

SATHYA SAI
THE
ETERNAL
COMPANION



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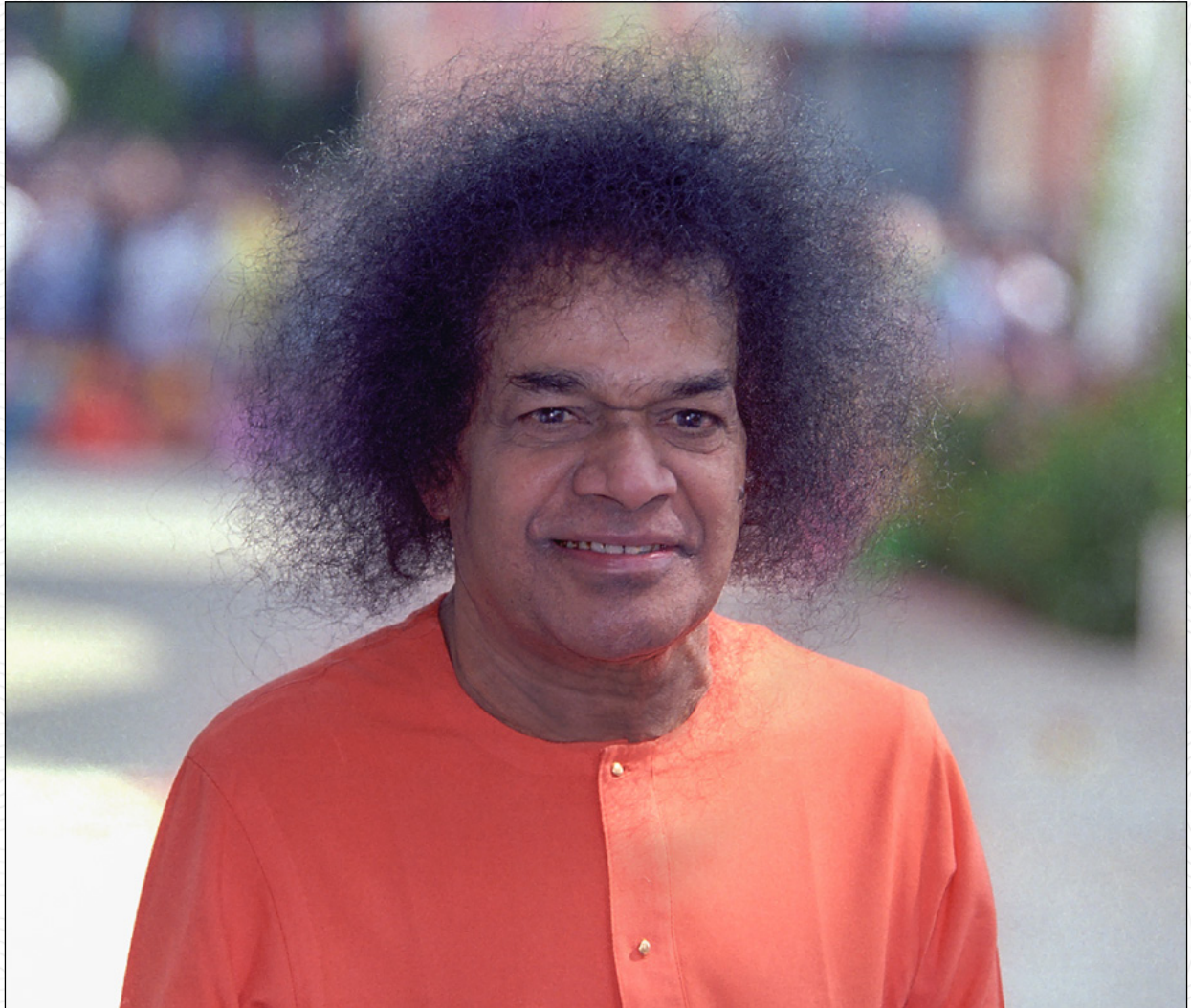


DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF
SRI SATHYA SAI



The panacea for all suffering is chanting God's name. Have the firm conviction that you are God. Never be under the mistaken notion that God is the master and you are His slave. You do not have a master. You are the master. Master the mind and be a mastermind. Never forget God's name. Never be away from God's love. Never leave truth (*sathya*) and never forget the right action (*dharma*). With one-pointed concentration, contemplate on God. Nothing else matters in this world.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
September 13, 1999



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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PURITY IS ENLIGHTENMENT

Part 1

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has gifted humanity a simple yet profoundly transformative aphorism, *‘Purity is enlightenment.’* This statement distills the essence of spiritual practice, the purpose of human birth, and the key to experiencing divinity. **It is a practical guideline that can be lived daily in every thought, word, and deed. Swami says, “Where there is purity, there is divinity.”**

Swami further elaborates that purity is essential for experiencing divinity and everlasting bliss. It is not possible to experience divinity unless we are pure—in fact, Swami explains that all spiritual practices, such as selfless service, devotional activities, and education, are undertaken to purify the mind. Thus, purity is the foundation of all spiritual practices.

All of us understand the word ‘purity,’ but from different perspectives. Every religion and philosophy has emphasized the importance of purity in daily life as well as for spiritual progress. All the great masters, too, have unanimously placed purity at the core of spiritual practices.

The Masters on Purity

Jesus Christ said in His profound teachings, ‘The Sermon on the Mount,’ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8). He also emphasized that one should be childlike: “Be ye as little children

if ye want to enter the Kingdom of God.” (Matthew 18:3)

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the saint of Dakshineswar, India, repeatedly emphasized that the heart must be as pure as a polished mirror without any dirt, to reflect the image of God. Swami Vivekananda proclaimed, “The test of purity is strength.” **The pure person, free from selfishness and negative qualities, is fearless, strong, and capable of great works.**

Shirdi Sai Baba (previous incarnation of Sri Sathya Sai Baba), frequently advised His devotees to leave everything to God. Such surrender cleanses the heart of worry, anxiety, and selfishness, replacing it with purity of faith.

St. Francis of Assisi, known as the Little Poor Man of Assisi, embodied purity through simplicity and renunciation. His pure heart saw God in all creatures—birds, animals, and even nature. His famous *Canticle of the Sun* reveals the purity of his vision.

Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi, a saint and teacher of *advaita*, taught the path of self-inquiry (*atma vichara*) to attain purity. He said, “True purity comes when the ‘I’ is traced to its source and dissolved in the Self.” He said, **“The pure mind is itself Brahman. When thoughts subside, what remains is pure consciousness.”**

Lord Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita, praises purity (*shaucha*) as a divine quality in Chapter 16. (BG16.1 and 16.3) He demonstrates that purity is not only a spiritual practice but is also the result of spiritual practice.

Sant Kabir, a well-known Indian mystic poet and saint, taught that chanting the divine name with sincerity purifies the heart more than any other ritual for purification. He said, "Cleanse the heart and the Beloved will come and dwell within."

Thus, purity is the bedrock of all spiritual practices. There are two types of purity: (1) external purity, and (2) internal purity. Both internal and external purity are crucial for one's physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Swami beautifully expounds on the importance of developing purity and the various aspects of both external and internal purity.

External Purity

External purity is very important because it is said, "*Cleanliness is next to Godliness.*"

The first aspect of external purity is having a clean environment. The place where we live—our home, the office, surroundings, and the community—should all be clean and free from dirt and refuse.

At the individual level, one should maintain cleanliness and purity in body, dress, and manners. This includes actions like bathing, wearing clean clothes, breathing clean air, drinking clean water, and eating pure food. The connection becomes clear when we realize that the essence of food influences the mind, which is responsible for our thoughts.

Purity of Food

One should pay attention to food and choose *sattvic* food. Krishna describes in the *Shraddhatraya Vibhaga Yoga*, meaning "The Yoga of Differentiating Threefold Faith" (BG Chapter 17), what *sattvic* food is. Fruits, tubers, and vegetables are all considered *sattvic*. Food that is too spicy, too hot, pungent, dry, bitter, or sour, is not *sattvic* as it stimulates the senses. Also, the food that increases one's thirst after eating is not considered *sattvic*. (BG 17.9)

It is important to be careful not only about the food consumed but also about the food entering through various sense organs such as the eyes, ears, nose, and hands. **Swami says that if the senses are fed with polluted food, you cannot become pure by merely taking milk, fruits, and vegetables. So, one**

*Where there is purity,
There is divinity.*



*‘Annam Brahma,
Raso Vishnuh,
Bhokta Devo Maheshwarah’*

Food is Brahma, the essence
is Vishnu, and the one who
partakes is Maheshwara.



should partake pure **sattvic** food through
all five senses.

Swami advises us to eat only after praying
and offering the food to God, by chanting
the food prayer:

*Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir
Brahmagnau Brahmana Hutam
Brahmaiva Tena Gantavyam
Brahmakarma Samadhina*

(BG 4.24)

*(The act of offering is Brahman
The oblation is Brahman
It is offered by Brahman into
the fire of Brahman*

*He who sees everything as Brahman
alone, surely attains Brahman.)*

When this prayer is made with purity in
the heart, Swami says that, the Lord within
responds too with the following verse:

*Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva
Praninam Dehamashritaha
Pranapana Samayuktah
Pachamyannam Chaturvidham*

(BG 15.14)

*(Becoming the life-fire in the bodies of
living beings, mingling with the subtle
breaths I digest the four kinds of food.)*

Thus, we chant these two *shlokas* from the
Bhagawad Gita as the food prayer.

When we pray with these sacred feelings, the
food becomes sanctified and **sattvic**. Food is
responsible for both good and bad qualities
of the mind. **As is the food, so is the mind.**
Hence, it is essential to eat pure, sacred, and
wholesome **sattvic** food in moderation.

**Swami also recommended another power-
ful and sacred mantra before meals.** In His
discourse of November 23, 2002, He advises
chanting ‘*Annam Brahma, Raso Vishnuh,
Bhokta Devo Maheshwarah*’ (Food is
Brahma, the essence is Vishnu, and the one
who partakes is Maheshwara). These three
entities correspond to body, mind, and
action, respectively. Thus, **purity of thought,
word, and deed is true wisdom.**

Swami emphasizes that not only should the
ingredients of the food be pure, but how
they are obtained, the person who cooks the
food, and the vessels used for cooking must
also be pure. That is why He advises us not
to eat outside the home as much as possible
because we cannot control these aspects of
purity. However, in unavoidable situations,
we can chant the food prayers mentioned
earlier to sanctify the food.

Nowadays, water, air, and food are frequently polluted. It is very important to drink clean and pure water, because water is the elixir of life. **Therefore, we should be very careful about what we eat, drink, and breathe. This is why we must respect and appreciate nature, which provides food, water, and air, without polluting the environment.**

Internal Purity

Internal purity is of supreme importance for a spiritual seeker. Bhagawan Baba declares that the purpose of human life and even the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization founded by Him is to **recognize our true and real nature—that we are the embodiments of the divine Atma. We are the embodiments of divine love and divine bliss.**

But often we do not experience our true nature. That is because of the impurities that affect us. In *Vedanta*, this is called *mala*. A good analogy is that of a dirty mirror. An excellent mirror, when covered with dirt, cannot show a clear and true image. One needs to remove the dirt or impurities for a good reflection.

Similarly, when the mind is clouded with impurities, one cannot see the reflection of the Atma. **According to the scriptures and Baba, the major impurities are *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *matsarya*—desires, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and jealousy.**

These can be removed or clarified by sanctifying the senses. As Swami says,

*“Think good, think no evil.
See good, see no evil.
Hear good, hear no evil.
Speak good, speak no evil.
Do good, do no evil.
This is the way to God.”*

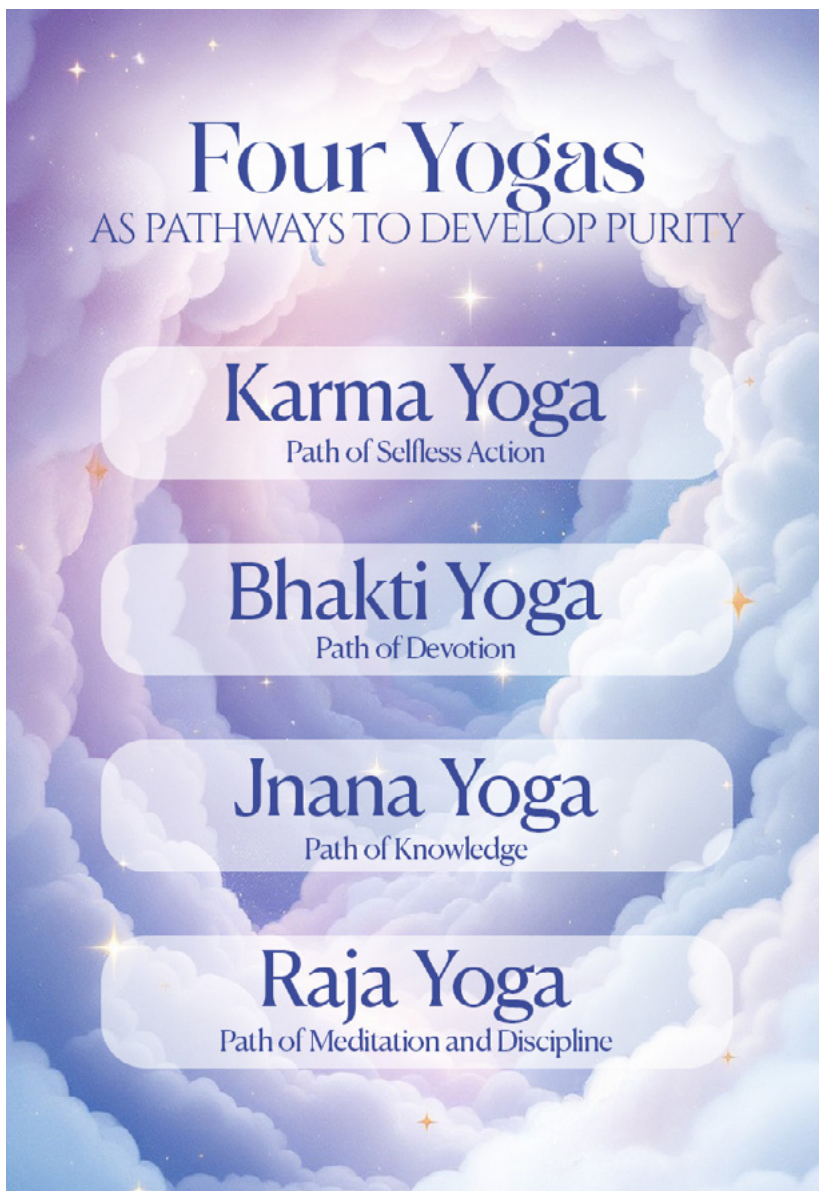
Swami offers us practical advice: instead of watching harmful movies and sensual scenes, we should use our eyes to see pictures of divinity or the beautiful manifestations of God in nature. We can watch

movies about the great saints and Avatars who lived ideal divine lives. Similarly, our ears should not be used to hear gossip, rumors, or bad or sensual music. Instead, they should be used to listen to stories about God and divine music. The mouth should not be used to speak ill of others or criticize them; rather, it should be used to glorify God, His beauty, and His *leelas*. Likewise, our hands should be used to worship God and serve God by helping and serving humanity. Our hands should not harm others. The feet should take us not to places of sin, sensual pleasures, or vice, but to places of worship such as temples, synagogues, mosques, or venues of *satsang* where the focus is only on God.

We should always engage in actions that help everyone and hurt no one. This can be achieved easily by practicing the five human

“**LOVE IN THOUGHT AND WORD IS TRUTH. LOVE IN ACTION IS DHARMA. LOVE IN FEELING IS PEACE. LOVE IN UNDERSTANDING IS NONVIOLENCE.**”





values of *Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, Ahimsa*—truth, right conduct, peace, love, and nonviolence. The undercurrent for these values is love, because Swami says, “*Love in thought and word is truth. Love in action is Dharma. Love in feeling is peace. Love in understanding is nonviolence.*”

Therefore, when we live in love and share that love with everyone, we automatically get rid of impurities.

Internal purity involves the cleansing and purification of the *antahkarana*, the four-fold inner instruments everyone has: the mind (*manas*), the discriminating intel-

lect (*buddhi*), the will and memory (*chitta*), and the ego sense (*ahan-kara*). Internal purity means the removal of all negative qualities, including attachment and ego, and cultivating divine qualities like love, compassion, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and humility.

Swami emphasizes that external cleanliness without inner purity is like cooking pure food in a dirty vessel, which spoils the food.

Swami also describes the four yogas as pathways to develop purity. The four yogas are the classic spiritual paths leading to Self-realization. **Karma Yoga** is the path of selfless action, where one performs duty without attachment to results, offering every act to the Divine. **Bhakti Yoga** is the path of devotion, cultivating love, surrender, and constant remembrance of God through prayer, worship, and singing His glories. **Jnana Yoga** is the path of knowledge, where inquiry, study, and reflection lead to the realization of the Self and the truth of oneness.

Raja Yoga is the path of meditation and discipline, involving control of the mind and senses through practices such as meditation, *pranayama* (breath control), and ethical living, to attain inner stillness.

We will explore these concepts, along with the 10-step *sadhana* guide for developing purity gifted to us by our dear Swami, in the next part of this editorial.

May we purify our hearts and minds, live in divine love, and reach the ultimate goal of Self-realization.

Jai Sai Ram.





Music of the Spirit

God is the echo of the hills, the flutter of the leaves, the whisper of men, the babble of children, the Om (Eternal divine sound) that wafts everywhere. God is present in all places, but to recognize Him, saints have prescribed a thousand methods! He is in everyone, yet He eludes discovery by all but a blessed few. Being all-powerful, He is the giver of all gifts, providence bestowing upon us all the required wherewithal. He remains the all-encompassing (*Sarvam avyakti tishthati*).

There is nothing except God. Nature is His manifestation. Man must recognize God in all human beings and in everything that exists. Since the individual being (*jeeva*) limits his viewpoint to the physical frame he occupies and confines his attention, interest, love, and attachment to a small circle of relations and friends, he also limits God to a certain name and form. As a result, he perceives His compassion, grace, blessings, and benediction as limited to a small group of 'devotees' who adore that specific name and form.

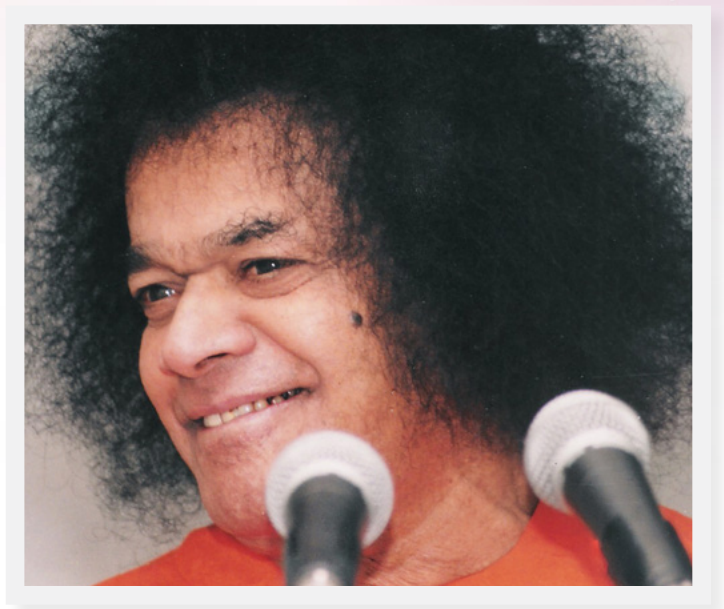
Human desires are narrow, so He who grants fulfilment is also imagined to be narrow in His Grace.

Ideally, therefore, when one prays, one should say in complete renouncement, 'Thy will be done,' and ought not to ask for this or that, for he has neither the wisdom nor the foresight to know what is best for him.

Pranava, Om, is the Gita (Song) of God

The Bhagavad Gita teaches that envy and greed can be overcome by practicing love and detachment. People have designated a day as the birthday of the Bhagavad Gita, which they celebrate with pompous worship (*pooja*) and speeches! In the midst of this confusion, the essential teachings of the Gita are ignored. When exactly did the Gita originate? What does Gita mean? Literally, the word means 'song.' Since God is omnipresent, the song of God, too, must be omnipresent. So, in reality, the eternal sound *Pranava* (Om) is the Gita of God. God's song cannot be only for a few, or only

“Om is also symbolic of the ‘Rama principle.’ The four brothers, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna, represent the four Vedas, Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva, respectively.



for select people, or in a language understood only by one nation. **Om is universal, eternal, and full of the essence of all spirituality. So, Om alone can be the real Gita of God.** And it can have no birthday for one to celebrate, having itself arisen and existed before the beginning of time.

Our [inner] Self resonates with the Pranava. But amid the clamor of the marketplace and the noise of the commerce of life, our little selves are unable to hear it. Our own senses lay claim to our attention. Our minds crave to be amidst the pleasures of the outer world. **Obviously, our passions and prejudices have to be calmed before we can hear the eternal sound of Om, the Song of the Lord, that wells up from the heart.**

Serve All with an Attitude of Worship

March on with your eyes fixed on the goal. Do not worry about the past, its mistakes, and its failures. Do not follow the whims and fancies of your mind any longer. They will fill your ears with praise or blame and drag you away from the spiritual (*adhy-atmika*) path. Heed the call of the divine arising from the hearts of all living beings.

Serve them with an attitude of worship, expecting nothing in return. Do not accept even gratitude, having dedicated all your acts to the indwelling God. This will purify you, enabling you to listen to the *Soham* (That [God] I am) that your breath repeats every moment. *Soham* transmutes itself into Om when the distinction between He and I has dissolved in the process of communion (*samadhi*).

Believe that the *Soham* merging into Om is the Sai *tatvam*, the Sai principle. ‘S’ stands for ‘Sai’, ‘A’ for ‘And’, and ‘I’ for the spiritual aspirant (*sadhaka*) himself. Thus SAI, in fact, symbolizes the Vedic dictum, *Tat Tvam Asi* (That thou art). In the first stage the *sadhaka* says, ‘I am in Sai’; in the second stage, ‘Sai is in me’; and in the third and final stage, ‘Sai and I are One,’ the duality between the two having been lost. When Truth strikes the individual like a streak of lightning in the midst of dark clouds and abides, it confers bliss. In that moment of illumination, Om is revealed in all its grandeur. By practicing the teachings of Krishna, one



gains that Illumination, the light of wisdom (*jnana jyoti*), Om.

Krishna's flute is the expression, the elucidation of the four Vedas, and Om is their quintessence. 'A,' 'U,' 'M' and the *bindu* or dot (signifying the reverberation of the sound in the depth of the heart) are symbolic of the four Vedas. **Om is also symbolic of the 'Rama principle.'** The four brothers, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna, represent the four Vedas, Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva, respectively.

When people neglect the divine aspect of one's nature and fails to pursue the spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) that ensures the awareness of the omnipresent and omnipotent Om, they fall prey to the impulses and instincts dominated by the ego, engrossed in the material world. They spend their lives amassing wealth, power, and authority over fellow beings and believe that holding others under their sway is a desirable achievement.

Man Knows So Little of What is Worth Knowing

If there were a vacancy in heaven, someone would surely apply for the position of God, believing that they have all the necessary attributes! **But one forgets that the real attribute for superiority is unshaken faith in one's *atmic* Reality.** Of what use is it to only know one's puny self? It is like a so-called learned band of doctors knowing a bit here and a bit there but not knowing how to treat maladies like cancer and the common cold. Science must make a person humble by revealing that they know so little of what is worth knowing.

The divine aspect of your personality will encourage humility, adherence to truth, love, eagerness to serve, fortitude, and detachment. Cherish the first manifestation of these qualities in your life and practice them whenever you get a chance. The

innate brotherhood that sanctifies the human race is destroyed by the weeds of envy that grow in the mind. These weeds ruin one's personality, growing so rampantly that they strangle the very individual.

Sorrow is the shadow that haunts the ego. When one of your neighbors grieves the loss of a loved one, you console them by saying that it is unwise to weep over worldly losses and that weeping cannot bring the departed one back. But when death visits your own family, you grieve so much that the same neighbor has to repeat those very words to console you. All this happens because neither has developed faith in the *Atma*, and neither has God's name (*nama*) on the tongue and love (*prema*) in the heart.

A person builds a beautiful house for oneself and takes pride in the garden surrounding it, the color scheme of the interior painting, and so on. If, during an election campaign, some kids scribble graffiti or slogans on the walls enclosing the garden, the owner flares up against them and threatens to thrash the young villains for damaging the immaculate whiteness of the walls. But once the house is sold and it no longer belongs to the individual, the person is not affected in the least, even if the house is reduced to a heap of bricks! Such is the insidious effect of listening to the ego. Before you were born, you had no kith and kin; when you die, they will not come with you. Why, then, develop this bond with them just for a short intervening life, and for its sake forget the very purpose for which this life has been granted? Always be conscious of the flimsiness of worldly achievements while using your talents, skills, and everything else to the best possible advantage in the service of God in man.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
August 13, 1978



ALWAYS UNDER HIS Watchful Eyes

Born Into His Fold

I was born in Tamil Nadu (Tiruvannamalai), India, in 1987, into a family that was devoted to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a blessing that shaped every aspect of my life. From early childhood, I was surrounded by Swami's presence through His stories, *bhajans*, photos, and most of all, the devotion that filled our home. I had the rare good fortune of seeing Him many times, enjoying close *darshans*, and once, the blessing of even touching His lotus feet. Yet, deep within, I always had an unfulfilled desire to have a personal interaction with Swami to experience the special nearness and dearness to Him. This could happen mainly through a personal interview. Although such an inter-

view never materialized, I now realize He has granted me such blessed experiences in many other ways.

A Highway Blessing in Brindavan

I had a truly blessed moment with Swami in 2004, when I was in higher secondary school. I travelled with my father and a few Sai-family friends from Tiruvannamalai to the Brindavan Ashram in Bangalore, hoping to get Swami's *darshan*. But we heard He was about to leave for Puttaparthi, and it seemed like we would miss Him. That was when a faculty member from Swami's Brindavan College told us that we could have Swami's *darshan* standing on the roadside along His travel route. We trusted his words and waited by the highway.

A miracle unfolded right before our eyes. **When Swami's car passed by, to everyone's astonishment, He smiled and raised both hands to bless us.** That single gesture, which was very rare at that time due to His arm fracture, was overwhelming. We followed His car all the way to Puttaparthi, where He later visited an old age home and then returned to the *ashram*. I observed that even at those stops, He did not raise His hands in blessing. That made our moment feel even more special. I was convinced that He had singled us out for a special, quiet, and personal benediction on the highway! **What a special blessing!**

Unseen Rewards at the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna

In 2007, I had the opportunity to do *seva* during the *Ati Rudra Maha Yajna* that Swami conducted in Chennai. It was an elaborate and sacred 9-day *Vedic* worship, chanting Rudram and *doing homa*, a fire ritual. My heart longed to serve in the *Yajna Mandapam*, the main area where the sacred ritual was being conducted, as I would be in Swami's immediate divine presence. I was posted instead at the Easwaramma Exhibition stall. Though I was disappointed at first, I accepted it as His will and performed my duties with sincerity.

On the last day, as I was walking alone through a dimly lit area, a man dressed in white, like a *sevadai* (volunteer), tapped me on the back and said, **"You did nice *seva*,"** and quietly walked away. I never saw him again. **That one sentence lifted my spirit.**

The next morning, Swami gave special *darshan* to all *sevadai* at Sundaram, and I was blessed with a close *darshan*, a group photograph with Swami, and a silver dollar as *prasad*, a memento of

His love. **Once again, He had noticed, and He had given me much more than I had hoped for.**

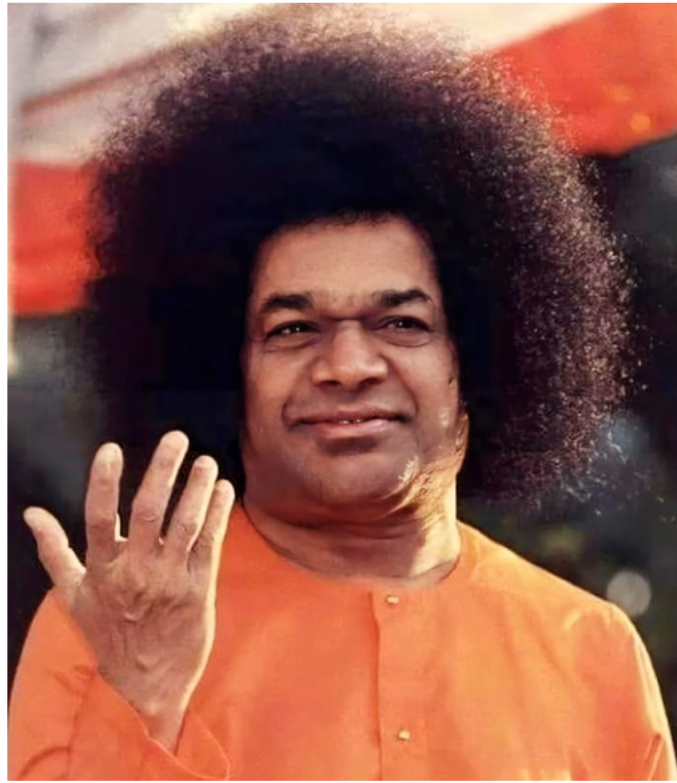
Guided to Port Blair for Higher Studies

In 2008, I moved to Port Blair (Sri Vijaya Puram, the capital of the union territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India) for my postgraduate studies at the Pondicherry University campus. The island was completely new to me, and I felt disconnected from my familiar Sai gatherings.. However, upon enquiry, I found a Sai Center nearby and began attending weekly *bhajans*, which gave me peace and strength.

Divine Timing for Doctoral Admission

After completing my master's degree, I decided to pursue doctoral research at the same university. I took a national-level entrance exam and secured the 13th rank. I approached the head of the department as well as another faculty member for guidance in my Ph.D. The head of the department said it would depend on my interview performance. The other faculty member agreed in principle, but she hadn't received her guideship recognition letter, the official document that authorized her to guide Ph.D. students.





Days passed, and the day arrived before the interview. It was a holy Thursday, and after our usual *bhajan* at home, I suddenly thought of calling the proposed guide. To my great delight, she said that she had just received her guideship recognition letter that very evening at 5:30 p.m. She told me to come for the interview if possible.

It Was a Divine Sign!

I immediately informed my family and rushed to Chennai airport, hoping to get a ticket to Port Blair. Normally, getting a last-minute flight ticket is very expensive, but by Swami's grace, the fare was nominal, and I got a seat! When I reached the venue for the interview, I was surprised to find that no other candidate had made it on time! **I was the only one! And that is how I got selected and began my journey of doctoral studies. Swami had arranged every single aspect of my journey silently, lovingly, and perfectly.**

His Presence During the Final Darshan

In 2011, during my doctoral research at Port Blair, I heard that Swami had been hospitalized. Around that same time, I had planned a brief visit to my hometown, Tiruvannamalai, before heading to Kerala for a training program. But on that very day, I was home when the devastating, painful news came that Swami had left His physical body! Our entire family rushed to Puttaparthi to pay our final homage.

At that time, the Andhra Pradesh *sevadai* was serving at Prasanthi Nilayam. Since there was an overwhelming crowd, the Tamil Nadu State Sevadai Coordinator requested that we be accommodated inside Sai Kulwant Hall, where Swami's physical frame had been placed. **And by His grace, we were accommodated within the hall during all three days, until the final rites were completed.**

Later, I realized how lovingly Swami had arranged everything. If I had been in Port Blair, I would have missed those final moments. But Swami ensured that I was in Tamil Nadu, close enough to go and be with Him. Even for the last *darshan* of His body, He included me, guided me, and comforted me in the most personal way.

Completing My Doctorate by His Will

In 2012, after finishing my fieldwork, I joined a national laboratory in Goa as a researcher. I also started attending the Sai Center in Goa, continuing my spiritual routine. As part of our oceanographic work, I often participated in scientific cruises to collect samples at sea. Soon after I submitted my thesis, I was called for the final *viva voce* examination, but at the same time, I was also scheduled to go on a cruise. My mentor at the lab insisted that I join the cruise, while my Ph.D. guide from Port Blair asked me to skip it and attend my

viva voce. Confused and torn, I simply prayed to Swami for guidance. I boarded the ship, unsure of what would unfold.

Miraculously, my guide personally spoke to the Director of the National Lab, who then instructed my mentor to release me from going on the cruise. **At the very last moment, I was allowed to disembark and attend the *viva voce*. I successfully defended my thesis and was awarded the doctoral degree!**

Today and Always: Under His Watchful Eyes

Today, in 2025, I serve as a Project Scientist at a National Institute in Kochi. From the time I was a child to this very moment, Swami has been guiding, guarding, and shaping my

journey. **At every crossroad, His hand has been there, in silent gestures, timely phone calls, affordable flight tickets, and unseen blessings, to name a few.**

My life has been nothing but a constant reminder and a testament to His love. I did not get the coveted personal interaction I wished for, but in truth, I have received blessings more profound: a living relationship with Him, built through surrender, silence, and grace.

Samastha Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu.

Jai Sai Ram.

Dr. Sai Elangovan Subramanian
INDIA



***Dr. Sai Elangovan Subramanian** is a marine biologist from Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, India. He works as a Project Scientist at a national institute in Kochi. Born in 1987 into a family deeply devoted to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, he was raised in a spiritual atmosphere. His journey took him from the sacred hills of Tiruvannamalai to the remote islands of Port Blair, and then to ocean expeditions. He earned his Ph.D. in marine science from Pondicherry University and has contributed to research on marine ecology. His personal and professional life has been guided by the unseen hand of Swami.*



Experiences of
Devotees

A Journey of **Faith**

I was born in London and grew up in South Africa. In the vibrant crucible of 1996, Johannesburg, South Africa, pulsed with hope for its young democracy, guided by Nelson Mandela, the nation's first Black president. At 16, I was navigating adolescence, shaped by my Christian Presbyterian roots. My mother, a passionate seeker of spiritual truth, often spoke with reverence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Her devotion was sincere, though it was mysterious to me. It came to a head during a family gathering with my father, Roy, and brother Casey. **With quiet intensity and strong conviction, she proclaimed she had encountered divinity incarnate during her visit to India.** We listened, our skepticism clearly showing. However, deep down, a spark had been ignited inside me.

Message About His Life

A few weeks later, she invited us to watch *"God Lives in India,"* a documentary film about Sri Sathya Sai Baba. **As His image appeared on the screen, something inexplicable stirred within me—beyond logic, beyond religion. I felt an undeniable inner**

connection. After that, I dived deep into the book, *My Baba and I*, by Dr. John Hislop, drawn in by the message of love, service, and compassion—'Love All, Serve All' and 'Help Ever, Hurt Never.' Sri Sathya Sai Baba's life, inundated with accounts of healing the chronic and incurable diseases, free hospitals, and monumental water projects that sustained millions in India's poorest regions, captivated my soul.

Though I had once felt a spiritual pull toward Catholicism—sparked by a vision of Jesus at age 11—Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Vedantic philosophy didn't conflict with my Christian beliefs. On the contrary, it expanded and broadened them. In Johannesburg, while many of my peers turned toward parties and escapism, I began to chart a different path—one grounded in reflection and service.

Bliss at First Sight

For my eighteenth birthday in 1998, my mother offered to send me on a pilgrimage to India. My father, initially reluctant, eventually urged her to accompany me. We landed

in Mumbai at dawn, descending mobile stairs from a Boeing 747 into the air thick with spice, dust, and life. The taxi ride to our hotel revealed a shocking truth—hundreds of people were sleeping on the sidewalks. That stark contrast to my life in South Africa humbled me profoundly.

From Mumbai, we traveled to Bangalore, and then, after a long drive, reached Puttaparthi. We settled into a modest apartment in the Prasanthi Nilayam *ashram*. I had my first *darshan* on a Tuesday morning. Thousands sat in silence with reverence as the sound of flute music filled the air. From the eighth row, I watched as Swami appeared, as if gliding across the marble floor in His saffron robe. His afro hairstyle shimmered in the light like a halo, and when His gaze met mine, I instinctively ducked, overwhelmed. He paused, leaned over the devotee in front of me, and smiled. **That simple gesture removed my fear and replaced it with bliss.**

Inner-view and Interview

Two days later, a sudden fever and stiff neck confined me to our apartment. I drifted in and out of sleep, cared for by my loving

mother. In that feverish state, vivid dreams appeared—of lives in distant lands, rowing boats in Southeast Asia, or playing football in a war camp—each image drenched in deep mystery as well as deep meaning. Upon recovery, I felt a deeper commitment to the spiritual path, embracing daily meditation and prayer.

On Sunday, by His grace, I got a second-row seat among tens of thousands of eager devotees. Baba emerged once more, and as He came near me, I averted my gaze once more. But He stopped and asked, “*Where are you from?*”

“England, Baba,” I replied hesitantly.

He looked deeper. “*No... where are you from?*”

Understanding His profound question, I answered, “Swami, I am from God.”

He smiled. “*Yes, very good.*” Then with a mischievous twinkle, “*How many?*”

“Two—me and my mother.”

He chuckled, “*Two? Not two, only one,*” and motioned, pointing toward the interview room. “*Go.*”



The Italians were called into a private inner interview room. Minutes later, the man on crutches emerged, lifting them over his head in amazement and joy. “I can walk!” he cried, weeping.



“Your mind is a mad monkey,” He said. “Up and down. So much worry. You don’t sleep. Why worry? I am with you always.”

I waited in nervous anticipation outside the interview room until we were called in.

Miracles During the Interview

In the interview room, Swami was jovial and magnetic. To my left were elderly Italian men, one of whom was on crutches. Baba turned to an Indian woman and asked, “*Who are you?*” She said her name. Swami teased her, saying “*This is a Maharani, an Indian queen,*” filling the room with laughter.

The Italians were called into a private inner interview room. **Minutes later, the man on crutches emerged, lifting them over his head in amazement and joy. “I can walk!” he cried, weeping.**

Then, Baba called us forward by nationality. Eventually, I stood alone.

He took my pinky (little finger). “*Come, my boy.*”

He led me into a small inner interview room, its centerpiece being a carved mahogany chair. As He sat down, I knelt before Him. He stroked my hand, placed His own hand on my head, and whispered, “*I bless you. I bless you. I bless you.*”

“*What do you want?*” He asked.

“Happiness,” I replied.

He looked deep into my eyes. “Happiness is union with God.”

He extended his palm. “*What is here?*”

“Nothing, Baba.”

“*No! Everything is here.*”

Suddenly, oil manifested in His hand, which He applied on me with care, like a healer. “*Your mind is a mad monkey,*” He said. “*Up and down. So much worry. You don’t sleep. Why worry? I am with you always.*”

He then instructed me to take the highly coveted *padanamaskar* (touching the feet reverentially). I bowed down and placed my head on His feet. **He blessed me, pronouncing, “Very good life. Very healthy life. Very happy life. I’m always with you.”**

He then handed me six packets of *vibhuti* for my mother. The private interview was over, and I returned to the room where the others were. Back in the main interview room, He again asked me, showing His empty palm, “*What is here?*”

“Everything,” I said.

"You're guessing," He teased. Then, waving that empty palm, He materialized a ring with three diamonds and placed it on my finger. We both laughed.

His Omnipresence and Omnipotence

That moment changed me forever.

I returned home feeling renewed, grounded in meditation and prayer. Shortly afterward, I moved from Johannesburg back to the U.K. Two years later, the ring disappeared—after I had broken a promise; a silent but powerful lesson in accountability.

Years later, while visiting my parents in South Africa, I traveled alone to Durban. One evening, as I was going out wearing a gold necklace and watch, I was ambushed by three men. One of them raised a knife, ready to attack me. In a moment of pure desperation, I cried out, "Baba, help me!"

Out of nowhere, an African woman appeared. With swift precision, she pounced on the attacker, shoved the others aside, and pulled me to safety. "Run, run!" she urged. We sprinted back to my hotel together.

Shaken and bloodied, I asked the hotel receptionist about the woman who had saved me. He looked confused. "What woman? You came in alone." **It was a miracle. A reminder of Baba's promise: I am always with you.**

In 2010, I got married and settled in the United States, and I am striving to incorporate Baba's teachings into my life. After a brief return to the U.K., I faced a number of personal challenges and overcame them by His grace. Finally, I returned to the United States, where I felt Baba wanted me to be, guiding me toward a life of service and spiritual growth.

From a skeptical youth to an ardent devotee, I've learned that faith brings forth miracles, and through meditation, love, and selfless service, we stay united with the divine.

Jai Sai Ram.

Mr. Robin Christie 
USA



*Mr. Robin P. Christie is a marketing professional with a diverse international background. Born in London and raised in South Africa, he worked in the boutique luxury hotel sector in London before building a successful career in the U.S. corporate sector. Mr. Christie was the Marketing Director for Domino's franchise, and the pro bono Development Director for **Standing United**, an organization supporting individuals in recovery and reintegration. A devoted follower of Sri Sathya Sai Baba since a life-changing visit to India in 1998, Robin's spiritual foundation continues to guide his professional and personal mission of service, compassion, and integrity.*



100TH
BIRTHDAY
OFFERINGS

National Conference USA

The first National Conference and Children's Festival of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) – USA was held in Dallas, Texas, from July 11-13, 2025, attracting over 700 attendees from across the United States. The conference theme, *"Sri Sathya Sai: A Mission of Selfless Love and Divine Transformation towards Oneness,"* honored Sri Sathya Sai Baba's life and teachings, promoted unity, deepened Sai devotees' commitment to His universal message, and reinvigorated their dedication to selfless service and spiritual growth.

Planning and Preparations

The SSSIO-USA National Council began planning for the conference nearly a year in advance. **The objective of the conference was to commemorate the life and teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, promote His universal message, and support His organization's mission to serve all and uplift humanity toward its ultimate divine goal.** The following five sessions were held over two and a half days:

- A Message of Unconditional Love (opening session)
- A Path of Unity
- A Mission of Selfless Service
- The Manifestation of Universal Human Values
- The Realization of Oneness

The planning for the children's festival, *'Messengers of Love and Light,'* was spearheaded by the Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) wing of the SSSIO-USA with a dedicated team of SSE coordinators, teachers, and parents from across the country.

Logistics was managed by the team of the South-Central Region and the local team in Dallas that worked with Hyatt Regency Hotel at the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, a stunning venue to host over 700 attendees. Multiple committees worked closely with the program planning teams to cover guest hospitality, audio-visual support, food logistics, and stage arrangements. Over 100 dedicated volunteers worked enthusiastically, meticulously, and diligently to make the conference a grand success.



Inaugural Session and Reflections on Unity

The inaugural session opened with the auspicious welcoming words, “Sai Ram,” followed by an acknowledgment of “the infinite love within each one of us.”

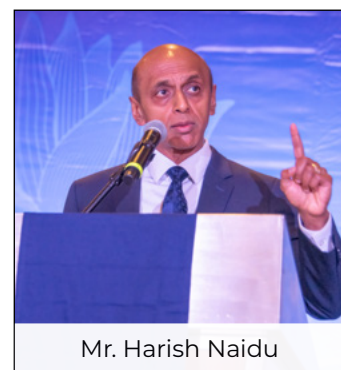
There were special guests in attendance. Prominent community leaders such as mayors, councilmembers, and the CEOs of large national non-profit service organizations like the Visiting Nurses Association were in the audience.

The conference started with a patriotic flag ceremony representing all 50 states of the USA. The program included the national anthem, lamp-lighting, and a universal prayer, setting an auspicious tone. Mr. Harish Naidu, National Council President of the SSSIO-USA delivered a warm welcome address, highlighting the organization’s mission of love and service. Swami’s video discourse prompted attendees to reflect on the meaning of selfless service. In his keynote address, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of SSSIO, emphasized that life should be rooted in love, with service expressed as love in action.

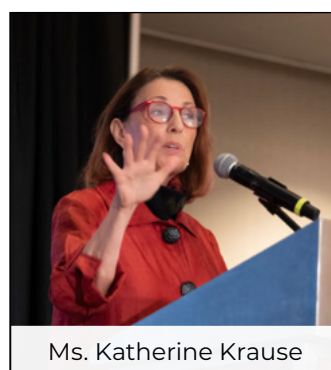
Several dignitaries praised the SSSIO-USA’s humanitarian works.



Dr. Narendranath Reddy



Mr. Harish Naidu



Ms. Katherine Krause



Mr. Mark Cronenwett

Mr. Suhas Subramanyam, Virginia’s 10th District Congressman, lauded its education, healthcare, and environmental programs.

Mr. Mark Cronenwett, Irving City Council Member, shared his own personal values, which were in alignment with the SSSIO’s mission.

Ms. Katherine Krause, CEO of the Visiting Nurse Association, expressed gratitude for the unwavering support of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Dallas for their ‘Meals on Wheels’ program.



Hon. Amir Omar

The Mayor issued a Proclamation from the City of Richardson, declaring the 100th year of Sathya Sai Baba's Advent

Ms. Michele Powers of *Common Ground*, ATX, shared her organization's growth in supporting halfway houses (homes for the underserved).

Hon. Amir Omar, Mayor of Richardson, Texas, stated he draws inspiration from Sri Sathya Sai's teachings, especially His universal and unifying message of selfless service. **In the most significant highlight of the conference, the Mayor issued a *Proclamation from the City of Richardson*, declaring the 100th year of Sathya Sai Baba's Advent as a time for reflection, gratitude, and celebration of His exemplary life, His teachings, and humanitarian service projects worldwide.** Sai devotees in attendance were overwhelmed with joy but also overcome by humility and immense gratitude to Swami for this momentous, memorable occasion.

Every speaker inspired the audience, each serving as an exemplar of selfless service. But the proclamation was truly a memorable moment.

Musical performances by the Young Adults of SSSIO-USA followed, including a tribute to Native Americans and American heritage songs themed "*Everything is You*," emphasizing the divinity in all. The audience watched an informative video detailing the history of the SSSIO in the USA. Dr. Phil Gosselin, SSSIO Zone 1 Chair, closed the session with an uplifting speech.

The afternoon session featured Ms. Sonal Shah, CEO of the Texas Tribune, a local newspaper, who delivered a thought-provoking speech encouraging the audience to reflect on the true meaning of selfless service. Drawing from her personal experiences, she challenged the attendees to expand their understanding of selfless service and incorporate more service into their daily lives.



Ms. Sonal Shah





Young adults presented an impactful musical production, *Unity in Society: Cultivating the Four Attitudes of Love*, exploring how Sai teachings relate to modern-day situations through music, skits, and reflections. The play focused on the four important qualities that both Swami and Buddha have emphasized: *Maitri* (friendship), *Karuna* (kindness), *Muditha* (appreciation), and *Upeksha* (non-attachment).

An engaging panel discussion, ‘Unity in Faith,’ featuring diverse panelists, highlighted how different faiths enrich spiritual journeys for everyone. Day one ended with a devotional musical offering, demonstrating how music drawn from various faiths can connect people of all ages in the spirit of oneness.

A concurrent digital exhibition showcased community service by SSSIO-USA members across ten SSSIO regions in the country, along with specific areas of envirocare, healthcare, information technology, and media. Each booth featured interactive displays of transformational work by SSSIO, souvenirs for the attendees, and feedback opportunities. A digital passport encouraged visits to all booths, fostering engagement and idea exchange. Inaugurated by Dr. Narendranath Reddy, the event attracted over 400 attendees and served as a platform for inspiration, learning, and collaboration to further Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s mission of selfless service.





The Children's Festival – Day 1

The Education Wing of the SSSIO–USA hosted its first Children's Festival, titled *'Messengers of Love and Light,'* in conjunction with the National Conference. Adjoining banquet halls were transformed into an enchanted forest, creating a joy-filled, magical setting for over 120 SSE children from all over the USA. Planning began in February 2025, with more than 150 volunteers, primarily SSE teachers. They designed sessions that blended creativity, reflection, and service around the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The festival began with devotional singing by the children. **The first session, "You Got a Friend in Me,"** focused on strengthening divine friendship with God through love, faith, and understanding. Children expressed this friendship through sculpting with clay. Group 3 and 4 students reflected on Swami's quotes, creating imaginative works like Liberation Island and Colorful Friendship, while younger groups designed simple, yet heartfelt creations inspired by guided discussions.

The second session, *'Ready to Backpack,'* explored 'Ceiling on Desires' with a focus



on time and energy. Activities combined creativity, movement, and reflection. **At the 'Vibe Mart,'** children made choices about how to spend their limited time and energy, encouraging awareness of true spiritual priorities. They also crafted get-well cards for a children's hospital and buttons for a backpack service project.



Selfless Service and Universal Human Values

The day started with Ms. Anjum Malik, an educational social entrepreneur, delivering an inspiring address about her nonprofit organization, *Global Impact Initiative*, which empowers refugees through education and workforce development. **She detailed the tutoring and mentoring program that has evolved through a partnership with the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Austin and now supports 857 refugee families.** Mr. Jonathan Gonzales shared a video message about how volunteering at the *Ashland Free Clinic*, an SSSIO initiative at San Lorenzo, California, transformed his compassion into sustained service.

A dynamic talk-show, *Selfless Hearts: Shifting Conversations and Changing Paradigms*, engaged the audience with innovative approaches to service. Leaders of **Enviro-**

care programs emphasized the urgency of protecting Mother Earth and their goal of planting one million trees. Ms. Doris Hampton, as part of the **Educare** panel, discussed the impact of the community-based SSEHV (*Sathya Sai Education in Human Values*) project for formerly homeless women and children implemented in collaboration with various government agencies. The **Health-care** panel, featuring Mr. Sanjeev Mehta and Dr. Geetha Govindarajan of the *Serve and Inspire (SAI) Clinic* in Chicago, described building a patient-centered, eco-conscious clinic that serves the community.

The morning concluded with breakout workshops on topics like stress management and reducing carbon footprints, offering attendees meaningful takeaway messages for their personal transformation.





The Manifestation of Human Values workshop on Saturday was an inspiring, activity-driven journey into living our highest ideals through the 3Hs—Head, Heart, and Hands. It started with an interactive *bhajan* that united head, heart, and hands through devotional singing. It then featured a powerful image: timeless values fading, leaving only ‘Truth’ clinging on in today’s turbulent world. From there, participants explored the head as the inner battleground, where pure, uplifting thoughts must be cultivated. The heart filtered these thoughts, transforming them into genuine feelings, with practical techniques to fight negativity and guard against false narratives. The hands segment demonstrated that right conduct naturally flows when head and heart align—thereby

restoring the values of peace, non-violence, and love.

Finally, there was a challenging activity involving a puzzle to be solved without a reference image, symbolic of life’s uncertainty. **It allowed attendees to reflect on how values must guide one’s actions when the path is unclear.** The session concluded with a call to align head, heart, and hands through conscious practice.

The night closed with a lively Young Adult production, *All Aboard*, a dynamic show that followed three strangers on a mysterious journey filled with action, music, laughter, and tears—revealing the transformative power of compassion for both the actors and the audience.

The Children’s Festival – Day 2

The morning program, *Many Leaves, One Tree*, celebrated unity, interconnectedness, and diversity. Groups 1 and 2 children began with an energetic leaf dance before rotating through *Global Connection Stations*, discovering nature’s sacredness. Groups 3 and 4 children created ‘Social Media for Sai’ campaigns, developing taglines, trends, and outreach ideas to share Swami’s message of unity. Students then added personal ‘Leaf Messages’ of love and peace to a communal tree symbolizing shared growth.

In the afternoon, ‘Just Do It’ began with the story of ‘*Premlok*’, the ‘Land of Pure Love,’ whose light was fading. Rooted in Swami’s teaching, “Life is a game, play it. Life is a challenge, meet it,” children journeyed through four themed zones, Play, Vision, Strength, and Joy, completing tasks to restore *Premlok*. Working in teams, they were reminded to use their head, heart, and hand for noble purposes, in harmony.

That evening, **SSE children performed the play, ‘*I Am the Light*,’ which was based on Tomie dePaola’s ‘*The Legend of the Bluebonnet*,’ depicting a young girl’s sacrifice for her tribe’s welfare. With narration, live**

DAY 3

music, and attractive props, the moving performance deeply touched the audience.

Spiritual Practice and Self-Transformation

The final day opened with an engaging debate on *Group vs. Individual Sadhana* (spiritual practice), with proponents of each side discussing convenience, accountability, consistency, and motivation.

Dr. Suresh Govind, Member of Prasanthi Council, delivered an inspiring motivational talk, reminding everyone that “we are spirits in bodies” and urging attendees to invite the divine into every moment. The session concluded with a brief sharing on self-transformation, encouraging participants to release attachment, stay present, and live sacred lives rooted in universal human values.

The Children’s Festival – Day 3

The final day’s theme, *One for All and All for One*, reflected Swami’s teaching, “Serve all.” Children assembled 100 backpacks filled with school supplies. SSE children of Groups 1 and 2 participated in a ‘Unity Walk,’ marking the end of three days of joy, creativity, teamwork, and service. **Messengers of Love and Light not only deepened the children’s understanding of Swami’s teachings but also inspired them to embody unity, love, and selfless service in their lives.**



Concluding Remarks and Gratitude

As the conference came to a close, attendees were left with profound insights and a deepened sense of unity and purpose. Dr. Jack Feely, Central Coordinator of SSSIO-USA, called the gathering a time of spiritual replenishment. Ms. Aparna Murali, the National SSE Coordinator, spoke warmly of the bonds forged with SSE students and the planning team. The conference team expressed deep gratitude to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and everyone who contributed to the success of the conference. The overwhelming feedback was whether such a gathering could be held every year or at least every other year. Attendees returned home renewed, reinvigorated, and ready to live in the spirit of unity and manifest divine love in their lives.



LOVE IN ACTION



THAILAND

Another Step Toward Planting a Million Trees

On July 6, 2025, over 100 SSSIO volunteers from Bangkok, Thailand, including SSE children, came together to offer selfless service at the Sathya Sai School, Lopburi. United by love, they prayerfully planted 100 trees, in honor of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 100th Birthday. Each tree planted was more than an act of environmental care—it symbolized unity, love, and hope for future generations.

The day turned into a celebration of devotion and ecology; a heartfelt expression of the Sai values of selfless action, reverence for nature, and collective upliftment. After



refreshments, the group also sang *bhajans* and visited the Hanuman Temple, Shirdi Temple, and Baba's House. The program then continued with a beautiful activity in the city, which involved making candles to distribute to local Buddhist temples for Guru Pournima.



USA

Youth Offering of Warmth and Service

Group 4 SSE students (ages 15 and older) from SSSIO-USA North-Central Region enthusiastically participated in the Blessed Blankets Project. This effort involved offering 100 cozy blankets in children's hospitals and shelters, as part of the SAI 100 initiative. With support from every Sai Center in the region, fleece fabric was lovingly transformed by many hands into soft, warm blankets—layered, cut, and tied in joyful unity. The work environment resonated with *bhajans*, laughter, and shared purpose, as Sai devotees of all ages—from the youngest pre-SSE child to the eldest member—tied not just knots, but bonds of compassion and commu-



nity care. The enthusiasm of the volunteers led to the making more than 100 blankets to provide comfort to children. The blankets were delivered with love and joy to the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) at St. Anthony's Community Hospital, where the staff received them with tearful gratitude.



AUSTRALIA

Compassion Rises with Floodwaters in Taree

In May 2025, catastrophic floods devastated Taree and the Mid-North Coast of New South Wales, Australia, setting a 100-year record as the Manning River surged more than 6 meters high. The disaster claimed lives, displaced about 50,000 people, and caused widespread damage to homes, infrastructure, and livelihoods across the region.

The Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) of Australia & PNG responded with compassion and loving service. Homes, farms, and livelihoods were lost, but amid this hardship, the light of selfless love shone brightly. Working hand-in-hand with partners and the local community, SSSIO members distributed 830 blankets and more than 100 pillows, cleaned, folded, and packed by over 30 volunteers. The affected people were also supplied with non-perishable food, essential household items, and cleaning supplies, which are critical after natural disasters.



Animals were also included in the scope of service as volunteers delivered 45 bales of hay and 60 bags of animal feed to struggling farmers. From the collection points to the relief centers, the spirit of unity and compassion was evident in every action. What started as a service initiative transformed into a journey of love. Gratitude poured in from the community. Ms. Cecilia from the Mitchell Island Recovery Centre stated, "Your group has left a wonderful impression of human kindness and compassion... Truly an honor to meet so many dedicated people."



BRAZIL

From the Heart to the Earth

In a beautiful tribute to Mother Earth and as part of the SAI 100 project, the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Natal in northeastern Brazil led a touching ecological and spiritual initiative between March and April 2025. Along with students, parents, teachers, volunteers, and local partners, 798 native fruit and shade trees of the Atlantic Forest were donated and planted across 15 schools and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) in four municipalities: Natal, Parnamirim, Taipu, and Macau. Every seedling was a symbol of love for nature and dedication to service. This



heartfelt initiative unified the fields of education, environmental care, and human values through selfless service.

Such dedicated efforts have helped the SSSIO worldwide to steadily progress toward its ambitious goal of planting millions of trees for Swami's Centennial in November 2025.

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

Mother's LOVE & Master's GRACE

I AM SHARING THE STORY OF A JOURNEY THAT BEGAN OVER HALF A CENTURY AGO, when I was around 30. In 1968, I heard about a person in India who could predict the future. They said He was a holy man, a Swami. I wasn't interested in such things. I was a practical woman, pregnant with my third child, working full-time, and managing a household. **But life has a way of guiding us, even though we are not aware of it.**

My husband's cousin, a young unmarried woman, approached me for help. She had heard about some "*bhajans*" being sung in a place called Maradana, close to where I worked in Union Place, Colombo, Sri Lanka. She asked if I could accompany her there and back to her sister's home, where she lived. This would assure her family of her safety, that she wasn't going alone to an unknown place. Though in advanced pregnancy and feeling tired, I agreed.

So, after work, she would come to my office and we would walk all the way to the *bhajan* hall. I never went inside. I would sit outside in the garden, reading a book, while she joined the singing. Once, she pointed to the photograph of Swami and asked, "Can you see the flowers falling from the picture?" I just brushed her off. I was polite, but I didn't believe in any of it.

Then something unexpected happened. My brother-in-law received a free ticket to travel to India to see Sathya Sai Baba, but didn't want to go. He suggested that I use the ticket, as I was already supposedly 'attending' *bhajan* sessions. He said, "Go. Investigate this person... Do some shopping also." My

**“Swami didn’t just give me back my vision.
He gave me purpose, peace, and a love I never
knew before.”**

husband also encouraged me. We were not financially well off, and we rarely got offers like this! And so, despite my reluctance to leave the children, I decided to go to India and see Sai Baba. **That trip changed my life entirely!**

Sai is the Embodiment of All Gods

It was February 1971 when I landed in Bangalore and traveled to the Brindavan *ashram* in Whitefield. At the entrance, someone rushed us inside, as Swami was expected to come soon to give *darshan*. I didn’t know what *darshan* meant. We just left our bags at the entrance of the *ashram* and went in. We sat down under a tree, and within ten minutes, Swami came walking up to us. My friend wanted to get up and prostrate to Him, but I held her back. “No! Just watch,” I said.

Then, Swami sat under the large tree, and the *bhajans* began. Many people had gathered, and **I was wondering who this being truly was? A monk? A Swami? A God?** Which God? That was when something strange happened. As I sat there quietly, I slipped into what may have been a meditative state. I was fully awake, yet I was not myself! I saw Swami seated on a chair, but then His form began to shift. **First, He appeared as Lord Buddha, glowing with a huge halo. Then, it was as if the light changed. He transformed into a deep blue figure. It was Lord Mahavishnu. Then, He changed back to Swami. A little later, the color seemed**

to change to red, and He appeared as Lord Kataragama (Karthikeya), and then again became Swami. The forms kept changing, one after another, like changing lights in a festive pandal.

When I returned to my senses, my friend was nudging me, whispering, “Sai is coming!” That is when I came back to my senses. Still unsure, I thought to myself, “If this man is who people say He is, then let me experience something real. Not visions, not dreams—something tangible.”

We were seated in just two long rows and Swami started walking between the rows. I was hoping to ask Swami some questions when He came close. But before I could do that, the lady beside me asked Him something. Swami bent down, and I thought He picked up some sand. When He gave it to her, it was *vibhuti*, holy ash! Swami moved ahead, ignoring me at first, as if He knew I wasn’t fully accepting Him yet. He moved to the next lady, who asked Him for something. Right from there, He looked at me as if beckoning me to observe. Then, Swami raised His arm, turned His palm facing downwards in circles, and produced a crystal-like sweet—*kalkanda* (rock candy). He gave it to her. I stood up to observe it more closely. Then He turned to me and gave me a long piece of *kalkanda* too. It felt warm in my hand.

That was the moment I knew this was no ordinary person. I was very happy!

Experiencing Mother's Love and Master's Grace

After *darshan*, I went back to see the *bhajan* area. The air was still filled with the fragrance of flowers and incense. I picked up a few flowers. Tired from the journey, we fell asleep under the tree. When we woke up, it was almost time for the next *darshan*. Some volunteers told us that since we were foreigners, we had to sit on the other side of the Mandir. They took us there and made us sit right up front. I was placed next to a lady playing the drums.

Swami walked barefoot on gravel and climbed onto a simple wooden stage. He started giving a discourse. I couldn't understand a word of it—it wasn't in a language I am familiar with and even the English translation by Dr. Gokak was too high-flown for me to understand.

But then something magical happened! Swami concluded the discourse by singing the *bhajan*, "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho, Ram, Ram, Ram.*" I had always loved to sing, ever since I was a little girl. As He sang, I felt something stir deep within me. I wasn't just hearing the music; I was hearing something my soul had longed for since childhood. I lost my mother when I was very young. She passed away just four days after my younger sister was born. I never knew a mother's love. All my life, I searched for that affection, that warmth. **In that moment, as Swami sang, I felt it. It made me feel like a child again, wrapped in love and security. In that moment of intense joy, I also felt my head open, and knowledge flowed into it! This knowledge was the understanding of Dhamma as taught by Lord Buddha! I had received the gift of the Truth of life. I didn't even realize I was crying. I was drenched in tears and**

sweat. The experience was profound and simply poured into me!

When I opened my eyes, the drums had stopped, and Swami was stepping off the stage. As He came near, I threw myself at His feet, sprawling on the ground—something I had refused to do just that morning! My whole body and clothes got covered in dirt, and the gravel cut into my skin, but I didn't care. After Swami left, people around me tried to clean me up, but I was in another world.

A Heartfelt Request

That night, I spoke to Swami in my heart. I said, "Sai Baba, I now know You are someone divine. I love to sing *bhajans*. I have already experienced Your magic. Please make me a *bhajan* singer."

The very next morning, our group leader approached me and said, "Tilaka (short for Tillekeratne), when you return to Sri Lanka, start learning *bhajans*. You can start singing in our center."

From that day, I began learning *bhajans* and eventually led *bhajans* at my own home. **Singing became my offering to Swami. He had made me a *bhajan* lead-singer and I began conducting *bhajans* at home!**

Helping a Family in Need

In 1974, around Christmas, I received a cash bonus at work. Ever since the experience with Swami, I felt that my ego, or lower self, was decreasing. I found myself feeling sorry for the poor and wanted to do something for those who were less fortunate. Sharing became part of my life. **So, I decided to spend my bonus money helping a family in need—my husband's cousin's children, who had lost their father.** We visited them as a family, with our three children, and bought them

school books, shoes, and other essentials. My children stayed back, in the city of Negombo, to spend a few days with their cousins during the Christmas vacation.

When we were returning home by bus, my maid Soma and I were seated together, and my husband was seated two seats behind. That was when a tragedy struck! We were near Seeduwa when a stone was hurled at our bus during a political rally. It shattered the window near me and hit my face on the left, and my left eye! The cornea was cut, and I was bleeding profusely. I used the children's clothes I was bringing home to wash as absorbent tissues to soak up the blood! I was taken to Colombo Hospital and admitted in the middle of the night. I was hospitalized for weeks and was treated, but finally, I ended up losing vision completely in the left eye. Out of concern for me, my husband told me to quit my job and stay home. It was the end of my professional career. My friends and family mocked me, saying, "You always speak of Sai Baba and about doing service. You do good, but look what happened to you! None of us were harmed, but you were!"

Vision from the Divine

My faith in Swami didn't waver one bit. I said to myself, "I will show them who Sai Baba truly is." In 1975, I went back to Puttaparthi. I wanted to seek Swami's

blessings to cure me. But instead, I wrote a small note to Swami, praying, "If I have sinned now or in my past births, please forgive me. Help me lead a life without problems."

Swami came directly to me, took my note, and placed His feet close to my folded legs. Unable to see with the left eye, I bent toward my right side to touch His feet. I bumped into His leg but managed to somehow hold on to His feet. **I held on to those divine feet and whispered thrice, "Swami, please forgive me!" I couldn't place my head on His feet, but I was happy.** I returned to my room and realized that something had miraculously changed. Though my physical eye was still damaged and not correctable, I could perceive and see just as before! In fact, I could see more clearly than ever before. I could even thread a needle! Swami had opened another eye within me! Today, when I look back at my life, I see Swami's love and presence in every moment. From a reluctant visitor, I became a devotee, a *bhajan* singer, and someone who learned to see the divine in every being.

That is the biggest miracle. Not just healing the eye but opening the heart. Swami didn't just give me back my vision. He gave me purpose, peace, and a love I never knew before.

Mrs. Iranganie Tillekeratne
SRI LANKA

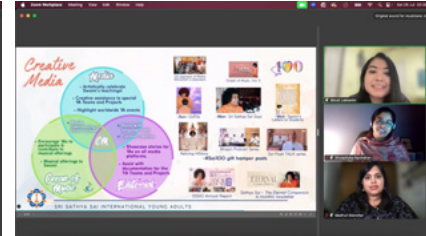


Mrs. Iranganie Tillekeratne is a grandmother, social worker, and a long-term Sai Devotee who has been personally blessed by Swami on multiple occasions. She started one of the oldest bhajan centers dedicated to Swami at her residence in Nawala, Sri Lanka. She has been a member of the Sri Sathya Sai Center for over five decades. During this time, she has held several positions in the SSSIO, Sri Lanka, including Vice President of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Colombo. She continues to be a mentor to SSE children and a helper to the needy.



from the International Sai Young Adults

INTERNATIONAL YOUNG ADULTS LEADERS CALL



The International Young Adults (YAs) Leaders Call held on July 26, 2025, brought together over 60 leaders from around the world, including the International, Zonal, Regional, National, and Center YA Coordinators, as well as YA Project Leads and team members.

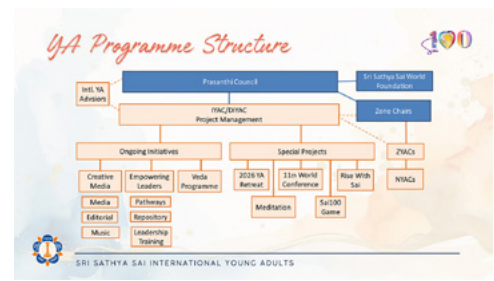
The meeting commenced with a brief guided meditation, creating a sacred atmosphere for the session ahead. This was followed by a warm welcome from the International and Deputy International Young Adults Coordinators. **A short presentation revisiting the SSSIO structure highlighted how YAs are a vital part of Swami's divine mission.** The introductions of the Zonal YA Coordinators and members of the YA Advisory Panel helped foster familiarity and unity among all participants.

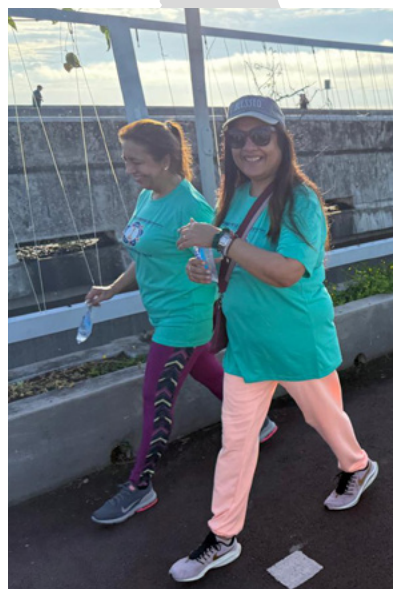
One of the key parts of the call was the unveiling of the updated structure of the International YA Committee, implementing key resolutions discussed during the International YA Leaders Retreat in Athens, Greece (2024). An overview was also provided of the special projects under-

way for the 100th Birthday Celebrations, with updates and inspiration from different teams. A vibrant round of YA highlights from around the world showcased uplifting activities in various zones, along with previews of upcoming initiatives at both the Zonal and International project levels.

The session ended with heartfelt reflections and guidance from the YA Advisory Panel, sharing wisdom inspired by Swami's teachings. A profound message from Sri Sathya Sai Baba's divine discourse left the participants deeply inspired by His reassurance that wherever we may go, Swami is always with us. He will take care of our difficulties. We must have courage, nurture divine thoughts, and continue serving society with unwavering faith. Though we may face losses along the way, we must never give up on service.

With the aim of hosting such leadership calls more regularly, this gathering marked a meaningful and significant step in strengthening stronger connections among YA leaders and learning from one another as instruments in His mission.





A WALK TO BUILD A BRIDGE

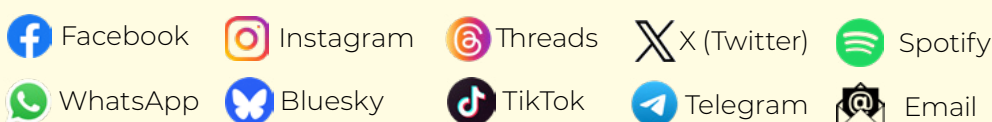
The SSSIIO of Panama organized a walkathon along the Coastal Strip 3 Marine Section, in Panama City, on May 4, 2025. The goal of this event was to raise awareness and support the construction of a bridge in a rural area. In this region, most families lacked access to essentials such as education, food, and medical care, making this walk a true act of *seva* (service) in action.

Participation in the walkathon required registration and the participants were given a T-shirt and a souvenir, along with entry to the event. The walkathon was a resounding success, drawing 110 participants. Young Adults played a key role by actively volunteering and contributing to the smooth implementation. In addition to the young volunteers, 12 young participants and several children accompanying their parents also participated in the walk; their presence enriched the meaning and purpose of the event.

The walkathon's success led to building a new bridge for the residents of the Pacora community who had long struggled with a deteriorating crossing. **The new bridge has been warmly received and deeply appreciated by the local community, who now enjoy safer and more reliable access to essential services. But perhaps the most touching reward of all was the radiant smiles and happiness of the local children—a gift that made every step worthwhile.**

Throughout the walk, Swami's presence was felt, whether during the planning stages, at registration, or among the active participants walking for this noble cause. The organizing team at SSSIIO Panama felt truly blessed to witness the values taught by Swami in action: truth, right conduct, peace, love, and nonviolence.

Follow Young Adults on Social Media



yacoordinator@sathyasai.org | <https://sathyasai.org/ya>

HEAD—HEART—HANDS



Transforming Lives Through Values-Based Education

On July 11, 2024, the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) of Malaysia launched an Education in Human Values (EHV) program for teenagers from the Pure Life Society of Malaysia, a home for orphans and underprivileged children. As part of this ongoing initiative, more than 90 classes have been conducted over the past year. Each session was supported by two male and two female volunteers on a weekly rotational basis from a total pool of 20 YA volunteers.

Swami beautifully says in His discourse on May 24, 1993, *“Teach the world through noble actions and words. Fill your heart with the name of God. Fill your mind with the spirit of service. Mankind has to make the right use of the head, heart, and hand. By following the three Hs of head, heart, and hand, we reach the most sublime heights.”* The main objectives of the program are deeply rooted in Swami’s teachings on the 3HV principle, namely **Head, Heart, and Hand**, and cover topics such as discovering the true Self, building self-confidence, developing a strong foundation for emotional stability and resilience, handling responsibility with care, anti-bullying, and self-care.

“The program also instilled a sense of responsibility and accountability in the students, encouraging them to strive for personal growth and contribute positively to society”

By the end of the year-long program, volunteers observed a remarkable transformation in the students. **There was increased engagement, improved emotional vocabulary, eagerness to participate in new activities, a boost in self-confidence and self-esteem, enhanced interpersonal skills, and a greater sense of empathy and compassion.** Students also shared that their relationships with the volunteers played a crucial role in personalizing the support and guidance they received. The volunteers served as role models, inspiring the students through their wisdom and experience. Furthermore, the program also instilled a sense of responsibility and accountability in the students, encouraging them to strive for personal growth and contribute positively to society.

Despite initial challenges, the EHV program has emerged as a meaningful initiative for nurturing character development and instilling positive values among the teenagers of Pure Life Society. To expand the goals and vision of the program, the volunteers are encouraged to stay connected with the students after completing the program, offering guidance as mentors and companions in their new phases of life. They're also encouraged to incorporate talent showcases, sport enrichment sessions, and open discussions about the current challenges students may be facing into future sessions.

Looking ahead, the EHV program plans to continue building on this solid foundation, nurturing young minds with love and values, and empowering them to face life's challenges with strength and compassion.





PURE THOUGHTS National Young Adults Retreat B A R B A D O S PURE WORDS PURE LIFE

As part of the Sail100 Worldwide Dedication Initiatives, the SSSIO Young Adults organized and hosted the **SSSIO Young Adults Retreat** in Barbados from **April 25-27, 2025**.

Sixteen Young Adults from Trinidad & Tobago, San Francisco, and Barbados gathered for this special retreat. The event was centered around this year's theme ***Purity is Enlightenment***, and explored the subtopics *Pure Thoughts*, *Pure Words*, *Pure Life*. The retreat featured a series of engaging sessions and soulful experiences to discover how purity can be practically applied in daily life, and how one can be firmly anchored in Swami's teachings.

It started with a heartwarming Friday evening *satsang* that brought Swami into the spotlight of the retreat, setting a powerful tone for the days ahead. This was followed by a dinner, where Young Adults bonded over their shared devotion and the impact of Swami in their lives.

The official start to the retreat on Saturday took place at the serene P.E.G. Farm, and the subtopics were explored through lively, thought-provoking mini sessions. The workshops were engaging and kept everyone immersed in the moment. By creating a safe and supportive environment, Ms. Akshata Chugani, the National Young Adults Coordinator of Barbados, inspired everyone to share their perceptions of impurity. **Together, they reflected on practical ways to cultivate purity in thought, word, and action.**



One of the highlights of the retreat was a beautiful meditation session led by Ms. Juhi Bhojwani Thani, seated overlooking the calm Atlantic Ocean. She guided the participants to visualize and express, through painting, both their negative and positive emotions, helping them to better recognize and align with their higher Selves.

The third day of the retreat allowed the Young Adults to experience purity in action through a meaningful and heartfelt seva project. Mr. Amrit Thani lovingly guided the group in preparing 44 children's hampers and six gift baskets filled with essentials for the children of the Nightingales Children's Home—a gesture that truly embodied the retreat's core values. The Young Adults had the joy of visiting the Children's Home and spending time with the kids, who were eager to play and connect. **Talking to them and playing with them became a profound moment of reflection on purity. Their joy and laughter made the Young Adults forget everything else and simply be present in the moment.** As the Young Adults were about to leave, two of the children, deeply attached to one of YA sisters, clung to her and asked when she would return. This pure love was a beautiful reminder of the Swami in everyone. The gratitude expressed by the children

had a deeply transformative effect on many present.

Throughout the weekend, attendees were nourished not only spiritually, but also physically with delicious meals lovingly prepared by local devotees. They were also uplifted and inspired by fun-filled Sai stories, moments of spiritual reflection, and experiences of Swami's grace.

Swami's presence was keenly felt in many subtle ways, through moments of silence, shared smiles, and special surprises, such as a Golden Age meditation on Aradhana Day, guided by Mr. Jagdesh Lakhan from Trinidad & Tobago. The retreat ended with a breathtaking hike up Chalky Mount, where the Young Adults experienced the majesty of nature, a vivid reminder of the beauty of creation.

The weekend retreat felt less like an event and more like a joyful family journey, where bonds were strengthened, hearts were opened, and Swami's love was enjoyed freely. The retreat planted seeds of inspiration, unity, and devotion, the kind of experience every Young Adult should have. The Young Adults left with renewed enthusiasm and commitment to walk the path Swami has lovingly shown, and to live with pure thoughts, pure words, and pure actions.

AN ODE TO AFRICA



We offer ourselves at Your lotus Feet,
Oh Bhagawan Baba, in all of Your patients,
it is You we have come to meet.

A pilgrimage following Your footsteps from 1968,
10 days, 3 countries, 1 team with over 60 teammates.

We started in Uganda, setting up in Kampala Sai Center,
Two who started off as patients became volunteers and mentors.

We crossed borders, setting up camp at a private hospital,
All the Kenyan doctors were on strike, the level of need was astronomical.

Then we traveled to two of Your Sathya Sai schools,
Your students, Your pride, helping us translate,
singing, and shining like jewels.

Last but not least, there was a Tanzanian hospital
still being built,

No running water, no electricity, no time to wilt.

We worked with what we had, we made do,
Finding solutions to problems, we learnt to.

You guided the way, You gave us the strength,
No matter the challenges, no matter the length.

It was You all along, in everyone we met,
You united all of us, shifting our mindset.

Thank you, Dear Sai, for the inner transformation and opportunity to serve,
In Your name, we celebrate the good health all the world deserves.



Dr. Priya Panneerselvam
USA



Dr. Priya Panneerselvam was among the members of the blessed entourage of the SSSIO East Africa Medical Mission which spanned three countries: Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, the same sacred path traced by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba during His only overseas tour in 1968. From March 31 to April 9, 2024, 64 healthcare professionals selflessly served 5,605 patients across multiple medical camps. Detailed accounts of the mission are available in [Sathya Sai – The Eternal Companion, July 2024](#). Raised in Swami's fold and a graduate of Sai Spiritual Education (SSE), Priya has been active in medical service, educational outreach, and women's empowerment initiatives. As the founder of Ask Akka, she promotes health literacy within the South Asian community



PURITY IS ENLIGHTENMENT

Sri Sathya Sai International Organization
lovingly invites you

**100TH BIRTHDAY OF SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
& 11TH WORLD CONFERENCE**

NOV 19

Ladies Day

NOV 20-22

**World
Conference**

NOV 23

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19-23 November 2025

**Sai Prema Nilayam
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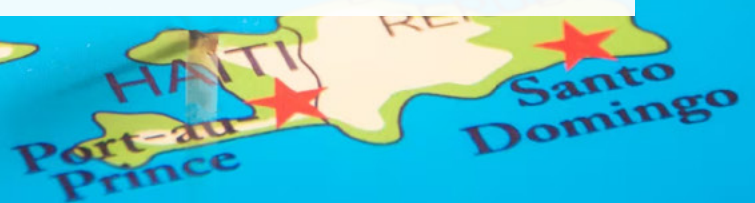
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'EDUCATION FOR LIFE, NOT JUST FOR LIVING'

Stories of Love and Dedication from Haiti

What started with the terrible earthquake in Haiti inspired a major SSSIO service project and as of August 2025, continues as an expression of care, love, faith, and dedication. Six hundred students, who would otherwise have no chance of attending school due to poverty, attend primary school, receive values-based education, and get a meal. For fifteen years now, the SSSIO has continued to support this educational project in Port-au-Prince, the capital city of Haiti. Two Human Values Clubs serve another 130 children. In a humanitarian crisis, with extreme poverty, food scarcity, and ongoing criminal gang wars, the unwavering courage and dedication of the local teachers at SSSIO partnership schools are amazing. It truly is a miracle that the schools are so successful in their mission. Sai's grace protects, inspires, and makes the impossible possible.





When the Ground Shook Below the Haitians' Feet

On January 12, 2010, one of the deadliest earthquakes in modern history struck Haiti and its capital, Port-au-Prince. An estimated 300,000 people died, and about 1.5 million people were displaced. Measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale, it destroyed 80-90% of buildings and caused economic loss of \$8-14 billion, nearly three times the country's annual GDP (Gross Domestic Product)!

Within days, the volunteer team of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) arrived in Haiti to assess the situation, meet with the Haitian Sai-devotees, and determine a plan of action. A few days later, the first SSSIO medical team arrived and set up medical camps at three locations. **For five days a week, hundreds of people received loving care and essential medicines. This critical service continued for eight months, as teams of doctors, pharmacists, and young adults (YAs) came to Haiti to care for the sick and the wounded.**

In the USA, the SSSIO organized a major drive to collect the necessary medicines and first aid products. Volunteers delivered them

to Haiti every week. Within days, Mr. Carlos Suarez, a devotee from Mexico, started a food program to distribute prepared meals to children in camps, orphanages, and on the streets. This service was essential in a country where, according to International Monetary Fund statistics, 70% of the population lived on less than \$2 a day even before the earthquake. **And thus, this *Narayana Seva* continued, growing from several hundred to several thousand meals a day!**

Life-changing Experience as a Volunteer in Haiti

When I arrived as a non-medical volunteer with the team at the end of March 2010, we were welcomed by Ms. Benita, a Sai devotee who made sure the volunteers were well cared for in the 'Sai House'. Ms. Ester came daily to prepare healthy vegetarian meals while Mr. Jesus drove us through the terrible traffic jams in an open truck to the medical camp locations. The routine of preparing for and setting up the medical camps in the various locations got well established. While the doctors saw the patients, we, the non-medical volunteers, helped in the pharmacy and played with the children who had



to wait many hours to be seen. **We administered this 'vitamin G,' or 'Vitamin God' as Swami calls it, and it seemed to work miracles by bringing smiles and energy to the traumatized children!**

The day at the Sai house started and ended with *bhajans*, prayers, planning, and sharing experiences. Every evening, a group of young people aged 17-23, from the Delmas neighborhood, came to talk with the volunteers. We learned so much from each other! Several of them joined the medical camps as translators, and Ms. Founa even became a nurse!

This first week of *seva* in Haiti changed the course of my life. Paradoxically, I felt that I had never experienced such love in my life before! The urgency of the situation, the courage and faith of the people we met, and the loving service of the doctors and volunteers opened my heart. **Sathya Sai's presence was so tangible that, even though I came to serve for a week, I ended up spending nine months in Haiti during 2010-2011!**

Dreams of Helping Children Materialize

The year before the earthquake hit, the youth from Delmas had created a group to organize service activities in their neighborhood. They especially wanted to help children attend school. Due to extreme poverty, lack of public schools, and the high cost of private schooling, many children never get a chance to go to school. Sometimes, they attend school only for a year, and let their siblings take their place next, for this privilege! With the earthquake, hundreds of schools were destroyed. Homes, family members, and livelihoods were lost. People were living in makeshift camps or on the streets. **The resolve of these Delmas youngsters was only strengthened by the situation.**

Since I had just spent a year teaching at the Sathya Sai School in Thailand, I was eager to share the wonderful lessons, creative activities, and games I had learned from Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai and Ms. Loraine Burrows. Thrice a week, around 20 youth and adults gathered to explore silent sitting, discus-

sions on a topic or citation, play value games, and engage in creative activities.

This led to a two-week training on 'Human Values and Leadership' being offered, with Dr. Vera Mehta from New York, in June 2010. Thirty youth participated, including a young pastor, Mr. Joseph, who discovered selfless service as his calling. He had just started a school for destitute children under tents in a field, on the outskirts of the city, and was determined to save the children from delinquency and ignorance.

Sustained Solutions SSSIO's Focus

Thanks to our meeting during the leadership training, and the close collaboration and support from the SSSIO and other donors, **this school grew from 63 to 420 students.** As of 2025, Mr. Joseph is the director of two primary schools, still serving those who cannot afford to go to school, or those who are often too old to be admitted to a regular school. Two former students are now sports teachers in the school, and one person is doing an internship there for her degree as a kindergarten teacher. Former students participate in special events and volunteer during the summer programs. **Due to Mr. Joseph's exemplary commitment, dedication and determination, the teachers also worked for free for seven years before receiving a modest salary.** As of 2025, he continues to be a valued community leader.

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV)

Until the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, we would travel to Haiti, visiting the schools and offering training through human values summer camps for children. During and after the pandemic, when the law and order situation took a turn for the worse, the training continued online. The joy of the free training methods, including the seamless connection with their own values, predominantly Christian, generated much interest. Many teachers in Haiti do

not have a teaching degree. Having finished high school, they are just ahead of the class they are teaching! **Learning about classroom management with love, discipline through respect rather than force, and how to draw out the values from within, works like a charm.**

As one of the participants, Ms. Christianne Aurélien, wrote in her evaluation: "I loved this training because it changed my way of thinking a lot and taught me how to see other people. I realized that I must show compassion, wisdom, and love toward them. I have been truly inspired because I learned that I am the light, and to light others, I must love without conditions; in other words, practice unconditional love."

ABC for Life

In February 2011, the Delmas youth, many of whom were still in high school themselves, secured the use of their school buildings in the afternoon to start another school. They chose the name '**ABC for Life**', based on Swami's teaching, 'Education is for life,





not just for a living.' **Amazingly, the school welcomed its first batch of 108 students!**

These were children from the streets and the camps who had never been to school before. So, it was quite a task to instill discipline in them! The afternoon started with a meal from the ongoing *Narayana Seva*. Twenty-seven children, who had received a scholarship from the SSSIO to attend schools that still functioned, came in the afternoon to do their homework. And of course, everyone loved the creative human values lessons for all ages.

Ms. Guerline Recule, one of the Delmas youth who had just finished high school, did not know what to study. She came from a poor family and thought that her only option was to learn to sew from her mother. However, seeing how good she was with children as a teacher, I told her that she should consider a teaching career. Two days later, she found a teaching program and got admitted! She completed the 3-year degree while continuing to volunteer at the ABC for Life afternoon school. Today, she is the director of the ABC for Life school, managing a cooperative team of teachers and involving volunteers and parents in special events and summer courses!

The 80 kindergarteners and 90 primary students at the ABC for Life school function

like a large, loving family. There are special events for children and parents focused on human values, hygiene, parenting, and local culture. They even created an 'education appreciation day.' **The weekly Saturday Human Values Club, started in Delmas in 2010, welcomes students and children from the neighborhood, thereby spreading human values well beyond the school.**

Faith and Courage Against All Odds

Sadly, the socio-political and economic situation in Haiti has deteriorated tremendously over the past four years. Along with endemic poverty, natural disasters, and persistent inequalities, criminal gangs have taken over the capital and much of the country, and 80% of the hospitals and 945 schools are closed. In Haiti, a child can only realize 45% of his or her potential, due to a lack of education and health care. To develop in a positive and balanced manner and to create a better world, the new generation must be carefully nurtured. **In the words of Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world."**

Given the near-famine conditions, a daily meal for the children in the schools and clubs became essential. **Since 2021, all students have received a hot lunch, and this is often the only meal that they receive!** Many fami-

lies have fled to the Tabarre neighborhood, hoping to find safety. Having lost everything, their children can no longer attend school. In response, a human values teacher from the ABC for Life school started a Saturday Human Values Club there. He recruited six volunteers, and together they organize lessons and activities for 80 children every week.

Due to severe gang wars, regular daily life has come to a halt as of August 2025. Parents cannot work, transportation is blocked, and day jobs have disappeared as entire neighborhoods are empty. Twenty-five percent of the children at Mr. Joseph's schools have lost a parent or caretaker due to violence and lack of access to health care. These children are extremely vulnerable, and the teachers keep a close watch on them and offer help where they can. **Just hearing the stories of the teachers who are living on faith alone is transformative.**

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Continues

Since 2020, it has become so dangerous for foreigners to visit Haiti that the SSEHV trainings, which used to take place during the summer, are given quarterly, online. **A strong focus has been on stress-relief, silent sitting, non-violence, and direct and**

In the words of Nelson Mandela, “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.”

integrated methods. Four of the most experienced teachers have become trainers and were able to hold training sessions in Haitian Creole instead of French, making it more accessible to all staff members.

Through the continued support and supervision of the ESSE (European Sai Spiritual Education) Institute of Northern Europe, the three schools supported by SSSIO all these years have become partnership schools. **The values serve as an anchor for teachers and students alike and are integrated into all aspects of the school.** Mr. Francine Picard, a dedicated educator from Belgium, prepares wonderful SSEHV lessons in French, which the teachers can adapt to different age groups.



Free Summer Schools for All Students

During summer holidays, the school children cannot leave the capital to visit their family in the countryside, as all major roads are closed, and travel is undoubtedly unsafe. Thus, the three partnership schools and Human Values Clubs become more important than ever. **They provide a sanctuary where the children can meet friends, feel safe, learn, be heard, play, and be children again. It is a safe space where they are sheltered from the surrounding negative influences and are guided to connect with their hearts, to use their intelligence, and to follow the path of right action.**

For the fourth year in a row, the schools, and this year the Club in Tabarre as well, offer free full-time summer schools for eight weeks. Along with a tapestry of human values, lessons, and activities, the children also study basic school subjects and learn practical skills such as cooking, sewing, sandal

making, and various handicrafts. Each child receives a daily meal. There is even a first-aid course offered to help boost the children's confidence and self-esteem so that they can offer help in difficult situations.

Gratitude to Sai and All Participants

Thanks to the support of SSSIIO devotees and friends, a total of 730 children participate in the three partnership schools and the Human Values clubs. Without this support, they would not be able to receive an education, which is key to building a better future for themselves and their community. A heartfelt thanks is due to the dedication and love of the teachers, and their courage and determination to do everything they can for the well-being of the children and their families. I offer my everlasting gratitude to Sri Sathya Sai, the Teacher of Teachers, who inspires us to follow His teachings and share His love with all.

Ms. Katinka van Lamsweerde
THE NETHERLANDS



To learn more about this program
please contact info@sathyasai.org



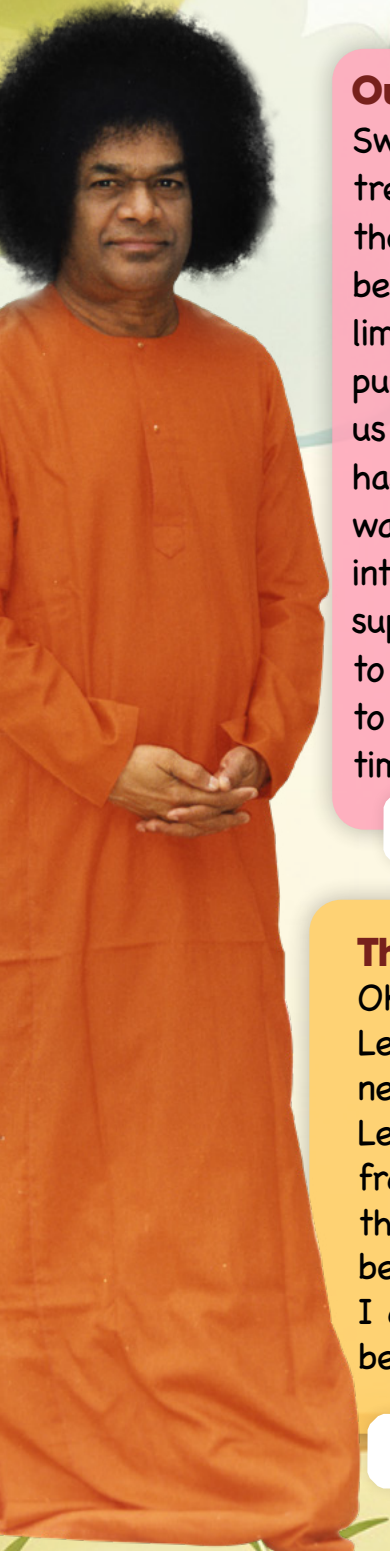
Ms. Katinka van Lamsweerde started Sathya Sai Education in Human Values training in 1996 and became passionate about the creative and practical translation of Sathya Sai Teachings for young and old. She completed the diploma course at the Sathya Sai School in Thailand, and taught languages there for one year. Since then, she has given trainings to help integrate human values education in a variety of cultures and contexts: in Laos, USA, Haiti, and Europe, working with children, youth and adults.

She co-founded two educational and humanitarian non-profit organisations, to give access to basic and values education. She lived in Lao PDR for eight years, working with villagers to build schools and spread values education through cultural programs with the children. Thanks to the SSSIIO, she went to Haiti, helped found the ABC for Life school and continues to support the partnership schools through training and the non-profit founded in the Netherlands to help maintain the schools.

Katinka joined the ESSE Institute as a trainer in 2021. Born in The Netherlands, she currently lives in France.



Our Beloved *Treasure*



Our Beloved Treasure

Swami, you are my greatest treasure, You have taught us the 5 human values, which have beautiful meanings that are limitless, superior in quality of purity and power. You made us realize that every being has these values inside them, waiting to be drawn out and put into action. You are my biggest support, heart warmer & guide to life. Swami, please bless us to follow your footsteps for all time to come....

Saisudha S | Group 3 | Netherlands

The Bond of Love

Oh Swami! I have a prayer...
Let me stay forever in the nectarine bliss of your love.
Let me spread at least a fraction of your compassion to those in this play. Let me not be distracted by the world. For I am nothing, and don't want to be anything without you.

ShreyaSai P | Group 3 | USA

True Love

Swami's love is still and deep
Not to hold, but just to keep
No desire, no need to prove
Only presence, only love

Eyes that see below the skin
Finding light that lives within

Soft as prayer, yet strong
and true Love that flows in us

Euhen Y | Group 3 | Malaysia

What Lies Within

Curiously looking up for answers, Unaware of the glowing light within, Swami, you are always present, simply waiting, For us to reach out and call your name.

Opportunities come from all directions, Yet, we're often overcome by distractions, Instead, try and listen to the conscience within, To journey on the path towards Him.

Rohan R | Group 4 | Malaysia

Swami and his Blessings

It's the year 2021, when we are having online SSE classes because of the pandemic. My mom has a desire of sending me to Puttaparthi and study there in Swami's school. She was looking for the release of admissions application at Puttaparthi school. It's the time 1st January 2021, the applications were open and my mom tried to submit the applications for my admission. She came to know that I wasn't eligible for first grade admission. She was so upset & cried a lot. On 3rd January it's our SSE class. After my class I came out of the room and my dad saw vibhuti on my forehead. It's a blessing from Swami as we didn't have any vibhuti in our home at that time. We all realised that Swami has blessed me as his child no matter where I am.

Dheeksha | Group 1 | USA

You are my Buddy

Dear Swami,

I am Sai. My parents call me Sai Arpit. Meaning, I am dedicated to Sai. And that Sai is You. In my early grades, when my teacher said I have been assigned with a buddy for a project, I then understood the meaning of my name; we both will be buddies forever. We both are Sai. Though I see you every day in a photo, I feel you are always with me. I love your 'Vibhuti' more than anything. I love singing and chanting to you. When I get sad, always feel like sharing and talking to you. When I get stuck somewhere working on a problem, I ask for your help and guidance. I know you are always with me, my true friend. You can't leave me, neither can I. Hope I am learning and practicing all the good things taught by you and I will not disappoint you. Love you buddy.

Sai Arpit N | Group 2 | USA

More Than a Game: Values I Learnt from Playing Cricket

Billions of people watch sports every day, but how many actually play one? Nowadays, most people prefer to stay home and watch their favorite team play rather than trying the sport themselves, especially the youth. Sports are very important in everyone's life because they provide not only fitness but also opportunities to meet new people, reduce stress, and learn important values like teamwork, dedication, and determination. When I first started playing competitive cricket, I barely scored any runs and couldn't get wickets. However, with consistent practice and dedication, I improved with each game. This shows how hard work can make a difference in any sport, even individual sports like chess.

Teamwork and communication are also crucial in sports. For example, while batting in cricket, you need to communicate with your partner to decide whether to take a run or stay, to make sure you don't get out. These moments teach you how to make decisions quickly and help you learn how to work as a team. Sports don't just help on the field but also help with skills that apply to everyday life. So, instead of just watching your favorite team play, go outside and try a sport.

Sai Hrishikesh N | Group 3 | USA

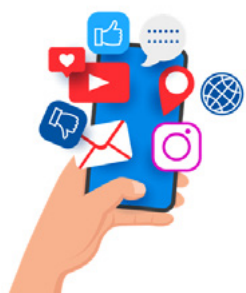
Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
September 5-7, 2025	Friday-Sunday	Sri Sathya Sai International Conference, Zone 4, Malaysia: <i>"Celebrating 100 Years of Love, Service, and Human Values"</i>
October 11-12, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
November 8-9, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Bhajans
November 19, 2025	Wednesday	Ladies' Day
November 20-22, 2025	Thursday-Saturday	11th World Conference, SSSIO
November 23, 2025	Sunday	100th Birthday of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Streaming on sathyasai.org/live and YouTube



Stay in touch with SSSIO news and activities, by visiting the SSSIO websites and following/subscribing to the various communications channels below. **Click on each icon or name to visit the site.**



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- Sri Sathya Sai Humanitarian Relief [🔗](#)
- Sri Sathya Sai Young Adults [🔗](#)
- Sri Sathya Sai Education [🔗](#)
- Healthy Living [🔗](#)



Pure vision leads to pure thoughts. Pure thoughts result in pure actions. Purity in action is essential for human existence. Purity in thoughts and purity in speech must lead to purity in deeds. This is the triple purity hailed by the sages. When this purity is manifest, human life gets redeemed. The principle of 'Help ever, hurt never' becomes the governing principle of daily life.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

April 14, 1998



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

