

SATHYA SAI
THE
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COMPANION



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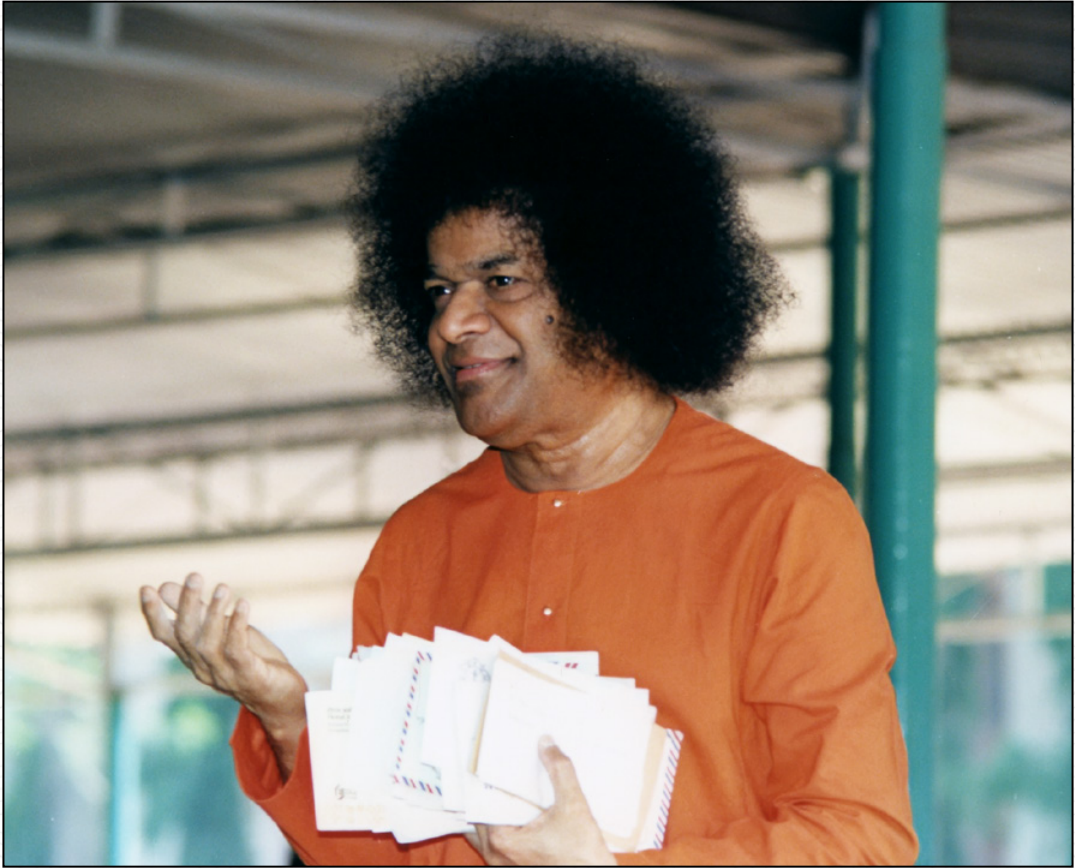


**DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF**
SRI SATHYA SAI



The Ramayana, the Rama story, teaches two lessons: the value of detachment and the need to become aware of the Divine in every being. Faith in God and detachment from objective pursuits are the keys to human liberation. Give up sense objects, and you gain Rama. Sita gave up the luxuries of Ayodhya so she could be with Rama in the period of exile. When she cast longing eyes on the golden deer and craved for it, she lost the presence of Rama. Renunciation leads to joy; attachment brings about grief. Be in the world, but not of it.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Rama Katha Rasa Vahini



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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publisher at info@sathyasai.org

Editor: Dr. Narendranath Reddy

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RAMA

THE EMBODIMENT OF DHARMA

Lord Rama incarnated in the *Treta Yuga* (age or period) to teach humanity the values of *Sathya* (Truth) and *Dharma* (Right action). Lord Krishna incarnated in the *Dwapara Yuga* to foster the principles of *Shanti* (Peace) and *Prema* (Love). In 600 BC, Lord Buddha incarnated to advocate the path of *Ahimsa* (Nonviolence). Now, in this Kali age, **the Lord incarnated as Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to teach humanity all the five fundamental human values: *Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, and Ahimsa.***

Rama could establish *dharma* because he was the very embodiment of *dharma*. As an ideal son, He loved his father, Dasharatha, and implicitly followed his commands even though it meant relinquishing the kingdom and going into exile in the forest. Rama was also an exemplary disciple in following his gurus, Sage Vasishtha and Sage Vishwamitra, and obeyed their commands with faith and sincerity. The uniqueness of the Rama Avatar is that He did not openly reveal his divinity as an Avatar. He wanted to show humanity how to live an ideal human life based on truth, right conduct, and love.

Sri Rama Navami, the birthday of Lord Rama, falls on the ninth day of the bright

moon fortnight in the month of *Chaitra* (March or April). In 2023, Rama Navami falls on March 30th, which is celebrated by devotees all over the world.

Sai and Rama are One and the Same

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has written a beautiful series of articles on the magnificent story of Lord Rama, first published in Sanathana Sarathi. These articles were later released in a book form as ***Ramakatha Rasavahini*, considered an autobiography of Rama because Sai Rama wrote it—the same Rama, come again.** Swami revealed this fact to the Raja of Venkatagiri, a great devotee of Lord Rama, when the Raja was blessed to see the tall and handsome form of Lord Rama in place of Swami's beautiful form. He prostrated at Swami's feet in bliss. **Swami also showed that He is the same Rama to the chosen mother, Easwaramma, enthralling her with the *darshan* of that form.** Another great devotee of Swami, Sri Dhoopati Tirumalachar, who composed Sri Sathya Sai Suprabhatam, blissed out when he saw Swami as Rama in Ayodhya, Rama's birthplace, when he was in the entourage with Swami.

Swami always gave a lot of importance to the life and message of Lord Rama. On



every Sri Rama Navami day, Swami elaborated on the message, glory, and life story of Lord Rama. Swami also detailed the inner significance of the Ramayana, the story of Rama, in a series of discourses He delivered in the summer of 1977 in Brindavan. They were compiled in a Telugu book, *Atma Ramam*, which delves into how Rama is the indweller in everyone.

The Inner Meaning of Ramayana as Narrated by Sai

Rama is considered the indweller of all—*Atma Rama*. Swami explains that each person's life is a Ramayana. King Dasharatha, the father of Rama, represents the physical body with the ten sense organs—the five organs of action (*Karmendriyas*) and the five organs of perception (*Jnanendriyas*). These organs are associated with the three queens representing the three qualities (*gunas*)—*Satwa* (serenity), *Rajas* (passion), and *Tamas* (inertia).

Their four children stand for the four fundamental human values: Rama for truth, *sathya*; Bharata for right action, *dharma*; Lakshmana for love, *prema*; and Shatrughna for peace, *shanti*. Further, describing other characters in the Ramayana, Swami explains that Sugriva stands for discrimination, *Viveka*, Vali for

despair, and Hanuman for courage. The journey across the bridge built over the ocean is compared to crossing the ocean of *Samsara*.

In the Ramayana, the bridge is built to find Sita, the consort of Rama, who represents the universal, absolute *Brahmajnana* (the knowledge of *Brahman*), which each individual must acquire. But to do that, one must always desire God and only God. When Rama renounced the kingdom, Sita chose to be with Rama. But when she developed a desire for the golden deer, she lost the company of Rama. That is why **Swami said that where there is Rama, there is no *kama* (desire); where there is *kama*, there is no Rama. Therefore, we should not have selfish or worldly desires.** The only desire we should have is the desire for God. Undergoing sufferings in Lanka, Sita rid herself of her desires and thus purified herself to represent *Brahmajnana*. Then she was reunited with Lord Rama, represented by the coronation ceremony.

The message of Ramayana is that we need to be established in *Atma Rama* to live in bliss. For that, we need to control our ten senses, go beyond the three qualities, or *gunas*, overcome despair, and cross the ocean of delusion with courage, discrim-

ination, and detachment. Then we will realize our true nature, which represents *Brahmajnana*.

The Noble Qualities of Lord Rama

Rama was known as a man of One Word, One Arrow, and One Wife. He adhered to the truth at all costs. He said He would give up His life but not the promised word. He discharged only one arrow when He took aim, which never missed the target. Finally, He had only one wife, whom He loved unwaveringly till the end.

Rama was a *Sathyabhashi*, who spoke only the truth. He was *Mithabhashi*, who talked in moderation. He was *Madhurabhashi*, who spoke very sweetly. He was *Hithabhashi*, who said only what helped others. Dasharatha, His father, promised his third wife, Kaikeyi, that he would give her son, Bharata, the kingdom. Though Rama had no obligation to fulfill His father's words, **He honored His father's words and went into exile in the forest, despite His right to the throne. That is the importance He gave to the promised word.** When Vibhishana, Ravana's brother, sought Rama's refuge, Rama pledged to make him the king of Lanka even before the war! When someone asked, "How are we sure we are going to win the war?" the reply was that once Rama gives the word, it always comes true. But what if Ravana came and surrendered to Rama too? Rama, the epitome of generosity, says, "In that case, I will give up my throne to the kingdom of Ayodhya to Vibhishana." Such was Rama's implicit adherence to *dharma* and the truth.

Another noble quality Lord Rama had was equanimity. The greatness of a spiritual seeker is seen in treating the pairs of opposites alike. In His historical letter of May 25, 1947, Swami defined devotion, saying that those who are devotees of Sai will treat pleasure and pain, profit and loss, success and failure, heat and cold, all the pairs of

opposites with equal-mindedness. That is called equanimity—and what better example than Lord Rama? The day He was to be coronated as the king of Ayodhya, He went into exile wearing the ochre robes of a renunciant. **Rama went to the forest with the same joyful, calm attitude and benevolent smile that He possessed when He was going to be coronated.** There was no reluctance, only pure joy. Swami says that more important than any other spiritual practice is to: '*Always Be Cheerful*'—the ABC of life. We come closer to God by always being happy.

Rama also showed the world how to be an ideal king. Every day He used to listen to citizens' grievances, address their concerns, and take care of them. He was an ideal brother for Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. He loved and cared for them as a father would love and care for his sons. He was an ideal friend to Sugriva. He promised Sugriva He would help him win back his kingdom, and true to His word, He made him King.

Even to His enemies, Rama was equally truthful and good. When the demon King Ravana was exhausted in the war but still wanted to fight, Lord Rama, instead of attacking him, said, "Go rest and come back; let us fight then." He wanted to give a fair chance even to the enemy. If Ravana had repented and surrendered, Rama was ready to forgive all his sins. He was an ideal husband who showed how to love a wife. Even though He is the Supreme Brahman, when Ravana kidnapped Mother Sita, He pined for her and made every effort for her safe return.

Rama Nama—The Name of Rama

Swami sang many *bhajans*, but the one He sang most frequently was "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram,*" which exhorts one to sing the name of Rama with love and joy and thus cross the ocean of *Samsara*. One should understand its

Swami says there is no use in simply repeating “Rama, Rama” if we do not follow His teachings because Lord Rama’s teachings are His life and His message.

Swami holding idols of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita



meaning to enjoy the *bhajan* and benefit from singing the name of Rama.

The name Rama denotes the one who confers bliss (*ananda*) (also called *Ramyate iti Ramaha*).

The name “Rama,” with the first letter ‘Ra’ and the second letter ‘Ma’ combines the benefits of two powerful mantras: the *Astakshari* mantra, or eight-syllable mantra, *Om Namo Narayanaya*, and the *Panchakshari* mantra, or five-syllable mantra *Namah Shivaya*. The ‘Ra’ from this eight-letter mantra and the ‘Ma’ from the five-letter mantra combine to form ‘Rama.’ **Chanting Rama is thus equivalent to chanting both of these powerful mantras, each one powerful by itself.**

When you analyze the word, Rama is Ra-aa-ma. ‘Ra’ signifies the seed letter for Sun God. Sun removes darkness, which is our ignorance. ‘Aa’ represents the Moon, which gives coolness and removes agitations. ‘Ma’ represents the seed letter for the Fire God. Fire destroys negative tendencies, bad *karma*, and sins.

Swami also says that when we say ‘Ra,’ we open our mouths, which drives away all negative things within us. When we say ‘Ma,’ we close our mouths, which prevents anything negative from returning. This is the power of Rama.

At the end of the Vishnu *Sahasranamam* (one thousand names of Lord Vishnu), it

is narrated that Mother Parvati asks Lord Shiva for the easiest way to repeat a thousand names because everybody cannot do this feat. **Lord Shiva replies, “Just repeat the name Rama, and it is equal to chanting a thousand names of Vishnu.” That is the power of Rama Nama.**

We are blessed that in chanting Swami’s name, ‘Om Sri Sai Ram,’ we have ‘Om’—the seed letter, the *Pranava Mantra* or *Omkar*; ‘Sri’ signifying auspiciousness; Sai, the embodiment of Shiva and Shakti; and ‘Rama,’ which we have described above.

Living a Life Based on the Teachings of Rama

Swami says there is no use in simply repeating “Rama, Rama” if we do not follow His teachings because Lord Rama’s teachings are His life and His message. Many devotees have lived exemplary lives of love and sacrifice in carrying out the Lord’s work. When Mother Sita was taken away by Ravana, a bird called Jatayu chased and fought the demon king and gave up his life. Lord Rama touched and caressed the fallen bird before he died and even performed his final rites when Jatayu breathed his last. Rama gave him liberation because of the sacrifice he made. That was a privilege that even Rama’s father did not receive! Similarly, Lord Sai Rama performed the final rites for the great devotee Sai Gita, the blessed elephant.

Another exemplary devotee is Shabari, a tribal lady who was not well-versed in the scriptures but **had the noble qualities of faith and patience**. Her guru had told her that the Lord would pass that way and bless her one day. She had complete faith in that prediction and waited every day, cleaning the path and plucking fruits for Lord Rama. This went on for many years, and finally, Lord Rama visited her hermitage to meet her. Shabari wanted to ensure that each berry she offered to Rama was sweet; therefore, she bit into each one before offering it to Him. But Lord Rama enjoyed those half-eaten fruits and relished them very much. **After only one darshan, Shabari merged with Lord Rama.**

Once, when asked why despite so many *darshans* of Swami, we do not have such a blissful union, Swami said that Shabari had complete and absolute faith that the Lord would come to her and had the patience to wait for so many years.

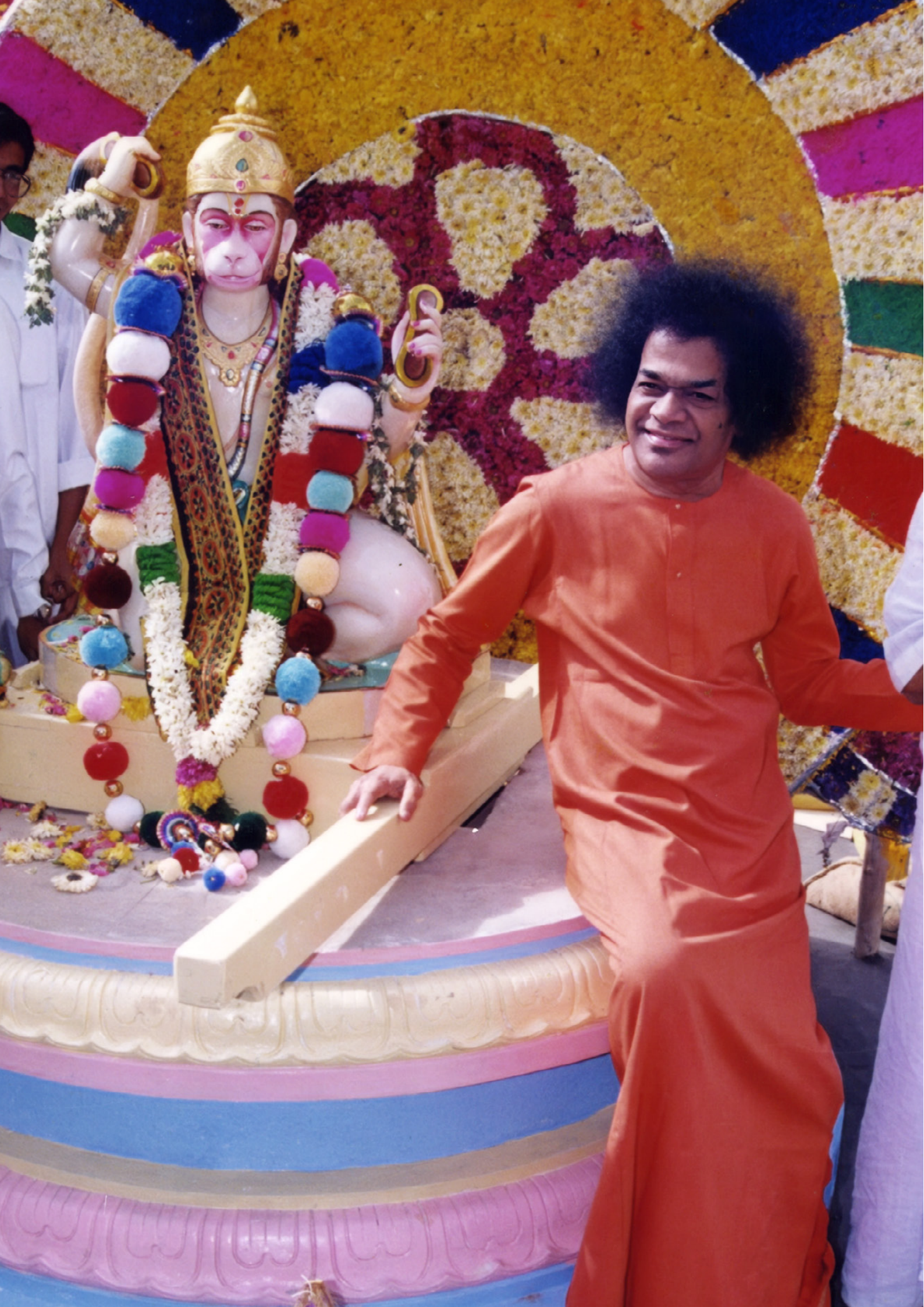
Finally, there is Hanuman, the greatest example of a devotee. That is why Swami gave him so much importance. The 65-foot Lord Hanuman statue Swami inaugurated on Vidyagiri hill towers over all other figures of other deities, showing Hanuman's greatness. **The most outstanding quality of Hanuman is that he demonstrates all three aspects of spirituality—devotion, wisdom, and service.** In one of his wonderful compositions, Saint Tulsidas relates how Hanuman is very scholarly, highly intellectual, and well-versed in all material sciences, spiritual sciences, fine arts, and music. But it is not just education; Hanuman also has good character. That is why Swami says the end of education is character. When he went to Lanka in quest of Mother Sita, Hanuman never yielded to the temptations of the mesmerizing worldly luxuries he saw there.

At the same time, Hanuman was very astute. He knew how to act and respond in a challenging situation, as seen in how he handled the enemies in Lanka. He was always interested in how best he could serve his Lord and was possessed by Rama Consciousness. In fact, at the time of the coronation of Rama, Mother Sita wanted to give her precious pearl necklace to the best among those present. She gifted it to Hanuman, who, to everyone's astonishment, began to bite the pearls. When asked to explain, he said that he was trying to see if they contained the holy name of Rama, and anything that did not reverberate with the name of Rama was useless to him. Then he was asked, "What about your body? Do you think you have Rama there?"

In response, Hanuman plucked one of his hairs and placed it next to the ear of the one who posed the question. Lo and behold, the hair reverberated with the sound, "Rama, Rama, Rama!" Every cell of his body was saturated with Rama. Such is Hanuman's love for Rama that it is believed that wherever people sing *bhajans* or narrate the divine stories (*leelas*) of Lord Rama, he is assuredly present incognito. When asked about his attitude toward Rama, Hanuman beautifully says, "Lord, I think I'm your servant when I have body consciousness. When I think I am the embodied soul, I am part of You. And when I have *Atmic* awareness, I experience You and I are one." That is why **Swami says, "Be like Hanuman and you will be one with God and live in bliss."**

Let us follow the example of the greatest devotees on how to love God. Let us follow the message of Lord Rama, follow His example, follow His life, and thus sanctify and redeem our lives.

Jai Sai Ram



The Message of Lord Rama

*The name Rama is sweeter than sugar
and the best honey.
It is tastier than curd.
As you go on repeating the name of
Rama, it tastes like nectar itself.
Hence, O mind, repeat this beautiful
name of Rama every day.*

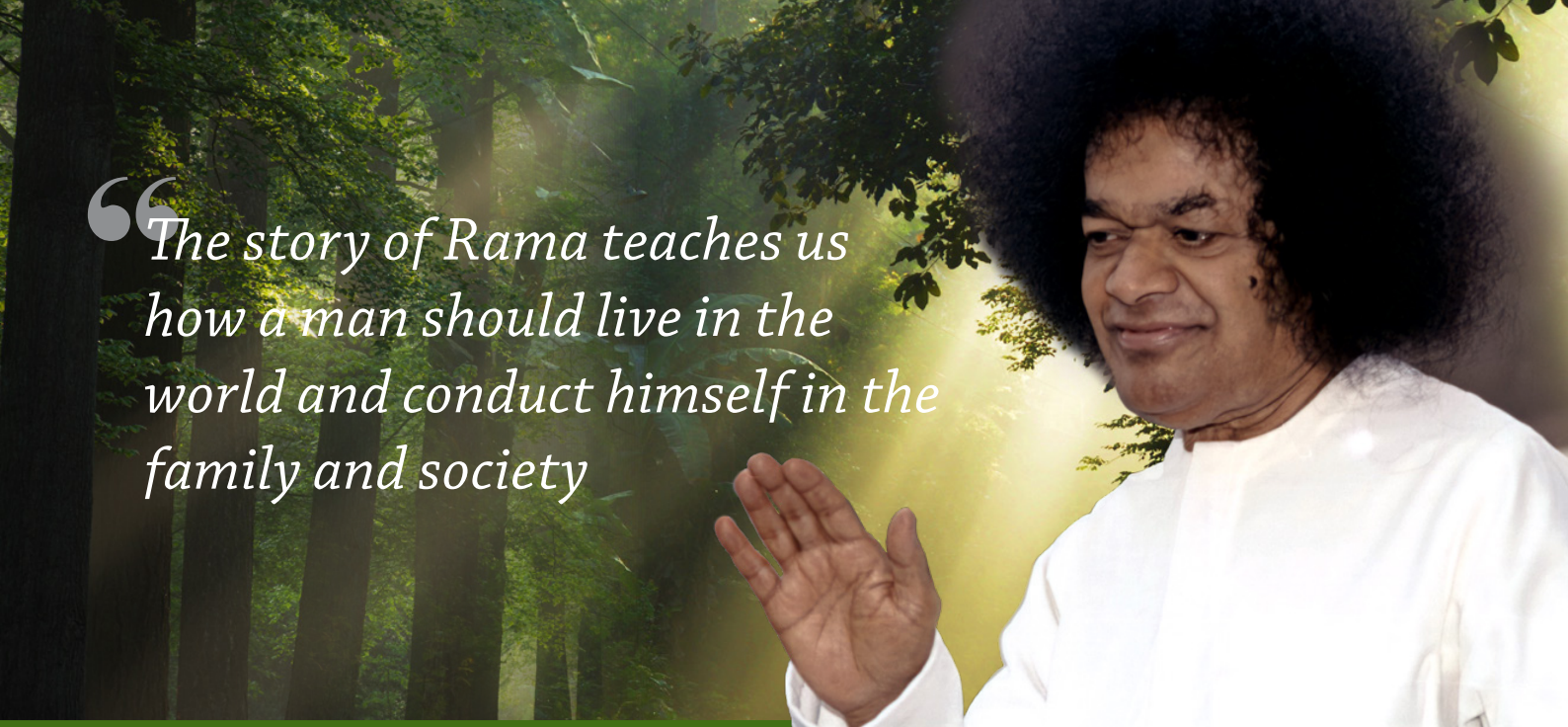
(Sanskrit Verse)

The Ramayana has been described as the story of Rama, as a reflection of the ideal man. In fact, **every human, in a way, is Rama Himself when he embodies the ideals of Rama.** Hence, it is imperative on the part of every individual to introspect whether one is living the ideals of Rama. The Ramayana enshrines in itself the very essence of the *dharma* (righteousness) of the individual, family, and society.

Though thousands of years have passed since the story of Rama was first written, the inner story of the Ramayana continues to be enacted in every moment of our life.

At the beginning of the Ramayana, Valmiki was swayed by the idea that Rama was the ideal man. But during the course of his writing, he was overwhelmed by the feeling that Rama was verily divine, and

concluded, at the end of the epic, that Rama was the Embodiment of Divinity. In comparison, Tulsidas began his writing of Ramayana with the firm faith that Rama was verily Lord Narayana Himself and concluded by emphasizing the fact that Rama was the ideal man. Kamban, the author of Kamba Ramayana, **had the feeling that man is God and God is man (*nara is Narayana, and Narayana is nara*).** The three great writers of the Ramayana lent different dimensions to it, depending on their inner sacred perceptions. Each writer, who brought forth his version of the Ramayana, added their own dimension in consonance with their own faith and temperament, reflecting the sacredness of Rama's story. **In today's world, it is essential that the Rama *Thathwa* (Principle) should be cultivated by one and all.**



“*The story of Rama teaches us how a man should live in the world and conduct himself in the family and society*”

The Glory of Ayodhya

Ayodhya was a beautiful flourishing city in the prosperous kingdom of Kosala; it was the capital of the kingdom. Emperor Manu founded this city, and there was none more beautiful. It had spiraling mansions, sprawling markets, and spruced-up gardens. The citizens of Ayodhya took delight in adding fresh beauty to the already beautiful city. The mansions were studded with pearls and precious stones and shone with great splendor. Dasharatha, the emperor, embodied in himself all noble ideals. The people, too, shared the noble virtues of their emperor. The emperor was pure, selfless, egoless and verily the embodiment of peace and love. He regarded the subjects of his kingdom as his own children and lavished great love and affection on them. The subjects of the kingdom, too, had intense faith in Dasharatha as a father figure and were full of joy for their good fortune for having a person of such noble character as their emperor.

Dasharatha ruled over his kingdom, counseled by eight ministers. These ministers were of extraordinary mettle. They were masters of the scriptures and masters of their senses as well. They held the emperor's command in high esteem and were prepared to lay down their lives and carry

out his commands, for the sake of the king and kingdom. The emperor had two eminent priests (*purohits*), Vasishta and Vamana. **These priests led profoundly moral and spiritual lives and were always absorbed in Divine contemplation.**

Though Emperor Dasharatha enjoyed every pleasure at his command, he remained unfulfilled because of the want of children. In due course of time, Dasharatha's queen Kausalya, gave birth to a daughter named Shanta. There was another emperor who pined for children. He was Emperor Romapada, of the kingdom of Anga. Since Romapada happened to be a friend of Dasharatha, Dasharatha gave away his daughter to Romapada for adoption. Romapada took extreme care of Shanta and reared her with love and affection. When Shanta came of age, Romapada gave her in marriage to a young sage named Rishyashrunga.

Concerned about Dasharatha's condition, one day, Minister Sumantra approached him and advised him to perform the *Ashwamedha Yaga*, a Vedic ritual worship to attain peace of mind. *Ashwa* (horse) represents restlessness, and *Medha* (intellect) represents the mind; so, *Ashwamedha Yaga* is performed to still the restless mind. The mind takes many

extreme forms. **Despite many cycles of birth, the nature of the mind does not change. The mind sows the seeds of desire, grows the trees of action (*karma*), and partakes in the fruits of unfulfilled desires, making the mind restless.** King Romapada suggested that along with it, he undertake *Putrakameshti Yaga*, a sacrificial *vedic* ritual worship for having children. He further advised him to invite sage Rishyashrunga to officiate the *yajna*. Dasharatha, accompanied by Sumantra, went to the kingdom of Anga and invited Romapada and Rishyashrunga to Ayodhya to perform *Putrakameshti Yaga*.

While all this was happening on earth, the angels and other divine beings got together and went to Lord Narayana and pleaded for relief from the atrocities being committed by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. They were worried by the boon that Brahma had granted Ravana and the assurance that he would not die at the hands of demons or divine beings. Brahma assuaged their concerns, saying that though he had granted the boon of protection to Ravana, he did not exempt his death from the hands of humans. Ravana, who did not hold humans in high esteem and considered them as worms, never had an inkling that he would die at the hands of a human. Brahma assured the divine beings that Lord Narayana would take birth in human form and bring about the death of Ravana. There was, thus, a happy coincidence of events on the earthly plane and the heavenly plane.

Rama's Birth (The Divine Descent)

In response to the request of Dasharatha, Sage Rishyashrunga came to Ayodhya to officiate the *Putrakameshti Yaga*. Lord Narayana, pleased by the prayers of Dasharatha, appeared and granted him the boon that he would be blessed with children. He gave him a vessel of pudding (*payasam*) and asked him to distribute it to

his wives, to be partaken by them. **Emperor Dasharatha won the grace of the Lord through his virtuous conduct and the moral and spiritual life he led. God's Grace is proportional to man's efforts.**

Emperor Dasharatha distributed the pudding to the three queens equally, for he had equal love for them. Pundits and scholars have distorted the facts by saying that the pudding was distributed in unequal proportions. The three queens of Dasharatha, namely, Kausalya, Sumithra, and Kaikeyi, lived in great harmony and adjustment. Kaikeyi, the youngest queen, happily received the pudding. She first thought that her son would be crowned as the king of Ayodhya as per the promise that Dasharatha had given before marrying her. Kausalya also happily received her share of the pudding. She thought that since she was the eldest queen, the son born to her would be crowned as the king of Ayodhya.

Sumithra, the second queen, did not entertain any such wish. She was friendly with everyone and highly merited her name, "Sumithra" (a good friend). She placed her share of pudding on the terrace wall and started drying her hair in the sun after her bath. While she was thus busy, an eagle swooped down and carried away the vessel containing the pudding. Frightened at the prospect of incurring the wrath of Dasharatha, she approached Kausalya and Kaikeyi and told them about her plight. Since the queens were highly virtuous, they happily gave away part of their share to Sumithra.

Out of the part of the pudding given by Kausalya, Lakshmana was born to Sumithra, whereas Shatrughna was born out of the portion of the pudding given by Kaikeyi. Hence, it is no wonder that Lakshmana, born of Kausalya's share, was deeply attached to Rama, and Shatrughna was deeply attached to Bharatha since he was

“We should realize the fact that the Lord descended on the earth to demonstrate an ideal to mankind.”

born of the share of Kaikeyi. Lakshmana served Rama sincerely and faithfully until the end, whereas Shatrughna served Bharatha to the last. Bharatha would not live without Shatrughna, even for a moment, a feeling that was mutual.

Similarly, Rama would not live without Lakshmana and *vice versa*. When Lakshmana fainted on the battlefield, Rama lamented, “Oh Lakshmana! In this wide world, I may be able to obtain a wife like Sita or a mother like Kausalya. But I will never be able to get a brother like you.” Such was the supreme love of Rama for Lakshmana.

The Ramayana and the Four Goals of Life

The four brothers were verily the embodiments of the four Vedas. What are these Vedas? Rig Veda is the embodiment of speech (*vak*); Yajur Veda is the embodiment of the mind (*manas*); Sama Veda is the embodiment of the life principle (*prana*); and Atharvana Veda is the embodiment of the intellect (*buddhi*). Thus, the four Vedas played about in the house of Dasharatha, represented as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Shatrughna.

We do not gain much if we continue to entertain the mistaken notion that Rama is the Embodiment of Divinity and that He is beyond our reach. **We should realize the fact that the Lord descended on the earth to demonstrate an ideal to mankind. Hence, every human being should mold himself according to the great example set by Rama.** In fact, Rama lives in every human heart as the enchanting principle. The enchanting principle in the heart is the

Self. There is none in this world in whom the Self is not present. Hence, the Rama principle exists in everyone. Similarly, we should investigate the inner meaning of the word Dasharatha. Dasharatha (one who rides a chariot that can move in all ten directions) was not just an emperor of the kingdom of Kosala. He stands for the body, which is verily the chariot of the ten senses. The body is made up of the five organs of action and the five organs of perception.

The four sons of Dasharatha also signify the four goals of life (*Purusharthas*): righteousness (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*), desire (*kama*), and liberation (*moksha*). These four goals of life give fulfillment to human life.

No human can find fulfillment without these four. There is a close connection between righteousness (*dharma*) and wealth (*artha*). Wealth should be acquired in a righteous way. Similarly, every desire should be a sacred and righteous one. **Sri Rama was the embodiment of *dharma*.**

That is why it is said, ‘*Ramo Vighrahan Dharmaha.*’ We should enjoy life, basing ourselves firmly on the principles of *dharma*. Unfortunately, the four goals of life have been sadly neglected with utter disregard. Ravana sought wealth and gratification of desire, utterly violating the principle of *dharma*. Ravana was a scholar *par excellence*. He had mastered the 64 disciplines of knowledge, whereas Rama had mastered only 32 disciplines of knowledge. However, Rama put them into practice and thereby understood them, whereas Ravana failed to digest them. Indigestion on the part of Ravana arose in the form of desire (*kama*), which ultimately destroyed

“*However deep and great our scholastic eminence may be, we cannot achieve anything without undergoing the transformation of the mind*”

him. While Rama was the Embodiment of *dharma*, Ravana remained the embodiment of desire (*kama*). Thus, there arose a conflict between Righteousness and unrighteousness. Rama transformed Himself into the embodiment of Truth (*sathya*) since He followed the principle of *dharma*. Since Ravana violated *dharma*, he became the embodiment of untruth (*asathya*). There is an eternal warfare between righteousness and unrighteousness, truth and untruth. **It is the duty of everyone to follow and practice the twin principles of truth and righteousness. *Sathya* and *dharma* are verily the Embodiments of Divinity, and there is no God other than these two.**

Live the Ramayana

The Rama principle is laden with many subtle secrets. The Ramayana is of exemplary excellence ethically, spiritually, and materially as well. **The story of Rama teaches us how a man should live in the world and conduct himself in the family and society.** It also teaches us how to retain one's individuality and shape one's personality.

Only when we develop a strong personality can we conduct ourselves ideally in the family and in society. Rama enshrined in Himself all these ideal qualities and shone as an ideal being. He also enshrined in Himself the principle of equanimity, unity, and bliss. This principle of bliss is latent in every human heart. **Every human has a right to realize and enjoy this principle of bliss, which is the Rama *Thatwa*. Rama was the Embodiment of four cardinal**

principles: truth, righteousness, love, and peace.

Rama was an Embodiment of *dharma*, which is the basis for the entire Universe. A true human being is one who follows and practices the principle of *dharma*. To burn is the *dharma* of fire. Coolness is the *dharma* of ice. Fire is no fire without burning. Ice is no ice without coolness. Similarly, the *dharma* of man lies in performing actions with the body and following the commands of the heart. **Every act performed with thought, word, and deed in harmony is an act of *dharma*. Thus, a *dharmic* life is a divine life.**

We say the word *dharma* without understanding its true nature and majesty. Right action (*dharma*) is of various kinds: *dharma* of a householder, a celibate, a recluse, and a renunciate. But the ***dharm* of the heart is the supreme *dharma*. This *dharma* of the heart is verily the *dharma* of life as well.** This is what is also said as 'the proper study of mankind is man.' **The unity of thought, word, and deed has to be achieved at any cost. The Ramayana stands as a supreme testimony to it.** The synthesis of humanity in divinity, and divinity in humanity, leads to Oneness or fullness (*poornathva*). It is said, 'That is full, this is full, and from the fullness, fullness emerges' (*Poornamadham poornamidham, poornath poorna-mudatchyate*). This fullness is humanness.

Many people are ignorant of the inner significance of the Rama story. I shall explain to you in due course the subtleties contained in the Ramayana and the deep significance of words like Rama,

Lakshmana, Sita, Bharatha, Shatrughna, etc. You will have a full appreciation of the Ramayana only after knowing the subtle truths contained in it.

The principle of Rama is the most sacred, sublime, and glorious. There is nothing in the world that cannot be achieved by cultivating the Rama Principle. Though thousands of years have elapsed since the story of Rama took place, the Rama Principle is deeply imprinted in people's hearts. The Rama Principle is ever fresh, ever new, and embraces infinitude itself.

The Rama Principle is contained in the smallest of the small and the largest of the large. The Principle of Rama is not just confined to name and form. It is a transcendental principle that transcends time itself. The Rama Principle is eternally blooming, blossoming, and bursting forth. Students will understand the true nature of humanity by realizing the Rama Principle.

When God descends in human form as an *Avatar*, we should not delude ourselves into thinking that the *Avatar* is a simple human form like us. His form may be human, but His majesty and magnificence are Infinite.

Why Does God Take Human Form?

We should not be deluded by the form and deceive ourselves thereby. **God has to take the human form and change the lives of humans by His own example.** The emancipation of humanity is possible only by taking the human form. It is only the human being who has descended to the depths of degradation by his utter disregard of his *dharma* and divinity. Humans alone have disregarded their human *dharma*, whereas birds and beasts firmly adhere to their respective *dharms*. There is no need for the *Avatar* to descend amongst birds and beasts since *dharma* has not declined in them. Lord Krishna declared, *Parithranaya sadhunaam* (I come down for the protection of the good). The *Avatars* hence come for the protection of the good.

There is no use merely uttering Rama's name. You must realize the Rama Principle first and foremost. **The Rama *Thathwa* is *Prema Thathwa* (Principle of Love). We must emulate Rama and transform ourselves by following the path of Love.** However deep and great our scholastic eminence may be, we cannot achieve anything without undergoing the transformation of the mind.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
May 20, 1996

How Ecuador Came to Love Sathya Sai



IT WAS THE LAST DAY OF MY FIRST TRIP TO INDIA – A MOST FRUITFUL ONE, for I was blessed to experience the Divine Love of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba! I had arrived from Argentina in January 1982 and it was already March 1982. When I left India in March 1982, I had a strong urge to return as soon as possible. I prayed to Swami to bring me back by September. It was a wishful prayer because I had just started working with a new company and had already spent all my savings. I did not have the financial means to return anytime soon. Still, as I bid goodbye to the people I had met at the Ashram, I told them I would be back in September!

Baba had just come to his side. He told him to open his mouth, and then He put His hand into his mouth, extracted something, and said, “Cancer has been canceled.”

An Irresistible Divine Urge

A few months after returning to Argentina, a live show producer came to my licensing company with a proposal to produce a children’s play in Ecuador with the characters that my company represented. The company owners approved the proposal, and soon, I was on my way to Ecuador with a 30-day-valid return ticket bought by the live show company. We toured Ecuador for 29 days, performing a play with Marvel Comic characters and action superheroes such as Spider-Man and The Incredible Hulk. On the twenty-ninth day, the tour ended, and the next day I had a flight booked to return to Argentina. At that moment, it struck me that nobody in Ecuador knew about Sai Baba, and **I had an irresistible urge to share the enormous joy of experiencing a remarkable encounter with God (Avatar) living in India.**

So, I rushed to the airline’s office to request to change my ticket for a later flight. By Swami’s grace, I paid just USD 100 as a fee to get an open ticket valid for an entire year! I was thrilled that Swami had granted me my wish.

When Sai Gives a Task, He Makes You Achieve It

I soon realized that talking about Sai Baba in Guayaquil was not easy. I did not know anyone locally, and I could not just go to a park, stand on a bench, and talk about Sai Baba. As I prayed to Swami for guidance, I remembered that an old friend,

Claudio Duran, lived in Quito, Ecuador. He had earlier introduced me to the Suddha Dharma Mandalam, the Raja Yoga organization where I had been vice president. He was presently a musician who composed jingles for advertising campaigns.

So, I called him and laid bare my thoughts and plans to spread the news about Sai Baba in Ecuador. He advised me, “Look, the only way I can help you is if you come to Quito, where, at least, there will be two of us trying.” So, I took a flight to Quito. Three days after I was initially scheduled to return to Argentina, I was at the headquarters of a Hatha Yoga organization run by a Catholic priest, delightedly sharing the story of Sai Baba with the attendees. The hall was full of people, and I spoke for almost an hour about my experiences with Sai Baba and His message. When I finished my talk, the Catholic priest was quite impressed and told me that if I wrote an article about Sai Baba, he would include it in their monthly magazine.

Moreover, if I had a photograph of Sai Baba, it would be featured on the magazine’s cover! My heart jumped with joy and gratitude. In just a few days, Swami resolved my dilemma—from wondering how to speak about Sai Baba in Ecuador, an article was going to be published in a magazine distributed throughout Ecuador! I was so happy that I could touch the sky with my hands!

The Master's Plan is the Masterplan

Claudio invited me the next day, Saturday, to go to a classical music concert. My flight back to Argentina was scheduled for the following Tuesday, so I went to the concert with him. After the concert, Claudio met with an important client for whom he was creating an advertising campaign. Since it was cold at night and the discussion was not completed, the client invited us to visit him the next day, Sunday, for a lunch meeting to continue the conversation. Though I had no intention of participating in a working lunch, Claudio insisted on my attendance, saying that it would be impolite for me not to attend and that it would also embarrass him. So, I reluctantly agreed, mainly not to let Claudio down.

Claudio's client, Dr. Teodoro Crespo, was a prominent industrialist in Ecuador who had also served as his country's ambassador to Israel. During lunch, he asked me why I was visiting Ecuador, and I told him about my memorable trip to India and my life-changing meeting and experiences with Sai Baba. I spoke enthusiastically nonstop for ten minutes about Sai Baba. Dr. Crespo suddenly interrupted me and asked, "Sir, would you mind going to India with me?" Surprised and happy at the same time, I replied that it would be no trouble at all! He said, "Well then, tomorrow, Monday, I'll wait for you at 10 am at a travel agency at this address to buy our tickets to India."

When I returned to the hotel, I thought the invitation to go to India was probably a joke. But on Monday, suddenly, it occurred to me, what if it's not a joke, but true and genuine? I was torn between my incredulous rational mind and the possibility that it was a sign from Sai Baba. So I called a taxi and went to the address of the travel agency. A travel agency was indeed located there, and Teodoro had already bought two tickets to India!

Thus, on September 2, 1982, I entered Sai Baba's Ashram in Whitefield, South India, accompanied by Dr. Teodoro Crespo. This incident reminded me of Swami's assurance, "***Take one step toward Me, and I will take a hundred steps towards you.***"

It was the first day of our stay at Whitefield Ashram near Bangalore. We were waiting expectantly to have the first darshan when Baba came out of His house, about a hundred meters from where we were sitting. Then I heard His voice echoing clearly in my head for the second time in my life, saying, "Didn't you want to be here in September? Here you are!" What a miracle!

Cancer Canceled and a Heart Overjoyed

During the long journey to India, Teodoro shared with me the reason for his impromptu decision to visit Sai Baba with me. A short time ago, he was told that he had a tumor on his palate, and the subsequent biopsy revealed that it was malignant. Within a few days of the diagnosis, my chance arrival at his house and my story of Sai Baba and His miraculous powers piqued his interest. With nothing to lose, Teodoro felt an inner prompting to go to India to see Sai Baba.

Teodoro, at that time, was a relatively well-built man, accustomed to a comfortable life surrounded by luxury. The austerities of the Ashram were difficult for him to endure, and he would complain constantly. In those days, Sai Baba gave darshan in Whitefield every morning, and on Thursdays and Sundays, He gave darshan both in the morning and the afternoon. Many devotees who came for morning darshan would stay seated till the afternoon darshan. On one of those days, Teodoro decided to sit and wait for the afternoon darshan while listening to bhajans being sung. I left after morning darshan. When

I returned in the afternoon, I found him sobbing uncontrollably, like a child.

When I asked him what was going on, Teodoro told me, between sobs, that Baba had just come to his side. He told him to open his mouth, and then He put his hand into his mouth, extracted something, and said, **“Cancer has been canceled.”** No one around him physically saw Swami, but Teodoro had that unforgettable miraculous experience of Swami curing him.

Soon after, we followed Swami to Prasanthi Nilayam, the primary Ashram of Baba, to spend a few days there before returning to Ecuador. After returning to Argentina, I learned later that Teodoro saw his doctor and then came for a check-up at the Texas Cancer Center, where they performed a biopsy. The results showed no trace of any malignant tumor on his palate, and he was completely cured of cancer.

Still stunned by this miraculous experience, Teodoro published a magazine with his experience with Sai Baba. He illustrated the story with the photos he had taken at the Ashram, printed 10,000 copies, and

distributed them throughout Ecuador for free.

Inspiration Is the Divine Voice Within

What started as an irresistible urge within me to share Sai Baba’s glory and universal message with the good people in Ecuador later turned into a much bigger movement. The talk I gave at the Hatha Yoga Center about Sai Baba was published as an article in the magazine run by the Catholic priest. In addition, Teodoro Crespo shared his incredible healing experience in the magazine he published only for that purpose, which had a circulation of about 10,000.

Today, there are two Sathya Sai Schools in Ecuador, several Sathya Sai centers, and many Sathya Sai devotees throughout the country. Many years after he was cured of cancer by the grace of Sathya Sai Baba, Teodoro Crespo visited Buenos Aires to share his experience with the Argentinian devotees. Along with several family members, Teodoro Crespo remained till his death some years ago as an ardent devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Mr. Leonardo Gutter
ARGENTINA



Mr. Leonardo Pablo Gutter, a psychologist by profession, has been serving in the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) for over four decades. He has had many personal interactions with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He started the Latin American movement of the SSSIO and previously served as the Chairman of Zone 2, Latin America. Mr. Gutter is a founding member of the Sri Sathya Sai Trust of Argentina.

He is a Member of the Prasanthi Council, Director of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, and Co-Chair of the Intellectual Property Committee. Working with the entertainment industry over the past 43 years, Mr. Gutter represents some of the largest American, European and Japanese TV and cinema studios in Latin America.

Sacrifice Alone Confers Immortality

Thyagenaike Amrutatwa Manushu

SWAMI'S 97TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS WERE BEING HELD IN COLOMBO, AND THE ANNUAL AWARD WAS ANNOUNCED.

"This year's Niroshan Memorial Award for the best Bal Vikas student goes to..."

My eyes were filled with tears. My mind went blank. In a flash, the memories came rolling in, one after another, as if I was in a time machine and the years were whizzing by fast. In my mind's eye, I relived my first ever darshan of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in February 1982. I had traveled to Puttaparthi from the United Kingdom, where I had been introduced to Him in October 1981. **Seeing Swami, listening to His discourses, and experiencing the serene atmosphere, I knew I had found my God.**

A Child Finds His Lord

After I returned home to Colombo, I enrolled my 8-year-old son, Niroshan, into *Bal Vikas* (SSE) classes, and he took to them as a fish takes to water. He was soon singing bhajans, playing the *tabla* and the harmonium, much to the delight of his *Bal Vikas gurus*. In 1984, He had his first *darshan* of Swami in Puttaparthi, which changed him. **He was convinced that Swami alone was the goal of his life.** He immediately gave up eating non-vegetarian food and filled the walls of his room with Swami's photographs.

His participation in *Bal Vikas* activities increased dramatically. As his father, it was a proud moment for me when the Hon. Late Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, the second President of Sri Lanka, praised Niroshan for acting well in the role of Shirdi Baba during an annual program. For Niroshan, though, it was an opportunity to perform in the omnipresence of his Swami, which made him happy.

The Lord Blesses His Child

As a young adult, Niroshan would go to Puttaparthi and Whitefield numerous times and join the *Sevadal* (volunteers) in the canteen kitchens. During one such visit, Swami materialized *vibhuti* for him and blessed him with an interview. As his offering of love, Niroshan prayed to Swami to establish a Youth Wing in Sri Lanka. **Swami lovingly blessed him to start the Youth Wing, and he was the first Youth Wing Leader in the Colombo Sathya Sai Center.**

He wanted to adhere to Swami's maxim '*service to man is service to God*' and decided to become a doctor and serve the underprivileged as a cardiologist. He wanted to "heal hearts and fill them with Swami." However, when the results were announced, he was disappointed that he missed the qualifying cutoff for admission to medical college by just one mark. Instead, he was offered the option to pursue dentistry. Disillusioned, yet not wanting to give up on his dream, he asked me to accompany him to Puttaparthi for the *darshan* of Swami.

A Mysterious 'Call' From Puttaparthi

When we arrived in Prasanthi Nilayam, I got another glimpse of his love for Swami. He forgot his slippers in the auto-rickshaw we had hired and ran like a mad person toward the *darshan* hall. He managed to get a seat in the front lines, and we both had close *darshan*. Swami did not speak to us, but Niroshan was very happy just seeing Him. Tears poured down his eyes at the sight of Swami. As *bhajans* were going on, I prayed to Swami to do some-



thing, so my son could pursue a medical career in Sri Lanka. That night, we left for Bangalore (Bengaluru) and returned to Sri Lanka.

A couple of weeks later, the telephone began ringing when I was fast asleep around midnight. I picked up the receiver, and the caller said, "**This is a call from Puttaparthi, India. Your son will be selected for medicine.**"

The line then went blank! I knew immediately that this was a message from Swami! I woke up my son immediately and excitedly told him what had just happened. He was extremely thankful to Swami and was very jubilant with tears of joy.

Two days later, Niroshan received a letter from the medical college stating that he was selected for admission as another candidate had given up the seat!

What a miracle! It was simply the grace of our beloved Swami. Niroshan continued his service activities—organizing medical camps, visiting cancer hospitals and orphanages, and singing carols in hospitals during Christmas. He began to organize Swami's Birthday celebrations and brought about a significant change

among the medical students. He motivated them to stop the practice of hazing (a form of abuse, humiliation, and harassment) first-year students and plunge into service!

The Final Call

I was fully engaged with my family practice as a physician, and life went on smoothly without any problems. Niroshan was home, preparing for his final MBBS examinations, which were to be held in October 2001. We were living in our three-storied house in Colpetty, Colombo. We celebrated Guru Poornima on July 5 and were all resting peacefully at home. On the morning of July 6, at about 3 am, our house was burglarized by two men who started wielding huge, sharp knives. They seemed high on drugs and were about to attack and stab me. Niroshan freed himself from their grasp and came running to protect me. He fought the assailants while my wife and I screamed for help. The attackers panicked, stabbed Niroshan in the chest, and made a getaway.

Niroshan leaned against the wall, which had Swami's picture, with a gentle smile of satisfaction lighting up his face. I immediately took him on my lap and tried to patch and stop the profuse bleeding. Without the slightest cry of pain or murmur of complaint, my son breathed his last on my very lap. **He had made the ultimate sacrifice for his father!**

Swami's Acknowledgement

April 10 is Niroshan's birthday. For his birthday in 2002, I wrote a book, *The Vision Of Niroshan*, outlining his life and achievements. In May 2002, I took two copies of the book to Prasanthi Nilayam. I mailed one to Swami and kept the other one on my lap during *darshan*. As Swami passed by me, **He pointed His finger at the book and said, "He is with Me." That made me very happy.** Niroshan was in a place he had always wanted to be—with Swami.

In my heart of hearts, I always knew that Niroshan inspired and touched many a heart by the way he lived Sai's ideals and quietly spread Swami's love and message. He left a beautiful legacy as an ideal Sai young adult.

I would like to share excerpts from a letter from Dr. U. Anushka Bagga, one of his collegemates who went to the same medical college, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayawardenepura, Sri Lanka. She is now working as Assistant Professor in the Surgery and Trauma Division, at Loma Linda University in California, USA. Dr. Bagga poured her heart out in the letter, sharing her lasting memories, idolizing and admiring him. This is another sign of Swami's continuing shower of grace and blessings on Niroshan.

Dr. U. Anushka Bagga sums up her memorable impressions in just two sentences, *"I knew Niroshan only for a year and a half and still grieve the loss of not having known him longer so that I could have learned to be more like him. There is no doubt he merged with Swami, and Swami used him as His instrument to teach us, mortals, how to live."* She also wrote,

"Niroshan was truly the embodiment of Swami's love. I first met him as a first-year medical student. Every year, during Buddha Poornima, the medical students would go around the wards of the cancer hospitals at Jayawardenepura and the Colombo South teaching hospital, singing Sinhalese devotional songs. I volunteered to play the flute to accompany these songs but wasn't familiar with them. Niroshan, a brilliant harmonium player and singer, spent a whole day with me to help me learn the songs. We walked, played, and sang as a group. Even when everyone was exhausted, he kept us going with his energy well after midnight until we played at every in-patient unit. Kids from the cancer hospital would

be trailing behind us like he was the Pied Piper leading his happy band. Any interpersonal tensions and misunderstandings would dissolve **whenever Niroshan walked into a room, as he would infuse everyone with Swami's love and compassion.**

Whenever we had religious events at the university, a lot of food would go to waste. Despite being sleep deprived and having to work over 100 hours a week, Niroshan would stay till the very end of every event. He would then pack his car with all the leftover food and deliver it to the homeless patients at the hospital. He never publicized his good deeds and always worked quietly, unassumingly, and tirelessly in the background. This amazing, noble person knew every patient who did not have a family and brought them food when he was on in-patient rotations. His batchmates told me how the patients would applaud and welcome him like a celebrity whenever he walked into a medical ward.

Later, when I joined the Young Adults (YA) program in Colombo, I discovered that he had set up a nutrition project for at-risk kids in an impoverished Colombo neighborhood and brought them nutritional supplements weekly. He would track the progress of their growth and hold medical camps despite his hectic academic schedule. Every Sunday, he would go for Nagar-sankeertan singing devotional songs

while walking in the streets) at 5 am, and on most days, he would be the only one walking and singing! I heard from fellow YAs how he would play the harmonium and sing throughout the night and the day during Akhanda Bhajans and Maha Shivarathri. He would also be working tirelessly in the kitchen, hauling heavy pots and pans during Narayana Seva at soup kitchens.

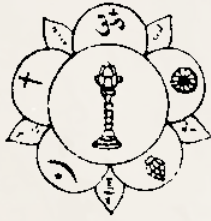
I don't know how a human being could do everything he did! Upon hearing that Niroshan passed away, the Professor of Pediatrics stopped his rounds in hospital wards, overwhelmed with sorrow. Busloads of people poured in from all over the country, sobbing in grief. **This 26-year-old man positively impacted many people with his divine love, which was so profound and powerful!** Niroshan's Bal Vikas (SSE) Gurus and Senior Sai devotees of Colombo loved him so much that they decided to offer a 'Niroshan Memorial Award' annually to the best Bal Vikas student during Swami's Birthday celebrations."

I miss my Niroshan. But whenever I look at Swami's smile in a picture, I see my Niroshan smiling. Every time a Bal Vikas student receives the annual Niroshan Memorial Award, I know that my son lives through every one of them!

Dr. Chanmugam Srideva
SRI LANKA



Dr. Chanmugam Srideva is a qualified Family Physician (MBBS, DCH, DFM, MCGP) practicing in Colombo, Sri Lanka since 1971. He had his first darshan of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in February 1982 and has been part of the activities of the Sai Center and the SSIO ever since.



Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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

My dears! Accept my blessings and love.
Each one from ego takes his birth and clad in
ego dies and comes and goes, Gives and
receives and earns and spends, and deals
in lies or speaks the truth, In ego all the
while. Heaven and hell and incarnations.
All these from ego are not free. Those who
do away with their ego attain salvation.
The Lord is ever true, and higher than the
highest is, But you must crush your ego
and realize Him. He is in you, with you
and around you, Be happy.

With love and blessings
Sri Sathya Sai Baba
(Baba)

Crush Your Ego and Realize Him

My Dears! Accept my Blessings and Love. Each one from ego take his birth and clad in ego dies and comes and goes, gives and receives, and earns and spends, and deals in lies or speaks the truth, in ego all the while. Heaven and hell and incarnations. All these from ego are not free. Those who do away with their ego attain salvation. The Lord is ever true, and higher than the highest is, but you must crush your ego and realize Him. He is in you, with you and around you. Be Happy.

With Love and Blessings

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Baba

LOVE IN ACTION



PERU Pure Love Through Pure Water

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education of Peru and the Sai Sustainability wing are jointly developing a series of workshops to **educate impoverished families about the benefits of using pure water**. In consonance with Swami's dictum of practice before precept, on November 5, 2022, SSSIO volunteers from Atlanta, USA, delivered 12 water filters to provide clean drinking water to underprivileged families in Lima, Peru. Two filters were installed in community kitchens, benefiting nearly 400 people. The families served by



the community kitchens were thankful for the gift of pure water to prepare their food.



RUSSIA Serving and Inspiring

Bhagawan Baba says that **the gift of food to the hungry is the noblest of all gifts**. In October 2022, over 150 SSSIO volunteers from seven regions across Russia served fresh and nutritious food to nearly 650 people in need. The volunteers served in the name of their beloved Sai, not only in Central Russia but also in the frosty Siberian region and the rugged Ural region. Dishes served included the Druzhiba porridge, cheese sandwiches, pancakes, vegetables, salad, apples, sweets, buckwheat porridge with vegetables, noodles, cottage cheese casseroles and hot tea. They also gave away grocery bags filled with fruits, buckwheat, sunflower oil, milk, and flour. The activity ignited interest in a passerby on the street, who also participated enthusiastically in the distribution of pies to the homeless.





SOUTH AFRICA

Mindfulness in Motion

SSSIO volunteers in South Africa organized a wellness clinic at the Sathya Sai School, Chatsworth on October 30, 2022. More than 60 people attended the clinic which had a theme *Mindfulness in Motion*. The camp included various stations, including dentistry, optometry, pediatrics, and general health checks. In addition, the **attendees participated in a stress management course that included yoga and exercise stations, and a course on light meditation**. The patients were also provided guidance on healthy eating, including recipes for breakfast and lunch.



USA

Spreading the Warmth of Love

Members of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Albany, New York, made 250 blankets for Project Linus, a nonprofit organization serving children in need, and 95 blankets for impoverished expectant mothers at the Alpha Pregnancy Center. Most of the Sai volunteers involved in this project were children and women. While making the blankets, **the group sang devotional songs to transmit love and compassion to the recipients receiving the blankets**.



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

SSSIO ZONE 7



AUSTRIA • BELGIUM • CZECH REPUBLIC • DENMARK • ESTONIA • FINLAND • **GERMANY**
HUNGARY • LATVIA • LITHUANIA • NETHERLANDS • POLAND • SLOVAKIA • SWEDEN

GERMANY



1975

Germany represented by Benno Wesner during the 2nd World Conference of Sathya Sai Organizations

1985

“My Life is My Message” First public meeting in Munich followed by three more public meetings in other cities

1986

Initiation of Children’s Summer Camp programs as part of launching EHV and teacher training

2000

“Values in Religions” national festival with over 450 participants





2004

Over 550 join the "Sai Art" festival in Cologne

2009

"God Has Many Names" national festival of religions attended by more than 650

2017

"Sai Symphony" performance in Wuppertal's City Hall to an audience of more than 1,400

2021

Extensive nationwide service after heavy flooding of the river Ahr



My Spiritual Transformation

I TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND WALKED UP TO THE TEACHER'S TABLE. I placed all the tangerines I brought on the table and called the children, one by one, handing over one fruit to each. The rector had come to observe and evaluate how well I could teach mathematics. She seemed surprised at my actions and watched us with a strange expression.

I asked the children to peel the tangerines and eat as many slices as they wished. Once the children had relished the sweet, juicy pieces, I asked them whether they remembered how many segments were in the fruit at the beginning. Then, I began to teach about fractions with graphic representations based on each child's experience. By the end of my class, every child had grasped the concept of fractions well.

The rector said, "At first, I thought you were out of control—how could you invite the children to eat in class?" She was frank with her feedback, saying, "But then I understood your approach, and I really liked your way of breaking barriers. When can you start teaching?" I was filled with happiness upon hearing this.

I learned to teach human values through Sathya Sai Education classes. It was 2006, and at the early age of 21, I had been accepted as a teacher in a primary school in Bahía de Caráquez, Manabí, Ecuador. I was soaring high with delight, a sense of belonging, and fulfillment. **I did not realize then that this was the start of a beautiful journey in spreading Sathya Sai Education In Human Values through the community.**

Miracle of Sathya Sai's Love

I was then 21 years old and tried to solve adverse situations by shouting. I had learned to be strong and not let anyone put me down because of a difficult childhood. My father left us when I was seven-year-old. It was a big blow for my mother. She had six children, no home, and no income as a housewife.

By the time I was hired as a Mathematics teacher, I was already responsible for caring for others, and my heart had expanded with love. Filled with joy, I began to imagine what I could do for the children's benefit. However, after the first week of classes, I saw my previous boss entering the institution one day. He had fired me earlier because I became pregnant. I learned his action was not legal, and I filed a complaint with the labor department. Although it was never resolved, my former boss would seek revenge from that day on. Whenever he found out I was working somewhere, he would visit my new bosses and ask them to fire me.

On that fateful day, my ex-boss talked with the rector. Then the rector called me to her office. As I looked at the children, my eyes filled with tears, and my heart sank as I thought this would be my last day at school. But I was about to witness the miracle of Sathya Sai's love. The rector notified me of the visit by my previous boss but told me not to worry! She said everything would be fine and asked me to continue doing my

best. I could not believe she had broken the circle of hate by Swami's grace!

I met many people throughout my life who spoke about love. **But that day, the rector showed me love in action, following the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I was never the same again, and thus began my transformation in thought and feeling.** My heart softened with love, and I decided to do my best to love more and more.

Be the Change That You Want to See in Others

Everything around me began to change when I understood that change starts with me. I became transformed by practicing the teachings of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values. Since I learned through actions and experiences, I appreciated the role of harmony of thought, word, and deed. This has taught me to know my true self. As part of the Sai family, I never feel that I am being judged. I have discovered my strengths and learned to work together, supported by a great team of coworkers.

Today my life is different since I have overcome my fears. I have come to appreciate the soft caress of the wind, the song of the birds, the smiles of the children, and the support of the parents of families. Additionally, I have the affection of the teachers, harmony with nature, and an earthly father who supports me. He listens to my tantrums and helps me develop self-confidence. I confess that it is often difficult to face 'storms,' listen to foolish words and learn harsh realities. However, at the end

of the day, there is always the smile of a teacher, the hug of a child, and a thank you from someone to help me overcome the negativity. **Many times, I had to unlearn to learn again.**

Today, our educational institute has grown. We have become beacons of light and hope where teachers, children, and parents practice love. In addition, we have **six maxims** for our students as institutional objectives:

1. Be good
2. Be happy
3. Serve society
4. Be responsible for nature
5. Be leaders
6. Know thyself

We believe that it is fundamental to humanize education. On the other hand, I can affirm with complete certainty practicing human values as taught by Sathya Sai has saved my life. **Now, I understand the importance of transforming myself to bring about the change I want in others.**

SSSEHV Equips Us to Face Life's Challenges Better

In addition, I think it is not by chance that the Lord brought me to this beautiful place to experience personal transformation. It also enabled me to bring out the best in others. I am now the mother of two beau-

tiful children, although one of them has Noonan syndrome with a partial intellectual disability. **The education program in human values has made me a better mother, partner, teacher, daughter, sister, friend, and human being. This is reflected in everything that surrounds me.** This does not mean that I do not have problems, but I can see these challenges as learning opportunities to assess and improve myself. It helps me to get rid of my negative emotions.

I believe that self-confidence is essential to achieve control of our lives. I grew up listening to words like "she can't do it," "she has no chance," and "she will never make it." But positive words spoken by my elder brother and others have always energized me never to give up, which shows the power of the word. Today, I may not have material or academic achievements, but I enjoy much affection, kindness, love, and respect from people close to me as well as strangers.

It is time to understand that the light of others does not limit our brilliance. **Each person shines with their own light, and it would be spectacular if all of us could shine and vibrate with love in harmony.**

Ms. Rosa Zambrano Rivero 
ECUADOR



Ms. Rosa Zambrano Rivero holds a degree in Education Sciences from the Technical University of Manabí (Ecuador). She has more than 18 years of experience teaching at almost all educational levels, in both formal and informal contexts. Currently, she is the Rector (Academic Head & In-Charge) of the Sathya Sai School of Bahía de Caráquez (Ecuador).

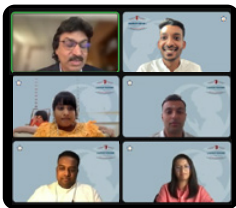


from the International Sai Young Adults

As the work expands, the International Young Adults Committee continues to grow to accomplish the mission. We take this opportunity to congratulate the newly appointed Zone and Deputy Zone Young Adults Coordinators of Zones 6 and 7. Additionally, we welcome the newly appointed Leads and Co-Leads for the Serve the Planet, Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana of Love, and International Young Adults Wellbeing Subcommittees. We wish them all the best as they continue to serve with great energy and enthusiasm. Watch this space for more exciting collaborations and initiatives from these Zonal and International YA Subcommittees.

This month, we bring you some inspiring worldwide service initiatives and an update from the Sri Sathya Sai International Leadership Programme for Young Adults.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME COMMENCEMENT



The Sri Sathya Sai International Leadership Programme (SSSILP) Class of 2023 commenced on January 21, 2023, with the online instructor-led session of Module 1. This year's batch comprised 111 Sai Young Adults representing 23 countries worldwide. The first module was facilitated in English and Spanish, with plans for conducting it in Russian in the future. We take this opportunity to wish the students all the best on this incredible journey. May Bhagawan be the center of their hearts, minds, and souls, as He is our true guide and eternal companion.



AROUND THE WORLD

Activities from Mexico, Dominican Republic, and El Salvador

On October 22, 2022, the YAs of **Mexico** conducted the project "Amor por la Naturaleza" (Love for Nature) with 14 participants. Multiple sessions were held about care and love for nature, reflecting their passion and enthusiasm for the SAI-100 tree-planting initiative.

Sai Young Adults in the **Dominican Republic** went early in the morning to a park in Santo Domingo to deliver breakfast to 110 poverty-stricken people on October 29, 2022.

When **El Salvador** hosted the retreat for Zone 2A Region 21 on November 25, 26, and 27, it was the Sai Young Adults of El Salvador that came forward to provide all necessary organizing and logistical support. They oversaw the welcome team, food arrangements, and programs for devotional songs and talks, including supporting the speakers. "Líderes Sai" (Leaders of Sai) was a great success, and the YAs gained valuable exposure and learn lessons to take over the mantle of service and responsibilities gradually.



Students! Young men and women! First and foremost, make efforts to understand your true nature. The difference between God and man is very subtle. As long as you do not understand the Truth, you remain a human being. Once you recognize it, you are God. Service is the best way to understand your innate divinity.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 18, 1999

“Who Am I?”

AS A CHILD, I WAS ALWAYS SCARED OF LOOKING INTO A MIRROR!

It happened when I was about five years old. When I saw my face in the mirror, I lost body consciousness, feeling so distant and separate from my body. For a couple of years after that, the experience kept repeating, and it felt very eerie. That would be followed by the persistent question, "Who am I? Who am I?" At that time, I did not understand it. I was terrified, so I almost stopped going to the bathroom because it had a big mirror. Today, I know this was a very spiritual experience, but I did not have anyone to share with back then. I was born into an atheistic family in the heart of Europe, the Czech Republic (former Czechoslovakia), and 'God' was not given importance. Later, when I came across the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, I remembered these experiences and found them very important.

As I grew up, I remember feeling an inner emptiness and meaninglessness in my life. I started actively looking for the meaning of life. After several years of searching, I accepted an invitation to attend a church service. As soon as the service began, I encountered what I had been unknowingly seeking—God in the form of Jesus. This experience completely changed my life; I felt like I was born again. I became a Christian and started attending this church and its activities. But that, too, was short-lived. Within months, I began to feel a conflict between my experience of a God who accepts and loves me unconditionally and the prevailing view in that church that God would save only Christians. I disagreed with that notion, but I still did not have an answer to the question: "Who will be saved?" I asked this question of God many times in my prayers. I searched in various books, reviewing and discarding many concepts, but in the end, none satisfied me completely and brought me inner peace.

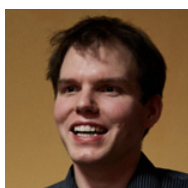
At this juncture, my friend gave me a book with the picture of a curly-haired man on the cover who looked like Jimi Hendrix; a noted musician, only instead of an electric guitar, He was holding a gold statuette. The book was called 'Man of Miracles,' and the author was Howard Murphet. I read it and was attracted to 'Sai Baba,' the book's

protagonist. The same was the case with another book, 'Sai Baba Avatar,' by the same author. **When I read Sai Baba's statement, "There is only one religion, the religion of love," I cried because that was the answer to my prayer: "Who will be saved?" Those that love will be saved!** It is as simple and profound as all of Sai Baba's teachings.

Later, I spent one school year in the Don Bosco Project in Karnataka, India. At the end of the year, I went to Puttaparthi for a few days, where I had darshan of Baba. After returning home, I attended Thursday bhajan meetings regularly and became a member of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization in the Czech Republic. The greatest miracle of this curly-haired man of miracles for me is His teaching, which excludes no one, is understandable yet so profound, and grows out of His absolute boundless love. It is that love that makes us evolve.




With His pure and unconditional love, **Sai Baba makes us embrace this profound Truth rather than run away from it. He brings us face-to-face with our reality and inspires us to question, "Who am I?"** From my childhood experience, I know that this can be very unnerving and, at times, scary too. It makes us want to avoid looking into the inner 'mirror' and stop any 'reflection', holding on to our ego for comfort. But the ego is just an illusion that we need to discard. The answer to the question, 'Who Am I?' is the ultimate reality we all must accept and celebrate.


Mr. Pavel Marcik 
CZECH REPUBLIC




Mr. Pavel Marcik is from the Czech Republic. He graduated from SSSILP for Young Adults in 2016 when he was the National YA Coordinator. He then served as the National Council President for the SSSIO in the Czech Republic from 2017-2020. Professionally, he is a Social Worker who has been practising in the Czech Republic, India and Ukraine.

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

 Email

SSE Reflections



Love All, Serve All
 Sometimes life can make you Fall
 Swami is always ready for the Call
 Even something that is Small
 We have a united power in the Prayer Hall



Help Ever, Hurt Never
 Wherever, Whomever, and Whenever
 Swami's message is very Clever
 We often forget However
 Please bless us in every Endeavour

Poems: Rishi B. | Group 2 | Canada
 Artwork: SSE Students, Malaysia and Naithik | Group 1 | USA



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Om Sri Sai Ram

I show "Love All, Serve All" by helping people when they are struggling. I help my friend almost every math period at school with his math. When I see donation bowls or any homeless people, I ask my parents for some money to give as a donation.

I also show "Love All, Serve All" by helping my Spanish teacher with all the technology stuff like connecting her computer to the big screen. I also fill her water bottle for her and she really appreciates it.



Rachana R. | Group 3 | USA

I am always trying to help people. You should like everyone no matter what because everyone is the same. As Swami says: "All religions are the same."

Bhargav R.G | Group 3 | Canada



Upcoming SSSIO Online Events

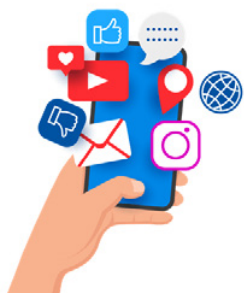
SSSIO has been conducting online events to share Swami's love, message, and works with everyone around the world. Hundreds of thousands of people have been reached through these events streamed on the sathyasai.org/live page.

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

Date of Online Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
April 15-16, 2023	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
April 23, 2023	Sunday	Sri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsavam
May 5, 2023	Saturday	Buddha Poornima



[Streaming on sathyasai.org/live](https://sathyasai.org/live)



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](#)



Since you claim to be Sai devotees, you should strictly adhere to the Sai path and make everyone happy. When you follow in My footsteps, you will certainly achieve sacred results and attain a good reputation. Being Sai devotees, you should give up selfishness and dedicate your lives for the welfare of society. Fill your lives with love. Stop criticizing others. Offer your respects to even those who hate you. Hatred is a mean quality. It will ruin you. Hence, do not give room for hatred. Cultivate love. Help the poor and needy to the extent possible. Help ever, Hurt never.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

April 13, 2002



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never