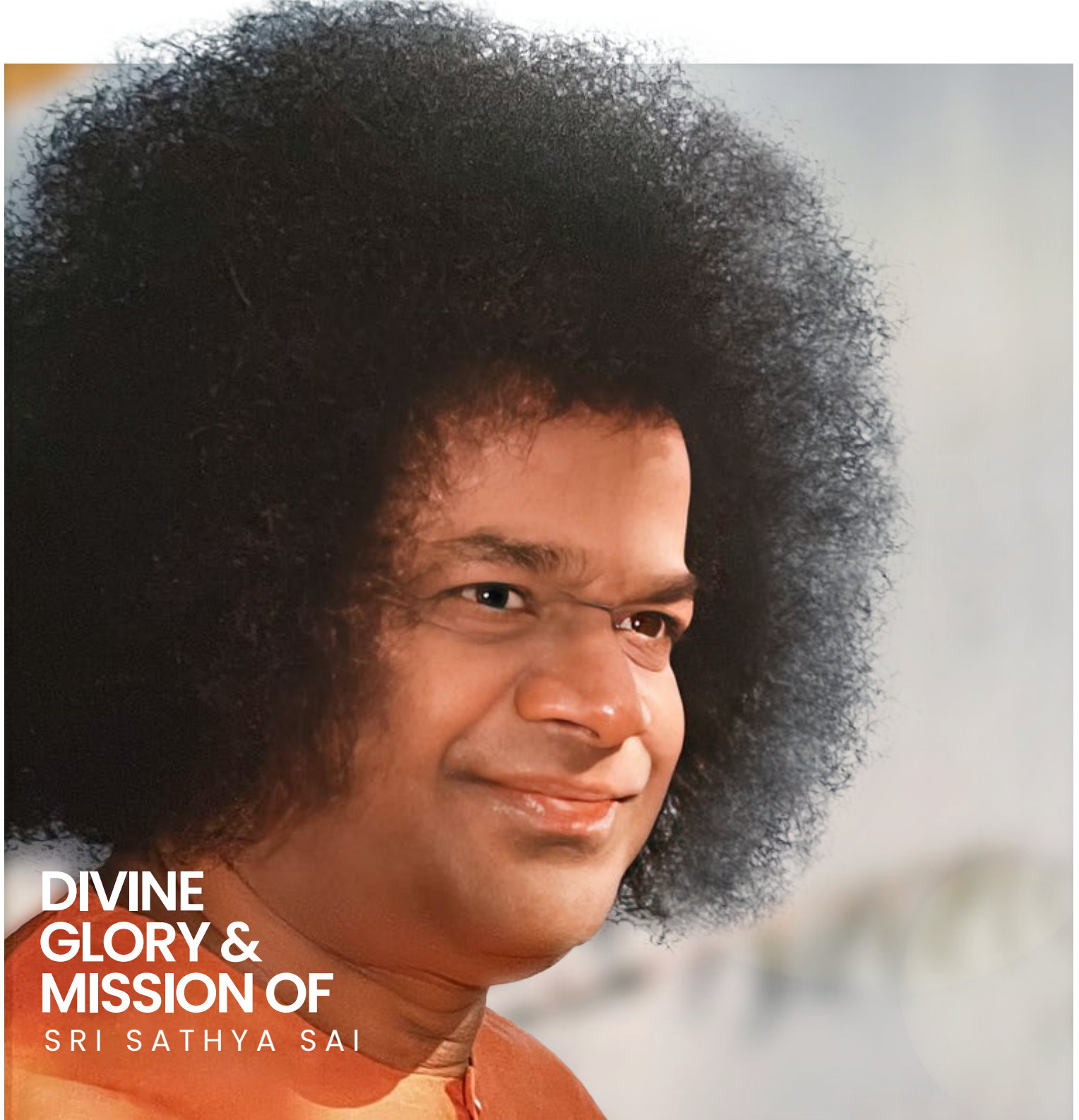




S A T H Y A S A I

THE ETERNAL COMPANION

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AUGUST 2022



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

A PUBLICATION OF THE SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION



Vinayaka (Ganesha) is omnipresent. He teaches through silence and conducts himself in an exemplary manner. Some people think that Vinayaka is worshipped only in Bharat (India) but the Vinayaka Principle is all-pervasive and is worshipped by all. People may follow different paths, but all can experience the Vinayaka Principle. This Vinayaka Principle is present in everyone in the form of breath. It would be sheer foolishness to limit your worship of Vinayaka to idols made of clay and metals. In fact, Vinayaka is your master, who is in you, with you, and around you. By constant contemplation on Vinayaka, all your sins will be destroyed.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Ganesh Chaturthi, August 26, 2009



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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SURRENDER COMPLETELY AND ONLY TO THE LORD

We celebrate August 19 as the Birthday of Sri Krishna, the *Paripoorna* Avatar (incarnation with the fullest manifestation of divine attributes and glory), who declared that He has no birth and no death, no beginning, and no end. This day is celebrated to study the glory, message, life, and sports (*leelas*) of the *Avatar*. Swami has declared that Lord Krishna came with all the powers, the sixteen divine attributes (*Kalas*), to promote the values of love and peace. Sri Rama came to promote the values of *Sathya* and *Dharma*. Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has come to propagate all five human values – *Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, and Ahimsa* – truth, right conduct, peace, love, and nonviolence, with love being the undercurrent of all five human values.

Pay Homage to Lord Krishna

There is only one God who is omnipresent, and He is all names and forms, and also beyond all names, forms, and attributes. Swami declared on May 17, 1968, in the Divine discourse at the First World Conference, **“This is a human form in which every Divine entity, every Divine principle, that is to say, all names and forms ascribed by man to God are manifest.** Do not allow doubt to distract you.” Swami has given the vision of Lord Krishna to Dr. Hislop and

other devotees, the vision of Lord Rama to Mother Easwaramma and the Raja of Venkatagiri, and the vision of several deities to many devotees. Swami has said that how we pay homage to the *Avatar* is important; we should study and reflect on His life, His story, His Divine sports (*leelas*), His Divine works, and His message. **In the Bhagavad Geeta, Lord Krishna said that whosoever comprehends the Divine nature of His life and works will be verily liberated from the cycle of birth and death** (Bhagavad Geeta, Chapter 4, Sloka 9).

Swami, in His infinite love and compassion, has given many discourses on the life and message of Lord Krishna, and His teachings. Swami also wrote two historic, inspiring Vahinis, namely, the Bhagavata Vahini which describes the life and Divine sports of Lord Krishna, and the Geeta Vahini which expounds on Krishna’s eternal and universal message based on the Bhagavad Geeta. One of the best ways to pay homage to the Lord is to dwell on a few aspects of these two Vahinis.

Bhagavata Vahini – His Story

Swami said that the Bhagavata Vahini is without beginning and end because it describes the story of the Lord who has no beginning and no end. Swami also beautifully said that the letters, *Bha, ga,*

va, ta, and mu (Bhagavatamu) summarize all our spiritual practices. **Bha** stands for *Bhakti*, devotion. **Ga** stands for *Gnana*, wisdom. **Va** stands for *Vairagya*, detachment or dispassion, **Ta** stands for *Tatwam*, the real nature or philosophy, and finally, **Mu** stands for *Mukti*, liberation. When we study and practice the message of this holy text, it leads to liberation which is the goal of all spiritual seekers.

Bhagavata Vahini is verily a Divine elixir, by drinking which one can become immortal. That is the beauty of listening to and reading the Divine sports of Lord Krishna.

Scriptures prescribe four goals (*Puru-shaarthas*) for human life: *Dharma*, right conduct; *Artha*, earning by righteous means; *Kama*, fulfilling righteous desires; and finally, *Moksha*, liberation from the cycle of birth and death. But the Bhagavatam also describes *Panchama Purushartha*, the fifth goal of life, supreme devotion (*Para-bhakti*), which is love for love's sake, exemplified by the Gopikas (cowherd girls of Brindavan), who had pure love for Lord Krishna.

Nine Forms of Devotion

Swami often talked about the nine forms of devotion, *Nava-vidha Bhakti*, in His discourses, to nurture the love for God and finally merge in God. These nine types of devotion are described in the Bhagavatam (Skanda 7, Chapter 5, Sloka 23). There was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu called Prahlada. He conveyed to his father (the demon king Hiranyakasyapu) that the purpose of life is to practice these nine types of devotion. Swami beautifully narrates these nine paths: *Sravanam* (hearing His glories), *Keertanam* (singing His praises), *Vishnu-smaranam* (constantly remembering Him), *Pada-sevanam* (serving Him), *Archanam* (worshipping Him), *Vandanam* (saluting Him), *Daasyam* (being His loyal servant), *Sakhyam* (friendship with Him), and *Atma-nivedanam*

(surrendering completely to Him). Practicing any of these nine forms of devotion or a combination thereof will lead us to the goal supreme.

Let us **first consider Sravanam or listening to the glories of God**. The greatest example in the Bhagavatam is King Parikshit who was cursed to die in seven days. He was blessed with the boon of listening to the stories of Lord Krishna related by Sage Suka (son of sage Vyasa) and was liberated from the cycle of birth and death in only seven days. This reveals the power of listening to the stories of God. In His previous Avatar as Shirdi Sai, Baba said that listening to the stories of God and narrating them is the greatest *sadhana* for Self-realization.

Listening to the divine sports of God can give us insight into the highest truth. Sri Krishna was born in a dark prison, where His parents were held in shackles. But the minute He was born, the shackles fell off spontaneously. The prison was flooded by Divine light and the doors of the cell opened so that His father could take Krishna to Brindavan for safety. **Similarly, when the Divine takes birth in us, the shackles of worldly bondage disappear, our hearts open up, and divine light shines in us.**

The second beautiful *Leela* of Lord Krishna is about the villagers who used to worship Lord Indra, the head of the gods. He told them to worship the living God, giving them sustenance, like the cows, the trees, and the Govardhana Giri (mountain). Thus, **Lord Krishna showed people to worship Mother Nature, the environment, as God**. Indra, in his ignorance, got infuriated and sent a rain of stones to punish the villagers. But when God is with someone, how can harm befall that person? Lord Krishna then lifted the mountain Govardhana with His little finger and held it like an umbrella. All the villagers and animals took shelter

under it safely. Indra was ashamed and asked for forgiveness from Lord Krishna.

Second in the nine types of devotion is Keertanam, singing the glories of God, which by itself will lead us to the goal of life. But it needs to be done with *bhava* (feeling), *raga* (melody), and *tala* (rhythm), which brings us into union with God. There are many great devotees like Mirabai, Suradas, and the great sage Narada who merged with God just by singing His name. There are several forms of devotional singing, but Swami emphasized *Nama-sankeertana*, singing the Lord's name which sanctifies our body, mind, and even our surroundings. Swami also emphasized *Nagara-sankeertana* where the devotees walk around the neighborhood while singing aloud, praising the Lord – this not only benefits the singers but also sanctifies the community, the environment, and the surroundings with Divine vibrations.

The third notable form of devotion is the remembrance of God's name, Vishnu-smaranam. Constantly remembering God's name will take us to our goal. A shining example of this devotional path was the five-year-old boy Prahlada who constantly remembered Lord Vishnu, all the time in all his activities. Amazingly, even when he was subjected to punishment and torture, like being poisoned, being thrown off a mountain cliff, and being trampled by an elephant, he cheerfully and joyfully chanted the Lord's name, and nothing could affect him. This is the benefit of constant remembrance of God's name. In a wonderful letter to the teachers and students at Brindavan, Swami wrote that **a person who has the name 'Sai' on his lips all the time will be a Jeevan-mukta, liberated while alive.**

In addition, three other practices like **Padasevanam**, serving Him; **Archanam**, ritualistic worship with flowers, garlands, etc.; and **Vandanam**, saluting or prostrat-

ing at His feet are also ways to express our love for God.

Next are the final three important paths, starting with **Daasyam**, being a servant of God. One of the greatest examples of this form of devotion is Hanuman who was always eager to serve his Lord Sri Rama. When he was in search of Mother Sita in Sri Lanka, his only goal was to do the Lord's work, and no adversity or distraction could stop him. For us, participating in the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization, which bears Swami's sacred name which He kindly lent to the Organization, provides the opportunity for selfless service. This is a wonderful gift of His love and grace, and we should serve in the Divine mission with our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The next form of devotion is **Sakhyam**, friendship with the Lord. The only true friend is God. We need to develop intimate friendship and kinship with God. Notable examples in the scriptures are Arjuna who had such friendship with Lord Krishna, and Sudama (Kuchela), a childhood friend of Lord Krishna. When we see God as our friend, we share our joys and sorrows with Him, wherein we feel a kinship, a one-on-one personal relationship with God.

Finally, as we progress in our spiritual journey, **the last stage is total surrender to God (Atmanivedanam)** – “Lord, Thy will be done, not mine. I don't exist. The only One who exists is You and only You.” At this stage, we surrender our body, mind, intellect, and all possessions to God. Then we come to realize that nothing belongs to us. **The ultimate word in spirituality is surrender when we realize that there exists only God and God alone. Then there is no difference between the devotee and God.**

The greatest example of complete surrender Swami has given in Bhagavata Vahini is Emperor Bali, who gave up his kingdom and property and his own life to serve the Lord.

When we practice any or all of these nine forms of devotion, we live in the thoughts of God.

Bhagavad Geeta – Message of Lord Krishna

Now we will focus on the Bhagavad Geeta, which is the universal and eternal message of Lord Krishna. The message of Bhagavad Geeta, given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, applies to all of us as we too are engaged in war between good and evil forces within ourselves. Sometimes we may have conflicts in the family, at work, in society, in the community, in the Organization, or in the nation. The Lord has shown us how to face these day-to-day challenges with detachment, strength, and courage through various Yogas, including *Bhakti Yoga* (path of devotion), *Jnana Yoga* (path of wisdom), and *Karma Yoga* (path of selfless service). Swami has given a series of 34 discourses on the Bhagavad Geeta in the year 1984. He also wrote the Geeta Vahini, elaborating the message of Lord Krishna. These Vahinis are essential reading for all spiritual seekers who want to study the life and message of Lord Krishna, as they were written by Swami, who is none other than Lord Krishna come again as Sai Krishna.

In the Bhagavad Geeta, Lord Krishna has given **three assurances**:

First, in Chapter 4, Sloka 8, He says, “*Paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām; Dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge*” – I incarnate from

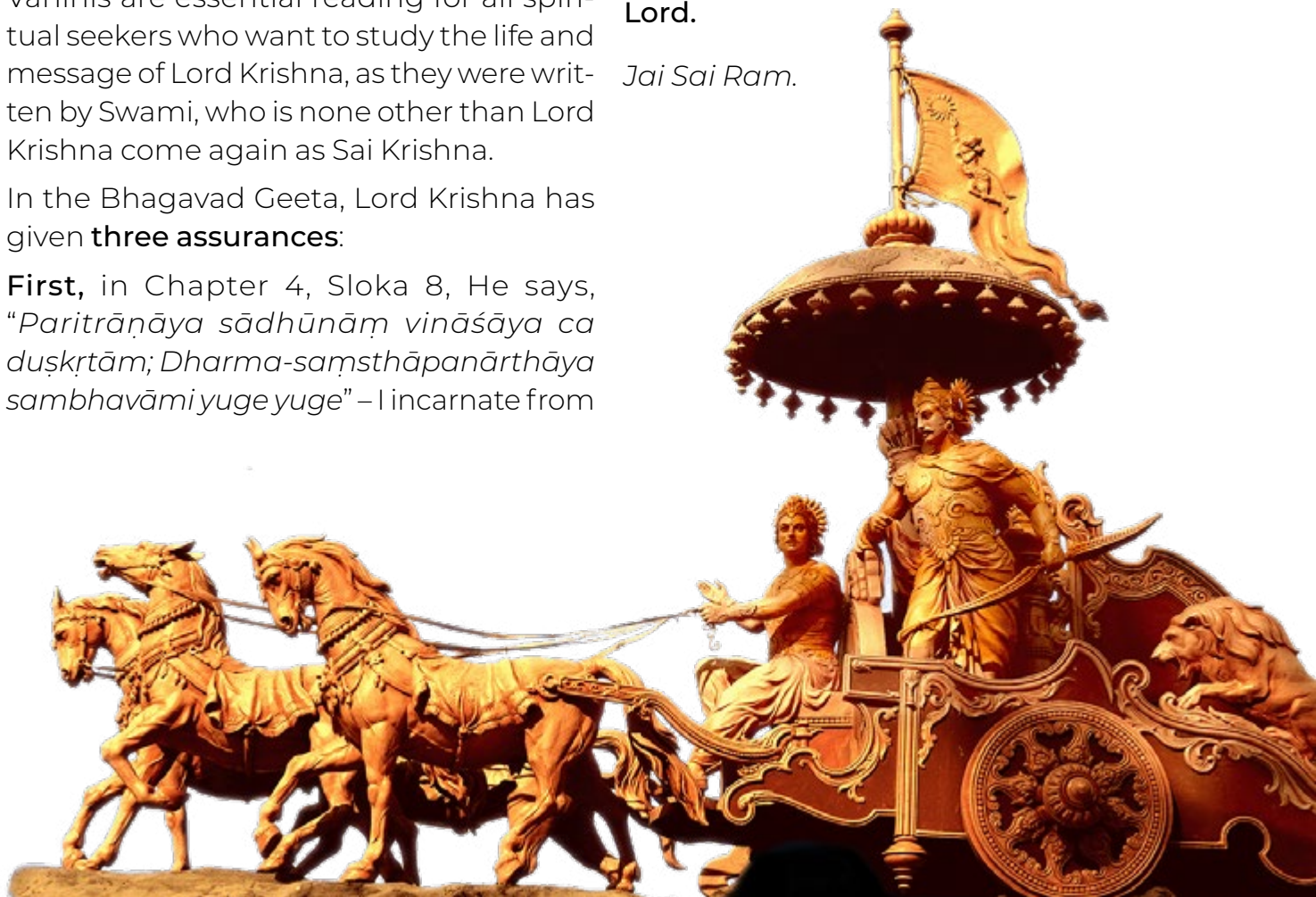
age to age to establish *Dharma*, uplift the good, and destroy the wicked. It applies not only to the good and bad people, but it also refers to our inner qualities of good and bad, so that we nurture our good qualities and get rid of our bad traits.

Second, in Chapter 9, Sloka 22, Lord Krishna assures, “*Ananyāścintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate; Teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānām yogakṣemaṁ vahāmyaham*” – I will take care of those who constantly contemplate on Me. I will take care of their welfare here and hereafter. I will protect what they have and provide what they do not have, and ultimately give them liberation.

The third assurance is given in Chapter 18, Sloka 66, “*Sarvadharmān-parityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja; Ahaṁ tvā sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*” – Giving up all your obligations, surrender to Me alone. I will remove all your sins, all your grief, and give you liberation.

Let us remember these three assurances, and surrender completely and only to the Lord.

Jai Sai Ram.





Lord Krishna

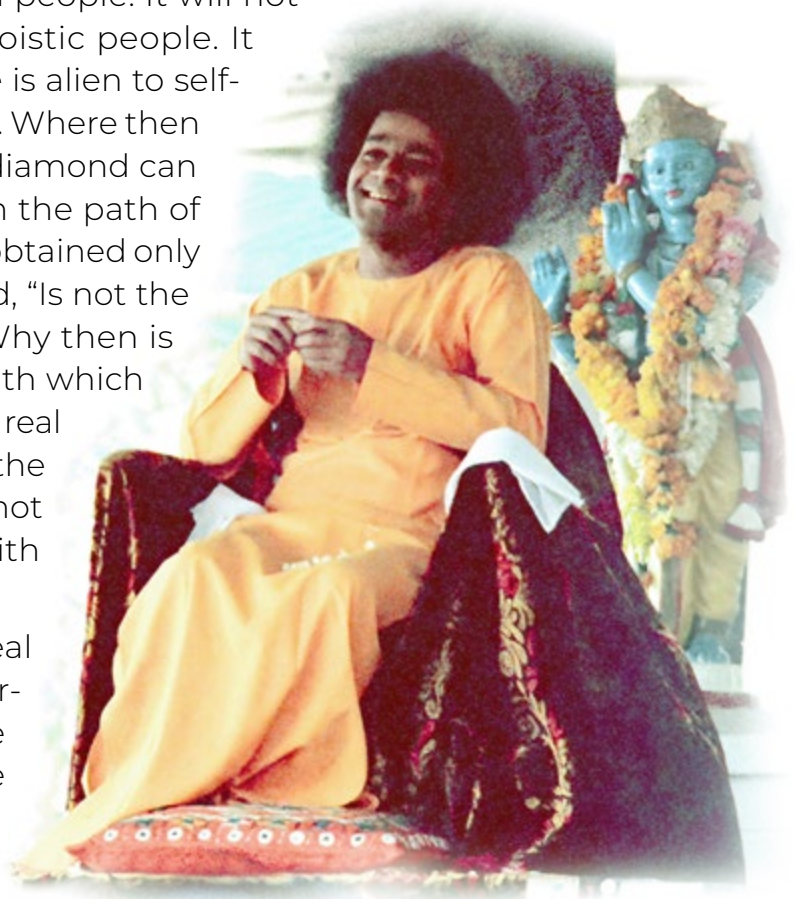
The Love Incarnate

*Love is God, the whole world is permeated with love
Coming in the form of love with great affection
Showers nectarine love bringing love among all
Lord Sri Krishna is the incarnation of Love, yearn for that Love.*

(Telugu poem)

Love (*Prema*) is like a most precious diamond. It will not remain even for a single moment with selfish people. It will not stay for even half a moment with egoistic people. It never enters ostentatious people. Love is alien to selfish, conceited, and ostentatious people. Where then is this love to be found? This precious diamond can only be got in the Kingdom of Love, in the path of Love, and in the shop of Love. It can be obtained only through a loving heart. It may be asked, "Is not the whole world permeated with Love? Why then is Love not readily available?" The love with which the world is considered to be filled is not real love. *Prema* associated with the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect cannot be called Love; anything associated with these is only affection (*anuraga*).

The spiritual life (*Atmic* life) alone is real Love. Therefore, people must lead a spiritual life, not a life associated with the body, the mind, the senses, and the intellect. A life related to the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect can never be free from selfishness,



“You may consider that the love within you and Divine Love are the same. But there is a difference – God’s love is totally selfless. It is absolutely pure. It is eternal. It is flawless.

conceit, and ostentation. **To experience real Prema, there is no need to practice any *japa* (repetition of God’s name), meditation, worship, or rituals, because, in the practice of all these, there is an element of selfishness and self-interest. Prema can only be obtained by complete absorption in spirituality.** It was for this reason that Sri Krishna declared in the Gita: “*Sarva Dharmaan Parithyajya*” (transcend all duties, surrender to me alone). Likewise, Jesus also declared: “I am the Path.” Buddha, conveying the same message, declared, “*Sarvam Sharanam Gachchami*” (I surrender everything). This means that the essence of all religions, the root of all scriptures, and the goal of all paths (*dharmas*), is *Sarvaarpitha Bhavam* (as an offering of total surrender). The Gopikas (cowherd girls of Brindavan) exemplified such a spirit of surrender and Oneness.

Restrain Selfishness and Self-Interest

It may be asked whether it is possible to develop such a spirit of complete surrender in this mundane world. It may not be possible for all to be completely free from selfishness, self-interest, and self-conceit. But there should be a limit to them. Nothing great can be achieved without restraint (*Na Shreyo Niyamam Vina*). When the normal temperature of the body is exceeded, it is a sign of illness. Likewise, there is a limit to selfishness. When this limit is exceeded, it becomes a disease. Egoism (*Ahamkara*) is a disease. Ostentation is a disease. Selfishness is a disease. Self-interest is a disease. All these diseases put together is called

bhavaroga (the disease of worldliness). These are the diseases that are prevalent in the world today. When the Divine is present in everyone, it is not fitting that one should fail to recognize this. One may have the faith that God resides within Him, but this is not sufficient. It is not a great thing to feel that God resides within you. You have to see yourself in God. That is the true *Prema-thathwa* (principle of Love). So long as you do not see yourself in the Divine, you remain selfish and self-centered.

Experience Ananda

Every man aspires for bliss (*Ananda*). **Vedanta defines *Ananda* as *Yoga*. *Yoga* is usually considered as some form of breathing or physical exercise. This is not the true meaning of *Yoga*. *Yoga* means *Ananda*.** Wherefrom can this *Ananda* be obtained. Only from the One who is the embodiment of *Ananda*. It cannot be obtained from possessions of any kind, food, recreation, position, or power. **We can receive this *Ananda* only from God, who is the embodiment of *Ananda*.** When will we get this *Ananda*?

Gopikas and Radha were always contemplating on Lord Krishna with the feeling of Oneness. **Who are Gopikas? Who is Radha? Gopikas symbolize our thoughts. Radha symbolizes the mind which is the combination of all thoughts. So, thoughts and the mind should melt in Krishna, represented by *Prajna* (Constant Integrated Awareness).** That is “*Prajnanam Brahma*” (Constant Integrated Awareness is Brahma). This *Prajnanam* pervades not

only the human body, the mind, the intellect, and conscience (*Anthahkarana*) but also the entire Cosmos. This means that *Prajna* pervades the inside and the outside of the Cosmos. This *Prajna* is *Brahman*. This means 'Constant Integrated Awareness'. All our thoughts, desires, and aspirations should be merged in this *Prajna*.

When this *Prajna* is present in all beings as the Divine (as *Brahman*), what is the need, it may be asked, for the descent of Avatars? There are reasons for the advent of Avatars. There are two kinds of perceptions viz. direct (*Prathyaksham*) and indirect (*Paroksham*). There are also two kinds of potencies: internal and external. For example, there is the fire within a piece of firewood (*Paroksham*). It is only when the fire latent in the firewood is brought out (*Prathyaksham*), it can be used for cooking. Likewise, everybody is like a piece of firewood with latent potency. The *Atmic* principle is latent within it. To make it manifest, some form of love has to be practiced. Just as you must strike the matchstick against the matchbox to produce fire, Love has to merge in Love to experience the Divine.

Difference Between Divine Love and Human Love

You may consider that the love within you and Divine Love are the same. But there is a difference – **God's love is totally selfless. It is absolutely pure. It is eternal. It is flawless. Human love is selfish, self-centered, and mixed with attributes (*gunas*). Such love cannot merge with God's love.** It is only when one is free from egoism, pride, hatred, and envy that God will abide in you. Without sacrifice (*Thyaga*), if a person is immersed in worldly pleasures and leads a mundane life, all his devotion is only artificial and a kind of self-deception. Such devotion will not lead to union with God. Today the world is full of such people.

People claim that they are loving God. But I have not seen a single person who truly

loves God. Everyone loves God for his own sake and not for the sake of God. This is pure selfishness. Man loves all objects in the world for selfish reasons and not for the sake of objects. Even God is sought for such a selfish reason. God cannot be reached so easily. The heart has only a single seat. There is room in it for only one person. If you install worldly desires on that chair, how can you expect God to sit on it? God will sit on that seat only if you vacate it of all other things.

Selfless Devotion of The Gopikas

Today, in the name of Love, men are playing a game of musical chairs with their hearts. The chair of the heart is occupied by different people at different times. The Gopikas, however, dedicated their hearts to one person alone (Lord Krishna).

All their thoughts were centered on Krishna. All their senses were wholly dedicated to the Divine. **They spoke only about God. Their thoughts were centered only on God. They listened only to the Divine words. Their hands were always engaged in Divine work. All their limbs and senses were dedicated to the Divine. They did not consider anything as their own. Krishna was their All.**

Here is an episode from the life of Krishna to demonstrate the total devotion of the Gopikas to the Lord. Once Krishna pretended that He was suffering from a headache for which the cure was the application, to His head, of the dust from the feet of a devotee. Sage Narada sought to collect the dust from Sathyabhama, Rukmini, and others, whom he regarded as great devotees of the Lord. But all of them declined to give the dust from their feet because they considered it sacrilege to offer their dust to be placed on the Lord's head. Ultimately Narada approached the Gopikas, who did not hesitate in the slightest to offer the dust from their feet because it would give immediate relief to

“*People are attached more to names and forms than inner purity. To get over this false attachment to external forms and names, it is essential to cultivate love in its purest form.*”

their Lord from His headache, regardless of the consequences to themselves. **The Gopikas did not consider whether it was right or wrong for them to offer the dust of their feet. They were only concerned with giving relief to their beloved Lord by any means. They declared, “Our entire life is dedicated to Krishna. His joy is ours.”** This was the spirit of Oneness with which they offered the dust of their feet. And that very moment, His headache was gone. By the time Narada reached Krishna, he found the Lord wreathed in smiles. Krishna told the sage, “You are boasting that you are devotees of the Lord. But none of you have the total selfless devotion of the Gopikas.”

How to Obtain Divine Love

Today there are many who claim to be devotees of the Lord and are close to the Lord. But few can be described as real devotees of God. In everyone, there is some element of selfishness. As long as there is an element of selfishness and egoism, the Lord's vision will not fall on them. To explain this, consider the Sun shining bright and effulgent. When the thick clouds pass in front of the Sun, the Sun is not visible to anyone. Does this mean, the Sun's effulgence is not there? It is there. As the clouds came in the way, the effulgence could not be seen. Likewise, **God is always the embodiment of Love. However, when the dark clouds of ego, selfishness, and ostentation are obstructing, this essence of Love does not get transmitted.**

The *Prema-thathwa* (Love Principle) is the only means to recognize the Divinity in man. All other means are of no avail. From

the Epic Mahabharatha, take the example of the fate of Karna and the destiny of Arjuna which indicates the difference between the former who does not have Divine grace and the latter who has the blessing of Divine grace. While Karna, who was associated with the wicked Kauravas, met with a tragic end, Arjuna, who was associated with God Almighty, was blessed with victory. All Indian scriptures and Puranas demonstrate the power of the Lord's grace to transform the human to the state of the Divine. Although people have been taking birth after birth because of their attachment to worldly pleasures, they have not been able to get rid of their involvement with worldly concerns. Hence, they are unable to experience the bliss of Oneness with the Divine. All the bad thoughts and bad actions which they have accumulated in previous lives continue to prevent them from experiencing the Divine. It is only when one gets rid of these impure thoughts that he can experience Divine feelings.

Cultivate Love in Its Purest Form

The *Prema-thathwa* (Love Principle) is the essence of *Krishna-thathwa* (Krishna Principle). It is associated with the Divine. Worldly love cannot be equated with Divine Love. The term Love is used in ordinary parlance to describe what is really a worldly attachment. People are attached more to names and forms than to inner purity. To get over this false attachment to external forms and names, it is essential to cultivate love in its purest form. There is no greater path to the Divine than this love.

“*It is not enough if you claim to be a devotee of the Lord. The Lord must recognize you as a devotee. Only then does one's devotion acquire value.*”

To manifest this love, the first requisite is to get rid of selfishness and ego.

Dear students, dear devotees! It is not so easy to experience the Divine. You may imagine that you have comprehended the Divine. You are immersed in the affairs of the phenomenal world. This cannot lead you to Eternal Reality. Only those who are dedicated to the realization of the Eternal can attain it. In Lord Krishna's principle, there were many ideals. This is illustrated by the Gopikas' total dedication of their lives to Krishna. They sought the complete merger of themselves in the Divine.

Surrender Completely to The Lord

Today, people are totally immersed in worldly concerns and do not devote any attention to their spiritual quest. **It is true that involvement in worldly affairs cannot be given up totally. But all such actions can be sanctified by performing them in a spirit of dedication to the Divine.** Gopikas lived their life full of Love for the Divine. Worldly sorrows, criticisms, and rebukes did not bother them. Worldly praise and blame did not affect them. They wanted only Lord Krishna to accept them as a devotee. It is not enough if you claim to be a devotee of the Lord. The Lord must recognize you as a devotee. Only then does one's devotion acquire value.

Arjuna, for a long time, felt proud about his closeness to Krishna and his devotion to Him. It was only towards the end he realized that he had to abide by the words of Krishna and completely surrender to the Lord. He then declared, “I shall carry out Your words (*Karishye Vachanam Thava*).”

No one should feel that it is beyond his capacity to surrender completely to the Lord. If there is firm determination, this can be accomplished. It is only through absolute faith that Divine wisdom can be attained (*Shraddhavan Labhathe Jnanam*). Today the world is afflicted with the epidemic of egoism (*Ahamkara*). There is really no basis for this kind of self-conceit. It is born of ignorance. It must be totally eradicated. If everyone realizes that the body must be used as an instrument for the pursuit of righteousness and acts on that basis, he will be able to realize the Divine.

Avatars Come to Propagate Divine Love

Embodiments of Divine Love! Experience the Love Principle and get rid of hatred. Once hatred goes the world will be free from violence and strife. For all the cruelty and violence that we find in the world today, the root cause is selfishness and ego. These must be eradicated. By cultivating the Love Principle and manifesting love in all your thoughts and actions, you will experience the bliss of Love. **When one is filled with the Love of the Divine, all pains and troubles will be forgotten.** You have more love for your body than for God. You are nurturing this transient, impermanent, and false identification with the body. **You are forgetting the Atmic feeling which is eternal and full of Divine Love. It is to propagate this principle of Divine Love that the advent of Avatars takes place from time to time.**

Although the Divine dwells in every person, this fact remains latent like oil in the

Sesame (*Til*) seeds. To manifest the Divine within you, you have to go through certain trials and tribulations. Love of the Divine will grow when you go through such experiences of adversity. **Just as gold increases in brilliance the more it is heated in the crucible, your devotion must go through a constant purificatory process.** Today, thoughts, words, looks, and actions are polluted in one way or another. Young people should realize that they must lead ideal lives. Only then will they be true to the message of the scriptures and epics. Every student should aim at becoming an ideal example to the world. For this purpose, they should cultivate good company, the company of persons filled with Divine Love.

Good Company (*Satsang*)

For the progress or downfall in your spiritual path, it is the company that is crucial. Dirt in the company of wind can reach the sky even though it has no wings to fly. Because of its company with the air, it can fly high and reaches the sky. Whereas the same dust in the company of water sinks down to the bottom even though it doesn't have the legs to go down. Thus, the saying, **'Tell Me Your Company, I shall tell you what you are.'** When you join bad company, you also become bad. For this

reason, we must keep good company. Then only we can become virtuous. **Cultivate the principle of Love. Be associated with those who are full of Divine Love.**

Spirituality

What is Spirituality? Is it singing bhajans (devotional songs), doing worship, *Japa*, and meditation? No. These are only preparatory steps. **In reality, spirituality means to get rid of animal instincts and manifest Divine qualities.** Despite practicing various spiritual practices, man's animal instincts are not diminishing. The reason is unlike in previous ages (*Yugas*), people today pretend to be what they are not. What is animality? Food, sleep, fear, and procreation are common to both man and animal. But man is endowed with the wealth of wisdom. A man without this wisdom is equal to an animal. Because of the animal qualities, all our efforts are in vain. So, first, we must get rid of animal qualities. Then, we must evolve from human to Divine. This is the true nature of devotion! We must prove this in our actions. This is the real sign of devotion!

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

August 21, 1992



Love of God is the means and the goal. This is the secret to be learnt from the Gopikas (cowherd girls of Brindavan). They saw love in everything. The Divine is in everyone. But to realize it, there is only one way. It is to cultivate intense love of God. Only that day when one strives to develop such love for God is the day of Krishna's birth.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

August 31, 1983

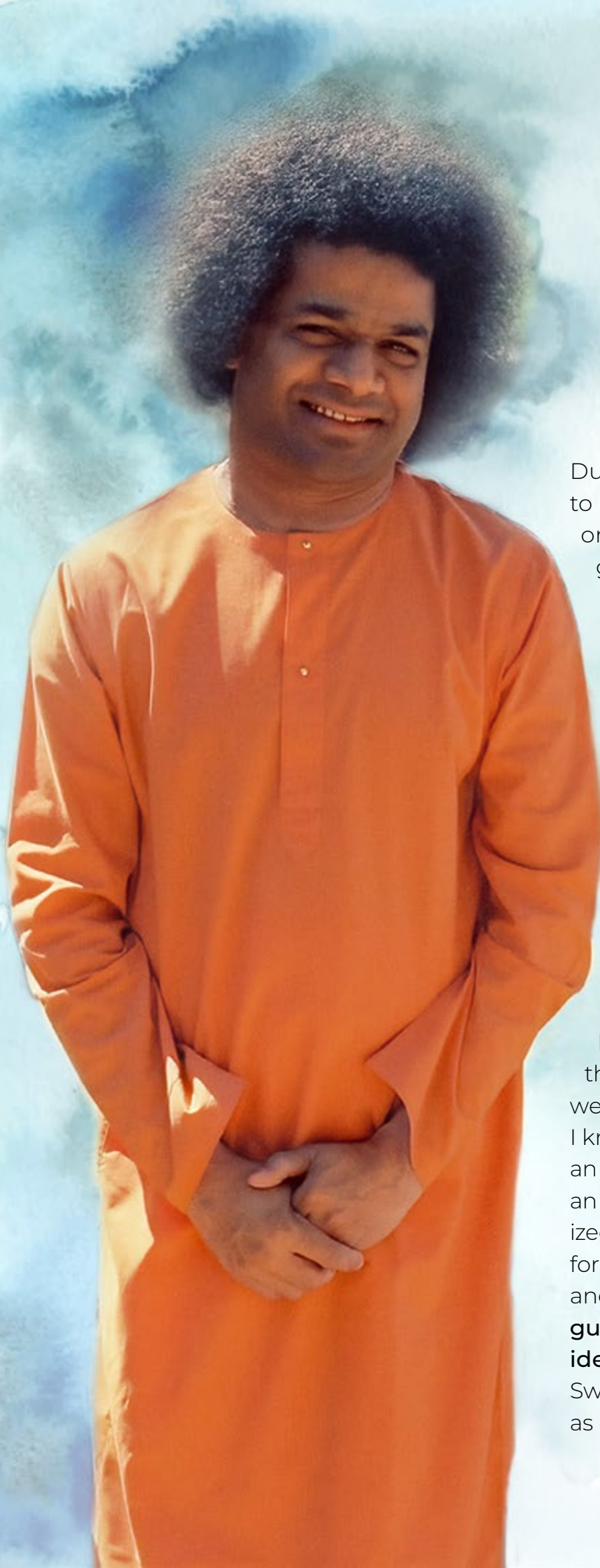
Guru of Gurus

In 1975, my wife and I attended a public meeting about Sri Sathya Sai Baba in our hometown in the USA. We were awestruck hearing about His mind-boggling miracles, profound universal teachings, and the healing powers of His *Vibhuti* (Holy ash).

Divine Physician

At that time, our son was two weeks old, born with health issues, but too young to receive the needed surgery. We began giving him *Vibhuti* regularly. When he was nine months old we took him to the hospital for preparatory screening for the surgery. **The doctors came out to the waiting room and told us to our elation that there is nothing wrong with our son, and there is no need for surgery!** We were greatly relieved and thankful. We knew it was a miracle and wondered about the power of *Vibhuti*. Within another year, we were delighted that our daughter was born. We soon attended the local Sathya Sai Baba center for the first time. Though we love them now, the bhajans sounded too foreign to us then. We could not connect, and so we discontinued attending the center.

Even though we knew of Swami, He had not yet revealed Himself to our hearts. It was a sort of lukewarm relationship. But, when He established His connection in our hearts, it was in a very endearing manner.



He Touches our Hearts with His Bhajans

During those years it was not unusual to see a box of community give-away or recycle items at the entrance of a grocery store. As I passed by one day I glanced at the box, and on top was an audio cassette tape, "Sathya Sai Baba Sings the Bhajans at the Fiftieth Birthday Golden Jubilee." We brought it home and played the tape; It was as if the skies opened, and rainbows came out as we thrilled to the sound of His voice singing the bhajans. We played the tape non-stop for several days. We immediately began singing bhajans at our Center meetings; it no longer sounded foreign, because of the heart-to-heart connection. I played the guitar. We began reading anything we could find on Sai Baba. What I read I knew undoubtedly was true: that He is an incarnation of the Universal Absolute, an Avatar (God in human form). We realized that striving from lifetime to lifetime for Self-realization is for mortals like us, and **an Avatar is there to help us and guide us to realize our true goal and identity.** We began having dreams of Swami and experiences in meditation as our love toward Him grew. I knew He



I am filled with gratitude to Swami for revealing His Divinity and enabling me to recognize my own.

was God. We met devotees who had been to Prasanthi Nilayam, some for long periods. It wasn't long before we wanted to visit India to see Him.

In July 1981, we found ourselves sitting on the sands of the holy grounds of Prasanthi Nilayam with our eyes seeing the Lord (*darshan*) each day. Our longing to see Swami was so intense that no hurdle seemed too high. To come to Prasanthi Nilayam, we had to sell our newly built home, I had to quit my special education teaching position, and we came to India with our children ages 3 and 5, intending to stay a long time at the feet of Swami. We attended *darshan* eagerly, hoping for good chances. We rejoiced every minute in His presence and joined all devotees in observing His every move. We attended talks for westerners given by Professor N. Kasturi and his son Mr. Murthy. We strictly followed the ashram guidelines by staying inside the ashram and eating food at the South Indian canteen, even though it was too spicy for our western taste.

“I Have More Work to Do with You”

At first, Swami paid a lot of attention to our children. We have many sweet memories of those precious days. For my son's birthday, Swami wrote the Sanskrit letter 'OM' on the slate he held out. On another day, He blessed him with a plum. He tossed candy to our daughter. Gradually, Swami taught and guided us ever so gently and subtly.

Swami's first look directly in my eyes came after some days in *darshan*. At the instant of His gaze, I knew I should resume my career in special education.

We were slowly being transformed by Swami, despite the physical challenges of losing weight from the lack of food we were accustomed to. We reluctantly came to the realization that we had to return home sooner than expected, but we also had the conviction that we were forever devoted to Swami whatever life may bring. The night before we left Prasanthi Nilayam, Swami came to me in a dream, and said, “You may be going, but I have more work to do with you.”

With Swami's grace, we returned home, I re-entered the special education field, my wife began teaching, and we soon were able to build another house. We attended Sathya Sai Center meetings. Over the years, I had the wonderful opportunity and privilege to serve in various leadership positions in the SSSIO. By the late 1990s, we started annual visits to Prasanthi Nilayam for Swami's *darshan*, then twice a year during the 2000s.

“Follow the Conscience”

In late September 2000, the ten-day festivities of Dasara (Navarathri) were in full swing at Prasanthi Nilayam. The Human Values conference organized for educators around the world had just concluded. The organizers of the conference were given privileged

seating in front of the interview room door. Being my first time sitting on the veranda, I felt an indescribable peace and deep spiritual bliss.

On October 1, 2000, Swami called me and a doctor sitting on the *veranda* for an interview. We sat on the floor by His chair. He spoke to us lovingly, revealing His omniscience. **Every word and casual talk that we were privileged to hear were so precious that they were etched permanently in my memory.**

Swami enquired, "How is your work?" I answered, "You mean, special education?" Swami said, "What is special education?" I said, "Education for the disabled." Swami said, "It is just bookish knowledge." I replied, "Should I stop?" Swami advised, "Two years."

I felt that the 'bookish knowledge' applies to my work. I continued to work for another seven years. At the end of each year, I followed my conscience in deciding whether to work another year. When a retirement package of "two years" additional credit was offered, I retired. Swami's statement came true.

Swami said to the doctor, "I came to you in dreams."

The doctor replied, "Yes."

Swami then said to me, "Dreams."

I responded, "Many times, Swami." Swami motions to His chest, "Not imagination."

I had numerous dreams with Swami, but occasionally my mind would doubt whether it was real. He cleared that doubt.

Later Swami said, "Body is a water bubble, don't follow the body. Mind is a mad monkey, don't follow the mind. **Follow the conscience,**" pointing to my chest. Toward the end of the interview, He told me, "You are divine." In my heart, I heard, "ask for *padanamaskar*." I said, "Swami, may I take *padanamaskar*?" Swami, "Yes, take." As I was touching His feet, He blessed me.

Time has passed. In 2022, I continue to keep my connection with Swami, as they say, "keeping the coal in contact with the live ember." **I am filled with gratitude to Swami for revealing His Divinity and enabling me to recognize my own,** for bringing us into His orbit, for His teachings, and for the chance to help spread His message to the world through the SSSIO.

Dr. Tom Scovill
USA



Dr. Tom Scovill first visited Swami in 1981. He holds an Education Doctorate and lives in California, USA. Tom is a retired educator who worked for 32 years in teaching children with disabilities and administration. Dr. Scovill is a member of the SSSIO Education Committee and also develops content for the sathyasai.org website. He served earlier as the President of Region 7 (Northern California and Nevada) of SSSIO, USA. Dr. Scovill has trained many teachers in Sai Spiritual Education in Northern California.

Mother Sai

My Eternal Companion

My family's multi-generational journey with Swami began in 1964. At the end of a typical workday in Chennai, my mother's colleague mentioned that she was going to see Sai Baba and invited my mother to join her. Being raised in a conservative family, it was atypical for my mother to agree to go anywhere without her father's permission, let alone see a spiritual teacher. But on that particular occasion, she felt a strong urge to accompany her friend.

Face to Face with God

The moment she saw Swami, she felt an instant connection and knew she was face to face with God. Filled with newfound faith, she returned home to share her experience with the family. When she entered her home, she was greeted by anxious parents and reprimanded for returning late. My mother began to cry, explaining that she did not go to a movie or a club but to see Sai Baba. Seeing his beloved daughter in tears, my grandfather comforted her and promised the whole family would visit Sai Baba the next day. **Thus began the eternal companionship with the Lord and integration of divinity into our family.**

My mother, her parents, and her three sisters went to see Swami the following day. During darshan, as Swami passed by, my eldest aunt attempted to get His attention and began to say, "Swami." Swami interjected and said in Telugu, "*Telusu-ley! Nee shoes akkada petti, ikkada vocchi koorchunnaavu. Swami neetone eppudu untaadu.*" (I know! You have left your shoes there (pointing to a tree), and you've come and sat here. Swami is always

with you.) He then blessed her by touching her head and granting *padanamaskar* (blessing to touch His holy feet). Even before she could tell Swami about her disability caused by polio, Swami, in His infinite compassion and omniscience, indicated He knew about her condition.

To the family's utter amazement, my aunt was offered a position as a schoolteacher the following Thursday, giving her financial independence. She had suffered numerous rejections for employment. As a disabled daughter destined to be dependent, by His Divine will, she was able to support her aging parents.

Over time, each family member developed a personal connection with Swami. Free time was spent focusing on Swami, and vacations were spent in Puttaparthi. They joined the Sai Organization in different capacities. Eventually, the family became fully dedicated to Swami.

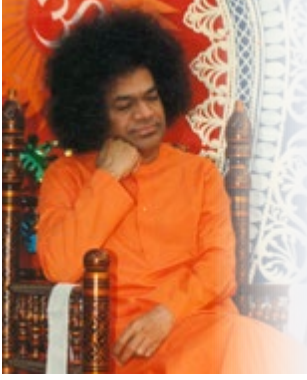
Thummi Flower Garlands

Back then, Swami would often accept and wear garlands that devotees offered to Him. During their visits to Puttaparthi, my mother and her sisters learned how to make Thummi (*Leucas Aspera*) flower garlands for Swami. **These tiny delicate white flowers are a favorite of Lord Siva.** The flowers had to be carefully plucked, preserved, and strung into a life-sized garland for Swami. The sisters were blessed with several opportunities to make these garlands for Swami during His visits to Chennai. Swami affec-



tionately referred to them as the “*Thumba Poo Sisters*” (Thummi flower sisters). Every Sunday, during bhajans at the Sai Center (*Samithi*), which was in their home, they would make a life-size garland for the altar. To them, the act of making garlands was service (*seva*), expressing their devotion (*bhakti*), and spiritual practice (*sadhana*). During bhajans, they not only felt His presence but also witnessed several miracles and materializations.

While my mother and her sisters devoted their lives to Swami, my grandmother did everything to support them so that they could focus on their devotion. She ensured that every family member was fed and taken care of. After her household duties were completed, she too participated in the garland making. Once during Swami's visit to Chennai, He sent for my mother to come to the prayer room of the residence where He was staying. As she watched Swami being garlanded with the Thummi flower garland she and her sisters made, she heard Swami tell the other devotees, “*Idi yemo*



As Swami emphasized the importance of women in spirituality and society, I realized the importance of living a life that embodies Sai values.

telusaa? Thummi poolu. Shivudiki preeti." (Do you know what this is? Thummi flowers. Lord Shiva is very fond of them.) Swami then materialized *Vibhuti* for her and blessed her with *padanamaskar*. Such is the joy of living in the light and love of Mother Sai.

My Connection with Swami

Growing up with stories of my family's dedication and devotion inspired and accelerated my spiritual journey. My first recollection of Swami is seeing Him at *darshan* in Chennai as a child in the early 1980s. As Swami was gently gliding across a sea of devotees, it felt like He, who is beyond time, moved in slow motion. **I witnessed His playfulness, love, humanness, and divinity embodied into one beautiful form.** Even at that age, I knew He was God and that I could have a personal relationship with Him.

Some of my fondest childhood memories are going to my grandparents' home for bhajans with my parents every weekend. That sparked my love of bhajans. My mother had enrolled me in Balvikas (Sai Spiritual Education or SSE) classes held in the house where Swami stayed while visiting Chennai in the 60s.

Joining Swami's College

Every year in May, devotees from Chennai were given the opportunity to volunteer for various services in Prasanthi Nilayam. One year, I accompanied my mother as

a young adult and met some students of the Anantapur campus (Swami's college for women). I was amazed and inspired by the prospect of close *darshan* and guidance from Swami while getting an education. My strong desire to become a Sai student prompted me to write a letter to Swami. As He stood before me, I could hand Him my letter and bow at His feet. Shortly after, I applied and was accepted to Junior College (11th grade). However, I was so homesick that I returned home after just two weeks. Determined to join Swami's educational institution, I reapplied for the undergraduate program.

Swami's Love and Omniscience

By His grace, I was accepted on my second attempt but was, once again, homesick. This time, my mother convinced me to hold on to my dreams and surrender to Swami. She explained that she could only be there for me when she was nearby, but Swami was ever-present and always ready to come to my aid. It took the unconditional love of my mortal mother to lead me to the unconditional love of our eternal Mother. That same afternoon Swami showed His divinity to me in a mysterious way during the Summer Course in Brindavan.

Before the evening *darshan*, Swami sent for the women students and staff so He could bless us with sarees. Usually, Swami also allows for *padanamaskar*, but on this occasion, we were asked not to take *padana-*

maskar. We were all very disappointed, but I devised a plan to get my *padanamaskar*. The plan was while Swami would hand me the saree, I would “accidentally” drop it. Then, while picking up the saree, I would sneakily take *padanamaskar*. I was all set with my scheme, and my turn came soon. But our dear Lord had His own plans. As Swami handed me the saree, He just wouldn't let go! As we had our mini tug-of-war, it was not until our eyes met that I noticed He was teasing me! How foolish of me to try to outmaneuver the Lord, only to be outsmarted! Although I felt I did not receive what I wanted, **I was rewarded with an even more profound lesson and a blessing: He knows everything, and I am never alone.**

Two months later, during Guru Poornima celebrations in Prasanthi Nilayam, I was seated in the front row with a tray of toffees and sanctified rice (*akshatas*) for my birthday blessings. Swami came out from the mandir and walked over to us. He allowed me to take *padanamaskar* and blessed me with sanctified rice. He stated matter-of-factly, in our family's Tamil dialect, “*Appa, Amma vandirukkaalaa? Good Morning sollu!*” (Mother and father have come? Say Good Morning to them.) I was puzzled and had no idea what Swami was talking about.

After *darshan*, as I was leaving the mandir, to my utter disbelief, I saw my parents standing near the coconut trees with their luggage! They had decided to come and surprise me for my birthday, not knowing that Swami had let the cat out of the bag!

Over the next three years of my stay at the Anantapur Campus, I was fortunate to witness glimpses of His omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.

The First Ladies' Day

The first Ladies' Day celebration in Prasanthi Nilayam in 1995 was momentous. It was held during my graduation, and it especially opened my eyes to the capability and leadership of women in the Sai Organization. **As Swami emphasized the importance of women in spirituality and society, I realized the importance of living a life that embodies Sai values.** Swami also gave me an opportunity to impart what I learned at His lotus feet to my children. My daughter, the fourth generation of Sai devotees in our family, has found her connection to Swami through teaching SSE, service projects, and working in healthcare

As I narrate and relive these experiences, my companionship with our dear Lord strengthens and deepens, as it is eternal.

Ms. Anu Venkateswaran
USA



Ms. Anu Venkateswaran hails from a family that has been in Swami's fold since the 1960s. She attended and graduated from Balvikas (SSE) in Chennai, India. She graduated from the Anantapur campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Currently, she is the SSSIO USA Region 3 Devotional Coordinator and serves as the President of the Northeast Atlanta Sai Center in the USA, where she also teaches Group 4 SSE.



Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

TELE No. 33
BRINDAVAN
WHITEFIELD

TELE No. 30
PRASANTHINILAYAM P O
ANANTHAPUR DT

My Dear! what is primarily needed for one who wants to ultimately surrender himself entirely to The Lord is a consciousness of perfect security under the protecting grace of the supreme Lord. This consciousness can never leave us if we constantly practise the remembrance of Him. Verily, remembrance itself is Darshan. The repetition of God's name must lead to dedication of all your actions to Him. This remembrance will be yours even when you are intellectually and physically active in all the walks of life when you consider that those activities are performed in the ~~name~~ name and for the sake of The Lord. During your off-moments do not fail to keep your thoughts engaged in the contemplation of God and at the same time meditate upon the truth that all your physical and mental powers have their source and inspiration from the cosmic energy of the Divine.

With Blessings
Baba

Practise Constant Remembrance of Him

My Dears! What is primarily needed for one who wants to ultimately surrender himself entirely to the Lord is a consciousness of perfect security under the protecting grace of the supreme Lord. This Consciousness can never leave us if we constantly practise the remembrance of Him. Verily, remembrance itself is Darishan. The repetition of GOD's name must lead to dedication of all your actions to Him. This remembrance will be yours even when you are intellectually and physically active in all the walks of life when you consider that those activities are performed in the name and for the sake of the Lord. During your off-moments do not fail to keep your thoughts engaged in the contemplation of GOD and at the same time meditate upon the truth that all your physical and mental powers have their source and inspiration from the Cosmic energy of the Divine.

With Blessings

Baba

LOVE IN ACTION



USA Cleaning up in Virginia

On April 9, 2022, Fairfax Sai Center and the Capital Area Group members participated in the National Service Offering, “Sai and Sustainability.” The Fairfax Center and Capital Area Group chose to clean up Little Rocky Run in Centreville, where a creek bed, feeder stream, and stormwater pond were filled with trash. Over 26 volunteers cleaned up a feeder stream clogged with plastic bags and bottles. Several SSE children also eagerly donned gloves to pick up litter and debris.

In addition, 15 members of the Charlottesville Sai Center cleaned up a nearby park in Greene County, removing grocery bags, soda cans, and other trash.



Love is based on selflessness. Love is the fruit which is born from the flower of your good deeds. Only when we engage ourselves in selfless service can we experience the essence of this pure love.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, December 11, 1985



MEXICO

Tree Planting in Jalisco

On May 8, 2022, 10 volunteers in the community of Tizate in Zapopan, Jalisco, planted trees as part of the golden jubilee celebrations of the SSSIO of Mexico. Nine fruit-bearing trees, including lime, tangerine, orange, papaya, avocado, and guava, were planted in several homes to ensure they would be well-tended. The volunteers plan to plant trees every month until 50 trees are planted. This service project is inspired by and offered to Sri Sathya Sai Baba.



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Facelift for a Local School

On April 10, 2022, about 35 volunteers from the Sri Sathya Sai Garden of Blooms ECCE Centre in Trinidad cleaned, washed, and painted the local school to give it a much-needed facelift before reopening in-person classes after the pandemic.



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

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

SSSIO ZONE 4



INDONESIA • LAO PDR • **MALAYSIA** • MYANMAR • PHILIPPINES
SINGAPORE • SRI LANKA • **THAILAND** • VIETNAM

MALAYSIA

1970s

First Sai Center in Malaysia met at
the Swami Vivekananda Ashram
in Kuala Lumpur



Human Values Festival – 1990

*Arulmigu Murugan
statue at the Batu Caves
(Chainwit., via Wikimedia
Commons)*



Sathya Sai Primary School – 2002



Service at Batu Caves on Thaipusam Day – 2009

THAILAND



1984

Inauguration of the first Sathya Sai Center



EHV Conference – 1987



Village service – 2018




Sathya Sai School – 1992



MY HUMBLE PRANAMS AT THE LOTUS FEET OF MY LOVING, DIVINE MOTHER, WHO HAS GUIDED ME ALL MY LIFE, EVEN WHEN I WAS NOT AWARE OF IT.

I was born a Hindu but was very ignorant of the religious practices in that faith. Attending a Christian school, I studied the bible. Though more meaningful because it was written in English, it was still very confusing and daunting for a young twelve-year-old. I was told by a friend that I would go to hell because I was Hindu. I was also told that the only way to God was through His son, Jesus. I could not accept this because how could my wonderful loving family not be accepted by this “Christian God?” I did not want to have anything to do with Him. Fortunately, I was brought up in a very ethical and loving family. They were my role models, and I tried to live by the human values they taught me.

Living in a cosmopolitan country like Singapore, I was exposed to many different faiths, each believing that theirs was the way to salvation. I did not understand why I had to approach God through a third person, such as a priest or even a prophet of God. I did not know what God looked like; therefore, I verbally communicated with a “formless God” somewhere out there, whom I felt loved and cared for. I could also speak to that God without fear or judgment.



Sathya Sai Baba-His Miracles

In my mid-thirties, I heard of a spiritual teacher in India, Sathya Sai Baba. He had healed my mother after she underwent major spinal surgery. She had several interviews with Him, and many amazing miracles happened at her home. I was in awe and mystified by what I saw and heard: *Vibhuti* manifested all over her prayer room; the house filled with the fragrance of *Vibhuti*; garlands on pictures grew in length; oil lamps lit by themselves; objects appeared out of nowhere, etc. **She told me that Sathya Sai Baba was God and gave me many books about Him to read.** I came across quotes like these:

You may infer from what you call My miracles that I am causing them to attract and to attach you to Me, and Me alone. They are not intended to demonstrate or publicize; they are merely spontaneous and concomitant proofs of Divine Majesty. I am yours; you are Mine, forever and ever. What need is there for attracting and impressing, for demonstrating your Love or My compassion? I am in you; you are in Me. There is no distance or distinction.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

November 23, 1968

The miracles did attract me, and I accepted Him as a holy man, maybe a prophet, but not God because He was human. These miracles inspired me to read more about Him, and His message motivated me to continue reading extensively. The Statement “*I am in you; you are in Me. There is no distance or distinction*” was thought-provoking. I did not have the spiritual knowledge to understand it fully but felt drawn toward this statement.

Unity of Faiths

The following quotation inspired me because the concept of one loving God and the unity of faiths was very dear to me.

I have come to tell you of this Universal unitary faith, this Atmic principle, this path of love, this duty of love, this obligation to love. Believe that all hearts are motivated by the One and Only God; that all faiths glorify the One and Only God; that all names in all languages and

all forms man can conceive, denote the One and Only God; and His adoration is best done by means of love. Cultivate that Eka-bhava (attitude of Oneness) between men of all creeds, all countries, and all continents. That is the message of love I bring. That is the message I wish you to take to heart.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

July 4, 1968

That was what I had been waiting to hear: the unity of faiths, adoration of Him through love and not fear, and names are many, but there is only One God. These words inspired me. This message is what I had always wanted to believe in, but the attitude of Oneness was a challenge! All the religious dogmas I was exposed to hindered my spiritual progress. I was now told that the journey in spirituality goes beyond the temple and church! I wanted to follow my conscience, which was very much in sync with Swami's teachings, even though I felt it was a difficult path to undertake. My extensive reading and visits to Puttaparthi strengthened my relationship with Him. **This was the Guru I had waited for.**

I seemed to be constantly asking for assistance, whether for family, friends, or myself. It was usually a waiting game, but I had to surrender to His wisdom. Not getting what I had asked for was the best motivation to learn to surrender to His will. Faith and trust in Him were my pillars of strength.

Knowledge of Advaita

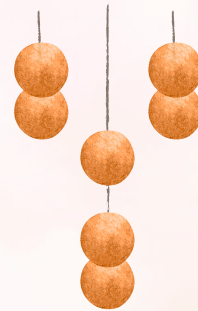
The *Advaita* knowledge I received further confirmed Swami's teaching that everything in the Universe was ONE and there was no OTHER. These were difficult concepts to accept fully, let alone understand, in-depth. With spiritual maturity, faith, and trust in my Guru, including listening to and reflecting on many spiritual discourses, I slowly started to make some sense of *Advaita* philosophy. All the texts repeatedly pointed out that there was only One and not many.

I heard Him say that we should not be attached to His body. How is this possible when we loved and longed for His presence so much! I also heard Him say that we do not have to travel to Puttaparthi to be with Him because He was always with us wherever we were. I

experienced His Omnipresence on several occasions. For example, when I just began to read about Swami, one night, my young son started to cry because he was afraid of the dark. He heard a voice like mine saying, "Why fear when I am here," which consoled him. No one in my family, except me, knew these words!

I realized that worshipping a form was a barrier because it restricted me from going within myself to realize my "true nature." **I needed to concentrate on and practice, His message. I started to recite this prayer given to us by Swami daily:**

*I am God. I am not different from God.
I am the indivisible Supreme Absolute.
I am Sath-Chith-Ananda.
Grief and anxiety can never affect me.
I am ever content. Fear can never enter me.*



Swami is my True Friend

Since Swami left His body, I have felt even closer to Him because I had practiced distancing myself from His physical being over the years. With constant reflection, remembering His message, and knowing that He is always there, the journey with Him has helped me in dealing with life's experiences. **I have realized that He is my one and only true friend, who loves me unconditionally and accepts me for who I am, despite all my flaws.**

I love the fact that the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization is a spiritual organization and stands for the unity of faiths. It is an organization that has helped me, with various sadhanas, to grow spiritually. Sai Ram.

Mrs. Jeyalaximi Charrett
Australia



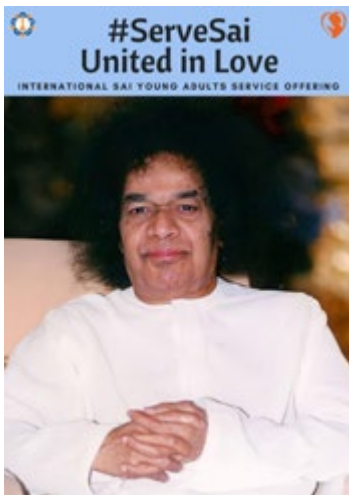
Mrs. Jeyalaximi Charrett came into the Sai fold forty-four years ago. She has been an active participant at the Nunawading Sathya Sai Centre in Melbourne. She has held several positions in the SSSIO, including President at Nunawading Sathya Sai Centre, and Board Director of SSSIO Australia Ltd. Mrs. Jeyalaximi was a secondary school teacher of science and mathematics for 18 years. She was involved in integrating children with various physical and neurological challenges into a regular school system.

from the International Sai Young Adults

We are pleased to share updates on the recently launched International Sai Young Adults Service Offering, #ServeSai. We are also pleased to share two personal reflections from Sai Young Adults, a personal letter written by Sri Sathya Sai Baba to His students and a short quiz to test your general Sai knowledge!

SSSIO International Young Adults Committee

#serve Sai UNITED IN LOVE



"For the human being, love and service are like two wings, with the help of which, one should strive to realise the spirit."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 21, 1995

Sri Sathya Sai Baba's life was an expression of selfless service. He encouraged young adults to dedicate their energies to serve society for the welfare of humanity, transforming their hearts. Inspired by His life, the SSSIO International Young Adults Committee launched a new initiative on June 28, 2022,

called **#ServeSai – United in Love**.

During July - September 2022, we invite all to participate in local service activities, in one's own daily life, with family, friends and with the community at large. Join us as we unite as an international family in recognizing and serving God in the hearts of all creation.

Visit sathyasai.org/ya to access the #ServeSai Guidebook and for more details on how you can participate locally.

Look Within

My Dear Boys,
Beloved child,

We shall be judged not by the creed we profess or the label we wear or the slogans we shout but, by the work, the industry, the sacrifice, the honesty, and the purity of our character. Realise the Heaven within you and all at once all the desires are fulfilled, and all the misery and suffering are put to an end. Feel yourself above the body and its environments, above the mind and its motive, above the thought of success or fear. The great cause of suffering in the world is that people do not look within. They rely on outside forces.

With Blessings and Love
Baba

Prema Dhaara, Volume 2

How well do you know Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings?

1. Name the Vahini from the Vahini series that does not end with the word 'Vahini'.
2. What are the four 4F's from Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings?
3. What is the unique and healthy *Satwic* food that Swami frequently ate?

Answers on page 33

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Sai Young Adults

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Reflections of Sai Young Adults

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



Ms. Saiyuri Naicker Australia

My journey to Prasanthi Nilayam started in 2009. I was 20 years old when I first visited the ashram with my grandmother. Despite having grown up in Sai fold, I was unaware of the strong connection I had with Swami's physical form, until this visit.

The trip from Bangalore to Puttaparthi was a shock to the senses that further spurred my nervousness. It was Navaratri and we arrived in Puttaparthi on auspicious Vijayadashami day. I remember my feelings of chaos and unfamiliarity slowly dissipated as we passed through the Gopuram Gate (ashram entrance) and were replaced with a distinct and surprisingly peaceful energy. It was as if the whole world had slowed down around me. I was fortunate enough to physically interact with Swami. He said something to me that completely changed my life, whispering in my ear whilst holding my hands in His: "I am Sai, you are Sai, one forever, there is no need for worry, there is no need for fear." That was the beginning of my Divine romance and what a love story it has been.

Since 2009, I have been to Puttaparthi five times, and each time, I fell deeper and deeper in love with divinity. Even though I used to go to Prasanthi Nilayam once a year to serve as part of the Sri Sathya Sai International Leadership Programme (SSSILP), just stepping foot onto that sand, and walking through those towering gates always made my heart melt. I have traveled to over 30 different countries all over the world from amazing Africa to the beautiful European cities, yet the most beautiful experience in the world is still walking through those heavenly gates and experiencing utter bliss. There is a bhajan that goes "I am the one, I seek Bhagawan," which truly describes my journey to Prasanthi Nilayam. For it is in Prasanthi Nilayam that I truly started my journey to discover who I am. Ultimately, I came to the realization that I can return there year after year for the Divine experiences, but true devotion is when I take along these Divine experiences within me and become the Divinity that I seek.



Ms. Karishma Samtani Hong Kong

My mother is a staunch believer of Shirdi Sai Baba and used to visit our local Sri Sathya Sai center for bhajans on Thursdays, and visited Shirdi whenever we went to India. I always enjoyed the Thursday bhajans as it was a place where I felt safe and secure.

From a tender age, I helplessly witnessed my mother's struggle with domestic violence. Despite being a victim, her words of faith echoed as my inspiration, "My Sai will take care of me!"

Sadly, adverse home circumstances impacted my learning and behavior at school. My low self-esteem was my biggest barrier for obtaining admission into the preferred secondary school that my mother wanted for me. I believe that the invisible hand of Swami worked through my aunt, who arranged an interview for me with the principal of that school and accompanied me. I am deeply grateful for her unconditional support. During that interview, I vividly remember seeing Swami standing behind the principal, smiling at me. That was the beginning of my journey with my Sai.

After my first trip to Puttaparthi, I had a dream of Swami leading me up a flight of spiral stairs. After that dream, the inner call to return to Puttaparthi became strong; I believe that Swami had made all the arrangements for me to visit Him again. I narrated my dream to a friend, who also wanted to go to Puttaparthi. Without delay, we traveled together to Prasanthi Nilayam. When Swami calls anyone to Puttaparthi, He ensures that every detail is taken care of, including the seating arrangement for *darshan*. We were surprised to be seated in a prime spot in Sai Kulwant Hall. During *darshan*, we felt so blessed when Swami's car stopped in front of us. He opened the window to look us right in the eyes and gave us a radiant smile.

I am grateful to my mother and grandmother for their strong faith in Swami, which strengthened mine. I am ever indebted to Swami for showing His omnipresence in my life.

Puzzle Answers

1. Sandeha Nivarini
2. Follow the master, Face the devil, Fight till the end, Finish the game
3. Ragi Sangati

From the kitchen of Anvesha: A Recipe to Make Swami Happy

Anvesha G. | Group 4 | USA



Yashasvi M. | Group 3 | Malaysia



1 gallon of
unconditional love



2 basketfuls
of non - violence

Millions of
divine discourses



An eternity of
omnipresence,
omnipotence &
omniscience



a lifetime
of truth



3 quarts
of peace



A world of
devotees



Eons of displaying
right conduct

5 packets
of vibhuti



Instructions

1. Put unconditional love in your pot. Stir until it emits a jasmine scent.
2. Dazzle in peace and non-violence.
3. Refrigerate for 2 hours.
4. While the mixture is in the fridge, melt truth and sprinkle the right conduct into it. Mix thoroughly.
5. After 2 hours: pour in truth and right conduct.
6. Knead with hands until it shines a bright orange.
7. Stuff divine discourses and devotees into the mixture.
8. Freeze for 3 days.
9. Shake in omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, and vibhuti.
10. Bake your love and devotion till Swami melts.
11. Voila! You have made Swami Happy!

The Girl & The Beggar

a story about selfless service

Nitya J. | Group 2 | USA

Once upon a time, in a not so far away land, lived a typical girl named Catherine, with a typical life. She went to school every day, came home and did her homework diligently. Every afternoon, she would go outside, play with her friends till dusk, and return to her lovely little house, filled with comfortable little cushions and sofas. Her bed was snug in her little brown room, and her mother and father lived in a little room next to her.

Her school was Fang Elementary, where every student and teacher was good. Her friends were Naya and Ferri, who were always there for her, every step of the way.

One day, as they were walking to school, Catherine and her friends found a poor person sitting on the road alone. He begged, "Food, Food!" "What a weird man!" Naya commented. "Yeah, he can buy food," agreed Ferri. Catherine only thinly smiled, knowing the man was poor and it was wrong to laugh at him.

Catherine's math teacher, Mr. Delat, saw the incident and walked up to the three girls. "Why didn't you feed the man?" "He could buy some," Ferri said. "He looked funny on the road!" Naya chuckled.

Mr. Delat said, "**We were born with two hands, one to help ourselves, and one to help others.** You should help him." And since that day, Catherine woke up early every day, stuffed some food in her bag, and gave the beggar some food on her way to school. She didn't care if her friends laughed.





SSE REFLECTIONS ON Growing *WITH* Sai

MILWAUKEE SAI CENTER, USA



Swami is important for me because He helps us. He takes care of us always. He is also kind to us and He is everywhere.
Pranav T.

Swami is very important to me because he helps us. He is always there for us.
Gayatri K.



Swami is omnipotent and omnipresent meaning He is everywhere and in everyone. He never gets mad because He loves everyone. However, He may give you a punishment. But the most important thing is that we are all His children and therefore should love and obey Him. If we want Swami to help us then we have to learn to help ourselves first, and then if the problem gets worse and there is nothing we can do then Swami will Himself step in and help us. If you can't see Him, just know that He is there everywhere watching us and guiding us.
Anvesha G.

Swami is amazing. He has made a huge impact on my life. Sometimes Swami is the only one who really understands me. Because of Swami, I know what the good thing to do is at all times. Even though Swami isn't here in His physical form, I feel like He's with me wherever I go.
Shreya M.



Swami is important to me because He is my mother, father and friend. He is caring, loving and giving like a mother. He is always there for you like a father. And He is always there as your conscience, helping you with everything you have a problem with. I am very fortunate to have Swami in my life ever since I was born. And I pray to Him to be with me through all my life.
Chandra C.

Baba is God, and God is always the best. Baba loves everyone and He is always in peace. He tells us to always speak the truth. We become beautiful by listening to what He tells us.
Karishma D.



Swami has been a part of my life ever since I was very young. The most impact He has on my daily life is through His five values. Reiterating His values aloud is my daily morning prayer. Although I might not apply them to everything I do, I certainly resort to them when I am in difficult situations. My relationship with Swami is more of a friend than anything else. I ask Him for advice, and He helps me out in the ways He sees fit. I have grown closer to Swami through the years and I will try to be a loyal Sai devotee for the rest of my life.

Anisha G.



Being able to grow up with the constant presence of Sai is truly a blessing. As I've grown older, I have learned to appreciate the way the teachings of Sai affect my daily life. Whether it's in school, home or any other location, I am able to constantly reflect on my choices and relate them to the five values. Growing up with Sai has truly given me so many opportunities to become a better person and to influence the world in a positive way.

Srimayi M.

As a Sai student, I have had some memorable experiences. I first started attending Sai Center as a SSE student in Group 1. In Group 1, I learnt a lot of thoughtful quotes on Sathya Sai Baba. Also I learnt the five values and what they mean. The quotes have a really delightful meaning. Like "Love all Serve all". That means to love everyone and at the same time serve everyone. Each value has an example related to SSE. Then in Group 2, we mostly talked about the five human values. For each value, we picked one person who really showed that value. I also learnt about the 10 Sai Commandments and what they mean. I think what I have learnt will lead me to the right pathway throughout my whole life.

Kaumudh S.



Upcoming SSSIO Online Events

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

Please visit sathyasai.org/events/worldwide for further details on scheduled events, including timings.

Date of Online Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
August 13-14, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
August 20 & 21, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Zone 2A, 2B Presentation: <i>Sathya Sai Baba in Latin America</i>
September 17 & 18, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Zone 6 & 7 Presentation: <i>Path of Unity</i>
October 15-16, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
October 22 & 23, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Avatar Declaration Day Presentation by Zone 8: <i>Your Life is My Message</i>

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



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- Healthy Living [🔗](#)



Devotion signifies Love. Love for the Divine is the only true Love. All other expressions of love are merely attachments of one sort or another. Love is God. Live in Love. Start the day with Love. Fill the day with Love. End the day with Love. That is the way to God. This Love should be considered divine by people of every faith. Manifest your Love regardless of how others behave. Cultivate this Love.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 21, 1995



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never