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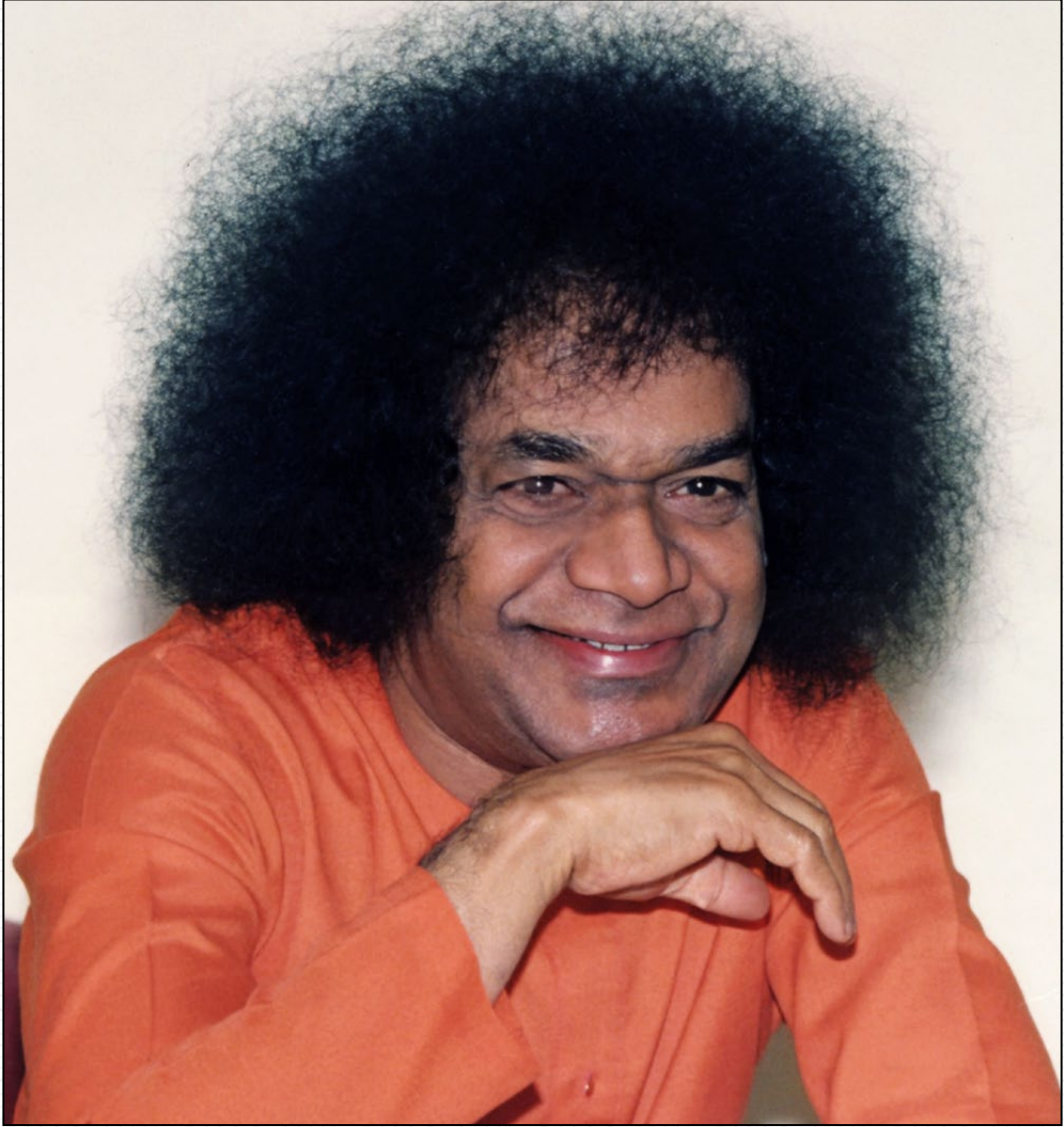


**DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF**
SRI SATHYA SAI



True devotion is the direct flow of love from you to God. Unconditional and selfless love for God is true devotion. Worship of God must be totally free from any demands, especially the fulfillment of worldly desires and the expectation of worldly rewards. However, people always worship God with a lot of self-interest or selfish motives. This is not true devotion. What you must offer to God is pure and selfless love (*prema*). It is such love alone that would secure liberation. Indeed, such love itself is liberation because it frees you from worldly desires. Freedom from attachments (*moha-kshaya*) is true liberation (*moksha*).

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
May 21, 2000



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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BHAKTI— THE PATH OF DEVOTION FOR SELF-REALIZATION

The great teacher of advaita vedanta, Sri Adi Shankaracharya, says that **Bhakti** is the supreme path to the realization of God. The scriptures say, “*Moksha-karana Samagryam Bhaktireva Gariyasi*” (Among different means of liberation, devotion holds the supreme place). The Bhagavata Purana (a sacred Hindu text), which Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba extols to sanctify one’s life, considers *Para Bhakti* (Supreme Devotion), the devotion that transcends all worldly concerns, as the *Panchama Purushartha*—the fifth and ‘ultimate goal’ of human life. It exhorts that love is the source, the path, and the goal. It emphasizes love for love’s sake. It is said that God may easily give *Mukti* (liberation) but not this supreme *Bhakti* (devotion), where the path itself is as blissful and rewarding as the goal.

All faiths extol the path of love as ‘God is Love and Love is God.’ Swami says, “**As one can see the moon only with the help of the moonlight, so also God, who is love, can be experienced only through love.**” Lord Jesus says as the First Commandment, “Love thy God with all thy heart, soul and strength.” He also says, “Love thy neighbor as thyself.”

The Narada *Bhakti Sutras* (Aphorisms on Devotion by Sage Narada) say *Anirvachani-*

yam Prema Swarupam (The nature of Divine Love cannot be described in words). One can only experience Divine Love and see the manifestation of love, which Sage Narada describes in this scripture as “when the tears of joy flow...the voice gets choked... there is horripilation...and there is intoxication with divine love.” Sage Shandilya, in his aphorisms on *Bhakti*, says, “*Bhakti* is the supreme, true, untainted, pure love and attachment to God.” He claims this is the best way to attain liberation and says divine love removes all negative tendencies, enabling one to live in bliss.

Sri Adi Shankaracharya gives another definition for *Bhakti*. *Swaswaroopam Anusandhanam Bhaktirityamidhiyate—to know one’s true nature is Bhakti*. It is to realize that one is the embodiment of divine love, the embodiment of divine Atman or Brahman. That is *Bhakti*. In His inimitable way, Swami says, “*Rakti* for Bhagawan is *Bhakti*.” It means that to have intense and pure love for God is *Bhakti*. Another way Swami defines *Bhakti*: “**Not to have Vibhakti is Bhakti.**” It means one should not feel separation from God. To feel that one is with God and is no different from God is *Bhakti*. Where there is no ‘devotee’ and only God is seen, heard, and experienced everywhere, at all times is true devotion.

In modern times when we have so many distractions, the path of *Bhakti* is considered the easiest and most effective spiritual practice by all the great masters.

The great saint Narsi Mehta composed a famous bhajan:

vaisnava jana to tene kahiye je pida
parāyi jāne re,
para dukhe upakāra kare to ye
mana abhimāna na āne re

Devotees of God feel the pain of others and help those who are suffering without any pride.

This was the favorite *bhajan* of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation for India. The saint-philosopher Narsi Mehta describes who is dear to God. He says that a devotee of God feels the pain of others as one's own. He does good to others without any pride or attachment. He respects and praises everyone but does not speak ill of anyone. He keeps up his promises and words and always keeps his mind steady. He is equal-minded, and when he sees other women, he respects them as his mother. He does not speak untruth, nor does he covet others' wealth. He does not have worldly attachments and has an intense feeling of renunciation. He renounces desire, anger, and greed and is straightforward, with harmony of thought, word, and deed. **Such a noble person is dear to God and does good for the whole world.**

Saint Paul, the great apostle of the Lord Jesus, makes a historical statement about love in his letter to the Corinthians. **"Faith,**



hope, and love are great. But of them, the greatest is love." He describes love as, "Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is not jealous. Love is not pompous. It is not proud. It is not rude. It does not dishonor others. It does not insist on its own way. It is not short-tempered. It keeps no record of the wrong done by others. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with Truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails."

Swami summarized all these feelings and sentiments of the great saints, sages, and Avatars, saying, "Love is God. God is Love. Live in Love." **Swami says that Divine Love is pure, selfless, unconditional, and eternal in contrast to worldly love, which is temporary, conditional, selfish, and impure.** Love is the source. Love is the path. Love is the goal. Love is its own reward.

In modern times when we have so many distractions, the path of *Bhakti* is considered the easiest and most effective spiritual practice by all the great masters. The Lord, who is the embodiment of Love, and beyond name, form, attributes, time, space, and causation, comes down in human form as an **incarnation to teach every-**

one this path of Love, this obligation to love, this duty to love, so that our lives are redeemed.

By looking at the life of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, studying His teachings, listening to His Divine Discourses, and engaging in His Divine Mission and His works, one can understand what Divine Love is and live in that love. He showered His love from the time He came on this Planet Earth until He left His earthly sojourn. But still, in His omnipresent and omniscient form, He continues to bless and guide the seekers who long to experience Divine Love.

How to Live in Divine Love?

Swami makes it very clear that God has to be the first priority for a sincere spiritual seeker. If we want to have **SAI** in our lives, we have to give importance to **Sai** first, **All** others next, and **I** last! The first priority should always be God in all our endeavors. Secondly, our love must be intense; it should not be lukewarm! There must be intense longing and hunger for God just as a miser has for wealth, a mother has for her only child, or a chaste wife has for her husband. One should cry for God and not for worldly pleasures and pursuits. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa showed this longing in His life and assured that if one cries for God for three days, God will appear. **In His Divine Discourse on July 28, 2007, Bhagawan promised that if one prays intensely for only 11 seconds, God will give realization. Also, He assured that He will manifest, give *darshan*, and converse with the devotee if he keeps his mind steady for 11 seconds.**

Next, this love should be love for love's sake. It should not be a business transaction. We love God because He is the dearest, and He is Love.

This love can be expressed in many ways. Traditionally there are nine forms of devotion to God:

1. *sravanam* (listening to the Lord's stories, divine sport, and glory)
2. *kirtanam* (singing His glories)
3. *smaranam* (remembrance of God)
4. *padasevanam* (service to the Lotus Feet of the Lord)
5. *archanam* (worship)
6. *vandanam* (salutation)
7. *dasyam* (servitude)
8. *sakhyam* (friendship)
9. *Atma nivedanam* (Self-surrender)

***Bhakti* Step-by-Step**

Swami succinctly describes the principle of spiritual dynamism and the gradual maturing of *Bhakti* through the various stages. It starts from *Bhoutika Bhakti* or *Samanya Bhakti* (External or Ordinary Devotion); progresses to *Ekantha Bhakti* (Devotion in Solitude) and culminates in *Ananya Bhakti* (Devotion in Oneness with the Divine).

In the first stage of ***Bhoutika Bhakti***, an outward path where one goes on pilgrimages, makes sacrifices, gives in charity, performs penance, constructs temples, consecrates idols, sings bhajans, reads scriptures, and engages in ritualistic worship. This gives him an outer vision (*Bahir Drishti*). These practices and experiences are external and physically engage the body, which is transient and not of a permanent nature. This body has to perish, so the experiences arising from the body will also disappear with the body. Nevertheless, this type of *Bhakti* is necessary as the first step.

Traveling on this path, we slowly enter the second stage of ***Ekantha Bhakti***, the inward path. *Ekantha Bhakti* is a subtle state achieved by effectively controlling the mind and experiencing the Self (*Antaratma*). To cleanse the mind of



Swami says it is not enough to call ourselves devotees of God. God should recognize us as His devotees.

impure thoughts is the true meaning of 'Ekantha.' Swami advises one to practice this *Sadhana* in a quiet place by oneself during *Brahmamuhurtam*—auspicious early hours of the morning between 3:00 AM and 5:00 AM. In the beginning, one has to do breath control (*Pranayama*) to control the flow of thoughts. When the stage comes where the mind is without thoughts and desires, one can concentrate easily on God. In the stage of *Ekantha Bhakti*, the mind becomes still—God's presence alone is experienced.

To illustrate, Swami gives a beautiful example. One can see the reflection of the Sun in a glass of water if the water is clear, pure, and steady. Similarly, one can experience divinity when one's mind is clear, pure, and steady. By continuous study and practice of *Ekantha Bhakti*, one can experience the *Atma* within. We cannot see the *Atma* because of the impurities of the mind and the waves of likes and dislikes buffeting us. When we turn the eye inward, away from the sensory objects, we will have the vision of divinity. **So, *Ekantha Bhakti* is *Antar Drishti* (inner vision) in contrast to *Bhoutika Bhakti* which is *Bahir Drishti* (outer vision).**

After attaining these two, it is time to achieve the final stage of *Ananya Bhakti*, when we experience continuous and consistent surrender to God, saying, "I have no savior other than you." Real *Ananya Bhakti* comes from deep inquiry into the reality of the True Self. Our experiences in the waking, dream, and deep sleep stages are found to be illusory and transitory when we inquire deeply. **After such inquiry, the *Ananya Bhakta* realizes that all that is**

seen in these three states are illusory; and that the 'I' which is present in all the three states is only the *Atma* (Self) which is no different from the *Paramatma* (Supreme Self).

When the thought of the body disappears, duality will not be there. Where there is no thought of a second, it is *Ananya* or no other, where one experiences only the divine in everything, everywhere, and ever. To reach this stage, we must pass through the first two stages. **This stage of *Ananya Bhakti* is the stage of non-duality which is experiencing Oneness or *Jnana* (Self-knowledge).**

In His discourse on January 23, 1982, Swami revealed more details about these three stages of *Bhakti*.

Qualities of a Devotee Dear to the Lord

Swami says it is not enough to call ourselves devotees of God. God should recognize us as His devotees. Swami frequently encouraged the students to chant the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita on special occasions. This is the chapter on the path of Devotion to realize God. Here, Lord Krishna has described how to be dear to the Lord. *Slokas* 13-20 of Chapter 12 describe qualities that make a devotee dear to God. Swami has expounded on these characteristics on many occasions.

॥ *Slokas* 13-14 ॥
adveshtā sarva-bhūtānām maitrah
karuna eva cha
nirmamo nirahankārah sama-
duhkha-sukhah kshami
santushtah satatam yogi yatātmā
dridha-nishchayah

mayyarpita-mano-buddhir yo
mad-bhaktah sa me priyah

Devotees with no hatred toward all beings, friendly, and compassionate, are very dear to Me. They are free from attachment to possessions and egotism, have equanimity in happiness and sorrow, and are forgiving. They are ever-content, steadily united with Me in devotion, self-controlled, of firm resolve, and dedicated their mind and intellect to Me.

|| 15 ||

yasmān nodvijate loko lokān
nodvijate cha yah

harshāmarsha-bhayodvegair mukto
yah sa cha me priyah

Those who do not cause agitation in others and who in turn are not agitated by anyone, who have equanimity in pleasure and pain, and are free from fear and anxiety, such devotees of Mine are very dear to Me.

|| 16 ||

anapekshah shuchir daksha
udāsino gata-vyathah

sarvārambha-parityāgi yo
mad-bhaktah sa me priyah

Those who are indifferent to worldly gains, externally and internally pure, skillful, without care, untroubled, and free from selfishness in all undertakings, such devotees of Mine are very dear to Me.

|| 17 ||

yo na hrishyati na dveshti na
shochati na kānkshati

shubhāshubha-parityāgi bhaktimān
yah sa me priyah

Those who neither rejoice in mundane pleasures nor despair in worldly sorrows, who neither lament for any loss nor hanker for any gain, who renounce both good and evil done to them, such persons who are full of devotion are very dear to Me.

|| 18-19 ||

samah shatrau cha mitre cha tathā
mānāpamānayoh

shitoshna-sukha-dukkheshu samah
sanga-vivarjitah

tulya-nindā-stutir mauni santushto
yena kenachit

aniketah sthira-matir bhaktimān
me priyo narah

Those, who are alike to friend and foe, equipoised in honor and dishonor, cold and heat, joy and sorrow, and are free from all unfavorable association; those who take praise and reproach alike, who are given to silent contemplation, content with what comes their way, no attachment to home, whose intellect is firmly fixed on Me, and who are full of devotion to Me, such persons are very dear to Me.

|| 20 ||

ye tu dharmyāmritam idam
yathoktam paryupāsate

shraddadhānā mat-paramā bhaktās
te 'tīva me priyāh

Those who honor this nectar of wisdom declared herein, practice it with absolute faith in Me, and are devoted to Me as the supreme goal; they are exceedingly dear to Me.

In the current issue of *Sathya Sai—The Eternal Companion*, we have a discourse by Swami elaborating on Sloka 16 of Chapter 12 of the Bhagavad Gita. **It serves as the best guide for all spiritual seekers.**

Let us live in divine Love, sanctify our lives and live in bliss by developing these qualities described by Lord Krishna and emphasized by our Swami in His Divine Discourses. Let us pray to our loving Lord, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to bless us with determination, discrimination, and detachment to follow this noble path of *Bhakti* (Divine Love) to reach the supreme goal of Self-Realization.

Jai Sai Ram.

SUMMARY OF QUALITIES DEAR TO THE LORD

|| Slokas 13-14 ||

advesta sarva bhutanam—Hatred towards none. One should not have the word ‘hatred’ in the vocabulary, not just toward humans but all beings.

maitrah—Friendliness

karuna eva cha—Compassion

nirmamah—No attachment to worldly things. Swami says that the best way to get detachment from the world is to cultivate attachment to God.

nirahankarah—No ego or pride. Man minus ego is God. Swami says that the greatest obstacles for a spiritual seeker on the path to God-realization are *Mamakara* (attachment) and *Ahamkara* (ego). These are like the two fangs of a poisonous snake!

sama dukha sukha—Equal-minded in sorrow and happiness. One should not be elated by praise, success, and profit nor be dejected by blame, loss, and dishonor.

kshami—Forbearance and forgiveness toward all.

santushtah—Always happy and content; he rejoices in the Self and does not need anything external to be happy.

satatam yogi—Always engaged in devotion and meditation.

yatātma dhridhanischayah—Absolute control over oneself with firm faith. Swami says that faith should be our life breath. Shirdi Sai Baba also emphasizes this as ‘*Shraddha* and *Saburi*’ (faith and patience).

mayyarpita mano buddhir—One who has completely dedicated his mind and intellect thus to me, in abidance with me

|| 15 ||

yasmān nodvijate loko—those who are not a source of agitation to anyone

lokān nodvijate cha yah—those who are not agitated by anyone

harshāmarsha bhayodvegair mukto—free from pleasure and pain; free from fear and anxiety

|| 16 ||

anapekshah—free from desires

suchi—pure externally and internally

dakshah—adept and skillful

udāsinah—without care and indifferent to the fruit of action

gata-vyathah—unperturbed and without worries

sarvārambha parityāgi—renounces the sense of doership

|| 17 ||

yo na hrishyati na dveshti—neither rejoices nor hates

na shochati—does not grieve

na kānkshati—does not hanker after gains

shubhāshubha-parityāgi—renounces both good and evil deeds

|| 18-19 ||

samah shatrau cha mitre cha—alike to friend and foe

tathā mānāpamānayoh—equanimity in honor and dishonor

shitoshna—equanimity in heat and cold

sukha-dukhkeshu samah—equanimity in joy and sorrow

sanga-vivarjitah—free from all unfavorable association

tulya-nindā-stutir—take praise and reproach alike

mauni—given to silent contemplation

santushto yena kenachit—content with what comes their way

aniketah—have no attachment to their residence

sthira-matir—whose intellect is steady and fixed

bhaktimān—full of devotion

|| 20 ||

ye tu dharmyāmritam idam yathoktam—those who honor this nectar of wisdom as declared

paryupāsate shraddadhānā—exclusively devoted to Me with faith

mat-paramā bhaktās—devoted to Me (God) as Supreme Goal

The Devotee Dear to the Lord

*Proclaim with raised hands that caste and credal divisions should go;
Speak out repeatedly that service to the weak is Divine;
Meditation on the Lord's name will lead man to the Lord's abode and
confer immortality on him.*

*Declare that all men of devotion and faith are your kith and kin.
Those who teach this wisdom to the people are dearest to the Lord.
Getting rid of feelings of differences, if you live in love and harmony,
that alone will delight Sai.*

What more can I tell you, Oh good people, assembled here

***anapeksha suchir-daksha udasino gathavyathah
sarvarambha parithyagi yo madbhaktah sa me priyah***
(Bhagavad Gita, 12:16)

*"Those who are indifferent to worldly gains, externally and internally
pure, skillful, without care, untroubled, and free from selfishness in all
undertakings, such devotees of Mine are very dear to Me."*

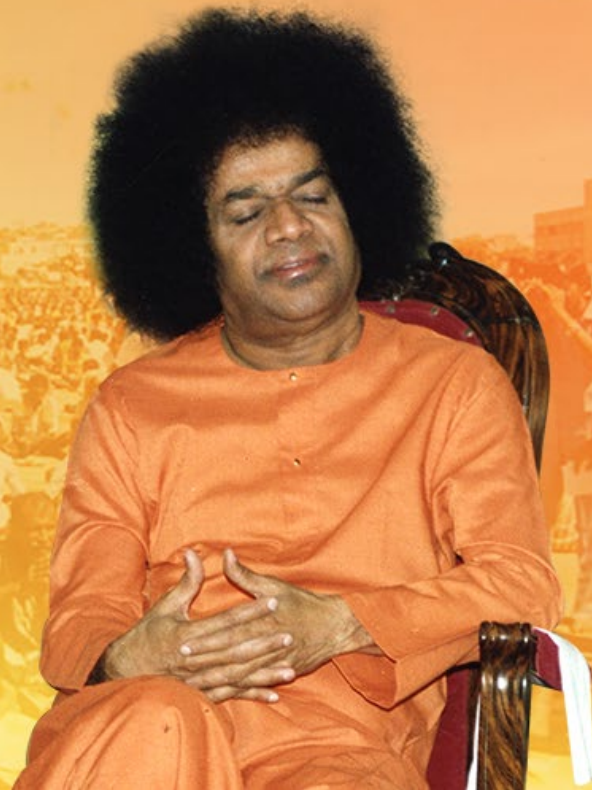
Embodiments of love! In whom, these noble qualities which embody the eight forms of wealth are present, that person is dearest to God. The first quality is *Anapeksha* (desirelessness). This term means, "to be free from any kind of *Apeksha* (expectation or desire)." Can a man having a body, mind, and intellect be free from desires at all? It is impossible. But such a state can be realized by an effort of will.

Preyo-Marga (Pleasant Path) versus Shreyo-Marga (Beneficial Path)

There are many in the world who seek sensuous pleasures from moment to

moment. Most people crave such pleasures. This method is described in the Gita as *Preyo-Marga* (the pleasure-seeking path). As against this, there is another path, which confers the experience of self-realization, and which transcends the senses. This is called *Shreyo-Marga* (the righteous path). This path is not easily understood by many and is not within their reach. So, those who seek sense pleasures take to the *Preyo-Marga*. Only the *Jnanis* (the wise persons), who are indifferent to the fleeting mundane pleasures of the senses, and who are austere and pure-hearted, pursue the *Shreyo-Marga*.

“If you want to earn the love of the Lord, you have to render service to everyone, anywhere, and at all times as an offering to the Lord.”



These two paths encompass all the possible desires of human beings. There is another path, which transcends the path of *Preyas* (pleasure seeking) and *Shreyas* (beneficial): *Anapeksha* (desirelessness) goes beyond both. *Anapeksha* is described as being free from desires. But this is not totally correct. **It is when an individual gives up the thought that “I am the doer, the enjoyer, or experiencer,” then true *Anapeksha* emerges.** This means that the conceit of doer-ship and enjoyership should be wholly renounced. This is the true state of *Anapeksha*. It is only when all actions are done as an offering to God that *Anapeksha* prevails. When such a feeling fills the heart of the devotee, the Divine confers grace on him. Such a devotee is dear to the Lord. **If you want to earn the love of the Lord, you have to render service to everyone, anywhere, and at all times as an offering to the Lord.**

Purity of Heart is Required for a Good Devotee

The second quality is *Suchi* (Purity). There should be both inner and outer purity. Bodily purity relates to the physical. It covers such cleansing acts as bathing; wearing clean clothes; eating pure food

by maintaining the purity of the cooking vessels (*patra shuddhi*), the food provisions (*padartha shuddhi*), and the process of cooking (*paka shuddhi*); and the like. In one’s daily life, one should ensure that the purity of all the materials used is maintained. Even in studies, the books should be wholesome and elevating. But mere external cleanliness without internal purity is of no value. Everyone, from the scholar to the common human being, is concerned only about external cleanliness and not about the purity of the heart within. However pure the ingredients may be, if the vessel in which they are cooked is not safe and clean, the food will be spoiled. One’s heart is a vessel and one must see that it is kept pure and untainted.

For the purification of the heart, one should undertake selfless service. Attachment and hatred pollute the mind and the intellect. We should take up selfless service to purify the mind and the intellect. It is only when the mind and the intellect are pure, we can take part in selfless service. When the mind and intellect are not pure, all the activities we take up will not be pure. Hence purity of body and mind are essential for a human being.

The third quality is firm resolution (*daksha*). This means that everyone should regard his life as a form of penance. Everyone must have a firm resolution that as long as life lasts, one will dedicate oneself to the service of his fellowmen and thus take part in noble activities. **One should develop firm faith that through selfless service, one will realize oneness (unity). Such a feeling of Oneness (unity) will lead to Divinity.** One should feel that achieving divinity is the sacred task. As long as one is alive, one should have firm faith that the body is rendered for the service of fellow beings (*paropkarartham idam shariram*). When people are immersed in selfishness and selfish pursuits, how can they realize their true nature? Selfishness should be eschewed. **One should take part in selfless service to the community to eliminate selfishness and ego.** This will lead to the experience of Unity or Oneness. One who has such firm resolution (to perform selfless service) is supremely dear to the Lord.

Do not be Swayed by Fears or Threats

The fourth quality is equipoise or equanimity (*Udaseenatha*). This means indifference towards sorrow and joy, loss or gain, honor or dishonor. You must be concerned only to see whether your actions are pure and selfless according to your conscience. Nothing else matters, neither the praise nor the blame of other people. When your conscience tells you that what you are doing is good, you may go ahead regardless of the opinion of others, whether they are your kinsmen, friends or others. With such a spirit of equanimity, one can surely succeed in their sacred resolve to serve the community.

You should not be swayed by fears or threats which can affect your success in achieving the intended goals. In this context of the spirit of indifference, one

should take care to stay far away from politics. When one is associated with politics, one's heart becomes passionate (*Rajo Guna*). This passionate quality aspires for honor and recognition, and longs for publicity. This will pollute one's mind. One should fill oneself with selfless Love and strive to serve fellow beings with love. The spirit of equanimity can lead to different feelings. The spirit of equanimity should not assume the form of arrogance, ego, exhibitionism, or ostentatious behavior. The true spirit of indifference (*Udaseenatha*) is not to be deterred by bad, and to stay on the path of good. Once we have goodness in our Heart, we do not need to be bothered by anything else. That is the highest *Udaseenatha*.

The Past and the Future are in the Present

The next quality is not to dwell in the past (*Gathavyathaha*). This means that there should be no worry regarding the past. One with mental agitations cannot undertake any action. Mental agitations will not be of any help to humans. One should not worry about the past or about the future. So, without being concerned about the past or future, one should focus on the present. **For all sorrows in this world, the primary cause is worrying about the past and the future.** Leaving aside what one has, desiring what one doesn't have, and worrying about the past, one undergoes immense sorrow. Past is past. Whatever effort one puts in, it will not come back. There is no meaning in worrying about the unknown future.

Keeping the present in focus, one should engage themselves in the right actions with a pure mind. The past and the future are in the present. Depending on how one acts now, the results follow accordingly. Hence, the past and the future are in the present. So, one should have the right focus on the present and take actions

with a sacred feeling. No need to worry about the past. We should focus on the path ahead of us and not the path we walked. **Without worrying about the past and the future, those that focus on the present and take part in sacred activities are dearest to God.**

The sixth quality is *Sarvambha Parithyagi* (renunciation of all undertakings). This means that we should not perform activities with ostentation or exhibitionism. Unless ostentation is given up, the ego will not die. The ego must be eliminated for purifying the heart. No good deed can be done without purity of the heart. It is through sacred deeds that the heart is purified. Activities that lead to purity of the heart should be taken up (*chittasya shuddhaye karma*).

Ostentation is a demonic quality. It results in attachment (*raga*) and hatred (*dwesha*), and infatuation (*moha*). The feeling of a sense of 'myself' (*mamatva*) and infatuation (*moha*) together lead to hatred. Therefore, ostentation leads to the extinction of humanness. **One should take up all activities with humility, sincerity, and obedience. Ostentation brings shame to oneself.**

One should strongly believe that selfless service to the society alone would bring a good name. In reality, the one who takes up selfless service only can command authority. Those who desire to be a leader for the country, should be a sevak (volunteer), develop humility and obedience, and thereby teach the principles of selfless service. In rendering selfless service, one should not seek authority. One who aspires to become a national leader must first know how to render selfless service. He should not seek office or a position.



“*When there is harmony in the actions performed by the hands, words spoken, and the thoughts from the mind, then, peace will emerge.*”

With a desire for a position, we should not render any type of selfless service. Unfortunately, today, people do not come forward when it comes to performing tasks, and they come forward to take up a position. All institutes are established for performing selfless service and not for holding positions. Every human being should feel that the body has been given for performing selfless service. One should redeem oneself by rendering selfless service using this body. With such complete faith, one should take part in selfless service.

Any work that is given, if executed in an exemplary manner, all Sai Centers (samithis) will be redeemed. If the work is not done in this spirit of excellence, it will be self-deception. Do not forget this good word.

(Telugu Poem)

However affluent people may be, whatever high position they hold, they cannot avoid the restlessness worry, and the agitations in them. **Selfless service is the only path to secure peace.** In this world, all comforts bring worry to a human being, and they do not elevate or redeem the human being. One should not exult over comforts, joy, and riches. Pleasure and pain are like guests that come and go, they are not long-lasting. Seeking such impermanent and fleeting pleasures and sorrows, neglecting the eternal and true divinity, people are wasting their lives.

Men are Born to Serve, Not to Dominate

Selfless service leads to the expression of Divinity in humanity. It broadens the heart. It removes narrow feelings. It gives bliss, brings about unity, and reveals the *Atma Tatwa* (the nature of the Spirit). Through such selfless service, all the bad qualities will be removed. Therefore, service activities should be regarded as the primary spiritual discipline for a human being. You are born to serve and not to crave positions of leadership.

Everyone in the world is a servant and not a master. All relationships—husband and wife, mother and child, employer and employee are based on mutual service. The world is advancing because of such mutual service. Without the principle of such selfless service the world cannot exist.

You may regard yourself as a person of authority. It is not so; every human being is a *sevaka* (servant). It is only when one is filled with the spirit of service that their human nature will progress to divine nature, and will attain peace.

What is the reason for the lack of peace? It is because any activity taken up is being done without purity and harmony in thought, word and deed. Whatever is spoken, whatever is done, whatever is seen, everything must be with harmony and purity in thought, word, and deed. Then only we will be able to experience peace. If there are three people in a home, if they live with harmony, mutual affection, and bliss, there will be peace in the home. On

the other hand, if there are conflicts and hatred between members of the family, how can there be peace in the home?

Within each person, the body is the house which includes the mind, speech, and action. **When there is harmony in the actions performed by the hands, words spoken, and the thoughts from the mind, then, peace will emerge.** On the other hand, if there is some thought in the mind, something else is spoken, and different action is done there will be no peace. Who is responsible for this lack of peace? We are responsible. Because of the lack of harmony in thought, word, and deed, and the lack of unity in the three entities present in each individual, there is a lack of peace. Therefore, unity of the three is of utmost need.

There is bliss in unity. This bliss will confer peace. Without this bliss, we cannot obtain peace. So, to obtain peace and experience a comfortable life, we practice harmony and purity in thoughts, words, and deeds. We should feel the oneness between the three instruments, mind, speech, and action. There is a great need for this unity in the world. There is a lack of peace in the home and in the country. If there is a lack of peace in an individual, how is it possible to have peace in the world? When the individual improves, society will improve. When society improves, the world will improve. Therefore, **to start with, there should be a transformation in the individual. When there is transformation in the individual, there will be transformation in the country.**

An individual means the mind. The mind is a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts will result in actions in one's daily life. The results of these actions are pleasure and

pain. One's actions are the reason for these. The lack of right conduct is responsible for one's sorrows. What is the cause for such conduct? One's thoughts are the reason. The mind is a bundle of thoughts. Without mind, one doesn't exist. Therefore, one should train the mind and make it act in the right way. For bondage and liberation, the mind is the primary cause (*Mana eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayoh*). When there is a knife in one's hand, it can be used for a good cause or a bad purpose. Likewise, we have the weapon of mind in us. When we use the mind on the right path, we can perform sacred activities. For merit or sin, the mind is the primary cause.

Sin is not somewhere in a different land. It is inherent in the actions done by oneself.

(Telugu Poem)

Therefore, divinity or unholiness is dependent on one's own conduct.

Embodiments of Love, recognizing one's innate divinity, living in unity, keep away from narrow feelings

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 20, 1990



My Journey to God

Divine Memories with Sri Sathya Sai Baba

(CONTINUED FROM JUNE 2023 ISSUE)

IT WAS 1989—MY FIRST VISIT TO PRASANTHI NILAYAM.

I was sitting in the *large* interview room with Swami in the mandir. I am with my best friend Michael, and we have already received our first lesson from Swami that we must be very clear in our prayers about what we want from God. However, as I learned later, Swami had also planned a personalized experience for me. Back then, I had a passion for mechanical wristwatches and was fascinated by them. They were expressions of craftsmanship, and I admired these miniature works of art.

As I sat in the interview room, the only window facing the mandir's forecourt casually caught my eye. There was a clock on that windowsill. And it was not just any clock; it was a mechanical model that could be often found in almost every lower-middle-class household in Germany at that time, including in my parent's living room.

The clock was enclosed in a glass cover through which the movement mechanism was visible. There was a balance wheel made of a cross with four balls that swung back and forth when the clock was running. This clock, however, was motionless and appeared to have stopped working for some time. I was surprised. How could it be that there was a defunct clock in the sacred mandir of Prasanthi Nilayam, in the same room where the divine incarnation Himself receives His guests? I thought it must have been a gift from a German pilgrim, and Swami evidently didn't know what to do with it. So, it must have been left on the room's windowsill and forgotten!

It showed the right time despite the mechanism being at a standstill! How on earth was that possible? I was going out of my mind and ready to scream to draw everyone's attention to the miracle!

It took me quite a while to forget my negative emotions and focus on Swami again. But after ten minutes, my eyes fell on the clock again. I was amazed that it showed precisely the right time, which I confirmed by checking my wristwatch. So, I thought that the clock must have stopped at that exact moment in the past. What a coincidence - I thought.

Another few minutes passed as Swami conversed with all His sweetness with another family that had also been called for an interview. And then the impossible happened. I looked at the clock on the window sill again and couldn't believe my eyes. Again, the clock showed the current time, which I confirmed by checking my wristwatch a second time. It showed the right time despite the mechanism being at a standstill! How on earth was that possible? I was going out of my mind and ready to scream to draw everyone's attention to the miracle! I could barely control myself and had a hard time waiting for the interview to end.

But after what seemed like an eternity, Swami ended the session after distributing a handful of *Vibhuti* packets to each one of us. He patted my shoulder lovingly as if to say goodbye. As soon as we were outside, I rushed to the other group members from the interview and enthusiastically told them about my experience. To my great surprise, however, I only got confused looks because I seemed to be the only one who noticed a clock on the window sill. Instead, each interviewee reported a different experience that I didn't recognize!

Today, I know that Swami arranged this little drama, especially for the doubter in me. After all, it was only my third day in His presence, and as I had to admit to myself, I was far from being convinced that God had entered my life. Still, by then, He had me hooked, and my wife and I experienced another magical Christmas and a very special New Year in His divine presence. **It was to be the beginning of a lifelong spiritual journey with our Lord Sai.**

Mr. Manfred Muller-Gransee 
GERMANY



Mr. Manfred Müller-Gransee came to Swami in 1989. Since then, he has been a member of the SSSIO and has served in different positions. Since 2018, he has been the Chair of Zone 7, Northern Europe. In addition, he is the Chairman of the SaiCare Foundation in Germany.

Manfred graduated from the University of Brunswick in 1981. He worked in education before starting an institution for management training and consulting in 1988. Since 2005, he has run a recycling company for electronic waste.





Love@Work A Journey Begins

It was late afternoon on July 28, 2006. The Sai Young Adults (YAs) of Australia were seated at the divine lotus feet of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba inside the mandir bhajan hall at Prasanthi Nilayam when one of the boys asked Him, “Swami, what is Your mission for us in Australia?”

Even now, when I close my eyes, I can imagine that scene, with my hand on His feet, those lotus feet. ‘Lotus’ is a perfect word to describe them! His face was aglow with the sun’s radiance and the moon’s softness, the beauty of all the heavens in one. A distinct divine fragrance unique to Swami permeated the air. Then came the response, a gentle divine voice soothing like a lullaby, **“I just want your love, love, love.”**

Carrying The Directive From Up Above To Down Under

A few minutes after that unforgettable divine moment, we boarded our buses, went to Bangalore airport, and caught our flights back to Brisbane, Perth, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, and Adelaide. We returned to work, school, life, the rat race of deadlines and competitions, demands and expectations, traffic, and all the rest. Like the American musical group of rappers, Black-Eyed Peas, we asked ourselves, *“Where is the love?”*

Once again, we were swallowed by this world, drowning in it. We were torn, caught in a tug of war between the beautiful memory of our beloved Swami versus the ‘reality of life.’

“We want to be with You at Your Divine Lotus Feet, Swami. Yet, You, in Your divine design, have placed us here. So, then, Swami, there is only one thing to do. Bring You here!”

That was our combined thought. But how can we do that? That was our plea to Him, and His answer to us was: Love@Work.

What Is Love@Work?

Simply said, it is to love God with all our heart through our actions, wherever He has placed us—the office, classroom, lab, clinic, home, or in the field. It started as a motivated group that grew in inspiration and numbers. Soon we had students, teachers, engineers, doctors, nurses, healthcare workers, homemakers, laborers, server staff, lawyers, psychologists, counselors, scientists, librarians, accountants, people seeking work, IT professionals, business consultants, etc.—people from all walks of life enlisted as Love@Workers since 2006.

What started as an initiative to bring love to the workplace became a movement for us to observe the power of love at work! Isn't it the truth about the universe that it is Swami's love at work? Thus, **Love@Work is intended for our self-development and Self Realization.** It is meant for sharing Swami's love with others—not incidentally or by chance. It's verily a way of life!

Swami Blesses the Program

Swami inspired us from within to name it "Love@Work," written just like that with the "@" in the middle. We thought it was a catchy and 'cool' way to call it, like an email address. But who are we before the 'Master

of Cool?' A Love@Worker, an accountant, had this experience that proved this point.

"Driving in to work on Monday, I was thinking about the leadership course that I was taking, where participants set and monitored their self-improvement goals. I had to report my progress to the course coordinator during the week. I was telling Swami about my sense of unease because the only self-improvement I practiced that week was through Love@Work—how could I discuss this with the course coordinator?

I began my work day by dedicating the day's tasks to Him and asking Him to work through me. Then my eyes fell on a package that had been sitting on my desk since we'd returned from India. It contained material from the leadership course. For some reason, I was drawn to open it at that moment. When I saw the first book's title, my jaw dropped: "Love@Work" by the Australian Institute of Management! **It was as though Swami had reassured me and blessed the program all at once, as only He can do.** The smile on my face was fixed for the rest of the day as I basked in the knowledge that He was aware of my every thought and action."

So, we feel that Love@Work is Swami's *prasadam* to us.



The Love@Work Life

*"Beloved Swami,
I cannot bear to be separated from
You for an instant,
So, I will love You
in every interaction,
every person,
every task,
of every day."*

That is the Love@Work prayer. For me, Swami is "God", but it can be any form of God or the formless God adored by the Love@Worker. Interestingly, when we started practicing Love@Work, Swami showed us the way through "Sai Inspires" (daily inspirational quotes). His guidance has become the bedrock of the Love@Work practice.

"Develop love wherever you are, be it in the forest or in the sky, be it in the city or in the

village, be it on the mountain top or in the middle of the deep sea, love is your sole refuge...suffuse your life with love. Develop courage and conviction. Only then can humanness be transformed into Divinity."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, August 15, 2006

Love@Work is an informal group bound by the common thread of intense love for God. It is a space for Satsang, service, and spiritual study. More than anything else, it is proof of Swami's promise, "If you need Me, you deserve Me." **Wherever we are and whatever we are doing, if we want Swami in our lives, we only need to practice and share His love.**

Dr. Venkat Reddy 
AUSTRALIA



Dr. Venkat Reddy practiced medicine in Australia, New Zealand, England, and Fiji, and now works in medical education. He was Regional Sai Young Adults Coordinator for Queensland before serving as the National Sai Young Adults Coordinator of Australia. When his work took him to New Zealand and Fiji before returning to Australia, he took up the opportunity to serve as National Sai Young Adults Advisor in each of those three countries successively. He continues to support Sai Young Adult activities and strives to live a life underpinned by Love@Work.



Right Conduct (Dharma)

Dharma leads one to develop an all-around personality. It creates a special relationship with God. This *Dharma* is the first step towards the fulfillment of human life. It is *Dharma* that makes a man divine. *Dharma* is the heart of all epics and scriptures. God is the presiding deity of *Dharma*. *Dharma* embodies the principle of virtuous conduct. It is the primary principle of equality and unity. If you protect *Dharma*, then *Dharma* will protect you.

Dharma is the one that brings order to daily life. That feeling is the highest *Dharma*. For virtue and rules *Dharma* is the root. *Dharma* is what brings happiness to the Self, and makes one have good conduct and good character. Scriptures like Vedas and Puranas stand on the foundations of *Dharma*.

Human behavior is established in *Dharma* and develops in good culture (*Sath samskara*) and moral actions in daily life. The divine nature of humanity itself is *Dharma*. *Dharma* is established in truth. *Dharma* like Truth is the form of God. *Ramo Vighrahan Dharmah* (God is verily the form of *Dharma*). As darkness cannot stand in front of the sun, in the heart enshrined in righteousness (*Dharma*), *Adharma* (iniquity) cannot stand. *Dharma* is the source of happiness and helps one lead a peaceful life.

One should lead a disciplined life with moral principles. As sweetness is natural to sugar, as the fragrance is natural to a blooming rose, as the burning power is natural to fire, so is humanity natural to a human being. Humanness is *Dharma*. Without it, it is animalistic nature.

The mind should not harbor lust, anger, pride, and jealousy. One should develop purity, steadiness, compassion, patience, and empathy. A tender heart is a symbol of *Dharma* and humanness. Society respects and loves only those with kind hearts. A speech untainted by lies, a mind untainted by attachment and hatred, and a body untainted by eating meat are the main human values. *Dharma* is an integral part of those values. For making

Continued on page 22





SERVING GOD
By Serving Man

HEALING IN NIGERIA AND BENIN



'Deena Dukhiyon Se Prem Karo Mera Sai Prasanna Hoga...' This is the opening line of a *bhajan* that ranks high among Sri Sathya Sai Baba's favorites because it urges everyone to practice what is near and dear to the Lord—serving those in greatest need! “Love the forlorn and suffering people, and my Lord Sai will be happy,” it says.

Taking this '*mantra*' as the driving force, an SSSIO (Sri Sathya Sai International Organization) team of five medical professionals—two gastroenterologists, a pediatrician, two internal medicine physicians, and three volunteers traveled to Nigeria from Botswana, Kenya, New Zealand, the UAE, and the USA. Their goal was to provide the highest quality medical care with love and compassion to the needy through two medical camps in Nigeria and Benin. They were joined by enthusiastic volunteers and a few dedicated healthcare professionals from Lagos.

The (Y)earned Privilege of Service

The team's resolve had already been tested by just the challenges encountered in traveling to Lagos. Dr. Dinesh Lal, head of the team, had suffered health issues before the trip, yet he traveled with his wife, with full faith and determination in Sai as the organizer, doer and protector of the camp. Despite many other travel-related challenges, Dr. Dinesh Lal, Dr. Hari Conjeevaram, Dr. Sunil Kadiyala, Dr. Ramadevi Sankaran, Dr. Bangararaju Kolanuvada, Mr. P.V. Sambasiva Rao, Ms. Dharana Lal, and Ms. Urvi Widhani joined the healthcare mission, with the conviction that “everything is in Swami's hands and not a blade of grass moves without His will”! None of them had the slightest idea that



by God's grace, such a small team would see and help more than 2,500 patients over the next week!

Ideal Sai Healthcare in Lagos

Ajah is a town in Eti-Osa in Lagos State, Nigeria. It encompasses Addo, Langbasa, Badore, Ajiwe, and VGC. The medical camp was held at Sathya Sai Nursery and Primary School at Ajah during June 9-10, 2023.

The camp was not formally advertised in the media. Still, patients arrived in droves, reflecting the urgency of their healthcare needs. Free medicine and reading glasses were dispensed to patients; Seeing them rejoice at the gift of sight was heartwarming!

A host of medical conditions were treated. A detailed but not exhaustive list of these conditions includes metabolic syndrome and complications (including diabetes mellitus), hypertension, parasitic infections including malaria, Bilharzia, fungal skin infections, scabies and cellulitis, folliculitis, upper respiratory infections, pelvic inflammatory disease, anemia, musculoskeletal syndromes, osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia and GI conditions including GERD, dyspepsia, constipation, hemorrhoids, and malnutrition. In addition, children were treated for upper respiratory infections, ear wax, skin conditions including allergies, pruritus, insect bites, fungal and bacterial infections, umbilical hernia,





constipation, rectal prolapse, rickets, cerebral palsy, neuromuscular disorder, and seizures.

It was heart-rending to see a 10-year-old with a cataract since birth, a 3-year-old with an inguinal hernia, and a 13-year-old with severe anemia. Such cases were referred for further consultation, and local SSSIO members and doctors were asked to follow up diligently on their progress. The team served 251 and 775 patients on June 9 and 10, respectively.

Sairam Benin!

On June 11, the SSSIO international medical team proceeded by road, and reached Abomey, Benin, in about 8 hours, traveling 250 kilometers. While Benin has experienced economic growth over the past few years, it ranks among the world's poorest countries. Abomey is the capital of the Zou Department of Benin, and it covers an area of 142 square kilometers with a population of around 90,000, in 2012.

The Royal Palaces of Abomey, a collection of tiny traditional houses inhabited by the Kings of Dahomey from 1600 to 1900, was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1985. Consistent with the local protocol, the medical team paid respects to the King of Abomey, who welcomed the members wholeheartedly and thanked the SSSIO for its efforts in rendering medical aid to the people of Abomey. He also requested healthcare professionals to see the 32 queens for medical checkups at their spiritual Center.

Sai is Already There

The team then visited the local Sai Centre after 9 pm and witnessed a miracle! The premises were packed despite the late hour and overflowing with local African



“I found the people we served in Nigeria and Benin shy and humble and determined to care for themselves and their young. They reflected so much love and were thankful for the loving services they received.”

devotees gathered with love and enthusiasm to welcome them. Mr. Jacques Fego (National Council President, SSSIO, Benin) was Swami's chosen messenger of love and inspiration. In the words of Dr. Hari Conjeevaram, “There are more than one thousand Sai devotees in the Abomey region, and Mr. Fego is the inspiration behind every aspect of service in the community. Witnessing his passion and commitment to serving his community was awe-inspiring, especially the school children and their families.”

Dr. Dinesh Lal added, “Hardly any of them have been outside Benin, but they embody the very essence of Swami's teachings. The sacrifices they make and the energy they possess for *seva and worship* cannot be adequately described in words...”

Even though it was late at night, the Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) children chanted the Vedas, recited prayers, initiated *Havan* (ritualistic religious offerings), and finally concluded with *Arati*.

Dr. Ramadevi Sankaran shared personal reflections, “Overall, the camp went very well by our Divine Mother's grace and guidance at every step. There is always room for improvement. It is a beautiful learning experience as a team. I am grateful that this camp happened since many children needed help and love. Personally, it was very fulfilling for my transformation and a beautiful learning experience, thanks to all of you and my patients. The most beautiful thing I observed was that people are very content with limited resources, living as a community, caring, and sharing. I love their attitude of gratitude. Thank you so much



for the opportunity to serve all the divine beings and feel the oneness.”

Medical Camp at Abomey

Right from 5 am, patients began lining up in queues for consultations. They came in droves and spoke about their strident healthcare needs. It was not just about medicine. The loving interactions, listening to their pains, and sharing a smile brought more than cures—it was healing for both the doctor and the patient! The SSSIO medical team lovingly served 1,478 patients during June 12–16, but thousands of hearts were touched in hundreds of other ways! Dr.



Conjeevaram was deeply moved, saying, “I found the people we served in Nigeria and Benin shy and humble and determined to care for themselves and their young. They reflected so much love and were thankful for the loving services they received.”

The service rendered by dedicated doctors cannot be described in words. They were miracle workers for hundreds of patients who expressed their deepest gratitude to them for their loving service. The consultations were held in nature, under the shade of trees. Despite it being the monsoon season, not a single drop of rain impeded the medical camps as Swami kept the skies clear. On completion, as the final group pictures were taken, the heavens opened up to celebrate the love and service with a downpour! It was an incredible experience

confirming Swami’s love and protection at every level. Local devotees also served food to the patients while chanting and singing bhajans.

A Long-Term Commitment

The Benin community is poor and cannot afford ongoing drugs for chronic conditions. Drugs are prohibitively expensive compared to other countries. Many patients were seen for severe hypertension. The SSSIO has initiated efforts to support this community with free antihypertensive medications via ongoing Clinics supported by the local Sai center.

On June 16, a “Happiness Within Reach—EASE (Exercise, Attitude, Sleep, Eat)” workshop was conducted in one of the High Schools in Abomey to teach holistic health—59 students and four teachers attended.





The medical team also met the local Health Director and discussed common prevalent diseases and their prevention. The team suggested providing mosquito nets to the public to prevent malaria rather than spending money on antimalaria medication. The suggestions were well received. The medical team also visited the local general hospital and discussed possible future collaborations with the administration and local doctors, including educational training.

Empowering the local Sai devotees and supporting Zone 9 through local and international resources and expertise was a long-term goal of the SSSIO International Medical Team.

Serving Those That Serve

The great Hindu saint, Kulasekhara Alwar, prayed that he gets the opportunity to be the servant of the Lord's servants because that is a great privilege and opportunity. That spirit was glowing and evident in the service of a dedicated team of volunteers who catered to all the requirements of the medical team from the moment it landed in Nigeria to the time they boarded the flight back home. In Nigeria, Mr. Ramesh Hathiramani and his team, and in Benin, Mr. Fego and his team formed the backbone for this magnificent service effort.

Their love and support were evident in the details during the week-long project. Similarly, the team was supported by Mr. Gaurav Singh (National Council President, SSSIO, Nigeria) and SSSIO Lagos members with steadfast commitment from the very beginning. Mr. P.V. Sambasiva Rao, the SSSIO Zone 9 Chair, was there even before the camp began to ensure everything was in order. At the same time, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of the SSSIO, worked silently behind the scenes in his characteristic style to inspire and coordinate the international effort. Mr. Fego said, "My impressions for this 2023 medical camp in Abomey in Benin are very positive because I experienced this only in Prasanthi Nilayam in India. I never thought this could be a reality in Africa—in my coun-



try. The need for medical services is very great in Africa. It was Swami who answered my prayer! The joy of the local people is unbounded because it is a unique service never experienced by us. We expect three times as many people at the next medical camp because many have experienced the benefit and joy of these medical camps.”

Sister Urvi added, “I consider myself incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to be part of the administration and as an active participant in the medical camp. Although we encountered numerous challenges, we were fortunate to see them resolved by divine grace. Throughout the planning and execution of the camp, I consistently felt a sense of guidance and support from Swami, leading us forward as we persevered through each obstacle. The joy and gratitude that shone in the

eyes of the patients upon receiving a free medical consultation, a pair of eyeglasses, medicine, or a meal were incredibly fulfilling, and words cannot fully capture the depth of my satisfaction in witnessing their happiness. I am eternally grateful to dearest Swami for allowing me to practice His teachings through active participation in service projects.”

The team experienced Swami’s motherly love through His dedicated and devoted instruments. Indeed, it reminded everyone of the adage, ‘Love the forlorn and suffering people, and my Sai will be happy’ as every team member found their hearts bubbling with joy and gratitude to Sai.





SATHYA SAI SCHOOL THAILAND

1990

Sathya Sai Human Values Conference, an international event held in Thailand and attended by delegates from many countries.

1991

Dr. Art Ong Jumsai and Sri Ramlal Sachdev show the plans to build a Sathya Sai School in Thailand over the next two years. Swami blesses them to start it within a year. The school is inaugurated in May 1992 with one headmaster, six teachers and fourteen students.



1998

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education (ISSE) offering teacher training and diploma courses in human values opened within the school campus. Swami later recommends the ISSE in Thailand for training Sathya Sai School teachers from India.

2005

Along with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), Sathya Sai School participates in the SEAMEO-UN Habitat Regional Planning Workshop on promoting values-based water and sanitary education in Southeast Asian schools.

2006

Over 100 teacher-trainers, from all over Asia and abroad, attend special training sessions on Human Values in Water, Hygiene, and Sanitation.

2007

The Water Institute inaugurated by Indian Ambassador Ms. Lalitha Reddy.





2008

Boys from the school perform a concert in Swami's presence in Puttaparthi. Swami blesses them with group photos.



2009

Girls from the school dance as part of an international dance presentation for Ladies' Day in Swami's presence in Puttaparthi.

2010

As part of a special agreement between the governments of Bhutan and Thailand, 76 teacher-trainers from Bhutan take intensive coursework in Sathya Sai Education in Human Values at the ISSE.



2015

Dr. Jumsai received an award from the honorable Prime Minister Prayuth Chan Ocha for his contribution to Thai Education through the Sathya Sai School.

2016

Princess Mahachakri Award presented to Dr. Jumsai by Her Royal Highness Mahachakri Sirindhorn.

2017 & 2018

Sathya Sai School wins Royal School Award presented by Her Royal Highness Princess Mahachakri Sirindhorn.





When Sai Gives You a Task...

IN MAY OF 2009, A SERIES OF INCIDENTS SHOWED ME how the unseen hand of our beloved Swami orchestrates every little aspect of our lives. It all started with the National Retreat of the SSSIO planned to be held in Poland along with the Regional Retreat (for Region 73 of SSSIO Zone 7). The double blessing of gathering in Swami's name at the national and regional levels became even more special as we invited ardent devotees of Swami, Dr. Thorbjorn Meyer and Ms. Marianne Meyer; our zone coordinators; and the teachers from the ESSE (European Sathya Sai Education) Institute, for the special occasion. Having served as the National Council President (NCP) for Poland for five years, I was happy at the prospect of retiring on a high note, passing on the baton to another able member while continuing to work as an active member of the SSSIO.

A Re'tire'ment Proposal

A few weeks before the planned retreats, I received a call from Dr. Thorbjorn Meyer in which he proposed that I take over his position as the Central Coordinator (CC) of Region 73. I had never wanted to hold any position in the Organization and just wanted to serve as a regular member. But I had been led by divine providence from one position to another despite my reluctance. In fact, it took a lot of time and effort for Dr. Thorbjorn Meyer to convince me to take up the role of National President of the Sai Organization in Poland. So, I was very surprised by his magnanimous offer, yet I respectfully declined. I was looking forward to relaxing and taking care of my family. But then, he gently prodded me to meditate and talk with Swami, seeking His guidance, before meeting him the following week.

I meditated for a whole week after that and sincerely prayed to Swami for a solution. Part of me was confused about the right thing to do, while another part of me was frightened about taking up the daunting responsibility. That was when He came to my rescue!

Life Is a Dream—Realize It

One night, Swami appeared in my dream. **Looking deep into my eyes, He spoke only one sentence, “Some time ago, you said ‘Yes’ to me....”** I woke up with a heart that was beating fast. I immediately sat down to write to Dr. Thorbjorn. I wrote to him about the dream and explained that I didn't feel I was up to the task of being

the Central Coordinator (CC), but I would gladly accept the role of a deputy. I never received a reply from him to my email. Thinking that he had gotten busy, I let it pass.

During our Regional Retreat, we learned the sad news from Dr. Thorbjorn's wife, Marianne, that he had passed away on June 11, 2009! Everyone was shocked at his unexpected demise, and indeed it was no occasion for anyone to bring up the matter of a new CC for the Region. I pondered on my last conversation with him. It was as if he knew what was coming and hence his urgency!

One week later, I got a letter from the then-president of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO), Dr. Michael Goldstein, congratulating me on my appointment as the CC of Region 73. He also invited me to the Prasanthi Council Meeting during Guru Purnima 2009, where I would be officially welcomed to the fraternity of senior SSSIO officers.

I became numb witnessing the speed at which things were happening. I realized that when we say 'Yes' to Swami, we lose the right to be like anyone else. As His instruments, our thoughts, words, and deeds become His, and our will becomes a manifestation of His Will alone! I slowly started to accept the idea and prepared myself for the new, major responsibility being placed on my shoulders. The meeting in Prasanthi Nilayam and my nomination was memorable, joyful, cordial, and warm.

Looking deep into my eyes, He spoke only one sentence, *“Some time ago, you said ‘Yes’ to me...”*

When Swami Gives a Task...

Soon after I assumed charge as the CC, Dr. Goldstein and Ms. Marianne Meyer enquired about my plans to visit all the countries in my Region (Region 73 included Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland). It was important for the CC to get an intimate understanding of the people and activities of the Region. It was also a mandate for me to put in my best efforts to inspire and uplift them with spiritual activities. I promised to do my best, but deep within, I wondered how it would be possible. Region 73 consists of four other countries apart from Poland, where I lived. I had never visited any of the other countries before, and although I was acquainted with the National Council Presidents (NCPs), I had no idea about the leaders in the various Sai Centers there. I had to travel, but how would I find the time and funds for it? Apart from my travels to Puttaparthi to see Swami, I could not manage to travel anywhere else.

He Provides Everything to Accomplish the Task

I prayed and poured out my heart complaining to Swami, “How am I supposed to do all this? How do You want me to travel to all these countries? After all, You know my situation well. What do You want me to do? Only You can manage, not me.” I prayed to Swami to show me the way, and again, the speed of His response left me speechless. In the evening, I went to the post office to call my friend in Poland, with whom I confided about the situation. After discussing the upcoming trip to Puttaparthi, he asked me if I would be interested in a trip offered to us by one of the business partners on my return to Poland.

“What kind of trip?”

“A trip that the businesses typically arrange for the stakeholders to entertain open discussions in a less formal and less stressful environment. You will be visiting four countries...”

I realized that when we say ‘Yes’ to Swami, we lose the right to be like anyone else. As His instruments, our thoughts, words, and deeds become His, and our will becomes a manifestation of His Will alone!

“What countries?”

“See, the idea is to travel from Poland to Finland, sailing through the Baltic Sea. After a two-day stay in Finland, you will travel to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for two days each on your return journey to Poland.”

His answer left me stunned and speechless. These were precisely the same countries in my Region! Not getting a reply, he continued,

“You will not have to pay for anything, of course. We hope you accept this complimentary travel....”

And that was how, three weeks after my appointment as the CC for Region 73, I travelled for the first time to meet all the

NCPs and leaders of the countries from Region 73—spending one day on the excursion and the second with Sai devotees in all four countries! Swami’s arrangements were perfect as ever!

After the visit, I told the organizing business partner about Swami’s miracle. He, too, was devoted to Swami and was amazed! He said, “And I naively thought that it was me who organized this trip!” Whenever we meet, we fondly recall this story.

When Swami gives us a task, He also provides everything to accomplish the task. Swami is verily Omnipotent!

Ms. Maria Quoos
POLAND



Ms. Maria Quoos, having completed her MA from the Academy of Art, Maria Quoos also graduated in journalism from the Pontifical Academy of Theology. She has been part of the SSSIO since 1995. She serves as the Central Coordinator for Region 73 and has been the conductor of the Sarva Dharma Choir since 2009. Since 2016, she also has served as the editor of the quarterly magazine, ‘Sai Ram.’

from the International Sai Young Adults

This month, we are happy to share two exciting events in Sri Lanka and London, where the respective Young Adults (YAs) of the locations came together for an exciting retreat and Guru Poornima celebrations.

YA Panel Discussion at SSSIO UK Guru Poornima Celebrations

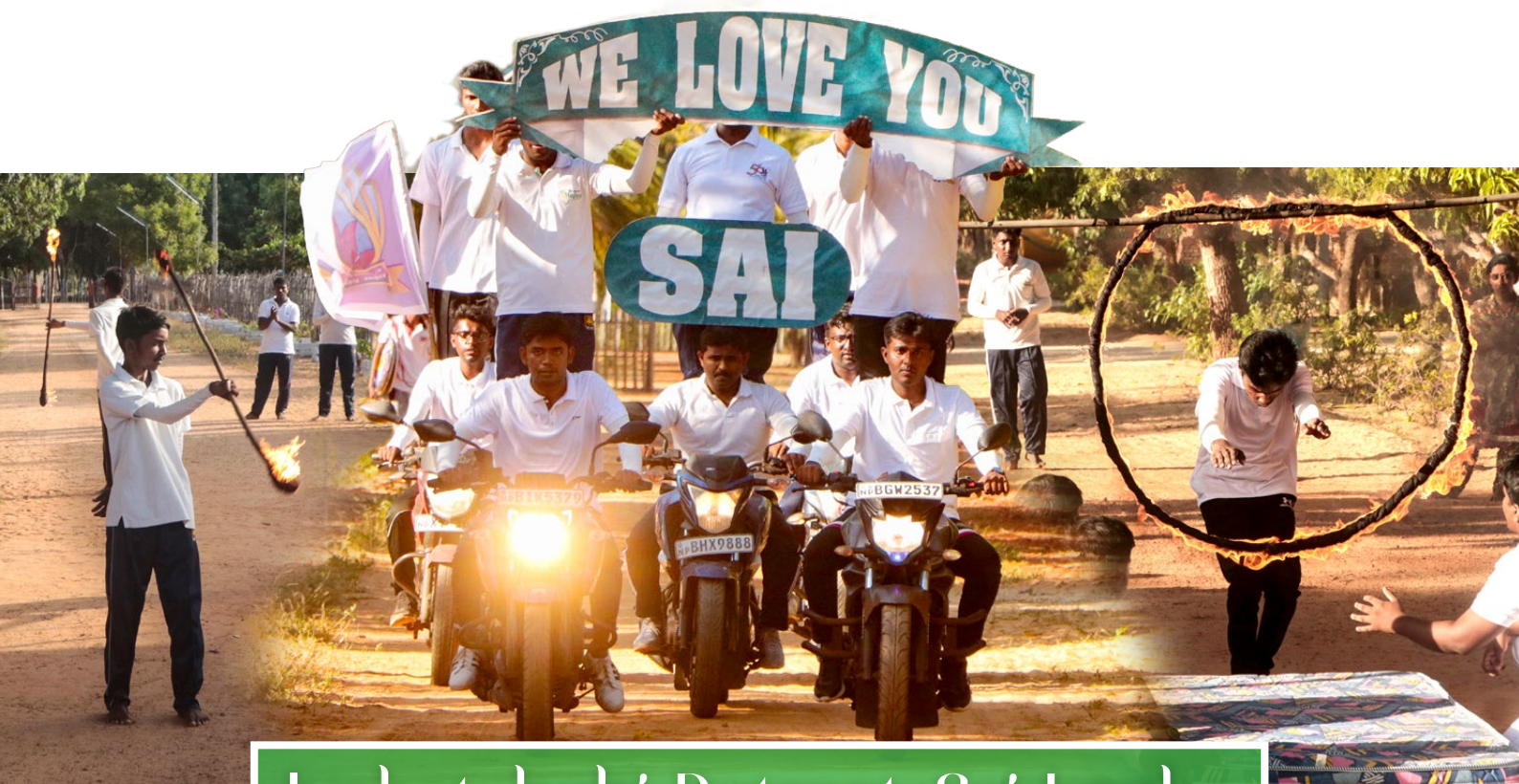


On July 2, 2023, the SSSIO-UK held their National Guru Poornima celebrations with the theme, 'Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba–The Ultimate Guru' with the participation of over 26 YAs from across the country. Brother Aravind Balasubramanya, an SSSIO YA Advisor, was the guest speaker for the day. As part of the event, the YAs conducted a vibrant YA bhajan session which left everyone energized and ready to participate enthusiastically in the YA panel discussion moderated by Brother Aravind.

The panel discussion focused mainly on how YAs connect to Swami, interact with Swami as their Guru, and practice Swami's teachings in their daily lives. The panel members were well-represented by YAs from various backgrounds and experiences. Many shared inspiring personal stories on connecting with Swami through continuous *Namasmarana*, personal well-being, in their profession, and many other ways. The panel discussion was received well and inspired the children, YAs, and adults.

After the session, the YAs had a one-on-one session with Brother Aravind, where he shared more reflections, and answered their burning questions. It was an inspiring and fruitful day for the YAs; it was also an event that brought the YAs together in the UK after a long time.

AROUND THE WORLD



Iyakatchchi Retreat, Sri Lanka

"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached." This clarion call of Swami Vivekananda served as the theme for an insightful conference and vibrant retreat at Iyakatchchi, Sri Lanka, held during June 9-11, 2023. The three-day event was filled with the enthusiastic and energetic participation of over 200 Young Adults who gathered in love for Swami from Sai Centers in Jaffna, Point Pedro, Kokkuvil, Thavadi, Changanai, Uralu, Chavakachcheri, Katkovalam, Mandihai, Killinochchi, Thaneerotu, Mulliavallai, Vidyapuram, Vattapalai, Vavunia, Poombuhar, Trincomalee and the North and North Central regions of the country.





Prayer sessions infused the conference with devotion, and the vibrant bhajans reverberated with soul-stirring devotional fervor. Workshops fueled enthusiasm and the thirst for knowledge, inspiring and empowering attendees. Stirring speeches echoed through the venue, striking a chord deep within the hearts of all present. Many programs focused on the basics, like accurately chanting mantras and understanding their meaning. The retreat also saw an explosion of talent and diversity as YAs unleashed their extraordinary abilities through displays of motorcycle stunts, yoga, fire drill gymnastics, musical dramas, and the traditional *Villu Paatu* (storytelling with a musical component). As the night sky lit up with the warmth of a bonfire, enchanting melodies filled the air, blending harmoniously with heartfelt stories and personal experiences. Dr. Vidushan, the Northern Region Youth Coordinator, eloquently reflected the sentiments of the participants who left the event feeling revitalized and invigorated in their journey toward Swami. He was thrilled to announce a remarkable resurgence in attendance. The previous regional conference saw 110 enthusiastic individuals, while this time, there was an even greater influx of newcomers eager to embark on their spiritual journey alongside like-minded souls.

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Sai Young Adults

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THE RELIGION OF LOVE

The Region 8 SSE theme for 2022-2023 was based on Swami's teaching, "There is only one religion, the religion of love." SSE classes focused on the essence and similarities of six major religions—Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism.

The tour culminated on the main island for a unique musical offering of songs highlighting Swami's teaching that all religions exhort us to love all. The grand finale song, "We are children of Sai," filled the hearts of all with love and oneness.

The SSE presentation was a truly collaborative effort between children, teachers, and parents. Over 40 children participated in this presentation. Group 3 and 4 students contributed to the script by researching the central teachings of the religions and also provided the voiceovers for dialogues and songs. Group 1 and 2 students enthusiastically took to the stage dressed in traditional costumes to act, chant prayers, and sing songs from each religion. Parents and teachers provided excellent support with costumes, props, recording and coaching the children. Everyone felt Swami's divine love and grace all along this extraordinary journey.



The SSE presentation at the international conference held at Sai Prema Nilayam in April 2023 provided an excellent opportunity to explore the regional theme through creative arts, music, and technology. Aptly titled "Journey to Love," the scene opened at the busy Los Angeles International Airport terminal with passengers ready to board SAI AIR Flight 1123 to 'Amore Islands' (Amore in Italian means Love). After landing on the main island, the captain of the flight serving also as tour guide, took us to each of the six smaller islands. Each island had a beautiful shrine dedicated to a particular religion.

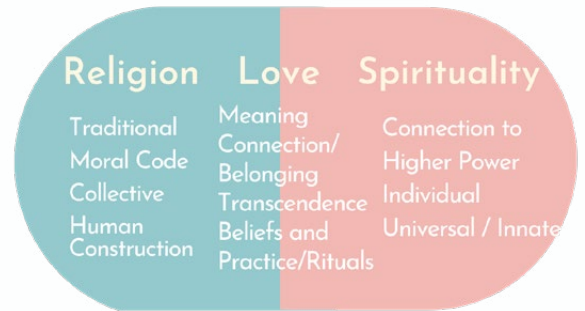


Here are a few reflections from the SSE students based on their experience with preparing for the presentation.

My takeaway from the presentation was that there are many similarities in the different religions and Swami's teachings and that we should treat everyone with kindness.

A striking similarity for example is: Zoroastrians have three main beliefs: Good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Swami has also emphasized: "therefore, have good thoughts, good speech, and good vision. See good, do good, be good."

Hemant K | Group 4 | USA



What I learned from Religion of Love:

To not separate the world into different castes and religions, or minorities and powers, but instead think of all as humans.

To not oppress or flaunt one's religion, but to come to peace and terms with others no matter your personal beliefs.

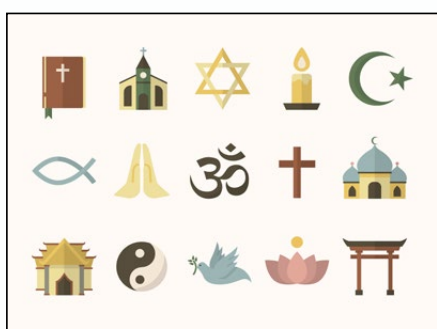
The more you follow the religion of love, the more you get accustomed to accepting all people.

Be a respectful, loving citizen, and the religion of love will always merit you.

Vibhav G | Group 3 | USA

I got a good opportunity to be the airplane captain and the narrator in the play, and it strengthened my connection with Swami. The play also let me learn about different religions and gave me an opportunity to get to know and spend more time with my fellow SSE peers.

Vaidehi S | Group 2 | USA



In SSE, we mostly have learned about Hinduism, but because of the play I was able to explore some of the other religions. It was very interesting learning about their different traditions, but I was also very surprised as to how similar their teachings were to Swami's.

ShreyaSai | Group 2 | USA

REFLECTIONS

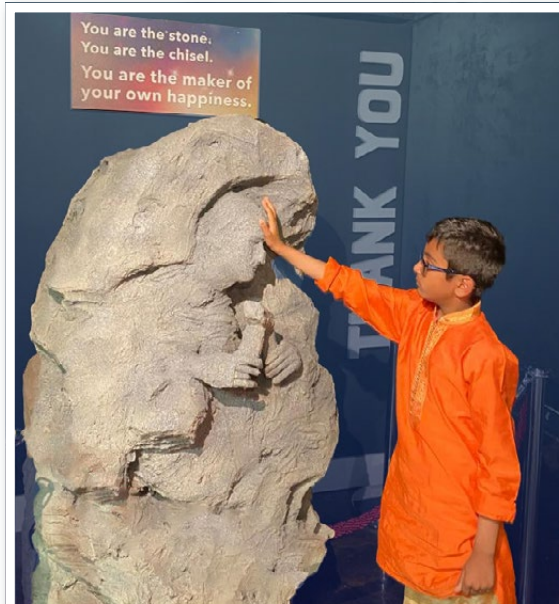
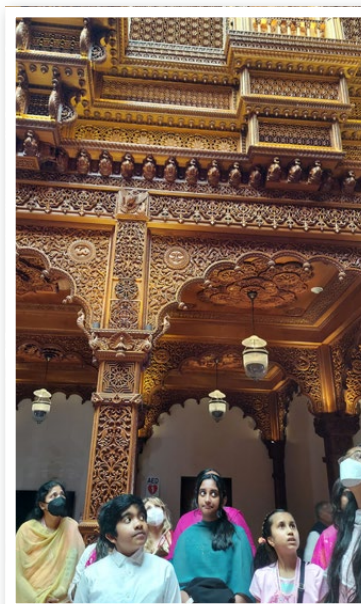
SSE FIELD TRIP

During the conference, the SSE teachers of SSSIO-USA, Region 8 (Southern California, Hawaii, Nevada) arranged educational and fun activities, including games and field trips

A field trip was organized to the local Swaminarayan temple in Chino Hills. The majestic architecture of the temple with its intricate stonework, and stunning marble statues of various deities and saints is appealing to devoted worshippers and awe-inspiring to tourists. The temple administration was happy to welcome the children and teachers. It provided a guided tour of the temple and the exhibition—*“Inspiring Faith, Tradition, and Harmony”*—regarding the timeless traditions of ancient India and the inner meanings of various aspects of the temple’s architecture.



for the children of the delegates. The young children had a wonderful time making beautiful Lego structures and designs using Magna Tiles building blocks. Balloon volleyball was a popular activity that fostered fun and friendly competitive spirit.





Sai Shine is an educational community platform of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO). Students and teachers of all the educational programs of the SSSIO can share their creativity, knowledge, and practical experiences in applying Sathya Sai Baba's teachings in their lives. Selected content from Sai Shine is exhibited in the hallways at Sai Prema Nilayam in Riverside, California.

Exhibits include poems, artworks, articles, and stories which have inspired numerous viewers as well.

Posters have also exhibited the various programs conducted by Sathya Sai Schools worldwide. The international conference attendees at Sai Prema Nilayam had an opportunity to learn about SSEHV in Sathya Sai Schools worldwide and admire the impact of the program on communities around the world.



USA



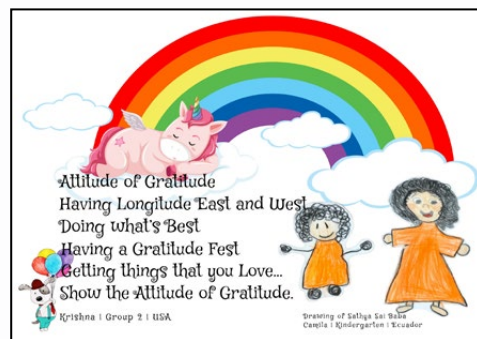
Argentina



Europe



USA



Krishna | Group 2 | USA

Drawing of Sathya Sai Baba's Centre | Iphidorgarten | Ecuador



Japan



Malaysia



Greece



Caribbean

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
August 19-20, 2023	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
October 21-22, 2023	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri



[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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Every act must be regarded as an offering to the Divine. It may not be easy to develop such an attitude. But if the effort is made sincerely, it can be achieved. It does not call for the abandonment of hearth and home or giving up your wealth and position. What I ask from you is to devote at least half an hour in a day of twenty-four hours to service. Is this beyond your capacity? If you can serve the government or someone else for eight hours a day for the money you earn from them, experiencing in the process many trials and difficulties, can't you devote some time to win the grace of God, the benefit of which is immeasurable?

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

May 20, 1984



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never