

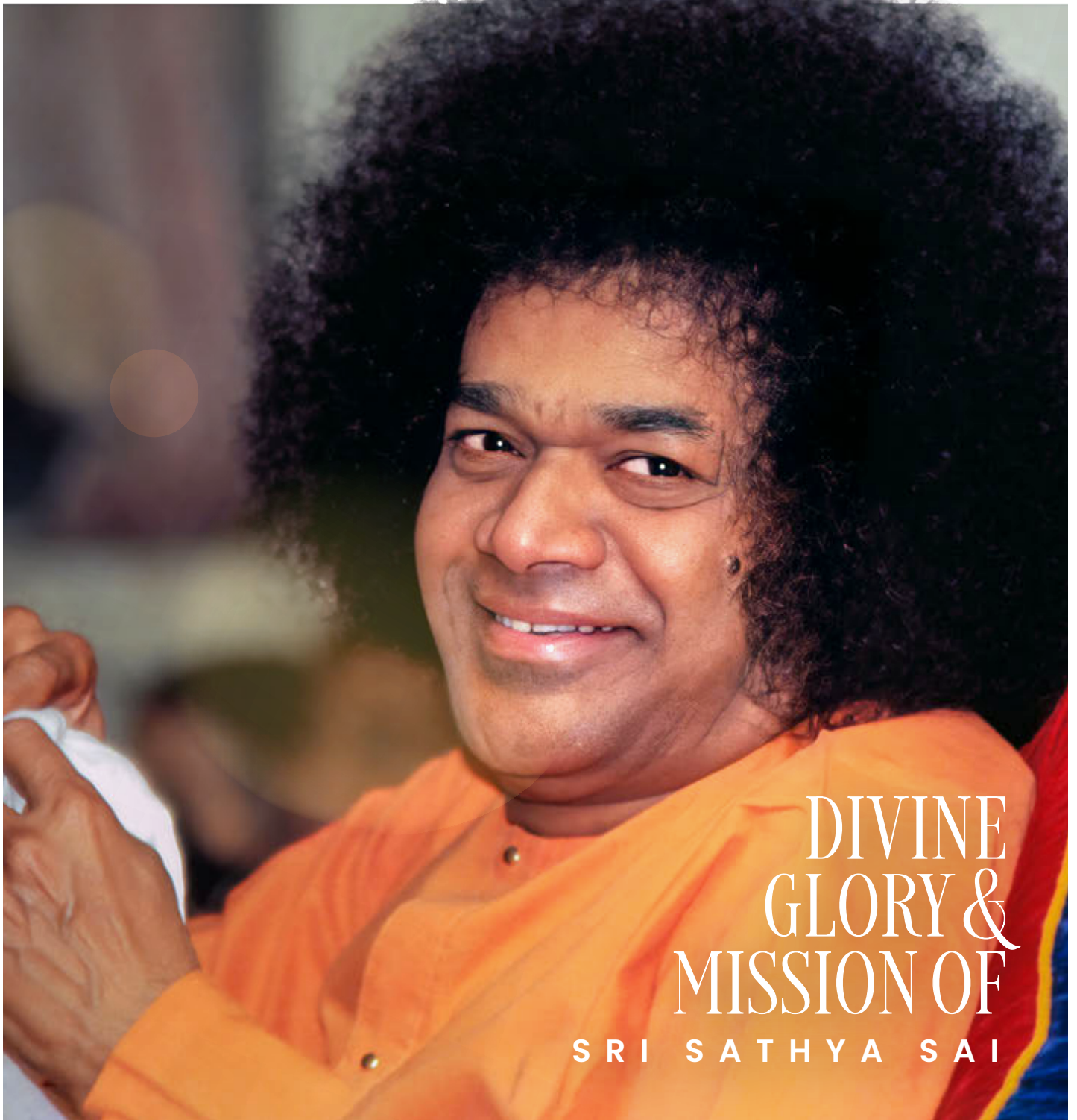


S A T H Y A S A I

THE ETERNAL COMPANION

MARCH 2022

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1



DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF

SRI SATHYA SAI



Everything comes from within you. Hence, you should always remain immersed in love. If you have love, you can achieve anything and perform any task. It is love that is responsible for the entire creation and its functioning in this world. There is no greater God than love. Love is God. Whatever you do without love is a futile exercise. Hence treasure love in your heart. Everybody will be attracted towards this love. It bestows everything on you. It is love that creates, sustains and destroys. When you look at the world with your physical eyes, you see diversity in creation. But, in fact, everything is love. It does not change. You should be filled with such love. If you follow this principle of love, it will give you the fruit of all the spiritual practices.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, December 15, 2007



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
ON THE OCCASION OF 2022 MAHA SHIVARATRI





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Editor: Dr. Narendranath Reddy
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Editorial

SATHYA SAI THE ETERNAL COMPANION

I am in you, with you, around you all the time. I am not separate from you. I am not an outsider, I am your Hridayavasi—Resident of your heart. I am your very own.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, May 27, 1995

God, who is beyond name, form, and attributes, in His infinite Love and compassion, incarnates in human form (Avatar) from time to time with a sweet name and a beautiful divine form for the redemption of humanity. He allures us with His divine *Leela* (play), filling us with bliss that is beyond description and comparison. God incarnated from time to time as Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and other Avatars. In our day and age, we are blessed and fortunate to be the contemporaries of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. **He is an incarnation of divine Love. His life, His ideals, His message, and His works can all be enshrined in one word – Love.** He exhorted that the purpose of human life is realization of our divine nature, which is pure love. Swami showed us that the path to attain Self-realization is Divine Love.

Sharing Swami's love and message is the duty of all spiritual seekers. The essence of Swami's teachings is the practice of the five human values: Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love, and Nonviolence – the undercurrent being Love.

Sathya Sai – The Incarnation of Love

On the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri, with love and gratitude, we offer this inaugural issue of a periodical publication, *Sathya Sai – The Eternal Companion* at the divine lotus feet of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. **Even after His Mahasamadhi, Swami continues to guide us, guard us, and shower His love on us. He was with us, is with us, and will be with us forever. He is verily the *Eternal Companion*.** Swami repeatedly assured us that He is always with us as Sai Consciousness – inside us, above us, below us, behind us, and around us – leading us to the ultimate goal of Self-realization.

Swami's teachings are the essence of all scriptures. In this publication, we share His message from His divine discourses and letters. Diving deep into Swami's teachings and practicing them will give peace, bliss, and enlightenment to one and all.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba's love and teachings have transformed the lives of millions of people around the world. There are many devotees,

young and old, who experienced His love and grace. We will share their personal experiences and the divine lessons learnt, which will inspire fellow pilgrims on the spiritual path.

Lord Sai, in His love and compassion, gave us the precious gift of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) as a platform to intensify our spiritual practices through the three paths of *Karma* (Selfless service), *Bhakti* (Devotion), and *Jnana* (Knowledge). He founded the Organization, nurtured it, and guided it over many decades and continues to guide us even today. In this issue, we will share the wonderful history of the SSSIO, USA from the 1960s. In future issues, we will explore the evolution and blossoming of the Organization in many countries around the world.

Swami recognized the unique spiritual potency and role of women, children, and Young Adults in the Sai spiritual movement. We will highlight their unique contributions, including special programs and initiatives.

Humanitarian Service – Love in Action

Swami advised that selfless service is love in action and the royal road to Self-realization. We will present some of the wonderful humanitarian service activities by SSSIO volunteers around the world in providing food, shelter, education, and health services to fellow brothers and sisters; and caring for the animals.

Swami also said that Nature is a gift from God and is the vesture of God. Our bounden duty, therefore, is to revere and serve

Nature. Taking His advice, the SSSIO has been conducting many 'Go-Green' initiatives, such as planting trees, cleaning natural habitats, conserving resources, reducing plastic usage, using clean energy, and many other inspiring projects. Some of these projects are reported in this publication.

In this inaugural issue, we will outline how the SSSIO is promoting the practice of universal human values at the individual, family, society, national, and international levels for peace and happiness in the world. The Education Committee, the Public Outreach Committee, and the Sri Sathya Sai Scriptural Studies Committee will present initiatives to intensify our efforts to disseminate Swami's message in every corner of the world – as per His divine command.

God's glory, His love, and His works are infinite and unfathomable. As the Taittiriya Upanishad (Vedic scripture) says, God and His glory are beyond comprehension of the mind and expression in words. This humble attempt to share His love, His glory and His mission is like trying to measure the ocean with a small cup. However, there is immense joy in this effort – as He is the *Anandaswarupa*, the embodiment of bliss.

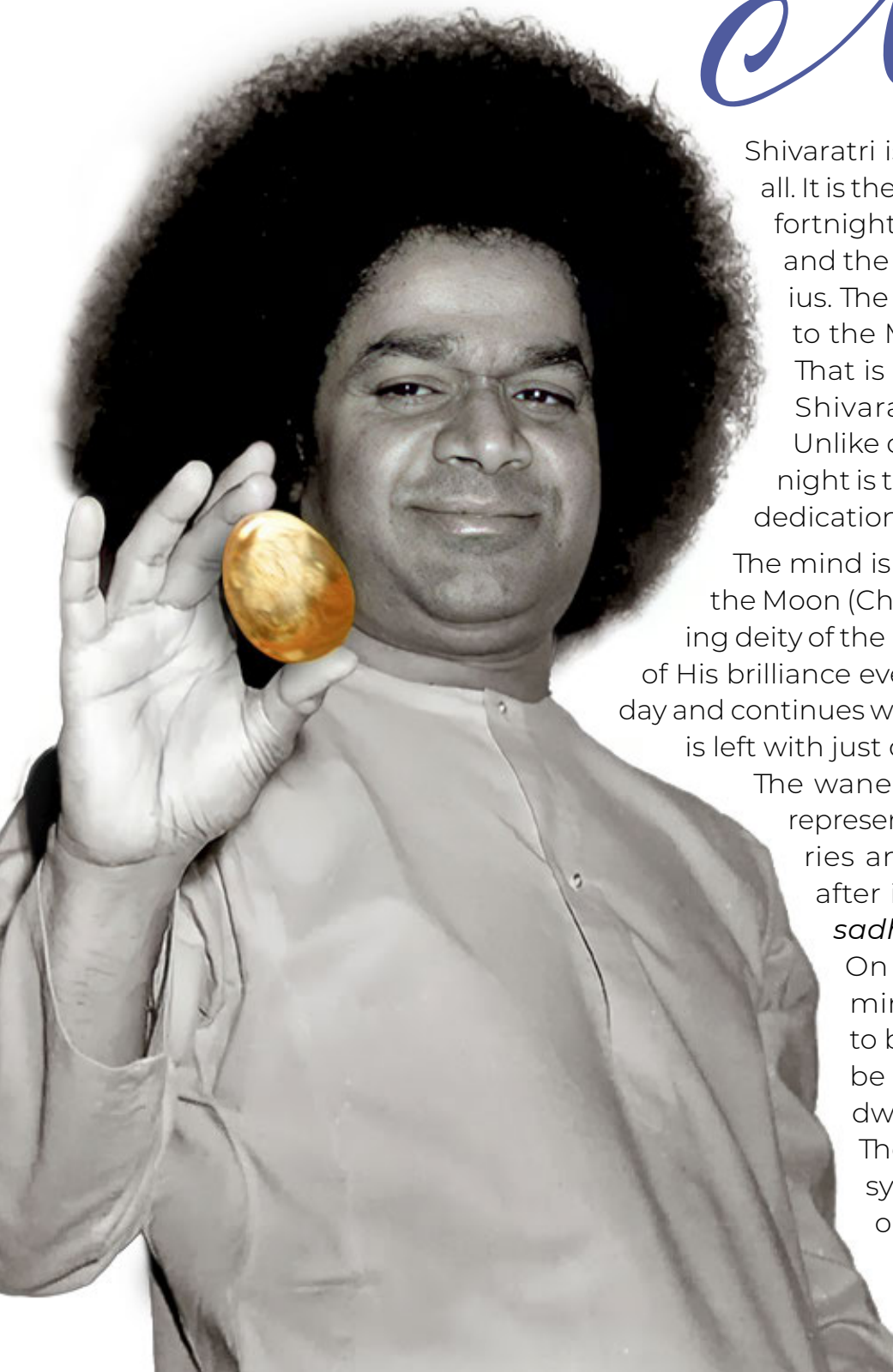
Key to Liberation

Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Geeta, Chapter 4, Sloka 9: **Anyone, who knows the divine nature and works of an Avatar in true light, will be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.** Let us pray to our Lord Sai for His Blessings and Grace so that we will attain liberation in this lifetime itself.

Jai Sai Ram.

Love All Serve All

Thoughts Shape Our Nature



Shivaratri is a very auspicious day for all. It is the fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight, when the Moon is waning and the Sun is in the sign of Aquarius. The festival is, however, related to the Moon rather than the Sun. That is the reason why it is called Shivaratri (the night of Shiva). Unlike other nights, this particular night is the night of consecration, of dedication, of illumination.

The mind is intimately associated with the Moon (Chandra), which is the presiding deity of the mind. It loses one sixteenth of His brilliance every day after the full-moon day and continues waning until on this night He is left with just one sixteenth of His power.

The waned moon may be taken to represent the mind with all its vagaries and waywardness reduced after it has been conquered by *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). On this night, there is just a minute part of the mind left to be conquered and that can be done by keeping vigil and dwelling on the Glory of God. The vigil that is prescribed is symbolic of the eternal vigil one has to observe, while the rite of fasting is symbolic of

“*Recitation of the Divine attributes only enables us to dwell on elevating ideals and make ourselves more and more closer to Divinity. We become what we contemplate on. By constant thinking, an ideal gets imprinted on our heart.*”

depriving the senses of the pleasures they crave for. The night-long *bhajan* (congregational singing of devotional songs) is significant of the lifelong consciousness of the Divine Presence that everyone should cultivate. The rites and vows laid down for Shivaratri being absent on other nights of the year, their observance on this day comes as a reminder that they are useful.

The Thoughts We Indulge in Shape Our Nature

There are three types of mental states in man – the wavering or scattered (*anekagratha*), the one-pointed (*ekagratha*) and the oblivious (*soonyavastha*). The first group, who allow their senses, mind and intelligence to wander without control, is a major group. So also is the third group, which comprises people who flit from one object to another, hop around from one thing to another in listless flippancy. For earning the concentration and one-pointedness characteristic of the second group, the festival of Shivaratri is very propitious. The *bhajans* and the ceaseless flow of *keerthanas* (devotional songs) and *namasmarana* (remembering God's name) on this occasion help in the attainment of one-pointedness. You must realize that *bhajans*, *namasmarana*, and *puja* (worship) are not for pleasing or propitiating God, but for our own spiritual progress. Frequently people flatter the rich and the powerful - especially when they are their

employers or are beholden to them for some precious help - in order to induce them to shower gifts on them. But God does not shower Grace on people because they sing His praises. Nor does He come down upon them because they do not deify Him. Recitation of the Divine attributes only enables us to dwell on elevating ideals and make ourselves more and more closer to Divinity. We become what we contemplate on. By constant thinking, an ideal gets imprinted on our heart. When we fix our thoughts all the time on the evil that others do, our mind gets polluted by the evil. When, on the contrary, we focus on the virtues or well-being of others, our mind is cleansed of wrong and entertains only good thoughts. No evil thought can penetrate the mind of a person wholly given to love and compassion. The thoughts we indulge in, shape our nature, along with others, they affect us too. For example, when a flash is used to photograph someone, his face is lit, but so too, to a certain extent, is the face of the photographer.

Effect of Thoughts on the Mind Cannot be Avoided

When a truckload of garbage passes by, you are affected by the bad smell even though you may be standing afar. Similarly, a thought may be momentary, it may be trivial, yet its effect on the mind cannot be avoided. It was because the ancient

sages knew this important truth that: they declared: “He who knows Brahman (Supreme Consciousness) verily becomes Brahman.” The only way to become Brahman is to be ever immersed in contemplation of Brahman. With a lump of salt on one’s tongue, how can one relish the sweetness of honey or fruits? With a lump of candy on the tongue, how can the taste of salt and savory be known? Immerse your mind in good thoughts and the world will be good. Soak it in bad thoughts and the world will be bad for you. So, recollect only good, think, plan and do only good, speak and act only good. Then, as a result you will emulate God, the source of all good. This is the message of Shivaratri.

Significance of Lord Shiva’s Cosmic Dance

According to numerology, the first three syllables of the word Shivaratri - *shi*, *va* and *ra* - connote the numbers 5, 4 and 2, and the fourth syllable, ‘*thri*’, means ‘three.’ 5, 4 and 2 make one whole, one composite picture of the eleven Rudras. Rudra means, “the one who makes man weep.” The eleven Rudras are: the five senses of perception, the five senses of action, and the mind. These, by leading man astray in pursuit of trivial and transitory pleasures, ruin him and make him weep. But the *Atman* (Supreme Consciousness) if it is sought and relied upon, sheds its rays on the eleven Rudras and makes them meaningful partners in the progress of man towards Self-realization. The rays from the *Atman* illumine the intelligence, the illumined intelligence alerts the mind and the alerted mind gets control of the senses, making the path clear for the person to proceed through knowledge to wisdom.

Another significance of Shivaratri is this: Shiva, or the *Paramapurusha* (the Supreme Being), in His desire to attract *prakrithi* (Mother Nature), engages Himself in the *thandava* (the Cosmic dance).

The dance is a divine plan to attract the material creation. Divine miracles like those of Lord Rama (He who pleases and delights) and Lord Krishna (He who attracts), are for drawing people to the Divine Presence. This is for the purpose of correcting or cleansing them, or for strengthening their faith and then leading them on to the *sadhana* (spiritual practice) of service so that they may dwell in divine ecstasy. This is *chamatkar* (miracle) resulting in *samskar* (transformation), leading to *paropakar* (helping others) and finally conferring *sakshatkar* (direct manifestation of Divinity). The *thandava* (the Cosmic dance) is so fast that fire emanates from Shiva’s body because of the heat generated by the movements. In order to cool Shiva and comfort him, Parvathi, His consort, places the Ganga (Holy River) on His head, makes the crescent Moon rest amidst the curls of His hair, applies cold sandalwood paste all over His body, wraps around the joints of His hands and feet cold-blooded snakes, and finally, being Herself the daughter of king of the Himalayas, she sits on His lap and becomes a part of Him. At this point, Shiva rises, and both *Purusha* (the Supreme Being) and *Prakrithi* (Mother Nature) dance together to the immense delight of the Gods and of all creation. According to the *Puranas* (ancient scriptures), this is what happens, on Shivaratri.

No Shortcuts on The Spiritual Path

The significance of the above description lies in pleasing the Lord and winning His Grace. What a pity that a day of such sanctifying significance is being celebrated through a routine of meaningless and even harmful pastimes. Since a vigil is laid down, some people spend the night in witnessing a series of films or in playing cards. Can a person, rolling in bed because he does not get sleep, claim that he is observing the vow of vigil? Can a stork, standing on

“You may worship a picture as God, but you should not posit God as a picture. Wood, stone or mud may be elevated to be Divine, but Divinity should not be limited and brought down to the level of wood, stone or mud.”

one foot on the bank of a stream to pick up a fish and gulp it, claim that it is practicing meditation? Can a person who refuses to eat his lunch because he has had a quarrel with his wife claim that he is observing a fast? There are no short cuts or tricks on the spiritual path.

A Story of Shivaratri Festival at Srisailam

Shivaratri is celebrated in all Shiva temples, Srisailam is a particularly famous temple of Shiva. There is an inspiring story told about this festival at Srisailam. At the foot of the Srisailam range of hills, there is a village where a boy of nine years old named Bala Ramanna attended the primary school. He learned from his friends at school that their sisters and brothers-in-law were coming to their homes in order to attend the Shivaratri celebrations on the Srisailam Hills. Ramanna came home and wanted that his mother should send his sister and brother-in-law too to the festival. His mother told him that he had no sister and, therefore, no brother-in-law. But he would not listen. He insisted that he must have a sister and a brother-in-law like his friends. So his mother just to quieten him, said, “You have a sister and a brother-in-law, but they are in the temple in the Srisailam. Their names are Bhramaramba and Mallikarjuna.” She gave him the names by which Shiva and His consort are known – Bhramaramba meaning ‘bee’ and Mallikarjuna

meaning the ‘white jasmine.’ These names are very apt, because the consort draws inspiration, instruction and wisdom from the Lord even as the bee draws its sustenance of sweet nectar from the jasmine flowers.

When he was told that his sister was in the temple on the Srisailam Hill, Ramanna insisted on going and inviting his sister and brother-in-law to come home and stay there for some time. He wanted to take some presents for them, but his mother said that they were far too rich and that younger members of the family should not present anything to the elders. The mother sent the boy with a neighbor who was going to the temple to see the festival. She gave him some money so that he could get presents for the boy. Ramanna hastened up the hill and rushed into the temple, crying “Sister...Brother-in-law,” and fell at the feet of the idol of Bhramaramba. He held the idol in embrace and began dragging it, wanting it to accompany him. He clasped the idol of Mallikarjuna and would not leave it. At last the priests in the temple drove him away thinking Ramanna was a mad boy.

Shiva and His Consort Appear Before Ramanna

Then in despair, he climbed a high rock and threatened to jump from that height unless his sister and brother-in-law came with him. Just then he heard a loud

voice from the temple “Brother-in-law!... Ramanna! Don’t jump! We are coming with you...” and soon Lord Shiva and His consort presented themselves before him and accompanied him to his cottage in the valley below. The mother and son were so overwhelmed with Divine Bliss that they merged in God and were seen no more. This inspiring story has added to the sanctity of the shrine of Bhramaramba and Mallikarjuna at Srisailam. Children in those days, and elders too, had innocent minds, simple hearts, and high ideals.

Nowadays cynicism and disbelief have become rampant. There is a wave of negligence and sloth sweeping which is pervasive. For one word uttered, people ascribe ten meanings to it and not one of them is correct. When a subject is mentioned, they start a series of arguments and counter arguments and in the dust that is raised, the truth is ignored. Their life is largely artificial and ideals shallow, so Divinity is beyond their reach. Ramanna had pure faith, so he was able to dedicate his Self to the Lord and reach the goal. You must always exalt low things to a higher level by infusing them with higher meaning. Ramanna believed the stone image to be God, he did not bring God down to the level of a stone image. You may worship a picture as God, but you should not posit God as a picture. Wood, stone or mud may be elevated to be Divine, but Divinity should not be limited and brought down to the level of wood, stone or mud.

Dual Attitude Must Be Given Up

Have high ideals. Strive to elevate yourselves. Strive for the Highest Goal, God. Whatever the obstacle or opposition, do not be disheartened. Give up the animal qualities in you, establish yourselves in

human virtues and proceed boldly towards the achievements, of Divinity.

The devotion of devotees wavers every minute. When counsel is offered by Swamy to follow discipline in a stern way, they go one way. When Swami offers counsel with Love, they go another way. This type of wavering nature is comparable to that of a monkey. With such wavering attitudes of the mind (*chittha*), devotees would not be able to progress in spiritual path and earn Divine Grace even if they try lifelong. Having acquired this great opportunity of the Divine Himself being amidst you, if you do not take advantage of the opportunity, it is unfortunate. From time immemorial, spiritual aspirants have been craving and pining for the grace of God and to get a vision of God. Today when you are getting it without much effort, it is unfortunate that you are not using this opportunity, neglecting it, and not realizing the value of it.

I am hoping that at least from today onwards, you will make efforts to recognize the truth, sacredness and divinity, practice the teachings, and redeem your lives. I bless you as such and conclude the Divine Discourse. This is a sacred Shivaratri, an auspicious night. From now onwards, there should not be any inauspicious feelings entering the heart. **Contemplate on the auspiciousness of this sacred Shivaratri day and strive to merge in the embodiment of auspiciousness.** On this day, I shall pardon all your mistakes committed knowingly or unknowingly. With immense bliss, I confer Grace on you so that you may sanctify your hearts.

– Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
Maha Shivaratri Discourse,
March 7, 1978

Faith & Surrender

Dr. Valluvan Jeevanandam is a Professor of Surgery and Chief, Cardiac Surgery, and Director, Heart and Vascular Center at the University of Chicago Medicine. Dr. Jeevanandam has performed over 1,500 heart transplants.

Dr. Jeevanandam was one of the physician leaders of the transplant team that made history in December 2018 after performing two triple-organ (heart-liver-kidney) transplants. There have only been 25 such procedures done in the world, and he has performed the heart transplantation operation for all 13 done at the University of Chicago. His personal and professional life has been transformed by our beloved Lord, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who affectionately called him His 'coconut tree' heart transplant surgeon. He is an exemplary devotee with great faith in Swami.



MY TRANSFORMATION FROM 'EGO AND CONTROL' TO 'FAITH AND SURRENDER'

started in 1995 from my first interview with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Little did I know that this would be the start of a long journey that will continue through the rest of my life. I asked permission from Swami to volunteer at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences (SSSIHMS) in Puttaparthi. Swami held my hand, looked lovingly into my eyes, and said "You don't need to ask for permission. This is your home. You can operate here anytime." The SSSIHMS is a true miracle. Not only was it built within one year to the highest world standards with the best equipment, but it is also verily a Temple of Compassion and Caring. Patients get completely free medical care and in a setting of peace and tranquility. I might have volunteered my time and services, but in the final analysis I was the person who got

the most benefit from working there. Take one step towards Swami and He will take a hundred steps towards you. That could not be truer for me, from my experience there. It was at SSSIHMS that Swami started to slowly peel away the layers of my Ego. Let me narrate an incident that started the process.

Lesson of Giving Priority to God

During the early days at SSSIHMS, the infrastructure and surgical expertise was still being developed so that we would come together as a team and perform surgeries. Currently, the team in SSSIHMS is so well trained that the senior surgeons act more in an educational and advisory role. I had come with my team and the first question people asked is how many surgeries will be done by me during the visit and compare it to the number performed by the surgeon who preceded me. I was very competitive and was fixated on treating as many patients as possible.

One day, the nurse informed me that all cases were to be stopped at 2 PM so that the staff could attend Swami's discourse and possibly also get interviews with Swami. Instead of embracing this great opportunity, I was upset that I might not reach my set quota and fail to do more procedures than the previous surgeon. Despite pleas from the staff, I told them to let my assistant and I show them how to do a procedure so fast that we could maintain our quota, and yet go to see Swami. But that day, there was every possible delay during the surgery, although the patient did come out fine. It took so long to complete the procedure,

that unfortunately the team was deprived of the opportunity to listen to the discourse and have darshan of Swami. As was customary in those days, we attended the morning darshan. Swami blessed us with His presence and engaged in a brief conversations and enquired about the patients. What precious moments and what a blessing! But the sad thing is that I never appreciated the honor and rarity of being able to communicate with the Living God. When Swami came near me, He asked me about the

patient. I told Him that we finished the procedure, the surgery went well, and the patient is doing fine. He looked at me mischievously and probed "What happened?" and continued "Not the expected half the time but the procedure took twice as long." Swami thus revealed His omnipresence – He knows everything. Swami's words struck

me like lightning. My Ego had gotten in the way of common sense and patient safety, and I had denied the team the opportunity to meet with Swami. That lesson has stuck with me to this day. Whenever I pride myself that I am better than someone else and let my ego raise its ugly head, I can hear Swami's voice as if I were still in the veranda for His Darshan.

Lesson in Patience – Thy Will be Done

Our pathway to Faith and Surrender can take many twists and turns. I am a slow learner, so Swami had to work hard to show me the right path – not only through my own experiences but by living through the experiences of others. Mohan was an IT professional who relocated to Puttaparthi to take care of his mother. She had been

**Whenever I pride myself
that I am better than
someone else and let
my ego raise its ugly
head, I can hear Swami's
voice as if I were still
in the veranda for His
Darshan.**

diagnosed with a leak in her mitral valve which caused increased amount of fluid in the lungs and shortness of breath. She was advised to have the valve fixed. Due to her advanced age and infirmity, the surgeons at SSSIHMS suggested that she have her surgery at a private hospital in Bangalore. Mohan asked Swami about this during multiple interviews and the reply was always the same – “wait.” But his mother was getting sicker, and the doctors were telling him to get her operated on elsewhere, because she did not meet criteria for surgery at SSSIHMS, and Swami kept telling him to wait. This continued for several months.

On the Thursday evening Darshan during my visit (I was going to leave on Friday evening), Swami came to Mohan and asked him why he was not taking care of his mother and getting her operated on. Swami told him that I was there for one more day and to get me to do the surgery. Mohan was elated. He could finally get treatment for his sick mother. But this is where Swami allows us to be part of His maya. Mohan ran back to the hospital and told the staff to prepare his mother for surgery. But since she had been denied care there, the staff would not proceed without permission from the Director or from Swami Himself. Unfortunately, darshan was over and Swami had retired to his residence. Mohan was frantic. The Director or senior members of the hospital could not contact Swami. Mohan had to get Swami to directly give permission. Mohan wrote a letter to Swami and rushed to get it to Him before He went up to His bedroom. He wanted to give a picture of his mother to Swami so He could identify his mother but there was no time. Mohan rushed to Swami's residence and was met by one of the students. To his utter dismay, Swami had just gone up to His bedroom and there was no way to get Him the letter. The student reiterated

that Swami never came down after retiring to the bedroom. Mohan was devastated. He gave the student the letter hoping for a miracle – namely, Swami coming down. Lo and behold, to everyone's amazement, Swami did come down and asked for the letter. He opened the letter and materialized the photo of Mohan's mother that Mohan did not have time to include with the letter. Then Swami showed the picture to the student attendant and gave permission to proceed with the surgery.

Mohan rushed back to the hospital so the staff could prepare for surgery the next day. They called me and asked if I would operate – without seeing the patient or the imaging studies and records, I accepted. Who are we to question or doubt the Divine Command? The next day during morning Darshan, I asked Swami about the case. He blessed me and told me to do whatever I thought was correct professionally. He then held my hand, blessed me and told me to proceed.

The staff at the hospital were concerned especially since the patient was elderly, malnourished, and weak. They had never operated on or handled such an elderly patient. They were afraid that she would never make it out of the hospital even with successful surgery because of poor chances for recovery. With Swami's grace we proceeded. Mitral valve disorders can be either repaired or replaced. It is preferable to repair them which allows for the patient's native valve to remain in place and not have the complications of a replacement. But repair is much more complicated and sometimes may not be durable. The staff was concerned that repair would take longer time and if the leakage recurred, a second operation could not be done. I was in a quandary – do I replace or repair the valve? Then I could hear Swami's voice – “Do what is correct?” I proceeded to repair the valve, all the time surrendering to Swami, and making it operation by Him. The repair

procedure was successful (should I have ever doubted that it would?) and the patient was stable.

During Darshan, I asked Swami if I had done the correct procedure. With a blissful smile, Swami said that He was with me in the operating room, that I was His instrument, and that He would take care of her. And He did exactly that – the patient made a quick recovery and enjoyed many years of health and joy, blessed by Swami. Mohan and his mother had a lot of faith in Swami and surrendered to His will – and He rewarded their faith in the best way and in His own timeframe. My takeaway message is that one should work tirelessly and earnestly – but the ultimate outcome is determined by God. For me, that is the true meaning of faith and surrender.

Implicit Obedience to Divine Command

Swami often communicates with suggestions, symbolisms and indirect advice. There was only one time in my life that Swami was very direct – and He had to be, so that I could follow it implicitly and surrender to His Will.

I was the Director of the Heart Transplant Program at Temple University, Pennsylvania, USA. Swami would affectionately call me His 'coconut tree surgeon' because of my tall stature. At Temple, we had the largest heart transplant program in the USA. We had a talented team and received several prestigious research awards for our innovative work. At least in my mind, we set the standard for a good heart transplant program. In February of 1998 I was to travel to SSSIHMS for doing cardiac surgery. I got a call from the Chairman at the University of Chicago (UC) to come and look at a job opportunity to be the Chief of not only heart

transplantation but of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery. He called me on a Monday and as I was to travel to India on Friday, I told him that a trip to Chicago was out of the question. It just so happened that my cases for Tuesday were cancelled and at the last minute I went to UC for a one-day visit. UC is one of

the most prestigious academic centers in the world. But at that time their cardiac surgery program was in disarray. The transplant program barely existed. I had absolutely no desire to

move from the largest renowned program at Temple and start from scratch at Chicago.

I flew to India and got fully engaged in working at the SSSIHMS. The big difference was that my trip was a little later in the year, and Swami had already left for Brindavan, and so I missed my precious daily Darshan of Swami. I was wondering if I would ever be able to see Swami during the trip. Swami knows your innermost thoughts. He sent word for me to come to Brindavan and that He would see me on Saturday morning. With much excitement and anxiety, I went to Brindavan and entered the interview room. Swami was holding a group interview with several families and motioned for us to have a private family interview. On the way to the adjoining room, He held my hand and said "You are going to Chicago. I set up a job for you there." I was stunned since I had no desire to pursue that position. My mother and father who were with me asked Swami many questions. I must have asked Swami multiple times about the Chicago job and no matter how hard I tried to change His mind, His answer was the same: Go to Chicago. I pleaded with Swami, explaining that the program in Temple was the best. He gently corrected me – quantity does not mean quality.

**Swami might not be
physically present, but
He is omnipresent and
as pervasive as ever.**

They offered me more money and a promotion to stay at Temple. But, in the end, putting faith in Swami's words, I went to Chicago despite getting less salary and joining a far underdeveloped program. My stay at UC posed many challenges. The program was good but not spectacular. Every time I would get job opportunities elsewhere, I would ask Swami and His answer was always the same – "who told you to go to Chicago?" I often felt however, that the move to Chicago was better for my family although it certainly did not appear to be better professionally, for me. I accepted the situation as Swami's Will.

The situation at UC stated to change only after fourteen long years. The Cardiology Head of Transplant left the position to join our main competitor. Then the program was placed on probation since our volume and results deteriorated. We had always accepted very high risk cases and also accepted a certain number of poor outcomes to help a larger population of patients who did not have any alternatives. I began to change my philosophy on how to lead the program. We had been very focused on surgery and did not interact as much with other disciplines of medicine. The hospital invested in medical components to augment surgery and also invested in Advanced Practice Nurses and coordinators, and an entirely new infrastructure. We wrote and developed protocols, so that patient care was better standardized. We had to accept less complicated cases until the foundation was solidified. Then slowly we were able once again to do surgery on high-risk patients considered inoperable by other major medical centers. We became the leaders in helping Jehovah's Witnesses who due to their religious beliefs do not accept any blood transfusions. We became the leaders in the incredibly complex triple organ transplant procedures (heart-liver-kidney) done in a single operation from the same donor. Our volumes increased.

Much of this happened because I set aside my ego and allowed a magnificent team of professionals to blossom. In September of 2021, I finally handed the Surgical Directorship of the program to a very senior highly talented Surgeon.

The Best Heart Transplant Program

I compared our program to others in the country, at the end of my leadership. Data from all transplants is reported by the SRTR (Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients) which is a database of all organs transplanted in the USA and supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. When we looked at the July 2021 report, to our amazement, the UC Heart Transplant program had the best survival rate of any program in the country. In a historic first, we also had the shortest wait times and the highest percentage of underserved minority community patients in the country – truly a miracle! Never could anyone conceive of that combination being achieved. We were the best program in the country – de facto, the world, since such comprehensive databases only exists in the USA. Swami had sent me to Chicago for a reason – "Quality over Quantity." It was achieved over 23 years; and as Swami would have desired, it happened just in time for the final report with me as the Surgical Director. My faith in Swami had kept me in Chicago. With hard work and more importantly, change in personal behavior and respect towards others, Swami had performed a miracle. Historically, it was the best transplant program in the world. It is really Swami's program, where He challenged me to face obstacles – and showed me the way to overcome challenges and conquer them.

Swami is Eternal and Omnipresent

The experiences I have narrated happened during the blessed physical presence of Swami. Without that close and personal guidance, I might have never found the

strength to surrender and place my life in His hands. My faith in His words never wavered in the ensuing years after He left the physical form. We can all communicate with Swami – during prayers, through dreams, through signs or incidences that we must pay attention to. Swami might not be physically present, but He is omnipresent and as pervasive as ever. Let us be patient with Swami, for patience with the Divine is Faith. Let us listen to Him and follow His

teachings and guidance with conviction. When we surrender to Him, we will realize that nothing will happen without His Divine Will. Our journey may not be as planned – but He will give us what we need to progress towards the goal of Self-realization.

Jai Sai Ram.

Dr. Valluvan Jeevanandam,
USA





BE **EVER READY for** GOD

Mr. John Behner came to Sri Sathya Sai Baba in 1979. He has served in the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization as Center President, Central Council President, Zone Chairman of Latin America, and Co-Chairman, Humanitarian Relief Committee – to name a few. He is the President of the Sai Foundation of El Salvador since 1989. He was a successful businessman owning the first frozen food company in Central America and worked for 20 years as the executive in-charge of a country of a multinational food company.

IN 1989, I HAD TRAVELED TO INDIA

for just three weeks to see Swami, and my wife stayed back to look after our home and the Sai Center, which was operating in our home, where 75 to 100 devotees joined the *satsang* every week. When I arrived in India on February 28, Swami was staying in the Whitefield Ashram. One evening, I was invited to the coveted Trayee session with the students at Swami's residence, and to my surprise Swami asked me to speak to the students. This caught me by surprise, but also taught me an important lesson—always be ready for the divine call. In my shock, I even failed to ask Swami to help me to speak, and I ended up probably giving the worst talk of my life.

Love My Uncertainty

When it was time to return to El Salvador, I called the airline to reconfirm my reservation, and the lady replied saying, "what reservation?" She said that my name is not on the list of passengers, and there are no more seats available on that flight – so she asked me whether I wanted to be on a waiting list. Totally confused, I told her I would call back later. When I went for darshan in the after-

One evening, Swami told a story about how Avatars don't always tell their devotees what to do but communicate by a sign. The devotee must be sufficiently astute to recognize and understand the message.

noon, Swami asked me when I was leaving, and I told him that my reservation was cancelled, and I did not know exactly when I could get a reservation.

Swami gave me that jovial look when he is playing a joke on you, and said, "I know, Swami will tell you when to leave." I thought "Fine, I will take a few more days of vacation." I called my employer in New York and informed them that I would be returning a few days late. This was a multinational company, and I was the manager for their operation in El Salvador with over 350 employees.

After a few days, I learned that Swami was going to Chennai. So, I asked Swami if I should join, hoping that He would tell me to go home. But He said, "Yes, come to Chennai." So, I went along with many other devotees to Chennai, where we had darshan at Abbotsbury and Sundaram. The *nagasankirtan* had over 10,000 devotees participating, and special traffic sevadals were helping the local police to keep the crowd in order. After a few days we returned to Whitefield, and Swami still gave me no word about my return date. So, I sent a telegram to the company saying that I was still delayed.

Next, I heard that Swami was going to Kodaikanal. So again, I asked Swami if I should come to Kodaikanal, thinking this time he would surely tell me to go home. By this time, it was already April, and I was having a difficult time explaining to my boss in New York that God would tell me when I could return. However, Swami said

"Yes, come to Kodaikanal." I had been to Kodaikanal twice before, in 1984 and 1985, but this time it was totally a different experience.

Living with God

I was invited into Swami's home at night to hear Swami's wonderful stories and listen to students' satsangs every night. We were in Kodaikanal for 6 weeks. Because the bhajan hall was being expanded, we worked after morning darshan everyday excavating the mountainside to make room for the larger hall. Swami would stop by occasionally and supervise the work, then give packages of milkshake to everyone. I had five interviews with Him, and on every occasion, I would ask Swami about my returning home. He would respond only with an evasive answer, such as, "I will see you tomorrow," or "Wait," or He would adroitly change the subject. It was already May when our stay in Kodaikanal came to an end, and it was time to return to Whitefield via Ooty.

I was still wondering what Swami had in mind for me. Does He want me to stay and teach business management in His University? Or does He want me to quit my job in this "fool company" (I worked for a large multinational food company) as He called it? A few days after we reached Whitefield, I received a telegram from the company informing me that I could stay in India as long as I wanted, because I no longer had a job. It was already June 1. I tried to show the wire to Swami, but by now our warm relationship seems to have

dissolved and I no longer seemed to exist for Him! However, I still had the privilege of attending the Trayee sessions at night. One evening, Swami told a story about how Avatars don't always tell their devotees what to do but communicate by a sign. The devotee must be sufficiently astute to recognize and understand the message.

A Sign from God

After the session adjourned, I was standing outside Swami's door praying, hoping that He would give me a sign, and help me be sufficiently astute to recognize the sign and interpret it correctly. When I opened my eyes, there was a 5-paisa coin near my feet. I picked it up, not because of its value, but because I was thinking what a strange thing to find a coin outside of Swami's door where the *sevadals* regularly sweep the floors. I was tossing the coin in the air while walking back to my room, and all of a sudden it hit me that the number 5 on the coin could be an indication of the date of my departure. The 5th of June was coming up. I called the airline next morning and was told that there was a long waiting list for the flight on the 5th of June. As it turned out, on 5th of June Swami was leaving for Prasanthi Nilayam, and all the students had lined up on either side of Swami's car as He left. I too got in the line. When Swami came up to me, I asked him if I should leave that day. He did not answer immediately but turned to give *padnamaskar* to the other line of students. Then I heard Him say, "Yes, yes, yes." One does not know if He is answering your question or talking with someone else, but He did say it thrice.

I decided to take a chance and went to the domestic airport where I boarded the local flight to Delhi. With my visa expired and my non-endorsable 45-day international ticket in hand, would I have the same luck? The lady at the reservation desk gave us

the bad news that the flight was oversold. After all the passengers boarded the flight, there were about 25 of us standing around and wait-listed. Then another lady at the counter announced that all the waiting passengers will be put on an Air India flight to Schiphol Airport, in Amsterdam, which was the next connecting location. Thus, my non-endorsable, expired ticket got me to Europe, and then on to the ongoing connecting flight home. I called my boss from Europe and told him that I was on my way home, and I will drop by the office on Monday to collect my final paycheck. He just said OK and said that we will talk on Monday.

Shower of Divine Grace

When I arrived at the office on Monday, the employees were all happy to see me. There was no replacement sitting at my desk. I looked at the financial results while I was away and noticed that they were even better than when I left. I called my boss and asked what he wanted me to do. He said that they have been discussing my case in New York (headquarters) and they decided to give me a 25% salary increase! Incredulously, I asked, "How much?" I thought I had misunderstood him. He further said that I will receive pay for the full time I was away in India, as paid vacation. Perplexed, I said "What?" Then he explained that when the company analyzed the present results compared to the previous year, it clearly showed another year of excellent performance. Therefore, I would also receive a bonus. It was literally raining money on me, or shall I say God's Grace? Such were the showers of divine grace from Swami!

Jai Sai Ram.

Mr. John Behner,
El Salvador

A black and white portrait of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a man with dark, curly hair, wearing a white shawl and a garland of flowers, smiling slightly.

EPIC EPISTLE

Sri Sathya Sai Baba wrote the following letter on May 25, 1947, at the age of 20, in response to a letter from his brother who was concerned with what He was doing. This letter disclosed His mission.

My dear one! I received the communication that you wrote and sent. I found in it the surging floods of your devotion and affection, with the undercurrents of doubts and anxiety. Let Me tell you that it is impossible to plumb the hearts and discover the natures of *jnanis*, *yogis*, ascetics, saints, sages and the like.

People are endowed with a variety of characteristics and mental attitudes, so each one judges according to his own angle, talks and argues in the light of his own nature. But we have to stick to our own right path, our own wisdom and our own resolution without getting affected by popular appraisal. As the proverb says, it is only the fruit-laden tree that receives the shower of stones from passers-by. Likewise, where there is good, there has to be bad; and where there is bad, there has to be good. That is the nature of this world.

The people have to be pitied rather than condemned. They do not know. They have no patience to judge aright. They are too full of lust, anger and conceit to see clearly and know fully. So, they write all manner of things. If they only knew, they would not talk or write like that. We, too, should not attach any value to such comments and take them to heart, as you seem to do. Truth will certainly triumph someday. Untruth can never win. Untruth might appear to overpower truth but its victory will fade away and truth will establish itself.

It is not the way of the great to swell when people offer worship and to shrink when people scoff. As a matter of fact, no sacred text lays down rules to regulate the lives of the great, prescribing habits and attitudes that they must adopt. They themselves know the path they must tread; their wisdom regulates and makes their acts holy. Self-reliance and beneficial activity –

“*I do not belong to any place. I am not attached to any name. I have no ‘mine’ or ‘thine.’*”

these two are their special marks. They may also be engaged in the promotion of the welfare of devotees and in allotting them the fruits of their actions. Why should you be affected by tangle and worry as long as I am adhering to these two? After all, praise and blame of the populace do not touch the *Atma*, the reality; they can touch only the outer physical frame.

I have a ‘task’: to foster all mankind and ensure for all of them lives full of bliss (*ananda*). **I have a ‘vow’:** to lead all who stray away from the straight path again into goodness and save them. **I am attached to a ‘work’ that I love:** to remove the sufferings of the poor and grant them what they lack. **I have a ‘reason to be proud,’** for I rescue all who worship and adore me, aright. **I have my definition of ‘devotion’:** I expect those devoted to me have to treat joy and grief, gain and loss, with equal fortitude. This means that I will never give up those who attach themselves to me.

When I am thus engaged in my beneficial task, how can my name be tarnished, as you apprehend? I would advise you not to heed such absurd talk. *Mahatmas* do not acquire greatness through someone calling them so; they do not become small when someone calls them small. Only those low ones who revel in opium and marijuana but claim to be unexcelled *yogis*, only those who quote scriptural texts to justify their gourmandism and pride, only those who are dry-as-dust scholars exulting in their casuistry and argumentative skill – only those will be moved by praise or blame.

You must have read life stories of saints and divine personages. In those books, you must have read of even worse falsehoods and more heinous imputations cast against them. This is the lot of *mahatmas* everywhere, at all times. Why then do you take these things so much to heart? Have you not heard of dogs that howl at the stars? How long can they go on? Authenticity will win.

I will not give up my mission or my determination. I know I will carry them out. I treat honour and dishonour, praise and blame that may be the consequence, with equal equanimity. Internally, I am unconcerned. I act but in the outer world; I talk and move about for the sake of the outer world and for announcing my coming to the people. Else, I have no concern even with these.

I do not belong to any place. I am not attached to any name. I have no “mine” or “thine.” I answer whatever the name you use. I go wherever I am taken. This is My very first vow. I have not disclosed this to anyone so far. For me, the world is something afar, apart. I act and move only for the sake of mankind. No one can comprehend my glory, whoever he is, whatever his method of inquiry, however long his attempt.

You can yourself see the full glory in the coming years. Devotees must have patience and forbearance.

I am not concerned nor am I anxious that these facts should be known. I have no need to write these words; I wrote them because I felt you would be pained if I do not reply.

Thus, your Baba.

Let God Work Through You

To Hislop

- I. The best method of spreading Vedanta Philosophy is to live it; there is no other royal road.
- II. Let God work through you, and there will be no more duty. Let God shine forth, let God show himself. Live God. Eat God. Drink God, breath God. Realise the truth and the other things will take care of themselves.
- III. True Love expands the self, attachment contracts it.
- IV. Heaven is within you. Seek happiness not in the object of senses, realise that happiness is within yourself.
- V. There is no rose without a thorn. Unmixed happiness is not to be found in this material world, all happiness is in Self Supreme.
- VI. In the lowest worm as well as in the highest human being the same divine nature is present. The worm is the lower form in which the divinity has been more overshadowed by maya. That is the highest form in which it has been least overshadowed. Behind everything the same divinity is existing and out of this comes the basis of morality.

With Blessings.

Baba



PHONE: KOTHA CHERUVU 30
WHITEFIELD 33

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

PRASHANTI NILAYAM (A.P.)

Date _____

10 Heslop

- I The best method of spreading vedanta Philosophy is to live it; There is no other royal Road.
- II Let God work Through you. and There will be no more duty. ~~to~~ Let God shine forth, Let God show himself, live God. Eat God. Drink God, breathe God. realise the truth and the other things will take ^{CARE OF} ~~themselves~~ ^{not}
- III True Love expands the self, attachment contracts it.
- IV Heaven is within you. seek happiness ^{not} in the ^{object of} senses, realise that happiness is within your self.
- V There is no rose without a thorn unmixed happiness is not to be found in this material world, all happiness ~~is~~ is in self Supreme.



VI in the lowest worm as well as in the highest human being the same divine nature is present. The worm is the lower form in which the divinity has been more over shadowed by maya. That is the highest form in which it has been least over shadowed behind every thing the same divinity is existing and out of this comes the basis of monality.

With Blessings
Baba.



Shiva Shakthi



Baba was brought down the winding stairs into the private room on the ground floor, because He insisted on giving darshan to the thousands of devotees who had come on that auspicious day. He had had an attack of cerebral thrombosis and was in bed for eight days from the morning of Saturday, June 29, to the evening of July 6. His left hand, leg, and eye were affected, His right hand had also slight palsy, the speech was indistinct, and the face was twitching. He was placed on the silver chair in the prayer hall, and His hand and leg were adjusted in proper position.

As soon as He was seated, He communicated the following message, which was interpreted and announced by Professor Kasturi (Swami's biographer and translator).

“*I must tell you about Myself, about something I haven’t disclosed so far, something that I was keeping to Myself for the past 37 years. The time has come to reveal it.*”

“This is not Swami’s illness; this is an illness that Swami has taken on in order to save someone. Swami has no illnesses, nor will He get ill at any time. You must all be happy; that alone will make Swami happy. If you grieve, Swami will not be happy. Your joy is Swami’s food.”

(Then, Baba signaled to Professor Kasturi to speak. After his short speech was over, Swami wanted the microphone to be brought. Swami started speaking and asked, “*Vinipisthundaa!*”, can you hear? Swami kept asking repeatedly, but His voice was feeble and so indistinct that no one could make out what Swami was saying.

He then signaled for water. When it was brought, He sprinkled a little with His shaking right hand on the paralysis stricken left hand and left leg. He stroked His left hand with the right. And then, He used both hands to stroke His left leg, and that touch was enough to cure it. He cured the disease in a trice! He started to speak! It was the same musical voice.)

Swami sang a line of a lyric – *Dikku lenivan-iki devude gathi* (For those who have no one, God is the sole refuge).

That is exactly the reason I had to take on the paralysis disease of a devotee who was destined to get ill. He was to suffer this dire ailment, as well as the four heart attacks that accompanied it, and he would not have survived. So, as per the dictates of My duty (*dharma*) to protect devotees (*bhak-*

ta-samrakshana), I had to rescue him. Of course, this is not the first time that I have taken on such illnesses of persons whom I wanted to save. Even in the previous *shareeram* (body) at Shirdi, I had this responsibility. The suffering that you saw would have been too much for this particular devotee, so I had to save him by going through the ordeal Myself. **This is My play (*leela*), My nature. It is part of the task for which I have come, protection of devotees (*bhakta-samrakshana*).**

People who were near Me during the episode last week requested Me to divulge the name of the person whom I had saved. I told them that they would get angry at that person and might say that “Swami had to undergo much pain and suffering in order to save just one person.” Then, they replied that they would honour the person because of the extraordinary devotion that persuaded Swami to run to his rescue that Saturday morning.

Some people probed further asking whether it was this person or that, giving names of those who had attacks of paralysis, especially on the left side! This is even more amusing, because when I save a person I save him completely. I do not wait until he gets the disease, and I do not leave him a fraction of a disease so that he may be identified later. It all looks funny to Me, the guesses and surmises that you make.

Even in Shirdi, Dada Saheb, Nadaram, Balawanth, all were saved by Baba taking on their afflictions. Balawanth was destined to

get plague, but the illness was taken over by Baba and the boy saved.

This is perhaps the longest period when I kept the devotees anxious and worried. That was because the devotee was also destined to have heart attacks later on; and, he had to be saved from those as well. Then, there is another reason why the 8-day period had to be observed. I shall tell you why. This means I must tell you about Myself, about something I haven't disclosed so far, something that I was keeping to Myself for the past 37 years. The time has come to reveal it. This is a sacred day, and so I shall tell you.

You know I declared on the very day when I decided to disclose My identity, My mission, and My advent that I belonged to the Apasthamba Suthra and the Bharadwaja lineage (*gothra*). This Bharadwaja was a great sage, who studied the Vedas for a full one hundred years. Finding that the Vedas were endless (*anantha*), he did penance (*tapas*) for prolonging life. From Indra, he got two extensions of a century each. Even then, the Vedas could not be completed. So, he asked Indra again for another hundred years. Indra showed him three huge mountain ranges and said, "What, you have learned in three centuries from only three handfuls from out of those three mountain ranges that make up the Vedas. So, give up the attempt for the exhaustive study of the Vedas. Perform a ritual (*yaga*) instead, which I shall teach you; that will give you the fruit of Vedic study, full and complete."

Bharadwaja decided to perform the ritual; Indra taught him how to do it; all preparations were completed. The sage wanted Shakthi to preside over and bless the ritual. So, he went to Kailasa, but the time was not opportune for presenting his petition. Shiva and Shakthi were engaged in a competitive dance, trying to find out who could dance longer. Eight days passed

thus, before Shakthi noticed Bharadwaja standing out in the cold. She just cast a smile at him and continued to dance along with Shiva! The sage mistook the smile as a cynical refusal to notice him, so he turned his back on Kailasa and started to descend. To his dismay, he found his left leg, hand, and eye afflicted by a stroke. Shiva saw him fall, came up to him, and consoled him. Bharadwaja was told that Shakthi had indeed blessed him and his ritual. Then, Shiva revived him and cured him, sprinkling water from the Kamandalu. Both Shiva and Shakthi granted the sage (*rishi*) boons: and promised to attend the ritual.

After the ritual was over, they were so pleased that they conferred even more boons on the sage. Shiva said that they would take human form and be born in the Bharadwaja lineage, thrice: Shiva alone as Shirdi Sai Baba, Shiva and Shakthi together at Puttaparthi as Sathya Sai Baba, and finally Shakthi alone as Prema Sai. Then, Shiva remembered the illness that had suddenly come upon Bharadwaja at Kailasa on the eighth day of waiting in the cold on the ice. He gave another assurance. "As reparation for the neglect that Shakthi showed towards you at Kailasa for eight days, this Shakthi will suffer the stroke for eight days when we both take birth as Sathya Sai and, on the eighth day, I shall relieve her from all signs of the disease by sprinkling water, just as I did at Kailasa to cure your illness."


It was the fulfilment of this prophecy that you have witnessed today, just now. This had to happen, this stroke and the eventual divine cure. The assurance given in the *Tretha Yuga* (era) had to be honoured. I must tell you now that the poor, forlorn devotee who would have suffered the stroke, and which instead I took over was a convenient narrative to fulfil the prophecy. You see, a railway engine is not made available to haul just one car; when a number

of cars are ready, then the engine is put into motion. So too, in this divine play the disease had to be gone through, the devotee had to be saved, the assurance had to be carried out, the mystery had to be cleared; the Divinity had to be more clearly declared by this grand miracle. All these were accomplished by this single incident.

Let Me tell you one more thing; **nothing can impede or halt the work of the Avatar.** When I was upstairs all these days, some people were foolishly saying, “It is all over with Sai Baba,” and they turned away many who were coming to Puttaparthi! Some said I was in samadhi, as if I were a spiritual

aspirant (*sadhaka*)! Some feared I was the victim of black magic, as if anything can affect Me! **The splendour of this Avatar will go on increasing, day by day.** Formerly, when the Govardhanagiri (a mountain) was raised aloft by the little boy Krishna, the cowherd maids and boys (*gopis* and *gopalas*) realised that Krishna was the Lord. Now, not one Govardhanagiri but a whole range will be lifted, you will see! Have patience, have faith.

– Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
Guru Poornima Discourse
July 6, 1963



Editor's note. This discourse is important for two primary reasons. First, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba illustrated His omnipotent powers by curing himself, in a few seconds and before thousands of people, of paralysis from a severe stroke that He had endured for eight days; and explained the significance and reasoning behind this historic event. Second, for the first time Swami revealed about His next incarnation, Prema Sai, as part of the triune incarnation of Sai.



SSSIO-USA

Highlights from the history of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization in the United States of America

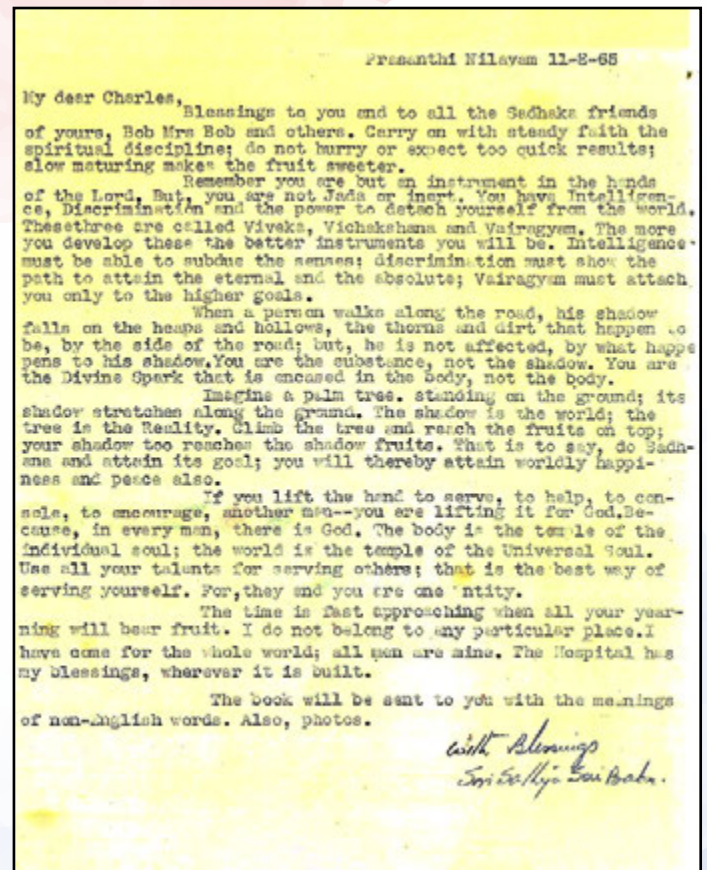
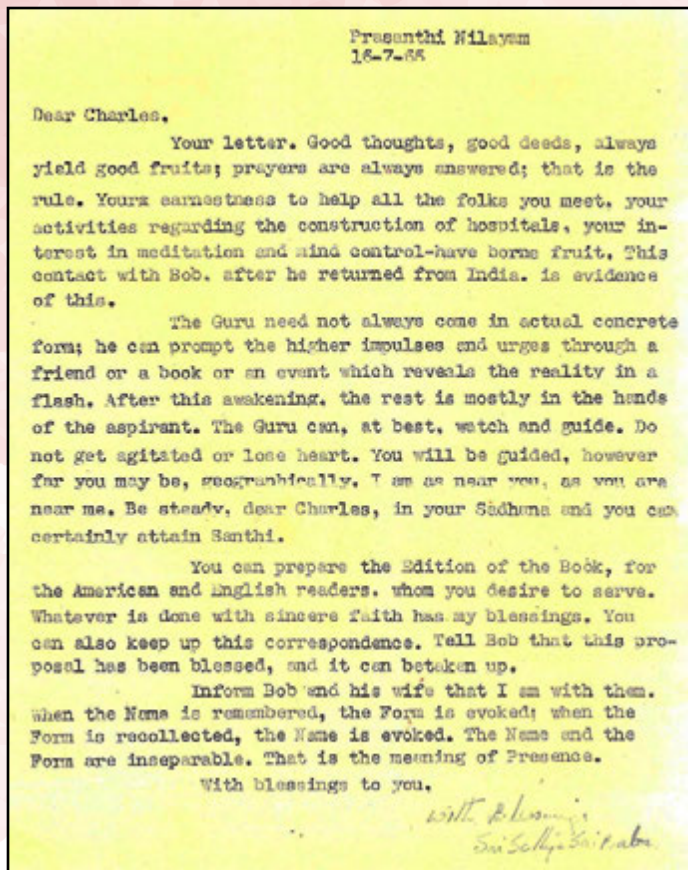
1960s

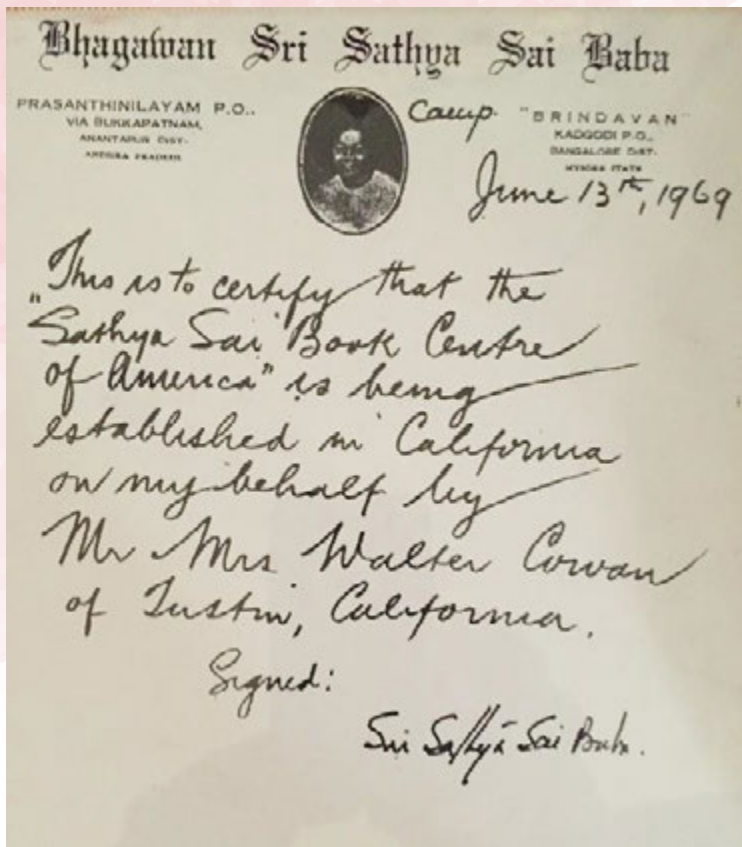
Swami had inspired many people in the West. Markel Brooks and Bob Raymer visited Baba in 1962. They held weekly meetings in Los Angeles, which were attended by people interested in various spiritual teachers and philosophies.



1. Jack Hislop
2. Janet & Richard Bock
3. Indra Devi
4. Sathya Sai Center Hollywood, 1969

Despite having never met Sri Sathya Sai Baba in person, Charles Penn received letters from Swami, and was personally invited to the First World Conference.





In a June 1969 meeting with Swami, Walter and Elsie Cowan asked if they could start a book center to publish and make Sai literature available for the growing number of devotees. Swami wrote a letter giving His permission



1970s

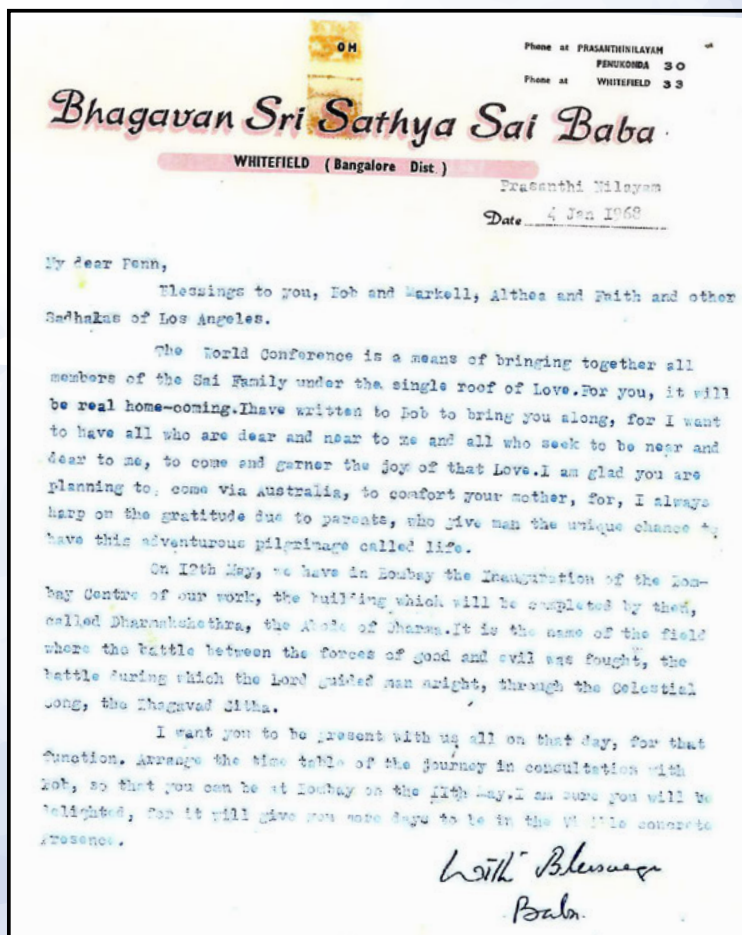
The Sri Sathya Sai Central Council of America was founded at the Second World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations, held at Prasanthi Nilayam (India) in November 1975. The purpose of the Central Committee was to act as an advisory and controlling board to oversee the activities of the Sathya Sai Baba centers in the United States. The guidelines for the centers were given by Baba for the benefit of the American devotees, so they may strive to fulfill the ideals set before them.

First officers of the Sathya Sai Central council of America, as chosen by Swami:

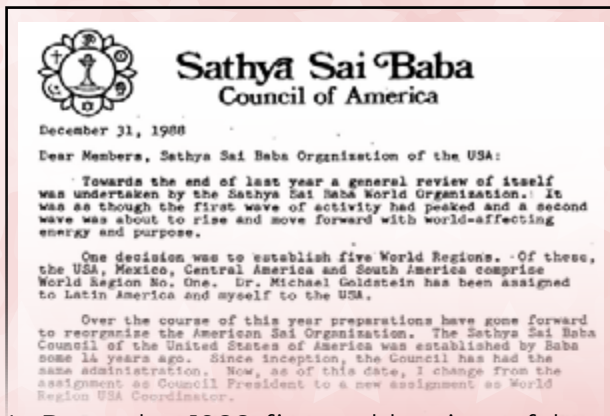
John Hislop
 President

Richard Bayer
 Vice President

Sidney Krystal
 Secretary



1980s



In December 1988, five world regions of the international organization were established, with John Hislop as the coordinator for World Region USA

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Foundation became a legal entity in 1983, and SSEHV lessons and curriculum were prepared



Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA started sharing information with American devotees

1990s

With His blessings, international Public Meetings were conducted in North and South America to share the life, message and works of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the organization

Young Adults in USA and Canada established Young Adults groups

Over 200 educators were certified in SSEHV workshops conducted in numerous states

International Sathya Sai Organization website, sathyasai.org, was launched in 1996, Dr. David Gries from New York is the Webmaster



2000s

SSSIO Medical Conference was held in October 2009

More than 400 medical professionals from many countries participated

Conference highlights included speakers, exhibition, workshops, panelists, and devotional singing

The second SSSIO Medical Conference was held in 2017



Sai Women's Conference was held in 2019, attended by more than 250 women.

LOVE IN ACTION



KAZAKHSTAN Serving the Environment

On July 4, 2021, more than 40 SSSIO volunteers from Kazakhstan participated in an event titled, Day of Purity in three cities, with focus on the environment. In one city, the volunteers gathered at a riverbank and cleaned debris, glass, and plastic on the riverbank, collecting 15 bags of garbage. Later, the participants spent the afternoon singing devotional songs, solving riddles, and taking part in a gymnastics competition. In another city, SSSIO volunteers prepared a flowerbed and cleaned the streets, removing 12 bags of garbage. They also distributed toys, diapers,



albums, and stationery, along with two tables and three benches to destitute people living in barracks. The Day of Purity event was a great success as everyone appreciated the need to keep the planet clean and green.



PANAMA Caring for the Elderly

On August 8, 2021, SSSIO volunteers from the Sai Group of Chiriquí, a province on the western coast of Panama, spread love and joy by serving the residents of Doña Carmen de Barroso Nursing Home in the community of Sortova. The volunteers distributed personal hygiene items, clothing, footwear, food, medicine, and blankets to the elderly residents of the Nursing Home.





GERMANY

Humanitarian Relief after Floods

On July 14, 2021, torrential rain fell on western Germany in a matter of just 22 hours. As a result, the Ahr and Erft rivers overflowed, causing catastrophic floods. At least 180 people lost their lives and several villages and cities suffered extensive damages, with disruption of water, electricity, and natural gas services.

The Humanitarian Relief Committee of the SSSIO of Germany immediately set up a planning team. Within a few days, food, water, and basic necessities were distributed in the village of Antweiler.

Shortly thereafter, SSSIO members served two more villages on the banks of the river Ahr. Because water levels inside homes were as high as 1.5–5 meters, a wide variety of tools and equipment were required to remove debris and repair the damage. Additionally,



people who were forced out of their homes and seeking temporary shelter required further assistance.

Over several weeks, the SSSIO of Germany distributed tools, equipment, food, clothing, and household items to 60 families in Insul and Altenburg, amongst other places. Additionally, eight building dryers were donated to the villages of Antweiler for removing moisture from buildings. The relief work is expected to continue



KENYA

Serving Needy Women

In commemoration of Guru Poornima, SSSIO volunteers, including young adults, served 120 needy women at the Sathya Sai School, Kisaju on July 24, 2021. Upon arrival at the school, the women were served hot tea and snacks and a traditional hot meal. The volunteers then distributed food hampers as well as hygiene and health kits. The food hampers contained maize flour, wheat flour, rice, sugar, cooking oil, salt, and tea leaves. In addition, 300 soaps, African curry powder,



biscuits, menthol lozenges and creams were given to the ladies.



MALAYSIA

Serving Flood Victims in Kuala Lumpur

During the monsoon season in Malaysia, there was a heavy downpour on December 18, 2021, which continued unabated for 36 hours. The rains caused extensive flooding in the Klang Valley, Kuala Lumpur, with water levels rising to dangerous levels. The most affected was the Langat area, which consists of several villages, including Dusun Tua, where four houses were washed away, and 15 homes were severely damaged.

The SSSIO of Malaysia quickly sprang into action and mobilized resources. Its medical professionals established medical camps and went from home to home to offer medical assessments, first aid, screening for chronic diseases, and counselling and preventive care. Patients suffering from diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic diseases were given medicines based on records obtained from local clinics and hospitals, as their own records were lost in the floods.

SSSIO volunteers offered food, water, and basic necessities to the victims, as well as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, pillows, mattresses, blankets, mats, and other essential items. The SSSIO also donated household appliances, including electric kettles, rice cookers, blenders, and clothes driers to make the residents more comfortable.

Thankfully, the flood water receded on the third day. Subsequently, SSSIO volunteers assisted in removing mud and soil from homes and local communal drains.

The SSSIO also gave school uniforms, school bags, shoes and stationeries to school children affected by the floods as they prepared for the new school year.





SRI LANKA

Shelter for a Needy Family

The Northern Region of the SSSIO of Sri Lanka identified a disadvantaged family of four in need of shelter in the Puloly Northwest area of Point Pedro in Jaffna district. They were receiving limited support from the government, supplemented by monthly dry ration packs from the SSSIO. Volunteers from the local Sri Sathya Sai Centre procured a house with land, repaired the building, and gave it to the family. The land surrounding the house was used for home gardening, to earn a living from selling the produce. The house is also situated close to the children's school.



The project provided both shelter and regular income for the family. A housewarming ceremony was organized on July 24, 2021, the auspicious day of Guru Poornima.



GHANA

Training the Needy to Make Soap

As part of the Guru Poornima celebrations, on July 24, 2021, the SSSIO of Ghana organized a training session in making soap, for the needy. Thirteen people were selected to participate, on the basis of need. They travelled more than 270 km to Tema Chief's Palace to learn how to prepare solid and liquid soap, and detergents. These products could be used in their own households or sold commercially, in response to the



global pandemic. In addition, the attendees received necessary materials to start their own business in making soap.

See more stories of loving service by volunteers from around the world at the Sri Sathya Sai Universe website:

- <https://saiuniverse.sathyasai.org>



Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare

The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba emphasized the importance of a sound body, mind and spirit for a healthy living. The [SSSIO webpage](#) on Healthy Living has articles on healthcare that are updated frequently. Swami taught about the importance of six principles of healthcare that would constitute a Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare.

The six principles are:

1. **State-of-the-art healthcare:** State-of-the-art healthcare is made available to all people. The importance of this principle is stated in this [Discourse](#).
2. **Free healthcare:** Economic considerations do not prevent anyone from receiving the highest benefits of healthcare. The importance of this principle is stated in this [Discourse](#).
3. **Compassionate healthcare:** Healthcare is delivered with love and compassion. The importance of this principle is stated in this [Discourse](#).
4. **Comprehensive healthcare:** Healthcare includes treatment of the body, mind, and spirit. The importance of this principle is stated in this [Discourse](#).
5. **Preventive healthcare:** Prevention should be the primary focus. The importance of this principle is stated in this [Discourse](#).
6. **Timely delivery of healthcare:** Healthcare is delivered as soon as a need is identified without delay. The importance of this principle is stated in this [Discourse](#).

These key principles of Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare are based on the five human values of truth (*sathya*), love (*prema*), right conduct (*dharma*), peace (*shanti*) and non-violence (*ahimsa*). This section presents three articles which cover the topics of Body-Mind-Spirit relationship, integration of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values in health care and current updates on COVID-19.

In the future issues we will present more articles on Sathya Sai Ideal Health Care.

International Medical Committee,
SSSIO



Healthy Living

<https://sathyasai.org/healthy-living>



Health, Happiness & Wellbeing: The Mind, Body and Spirit Connection

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

advises us: “Life is a game play it, Life is a challenge, meet it”. This came verily true during the unprecedented challenges that humankind faced during this pandemic. Humanity continues to undergo enormous suffering due to COVID-19, including loss of life, financial stress, job loss, interpersonal issues, physical, and mental health afflictions, all of which have turned our lives topsy turvy. While on one hand, the pandemic has been a reality check, that in this *bhavasagara* (ocean of life) one has to endure and experience both good and bad with equanimity, it has also reemphasized the need to understand and comprehend human grief and suffering not just through a scientific lens but also through a spiritual lens.

The concept of mind, body, and spirit is a beautiful way of understanding ourselves as “whole people” holistically. “A whole person” has personal and professional lives that interconnect – mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions that not only influence the two spheres but also interact with one other.

Mind, Body, Spirit – when in balance or in equilibrium results in good health, an imbalance results in disease which means not at ease. We



Meera Narasimhan, MD is Professor and Chair of the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Senior Medical Director for Behavioral Health, Prisma Health and is the Special Advisor to University of South Carolina (U-SC) President for Healthcare, Innovations and Economic Development. She serves on faculty at the Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston.

Dr. Narasimhan has received numerous prestigious national and international awards from several institutions and organizations including the American Psychiatric Association, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Mental Health America, Yale University, and U-SC School of Medicine.

have all known that heart disease, diabetes, depression and anxiety disorders are all lifestyle diseases brought on by disequilibrium of the mind, body, and spirit. Increased suffering to an individual and the disease burden to our society that we have witnessed during this pandemic has exacerbated it even further. While struggles are a part of life, they cannot always be avoided. It behooves us to dive deep into understanding and strengthening the connection between the mind, body, and spirit. A solid foundation requires the mind, body, and spirit to be in unison. They are in essence the three legs of the stool of “Wellness”. If we leave one leg out, our life ceases to be ‘whole’.

Advances in medicine and scientific breakthroughs, given the sophistication in understanding the biological underpinnings of illness, cutting edge diagnostic tests, and pharmaceutical wonders, have demonstrated the potential for humans to work together to engineer a brighter, healthier future for all. Over the past 25 years, healthcare has also seen a paradigm shift in the mindset which maintains that the clinician must address both the disease and know the patient as a person. The physician should seek to know how the illness is being experienced by the patient with an appreciation of the impact it has on their lives; while realizing that the mind/body/spirit connection has a bearing on the medical outcome and quality of life.

As Hippocrates, the father of medicine, stated: “It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has.”

The tenets of Sai Ideal Healthcare emphasize the importance of comprehensive healthcare (mind, body spirit connectiv-

ity), holistic health as essential for overall wellbeing.

Today, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of integrative medicine in healthcare. We now know that the etiology, progression and outcome of a physical illness are determined from a complex interaction of biological, psychological and social factors. Emerging science is now bearing out physiological and psychological connections between many seemingly unrelated mental and bodily issues that

**WHERE SCIENCE ENDS,
SPIRITUALITY BEGINS.
DIVINITY PERVADES BOTH.**

may seem unrelated on the surface. There is data backed by medical science that supports the bidirectional relationship between physical and mental health –

whether it is Heart disease and depression, Irritable Bowel Disorder and Anxiety disorder or Diabetes and depression, just to name a few.

Just as an example, there is scientific evidence to suggest the biological basis of the brain and “gut” connection. Researchers have shown that 95% of serotonin is produced within the gastrointestinal tract. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that regulates mood and behavior by relaying messages between nerves. Given this gut-brain connection, it makes sense that the right type of food will help nourish our gastrointestinal tract but also impacts our brain. Adopting a healthy diet promotes the health of the gastrointestinal tract, which in turn effects mood, emotions and sleep.

We have all heard Swami talk about this at length. Swami says,

*“Food that we eat affects our Mind
As is the food, so is the mind
As is the mind, so are our thoughts
As are our thoughts so is our conduct
As is the conduct so is our health.”*

“Food” here has a broader connotation and implies consumption through our *Panchendriyas* (Five senses). If we see good, hear good, taste and smell pleasant things and feel good, our thoughts and mind also experience positivity. We need to make a sincere effort in putting this into practice. An ounce of practice is worth more than a ton of preaching.

Swami says, “Life is a mosaic of pleasure and pain – grief is an interval between two moments of joy”.

As human beings on this journey of life, we have to go through pleasure and pain. While it hurts when we are going through hard times, it is also an opportunity to keep turning that dial back towards Swami to help firm up our conviction that HE alone can help us through these “speed bumps and detours”! This also requires us to become more adept at working towards a perfect harmony of the mind, body and spirit and that entails practice.

Face Ups and Downs With Equanimity

One should face everything in life with a smile. In this dualistic world, it is natural that gain and pain alternate. One cannot avoid either. We need to realize, adversity is a stepping-stone to eternal bliss. Only when the Pandavas suffered hardships during the thirteen years of their exile, could they secure the grace of Krishna and the Lord always stood by them. The Pandavas had their priorities right. God was first for them, then came the world, and ‘I’ came last. But the Kauravas had their priorities backwards. They placed ‘I’ first, world next and God last. That is why they lost the battle of life. Bliss eluded them. One who has won proximity to God is always blissful.

Swami says, “The rind of bitterness of sorrow covers the sweet juice of joy in the orange fruit of life. When you peel out the rind, you get the sweet juice. God is the very essence of joy”

Strengthening the Body, Mind, and Spirit

So how can we work towards a happy, healthy, fulfilled life. Here is a prescription for syncing and strengthening the mind, body and spirit, a prerequisite for health and wellness.

The pandemic has been a humbling experience for those of us in healthcare. It has taught us time and again that science has limitations and that we are not in charge.

“Where science ends, spirituality begins. Divinity pervades both”. As physicians we treat, while fully realizing God is the healer. “God heals through the doctors”. He may send doctors, medicines and machines to help treat the illness. At times, God heals in His own special way, what we term a ‘miracle’.

The mind-body-soul connection is the easiest way to live life filled with health, happiness while instilling vibrancy in one’s life. A healthy mind, body, and soul can change the way you feel and impact the way you show up every day. Over time, this creates a ripple effect throughout one’s life. If we conceptualize the Mind, Body, Spirit as the three faces of a Prism and work towards balancing the three by allowing the rays of God’s love to permeate through it, we can make our life be as vibrant as the colors of the rainbow and sanctify this sojourn on earth.

Rx to Strengthen our MIND



- ✓ **Meditate:** Meditation helps reduce stress. It increases our awareness of negative thought patterns while dealing with stress in a more calm and mindful way. Mindfulness meditation and Jyothi meditation are effective ways of calming a disturbed mind.
- ✓ **Exercise our mind:** Keeping our brain active, learning new things, cognitive exercises, staying connected, and focusing on positive thoughts are helpful.
- ✓ **Find purpose and passion in life:** These are mind boosters that help improve our overall vitality and health.
- ✓ **"Self-care" moment:** Finding time to take care of oneself, taking time out, writing a journal, and work-life balance prevents burn out.
- ✓ **Sleep is essential for wellbeing:** The quality and quantity of sleep matters and has an impact on one's mood and on disease. Sleep is essential for our mind, body, and soul. An average adult needs between seven and nine hours of sleep per night.
- ✓ **Building resilience:** Looking at the glass half full, life is full of opportunities; even the most challenging situations have opportunities hidden in them. Coping skills, good role models in life, and positive thought process help build resilience.



Rx to Strengthen our BODY

- ✓ **Exercise:** A must to help improve metabolism, circulation, weight but also for stress relief, mood elevation and brain health. One can practice aerobic exercise, walking, jogging, yoga, and tai chi. Yoga has profound impact on the body, mind and soul. Incorporating *pranayama* or breath control in our lives helps reduce stress and has a calming effect.
- ✓ **Eat healthy:** “The food we eat affects our thoughts, feelings and beliefs”. Swami has placed a lot of importance on *Ahara* (food) and *Vihara* (habits). Incorporate a range of vegetables and fruits in your diet. Limit or avoid consumption of meat, alcohol, caffeine, and sugar. Drink at least two liters of water per day.

Rx to Strengthen our SPIRIT

- ✓ **Practice gratitude:** The attitude of gratitude allows one to let go of negative thoughts by looking for things we should be grateful for, which in turn can improve our overall wellbeing.
- ✓ **Connect with bigger purpose:** “Love all and serve all” needs to be our mantra. One might find a greater sense of meaning by doing SEVA, serving others.
- ✓ **Being compassionate to all:** Before developing compassion for others, start with self-compassion which helps build confidence to accept mistakes and failures as a part and parcel of life. Being compassionate towards other beings allows one to live a more fulfilled life.
- ✓ **Enjoy Nature:** Ecopsychology is the area that focuses on the benefits of nature and allows for the mind, body and spirit connect with *Prakriti* (being in tune with nature).

Dr. Meera Narasimhan,
USA

Human Values in Healthcare

Dr. Ramadevi Sankaran

In 2020 a pilot Introductory SSEHV Workshop for Health Care Professionals was developed in collaboration with the ISSE-USA and Dr. Ramadevi Sankaran, USA, for clinic-based medical and public health professionals. The online workshop was further developed and offered to physicians and healthcare professionals.



The expanded workshops were intended to create awareness among healthcare providers about human values, to emphasize the importance of being exemplars of human values in their personal and work settings, and to explore the relationship of SSEHV to patient care and medical ethics. The workshops were received with enthusiasm and great interest, and are in the process of being further expanded for a wider group of healthcare professionals in the U.S. and other countries around the world.

***As the food, so the mind; as the mind, so the thoughts;
as the thoughts, so the act. Food is an important
factor which determines the alertness and sloth, the worry
and calm, the brightness and dullness. Moderate food is the
best medicine to avoid bodily illness.***

Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
September 21, 1979



Women as Instruments of the Divine Mission

Alida Parkes serves as the Chair of Zone 6, SSSIO, which consists of fourteen countries in Europe. She is the Chair of Public Outreach Committee and member of Media Committee. She came to Swami over 30 years ago and has been serving in the Organization for several decades.

Alida Parkes was the founder and general manager of a Media Production company. She also published a monthly magazine focused on media and produced TV program and organised events in Italy.

ON NOVEMBER 19, 1995, SWAMI SAID: “AS TODAY IS A SACRED DAY DEDICATED TO WOMEN, they should change themselves and help to change the men and the children. They should develop the qualities of sympathy, compassion, love, and sacrifice...I desire that you should take up the reins of leadership and bring peace and prosperity to the nation by living ideal lives.”

In one of my very first interviews, Swami looked at me and said: **“Remember 3 principles: Love God, Fear Sin and Practice Morality in Society.”** He repeated it twice, patting my head firmly, as if He wanted to fix them in my brain! Then, to ensure I had understood and memorized His advice, like a schoolteacher, He said: “Repeat!”

If we follow these three main principles, all-round progress is guaranteed.

So I kept His words as my key guidelines, trying to analyze and fully understand the teachings behind them.

To love God is easy; we all love Swami, however Baba spoke many times about ‘Oneness’-that we all are One with God, that God is in each one of us and each living creature, that God and the Creation are One.

TO ACHIEVE **UNITY**, I
HAVE LEARNED THAT
WE MUST FORGET
WHAT THE 'I' THINKS
AND WANTS, AND
FOCUS ON WHAT
PLEASES GOD.

UNITY IS THE IDEAL
THAT WE MUST
STRIVE TO ATTAIN.
ANY TASK CAN BE
ACCOMPLISHED
THROUGH **UNITY**.



Serving in the SSSIO I have noticed many times how similar ego and attachment are. These are the real obstacles to unity and divinity. We are attached to our habits, traditions, cultures, ideas, and our own likes and dislikes. These attachments give rise to the 3 F's: Frictions, Fractions and Factions that destroy unity and are detrimental. To achieve Unity, I have learned that we must forget what the 'I' thinks and wants, and focus on what pleases God. Unity is the ideal that we must strive to attain. Any task can be accomplished through unity.

The SSSIO has an immense potential, with its presence all over the world. Working together with unity, we can effectively change the world – making this planet a better place to live in.

The first time I came to Prasanthi Nilayam, over 30 years ago, I was overwhelmed and deeply touched by the energy and vibration of Love I felt when Swami walked into the Sai Kulwant Hall – a feeling that has never left me. I stayed only for a couple of days, but it was enough for me to realize that I had found what I was looking for. It was enough for me to wish to be part of His divine mission.

So I am very grateful to Swami for having fulfilled my desire by giving me the opportunity to serve Him in many roles within SSSIO. Our duty as Sai officers is to be good examples, by working hard with dedication and diligence. Swami says, "serve all and be nothing." We should let go the attachment to our desires, so that we may learn to serve in the "Sai way". **We should never forget that the ultimate goal of every officer is self-transformation.**

If we want to be excellent examples of Swami's teaching, we must remember, in all our actions, to follow our heart but also to use our fundamental discrimination. SSSIO officers undergo many tests; these tests serve an important purpose and so should not be a reason to give up. Tests cause us to open our minds and hearts to listen to the views of others. They teach patience and perseverance, and build fortitude. They teach us that all happens at the right time and by His will alone.

It is worth reminding ourselves, from time to time, that Baba tells us never to leave His Organization, particularly when disappointments or disagreements surface, as they inevitably will.

We can only call ourselves Sai followers when we put into action the principle of Sai – that is, the principle of Love. This is easy to say, but not easy to follow. Personally, I focus my efforts to Love All, Serve All and See God in All.

SSSIO serves in many countries with different languages, traditions, cultures, and faiths. But it is Sai Love that brings us together to formulate programs, projects, activities, to support one other, so that we can speak with one 'voice' to the world. This is the 'voice of Love.'

Swami says that the very purpose for the existence of an organization bearing His Name is to see Him in each and every

person and serve all with a spirit of dedication and veneration. This is a very important point. Often, we do not pay attention to Swami's words, and since we do not fully understand the message behind it, we fail in achieving our goal.

I have learned in all these years serving in the SSSIO that **when I am asked to do something, I should respond as if the request came from Swami Himself.** In this way, whatever I do, I do it for Swami and I do my very best, because nothing less can be offered to Him. You would also give the work in the SSSIO the highest priority, if you knew that the assignment came from Swami Himself.

We must always remember that Love is the source, path, and goal of the Sai Organization.

Ms. Alida Parkes,
Italy

Study the lives of great women who were models of patience, fortitude, compassion, and sacrifice. I desire that you should take up the reins of leadership and bring peace and prosperity to the world by leading ideal lives.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Divine discourse on Ladies' Day
November 19, 1995

Women – Embodiments of Love and Compassion

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA CAN BE HAILED AS THE RESTORER OF WOMEN'S VALUES.

By describing her special characteristics and qualities, He gives women and men alike the opportunity to not only value, but also to re-evaluate woman's contributions and strengths and her position in the family and in society. While giving numerous examples in His discourses on the high achievements of women through their integrity, faith, determination, and surrender, these will remain simply ideals if we do not seek to develop the God-given potential within ourselves. Of course, this holds true for both men and women. For men to respect women for their wonderful capabilities, women need to acquire the confidence to identify, develop and demonstrate their God given potential. **In other words, women need to first believe in themselves, trust the words of Sri Sathya Sai, and dare to bring out their inner qualities.**

Much has been said about equal rights, yet at times these will make the workload of women even heavier, trying to compete in a men's world... The inherent equality as human beings, under the fatherhood

of God, is indisputable. Yet the beauty of unity in diversity is that each being can live up to its own potential and express its special role in the web of life. If women stop comparing themselves with men but delve into their own qualities and gain strength therefrom, they will certainly be happier. **By setting her own standards and goals, each moment becomes a steppingstone on the spiritual journey.** Of course, the same holds true for men, who need to also follow their conscience to reach their full potential. Sri Sathya Sai Baba's revolution is to undo age-old habits and prejudices about the spiritual rights and the role of women, liberating them from the shackles that limited their vision, self-confidence, and possibilities. By founding a College for girls even before starting one for boys, allowing women to recite the Gayatri mantra and girls to chant the Vedas, and by instituting a special Ladies' Day to honour womanhood, Sri Sathya Sai Baba helped us all to adjust our vision and to restore our faith in the 'better half' He created.

Ms. Katinka van Lamsweerde,
The Netherlands



Katinka van Lamsweerde is blessed to have been called to Sri Sathya Sai in 1990, which changed her life. She is currently a member of the Archive Committee and a trainer in SSEHV with the ESSE Institute.

INITIATIVES AND UPDATES

"Young men and women, the world's good fate, world's progress is dependent on the transformation of the youth, today. Only when the youth transform themselves with good character, will the world be able to experience ideal virtues."

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba, July 16, 1997

AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

(SSSIO) is the International Sai Young Adults Program that carries out several worldwide initiatives focusing on their love for Sri Sathya Sai Baba and His Divine message. The young adults from around the world display stellar efforts to serve the community through many service projects and humanitarian relief activities. They continue to show exemplary leadership by innovating and organizing online virtual programs, including bhajans and other spiritual *sadhanas* within local Sri Sathya Sai Centres, at national and zonal levels. In addition to all the service activities, the young adults organize various conferences, festivals, and camps to foster unity and assimilate Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Universal teachings.

To cater to the wide range of interests and passion of the young adults from around the world, the programs are supported by eleven International Sai Young Adults Subcommittees providing opportunities to participate in interesting projects designed specifically to nurture spiritual growth. The young adults are very near and dear to Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The International Sai Young Adults Program forms a firm and holistic foundation for Sai Young Adults to achieve their spiritual goals. We pray that our beloved Sri Sathya Sai Baba keeps us in His Divine fold. May He think through us, speak through us, act through us, and love through us; as we dedicate our lives at His divine Lotus Feet.

For more information and updates on International Sai Young Adults initiatives, please visit our website <https://sathyasai.org/ya> or contact yacoordinator@sathyasai.org

Ms. Vahinie Pillay,
South Africa,
International Young Adults Coordinator



Ms. Vahinie Pillay is a fourth generation devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. She is the International Young Adults Coordinator of the SSSIO and oversees Young Adults activities in more than 110 countries across the world.

She is a singer and songwriter who has composed many value-based songs. Professionally, she is a senior audit consultant for a leading international consulting firm.

Updates from the International Sai Young Adults Around the World

The Sai Young Adults play an integral role in the SSSIO. They have undertaken many initiatives and a few highlights are given below.

Serve the Planet (STP)

STP is a worldwide public outreach service initiative launched in October 2013 and led by the YAs of the SSSIO. The two messages STP advocates are practicing 'Ceiling on Desires' and applying the five universal human values: Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence, when caring for our environment and the planet. The theme for 2022 is "Love the Planet to Serve the Planet."

Ocean of Music (OoM)

The OoM Subcommittee encourages YAs around the world to contribute original and uplifting devotional as well as values-based musical compositions and offerings. The SSSIO Young Adults Music Album Series, Ocean of Music – Vol 1 was released on Swami's 96th Birthday and is available on Spotify.

Sri Sathya Sai International Leadership Programme (SSSILP)

The SSSILP provides standardised leadership training to YAs from all over the world, based on Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings. It consists of nine online modules which cover the life and teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and overview of the SSSIO. More 2,000 young adults have successfully graduated from the program between 2015 and 2021.

Sri Sathya Sai

Sadhana of Love (SSSSOL)

The SSSOL Programme is a web-based Satsang with a residential programme, based on Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings. This programme is built around the foundations of Self-Confidence, Self-Satisfaction, Self-Sacrifice, and Self-Realisation. This subcommittee focuses on raising awareness to help with the spiritual growth of YAs worldwide. The programme also fosters a positive and accepting environment where YAs can discover the path to Self-Realisation by sharing experiences amid various challenges in today's world.

Young Adults International Engagement (YAIE)

The Young Adults International Engagement (YAIE) subcommittee aims to provide Sai Young Adults (YAs) with the tools, materials, and knowledge to support and guide them in sharing Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Message, His Universal Teachings, and the work of the SSSIO at public events including, interfaith programmes, public forums, and community-based events.

Pathways

The International YA Pathways Subcommittee empowers the spiritual learning and development of the future YAs (aged 18–22) by creating a strong support system through mentorship and study of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings in their daily lives. The age category of 18 to 22 is one

of the most crucial age brackets for YAs, as it is a period of change and therefore crucial to have a greater understanding of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings, when making key life decisions.

Information Management and Analytics (IMAS)

The International Young Adults (YA) Information Management and Analytics subcommittee (IMAS) supports the Sri Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSSIO) in acquiring, managing, analyzing and communicating information. The IMAS analyses data and provides insights on the growth of the YA programme and develops suitable systems to make better decisions and for long-term planning.

International Young Adults Veda Programme

The International YA Veda Programme launched its first Veda training on 24 April 2020. The programme provides a golden opportunity to YAs to take up Veda chanting and propagate the Vedas. Interactive learning material (audio and text) are provided and beginner, intermediate and advanced lessons are conducted to ensure all the YAs are able to participate.

InSAIghts

InSAIghts is an initiative involving unique spiritual masterclasses aimed at sharing the insightful and practical teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. These online masterclasses cover a broad range of topics and

are delivered by speakers who have had personal experiences with Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

International Young Adults Wellbeing Support Group

The YAs Wellbeing Support Group was initiated in June 2020 to provide YAs with support during difficult times. It covers topics on stress, depression, anxiety, and mental health. Feedback from YAs regarding this initiative has been extremely positive. In the short-term, the vision is to continue with the current strategy by covering a wider range of topics, and in the long-term, the vision is to encompass all SSSIO YA activities.

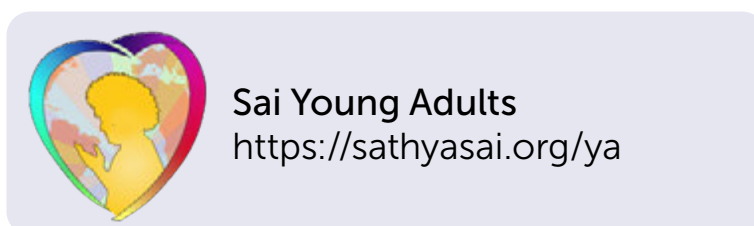
Sai Young Adults Editorial Team

The Sai Young Adults Editorial Team provides editorial expertise to the International YA publications and initiatives for various worldwide materials such as the SSSIO Annual Report, International YA bulletins, announcements, articles, events, and worldwide publications.

Sai Young Adults Media Team

The Sai Young Adults Media Team supports activities of the International YA Subcommittees and highlight the activities of YAs from around the world. Through graphic design and video editing, the team manages the SSSIO YA social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) to effectively communicate these messages.

In the future, we will be sharing with you the works of the SSSIO Young Adults across ten Zones of the SSSIO, around the world.



Reflections from Sai Young Adults

An initiative of the Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana of Love (SSSSOL) Subcommittee is Reflections of Sai. This is an avenue for Sai Young Adults across the world to express their love for Sai by sharing their experiences and its positive impact on their lives. Submissions of stories of gratitude, miraculous occurrences, and interactions with Sri Sathya Sai Baba are shared periodically on YA social media outlets.



Tanisha
Indonesia

I am very fortunate and blessed to be born to parents who introduced me to Swami, at a young age. Fifteen years ago, I graduated from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology with a degree in Information Technology. While I waited for permanent residency in Australia, I returned to my hometown and started applying for jobs. I surrendered to Swami and also extended my efforts in applying for many jobs.

After some time, my mother and I came across an Indian couple. As we chatted, my mother mentioned that I was looking for a job. We exchanged numbers and then parted ways.

A few weeks later, I got a call requesting me to come for an interview. Thinking it was one of the jobs that I had applied for, I went to the interview. As I entered and met the interviewer, it was none other than the man who my mother and I had bumped into a few weeks prior. He was the head of the IT department and agreed to recruit me as an intern. I was so thankful to him and accepted the job. That job was instrumental in shaping the person I have become today.

As time passed, I realised it was all Swami's Divine *Leela* (play). The name of the company was "Saipem" (SAI-pem)! I first thought of it as a coincidence. I soon realised that when one surrenders to Swami, it becomes a "Saincidence". To date, my work has always continued to be fulfilling under His guidance and blessings.

Thank you Swami, for always protecting me under your Divine umbrella.



Avinash USA

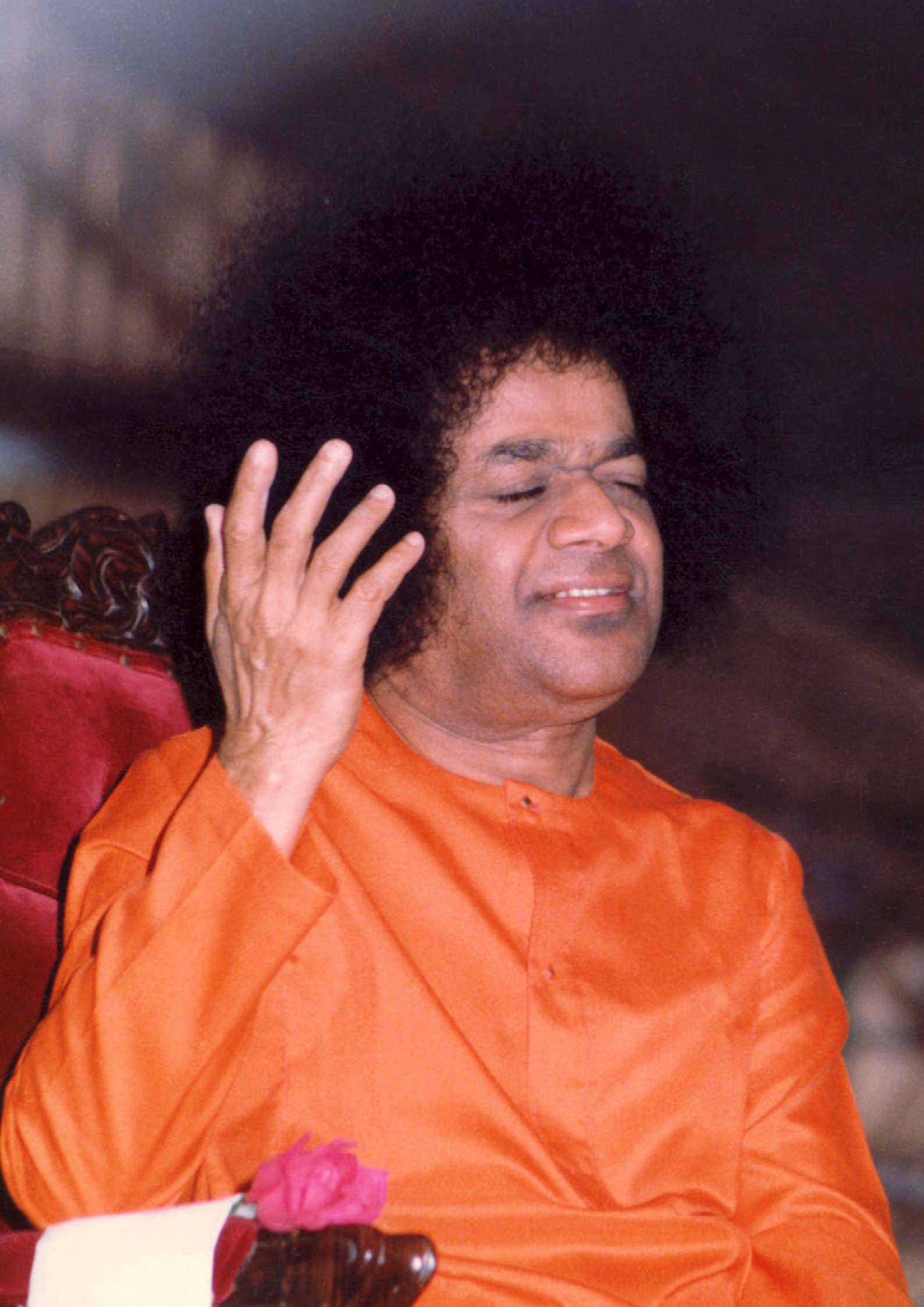
In 2011, I applied to a graduate school in Geneva, Switzerland. Many administrative processes ended up becoming more complicated than I anticipated. I felt completely alone and wanted Swami to prove to me that He was watching over me. One night, after reciting 21 Aums, I clearly requested Him to prove to me that He was there for me. I went to bed and a few minutes later, I woke up to check my email. I had received an email from someone, who had subscribed to my YouTube channel. I clicked on the profile and found that it was a channel with videos of Swami! I felt reassured that Swami had shown His omnipresence. Eventually, everything ended up working perfectly! Indeed, Swami has a personal connection with each of His devotees and responds to their earnest prayer in perfect divine timing, providing assurance and captivating their hearts.



Irena Slovenia

I feel very blessed to be a part of the Sai Avataric mission. Being born and raised in a Christian family, sacred values have been embedded within me. With deepest gratitude to my dearest Swami, my life changed when He stepped into my life. Swami has given me many blessings and lessons through which I have grown. Over the past few years, I have faced some challenging situations in my life. Even though I would never give up on anything, I began to have doubts about righteousness, fairness, and truth. At times, I felt that my faith in God was being tested and I prayed to Swami for His Divine guidance. He has shown me through various signs that He is always with me. In one of the darshans in Puttaparthi, after intense prayer, vibuthi manifested in my badge. This experience made me realize that He is taking care of me as a loving mother and the materialization was a beautiful display of His immense love and grace.

During the challenges that I faced, Swami was the only one whom I could trust. I learned the importance of allowing myself to hear His voice and follow Him. I also felt that I am never alone or abandoned. All I needed to do was surrender to the Divine will of Swami as His plan unfolds. I know that Swami is always with me, protecting and guiding me.



Revere Nature as God

Nature is the Best Teacher

To achieve mastery of ourselves, we can look to Nature as a valuable teacher. Love is the driving force in Nature. This Love expresses itself by ceaselessly and selflessly giving to others. All life thrives on the foundation of Love and Service — a pure reflection of the Divine. We humans were designed to behave in the same way and, like Nature, to reflect our highest Self, which is also Divine. Yet, Nature does not veer from its dharmic duty, unlike so many of us humans.

“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.”

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, December 25, 1978

To connect and learn from Nature, we have only to take time away from the human-constructed world we inhabit and find the nooks and crannies where Nature still abounds. It could be a forest or open meadow, next to a large water body or small healthy stream, or it could be under a mature tree — wherever one can observe and feel the heart of Nature beating. Once there, we can enter the silent space and connect through our own hearts. We may close our eyes and listen, feeling Nature is not just ‘out there’ but also inside us. Or we can keep our eyes and all our senses open to take in all that resonates with Divinity.

“Now, I truly believe that we in this generation must come to terms with Nature, and I think we’re challenged as mankind has never been challenged before to prove our maturity and our mastery, not of Nature but of ourselves.”

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, 1962



Ms. Tina Schweickert lives in Oregon, USA and serves on the SSSIO Environmental Sustainability Committee. She previously served as YA advisor and vice president of Region 6,

USA. In 2005, Tina’s book *Tread Softly: Sathya Sai Baba’s Teachings on Nature and the Environment* was published. It weaves together Baba’s teachings and experiences from her environmental career, managing her family farm, and interactions with Sai Baba.

“*Sai Baba made it clear His mission will succeed and life on Earth will improve for all beings, not just humans.*”

“What is the lesson to be learnt from the observance of Nature? It is... being always active in the performance of one’s duty. It is because Nature ceaselessly performs its duty that the world is able to derive so many sacred benefits.”
–Summer Showers 1990, Ch.10

Nature and Sathya Sai Baba – Examples of Loving Service

Like Nature, Sathya Sai Baba demonstrated how to live a life of pure loving service. He also left us with a multitude of teachings to continue instructing and illuminating the path to our Divine Self. And He made it clear that walking along this path is the essential purpose of human life, and He prepares us to walk in harmony with Nature to protect and preserve life on Earth.

“All the education you pursue is not for you only. It is for helping your fellow human beings, fellow living beings like birds, animals, and insects. Then only the education you have acquired becomes meaningful.”

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba, November 22, 2007

What happens when we don’t do as Nature and Sai Baba teach us? To know the answer, one has only to look at the lack of healthy ecological communities in our cities and farmland; to breathe in smog-choked air in a major city; to observe how our weather has become more harsh, straying from its customary pattern; to watch the news of yet another species endangered; forests and residential areas ravaged by wildfires; or towns and villages wiped out by violent

floods, tornadoes, hurricanes ... and the list goes on.

There is a reason why Nature thrives on loving and giving. It works! Humans have instead been heedlessly taking from Nature for centuries, which exponentially escalated after the start of the industrial revolution 250 years ago. But all this is changing now.

Witnessing the many examples of human-caused devastation is prompting many people to question our place on the planet. We are beginning to wake up on a massive scale. We see the harm we are causing, and we are getting closer to understanding the source of the problem, which is none other than our wayward mind disconnected from our spiritual heart. The time is ripe, the time is now, to wake up to our spiritual role as human members of planet Earth.

Sai Baba’s Message on Environment

Long ago, Sai Baba promised things would improve and that His mission would succeed. It succeeds now by all of us doing as He so lovingly instructed. And His influence reaches out to many who do not even know the source of this wisdom. It becomes ubiquitous through the threads of love and service that have been cast out across the Earth, through the devotees He drew from every part of the world.

The change in their hearts and minds and their focus on Him, His teachings, the chanting, singing, serving have been reverberating through communities in ways we cannot even comprehend. Remember, this Mission began with Shirdi Sai who was

born in the early 19th century. With the lives of just two of the three Incarnations, there is a span of 180 years. And, as we know, it's not over. Sai Baba made it clear His mission *will* succeed and life on Earth *will* improve for all beings, not just humans. We are integral to this success. We all must do our part and stay the course.

"...worship in order to promote the happiness and peace of living beings... That is My mission, My resolution, My Will, My Vow - the planting of love in every human heart. The Lord is love; love is the highest Atma (Paramatma). If you fill your heart with love, then hatred, envy, greed and egoism cannot enter it. There will be no devastation for a loved-filled Earth."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, December 25, 1961

Practice of Human Values is the Answer

We can begin co-creating a "love-filled Earth" by understanding how the five universal human values help us build a strong, personal relationship with Mother Earth. The values of Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love and Nonviolence are within us, and the highest aim of our human experience is to manifest them in our interactions with people and the environment, Nature and Mother Earth. When we live in tune with these values, Mother Earth is sustained and protected.

The value of **Truth** inspires us to spend time in Nature to directly experience God's omnipresence. This strengthens our will to avoid actions that harm the Earth and its beings, as well as the waters, atmosphere, and soil. Truth tells us it is within our power to transform ourselves—to realize the spiritual beings that we are so that we focus less on material goods and more on spiritual goodness.

Right action is living with a sense of justice, honoring the truth that all beings, including animals, plants, and future generations,

depend on Nature's abundance. We are aware of our duty and responsibilities as custodians of the Earth. We place a ceiling on our desires and limit our use of natural resources and energy; we minimize our carbon footprint by installing solar panels or other green energy options; we don't waste food, and we use the money and time saved to help others.

When we walk in **Peace**, we maintain our equanimity despite disturbances in the world. We are prepared to help others in distress—especially those harmed by disasters arising from human actions that disrupt Nature's balance. We seek happiness that does not come from material wealth, comfort, or excessive consumption. We are grateful for the gifts we receive from Nature and demonstrate our gratitude through prayer.

When we act with **Love** for Mother Earth we can't help but feel compassion for the suffering of others and selflessly seek ways to help. We feel a oneness with all beings and pray that they be happy. We do our best to avoid polluting or wasting resources while embracing opportunities to relieve suffering, like cleaning up plastic litter that could end up in the ocean and harm marine life or helping to cleanup or sustainably rebuild after disasters.

Non-violence is an essential virtue for all who want to live in harmony with Mother Earth. It is a state of mind as well as practice in daily life. We follow the maxim to Help Ever, Hurt Never in our thoughts, words, and deeds. For instance, we avoid products that are known to harm others in testing, production, and/or waste. We provide a refuge for those harmed by human development by planting trees and creating habitat for birds, insects, and animals. We speak out when we see injustice and harm being done.

Though we may sometimes feel despair when we see the state of our planet today,

it is precisely at such a time that we should re-affirm our faith and our convictions and double our efforts to protect Mother Earth.

“Some incidents happening in this world may shake your faith in God. But, if you hold on to your faith firmly, you can boldly face any situation.”

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba, December 26, 2007

SSSIO Go Green Initiatives

Within Sai communities around the world, people are coming together in unity to put their convictions into practice. A small sampling of Sai-inspired environmental service projects includes:

1. Planting trees for habitat, erosion control, and watershed improvement in Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Brazil, Colombia, Czech Republic, Kenya, New Zealand, Russia, Suriname and Thailand
2. Cleaning up rivers and beaches in Croatia, Ecuador, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa and Taiwan
3. Caring for sick and abandoned animals in Austria, Guatemala, and Ukraine
4. Creating innovative recycling/reuse projects in Slovenia, Germany, and Hungary
5. Gathering unused fresh food from farms, markets, and restaurants and giving to those in need in USA
6. Holding retreats on environmental education and eco-service planning in many countries.

These projects and more are highlighted in newsletters created by the SSSIO Environmental Sustainability Committee and posted on the environmental sustainability hub: <https://sathyasai.org/environmental-sustainability>. The hub is rich with information on how individuals and Sri Sathya Sai Centers around the world can practice environmental sustainability, including checklists for personal practice and managing retreats and meetings. There are inspirational articles and videos on Nature and Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings, with access to quotes for use in study circles or personal reflection. We encourage you to take advantage of the many resources available on the site.

“Spiritual sadhana means to regard a mountain or a tree, or a flower, or the ocean, as a means of God-realization.”

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba, December 29, 1985

As we begin this new year, we would do well to broaden our personal and collective *sadhana* to deepen our relationship with Nature. We can pray, chant, sing, and meditate on the Divine in Nature while we seek to live more sustainably.

Holding positive intentions and thoughts for a pure environment and developing our sense of oneness with all Creation are powerful forces for good. And all actions to serve Nature also serve the extraordinary mission of our beloved *sadguru* Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Ms. Tina Schweikert,
USA



Environmental Sustainability Hub

<https://sathyasai.org/environmental-sustainability>

SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES



THE PRINCIPLES OF SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES

are being disseminated through the activities of a sustainable network of Institutes of Sathya Sai Education, Sathya Sai Schools, Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Projects from all over the world.

To advance the important work done by the SSEHV educators world wide the Education Committee (EC) under the authorization of the Sathya Sai World Foundation is setting up various platforms for online learning and sharing of information and experiences.

To ensure the authenticity of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) based on the philosophy of Educare and the pedagogy of Integral Education, the EC has undertaken an important research initiative, to promote and support character development and academic excellence as one of the primary goals of education. This research Project is lead by Dr. Margaret Taplin.

There are two main reasons why research about SSEHV is important.

First, it helps evaluate the effects of SSEHV projects on children, youth, teachers, families, and communities and gives data on how teachers of SSEHV are best inducted into its use. This can help us to understand how SSEHV training can be improved.

You should rely more on your **spiritual heart** than on the physical heart.

Whatever is done with **love** and **purity** of heart will **confer bliss** on you.”

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba, August 17, 2005

Second, it is important in showing to mainstream educators how SSEHV may enhance lives.

The research program will answer questions about teaching SSEHV better and how to promote interest.

How to Teach SSEHV Better

This can be explored by asking questions like:

- How can we best support children to accept SSEHV?
- How do teachers develop as SSEHV teachers?
- What do teachers believe and understand about SSEHV and how can we use this information to help them to grow as SSEHV teachers?

How to Create Greater Interest in the Wider Community

One of our most important tasks is to show the mainstream education and wider communities that SSEHV has something unique and very much needed to contribute to society; to show how SSEHV may change their lives and help them to cope with their professional and personal problems; that SSEHV is worth the time

spent on, both for the more obvious impacts - such as improved behaviour and concentration, more balanced mental and emotional health, and even better academic results – and for the more subtle aspects of inner transformation such as understanding “Who am I?” and what it takes to develop true lasting happiness. This can be done through collecting stories about transformation from students, teachers, and parents.

Another important message that the general community wants to know is how SSEHV benefits children’s family members and the wider community.

To illustrate the impact of SSEHV around the world, future issues will provide some illustrations of how SSEHV has helped to bring about changes in people’s lives. We will describe how children and their families have transformed after participating in various SSEHV projects. We will also show how teachers have learned to cope better with their professional and personal problems after adopting SSEHV strategies in their own lives.

SSSIO Education Committee



THE SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES (SSEHV) PROGRAMME, based on the philosophy of 'Educare',

is a heartfelt and lifetime commitment, which is personally the most treasured jewel I have discovered in Sathya Sai Baba's ocean of universal teachings! I feel an immense and profound gratitude to our dearest Swami, who constantly guides us to discover the eternal and everlasting source of love and wisdom that resides within each and every one of us.

Sathya Sai's teachings are universal. His message of Love has a huge impact, not only on Sai devotees, but is also of great benefit for the whole world. I have had the precious opportunity of working as a teacher for the last 17 years, applying the SSEHV programme at a personal and classroom level in the private international schools I have worked at. As Swami says, 'Educare' means to bring out the latent human values we have within and translate them into action.

Working with kindergarten, primary and secondary students, over the years, I have understood that one must firstly have the deep trust and firm conviction that this source of wisdom is already there, within each one of these tender souls. From there, as educa-

Sathya Sai is
indeed my Eternal
Companion.
Wherever and
whenever we
practice and
share His Message,
He is present!

tors, our duty is to create the right environment and culture of love to help them bring this wisdom out. So, through the art of Self-inquiry, learning how to dive deep within ourselves to 'bring out' that latent inner knowledge, by tuning our 'Head, Heart and Hands', and by WATCHing our words, thoughts, actions, character and heart, we embark together on an adventure every year to discover and manifest these marvellous treasures we all have within, and to make sure they shine with added lustre day by day!

It brings immense gratitude to my heart to share a very meaningful personal story related to the impact of Swami's presence in my life. Swami left His physical body on the 24th of April 2011, during Easter time. I was on holiday when this happened. We gathered in the Sathya Sai Centre of Madrid, Spain to sing devotional songs, pray and just be together in the spirit of satsang and deep gratitude, like devotees did in many places around the world.

When I went back to school the first day after the Easter holidays, I did feel something was different, however I was not sure what it was. When I walked into the classroom, the thought I had was: "*Swami, this is the first time I am going to share all these divine treasures that You have taught me without You actually being there.*" I was amazed at this thought because I said, "Without You being there? But Swami is here!" So, I just observed this thought.

When I walked into the classroom, the children looked at me, they hugged me after a long period of holidays, and we all sat down together. Then, we started talking about their holidays and one little girl looked at me and she said: "Miss Raksha, you look a little different today." I said, "Do I?" She continued: "Yes, you look a little sad. However, it is not a normal kind of sadness, you really look... I don't know, it's a strange

sadness I would say.” I was amazed as the depth of a 5-year-old child telling me this. When the children were sharing things about their holidays, they were talking about values, giving examples of how they apply them in their daily lives and take them back home and share these universal teachings with their family and friends too. Then, I shared with them and with this little girl, Carolina, what had transpired. I said: *“You know what Carolina? Maybe you have seen something I have not seen. Maybe I am a little sad. Because you know all these beautiful things that you say we learn together... Well, actually I have learnt them as well from a very special teacher and this teacher no more lives physically.”* So, she said: *“Oh, your teacher has died. Now I understand, you’re sad about that, aren’t you?”* With their beautiful innocence, another child added *“Well, we would be very sad if you died as well Miss Raksha!”*

Then Carolina stopped suddenly, like as if she had discovered something very important and said: *“Wait a minute Miss Raksha! Did I get this right?”* And then, she stood up and in front of the whole class

and said: *“Did you say that everything that you teach us, you have learnt from your special teacher?”* I confirmed: *“Yes, that is what I just said.”* She firmly stated: *“Wait a minute Miss Raksha, that means that we have learnt nothing from you! Everything we have learnt; we have learnt from Him!”*

This took me back to my initial thought where I had thought, *“Swami this is the first time I am going to share what You have taught me without You being here.”* And the answer I got from within was, ***“I have always been with you, I am with you, and I will always be with you.”***

From that day till the very present moment, with this precious reassurance, my spiritual heart knows and feels deep inside that **Sathya Sai** is indeed my **Eternal Companion**. Wherever and whenever we practice and share His Message, He is present! And in the moments when we may slip and fall, just like a loving parent and true friend, He is also there to help us ‘tune in’ again. Thank you, dear Swami, for your constant presence, inspiration and guidance.

Ms. Raksha Mahtani,
Spain



Ms. Raksha Mahtani lives in Spain. She is the Central Coordinator for the countries of France, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, UK, and Ireland of Zone 6 as well as the Zonal Young Adult Advisor. Raksha is a member of the SSSIO Education Committee and Public Outreach Committee. She is also a faculty member of the Institute of Sathya Sai Education of South Europe since 2009.

Raksha has worked in the field of Education for more than 17 years and promotes human excellence, inspired by the philosophy of Educare as taught by Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Unity Forever

Unity is the strength that binds us forever,
With love and understanding which holds us together,
Unity draws people closer when they need it the most,
Making sure no one is left behind.

Unity needs to flow everywhere,
In the family, community and the world,
Friendship, cooperation, understanding and service
Helps everyone to join together in peace and harmony.

Tightly knit families and nations,
All bonded together in loving unity,
Are stronger in the face of misfortune,
As everyone pulls through to the happy times.

The family is the training ground,
The most important unit in the world,
Family members need to be united in peace and goodwill
For two is better than one.

Brothers and sisters need to work together,
As divine strength lies in being one,
Being united is the kind way to live,
For achieving a loving and peaceful world.

John | SSE Group 3 | United Kingdom



Art Illustration by
Ananya | SSE Group 3 | USA



Art Illustration by
Koushik | SSE Group 4 | USA

Reflections on Shivaratri

Sharavan | SSE Group 4 | USA

The lesson of Shivaratri is that devotees should foster good and sacred thoughts. They should be filled with godly thoughts. They should seek to become one with the Divine by reflecting on their inherent divinity. If you constantly chant the name of God, God realization will come in due course.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, February 26, 1998

Om Sri Sairam.

One of my favorite festivals of the year is Maha Shivaratri. The reason is when I was in SSE Group 1 and Group 2, my parents would let me stay up till 2 in the morning and I would play the kanjira while nearly falling asleep. Also it was a proud moment to tell my friends and family that I stayed up past till midnight for Shivaratri bhajans.

Another thing I learned during Shivaratri time is Lingashtakam. Learning to chant it was definitely something I enjoyed. My all time favorite Shiva bhajan is
Gangadhara Hara Gangadhara Hara Kailasa Nadha Prabhu Sankara
Bhavanasha Bhava Bandha Vimochana
Sathya Sai Shiva Shankara (2)

Another wonderful memory is our SSE gurus telling us the Samudra Manthan (Churning the Ocean of milk) story. Every year it is the same story but the message I took from it changed over the course of time. Now as a SSE group 4 student, the message I got is not only the story but also the significance behind it.

For example, the devas (DemiGods) are the positives and asuras (Demons) represent negatives of our own self. They always exist in the human mind. We need to constantly churn our mind using the power of discrimination. As a result of this process, we may undergo some suffering and pain. All we have to do is offer it to our dear Lord and move on. There might be distractions but we must not lose our focus. Ultimately we will reach our goal (self-realization - Amrit).

In order to not get lost we have to constantly remember that God is always there throughout this process like the tortoise holding the mountain so that it won't sink in the ocean.

Jai Sairam!

Everything is Divine

Om Sri Sairam.

I remember when I was around 12 years old, one of the Sai devotees in our center convinced me into playing khanjeera. By playing this energetic instrument I felt so connected to the fast-paced songs!

This love for bhajans however met a big obstacle in February of 2017. We were getting ready for the Shivaratri Bhajans, and there were a lot of preparations being made before the event, including a practice session for bhajans 5 days before the big event. I was looking forward to participating for this 12-hour musical marathon until something happened that upcoming week. When I was at school, I got hurt playing around and got a hairline fracture on my arm. I couldn't believe this had happened especially since Shivaratri Bhajans were tomorrow.

A lot of emotions came over me, mostly of sadness and frustration because I couldn't enjoy playing through the night. I remember how upset and angry I was, but looking back on it now, I feel everything happens for a reason. This accident taught me to go with the flow and to be grateful for the things that I have. This situation could have been a lot worse, but it was just a couple of weeks and a little pain in the arm.

Since the pandemic, I felt so sad that we don't have bhajans like we used to, but this time has also helped me realize that Swami is always with us. It doesn't matter if you are singing, playing an instrument, walking, eating or doing anything, He is always with us and will give us the best. So, this Shivaratri let us make sure that through the night, no matter where we are or what we are doing, let us keep Sai within our hearts and remember Him and all His teachings.

Jai Sairam!

Skanda | SSE Group 4 | USA

There is no use in just thinking of Shivaratri once a year.
Every minute, every day, every night, you should think of
Divinity and sanctify your time, for the Time principle, truly
speaking, is Shiva.

You yourself are Shiva.

Try to understand and recognize this principle
of Shiva Tatva which is your own Reality.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, February 17, 1985



Dissemination of Human Values

*“Go to every corner of the world and
share My message”*

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba, November 2004

THE MISSION OF THE SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION (SSSIO) is to help as many people as possible to advance their own spiritual awareness. It does not mean that we must try to convert others into Sai followers, but, as members of SSSIO, we have the duty and the responsibility to share Swami's message: a message that God exists, that He is in our hearts, that He is our true self – and that there is a path to realise this eternal truth. The path is to practice the Human Values in all aspects of our lives. So, as per His instruction as well, we have the duty and the responsibility to follow His instruction to share His message.

SSSIO started a Public Outreach Committee (POC) in 2017 in this connection, to intensify the efforts in carrying out this task. The POC has identified four programmes to achieve this goal:

- Public Meetings
- Community Engagement
- Walk for Values
- Interfaith Activities

In addition Swami's message is shared through various projects such as Love All Serve All (LASA), Serve the Planet, Global Peace Day, Human Values Day, etc.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, many Sai members around the world implemented projects related to public meetings, Walk for Values, Interfaith Activities and Community Engagements, sharing the Sathya Sai universal message on Human Values with the general public. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these activities are being conducted online in each region/country, reaching large audiences with a wider dissemination of the universal spiritual message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

We share the Sai Human Values through social media, and through the Values Transform website: <https://valuetransform.org>. The aim of this website is to create greater awareness of these inherent values that reside within each one of us and are common to all, in order to bring out these universal Human Values and put them into practice in our daily lives, spreading them to all corners of the world.

In addition, twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays, topics from the **ValuesTransform** website are posted on Facebook: <https://facebook.com/valuetransform>. Noteworthy is the creation the **Gems Of Eternal Wisdom page**, where once a week, on Mondays, Sri Sathya Sai Baba's quotes are posted for all audiences: <https://facebook.com/GemsOfEternalWisdom>

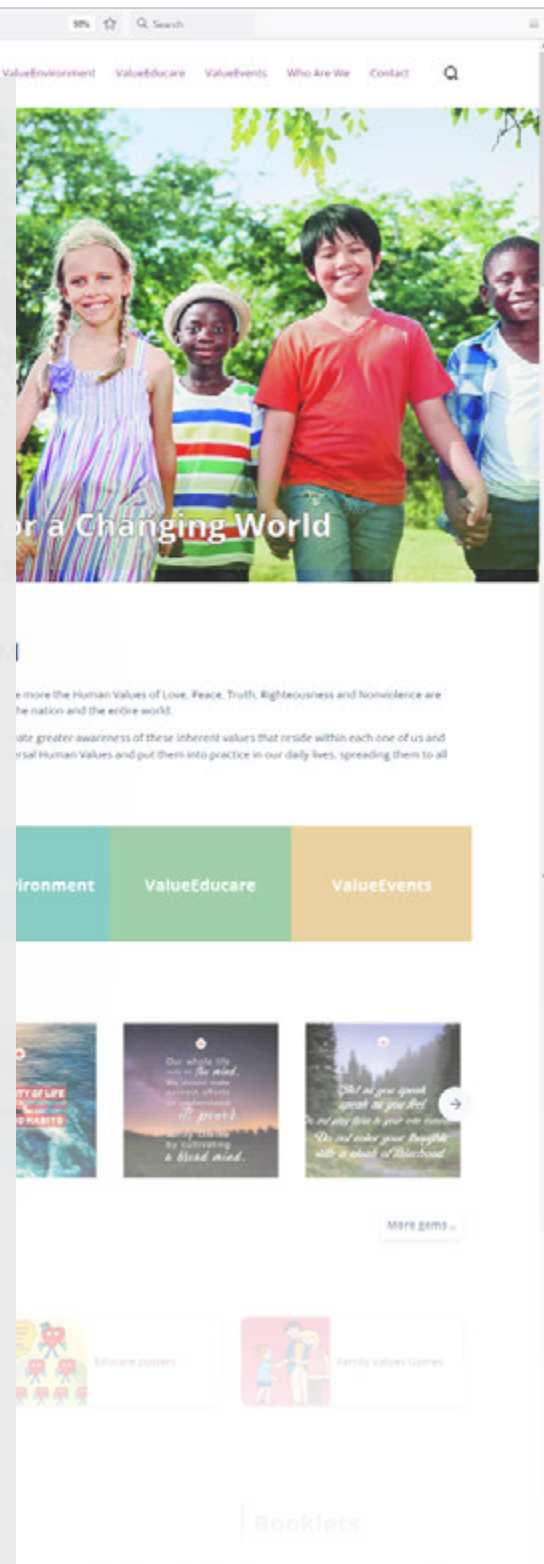
Mr. Marco Fulgenzio,
Italy



<https://valuetransform.org>

<https://facebook.com/valuetransform>

<https://facebook.com/GemsOfEternalWisdom>



Mr. Marco Fulgenzio is a Deputy Central Coordinator for the countries of France, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, UK, and Ireland of Zone 6. He has been an active member of SSSIO of Italy since 1994. He first met Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Prasanthi Nilayam in 1982. In 1993, Swami advised Marco to serve in the SSSIO, where he has held various positions, including National Council President of Italy.

Marco served for 40 years as a teacher and School Administrator.

Upcoming SSSIO Online Events

SSSIO has been conducting online events to share Swami's love, message, and works with everyone around the world. We have reached hundreds of thousands of people through these online events.

We will update the SSSIO online events periodically. Please visit sathyasai.org for further details.

Date of Online Event	Day	Festival/Event
March 1-2, 2022	Tuesday, Wednesday	Maha Shivaratri
April 9-10, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
April 23 & 24, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Sri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsavam
May 6 & 7, 2022	Friday, Saturday	Easwaramma Day
May 14 & 15, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Buddha Poornima



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.



Facebook



Instagram



WhatsApp



Twitter



YouTube



Spotify



Telegram



Email



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



The word 'Educare' means to bring out that which is within. Human values, namely, Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa (Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence) are hidden in every human being. One cannot acquire them from outside; they have to be elicited from within. But as man has forgotten his innate human values, he is unable to manifest them. 'Educare' means to bring out human values. 'To bring out' means to translate them into action.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, September 26, 2000



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never