars are Part of the Divine Play (*Leela*)

This has been the case for all ages. People may be very near (physically) to the Avatar (divine incarnation), but they live out their lives unaware of their good fortune. **They exaggerate the role of miracles, which when compared to My glory and majesty, are as trivial as a mosquito compared to the size and strength of the elephant upon which it alights.** Therefore, when you speak about these ‘miracles,’ I laugh within Myself out of pity that you allow yourself so easily to lose the opportunity of precious awareness of My reality.



My power is immeasurable; My truth is inexplicable, unfathomable. I am announcing this about Me, for the need has arisen. But what I am doing now is only the gift of a 'visiting card!' Let Me tell you that the most emphatic declarations of Truth by an Avatar were made clearly and unmistakably only by Lord Sri Krishna. Despite this declaration, you will notice that in the divine drama of the same Krishna, He accepted defeat in His efforts and endeavors on a few occasions. You must also note that those defeats, too, were part of the drama that He had planned and directed Himself. For example, when many kings pleaded with Him to avert the war with the Kauravas, He confessed that His mission to the Kauravas' court for ensuring peace had 'failed!' But in truth, He had not willed that it should succeed! He had decided that war would be waged! His mission was intended to punish the greed and iniquity of the Kauravas and to condemn them before the whole world.

Do not Crave from Me Trivial Material Objects

Now, I must tell you that during this Sai Avatar, there is no place for even such a 'drama' with scenes of failures and defeats! **What I will must take place; what I plan must succeed. I am the Truth; Truth does not need to hesitate, fear, or bend. The word 'willing' is superfluous for Me. For My Grace is ever available to devotees who have steady love and faith.**

Since I move freely among them, talking and singing, even intellectuals fail to grasp My truth, My power, My glory, or My real task as an Avatar. I can solve any problem, however knotty. I am beyond the reach of the most intensive inquiry and the most meticulous measurement. **Only those who have recognized My love and experienced that love can assert that they have glimpsed My reality. For, the path of love is the royal road that leads mankind to Me.**

Do not attempt to know Me through physical eyes. When you go to a temple and stand before the image of God, you pray with eyes closed, don't you? Why? Because you feel that the inner eye of wisdom alone can reveal Him to you. Therefore, do not crave from Me trivial material objects; but crave for Me, and you will be rewarded. Not that you should not receive whatever objects I give you as a sign of grace, out of the abundance of love.

I shall tell you why I give these rings, talismans, rosaries, etc. It is to symbolize the bond between Me and those to whom they are given. **When calamity befalls them, the article reaches Me in a flash and returns in a flash, taking from Me the remedial grace for protection. That grace is available to anyone who calls on Me by any name or form, not only to those who wear these gifts. Love is the bond that wins grace.**

There is no Creature Without Love

Consider the meaning of the name Sai Baba. 'Sa' means 'divine,' *ai* or *ayi* means mother, and 'Baba' means father. The name indicates the divine mother and father, just as *Samba-shiva* also means the divine mother and father.

Your physical parents exhibit love with a dose of selfishness. But **this Sai 'mother and father' showers affection or reprimands only to lead you toward victory in the struggle for Self-realization.**

mands only to lead you toward victory in the struggle for Self-realization.

Because, this Sai has come to achieve the supreme task of uniting the entire mankind as one family through the bond of brotherhood, by affirming and illuminating the *atmic* reality of each being, to reveal the divine, which is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests. And to teach all to recognize the common divine heritage that binds humanity so that man can rid himself of his animal nature and rise to divinity, which is his goal.

I am the Embodiment of Love; Love is My instrument. There is no creature without Love. Even the lowest form loves itself, at least. And its Self is God. So, there are no atheists, though some might dislike Him or refuse Him, as malarial patients dislike sweets or diabetic patients refuse to have anything to do with sweets! Those who preen themselves as atheists will one day, when their illness is gone, relish God and revere Him. **I had to tell you so much about My truth, for I desire that you should contemplate on this and derive joy therefrom, so that you may be inspired to observe the disciplines laid down by Me and progress toward the goal of Self-realization, the realization of the Sai that shines in your hearts.**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

June 19, 1974





Experiences of
Devotees

The Greatest EMBODIMENT *of* DIVINE LOVE



I WAS BORN IN 1956, BUT FEEL THAT MY REAL LIFE BEGAN IN 1990 WHEN I CAME TO THE LOTUS FEET OF SWAMI.

Though my father had taken me for *darshan* at Dharmakshetra, Bombay, when I was about five or six years old, I hardly remember anything about it. While he would often visit Dharmakshetra, I got busy with my schooling and college. After graduating from medical school, I came to the USA in 1982. In 1984, while doing my residency at Atlanticare Health Services in Atlantic City, New Jersey, I was invited to *bhajans* being held in the small Indian community. I attended out of courtesy and did not truly understand the significance of *bhajans*. Soon, I began to routinely attend such sessions out of courtesy, though I would just sit through the event, receive the *prasad* that was distributed, and leave.

Divine Love at First Sight

I did not realize that my 'reintroduction' to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba had begun. I read a few books about Swami, and they aroused my interest in Him. So, when I traveled to India to meet my parents after completing my residency and fellowship in Cardiology in 1990, I decided to go to Puttaparthi, as well. When I landed in Bangalore with my wife and two sons, the taxi driver told us that if we wanted to see Sai Baba, we should go to Brindavan (Whitefield *ashram*) because Swami was in Bangalore at that time.

We were lucky and just in time for *darshan*. As soon as the taxi reached the *ashram*, everybody was saying, "Baba is coming. Go fast." We entrusted our luggage to the friendly taxi driver and rushed in. The place

I secured along with my boys was far from Swami's chair, but during *darshan*, He came walking toward us. When He came near me, He looked into my eyes, staring at me without blinking. I also looked into His eyes intently in the same way. Suddenly, tears started rolling down my cheeks, and I just couldn't stop crying. My sons looked at me puzzled and asked, "Dad, why are you crying?" I said I did not know why, but I just couldn't stop the tears! **It felt like Swami**

was looking into my eyes and deep into my soul for eternity!

That is when the change happened! I was so immersed in divine love that I started making annual visits to India to see my beloved Swami. It was during my trip in 1995 that I started getting involved in medical camps held at the *ashram*. Dr.

Raghavendra Prasad was instrumental in giving me that opportunity. This led me to annually travel to Swami multiple times for every medical camp held during Guru Purnima, Birthday, Christmas, and Maha Shivarathri celebrations. But I was not satisfied. **The yearning to see Swami and spend time with Him was so intense that I would make additional visits and serve in the Super Specialty Hospital in Puttaparthi as a visiting physician.**

The Power of Prayer

Swami, slowly but surely, shaped and guided my life through many interactions. The things He mentions in almost every interview are the purpose of life, how time should be spent doing good, and how doing service is most important for our uplift and salvation. So, apart from medical camps, my wife, Neelam, also started serving in churches in

Within moments,
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Atlantic City, USA, where we lived, teaching human values to children. There were a lot of difficulties because the adults were suspicious of her intentions. They wondered if we were proselytizing and thought that religious ideas were being taught. But Swami encouraged her to persevere in her service efforts and help the children. And that is what she did, praying to Swami daily. The power of prayer was so strong that, ultimately, she succeeded. **As the years went by, the transformation in the children was so incredible that even the parents started attending *Bal Vikas* (Sai Spiritual Education) classes, which they were initially reluctant to send their children to!**

One night, I got an emergency call from the hospital as one of the patients was in urgent need of a pacemaker. So, I rushed to the hospital and tried my best to place the temporary pacemaker. We didn't have the current fluoroscopy technology, so I had to place the pacemaker blindly in the heart with the help of a wire. Despite dozens of attempts, I was unsuccessful. Distraught, I finally closed my eyes and prayed to Swami. "Please help me, Lord! If I cannot do this, this person will die. Under your blessed guidance, this should not happen."

I finished the prayer and made another attempt at placing the pacemaker. Bingo! It landed in the perfect spot, began working, and the heart started beating! **Whenever you take one step toward Swami, He takes a hundred toward you. He is always with us, by our side.**

Swami's Omnipresence and the Importance of Being Aware of It

When I say that Swami is always by our side, I mean every second of our lives. Once, in the interview room, Neelam asked Swami, "Do you come home and accept the food we offer You?" With a twinkle in His eyes, Swami said, "*I am there every moment. I listen to you.*" Then, He repeated a private conversation that Neelam and I had in the

dining area. As He went about repeating our conversation, word by word, we sat with our mouths wide open in shock! Swami listens to each and every word we speak at our homes!

This was direct proof of Him being with us always. **We should always be convinced of that and behave in a manner pleasing Him and befitting His divine presence.**

On another occasion in the interview room, Neelam asked again whether Swami had enjoyed the food that had been offered. Swami immediately reminded us of the day when He actually ate the food offered, but we blamed the dog at our home! Swami said that it was not the dog but God who had eaten it. He added, "Next time, don't give me pizza. I don't like it!"

Needless to say, from then on, whenever we made pizza at home, we made it a point to make something else that we could offer to Swami.

In many medical camps that we have participated in, we have witnessed *vibhuti* manifesting on Swami's pictures that we accept gratefully and joyfully as His bountiful blessings on everyone - the doctors, staff, volunteers, and patients. It is His way of telling us that He is always with us, blessing what we are doing.

Swami's Omniscience and Importance of Faith

When my son Amit was about 14 years old, I noticed red marks all over his body as he stepped out of the shower. I suspected that it might be a serious blood condition, which can lead to bleeding in the brain and may cause paralysis or death. I immediately rushed him to the hospital, and, to my disappointment, the blood tests proved my diagnosis to be correct. He was diagnosed with ITP (Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura).

It was Halloween night, and my son didn't want to get admitted to the hospital. He wanted to go around celebrating Halloween

joining his friends saying, 'trick or treat.' I had to firmly say no because he had to be rushed to the hospital for the treatment! The treatment began, and an intravenous (IV) drip was put in his arm. As usual, it was taped well to ensure it remained clean and sterile. Amit had to stay put in bed.

He was upset and began complaining to Swami that he was being forced to miss going around with his friends on Halloween night. The next morning, when the nurse checked the IV location, there was profuse *vibhuti* under the tape! She was furious and asked my wife what had happened and why the spot was so dusty. **My wife was thrilled beyond words, and she went straight to Amit, saying, "Look, Amit! Swami is with you always! Who else can put *vibhuti* under the tape without removing the tape?"** Amit was also very happy, and his faith in Swami was reinforced. With appropriate treatment, his platelet count gradually improved daily and normalized in a few days. It has remained normal ever since, and he is 42 years old now.

Two years later, when Amit was in the 10th grade, Swami allowed me to bring my children to Puttaparthi with me, promising to speak to them. On the day we were leaving, Swami called us in for an interview. Neelam told Swami, "Please bless my children."

"They are not your children! They are my children. I have given them to you to raise them. That's all!"

My children were so happy, and they hugged Swami, who hugged them back. While He told my younger son Kunal that he was going to be like his father, He told Amit that he would be an orthopedic surgeon.

Keeping Swami's words in mind, years later, Amit completed medical school and then did an internship in surgery in a hospital with a good orthopedic program. The orthopedic director was impressed with Amit's work during his one-year internship and promised



to take him into the Orthopedic Residency program.

However, when the time came, because of unavoidable circumstances, the residency position was offered to another candidate. The director apologized to Amit and promised to offer him the same residency position the following year. Not wanting him to waste a year, I tried to persuade Amit to take up another surgical program. But he was adamant. "Swami told me I will be an orthopedic surgeon, and that is all I want to be."

The residency would begin in July, and when every measure failed, Neelam and I decided to go to Puttaparthi in May. We stayed there for many days, hoping Swami would talk to us and I could tell Him how stubborn Amit had become, but Swami completely ignored us. Swami would not even come close to me.



“
*They are not your children! They are my children.
I have given them to you to raise them. That's all!*”

We had decided that we would stay back until He spoke to us.

One morning at around 3:30 AM, we received a joyous call from Amit. He said that out of the blue, the RRC (Residency Review Committee) had approved one more position for residency in the orthopedic program, and the director immediately offered that position to him! Amit wanted us to thank Swami for His blessings. He emailed us a letter to present to Swami thanking Him, which I printed out and planned to give to Swami during *darshan*. During that morning *darshan*, Swami came straight to me and asked, “*Mil gaya (Got it)?*”

Swami knew the outcome all along, and it was all His *leela* (divine play). In the process, He was testing our faith in Him. Amit's faith in Swami was strong, so he wasn't worried, unlike us! Swami accepted Amit's letter and blessed me with a smile. Afterward, we returned home in bliss, grateful and joyful.

Swami's Omnipotence and the Importance of Gratitude

Swami materialized a beautiful ring with a green stone set in it. I noticed the stone was a bit loose, and water would go under the

stone whenever I washed my hands. I learned from people that Swami often 'repaired' or 'replaced' such items when brought to His attention. So, the next time He called us for an interview, I told Him about this problem. Swami smiled and immediately said, “*It is good! It cleans you from the inside!*”

There was no repair or replacement. When I returned home, I noticed that after the interview, water would no longer go under the ring. The stone had been perfectly set! **The entire *leela* was to drive home the message that whether He gives us a ring or not, Swami is always purifying us from within. This is an important part of His mission.**

I was also diagnosed with a condition in my eyes called keratoconus. It is a condition that affects the structure of the cornea, gradually making it cone-shaped and resulting in loss of vision. As the condition progresses, one needs to change one's glasses approximately every three months. Every time I went to Swami, I would update my glasses to see my Swami clearly.

This went on for about five years. Then, the cornea needed hard contact lenses that

would press on it in an attempt to prevent it from becoming more conical. This treatment would be very uncomfortable, but I had no choice. I did not want to seek personal favors from Swami, so I never informed Him.

I was receiving treatment at the famous Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia. Every time I went there, the doctors would do a keratogram, calculate the growth of the conus, and calibrate my contact lenses. This time, they said that the keratoconus was so severe that I had to consider a corneal transplant, which is a complicated procedure. It requires chemotherapy and the lifelong use of steroid drops. Before going ahead with it, I thought of seeking Swami's permission and blessings.

So, the next time I was in the interview room with Swami, I asked for His permission to go ahead with this transplant. Swami seemed to be lost in deep thought as He sat looking up. Finally, He looked at me and asked me to take off my glasses. When I did that, He put both His hands on my forehead and, with His thumbs, rubbed my eyes three times. Then, He said, "*Achcha hain abhi. Sab theek hain...*" (It's good now. Everything is fine.) He didn't say anything about whether to have surgery.

After I returned home, I noticed that my eyeglass power had stopped changing. I was very happy and continued with the status quo. I did not go back to the hospital again because I no longer needed that procedure.

However, the hospital was insistent that I visit them since I needed a corneal transplant. Finally, approximately eight months after returning from Swami, I agreed and returned to the Wills Eye Hospital.

The technician did the keratogram and compared the results with my previous report to see the progression of the disease. He had to update my progression graph. He then came to me and said, "There is something wrong. I need to do the keratogram again." I agreed, but he was confused even after the second one. Now, he called the attending doctor, who came and did the keratogram himself. After that, he compared it to the old records and said, "I am so sorry! We made the wrong diagnosis. I don't know how we did it because you don't have keratoconus!"

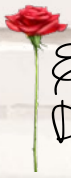
Gratitude to Swami flooded my heart. Within moments, He had cleared a problem that modern science had no easy solution to! He had cleared my vision and ensured that I could always see! I don't know how I can ever repay the debt I owe to Swami. Greater is the debt I owe Him for clearing my 'vision' and 'focusing' on Him! I just express gratitude to Him daily and plunge myself into service activities to the best of my abilities. And I pray to Swami to bless me with more and more opportunities to serve Him every moment of my life.

Dr. Yatish Merchant 
USA



Dr. Yatish Merchant has been an ardent devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for more than three decades. He has been practicing cardiology in Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA, since 1988. He graduated from KEM Hospital & Seth G. S. Medical College in Maharashtra, India, and did his postgraduate training in medicine and cardiology in the USA. He is Board-certified in Internal Medicine and Cardiology and is a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology (FACC). He is also on the teaching faculty of Atlanticare Health System and three medical schools.

Dr. Merchant has served in the SSSIO since 1995 and is the Co-chair of the Humanitarian Relief Committee. He has organized numerous major medical camps around the world, including Guyana, East Africa, the USA, Russia, India, and Fiji.



Experiences of
Devotees

The Privilege of Serving in Swami's Mission



We may have heard and read about people who were skeptical and challenged Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to do 'something' as proof before accepting Him as their Guru or God. From that perspective, I offered my faith 'freely and fully' to Him, having been introduced to Swami at a young age by my parents when we lived in Bengaluru, India. Even as children, my siblings and I accepted Him as God without a second thought. Furthermore, here He was, in flesh and blood, right before our eyes, unlike the other Gods, who were merely pictures and idols in the prayer room at home.

A Child's Relationship with Swami

Going to see Swami in His Bengaluru ashram at Brindavan during the summer holidays would mean an early morning journey of 30 km, which seemed arduous to a pre-teen boy. Waiting in the queue and then under the large green Banyan tree in the peaceful surroundings of the ashram was the perfect time to catch up on the sleep I had missed that morning. But then, every time Swami came out for *darshan*, I would be

As we turned around to thank him, he was nowhere to be seen! Who else could this 'invisible' benefactor have been?

excited and afraid in equal measure—excitement and fear that had no logical explanation. The settings changed at Brindavan when the Sai Ramesh Hall was inaugurated in late 1992. I remember we would end up with the 'worst' seat in the hall more often than not—either behind a pillar, all the way at the back, or, sometimes, even outside the darshan hall! **But, every single time, Swami would always make His way to the section where we were seated, regardless of where it was!** And I would feel the same excitement and fear! There was something perceptibly powerful about His presence.

Once we moved to Chennai in India in 1994, travels to Brindavan or Prasanthi Nilayam decreased to maybe once a year. However, I was so drawn to the Sai Gayatri and the *Ashtothram* (108 names of Swami) that I would chant regularly every day. Time rolled on, and the days were filled with school and playing cricket in Chennai's local professional league. Regular prayers became occasional prayers, which soon turned into 'something I used to do.' **But I never left home without my cricket kit bag and Swami's picture in my pocket. That was my rather simplistic way of being connected to Him.**

Swami Does Not Disappoint His Devotees

Years passed, and I completed graduate studies in the USA in 2007 and later moved to Huntsville, Alabama, to start my first job. In October 2008, I returned to India for a 10-day vacation, which turned into a four-month wait as some visa paperwork had to be sorted out. By Swami's grace, my

employer remained incredibly supportive while I was held back in India. During my unplanned extended stay in India, my sister also happened to be visiting from the USA. We decided to go to Prasanthi Nilayam for Swami's *darshan*. Due to my sister's tight schedule, we had only two days to drive from Chennai to Puttaparthi, have Swami's *darshan*, and return to Chennai. We left on time, intending to get to Prasanthi Nilayam early. However, a series of traffic bottlenecks found us in the dark of night when we were still many miles away from Puttaparthi. A few turns later, we found ourselves deep inside a village with few street lights and no one on the streets. These were the days before GPS and navigation apps. We were in a village where we did not speak the local language, even if we were to see someone outside!

Then, out of nowhere, a young man walked down the middle of the road. In perfect English, he asked, "Are you going to Puttaparthi?" and proceeded to give us directions that led directly to our destination. He stood to one side of the road, waiting for us to turn the car around. **But just as we turned around to thank him, he was nowhere to be seen! Who else could this 'invisible' benefactor have been?**

When we reached Prasanthi Nilayam, we learned that Swami had not given morning *darshan* for almost a week. That was disappointing because it would mean only one chance of an evening *darshan* for us. Anyway, we still went for *darshan* the next morning. Much to our delight, the musical notes of the flute filled the air at precisely

8 am, heralding Swami's *darshan* and arrival into Sai Kulwant Hall! The excitement in the hall was palpable since this was the first morning *darshan* of the whole week! I was thrilled. Swami had not broken our streak of always getting a close *darshan*. We had two more blissful *darshans*. Feeling extremely fortunate and blessed, we returned to Chennai the following day!

The First Taste of Service

In 2014, I moved to Pasadena, California. As it turned out, I was almost exactly 5 miles away from not one, but two Sai Centers—Arcadia and Glendale. I emailed the Arcadia Center and received a warm response from the center president, inviting me to the weekly Thursday *satsang*. The first visit turned into a second, and then a third, and soon enough, I started looking forward to Thursday evenings! I would find a corner at the back of the hall to sit and enjoy the *satsang* and *bhajans* before quietly exiting soon after the closing prayers.

One Thursday evening, the president of the Arcadia Sathya Sai Center announced that anyone interested could stay back after *bhajans* and assist in the packing of 300 toiletry kits for distribution to the needy. That was my first introduction to service! A few weeks later, I volunteered for an upcoming medical camp in the city of Oxnard, California. Not knowing what to expect, I showed up full of excitement and enthusiasm and was assigned to the vision department. Little did I know that vision services at medical camps were the most sought-after by patients who ended up waiting a long time for service! **Seeing the joy brimming in the faces of those who came to the camp was incredibly uplifting. Despite a long and exhausting day, I went home with an inexplicable sense of joy and fulfillment that I had never experienced.**

Always Say Yes to Serving in Swami's Mission

Soon, I was back to regularly reciting prayers. One day, I said, "Swami, there are so many devotees doing so much work in the Center. I really should be doing more. Please give me an opportunity." **Fifteen minutes later, the phone rang. It was one of the senior members from the Sai Center. Her only question was if I had time to do some work for the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO)! I had to edit some articles that would be published on the Sai Universe website. Stunned by the 'Sai-incidence,' though I did not know what 'Sai-Universe' was and had no experience editing non-technical articles, all I could say was, "Yes, Aunty, sure!"**

This was Swami's work, so I said 'Yes!' With that, I began regularly reading, summarizing, and editing articles about the wonderful service activities of SSSIO volunteers worldwide. Swami was slowly transforming me by allowing me to read about how He was touching and transforming the lives of millions of people in far corners of the world through these service projects.

Over the next few years, I said 'Yes' to every opportunity that came my way, regardless of whether I had the time or the skill for that activity. No task is too small or too big! **I have learned that when we say 'Yes' to Swami, He gives you the time and resources necessary to complete your assignment! The desire to serve in His mission is all that is needed!**

The True Purpose of Serving in Swami's Organization

It is from Swami that I learned the true purpose of service is not just about helping others. It is a *sadhana* that purifies our hearts and minds.

In His discourse to students on November 18, 1999, Swami says, "The highest *sadhana*

is to transform love into service. Service will lead you to devotion....Service is the best way to understand your innate divinity. Service should be for self-satisfaction, not for name and fame. Experience the bliss that you derive from selfless service.”

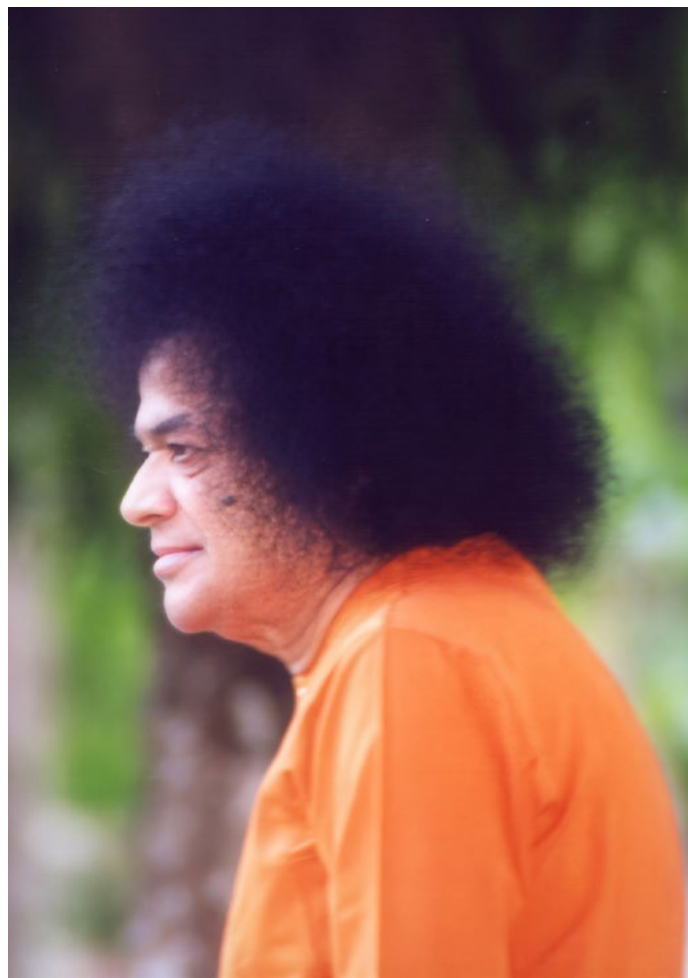
Looking back over the last few years of serving in His organization, I see a slow transformation in myself. The more I serve, the more I am drawn toward looking inward. The more I look inward, the more I realize the need to purify my thoughts, words, and actions.

The bonus of doing seva is that we endear ourselves to Swami and become recipients of His grace. When we do everything as ‘His’ work, He takes care of all our cares and concerns, showing His constant presence. I experienced this in late 2022 when my mother’s health suffered a setback.

Swami is Always with Us as The Eternal Companion

My mother had suffered a sudden deterioration of her eyesight. This was the first time she had had a serious health issue, and everyone was extremely worried. She was referred to a reputable retinologist, who happened to have an office just a mile from my home – one in a series of ‘Sai-incidences’ that led to that point.

For the entire week before her appointment, my mother was very worried. We had never before seen her in such a state of anxiety. On the day of the appointment, all I was thinking was, “Swami, give her the strength to get through today and take care of whatever is this medical condition.” A short while later, my mother was called to the nurse’s station. A nurse of Hispanic origin came in and asked her to sit in front of the Optomap—an instrument used to take an image of the retina. Sensing my mother’s anxiety, the nurse asked, **“Are you Indian? Do you know the Gayatri Mantra?”**



We were taken aback. And then the nurse started chanting it, asking my mother to join in! This calmed my mother down enough to be able to complete her tests. I asked the nurse how she knew the Gayatri Mantra, and what she said surprised me even more!

“You know there is an Indian Guru—Sai Baba?”

By now, I sensed where this was going, but I still asked her, “Which Sai Baba?”

“Sathya Sai Baba—in South India. I follow Him!”

And I just laughed, and we all looked at each other! Swami did indeed show that He was in control and taking care of the situation! We told her we were Sai devotees, too! As if we needed more evidence, the nurse continued, “Do you know there is a Sai Center nearby—in Dr. Narendranath Reddy’s house? I used to work for Dr. Reddy many years ago,



and I used to go to the Arcadia Center, but I have not been able to go for a few years now!"

She added, "A few years ago, my mother was downsizing and did not have space for a big picture of Swami that she had. She gave it to Dr. Reddy!" That was when I remembered, a few years ago, a devotee had donated a large picture of Swami to the Center! **Regarding my mother, she was taken care of in the most beautiful manner by Swami and she continues to experience His grace and blessings.**

When Swami was physically present, I never had the opportunity to receive *Spar-*

shan (touch of the divine) or *Sambhashan* (conversation with the divine) from Him. However, looking back, it is clear that Swami has led me through every phase of life to bring me to where I am today – with an incredible opportunity to serve daily in His mission. **At every turn, Swami continues to shower His love and grace on me, protecting and guiding me every step of the way.** As we approach the 100th Birthday of Swami, I pray He continues to bless me with more opportunities to serve so that He may acknowledge me as a good devotee!

Mr. Karthik Srinivasan 
USA



Mr. Karthik Srinivasan came into Swami's fold as a child in India. He currently lives in the USA and serves as the Co-Chair of the SSSIO Archive Committee. He is also a member of the SSSIO I.T. Committee and the SSSIO Media team. He has a master's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Professionally, Karthik Srinivasan leads the development of instruments for planetary exploration at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, USA.



Divine Love Travels North

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba embarked on a ten-day visit to North India on March 30, 1975, responding to the spiritual longing of millions. During a brief stop in Hyderabad, He blessed devotees before proceeding to Delhi, where He was welcomed by massive crowds. On April 2, at Talkatora Gardens, over 200,000 devotees attended His discourse inside and around a *shamiana* (canopy) that was meant for just 20,000! And yet, one could hear a pin drop in the silence of the eagerly awaiting devotees! Each day, devotees gathered at 16 Golf Links Road for *darshan*,

followed by morning and evening *bhajan* sessions at Talkatora Gardens, where Swami blessed many, creating sacred *Vibhuti* many times. On several evenings, the Balvikas (SSE) children presented cultural programs and Swami lovingly showered His grace and blessings on them.

Swami then flew to Amritsar, where multitudes gathered despite the short notice. He blessed devotees in Chandigarh before leading a grand convoy to Simla. At dawn, tens of thousands of people filled the Ridge Maidan,



Ridge Maidan, Shimla



Darshan at Chandigarh



Himachal Bhavan, Shimla

eager for His *darshan*. Just seeing the huge gathering, many members of Swami's entourage wondered where and how those thousands residing in the hills came because the numbers that thronged the lotus feet were beyond their expert estimates. **His discourse on April 4 deeply moved the hill people, and His bhajans evoked divine ecstasy.** Swami's humor, stories, illustrations, and analogies provided food for reflection and spiritual exaltation. Here, too, the children from the Bal Vikas classes won Swami's blessings by enacting good playlets and graceful dances.



Darshan at Shimla

Continuing to Jaipur in a chartered plane with a small group of devotees, Baba visited the Sri Sathya Sai College, praising the students' discipline and devotion. On April 8, He addressed dignitaries at Vigyan Bhavan, including the Vice-President of India, Sri B.D. Jatti, industrialists, administrators, and scholars, **emphasizing love as the remedy for global turmoil.** As Swami departed Delhi, devotees were overcome with emotion and many were moved to tears. Baba briefly stopped in Hyderabad before reaching Bangalore. On April 12 (Ugadi festival), He traveled to Prasanthi Nilayam despite the scorching heat, ensuring devotees received His *darshan* on the auspicious day.



Sathya Sai College, Jaipur

LOVE IN ACTION



BRAZIL Helping Hands That Heal

A dedicated team of 24 volunteers, including 13 members of the SSSIIO offered medical consultations, nursing services, dental health education tutorials, physiotherapy, and massage therapy to over 60 people on November 23, 2024. This medical camp and community service was organized by the Sai Center of Fortaleza, Ceará, as an offering of love and gratitude to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the occasion of His 99th Birthday.

Medications were distributed and haircuts and manicures were given to the local community at the Spiritist Society of



Fortaleza. Additionally, recycling workshops were conducted and vegetarian snacks were distributed. Volunteers donated pizzas and juice boxes to serve the children. The event, embodying the spirit of selfless service and compassion, honored Swami's legacy and teachings on serving humanity.



MOLDOVA Faith and Food to Feed the Hungry

In November 2024, three members of the SSSIIO in Moldova prepared around 50 servings of hot food, sandwiches, and bread. They visited a new location where approximately 100 people gathered. Despite the long lines and the limited quantities of food prepared, the volunteers could distribute and serve everyone who came! The large number of people served reminded them



about the importance of being well-prepared. The volunteers also learned a valuable lesson in faith and service.

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



CZECH REPUBLIC

Seeing God in Nature

On November 16–17, 2024, members of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) of the Czech Republic gathered in the scenic Bohemian Paradise for the SAI 100 environmental initiative focused on reforestation and planting one million trees in celebration of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 100th Birthday. The SSSIO's SAI 100 program progresses silently yet resolutely worldwide without much fanfare or publicity.

During the two-day event, 20 volunteers, including local residents, planted more than 50 traditional fruit trees and edible shrubs. These carefully selected native species restore lost natural landscape features, support biodiversity, and improve the local microclimate. The trees were securely planted and protected against wildlife intrusion to ensure their long-term survival. Beyond tree planting, the gathering had a spiritual dimension, with evening sessions featuring devotional songs and short meditation sessions that deepened their connection to nature and God. A dedicated kitchen team provided meals, fostering camaraderie and ensuring everyone remained energized.



The initiative was not just about planting trees but also about making a lasting commitment to caring for them. Each tree stands as a symbol of hope for a greener planet, cleaner air, and a future where humanity and nature coexist in harmony.



SPAIN

Stepping in to Serve

The La Milagrosa Soup Kitchen in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, managed by the Daughters of Charity, serves around 100 vulnerable individuals daily. Due to its closure on January 5 and 6, volunteers from the Sri Sathya Sai Center in Tenerife readily responded to a request for help from the Soup Kitchen by organizing to serve food on January 6, 2025. They collected and prepared various food items, serving 60 people, including pasta, sandwiches, desserts, canned goods, fruit,



and drinks. The initiative encouraged participation from children and young people, fostering a spirit of service and gratitude.

'August' Assembly of **MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS SERVE IN FIJI**



The Republic of Fiji is an island country, an archipelago of more than 330 islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about 2,000 km northeast of New Zealand. About 87% of the total population lives on the two major islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, with about three-quarters living on Viti Levu's coasts, either in the capital city of Suva or in smaller urban centers.

Extensive and Impactful Medical Service

Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) organized a health mission in Fiji from August 25-30, 2024. One hundred and twenty healthcare professionals and volunteers from Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia participated in one of the largest zonal *seva* projects, serving disadvantaged patients in remote areas of Fiji. To maximize benefits to patients, this unique mission was planned for both Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

The first camp was held on Viti Levu, followed by a night journey across the ocean by ferry to Vanua Levu, where the service continued for five more days. A total of 2,535 patients were provided with comprehensive medical care in a mobile hospital, bringing smiles to the faces of the members of the communities that were served.



According to one participating medical specialist, “I found that quality time spent with each patient was the most fulfilling and made the most impact. It made a difference in being able to educate and inform the patient and make them understand their medical conditions.”

High Quality Free Medical Service

The healthcare professionals’ team consisted of medical doctors and specialists across diverse specialties. This included Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Cardiology, Psychiatry, Geriatrics and Stroke, Orthopedics, Pediatric Surgery, Neurosurgery, Gastroenterology, Dentistry, Physiotherapy, Pharmacy, and Optometry. There was also a dedicated team of nursing staff and lab personnel.

Testing facilities were set up for blood tests, diabetes screening, eye exams, dental exams, ECG, ECHO, ultrasound, endoscopy, and women’s health screening, including breast cancer and pap smear exams. Medical consultations included primary and secondary prevention, evaluation and advice on medications, and psychiatric evaluation and management.

Many patients expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be seen by the doctors with one commenting, “I visited the free Sai Medicare Camp at Tambia College, Labasa, this afternoon. My sincere appreciation for the professional approach, consultation, treatment, and advice given.”

Other Beneficiaries of the Team’s Expertise

The Camps were preceded by half a day of interactive, face-to-face, and online teaching sessions conducted by medical specialists. These sessions were attended by more than 80 students and trainee interns at Umanand Prasad School of Medicine & Health Sciences (UPSM), Lautoka. In addition, the team also provided clinical teaching to 13 medical students and 5 nursing students from UPSM, and 5 Sangam Nursing school students from Labasa, Fiji, (Sangam being a nonprofit social and cultural organization formed in 1926), over the five days of the healthcare mission in Vanua Levu.

This was a fulfilling and awe-inspiring activity for many healthcare professionals and volunteers participating for the first time. The team served the patients with patience, love, unity, and resilience during difficult



Summary of Patient Registration

Nanuku School RakiRaki	269
Seaqaqa	490
Qalitu Fijian School	430
Tabia School	439
Naikavaki Bua	305
Vunika	602
Total	2,535

times caused by long travels and sleep-deprived nights.

Additionally, the communities served in Fiji greatly appreciated the help rendered, with one participant noting, “The smiles and joy seen on patients’ faces spoke a thousand words of gratitude in receiving free medical care in the remote Fijian villages.”

Another participant commented, “Loved how approachable and friendly each and every member of the team was—from kitchen staff to clinic professionals. Most importantly, there was no hierarchy; everyone was treated with great respect and dignity despite coming from diverse backgrounds.”

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says,

“Doctors should serve the poor with a spirit of sacrifice. There is no greater service than this. As man is the embodiment of God, it is his primary duty to help the destitute and the forlorn.” (July 5, 2003)

The team members of SSSIO’s medical mission served with this ideal in their hearts and offered the seva at the lotus feet of their Lord.

Sri Sathya Sai International Organization
ZONE 3



Taming

THE MONKEY MIND

IN 2010, I WAS A HAPPY 30-YEAR-OLD LEADING THE LIFE OF MY DREAMS IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL.

I was married to a man I loved and had a wonderful 10-year-old daughter, Anandha, who was doing exceedingly well. She proved to be an outstanding student and a very loving daughter. I actively participated in the youth activities at the Sathya Sai Center in the neighborhood of Vila Isabel. I was also the Education Coordinator and a Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) teacher. Life was flowing naturally and beautifully; it was a bed of roses. There were no significant worries; everything went right, and it seemed like everything was under control. In fact, being in control was one of my strong traits. I always liked to have everything planned, and up until then, my life seemed to be going the way I planned and wanted.

And then, everything went haywire.

Pleasure is an Interval Between Two Pains

2010 was a turning-point year when I experienced a very disappointing situation at work and started to feel very sad. Very soon, my situation spiraled out of control into a crisis and nothing made sense to me any longer.

“No word He speaks is ever in jest or casual because He is omniscient and omnipresent, knowing our past, present, and future.”

I just cried and cried all the time. I had no strength for anything, and I seemed afraid of everything. I felt very insecure. I spent weeks like that until I was diagnosed with depression. It was really hard, and my world fell apart!

I was put on antidepressant drugs for a long time. However one day, I suddenly had a bout of euphoria, which led me to go on a shopping spree. By buying many things and spending a lot of money, I experienced great happiness and satisfaction. But this euphoria was bad news because when I went back to the psychiatrist, I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. It was an illness that my elder sister and two uncles also had been diagnosed with.

Bipolar disorder makes one vacillate between exaggerated joy and extreme sadness. One moment, one is euphoric, then one feels depressed. It was not easy for me and my family. My husband and daughter were very supportive and always by my side. They patiently took care of me. However, my aggressive bouts of vacillating emotions took their toll on them. My life alternated between extreme pleasure and pain, both physical and mental. It was so unbearable that I even contemplated suicide several times.

It was when I was at the nadir of my life, on the verge of suicide, that **my Baba, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, came to my aid and rescue.**

When Sathya Sai Entered My Life

I had been introduced to Sathya Sai Baba in 1996 when I was just 16 years old. My father saw an advertisement in a magazine about the Sai Center in Vila Isabel. After Sunday lunch, we went there to attend the meeting. We were very well received and got involved in the center's activities immediately. It was incredible to experience the devotion in that place and in the people. We quickly became Sai devotees and got involved in all Sai activities. **Life with Swami significantly transformed us.**

I am very happy to share that my father is the President of the Sai Foundation, and my brother, is the Vice President of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Vila Isabel, along with being a member of the media committee and a speaker. My mother supports the family with her intense devotion, faith, and prayer. They are also dedicated to service in the SSSIO.

I had always dreamed of starting a family since I was young. So, I knelt before Swami's picture and prayed for a good-natured person as my future husband and father of my children. After a very short time, I met Eduardo, who soon won my heart and became dear to my entire family. We became very close. Though he did not accept Baba as God, he was fine with me following Swami. Meanwhile, my father invited him to accompany me the following year, 1997, to the World Youth Conference in India, and he accepted.

Tatiane and Eduardo in Puttaparthi



When we arrived at the ashram, we had the greatest blessing of getting an interview with Baba. During the interview, Swami asked me if I was okay, and I replied affirmatively. However, Swami said that I wasn't OK! He said that I had a monkey mind, but He would help me with that. I just smiled and did not know what to say. I had so many things to ask Him, and there was limited time. So, I decided to ask Him if I would get married to Eduardo. That was something so obvious to me! He answered, "*Get married.*" I was so happy. We returned to Brazil and two years later, we married and had our daughter, Anandha.

The Monkey Mind Jumps

I had no idea at that time about the significance of what Swami was talking about. **No word He speaks is ever in jest or casual because He is omniscient and omnipresent, knowing our past, present, and future.** At the nadir of my life, my monkey mind, which Swami had referred to, became evident!

"So, this is what Swami had warned me about 14 years back," I thought. But then, I also remembered His loving reassurance, "*I will help you with it.*" And so, I began praying to Him for help. Even as I visited various doctors, submitted myself to different therapies, and consumed a variety of medicines, I prayed to Swami in the background. I would have conversations with Swami. I would look at His picture and cry for mercy. I also cried for healing. My unflinching faith that He was taking care of me prevented me from taking away the most precious thing

I had—my life. My father and my daughter always told me that it would pass, and it did pass after a while. However, there was always a relapse, and, unfortunately, I suffered from the crises for nine painful years.

Amidst all this, I was eager to have a second child. Anandha was 18, and despite all attempts at age 40, I wasn't able to conceive. I told my husband that if I didn't get pregnant soon, I wouldn't be able to have a child because of my age. **Again, Swami was my only resort.** I began to pray fervently to Him for a second child.

Delivery and Deliverance

One month later, I was pregnant! I had to reduce my medication so as not to affect the baby. But that led to my becoming seriously depressed and unstable again. It was a very difficult and delicate pregnancy for the whole family.

The suffering was so great and so deep that I would stay in bed all day when I was at home. I also paid little attention to my personal life. I didn't properly prepare to go to prenatal care. Additionally, I went to ultrasound tests completely unprepared, with my hair tied up and without makeup. I had no vitality, grace, or beauty that an expectant mother possesses. **And yet again, I maintained my sanity only through prayers to Swami.**

And then, it happened!

The healthy birth of my second daughter, Thalita, after so much medication, was a miracle. **However, Swami had gift-wrapped another miracle for me. After the delivery of my second daughter came my deliverance, too!** After that, for months, I didn't have any depression or euphoria episodes! I was always calm and happy, caring for my baby and my family. I was also working non-stop without medical leave! Though I continue to take medicines, with Baba's grace, I have not shown any symptoms of bipolar disorder for over 5 years now!

Though the battle with bipolar disorder seems over, I know that dealing with the

mind is work in progress. I continue with my *sadhana* of meditation, *yoga*, prayer, daily conversations with Baba, reading His message, and service through working in various positions in the SSSIO's education wing. Having gone through extremely challenging times, I no longer tell Swami I have a big problem. I turn to the problem and say, "I have my big Swami!"

And I keep reminding myself there is no need to fear when He is here.

Mrs. Tatiane da Costa Mendonca

BRAZIL



Ms. Tatiane da Costa Mendonça hails from Brazil. She joined the Sai Organization in 1996 and has since actively participated in the activities of the SSSIO. She joined the Youth program in 1997 and participated in the 1st World Youth Conference in Prasanthi Nilayam in the divine presence of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba the same year. She graduated from the Human Values course offered by the Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Brazil, where she later worked as a facilitator. She serves as the coordinator of Sai Spiritual Education at the Sai Center of Vila Isabel, Rio de Janeiro, a position she has held for many years.



from the
International Sai Young Adults

Nourishing the Soul: Vegetarian Cooking Workshop in Argentina



“As is the food, so is the mind; As is the mind, so are the thoughts; As are the thoughts, so is the conduct; As is the conduct, so is the health.”

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba
January 21, 1994

In His infinite love and concern for humanity, Swami has repeatedly reinforced the spiritual significance of food. Based on this precept, since 2022, the Sai Young Adults of Argentina have been hosting virtual vegetarian cooking workshops to educate the public on the preparation of nutritious, meat-free meals conducive to spiritual practice. According to a report by the Secretariat of Bioeconomy of Argentina, as of June 2024, the average consumption of meat in Argentina is approximately 109 kg per person annually. The Young Adults understood the importance of dispelling misconceptions like *“without meat, there is no protein”* in a country that is historically and culturally entrenched in relishing non-vegetarian dishes. These vegetarian cooking workshops are conducted bi-monthly and around 30 people from Central and South America attend the workshops on Zoom. Dishes prepared and taught online include causa limeña, baked vegetable cannelloni, veggie burgers, and pumpkin and Brazilian squash soups. **These workshops help to follow Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s message on the importance of a *satwic* and vegetarian diet in one’s spiritual journey.**

- For cooking inspiration and vegetarian recipes, visit <https://blissismyfood.sathyasai.org/>

AROUND THE WORLD

Spreading Smiles in El Salvador



On December 7, 2024, in the San Paulino Community of San José Villanueva, La Libertad, El Salvador, the Sai Young Adults organized a heartwarming, gift-giving event filled with love, joy, and profound meaning. A group of four YAs and three adults, all devotees from the Sai Center of San Salvador, spent weeks planning to create a special day for the children and families of the community.

One of the most exciting elements of the event was the group's decision to wear costumes, adding a touch of magic for the children. Initially uncertain about how it would be received, the group entrusted their concerns to Swami. Before beginning, they prayed together, seeking guidance from Him and the energy to spread love and happiness. As they arrived, any lingering nervousness quickly turned into excitement. The children greeted them with curiosity and delight, their faces lighting up at the sight of the costumes. At that moment, the group felt Swami's presence enveloping everyone, affirming they were precisely where they needed to be.

The activities planned for the children were both engaging and meaningful. The YAs led games, songs, and interactive activities that fostered genuine connection and joy. **The children's laughter, spontaneous hugs, and unfiltered expressions of**

happiness were a testament to the transformative power of shared happiness and love.

When it was time to distribute gifts, the atmosphere brimmed with excitement and joy, as the children approached eagerly, their eyes shining with anticipation. Each package contained not only a gift but also the care and love with which it had been prepared. The most touching moments were watching the children embrace their gifts like priceless treasures! The mothers and teachers also received gifts, their expressions of gratitude deeply moving the group. **It was a poignant reminder of the profound impact of even the smallest gestures of kindness.**

The children's reaction to the costumes was memorable. Many of them eagerly requested to have photos with the Sai Center members. Initially, what seemed like a simple request soon revealed a deeper significance. The children considered the group members as magical figures who had come to brighten their day. Yet, in truth, it was the children who filled the volunteers' hearts with happiness and innocence. **Each photograph captured not just an image, but the**

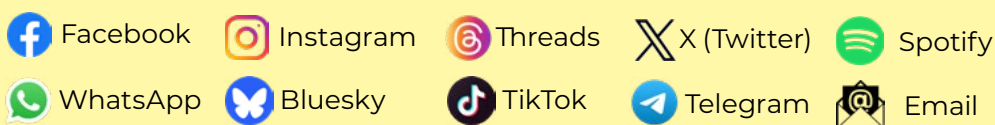
essence of a bond formed in a short yet meaningful time.

The day concluded with the joy of sharing a delicious cake. Before cutting it, the group once again prayed and dedicated the moment to Swami, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to participate. It was a heartwarming ending, with all devotees united in the shared feeling of fulfillment and divine grace.

Reflecting on the experience, the Sai Young Adults realized that the event had left an indelible imprint on their hearts. It was not only an opportunity to give but also to receive—love, smiles, and lessons in humility. The day was a powerful reminder that small acts of love and kindness can make a significant difference in people's lives. It was a moment for profound reflection and an opportunity for the Young Adults to experience the great joy of serving the children. **It reaffirmed that serving others is one of the purest expressions of love and gratitude for all we receive.**

Through this experience, the Sai Young Adults gained a deeper understanding of what it means to live Swami's message. Inspired by this event, they remain committed to participating in activities that bring hope and happiness to those in need.

Follow Young Adults on Social Media



yacoordinator@sathyasai.org • <https://sathyasai.org/ya>

April is a month of deep reflection and inspiration, marked by two significant occasions—Earth Day on April 22 and Aradhana Mahotsavam on April 24. **Earth Day** reminds us of our sacred duty to care for the planet. **Aradhana Mahotsavam** is a time for the Sai devotees to reflect on Swami's life and legacy. In this spirit, two Young Adults from Zone 9 (Africa and nearby nations) share their heartfelt reflections, offering insights on how these occasions inspire them to live with greater love, responsibility, and devotion.

BEE FARMING AND NO LITTERING

I have known my dear friend and nature guide, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, since I was five, but this divine relationship began long before I was born. **Protecting nature has always been an integral part of my family's culture—we raise the vegetables we eat and nurture them with love.** I often saw bees buzzing around the plants, searching for nectar and pollen. These tiny creatures visited us frequently, but little did I realize their immense significance to the ecosystem.

One day, I traced the bees back to their source and discovered a fascinating colony living in an old, abandoned tire on an isolated piece of land near my garden. Moved by their presence, we built our first beehive using a wooden box, offering them a proper home. Today, we have around 50 beehives, and I am deeply grateful to Swami for granting me the opportunity to protect these essential pollinators.

My journey in bee farming has significantly deepened my understanding of the intricate relationship between nature and humanity. Through this experience, I have cultivated patience, responsibility, and a heightened awareness of the importance of preserving a balanced ecosystem. Despite their tiny size, bees play a vital role in pollination and environmental sustainability. Working with them has taught me how even the slightest changes in the ecosystem can significantly impact bee



colonies and, by extension, our global food supply.

Beyond bee farming, I have also developed an awareness of proper waste management and its critical role in sustaining healthy habitats for all species, including bees. **Littering not only harms the environment but also disrupts the delicate balance that bees and other pollinators depend on for survival.** For instance, plastic waste can obstruct bees' pathways or contaminate their essential water sources.

Reflecting on these two practices—bee farming and responsible waste management—has reinforced my commitment to environmental stewardship. Bee farming reminds me that small, everyday actions can create meaningful change, while not littering is a simple yet powerful step in preserving our planet for future generations. **Through Swami's guidance, I have come to understand that nature is not just something to admire, but something to protect and cherish.**

Ms. Madvee



from **FORM**
to **FORMLESS**

Growing up in a family that believed in the divine nature of Swami meant that we were constantly surrounded by His love. Our connection with the Sai Organization also ensured that we were in the company of people well-versed in spiritual concepts such as *'Form to Formless'* at study circle discussions. As a child, these ideas were beyond my comprehension. **What did 'formless' even mean?** Didn't everyone, including the deities adorning our home altar such as Lord Ganesha, Lord Rama, and Swami Himself, have a form? Life has a way of presenting circumstances that

expand our understanding, sometimes on short notice. April 24, 2011, was one such moment.

As the poignant Aradhana Mahotsavam comes around each year, I find myself in a pensive mood. **Commemorating the formless aspect of our dearest Swami takes on new meaning with each passing year, deepening my understanding.**

In 2024, Aradhana Mahotsavam held a special significance—it was the day I submitted my Ph.D. dissertation. For me, it was the fulfillment of a promise I had

made to Him in the very first letter I wrote as a seven-year-old: *Swami, when I grow up, I'd like to be a doctor.* I still remember the joy of knowing that He had accepted that letter—an assurance that my path was guided by Him. As I reflected on this milestone, two childhood experiences stood out, each shaping my understanding of His divine presence.

In 2002, as an SSE student, I had the opportunity to be part of a musical play offered to Swami during the Guru Purnima celebrations in Prasanthi Nilayam. I played the role of Sage Narada (the divine messenger), serving as a bridge for communications between devotees and the Lord. That week, Swami had taken upon Himself the illness of mumps of a child, and there was uncertainty about whether our play would proceed. **We were told to accept Swami's decision as His love, no matter the outcome.** But in His boundless grace, Swami sat through most of the play—except for the final scene. Just as I stood on stage, delivering a dialogue about devotees searching for God everywhere—outer space, under the ocean, across the Earth—and unable to find Him anywhere, Swami instructed that the curtains be drawn. He then stayed behind, lovingly blessing us to have group photos with Him. Yet, I felt an inexplicable sense of emptiness. **Oh Swami, if only You had stayed for five more minutes! You would have seen the climax, where God Himself tells Narada where one can truly find Him.**

In the summer of 2007, we received another opportunity—the chance to offer daily *bhajans* at the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum after morning *darshan* in Sai Kulwant Hall. Upon reaching Puttaparthi, we learned that Swami had stayed back in Brindavan, His Ashram in Bengaluru, longer than expected. His absence left a void—an unfamiliar emptiness, filled with anxiety and restlessness. Yet, we continued

with our duty, practicing *bhajans* with diligence, and singing for the Lord who was not physically present. Little did we realize He was preparing us for a greater reality that would ensue four years later.

After a couple of days, as per the *bhajan* roster, I was scheduled to sing the *bhajan*, *Aao Aao Sai Natha*. The third line of the *bhajan*—*Darshan Ke Liye Taras Rahe Hain* (longing to behold Your *darshan*—resonated deeply with the mood of the moment. As the *bhajan* session concluded, we received the news we were all praying for: our dearest Swami had left Brindavan and was on His way to Puttaparthi. Oh, the joy! A couple of elders attributed Swami's return to Puttaparthi to my heartfelt call through the *bhajan*. But in truth, at that age, I was more focused on ensuring that the technical nuances of the melody were perfect rather than the emotions behind the words.

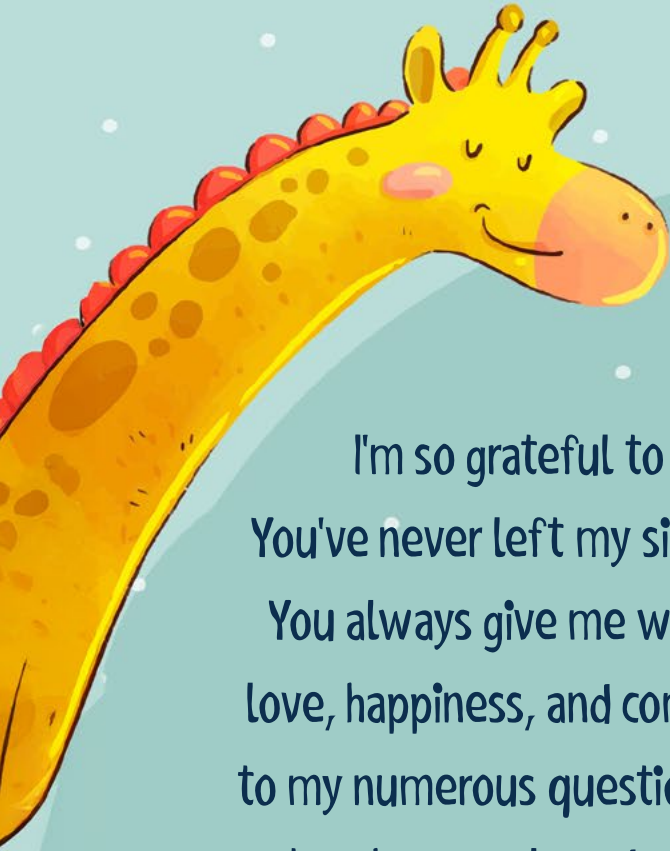
Today, looking back at this episode, I now realize Swami hears our calls even when we do not fully grasp the depth of our yearning. Even when He was miles away, He responded to the longing of His devotees. **But Swami, without Your physical presence, can You still hear our prayers? Should I call out louder? Will Your response be as swift as it was when You walked among us?**

Oh, never mind Swami, didn't You already answer these questions for me when I acted as Sage Narada in the climactic scene of the play? In the final scene—the one He did not stay to witness—God reveals to Narada that man searches for Him across the universe, yet He remains hidden in the most intimate of places: **within the heart of man. It took my small mind years to realize it, but now I know that the formless Swami is as close as He can ever be within us, always.**

Dr. Madhuri Manohar



My Divine Friend



Dear Swami,

I'm so grateful to have you as one of my friends!
You've never left my side, and I'm forever thankful for that.
You always give me what's good, and give me a feeling of
love, happiness, and comfort. Thank you for always listening
to my numerous questions and feelings. I always have you to
go to whenever I need someone. I have learned immeasurable
values from you and I'm still learning! You mean so much to
me and I'm incredibly appreciative for you.
You help me out with everything: from friends, school,
and all my other activities! I would never
have a sweet and amazing friend as you!

much love

Aditi A | Group 3 | Online SSE





Aarya K | Group 1 | Panama



Manasvee T | Group 1 | USA



Radha S | Group 1 | USA

♡ Letter ♡

Dear Swami,
 You are my divine friend. You are always there for me and you never leave my side. I am so thankful to you for always answering my prayers and guiding my decisions. One way I foster friendship in my daily life is by always being kind to everyone around me, even if they are not my friend. You've taught me to "love all," so I constantly try to apply that to my life. Even when I am mad at someone, sending them love and being kind to them helps the friendship continue. Thank you for being my divine friend, and for always protecting me.

Love,
 ♡

Sahitya R | Group 3 | Online SSE

My dearest Swami,

Thank you so much for always being in my life. I love you so much. No matter what happens, I know with full faith, that my Swami will always be right there for me. Please always be by my side and help me hold onto Your hand as tight as I can, Swami.

Through ups and downs, happiness and sorrows, successes and failures, You've always been here for me, listening to me, and showing me that everything will be okay, while still teaching me important lessons in life. And I'm forever grateful to You.

Swami, when my faith in you starts to waver, please always remind me that just because the teacher is quiet during the test, that doesn't mean the teacher isn't there. And just like that, help me remember that if I don't feel Your presence at times, that does not mean that You are not there for me. And during those times Swami, please give me the strength to surrender to You completely.

Swami, please guide me on the right path, to always make you happy. Help me to not get caught in the ups and downs of life, but rather, have firm faith that You have a Master Plan for me. And please make sure I never forget that "His Delays are not His Denials."

Thank you for always listening to me, both when I am happy and when I am sad. And thank you for always giving me comfort and confidence that whatever happens is for my good in the end.

Swami, I have noticed that whenever I yearn for You, that yearning is fulfilled. Please always remind me to yearn for You.

Swami, please help me to remember that people will always come and go in life. But the one person that will forever be with me, no matter what happens, is my Best Friend.

Thank you so much for being my best friend and please help me to never forget the value of your Divine friendship. I love you so much, My Swami.

Forever Grateful,
Ashritha

Ashritha K | Group 4 | Online SSE

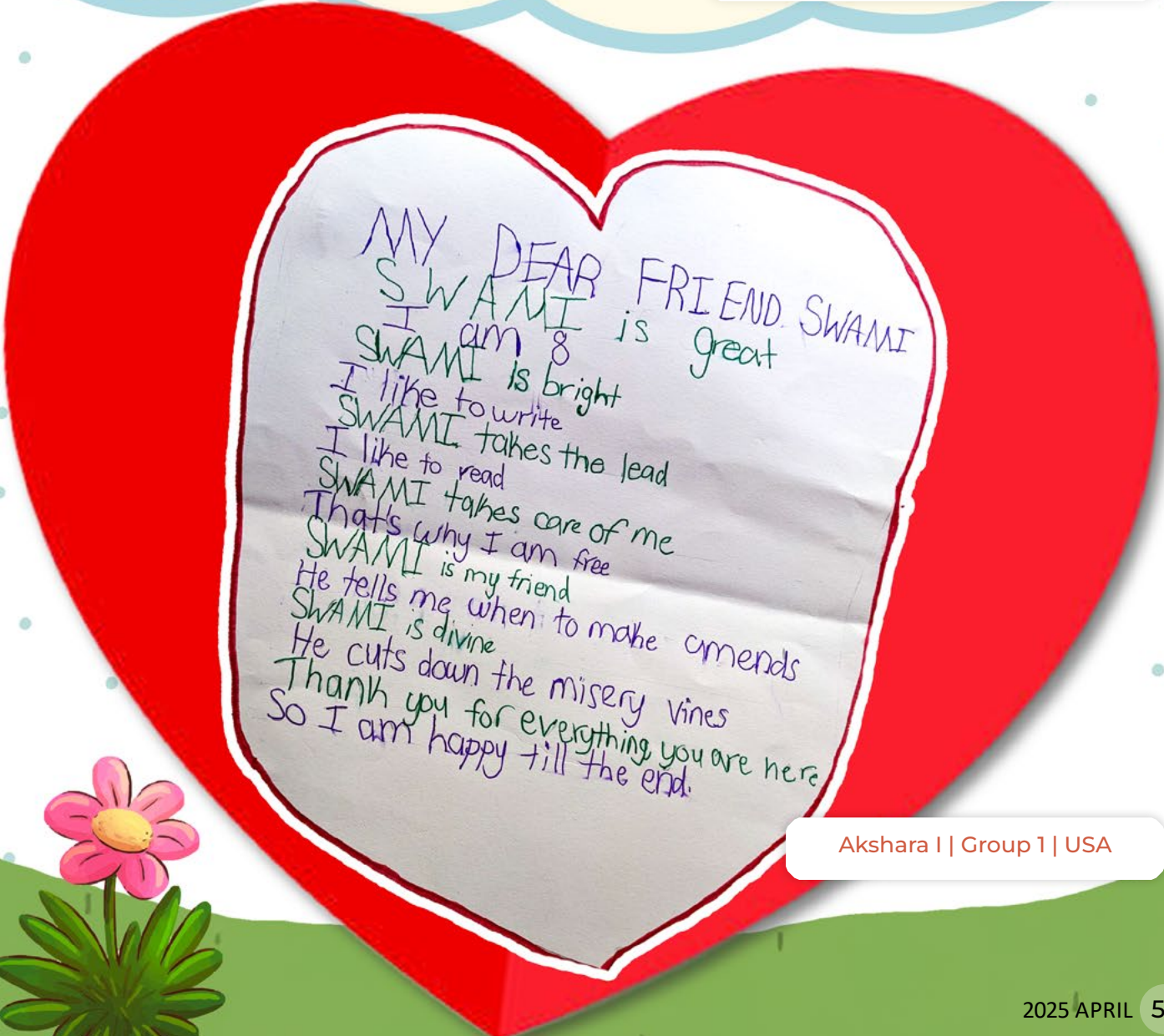
I present this at the lotus feet of Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
Sairam,

Divine friendship is the connection between God and you. Divine friendship is the most precious thing that you could have because even when everyone leaves you God will always be with you. Swami says "walk beside me and be my friend-Sri Sathya Sai Baba".

I practiced divine friendship by always wearing a necklace which has Swami's photo on it so I can always keep him close to me. I also practice divine friendship by meditating. When I meditate I converse with God so I tell him about my life, school, family. It makes me feel closer to God. Swami says there is no greater friend for anyone than God-Sri Sathya Sai Baba."

There are many way to connect God and these are just my way of practicing divine friendship.

Manasvisai V | Group 3 | Canada



MY DEAR FRIEND SWAMI
SWAMI is great
I am 8
SWAMI is bright
I like to write
SWAMI takes the lead
I like to read
SWAMI takes care of me
That's why I am free
SWAMI is my friend
He tells me when to make amends
SWAMI is divine
He cuts down the misery vines
Thank you for everything you are here
So I am happy till the end.

Akshara I | Group 1 | USA

Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
April 12-13, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
April 24, 2025	Thursday	Aradhana Mahotsavam
May 10, 2025	Saturday	Buddha Poornima
June 14-15, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri



Streaming on sathyasai.org/live and YouTube



Stay in touch with SSSIO news and activities, by visiting the SSSIO websites and following/subscribing to the various communications channels below. **Click on each icon or name to visit the site.**



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Eternal Companion email list



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



Every student should undertake *satkarmas* (good actions) which lead to *chitta shuddhi* (purity of mind). Where there is purity, there will be *jnana siddhi* (attainment of enlightenment). These are all within yourself only. You need not search for them anywhere outside.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
June 3, 1990



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

