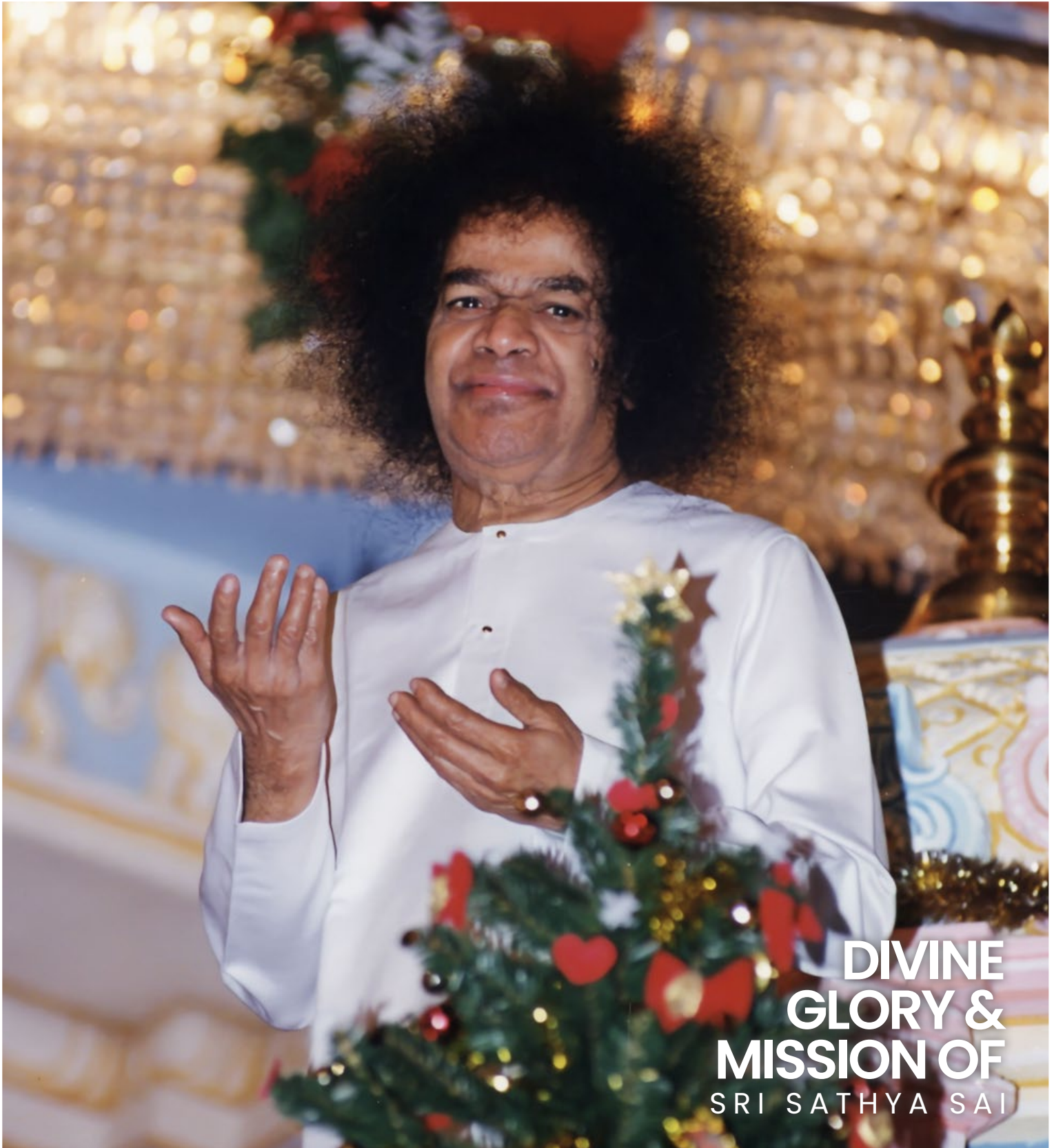


SATHYA SAI
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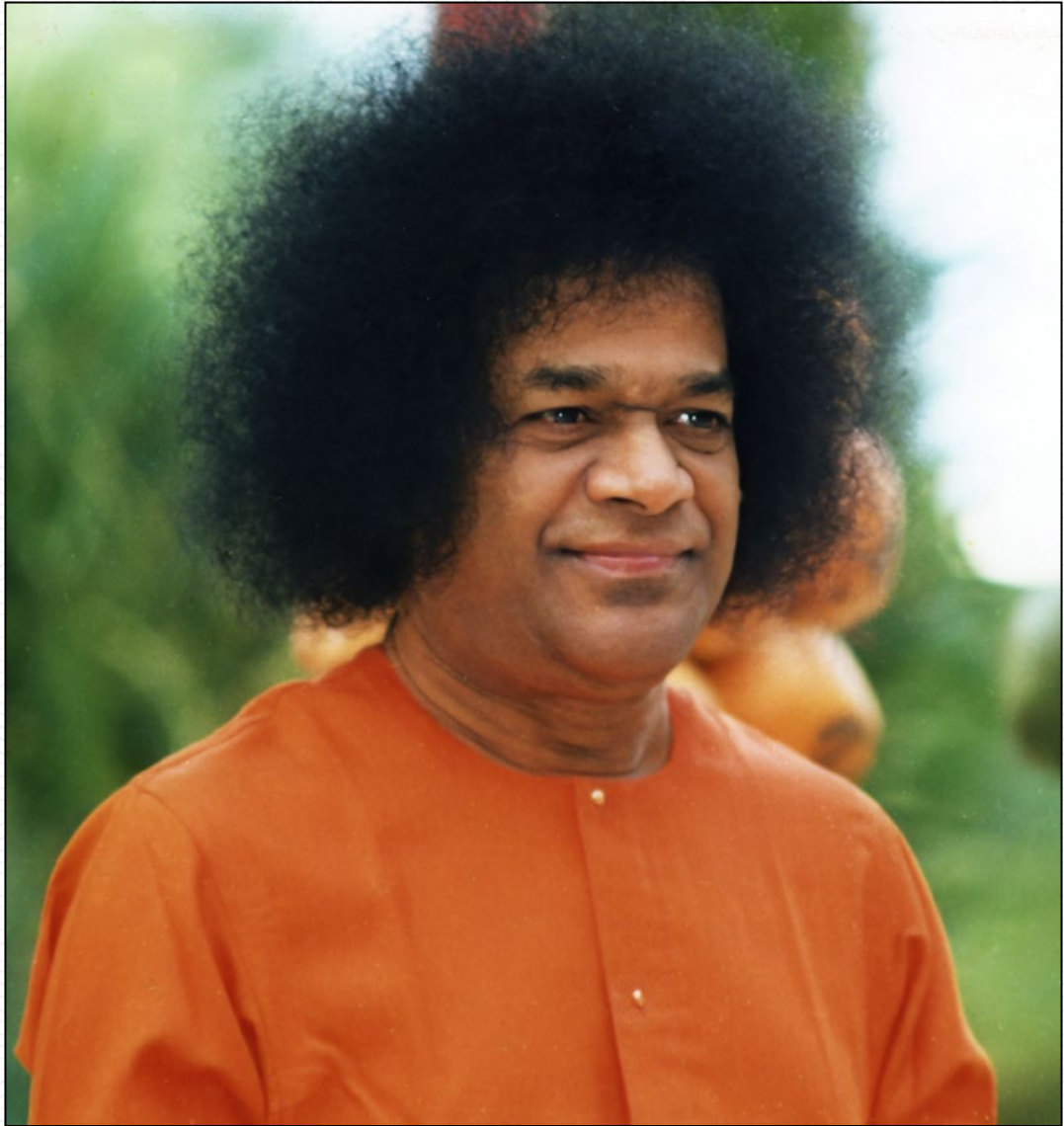
**DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF
SRI SATHYA SAI**



Love must be manifested as *seva* (selfless service). *Seva* must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, and consolation for the sick and the suffering. Jesus wore Himself out in such *seva*. The heart full of compassion is the temple of God. Jesus pleaded for compassion. Compassion was His message. He was very distressed at the sight of the poor. This day Jesus is worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Sai is being worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Everywhere, pomp, pageantry, hollow exhibitionism. Lectures, lectures, lectures! No action, no love, no *seva*. Heroes while lecturing, zeroes while putting what is said into practice. Develop compassion. Live in love. Be good, do good and see good. This is the way to God.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

December 25, 1981



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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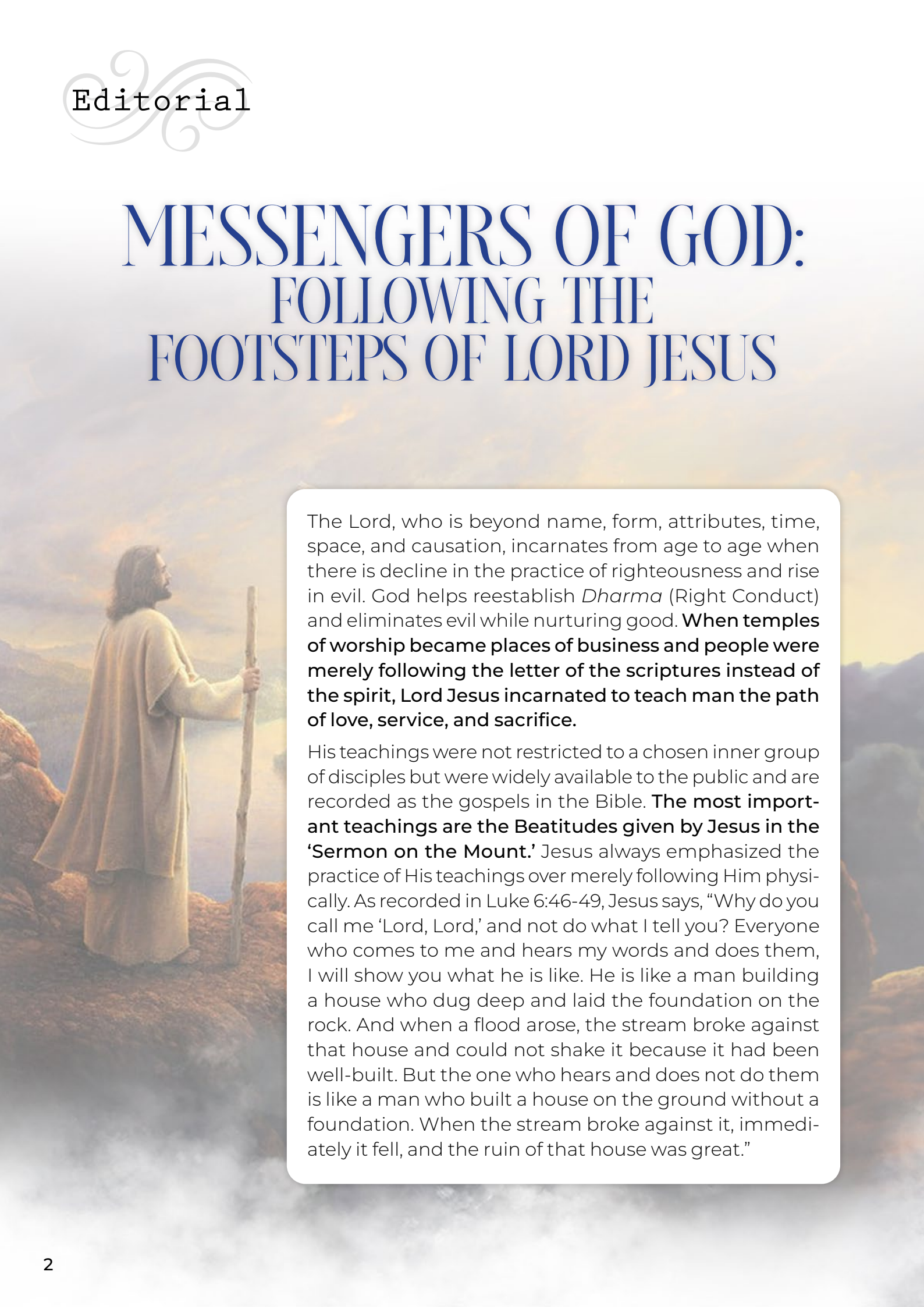
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MESSENGERS OF GOD: FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF LORD JESUS



The Lord, who is beyond name, form, attributes, time, space, and causation, incarnates from age to age when there is decline in the practice of righteousness and rise in evil. God helps reestablish *Dharma* (Right Conduct) and eliminates evil while nurturing good. **When temples of worship became places of business and people were merely following the letter of the scriptures instead of the spirit, Lord Jesus incarnated to teach man the path of love, service, and sacrifice.**

His teachings were not restricted to a chosen inner group of disciples but were widely available to the public and are recorded as the gospels in the Bible. **The most important teachings are the Beatitudes given by Jesus in the 'Sermon on the Mount.'** Jesus always emphasized the practice of His teachings over merely following Him physically. As recorded in Luke 6:46-49, Jesus says, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like. He is like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it because it had been well-built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

A photograph of Swami Sivananda, a prominent Hindu spiritual leader, sitting on an ornate wooden throne with a red cushion. He is wearing traditional orange robes and has a serene expression. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and a bright sky.

*Obeying
My instructions
is enough;*

**it will benefit you more than the
most rigorous asceticism.**

Likewise, in His discourse on May 17, 1968, during the First World Conference in Mumbai, Swami says: *“Obeying My instructions is enough; it will benefit you more than the most rigorous asceticism. Practice Sathya (truth), Dharma (right conduct), Shanti (peace), and Prema (love), which are dear to Me; resolve to keep those ideals before you ever, in all your thoughts, words, and deeds. That can confer on you the summum bonum of mergence in the Supreme Substance of Divinity (Self Realization).”*

The Parable of The Sower Practice Above Precept

Jesus emphasizes the importance of practicing His teachings in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-52).

“Listen! Behold, a Sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. The other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately, it sprang up since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns

grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Jesus later explains to his disciples that the seed represents the Gospel, the sower represents anyone who proclaims it, and the various grounds represent people’s responses:

“The sower sows the Word. And these are the ones along the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thistles. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But **those that were sown on the good soil are the**

ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Swami also shares a beautiful example of three dolls to illustrate such differences between spiritual seekers. When a wire was passed through the ear of the first doll, it came out of the other ear. In the case of the second doll, it came out of the mouth. For the third one, it did not come out at all. These dolls represent three types of people listening to good teachings in the form of the wire. The lowest kind, like the first doll, does not register anything. The better ones, like the second doll, hear, remember, and repeat the teachings like a parrot, just as the wire emerges from the mouth of the doll. The best ones are those inside whom the teachings stay like the wire that remains in the third doll. They listen, digest, assimilate, and make their lives His message. Those are the best followers of the Lord's teachings.

Jesus proclaimed the greatest commandment is to “love thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength.” The other equally cardinal commandment is to “love thy neighbor as thyself.” One may wonder whether it is practical for ordinary human beings to practice these teachings and be perfect like the Father. Studying the lives of great Christian saints who followed the teachings of Lord Jesus gives us clear answers for how to be like Jesus.

Saint Teresa A Life of Selfless Service and Boundless Compassion

Saint Teresa, earlier known as Mother Teresa, was born in Skopje, now part of North Macedonia. Her early life was marked by her deep faith and calling to serve the poor and the disadvantaged. At 18, she became a nun, joining the Sisters of Loreto in Dublin, Ireland, where she took the name Sister Mary Teresa. The following

year, she chose to serve in India, traveling to Calcutta (Kolkata today) and becoming a teacher at St. Mary's High School for Girls. She soon became fluent in the Indian languages, Bengali and Hindi.

In 1946, she heard Christ's call to give up teaching and, instead, to dedicate her life to serving poor people living in the slums of Calcutta. Thereafter, her life was characterized by poverty, charity, obedience to God, faith, and incessant prayers. Her famous saying, **“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love,”** encapsulates her fundamental philosophy of serving humanity through everyday acts of kindness and charity. Her simple living exemplified the poverty in her life. She owned only three sarees (Indian dress), which she would wash by herself. When she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, she requested the Nobel Committee to donate the prize money of the Nobel award (USD 192,000 back then) to charities that help the poor.



One of Mother Teresa's significant contributions in serving the poor was founding the organization "Missionaries of Charity" in 1950. This organization continues Mother Teresa's legacy of selfless service by serving the poorest of the poor and providing love and care to those in need in more than 130 countries.

She practiced the divine teaching of Lord Jesus—"When you are serving the least of your brethren, you are serving Me." When she was serving a baby boy with leprosy, smelly and teeming with pus, someone asked her, "How could you even be close to such a person?"

"I am not serving a leper child but baby Jesus," was her loving reply.

That is the true meaning of seeing divinity in everything.

She possessed absolute faith in God and implicit obedience to God's word, especially in the most challenging times in her life. This is an example of the '3Ps' that Swami teaches—Purity, Patience, and Perseverance. She courageously faced the most devastating criticism with only one thought—her avowed obedience to God and His words. She trusted in the power of prayer when she faced challenges in building her mission in Calcutta. She once said, **"In our most difficult times, our biggest weapon for our soul is our faith and prayers."** She always carried a rosary, chanting the name of the Lord. On one occasion, when she was wrongly accused of being at fault, she resorted to praying intensely and incessantly and asked all those she knew to pray steadfastly until "God Himself will have no choice but to be the savior." She was indeed saved by the strength of those prayers.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, *"The best way to love God is to love all and serve all."* Mother Teresa is a great saint of recent times who exemplified this aphorism in

her life. She remains a revered and iconic figure whose legacy endures as a beacon of light and a source of inspiration for those committed to alleviating human suffering and demonstrating God's love through beautiful acts of kindness and charity.

Brother Lawrence

The Practice of the Presence of God

Brother Lawrence was born as Nicholas Herman in 1614, into a poor family in Lorraine, France. He did not have any formal education and had a difficult childhood. He served as a soldier in the army. At 16, he had a profound spiritual awakening that changed the course of his life. This transformative experience led him to join the Carmelite monastery in Paris as a lay brother, where he later became known as Brother Lawrence.

His message and doctrine may be summarized from the title of his most famous work, "The Practice of the Presence of God." In this small but powerful transformative book, he outlines his approach to a unique, personal, and continuous relationship with God. With the sole desire for constant communion with God, he experi-



enced God's presence constantly, whether he was worshipping in the church during the set times of prayer or working in the kitchen.

“The time of business,” he said, “does not, for me, differ from the time of prayer. In the noise and clutter of my kitchen, where several persons are, at the same time, calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament.”

Bhagawan says that if we want peace of mind, we should not separate work as worldly and spiritual. We should spiritualize every thought, word, and deed. Then, all work becomes the Lord's work. Similarly, Lord Krishna also proclaimed that dedicating our thoughts, words, and deeds to God makes everything an offering of love and takes us nearer to the goal of Self-realization.

Brother Lawrence was the epitome of such dedication, as evident in his letters, which inspire all spiritual seekers. Here are some excerpts from those letters:

1. Let us live and die with GOD; sufferings will be sweet and pleasant to us while we are with Him, and the greatest pleasures will be, without Him, a cruel punishment to us. May He be blessed for all.
2. Lift up your heart to Him, sometimes even at your meals, and when you are in company: the least little remembrance will always be acceptable to Him. You need not cry very loud; He is nearer to us than we are aware of.
3. **Ask of God, not deliverance from your pains, but strength to bear resolutely, for the love of Him, all that He should please, and as long as He shall please.**
4. Love sweetens pains, and when one loves GOD, one suffers for His sake with joy and courage. Do you so, I beseech you; comfort yourself with Him, who is

the only Physician of all our maladies. He is the Father of the afflicted, always ready to help us. He loves us infinitely more than we imagine: love Him then, and seek not consolation elsewhere.

5. We can do all things with the grace of God, which He never refuses to give to those who ask for it earnestly. Knock, and persevere in knocking. I assure you that He will open to you in His time, and immediately grant you what He has delayed giving you during these many years. Pray to him.
6. **God knoweth best what is needed for us, and all that He does is for our good.** If we knew how much He loves us, we should always be ready to receive equally and with indifference from His Hand the sweet and the bitter: all would please that came from Him.
7. That there needed neither art nor science for going to GOD, but only a heart resolutely determined to apply itself to nothing but Him, or for His sake, and to love Him only.
8. Let all our employment be to know GOD: the more one knows Him, the more one desires to know Him. And as knowledge is commonly the measure of love, the deeper and more extensive our knowledge shall be, the greater will be our love: and **if our love of GOD were great, we should love Him equally in pains and pleasures.** Let us seek Him often by faith. He is within us: seek Him not elsewhere. Let us cast everything besides, out of our hearts. He would possess them alone. Beg this favor of Him.

At the heart of Brother Lawrence's teachings was the practice of mindfulness and living in the 'Presence of God.' He bridged the gap between contemplative spirituality and the everyday life of an ordinary person. He showed that spiritual growth



and union with God were not reserved for the elite, the scholarly, and the ascetic but were attainable by all. He encouraged individuals to turn their hearts and minds to God in the ordinary activities of daily life, like cooking, cleaning, serving others, and seemingly insignificant mundane tasks. He wanted all to offer work as an act of devotion to God and to converse with God. He showed by example and precept that spirituality can be simple, accessible, and transformative, leading one to develop a deeper and more intimate relationship with God.

Saint Francis of Assisi A Life of Sacrifice, Renunciation, and Love for Nature

Saint Francis was born in a wealthy merchant family in Assisi, Italy. He enjoyed a life of privilege and extravagance, not having any cares of the world in his early years. But his life took a dramatic turn when he heard the voice of God and had a spiritual awakening. This brought about a remarkable transformation that made him renounce all the riches and sense-pleasures. It led him to embrace a life of poverty, simplicity, and complete dedication and devotion to Lord Jesus.

Bhagawan Baba says that the foremost characteristic of a spiritual seeker is

dispassion for the world and detachment from worldly pleasures. Lord Jesus says (Matthew 19:24), "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God." He emphasized that you cannot serve two masters—God and money. St. Francis made the perfect choice.

The central message of St. Francis can be summarized in his famous prayer.

**Lord, make me an instrument
of your peace.**

**Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.**

**O divine Master, grant that
I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.**

**For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that
we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are
born to eternal life.**

This prayer encapsulates his commitment to promoting love and compassion in a world characterized by strife and materialism. He is the patron saint of animals, birds, plants, elements, and nature. **He said one should experience God's love in the sun, moon, elements, rocks, wind, animals, birds, and plants.** Baba says that nature is a gift of God. He also says that nature is a manifestation of God before proclaiming that nature is verily God. St. Francis practiced this proclamation all his life.

There is a beautiful incident when St. Francis and his companions were taking a trip through the Spoleto Valley near the town of Bevagna. Suddenly, Francis spotted a large number of birds of all varieties. There were doves, crows, and all sorts of birds. Swept up in the moment, Francis left his friends on the road and rushed toward the birds, who patiently waited for him. He greeted them in his usual gentle, loving way, expecting them to scurry off into the air as he spoke to them. But they moved not!

Filled with awe, he asked them if they would stay awhile and listen to the Word of God. He told them, "My brother and sister birds, you should praise your Creator and always love him: He gave you feathers for clothes, wings to fly, and all the other things you need. It is God who made you noble among all creatures, making your home in thin, pure air. Without sowing or reaping, you receive God's guidance and protection."

At this point, the birds began to spread their wings, stretch their necks, and gaze at Francis, rejoicing and praising God wonderfully, according to their nature. Francis walked right in the midst of them, turned around, and returned, affectionately touching their heads and bodies with his tunic. It is said that the brothers who journeyed with him stood still, watching in amazement.

There are stories of how he even tamed a wild wolf and worked with reptiles, influencing them with his pure, divine love. His conduct is similar to that of the sages and saints of yore who lived in hermitages alongside wild animals, including lions and tigers. They lived amidst the wild beasts in harmony and love. One such noble saint is Sage Agastya. No wonder Swami says that love is the greatest power one is blessed with to conquer all, more than even nuclear power.

St. Francis founded the Franciscan order (1209 CE) to share God's love and message with the multitude and live according to St. Francis's ideals, emphasizing purity, simplicity, and a life of service to the poor and needy.

It is said that the way one's life ends shows how one has lived one's life. If someone is always involved in worldly thoughts, that is what comes to them in the final moment. If one is steeped in holy thoughts, the end will be sacred too. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 8: 6 and 8:7)

*yam yam vapi smaran bhavam
tyajatyante kalevaram
tam tam evaiti kaunteya
sada tad-bhava-bhavitah*

"Whatever one remembers upon giving up the body at the time of death, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), one attains that state, being always absorbed in such contemplation."

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

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

St. Francis of Assisi lived such a noble divine life with his thoughts, words, and

deeds saturated with divine love that he left his body singing Psalm 141, which begins with:

Lord, I call to you; hasten to me;
listen to my plea when I call.
Let my prayer be incense before you;
my uplifted hands an evening offering.
Set a guard, Lord, before my mouth,
keep watch over the door of my lips.
Do not let my heart incline to evil,
to perform deeds in wickedness.

This is an excellent example of leading a divine life, which resonates with people of all backgrounds and is a testament to the transformative power of spirituality and leading a blessed life.

Saint Teresa of Avila A Life Dedicated to Contemplation and Prayers

Saint Teresa was born in 1515 to a noble Spanish family and is widely regarded as the patron saint for health. After a profound spiritual awakening, she entered the Carmelite monastery. Once, during a severe illness, she experienced a transformative encounter with God, leading to her commitment to faith and a lifelong journey of contemplative prayer and a spiritual life. She emphasized to the other nuns the importance of leading an inward path in solitude and detachment with a vow of silence. She went on to tell them not to be attached even to their personal copies of the Holy Bible. She recommended that people exchange personal copies of the Bible so they don't get attached to their own copies of the Bible!

Her message is encapsulated in her famous prayer.



*“Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away;
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.”*

These words of prayer reflect her unflinching faith in God's presence and guidance in the face of life's challenges and uncertainties. Her message emphasized the importance of a deep and personal relationship with God through contemplative prayer and the pursuit of divine intimacy. She is one of the foremost mystics in the history of Christianity and is recognized for her profound insights into contemplative life. **Her doctrine, as expressed in her writings, is best exemplified in her profound and classic works such as, 'The Interior Castle' and 'The Way of Perfection.'**

In 'The Interior Castle,' she describes the soul's journey toward union with God through seven stages of spiritual growth. She had unconditional, pure love for all, and not surprisingly, her favorite saint was St. Francis of Assisi. The other classic, 'The Way of Perfection,' is a practical guide to prayer and prayer-filled life where three principles are emphasized:

1. Fraternal universal Love
2. Detachment from created things.
3. True humility and practice of silence

'The Way of Perfection' is a work of sublime, mystical beauty. Its outstanding hallmark is its simplicity, which instructs, exalts, and inspires all those seeking a perfect way of life.

Baba says that only in the depths of silence can the voice of God be heard. St. Teresa showed by her example and teachings that silence is an important spiritual practice. Her teachings inspire believers seeking a deeper and more intimate relationship with God, and her writings remain a source of remarkable spiritual wisdom and insight for all spiritual seekers.

For spiritual seekers, a glimpse into the lives of these great saints is a source of inspiration to march forward on the way to perfection to attain supreme bliss. Their remarkable lives provide a recipe for a better life, giving us direction and spiritual guidance from following their exemplary lives. **Each saint has shown us the path to the fountain of eternal life by their unique dedication to God.** While Brother Lawrence's life shows that anyone can live in God's presence, making everything God's work, St. Francis of Assisi demonstrates that one can always be in communion with God through Nature, animals, birds, and creation. Sister Teresa of Avila shows us how to lead a contemplative life, practicing silence on the inward path, while Mother Teresa's life exemplifies the effectiveness of incessant prayers coupled with service to the poor and the downtrodden to reach God.

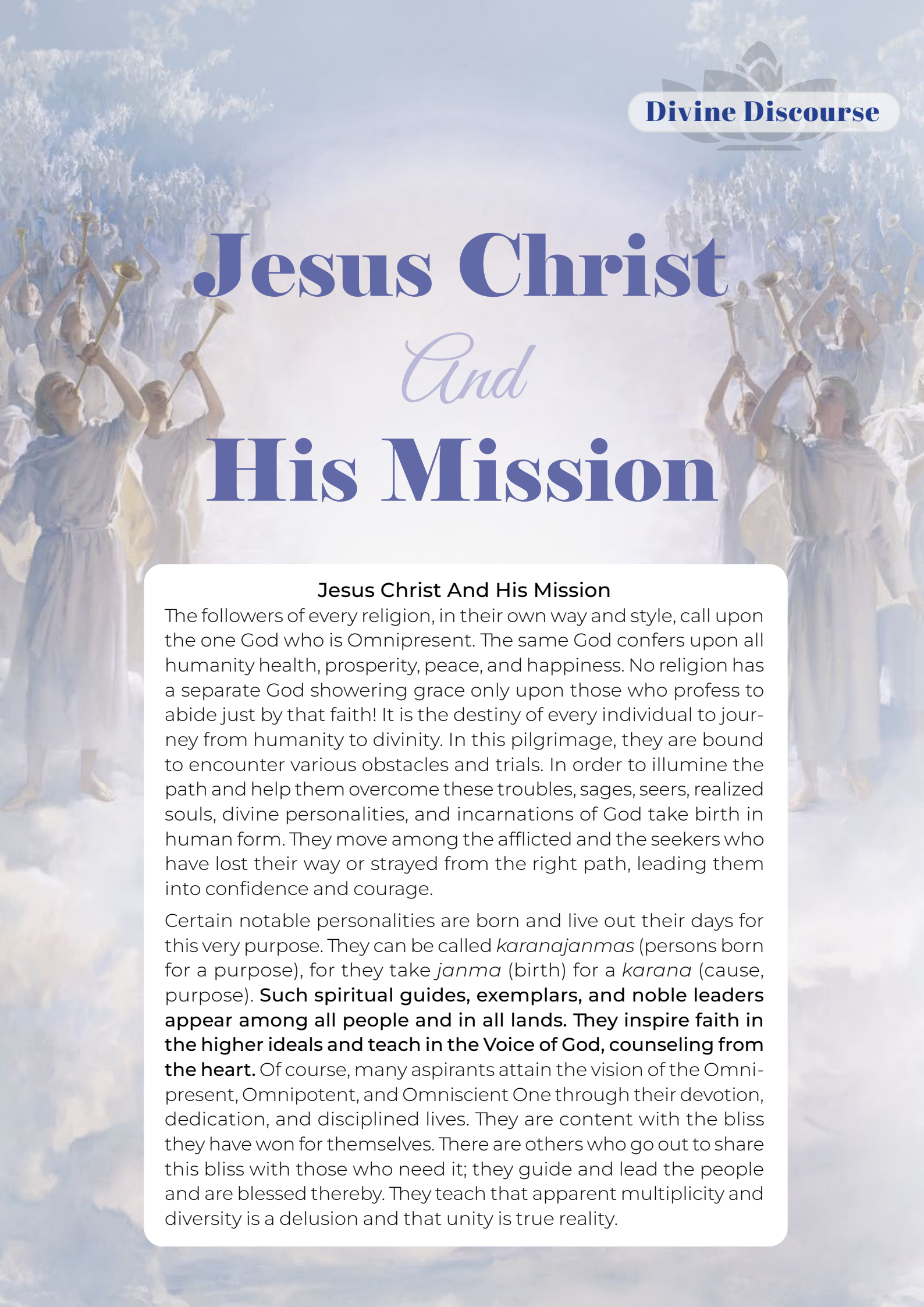
With divine grace and our sincere and intense efforts, may we all continue to make spiritual progress and reach the goal supreme, namely Self-realization.

Jai Sai Ram.

The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread but there are many more dying for a little love. The poverty in the West is a different kind of poverty—it is not only a poverty of loneliness but also of spirituality. There's a hunger for love, as there is a hunger for God.

—Mother Teresa





Jesus Christ And His Mission

Jesus Christ And His Mission

The followers of every religion, in their own way and style, call upon the one God who is Omnipresent. The same God confers upon all humanity health, prosperity, peace, and happiness. No religion has a separate God showering grace only upon those who profess to abide just by that faith! It is the destiny of every individual to journey from humanity to divinity. In this pilgrimage, they are bound to encounter various obstacles and trials. In order to illumine the path and help them overcome these troubles, sages, seers, realized souls, divine personalities, and incarnations of God take birth in human form. They move among the afflicted and the seekers who have lost their way or strayed from the right path, leading them into confidence and courage.

Certain notable personalities are born and live out their days for this very purpose. They can be called *karanajanmas* (persons born for a purpose), for they take *janma* (birth) for a *karana* (cause, purpose). **Such spiritual guides, exemplars, and noble leaders appear among all people and in all lands. They inspire faith in the higher ideals and teach in the Voice of God, counseling from the heart.** Of course, many aspirants attain the vision of the Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Omniscient One through their devotion, dedication, and disciplined lives. They are content with the bliss they have won for themselves. There are others who go out to share this bliss with those who need it; they guide and lead the people and are blessed thereby. They teach that apparent multiplicity and diversity is a delusion and that unity is true reality.

To elevate man and raise his consciousness level, Jesus had to incarnate as man. He had to speak to them in their own style and language; He had to teach them the methods they can adopt and practice.

The Three Stages of Jesus' Life

Jesus was a *karanajanma*, a Master born with a purpose—the mission of restoring love, charity, and compassion in the heart of man. He had no attachment to the self, nor did He pay any heed to joy or sorrow, loss or gain. His heart responded to the call of anguish, and He went about the land, preaching the message of love. His life was a libation for the upliftment of humanity. Like most seekers, He first searched for the divine in the objective world. But He soon realized that the world is a kaleidoscopic projection created by one's own imagination and sought to find God within Himself. His stay in the Himalayan monasteries in Kashmir and other centers of eastern asceticism and His in-depth spiritual inquiry gave Him greater awareness. From the attitude of being a 'Messenger of God,' He could now call Himself the 'Son of God.' As the bond of relationship increased, the "I" was no longer some distant light or entity; the light became a part of the "I." With body consciousness predominant, He was a messenger of God. With heart consciousness in the ascendant, He felt a greater nearness and dearness to God, and so the son-father bond seems natural at this stage.

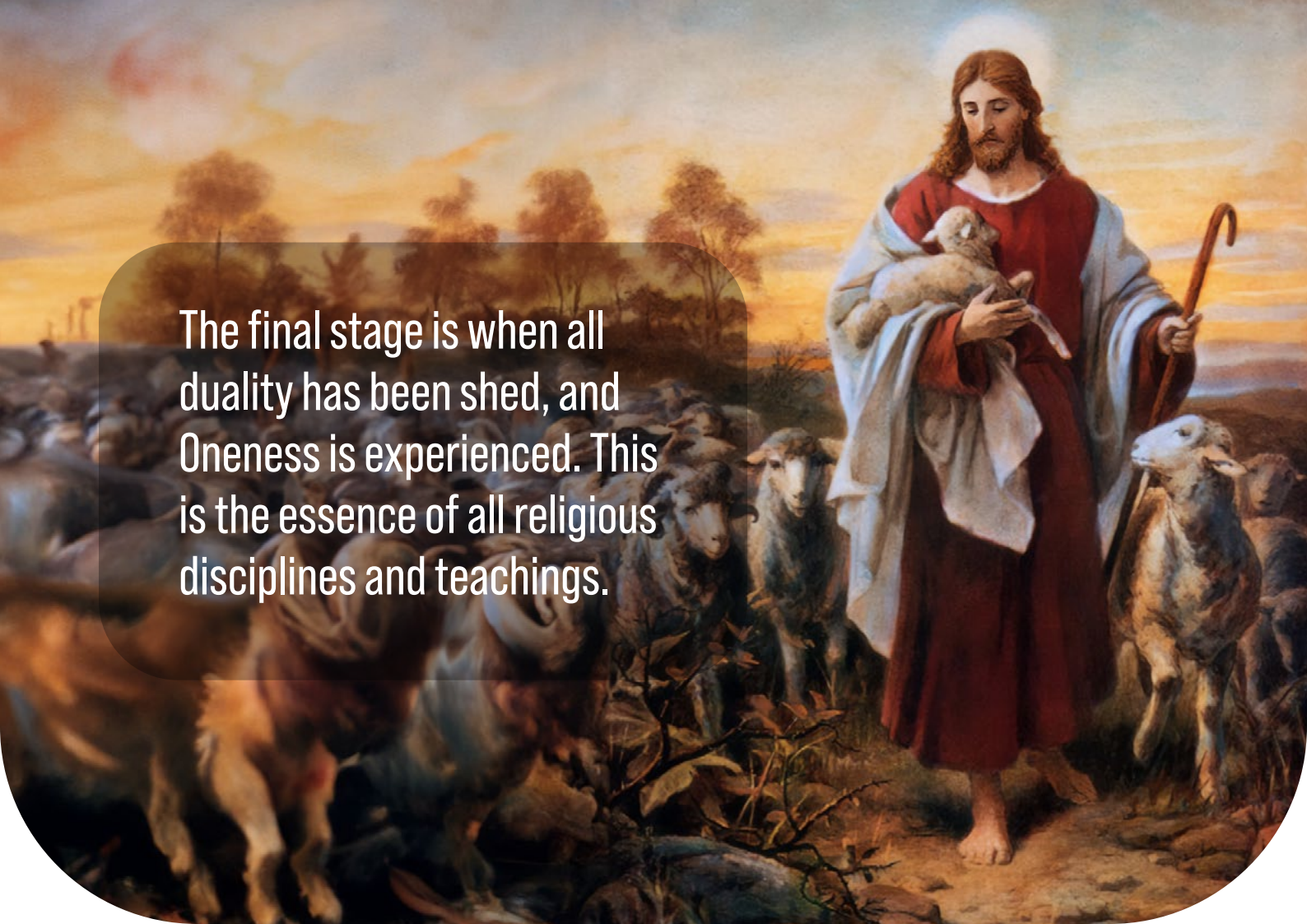
Later, as He was established in the awareness of the Self (*Atma*), Jesus could declare, "I and My Father are One." The three stages may be described as: "I am in the Light," "the Light is in me," and "I am the Light," and may be compared to the *Dvaita* (dualism), *Visishtadvaita* (qualified

non-dualism) and *Advaita* (non-dualism) stages as described in Vedanta. **The final stage is when all duality has been shed, and Oneness is experienced. This is the essence of all religious disciplines and teachings.**

Jesus' Original Name Was Isa

Jesus was honored by the populace as Christ, for they found no trace of ego in His thoughts, words, and deeds. He had no envy or hatred and was full of love, charity, humility, and compassion. **Jesus' original name was 'Isa,' a two syllabled word, which, when repeated sounds 'Sai.' Isa and Sai both mean Ishwara (God), the Eternal Absolute, and *Sath-Chith-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss).** In the Tibetan manuscript, at the monastery where Isa spent some years, His name is written as Isha, which means the Lord of all living beings. When Jesus proclaimed that He was the Messenger of God, He wanted to emphasize that everyone is a messenger of God too, and must speak, act, and think like one. This is the true *Karma Kanda* (branch dealing with ritualistic practices and activities) of the Vedas: *sadhana* (discipline) of *karma* (work), *japa* (prayer), *seva* (service), and *dhyana* (meditation).

Further, Jesus asserted each one can recognize all as sons of God, children of God, brothers and sisters of oneself, and so, deserving of worship. The *Upasana Kanda* (branch of Vedas dealing with worship and contemplation) is the scripture in *Sana-thana Dharma* (Eternal Religion) for this



The final stage is when all duality has been shed, and Oneness is experienced. This is the essence of all religious disciplines and teachings.

stage. Finally, knowledge ripens into wisdom, and the goal of *Jnana Kanda* (branch of Vedas dealing with spiritual wisdom and nonduality) is reached when each one realizes, “I and My Father are One.”

Do Not Confine Jesus to One Community

The Birthday of Jesus must be celebrated by all humanity, for such *karanajanmas* belong to the entire human race. They should not be confined to a single country or community. Jesus found that scholars and ritualists had befogged true religion. Hence, He taught spirituality and morality, for education is the very light of life. Jesus found that people were running after worthless glass beads, imagining them as diamonds and attaching great value to them. He went around the holy shrines and discovered they had become bazaars

(places of business) where grace was being auctioned, bargained, and commercialized. He condemned the priesthood, which tolerated and encouraged these practices. So, He drew upon Himself the wrath of the heads of temples and monasteries. They tempted one of His disciples with 30 silver pieces to betray Him and turn Him over to the Roman rulers.

The Roman rulers were told that Jesus was attempting to assert himself as King and should therefore be punished for treason. Their insistence made the Governor order the crucifixion of Jesus. When the nails were being driven into Him to crucify Him on the Cross, Jesus heard the Voice of the Father saying, “All life is one, My dear Son. Be alike to everyone,” and Jesus pleaded that those who were crucifying Him may be pardoned for they know not what they do. Jesus sacrificed Himself for the sake of humanity.

Singing carols, lighting candles, reading the Bible and acting out the incidents surrounding His birth are not enough to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus said that the bread taken in the 'last supper' was His flesh and the wine, His blood. He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are to be treated as Jesus Himself and that no distinction be made between friend or foe, we or they. **Everybody is His Body, sustained by the bread; every drop of blood flowing in the veins of every living being is His, animated by the activity that the blood imparted to it. That is to say, every man is Divine and must be revered as such.**

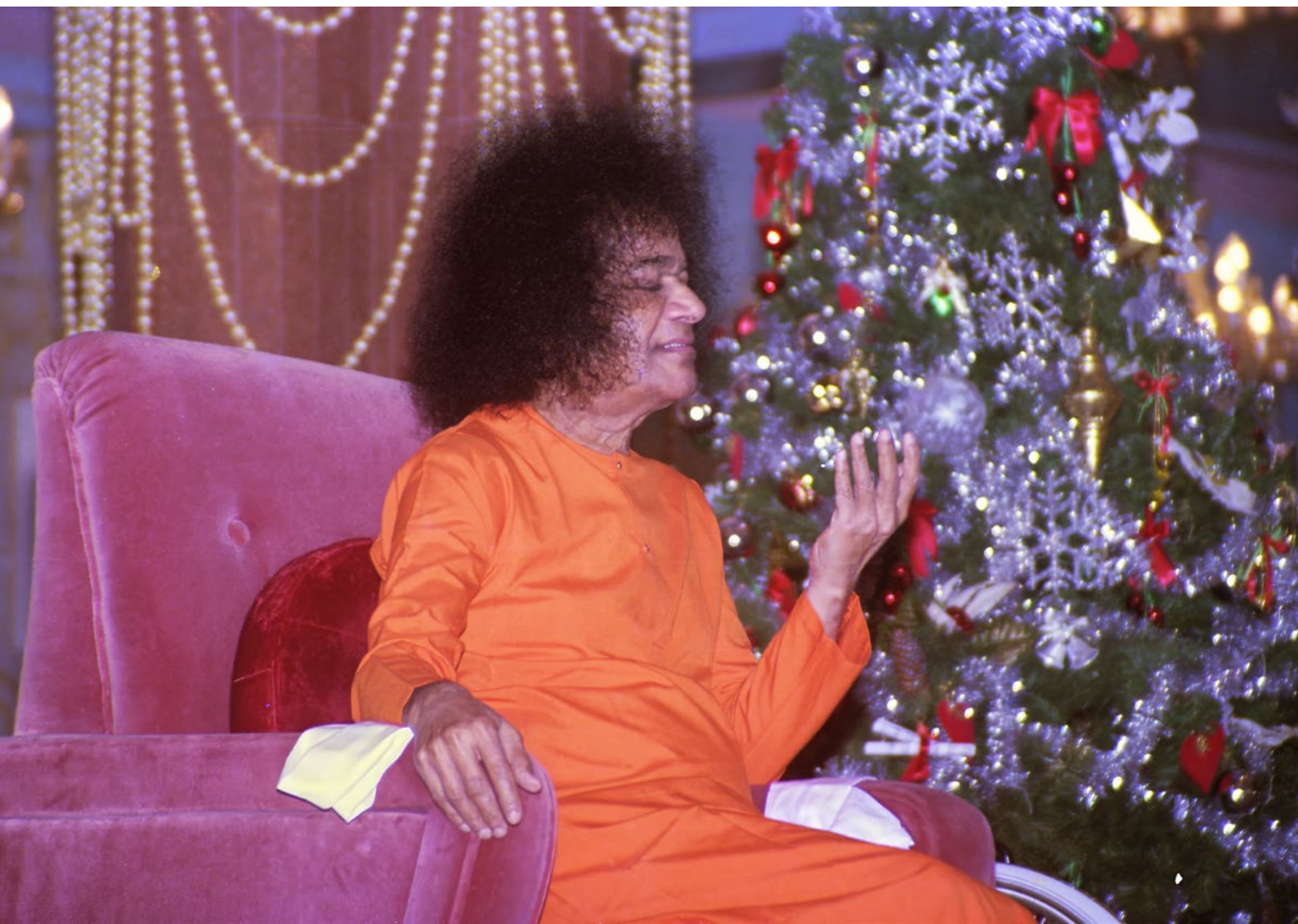
Man Forgets or Ignores the Goal of Life

You work as a messenger or servant; later, you worship, as a son does to his father, and

finally, you achieve the wisdom that you and He are One. Jesus has shown the way for this spiritual journey in clear terms. He announced very early in life that He had come to illuminate the spiritual path. Even as an emerging bud, He emitted fragrance. He had the light in Him.

To elevate man and raise his consciousness, Jesus had to incarnate as man. He had to speak to the people in their own style and language; He had to teach them the methods they can adopt and practice. Birds and beasts need no divine incarnation to guide them, for they have no inclination to stray away from their *dharma*. Man alone forgets or ignores the goal of life, warranting divine guidance to follow the spiritual path.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
December 25, 1978



WHAT'S IN A

NAME?



In the Spring of 1971, we were a bunch of 6 or 7 young Western men devotees who lived in a rural house near the Whitefield area, Bengaluru. Though it was close to Swami's Brindavan Ashram, it was still far enough that we rode bikes to *darshan* twice daily. Swami had permitted 5 or 6 western ladies to live behind the classrooms closest to His residence. Every morning, I would enjoy riding the bicycle through the green countryside to pick up milk for the ladies at a nearby dairy. With big milk cans hanging off on either side of the bicycle, I was literally like the milkman of Brindavan!

One morning, I arrived on the driveway near Swami's house. I was about to park the bike and deliver the milk when I saw Swami leaving His house to give *darshan*. No one expected Him to come that early, and very few people were around. It looked like I would have my near-private *darshan* because I was in His direct path! I had no clue what the protocol for this situation might be. So, I just froze in place, holding my bike with the milk cans hanging on my bicycle, probably looking ridiculously out of place.

"What is Your Name?"

Swami looked at me from a distance as He walked slowly toward me. This gave me plenty of time to have a gamut of rambling thoughts, like, "This must be my big, blessed moment. Will He say or do something deeply profound? I should ask him for what I want most!"

My over-excited mind then got tangled up with, "Well, what SHOULD I ask for? What is right to ask for?" I still hadn't sorted this out and was awestruck and dumbfounded when He so gracefully and yet inexorably came up to me.

Looking at me, He surprised me by asking simply, “What is your name?” Letting go of everything I had thought so far, I just said, “Philip Gosselin.”

Swami looked at me as if thinking, “What a most bizarre and foolish thing to say.” I couldn’t get out any words or even organize any thoughts to respond as my mind stopped functioning completely, and He glided on. I was enthralled at being so close in such a casual and intimate exchange with the Lord. At the same time, I was mystified as the Master, by the most prosaic of all questions, had thrown a Koan (a story, dialogue, question, or statement that is used in Zen practice to provoke the “great doubt” to test and aid a student’s progress) on the nature of desire, reality, and Self!

Understanding The Koan

Swami always emphasizes the importance of the divine name, but for most people, our names are more important as they are part of the identity we create for ourselves. That is probably what Swami refers to as ‘Being is lost in Becoming.’ **Our original Godly nature is obscured by the identity we create over time.**

Swami also says, “*You are not one but three —the one you think you are (body), the one*

that others think you are (mind), and the one that you really are (Atma).”

Evidently, one of Sai’s tasks is to undercut false identities of who we think we are and allow our reality to shine forth! That process was once jokingly described as going from seeing ourselves as VIPs (Very Important Persons) to becoming VVOPs (Very Very Ordinary Persons)!

Names He Gave to Hasten Our Growth

Swami didn’t usually refer to devotees in our groups by their given names. Just as Swami used to refer to His father as “Home-boy (*griham abbayi*),” or “father of this body,” and His mother as “Home-girl (*griham ammayi*),” or the “mother of this body”, He would often use casual or even deflating names for many of us. He did it perhaps to ensure that we would avoid our usual, overly elevated and self-concerned view of ourselves. For example, if someone was chubby and short, He might refer to them as “*Pakoda*” (Indian equivalent of dumpling). If they were tall and slender, He would refer to them as “Coconut Tree” (my wife and I fittingly once received this appellation). Others we know were termed “Dirty Beard” (for those with long beards) or “Lion” or “Big Head,” for example.

Name,
not important.
Heart
and love
important.



Sometimes Sai would occasionally express His love and care by renaming devotees. For example, Robbie became Ravi, Shri Ravan became Shri Raman (“I don’t want to call anyone Ravana (a demonic king),” He said), and Wendell became Sai Wendell.

For the most part, though, Swami didn’t refer to us by name. This sometimes evoked reactions. I was once in an interview with a distinguished educator from California who wanted to start a Sathya Sai University in California. Swami gave him a lot of attention then, but when he returned a year later, Swami seemed very distant. He thought, “He doesn’t even know my name!” A few days later, Swami leaned toward him during *darshan* and said, “I know your name.”

Whether He gives names or doesn’t call by our names, it is always to ensure that we are distancing ourselves from our bodies and minds toward the Atma!

From ‘Not Important’ to an Integral Part of My Life

Let me conclude this article on a humorous note. In the Spring of 1974, during my

second trip to Swami, I brought four others looking forward to meeting Him. There were more Westerners in Whitefield now, and some were taking on new Hindu names or of other traditions to signal their new spiritual life. One member of our group, Peggy Atkin, was enchanted with this idea, and she seemed to have Swami’s ear as He spoke to her in the *darshan* line and seemed to enjoy mimicking her high-pitched voice. One day, she presented a big card to Him asking for a new name, to which He graciously and touchingly replied, “Name, not important. Heart and love important.”

This was a profound message that bound her even more closely to Sai.

I couldn’t resist teasing her that Swami had given her a new name—“Not Important!” However, she felt that she got the last word as Swami performed our marriage several years later, and she gleefully pointed out, “See, He did change my name to Mrs. Gosselin!”

Dr. Phil Gosselin
U.S.A. 



Dr. Phil Gosselin is the Chairperson for Zone 1 of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization comprising of the English and Dutch speaking countries of the Western Hemisphere. He is also co-Chair of the SSSIIO Archive Committee. He is one of the original Central Council members for USA announced at the 1975 World Conference in Swami’s Presence. Dr. Gosselin was also a Founding Member of several Sai Centers in the Northeast USA including the Manhattan Sai Center. He had the great fortune to live in Prashanthi Nilayam for 2 years in 1971-72 and 1974-75.

*Professionally, Dr. Gosselin is a clinical psychologist and has been a Professor of Psychology at Union Institute and Director of the Behavioral Medicine Department at Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield, MA. He also previously worked on Wall Street for twelve years in the 70’s and 80’s. An account of his professional life on Wall Street is described in the book *The Dharmic Challenge*.*



I Want Liberation Now!

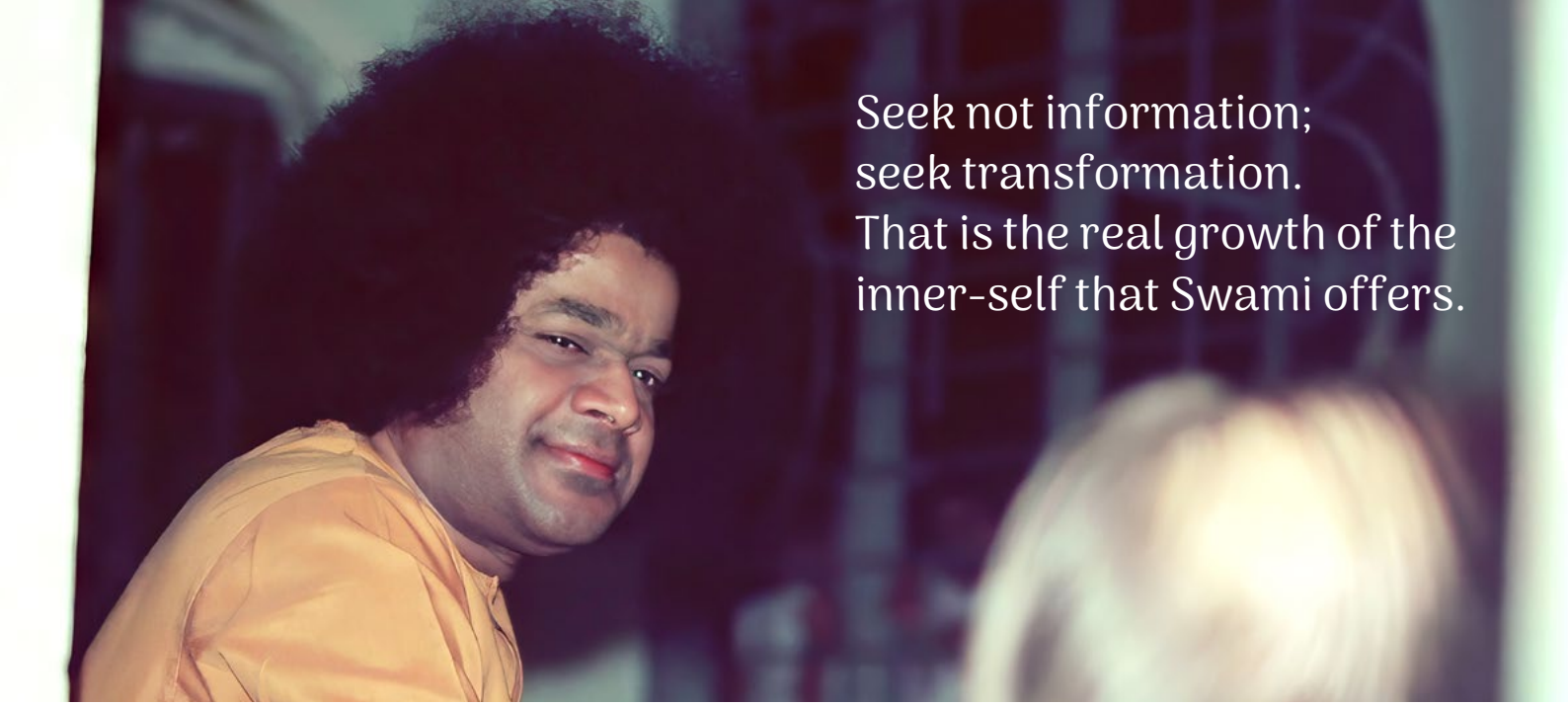
No one can liberate you, for no one has bound you. You hold on to the nettle of worldly pleasures, and you weep, like the kite that is pursued by the crows so long as it carries the fish in its beak. Once the kite drops the fish, immediately, it is free. Similarly, you should give up attachment to the senses; sorrow and anxiety can harass you no more, and you can be happy.

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba
March, 1965

In 1978, my husband Robert was called for an interview along with twelve Western men. It is customary that when one spouse is called for an interview by Swami, the other is also allowed. On this occasion, however, at the last moment before entering the interview room, Swami, perhaps wanting to spare the wives the emotional ordeal that was to come, sent the ladies back.

In the interview room, Swami directed His attention to a young, nineteen-year-old Westerner whose face showed severe agitation and restraint of tears. The young man cried out, “How do I get Self-realization? If I can’t get it, I’m going to kill myself!”

Swami materialized a crystal *japamala* (necklace of prayer beads). Before He offered it to anyone, though, the man cried out in anguish, “I don’t want rings. I don’t want *japamalas*. All I want is liberation. If you don’t give it to me now, I’m going to cut my wrists right here!” Rarely does one witness such an emotional outburst in Swami’s presence. As a rule, people are restrained and self-controlled, as Swami’s presence commands the utmost respect. Swami undoubtedly had



Seek not information;
seek transformation.
That is the real growth of the
inner-self that Swami offers.

His reasons to allow such an outburst, and perhaps Swami's lengthy reply will benefit others in a similar rush for realization. Swami calmly responded:

“Realization is not an article that you can purchase in a store. The desire for liberation is good, but the display of emotions is not correct. Self-realization is the result of steady and continuous *sadhana*. The desire for immediate realization is brought on by the urges of the lower self, anxiety, and haste. Haste is emotionalism. Haste makes waste. **Start early, go slowly, and arrive safely. Make your desire for divine union permanent, constant, and all-important, and I will give. I love all of you. Know that what I give is best for you.** There is no selfish interest in Swami.

Many come and seek an interview. They go away disappointed. Their hunger is insufficient. They are like a man who, with a plate of *chapatis* (flatbread) and potatoes in front of him, repeats over and over, “*chapati*, potato, *chapati*, potato.” There is not enough hunger, not enough effort commensurate with hunger, to bring the food to the mouth. These people want only a taste, but a mere taste is a waste. They come for a few days or months and go away. If you feed a dog every day at 10:00 AM, the dog will come

exactly at 10:00 AM by the tenth day. The dog is ignorance (*avidya*). You must be like God, knowledge (*vidya*), which comes from the opposite direction.

Be steady in your spiritual practice, and I, your higher consciousness, will come to you. Your Guru is your Self, your higher consciousness. Have faith and trust in your higher consciousness, your highest inner-Self.

You say you want Self-realization. But what is that Self? You say, “You and I are one,” or, “I am He.” But each adds up to two. You and I are we. We is one, not two. We and we is one, not two. You must reach the consciousness that “you” are “we.”

Let there be no separation in your life. Follow the four stages: work, worship, wisdom, and realization. Do all work as worship of God. Do not divide your efforts into your work and His work.”

In response, another devotee asked Swami, “It appears as though there are many separate people in this room. What causes me to see diversity when you say there is only unity?” Swami replied, “There is only one moon in the sky, but the light of the moon is reflected in the water contained in one hundred pots.” “Why does this illusion exist?” the devotee asked. “Without illusion, there is

no desire for liberation. Why illusion? That is life! Without darkness, there is no appreciation of light,” Swami explained. “Why did God create the Universe?” was the devotee’s final question. Swami replied, “First, understand your Self before you try to understand the purpose behind the creation of the Universe. Now, you are at a stage where you will not be able to understand the purpose of this

creation. **Seek not information; seek transformation. That is the real growth of the inner-self that Swami offers.**”

After Swami gave this enlightening explanation, the young man was soothed and calmed down.

Ms. Diana Baskin 
USA

Excerpt from the book “Divine Lessons from Sathya Sai Baba” (2009)



Ms. Diana Baskin, an ardent devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for more than four decades, has authored two very inspirational books relating to her remarkable experiences and life transforming lessons learnt during her many close interactions with Baba. Her books titled ‘Divine Memories of Sathya Sai Baba’ and ‘Divine Lessons from Sathya Sai Baba’ have inspired many devotees around the world in their spiritual quest. In the words of Dr. John Hislop, well known and exemplary devotee of Baba, her compelling story and experiences are matchless and priceless in inspiring readers, for centuries to come.

When you know that thieves have broken into your neighbor’s house, you become extra cautious, and every night, before you retire, you examine every lock and bolt in the house. When you know that death has carried away a victim from the house next door, why do you not examine yourselves, whether you are equipped to meet it when it comes for you? Why do you immerse yourselves in distractions like building houses, piling bank balances, celebrating picnics, and contesting elections? Engage yourselves rather in things that will make you immortal and serve your best interests by service to the world. Seek your own reality. That is what a wise person should do.”

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba
March, 1965



Enter the Abode of Bliss

September 1, 1971

Dear Kriyananda: why fret and worry? Oh dear! None, none but your own self has an exclusive rule over the universe. Realization is not a thing to be achieved; you have not to do anything to gain God vision; you have simply to undo what you have already done in the way of forming dark cocoons of desires around you.

Dear! It is easy to drive people but it is hard to lead them. Do not place your centre outside your-self. This will make you fall. Place all your confidence in your-self; remaining in your centre nothing will shake you.

You are the embodiment of God. Fill yourselves with this thought of your almightiness, your majesty and your glory. Impurity is a mere superimposition under which the real nature of man has been hidden. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all else shall be added unto you. The refinement of an individual is measured by the yardstick of sense control.

What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose Love is one burning selflessness. What love will make every word tell like a thunderbolt: Awake, Awake, great souls! The world is burning in misery. Can you sleep? Open the gates of wisdom. Tear the veil of ignorance. Enter the abode of bliss. Rest in peace forever.

Kriyananda! God is with you, in you, around you. Be happy and pure. Don't worry!

With Love

Baba



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BHAGAVAN
SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

PRASHANTI NILAYAM, S. O.

1-9-71 (A. P.)

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With Love
Baba

LOVE IN ACTION



GREECE Sai Prema Witnesses Sai's Prema

After a few years of meeting online, officers and members of Zones 6 and 7 were delighted to meet in person on September 1 and 2, 2023. They gathered in the beautiful premises of Sai Prema, the spiritual center near Athens, Greece. **The meeting, with the theme, “Living in Sai and spreading His universal message,” successfully united 45 SSSIO members from 18 European countries to participate in an atmosphere of love, joy, and spiritual bliss.** Zone 8 participated with a recorded talk by the Zone Chair, Mr. Valery Voshchinin, and an inspiring and informative video of many spiritual, devotional, and service activities.

The days began with prayers, Vedic chants, and devotional singing. Prasanthi Council members Mr. Leonardo Gutter, Ms. Marianne Meyer, and Dr. Suresh Govind delivered inspiring speeches online, highlighting the excellent work being done by the SSSIO around the world. Other senior officers gave beautiful talks and testimonials in person and online. Some presentations were dedicated to **humanitarian relief, including aid offered to Ukraine, Belgium, France, and Syria.** Other presentations were dedicated to the importance of EnviroCare and practical ways to serve Mother Earth to mitigate the growing destructive effects of natural disasters. Particular importance was given to Regenerative Organic Agriculture, which has been practiced in the Sai Prema farm for many years and could be taught in larger communities.





ITALY

Twenty-five Years of Serving Love in Faenza

When 'Settesere,' a local newspaper in Faenza, Italy, recognized the local Sri Sathya Sai Center for its profound impact on the community, it spoke of the quality of service that this Center has been rendering to the city of 59,000 residents since its establishment.

During a severe flood in the Emilia Romagna region, the Sai Center in Faenza provided over 170 meals to young men assisting in clean-up efforts, displaying the spirit of kindness and support.

Since 1998, dedicated volunteers from the Center have been serving free vegetarian meals on Sundays at the canteen to nearly 80 people weekly, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2012, the Centre has collaborated with the Faenza Municipality to support underprivileged families by providing food, hygiene products, clothing, and other essential items. It has also been organizing community gatherings to promote interaction among children and adults from diverse backgrounds since 2014.

The canteen service not only benefits the community but also transforms the lives of its volunteers. It is a powerful example of love in action, helping one guest battling addiction to find a renewed purpose in helping others.



THAILAND

Love in Spontaneous Action

Love is both spontaneous and instantaneous in its expression, and so is service! On August 18, 2023, members of SSSIIO Thailand received an emergency call to urgently help 25 families suffering from a lack of food. The next day, two volunteers bought rice, oil, soya sauce, soap, milk, and sugar, and the following day, five devotees delivered them to needy families. The families were grateful and happy for the generous donations, and the volunteers appreciated the opportunity to serve.





UGANDA

Nurturing Children into Model Citizens

In poverty-stricken Uganda, 272 children from marginalized communities enrolled to study at the Sathya Sai School in 2023. The school, which focuses on imparting education based on the five human values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love, and Non-Violence, has 17 staff who lovingly guide and nurture these children to become model citizens. Sports and cultural events at the school celebrate the ancestral heritage and culture of the local community.

Every year, children and teachers participate in the Walk For Values event in the community, singing values-based songs and carrying placards with quotations to create awareness of the five fundamental human values. After the walk, the children work to improve their community by cleaning un-hygienic places as a token of selfless service. For instance, last year, they cleaned the Mawoito Health Center II, a neighboring community hospital, and donated sanitizers, liquid soaps, and cleaning materials.



Two attainments mark out the *sevak* (service volunteer), especially the Sathya Sai *sevak*—absence of conceit and presence of love. Service to those needing help makes you the comrade of all, irrespective of other considerations. Be looking all around you, all the time, even beyond the horizon of your allotted tasks for any extra chance to serve. An old man may be stranded in the hot sun. A paralytic may be casting his eyes for a chair. A child may be wailing for its parent. A mother may be clamouring for water to slake her thirst. Watch for these and run towards them with a smile and a word of cheer. It may be that someone has swooned or fainted. Get the doctor or take the patient to the dispensary, with loving care and with gentle alacrity, instilling courage and confidence. Let them go back to their places and say that not even their nearest kin could have dealt with that situation as lovingly and as intelligently as you did.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

February 21, 1971

For more stories of loving service by volunteers from around the world, please visit the Sri Sathya Sai Universe website:

<https://saiuniverse.sathyasai.org>



SSSIO ZONE 3



AUSTRALIA • FIJI • NEW ZEALAND • PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1980

John and Jeannie Peel started the first Sri Sathya Sai Center in Auckland, affiliated with the World Council of Sathya Sai Organizations

1980-90

Swami granted several interviews to devotees from New Zealand, guiding their growth and the organization. Prominent names include Ms. Kura Baker (respected elder of the Rangitane people), Madam E. Poyzer (renamed by Swami as Mata Betty, His 'New Zealand Ambassador'), and Mr. Richard Wallis.

1981

SSE classes were started. Three retreats and Akhanda Bhajans were held for the first time. Sathya Sai Newsletter of New Zealand was launched.

1983

Women's Wing of the organization was started with monthly planning, meetings, and reviews.

1987

New Zealand Sathya Sai National Organization was formed, including the Auckland Center and groups from Hamilton, Rotorua, Wellington, and Whangarei.

1993

Volunteers from the Sathya Sai Organization started teaching universal human values at Rongomai Primary School.

NEW ZEALAND



Swami with "Mata Betty"



New Zealand group visiting Puttaparthi



Retreat



Young Adults pilgrimage to Puttaparthi



1993

The First National Conference was held, after which it became an annual event.

1994

Young Adults went on a pilgrimage to Puttaparthi under the leadership of Bernard Guillemin after 18 months of *sadhana*, study, and *seva*. Swami blessed them with five interviews.

1997

Young Adults from New Zealand participated in the First World Youth Conference in Prasanthi Nilayam.

1998

Delegates from New Zealand participated in the First Overseas Convention of Chairpersons in Prasanthi Nilayam.



Rongomai School



2004

SSSIO New Zealand obtained a full childcare license for 40 children at Rongomai Sathya Sai Pre-School.

2006

New Zealand took the lead in organizing the first International Medical Camp in Fiji, which continues as an annual event.

A 5-page commentary of the medical camps was published in Sanathana Sarathi after which Australian devotees also join the medical camps annually, providing a wider coverage at a different time of the year.



Fiji Medical Camps

2009

Swami blessed the devotees from New Zealand to present a choir program, specially seated on the dais on either side of Him.

2011

Youth from New Zealand teamed up with those from the Czech Republic to present a musical program in Swami's divine presence at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Choir Program



2017

The National Conference with the theme "Sathya Sai Legacy And Your Role" was held with the participation of international speakers.

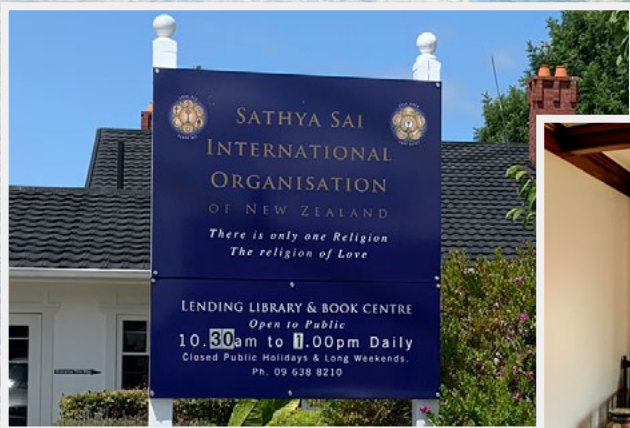


2020

The 'Sai Home' Center in Auckland was completely refurbished.



Go-Green Projects in New Zealand



'Sai Home' Center



Welcoming Sai into Greek Hearts and Homes

IT WAS IN JULY 1981 THAT SEVERAL OF US GATHERED at the home of Mary Tambourlou in Athens and felt that we should create an association named after Sathya Sai Baba. Since Swami had often granted interviews to Mary, she was requested to convey our proposal to Him. Mary agreed and left for India.

On July 25 or 26, 1981, Swami granted her an interview. Just as Mary started conveying the devotees' wish to establish a Sai Center in Athens, Swami interrupted and told her, "Yes, yes, you will be doing My work! **Don't be afraid. I will always be by your side to support your every effort. I will send you worthy devotees to help you.**"

Swami then assured her that He would send people who would help meet all financial needs to start a center. He instructed the devotees to gather for bhajans every Thursday at her home. And then came a wonderful promise, "After bhajans, I will come in your dream at night to bless and guide."

Mary sat at His feet, overwhelmed, with her palms joined in prayerful reverence. Unexpectedly, Swami grasped her

“Those who come should have faith in Swami and must show discipline by abiding by the rules of the organization”

folded palms with His divine hands and, looking lovingly at her, said, *“These two hands, I trust!”*

For two years after that, we followed Swami's instructions in Greece, and He kept His word of regularly guiding us through Mary's dreams.

Swami Dances in My Heart

When Swami granted her the second interview in July 1981, I, too, was called in along with my sister, Christina. He asked Mary to meet Sri Indulal Shah, the President of the Sathya Sai Organization at that time, to discuss the establishment of the organization in Greece. He also told me to help and support Mary.

Mary asked Him how she should select and accept people who wished to join the group. **He assured her He would instruct her in His own way and guide her from within.** Then, He asked us to write down our questions and that He would answer them when He saw us again.

After this private interview, we went back to the main room. Mary and Christina sat

at Swami's feet while I sat behind. Swami said, *“Come, sit closer to your sister.”* I went forward and sat near Him.

He asked me, *“How are you?”*

“Very well, Swami,” I answered.

“What do you want?”

Though I had often wondered what I should ask from Swami, my mind went blank! I just looked at Him with love and did not answer.

“Do you want Swami?” He asked.

“Yes, of course!” I answered.

As He spoke to an Indian lady, He suddenly moved His hand in a circular motion. *“Here it is! Yes, it's all gold, together with the chain,”* He said.

He showed it to everyone in the room. It was a rectangular gold pendant with Swami's face in enamel. He showed it to Mary and asked, *“Are you jealous?”*

“I am never jealous,” she replied.

“Jealousy is a very bad quality,” Swami observed.

“Come here,” He beckoned to me. I was stunned. Thoughts sped in my mind. “Is it possible? Is this for me? My God, thank You!”

I went closer to Him, and He passed it around my neck. “Swami is dancing in her heart,” He said to Mary.

Then, He gave packets of *Vibhuti* (sacred ash) to all of us as we left the room, enchanted by the divine Presence. Swami also lovingly permitted us to attend *bhajans* in the *bhajan* hall, seated behind His ‘sister,’ Venkamma.

Experiencing Sai Krishna at Brindavan

On August 7, 1981, the entire Greek group enjoyed morning *darshan* from the front row, and I got a chance to bow at His lotus feet. Even as we rejoiced, we got the news that Swami was suddenly leaving for His *ashram* in Whitefield. We panicked, quickly locked all our belongings in Verena’s kitchen, and started off in the car of an Indian friend hosting us in Bangalore.

The next morning, we went to the *ashram* for *darshan* and sat under the big tree in the pristine open grounds. Mary was seated in a chair. We saw Swami approach her and talk to her. Later, she told us that Swami enquired about us, and she told Him that Christina had pain in her legs. Swami advised, “Bring your friend with the girl and stay in My hostel.”



Mary with Swami

What joyous news! The next day, we moved to the hostel next to Baba’s College. That afternoon, Swami told Mary, “After *darshan*, the three of you come to My house for evening *satsang* and *bhajans*.”

And that was how we entered our God’s house! We were happy beyond our imagination, though I felt the other Greek devotees should also be granted that blessing.

On August 12, Swami called the three of us for another interview. He started speaking about Christina, “In *Puttaparthi*, she walked a lot to go to the conference, and her legs hurt. Now she is walking all the way from the hostel! The three of you come and stay at Swami’s house. You will always be close to Swami and will see Him ceaselessly!”

We lost our minds, overwhelmed by His love, compassion, and attention! Mary asked if we could be at His house for *bhajans* again in the afternoon, and He answered, “Why not? Come to My house every afternoon. You are My guests.”

He also promised to speak to us again!

The Perfect Host

We entered the small apartment right beside Swami's home. It was spartan and empty. Just then, six students suddenly appeared and asked us what we needed. Before we could ask for anything, they brought us beds, mattresses, pillows, sheets, blankets, a small table, and three chairs! As soon as we had arranged our things, they brought us food! I cried in gratitude, overcome by their love and caring. We were overwhelmed by Swami's love and generosity.

Swami hosted us for 24 whole days! Each day, early in the morning, a student would bring us a large bucket of hot water to shower. Then they would bring us 3-4 varieties of food in metal utensils for breakfast, hot tea, coffee, milk, and laundered white towels in a lovely basket! Similarly, they also brought us lunch and dinner. **Swami was the most perfect host in the world!**

Swami's cottage is a circular two-storied building surrounded by a beautiful garden of trees and well-groomed shrubs. Scattered in the garden were about a dozen small cottages He had given to devotees. We were in the three-storied building at the back of the garden, with many apartments. Swami's residence had a separate entrance from the main road and within the compound. But we had to go out onto the street to re-enter through the

main gate of the *ashram* for *darshan* and *bhajans*.

Swami would stop by every day and ask about Christina's health and whether we were happy. What could we say? One day, He told us, "*Don't go out on the street. Christina will get tired. Use My gate in the compound to go for darshan or bhajans.*"

A few days later, He asked Mary at the *darshan* line, "*Why do you come here?*"

Mary got confused, and she thought we might have made some mistake. I dared to ask, "Where should we have gone Swami?" "*To My house,*" He replied.

We remained speechless, astounded. This was a great blessing Swami bestowed on us. Every day, from 8:30 to 11:00 AM in the morning and from 4:30 to 6:30 PM in the evening, we would go to His house when *bhajans* were over. A long and wide corridor on the ground floor was divided into two parts lengthwise. On one side, Swami would sit during *bhajans* with students, teachers, doctors, foreign visitors, and men of His entourage in general, and on His left side sat the women in a semi-circular hall separated by a wall. A curtain on the open side of the room was drawn during the day, as Swami and other men would be present in the hall.

Swami would come and open the curtain many times a day and joke with the devotees. He asked us if we liked the food He

sent to the room. Since Christina and I liked spicy Indian food, we said, "Very nice, very nice."

Turning to Mary, Swami would say, "Very nice, very nice," while fanning His mouth with His hand, in a gesture that Mary used to make when the food was spicy!

Greece Gets His Love

On August 16, Swami called Mary for an interview and guided her on how to conduct the Sai Center. Then, on August 19, He called the whole Greek group of 16 people for an interview. Christina and I were sitting at the back of the interview room. Our beloved boundless sun entered the room, and the whole place lit up. Like the Emperor of the Universe, He sat on His chair, glanced at us lovingly, and spoke to me, saying, "Come with Christina and sit in the front."

Swami began by asking Michael in the group, "I will give you a good girl to marry. What do you want?"

"I want to be with Swami all my life."

Mary said, "He is a very good lad. He comes to my house and prepares everything for the prayers. He sings lovely bhajans."

"I know," said Swami.

Then He told us, "Come to my house to join the bhajans in the afternoon!" Our joy



Items Materialized by Swami

was so great that we didn't know how to contain it.

"Thank you, Swami, for honoring our homeland Greece so much."

Suddenly, Swami made a circular motion with His palm and said, "**Diamond, die mind, pure mind...**" Then He called me and put the diamond ring He had just created on my finger!

Soon, the doors opened, and the students came in for *bhajans*. Swami came and asked Michael, "Will you sing?" He nodded. Swami tapped him on the forehead and asked again, "Do you play the harmonium?"

"No, Swami."

The session began, and after four *bhajans*, Swami stopped the students and asked Michael to sit at His Feet. He exclaimed, "Greece." Full of tension, Michael started singing "*Gajavadana Gananatha*." After the second line, he gained speed, and we all sang together, with the students playing the instruments. Swami was happily

playing the cymbals, moving His head to the beat.

After the *bhajan*, Swami spoke for a while with the students and then asked Michael if he knew any other *bhajan*. So he sang, “*Par Karo, Udhar Karo.*” Swami asked him to continue, and he sang “*Rama Rama,*” and “*Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam.*” At the end of each *bhajan*, Swami would say, “*Very good,*” and speak to His students. We found out later that He praised Michael, saying to the Indian audience, “*You Indians have teachers and the scriptures, but you don’t care. You croak like frogs in the well, while foreigners come here, learn them, and use them. Look at this boy. He doesn’t know the language but see how well he sings!*”

All of us were thrilled and felt a bit proud, too.

Guidelines for His Organization

On September 2, 1981, Swami again blessed the three of us with an interview. He guided and advised us on issues regarding the

organization of the Center. He had already spoken to us about His intention of coming to Greece. He told Mary that her husband should come to Swami first, and then He would visit their house. Mary was committed to bringing her husband for Swami’s Birthday.

On September 3, there was another interview, and **He discussed His work again:** “***Those who come should have faith in Swami and must show discipline abiding by the rules of the organization.***” He characteristically said to Mary: “***Those who do not want to follow discipline, let them go—even if it is just you and Me that stay!***”

Returning to Athens in the autumn of 1981, Mary immersed herself in establishing the Sathya Sai Association, following Swami’s words. Thus, in November 1981, the first Sathya Sai Baba Association was founded in Greece with legal status, and it continues to grow with His love.

Mrs. Gina Kokkali 
GREECE



Mrs. Gina Kokkali was born in Greece and is a founding member of the SSSIO of Greece. She first heard about Swami from her Yoga teacher and visited Him in the early 1980s with her daughter. Mrs. Kokkali started the first Sathya Sai Center in Greece under the direct instructions of Bhagawan.

from the International Sai Young Adults

Get ready for an exhilarating celebration as we mark the 10th anniversary of our Serve the Planet subcommittee, coinciding with Sai Avatar Declaration Day! Join us for uplifting news from the recent SSSIO International Conference held in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. **Uncover the secret to real happiness with insights from the 5th European Young Adults (YAs) Camp.** And prepare yourselves for the exciting European Young Adults Meeting in February 2024. Plus, don't miss our dynamic InSAIde Scoop Podcast series, delving into the intriguing question—*“Does chasing material success make me less Satwic?”* with the dynamic Dr. Sathya Rao.

Tenth Anniversary of Serve the Planet

On the auspicious day of October 20, 2023, the 'Serve the Planet' subcommittee celebrated a decade of service to the environment. In commemoration of this significant milestone, the YAs released a guided meditation video, which serves as a powerful reminder of our profound connection with nature, particularly with the magnificent trees.



These noble beings of the plant kingdom continuously provide generous service, giving us life-sustaining oxygen while effectively absorbing the carbon dioxide we exhale. With every precious breath we take, let us awaken to the understanding that the Divinity present within the trees is but an extension of the divinity residing within all of us. We invite you to visit our social media channels to explore this enlightening video.

Furthermore, the subcommittee has fervently encouraged every devotee to embark on a journey of reverence by planting a tree. In this act, we are reminded that as we plant the seed, sapling, or tree, we are essentially planting the divine seed of Bhagawan Himself. **The process of planting a tree becomes an act of worship, a spiritual connection that reverberates with profound significance. By nurturing the seed, tending to the sapling, and caring for the tree, we simultaneously nurture and empower that divine essence within ourselves.** In this beautiful communion with nature, we find a deeper spiritual connection and unity with all creation.

AROUND THE WORLD

Fifth European Sai YA Camp

“Real happiness lies within you!” This was the theme for the 5th European Sai Young Adults Camp, held at Sai Prema, Athens, Greece, from August 19–27, 2023. The camp was a profound inner journey for 15 YAs from nine countries in zones 6 & 7 (South and North Europe). Though they came from diverse backgrounds, they were all bound together by the Universal love for Sai. Every morning and evening, the sweetness of prayers and bhajans united their hearts, making them feel as part of one Sai family.

Different workshops were held to help the YAs with practical tips and guiding principles to be happier in their everyday lives.

These workshops covered topics like business and communication as well. Discussions delved into finding a connection with God and making it a part of their daily routines. There were interactive sessions to show the difference between being unhappy and joyful with a liberal dose of bhajans and dancing, which made the YAs smile, feel good, and be happy.

The YAs learned about old buildings and the ideas of famous philosophers of yore in Athens. They visited ancient temples and historical places, admiring the ancient culture’s unique designs and stories. Every year, their visit to Athens ends with watching the sunset at the temple of Poseidon, the God of the sea, in Sounion. This beautiful view reminded them of God’s never-ending presence and boundless love.

Amidst the enchanting morning prayers, Suprabhatam, and soulful bhajans with the altar of Swami’s picture by the seaside, the YAs experienced unity in their shared devotion.

As the gathering concluded, Alphaville’s poignant lyrics of “Forever Young” left a lasting impression, reminding everyone of the timeless connection they had forged. This unity was not just external but an inner yearning to merge with the divine presence within, a commitment to live each moment to the fullest in gratitude for Swami’s blessings.



Young Adults Sessions at the SSSIO Sri Lanka International Conference

The Young Adults (YAs) sessions at the SSSIO International Conference in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, held from September 28 to October 1, 2023, under the theme “My Life—His Message,” served as a vibrant hub of engagement for Sai Young Adults from around the world. YAs played an integral role in the conference, infused with the Divine love of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Here are the highlights of these enlightening YA sessions:

1. Workshop on Physical Well-being

A team of 7 YAs led a workshop on physical well-being, focusing on four key aspects. These included the importance of regular exercise with basic workouts and their impact on health. Additionally, they instilled positive attitudes conducive to an integrated lifestyle, emphasized the significance of restful sleep and sleep habits, and drew insights from Swami’s teachings on healthy eating habits.

2. YA Exhibition

A dedicated group of 40 YAs orchestrated an impressive and creative exhibition featuring six booths showcasing Swami’s life and His teachings. The exhibition provided a treasure trove of information and offered engaging, fun games for visitors. **The exhibition themes ranged from the sacred story of Swami’s birth, His Avatarhood, and miracles to exploring the essence of the five human values, the interplay of mental and physical well-being, the bridge between science and spirituality, the relationship between organs and the seven spiritual centers of the body**



(*chakras*), creating a space for meditation, and the vision and worldwide mission of SSSIO.

3. YA Cultural Program

Eleven YAs presented a thought-provoking drama, “*Kurukshetra—A Mind at War.*” This drama depicted the eternal struggle between the forces of Good (*Dharma*) and Evil (*Adharma*). It delved into preparing the unsteady mind, drawing from Bhagawan’s teachings from the Bhagavad Gita for the impending battle against the forces of *Adharma*. The performance illuminated the hearts and minds of the audience, emphasizing the cultivation of divine qualities like love, compassion, humility, and reverence, as taught by Swami.

4. Workshop on Mental Wellbeing

Another team of 7 YAs facilitated a workshop on mental well-being, addressing topics such as consistency in one’s spiritual practice (*sadhana*), finding one’s purpose, prioritizing Swami’s mission, understanding financial literacy, and maintaining emotional equilibrium for a happier life.

5. YA Panel Discussion

Moderated by Ms. Nira Kanagasabai (Zone 4 Deputy YA Coordinator) and with esteemed panelists like Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya (International YA Advisor), Dr Kanichelvan Ravibalan (National YA Coordinator, Malaysia), and Dr. Thaneshkumar Jegatheeswaran (Former NYAC, Sri Lanka), the panel discussion revolved around managing emotions, fostering optimism, addressing the challenges faced by YAs, promoting unity among devotees, balancing spirituality in the digital age, studying Sai Literature, and participating in *Satsangs*. The audience actively engaged in dialogue with the panelists, making it a lively and productive discussion.

6. Sri Sathya Sai International Leadership (SSSILP) Convocation

The conference witnessed a momentous occasion with the graduation of 33 YAs from three SSSIO zones—Zone 3 (Australia), Zone 4 (Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia), and Zone 5 (Hong Kong). These YAs had completed the nine modules of the SSSILP



program, covering topics such as SSSIO Overview and Structure, Project Management, Challenges of YAs, Loving and Effective Communication, Unity in Diversity, and Team Dynamics.

7. YA Musical Offering

Seventy-one singers and twelve musicians from five countries (Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and India) joined together to create a mesmerizing and uplifting musical composition. They sang in languages spoken widely in Zone 4 and Zone 5 countries, beginning with the Ganesha Mantra and culminating with a heartwarming performance of “*I Will Follow Him*,” which received a standing ovation from the audience.

In conclusion, the conference rejuvenated the YAs, fostering stronger communication and interaction among countries in the Sai Universe, thus enriching the YA Program.

Participants embraced the profound wisdom that happiness lies in union with God and that prioritizing their relationship with Swami can harmonize their thoughts, words, and deeds, nurturing a deep and abiding love for Him.

A Divine Gift



Mr. Wilcent Krishnalim Indonesia

My experience at the inaugural function of the SSSIO International Conference in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, was nothing short of a divine gift. Swami graciously gave me the privilege of representing Indonesia, bearing our national flag with pride during the grand opening ceremony.

Throughout this enlightening conference, I immersed myself in absorbing a wealth of knowledge, encompassing various profound and captivating subjects, including financial wisdom, health insights, and invaluable mental well-being guidance. The beach-front prayer sessions, with the soothing waves as a backdrop, provided supreme peace and serenity.

The general atmosphere was amazing. Not only did I get to meet many wonderful and interesting people from different parts of the world, but I also got to interact with the Sevadals, who were very helpful and kind, from those who arranged transport for foreign delegates to those who served food and beverages at the canteen.

The inspiring talks and interviews by revered devotees like Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya were a divine blessing. From a Young Adult's perspective, his wonderful sense of humor and ability to connect with us YAs added a refreshing and relatable dimension to the conference's overall ambiance.

Overall, it has been an unforgettable experience that I wish all my fellow Indonesian brothers and sisters could experience.

InSAIde Scoop Podcast Series



Series 2022, Episode 1:

“Does chasing material success make me less Satwic?” featuring Dr. Sathya Rao

In this podcast episode, the host, Ms. Nira, and the guest, Dr. Sathya Rao, who specializes in family medicine, discussed the concept of being a “*Satwic* being” in modern society. They explored various aspects of *Satwic* living, including how it relates to personal branding and ambition.

The main topic of discussion revolved around the idea that YAs today often feel pressure to engage in personal branding and self-promotion to advance their careers. There is discomfort with this practice, stemming from values cultivated during the time spent as an SSSEHV student. Is the idea of being “*Satwic*” misunderstood? Is being too passionate or assertive “*Rajasic*?”

Dr. Sathya Rao offered his perspective on what it means to be a “*Satwic* being.” A *Satwic* being strives for unity in thought, words, and deeds, encompassing all aspects of the body, mind, and intellect. Bhagawan’s teachings of unity, purity, and divinity are the key principles of *Satwic* living.

Personal branding through promoting oneself on platforms like LinkedIn is not contrary to a *Satwic* lifestyle if it is truthful and serves a genuine purpose. The intention in such endeavors is of paramount importance.

The same principle holds while desiring material success, such as a high-paying

job or an expensive car. Dr. Sathya Rao explained that desires are not inherently harmful, depending on their intention.

The host further explored the idea of placing a ceiling on desires to achieve spiritual growth. Dr. Sathya Rao agreed with this concept but emphasized that it is a personal decision between an individual and Swami.

The conversation took an interesting turn when the host questioned whether success in the eyes of society, which often involved professional achievements, academic qualifications, and material possessions, could still be achieved while adhering to a *Satwic* lifestyle. Dr. Sathya Rao shared his personal journey, emphasizing that people practicing *Satwic* principles can be successful.

The discussion concluded by addressing the balance between the three *gunas* (qualities)—*Tamasic*, *Rajasic*, and *Satwic*. Dr. Sathya Rao emphasized the importance of maintaining equilibrium and explained how daily routines help individuals transition between these *gunas* to lead a balanced life.

You can listen to the full podcast here:

[InSAIde Scoop Episode 1-YouTube](#)



Invitation to SSSIO European Sai Young Adults Meeting

The European Sai Young Adults Meeting will take place in Prague, Czech Republic, from February 2-4, 2024, with the theme *“Don’t stop the flow.”*

The program will consist of inspiring workshops, devotional singing, prayers, short sightseeing of the center of Prague, and other activities that will help YAs grow spiritually. If you would like to participate, please send an email to euromeeting@sathyasai.org or Mr. Pavel Marčík at pavel.marcik@gmail.com.



Follow the @saiyoungadults accounts on social media

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

My Divine FRIEND



Shruthi D. | Group 1 | USA

Sathya Sai Baba, a man of grace,
With love and care, he showed the way,
Helping others, Come what may.

He taught us all, both young and old,
To be kind and loving, like pure gold.

In service to others, we can find,
The goodness and love, in every kind.

Naghul S. | Group 3 | Canada

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart where?
Down in my heart, Down in my heart
Down in my heart to stay ♥
And I'm so happy, so very happy
I've got the love of Jesus in my heart
And I'm happy, so very happy
I've got the love of Jesus in my heart
Down in my heart to stay

- Old Christian Song

Fill this bucket of love for Swami's Birthday



Tisha | Group 3 | Mauritius

My Constant Friend

To my most beloved Swami
In dreams, I yearn to see your face,
To touch your feet, embrace your grace.
Though you're the Lord of endless skies,
In your love, this sinner finds his prize.
You guide me through life's winding stream,
In your embrace, I find my dream.
A mother's love, a father's care,
In your presence, I'm safe and aware.
Through trials and sorrows, you remain,
My constant friend in joy and pain.
Though others left, you never did,

Be in your love, my heart, I bid.
So let your light within me shine,
Divine qualities, make them mine.
With each day's dawn, with every night,
In your love, I find my guiding light
I'll cry for you, with love so deep,
In your embrace, my soul will keep.
Through countless births, our love will bloom,
I scolded and insulted, my heart filled with pain,
Yet, you never let go, your love did sustain.
Through sins I committed, my soul lost its way,
You pulled me closer, night and day.
Your patience and grace, like a boundless sea,
Forgiving my faults, setting my spirit free

In your unwavering love, I found my redemption,
You never gave up, my eternal connection.
In humble plea, I seek your grace divine,
Forgive my sins, let your love forever shine.
I found my light.
So let me cry for you, my dearest friend,
In your love, my sorrows mend.
Through all my births, in each life's scheme,
In your embrace, I'll forever dream.

Shahana S. | Group 4 | Sri Lanka



Vaishnavi S. | Grade 7 | Mauritius



Mehvish S. | Grade 3 | Mauritius

Swami hold my hand
and show me the right
path. Be my friend and
guide me



Durga | Group 2 | Online SSE

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 for further details on scheduled events, local dates and timings.

Date of Online Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
December 16-17, 2023	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
December 24, 2023	Sunday	Christmas
February 17-18, 2024	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
February 24, 2024	Saturday	Chinese New Year



[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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- [Sri Sathya Sai Education](#)
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Let people say anything, be cool and calm. Do not enter into unnecessary arguments with them. It only breeds enmity. Speak softly and sweetly with a smiling face. That will silence the critic. Smile is the best answer to criticism. When Saint Paul went on accusing Jesus, He lovingly went up to him and gave a pleasing smile. The sweetness in the nectarine smile of Jesus transformed the poisonous heart of Saint Paul. Be always cheerful, even in times of adversities. Always put up a smiling face, never a castor-oil (long) face. "Happiness is union with God."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

December 25, 1998



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never