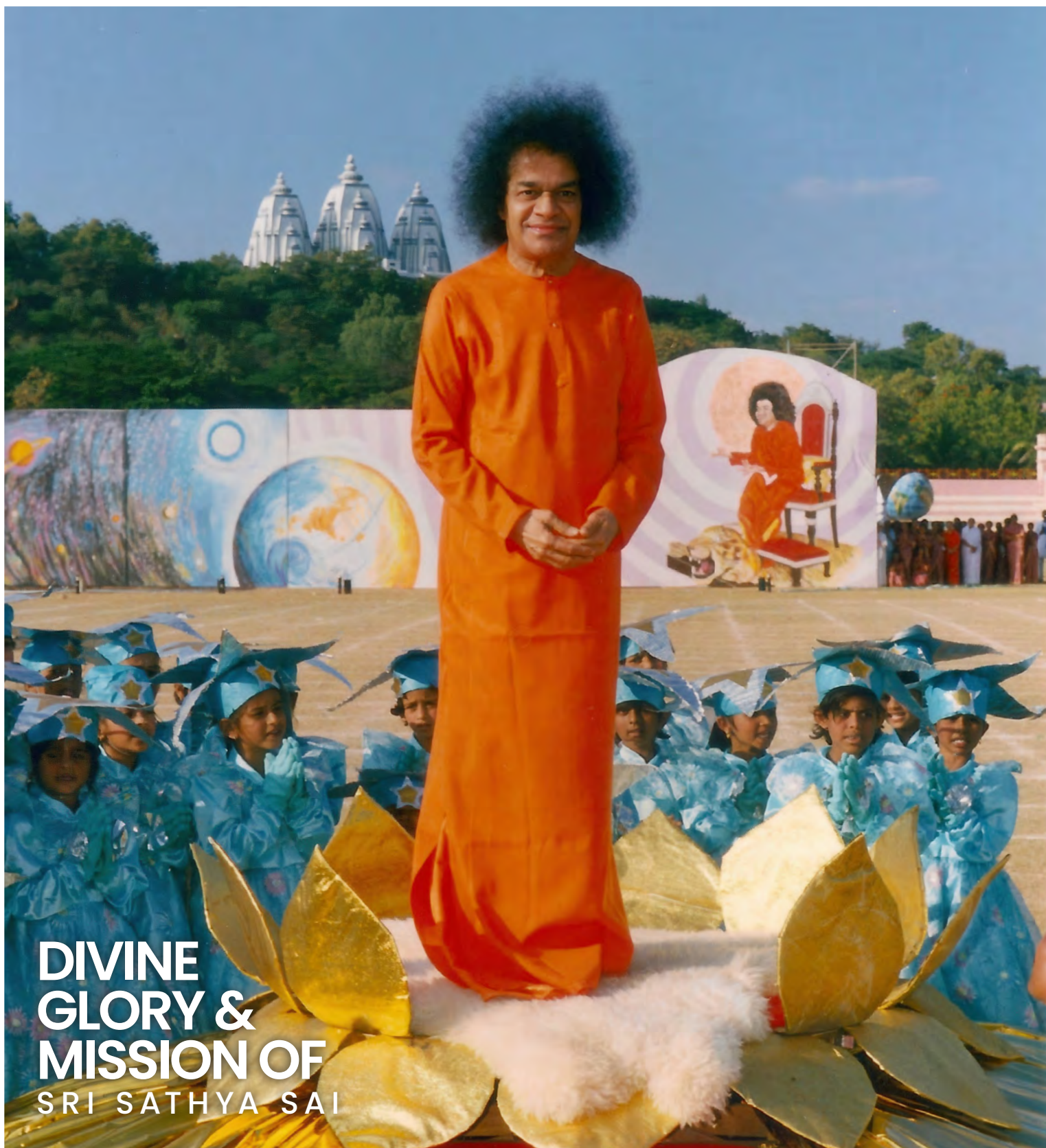


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THE
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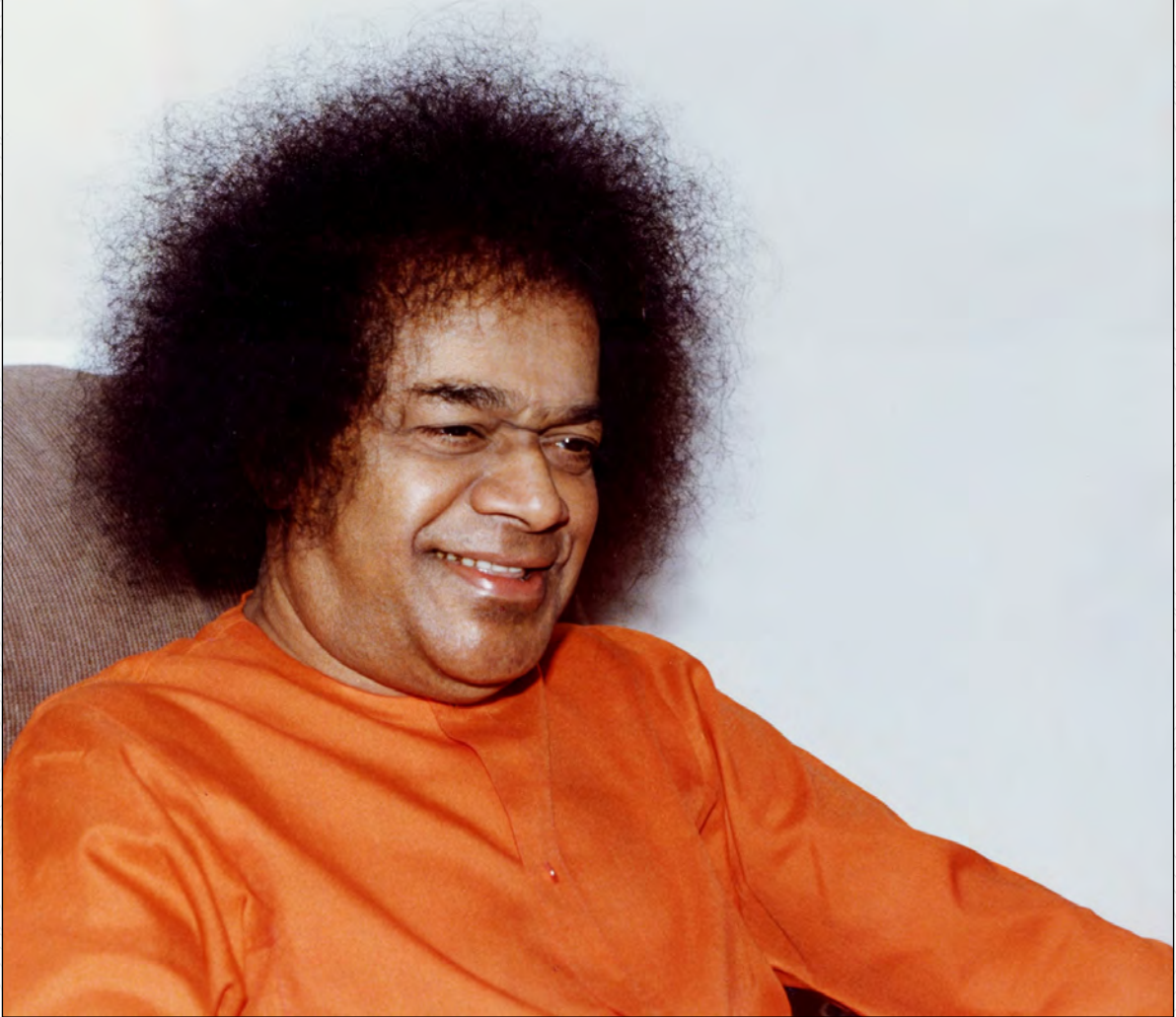


**DIVINE
GLORY &
MISSION OF
SRI SATHYA SAI**



With faith in the omnipresence of the Divine, you should engage in good deeds, cherish good thoughts and dedicate life to good practices. Your words should be words of truth. The ornaments you should cherish are truthfulness in speech, charity for the hands, and listening to sacred lore for the ears. Develop faith in your divinity. Then you will redeem your life. Follow your conscience. Make your heart pure.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
January 1, 1996



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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UNIQUENESS & UNIVERSALITY OF SATHYA SAI BABA'S TEACHINGS

Part 2 of 2

In the first part of this editorial (December 2025 issue), we reflected on Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as the Supreme Teacher, whose universal message transcends all boundaries of religion, race, and culture. We saw how His life itself is the greatest scripture—how every discourse, gesture, and glance embodies the essence of all Vedas, Upanishads, and world faiths. Swami revealed that Love is the foundation and fulfilment of every spiritual path, and that the simplest expression of the highest truth is 'Love All and Serve All.'

In this second part, we delve deeper into how Bhagawan, through His divine compassion, conveys the most profound and eternal wisdom in the simplest ways. Using parables, symbols, acronyms, and familiar examples, He translates metaphysical truths into practical spirituality—unveiling new insights and revolutionary interpretations that awaken the seeker to the Self within.

Fourfold Formulas

- Swami says that there are **4Fs** important to practice in life:
 - F**ollow the Master
 - F**ace the devil
 - F**ight to the end
 - F**inish the game

Each of these precious advice, when practiced sincerely, leads one to 'Finish

the game,' which means to attain the goal of Self-realization.

- Similarly, Swami speaks about spiritual progress through **the stages of *chamatkar*, *samskar*, *paropakar*, and *sakshatkar***—from experiencing miracles (*chamatkar*), one should move to transformation (*samskar*), then to selfless service (*paropakar*), and finally to Self-realization (*sakshatkar*).
- Another formula Swami gives us for approaching God is the **four stages of *salokya*, *sameepya*, *sarupya*, and *sayujya***. We can meditate on each of these deeply. First, we come into the fold of the Lord (*salokya*—being in the same realm as the Lord). Then, through spiritual practices and love for God, we come close to Him (*sameepya*). As we grow closer and are immersed in love for God, we begin to resemble Him (*sarupya*). Finally, when we reach the highest stage, we become one with God (*sayujya*).

The greatest example for *sarupya* is Bharata, the brother of Lord Rama. When Rama was in exile, Bharata spent his time wholly in contemplation on his beloved Lord. When Rama returned from exile, Bharata looked so much like Rama that people were confused about who was Rama and who was Bharata. By constantly thinking and contemplating on God, one becomes verily like God.



“People undertake many spiritual practices in order to sanctify their lives, but without purity of mind and heart, all this will be of no use.”

Yad bhavam, tad bhavati (As you think, so you become). Finally, we achieve *sayujya*, oneness with God, as Lord Jesus proclaimed, “I and My Father are one.”

Eternal Wisdom Through Simple Words

Bhagawan Baba gives us profound messages through simple words and easy-to-understand logic. For example, to show how world peace can be achieved, He says,

*“When there is righteousness in the heart, there is beauty in character.
When there is beauty in character, there is harmony at home.
When there is harmony at home, there is order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation, there is peace in the world.”*

It all starts with righteousness in the heart.

Similarly, Swami speaks of oneness as:

*“There is only one religion – the religion of Love,
There is only one language – the language of the Heart,
There is only one caste – the caste of Humanity,
There is only one God – He is omnipresent.”*

He emphasizes this unity in diversity through beautiful examples:

“Jewels are many, gold is one.

*Pots are many, clay is one.
Stars are many, sky is one.
Cows are many, milk is one.
Flowers are many, worship is one.”*

Regarding the importance of practicing human values, Swami speaks beautifully about the need for integrating them into daily life:

***“Education without character,
Politics without principles,
Commerce without morality,
Law without justice,
Science without humanity,
are not only useless but positively dangerous.”***

These are spiritual injunctions that, when followed, make human life and society peaceful and happy for all.

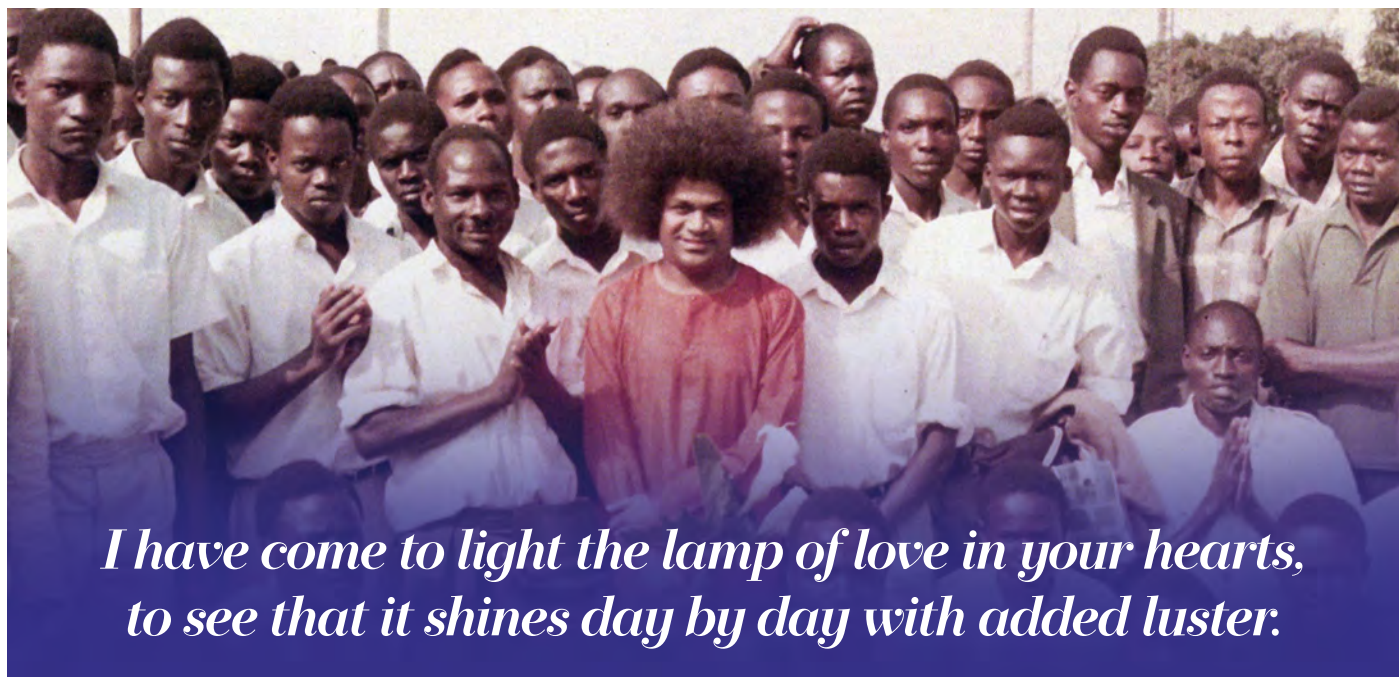
There is a famous Sanskrit verse that summarizes the ultimate truth:

*Brahma Satyam, Jagat Mithya,
Jeevo Brahmaiva Na Parah...*

(Brahman alone is Truth; the world is illusory; the individual soul is none other than Brahman.)

Swami beautifully says this in poetic Telugu,

***Sarva Vedanta granthala saramella,
okka vakyana cheppudu nokkasari,
akhila bhoothamulonunna
atma, neevu, okkatenani
manasuna undavalayu***



*I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts,
to see that it shines day by day with added luster.*

(I will tell you in summary, in just one sentence, the essence of all the scriptures and Vedanta. Just realize that the same Atma in you pervades all beings.)

Unity of Faiths and Harmony of Religions

Another key message that Baba emphasizes is the unity of faiths. While earlier teachers like Sri Shirdi Sai and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa demonstrated the harmony of religions, Swami emphasizes the *unity of faiths*. The underlying principle of all faiths, He says, is only love.

When He visited East Africa, the only time He travelled physically outside India (to Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania), Swami made a profound declaration in His divine discourse on July 4, 1968:

"I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster. I have not come on behalf of any exclusive religion. I have not come on a mission of publicity for a sect or creed or cause, nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into my fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this unitary faith, this spiritual principle, this path of love, this virtue of love, this duty of love, this obligation of love."

This declaration beautifully summarizes His emphasis on the unity of faiths and the harmony of religions, based on the universal truth of love.

Because of this universal outlook, Swami promoted the grand celebration of festivals from many religions in a prominent way. Festivals such as Dasara, Deepavali, Christmas, Buddha Poonima, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, Eid, Moharram, and Nowruz are celebrated in Sai Centers around 110 countries, showing that all paths lead to the same common goal.

Swami also explains the inner significance of various festivals, rituals, and symbols across faiths, revealing their spiritual essence beyond the external form. Swami once playfully created an acronym for GOD to illustrate the universal role of **GOD** in all religions. He expanded it as **G** for *Generator*, **O** for *Operator*, and **D** for *Destroyer*—the three aspects of the world and creation.

Path of Purity: A New Concept Introduced

Bhagawan refers to the greatest truth revealed in the Rig Veda: *Ekam Sat Viprah Bahuda Vadanti*—Truth is One, though the wise call it by many names. There are many paths to reach the same goal, but Swami says that there is truly only one goal: to

realize that we are the very embodiment of divine love, or the divine Atma. **Swami also introduces a new concept that, ultimately, there is only one path—the path of purity. Swami exhorted that the essence of all spiritual paths is purity.**

In the discourse He delivered on November 21, 1995, Baba says:

“People undertake many spiritual practices in order to sanctify their lives, but without purity of mind and heart, all this will be of no use. First, purify your mind and heart—all else will follow. Greater than the power of mantra, tantra, or yantra is the power of a pure heart.”

Again, in His discourse of August 25, 1998, Swami affirms, “To the pure heart, Truth reveals itself spontaneously.”

Therefore, the theme of the **11th World Conference of the SSSIO** was: *“Purity is Enlightenment.”* The same message, *“Unity is Divinity, Purity is Enlightenment,”* was also chosen by Swami as the theme for a special International Sathya Sai Symposium held in Rome in 1983, emphasizing both unity and purity.

Emblem of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO)

The emblem of the organization representing Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba originally depicted the major religions of the world—Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Islam—symbolizing unity of faiths. Then, when Dr. John Hislop, during an interview, petitioned Swami that Judaism was not represented, Swami modified the emblem to include the Star of David. Later, however, the SSSIO emblem was modified in view of the fact that there are thousands of denominations and faiths around the world.

The present emblem of the SSSIO features the five human values—Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love, and Nonviolence—radiating from the divine light at the center. On one hand, this symbolizes that all human values, and indeed all religions,



emanate from divinity. It also shows that the five fundamental values are universal and emphasized by all religions, without exception.

This became evident when, during the 11th World Conference of the SSSIO at Sai Prema Nilayam, representatives of five different religions pointed to the logo and stated that it represented the teachings of their respective faiths.

Insights into the Scriptures

All great masters like Jesus Christ came to reveal the *inner meaning* of scriptures. When Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, the learned scholars of the Jewish tradition, He told them that they were following merely the *letter* of the law, not its *spirit*.

Similarly, Lord Krishna gave new insights into the Vedas, explaining aspects of *karma*, *bhakti*, *jnana*, and yoga in a new light. He said one must go beyond the realm of the three *gunas* (qualities) and transcend even the realm of the Vedas. (BG 2.45)

*tri-gunya-vishaya veda nist-
rai-gunyo bhavarjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho
niryoga-kshema atmavan*

(The Vedas deal with the realm of the three Gunas, O Arjuna. Rise above the three gunas, freeing yourself from dualities, eternally fixed in Truth, and without concern for material gain and safety, be established in the Self.)

Swami declares that one of the purposes of this Avatar is to make people realize their innate divinity and that they are embodiments of love. It is also to revive the Vedas, shedding light on the inner secrets and the eternal truth.

In one of His poems, Swami says that He came to reveal new insights and meanings for the traditional interpretations of scriptures—a process He had already begun in His previous incarnation as Shirdi Sai Baba.

For instance, in the book, *Shirdi Sai Satcharita*, Baba explains a verse from the Bhagavad Gita (BG 4.34) to His devotee, Chandorkar, giving it a completely new meaning. The verse begins as *Tadviddhi Pranipatena*. Most commentators, including Adi Shankaracharya, interpret the verse as meaning that the Guru teaches the disciple the knowledge of the *Atma* (Self). But Shirdi Baba says, “*The Guru does not give you knowledge of Atma; you are already the embodiment of Atma. The Guru merely removes the dark clouds of ignorance. Once ignorance is dispelled, the effulgence of Truth shines forth spontaneously.*”

Swami gives similar revolutionary interpretations to many scriptures—too numerous to list—but a few examples stand out, as noted below.

1. Swadharma

Traditionally, *swadharma* means one’s duty according to one’s station in life—as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, or Shudra; as a man or woman; as a student, householder, recluse, or renunciant. Swami elevates this understanding by saying that true *swadharma* is not related to body, mind, or intellect. It is *Atma dharma*, the *dharma* of the Self.

All other duties pertain only to temporary identities, but *Atma dharma* transcends them all.

2. Ananya Bhakti

Conventionally, *ananya bhakti* is understood as devotion where one constantly thinks of God, trusting that God will take care of all needs and welfare. But Swami revealed its deeper essence that true *ananya bhakti* is that state where there is no ‘*anya*’ (other) than God! There is nothing in creation other than God. Thus, there is also no separateness between the devotee and God. Thus, *bhakti* (devotion) becomes one that has no *vibhakti* (division) according to Baba. When one realizes that every cell, atom, and moment is permeated by divinity, that nothing exists apart from God, that is true *ananya bhakti*.

3. Samadhi

Traditionally, *samadhi* is described as a state of total withdrawal from the outer world. It is described as a trance-like absorption in Brahman lasting for hours or days. Swami gives a higher interpretation that the word ‘*samadhi*’ originates from ‘*sama*’ (equal) + ‘*dhi*’ (buddhi or intellect)—meaning a state of perfect equanimity. **True *samadhi* is to be equal-minded and balanced in all circumstances.** This steadiness itself is Brahman.

4. Neti Neti

In Vedantic texts, “*neti neti*” (not this, not this) is used to negate everything that is not Brahman. Swami revolutionizes this understanding by saying that the traditional meaning given to this Vedantic formula of ‘not this, not this’ is not the true meaning.

Traditional Vedanta teaches that the ultimate truth is realized by negating the *jeevi* (individual), and the world (*neti neti*) to reach *Brahman*. Ultimately, one realizes that what was negated in the spiritual journey is also Brahman, as there exists nothing other than Brahman. Thus, the correct and appropriate meaning of *neti neti* is ‘Not only this, not only this’, which means there is much more to Brahman than what is perceived or conceived by man. This is also referred to in the *Purusha Suktam*. (Vedic Hymn)



One who has hunger for God doesn't
have to memorize all His teachings.
Practicing even one teaching is enough.

Thus, one should never deny anything as unreal, for everything is, in essence, divinity itself.

5. Karma and Akarma

One of the most enigmatic verses in the Bhagavad Gita (BG 4.18) says,

*karmanyakarmayah pashyed
akarmani cha karmayah
sa buddhiman manushyeshu sa
yuktah krithsna-karma-krit*

*(One who sees inaction in action
and action in inaction, is truly wise
among humans. Such a person is not
affected by the results, even though
engaged in a variety of work.)*

Many commentators have given different, contradicting, and confusing interpretations of the terms *karma* (action) and *akarma* (inaction). However, Swami clarifies that the inner meaning of *karma* is the body and mind, which assume doership. Body and mind owe their origin to *karma* (result of action), and they are also meant for performing action. In contrast, the term *akarma*

signifies the *Atma*, the Self, because it has nothing to do with action or its results. It is just the eternal witness.

A good analogy for this is a movie theater, where the screen represents *akarma* or inaction—the *Atma*, and the pictures stand for *karma* or action. This illustration teaches us that the screen, the *akarma* or *Atma*, does not need the pictures, while the body, or the *karma*, depends on the screen or the *Atma* for its support and sustenance. Also, just as the screen is not affected in any way by the pictures, the *Atma* is not affected by the body and its activities.

He who has realized that all things on the physical or mental plane exist only as long as they are in relation to the *Atma*, the higher Self, sees the One that is inactive in the midst of all activities and becomes an ideal worker. Such a *karma yogi* attains perfection through his work.

Swami's interpretation is that *karma* is equivalent to the ego, doership, and the craving for the results of action, whereas *akarma*



is equivalent to the Self, which transcends all activities, and that is unchanging, immovable, and eternally at rest. This is the secret of *karma yoga* and the path to enlightenment.

Start With Any One Teaching

There is no end to Swami's teachings. They are like an ocean—even greater than an ocean. An ocean has boundaries, but Swami's teachings transcend the limits of time and space. They are highly relevant to humanity and for its redemption.

There are thousands of divine discourses containing Swami's teachings. There are sixteen *Vahinis* written by Swami, each containing His teachings, and a lifetime is not enough to delve deeply into all of them. But we should not get discouraged. As Swami Himself says in *Gita Vahini*, when you are thirsty, you just need a glassful of water; you don't need to drink the whole river.

One who has hunger for God doesn't have to memorize all His teachings. Practicing even one teaching is enough. Swami gives the example of a box of matches, which has

many sticks. If you want to light a lamp, you need to strike only one good, dry matchstick. It will light the lamp. You may have hundreds of matchsticks that are damp or wet, but they will not be able to light the lamp and are useless. The dry matchstick represents the practice of one of the teachings. Even if one practices one teaching effectively, one gets the light of wisdom. On the other hand, one may memorize many teachings but not practice them—it is of no use, and one continues to be ignorant.

As Swami emphasizes, the words of God are meant to be practiced in life and practical living, not just for preaching and memorizing.

Power of Practicing One Teaching

Swami also tells a beautiful story about how practicing just one teaching can lead one to liberation.

He gives the example of a thief who goes to a guru for initiation into spiritual life. When he was told to give up stealing, he said, "How can I do that? It is my profession." The guru asked him to give up at least one of his bad habits, and the thief decided to give up uttering falsehood. Then the guru said, "Very good. Make sure you always speak the truth." The thief gave his word that he would always speak the truth.

That night, when he went to the royal palace to commit a robbery, he found another person on the terrace who said he too was a thief. They broke into the treasury and divided the diamonds they found among themselves. The other person, however, was none other than the king in disguise.

The king pretended to be a thief and said he knew where the treasury keys were. As they were dividing the stolen diamonds, the thief suggested leaving one behind out of pity for the king, who would lose everything. He

asked his companion to leave one diamond behind in the safe. It was done.

The next morning, it was discovered that the treasury had been looted. The minister was summoned by the king to assess the loss. The minister found a diamond was left behind and thinking that the thieves might have left it behind in their hurry, he quietly pocketed the diamond and reported that all the diamonds were stolen.

The king then summoned the honest thief, who confessed to his part in the crime but maintained that one diamond was left behind. The missing diamond was found in the minister's pocket, and the king dismissed him for dishonesty. Impressed by the thief's commitment to truth, the king

appointed him as the new minister. He gave up his old ways entirely and pleased his guru as a virtuous administrator and gained fame.

This story exemplifies how following one of Swami's teachings can have a profound and positive effect.

The teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba are comprehensive, uplifting, inspiring, and enlightening, guiding humanity toward purity, unity, and the realization of the divine within. So let us, as part of this dawning of the new year 2026, resolve to take one teaching of Swami, study it deeply every day, contemplate on it, and practice it, so that our lives are redeemed.

Jai Sai Ram.



Self-Confidence

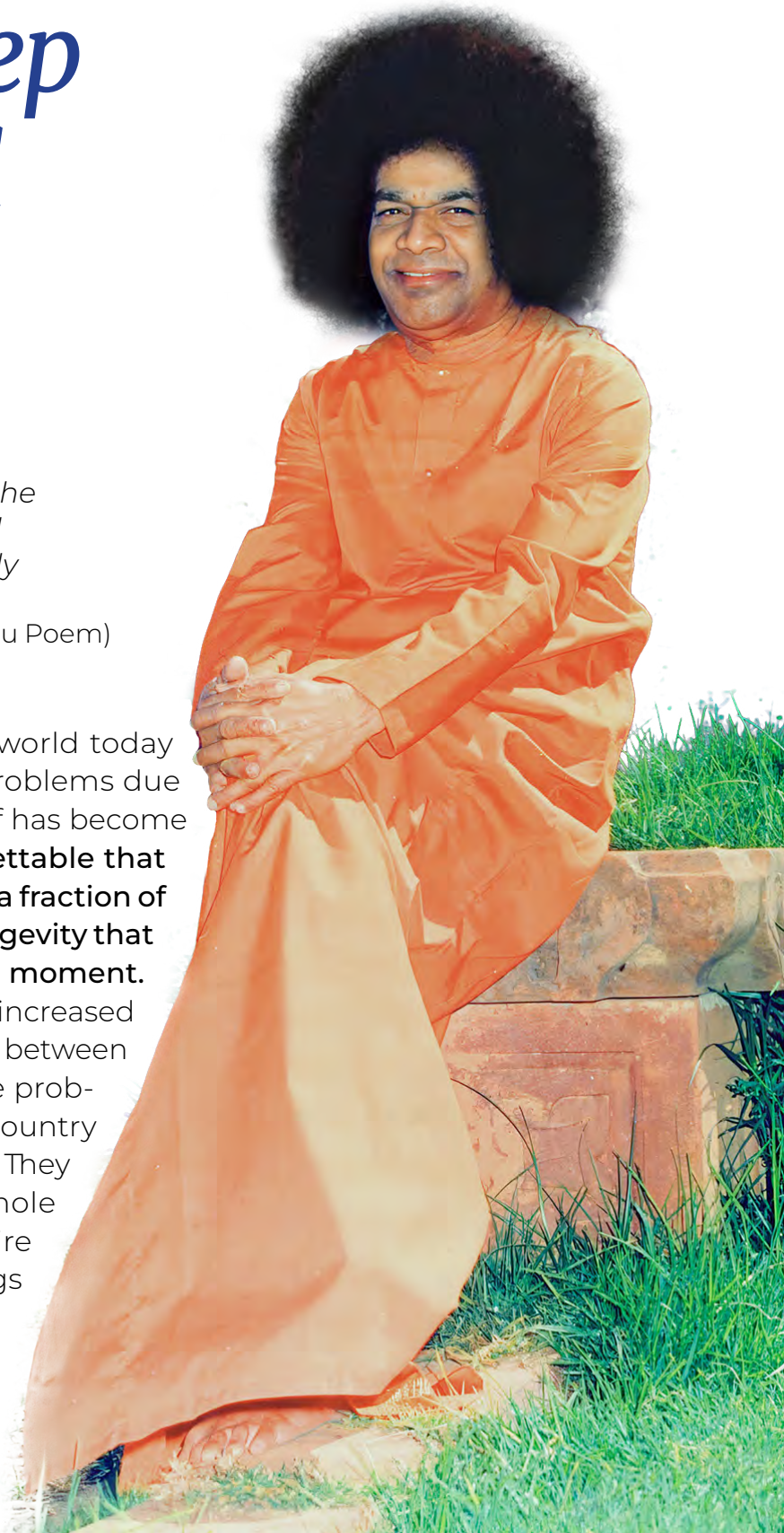
The First Step in Spiritual Practice

*"I am proclaiming the essence of all
Vedantic texts in one sentence that the
Atma present in all living beings and
in you is one and the same—constantly
remember this Truth."*

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of divine Atma! The world today is facing an increasing number of problems due to the modern way of living. Life itself has become a string of problems. **It is most regrettable that modern man is unable to enjoy even a fraction of the peace, happiness, health, and longevity that our ancestors experienced even for a moment.**

The world has become smaller due to increased conveniences to travel. The boundaries between nations have become narrow. So, the problems and challenges of a particular country are no longer confined to that nation. They are spreading rapidly across the whole world like wildfire, troubling the entire world. The condition of human beings today can be compared to someone



who possesses everything they desire in the material world yet lacks mental peace and happiness.

Today, man is searching for peace and happiness in the world under the illusion that they exist outside himself. Unable to recognize the truth that he himself is the embodiment of peace, man tries to search for peace in the turbulent world outside. In fact, he is fighting for his rights while failing to recognize his duty toward his fellow human beings and his country. The main reason for this is the loss of one's Self-confidence and developing an increasing interest in acquiring worldly possessions. **By cultivating an outward focus instead of an inward vision, man is becoming ignorant, forgetting his true nature.** He has become so blind that he fails to realize the truth that the external world is nothing but a reflection of the feelings within his own mind. He is unable to recognize the truth that his own mind is responsible for everything. Without the mind, there is no world! It is imperative to recognize the truth that the entire objective world depends on the mind.

A thorn pricks the foot and causes pain. Yet, with the help of another thorn, one can remove the thorn lodged in the foot and relieve that pain. So, for suffering or relief, the mind can be compared to a thorn. It is the mind that can efface a person's sins just as it can increase one's sins. Likewise, the mind is responsible for both the birth of the human body as well as returning it to the earth. It is therefore the duty of every human being to realize the true nature of the mind. It is said, "*Manaeva manushayanam karanam bandha mokshayoh*" (mind alone is the cause for both bondage and liberation). **One has to realize this truth and strive to cleanse the mind by**

“
*One has to realize
this truth and
strive to cleanse
the mind by
removing illusion
and cultivating
sacred and noble
thoughts.*

removing illusion and cultivating sacred and noble thoughts. This is the foremost duty of a *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant).

Today, man is under the illusion that the whole world is in a state of turmoil, since his own mind is restless. In fact, it is his own problems that cause his restlessness, not the problems of the world. Peace is within oneself, and it does not lie outside. A pure mind is like a garland of crystals through which the thread of divinity runs. If the garland is made of pure crystals, the thread is clearly visible. If it is made of Rudraksha (a kind of opaque sacred rosary beads), the thread remains invisible. Therefore, one must keep the mind always strong, pure, and transparent, so that divine manifestation can be perceived. Instead of striving to attain such purity of mind, we are adding more and more darkness of ignorance to a mind that is already dark. We indulge increasingly in sensory pleasures and become enmeshed in the darkness of ignorance, falling into abysmal depths.

**It is only
when you have
Self-confidence
as your
foundation
that you will be
entitled to enter
the spiritual
path.**

Today's man is unable to trust even what he sees with his own eyes and is becoming ignorant. He is trying to look through the Westerners' eyes and hear through the Westerners' ears. He is trying to experience the world through Westerners' hearts. His life has become so conditioned that he has lost his own individuality. In fact, a real person is one who sees with one's own eyes, hears with one's own ears, and experiences with one's own heart. Only such a person can be called a human being in the real sense. As the saying goes, those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble souls; those who lack harmony of these are wicked (*manasyekam, vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahathmanam; manasyanyath, vachasyanyath, karmanyanyath durathmanam*). One's hunger will be satiated only if one eats for oneself. It will not be satiated when someone else eats. One has to take medicine for oneself to cure one's disease. It is foolish for someone to take medicine to cure someone else's disease. Similarly, one has to strive to attain God's grace to cure one's *bhavaroga* (the disease of the cycle of birth and death). **One's suffering cannot be alleviated by imitating others or relying on others' experiences. That is why developing Self-confidence is considered the very first step in spiritual *sadhana*.**

Hence, it is only when you have Self-confidence as your foundation that you will be entitled to enter the spiritual path. One who is devoid of Self-confidence can never enter the spiritual path, however intense one's *sadhana* may be, however well-read

one may be, and however blessed one may be with *darshan* (auspicious sight of deity or holy person), *sparshan* (divine touch), and *sambhashan* (divine conversation) of great souls. Such a person remains ignorant and can never enter the sacred path of spirituality. Today, many people are following the ignorant and becoming increas-

ingly ignorant, just like the blind following the blind. In this manner, people are losing Self-confidence by blindly following and imitating others. You belch what you eat and not what others have eaten. So, acquire your own experience.

Embodiments of sacred *Atma*! Consider constant contemplation of God as the noble path laid down for the people of this sacred country, Bharat. Having been born in this Vedic land of Bharat (India) and having acquired the great name *Bharateeya* (resident of Bharat), it is a sign of ignorance if you cannot realize the true nature of *Bharateeyas*. **Truly, there is only God in the entire universe, nothing else. What all exists is an illusion, and the entire universe is nothing but the reflection of divinity.** The one Sun that moves across the sky is reflected as many Suns in several pots containing water. The vessels may be different, but the Sun reflected in the pots containing water is only one. It is only a fool who gets deluded by the reflection of one Sun as many Suns. The body of every human being is like a pot. God as *Atma Swarupa* (embodiment of *Atma*), who is reflected in the individual's body, is the same *Paramatma* (Supreme soul). Every

spiritual seeker has to bear this fact in mind and behave accordingly..

It is only to make people realize this spiritual truth that several holy festivals are being observed in Bharat throughout the year. Every festival is observed with special significance and conveys a more profound inner meaning. Unfortunately, people do not realize the inner meaning of these festivals and spend their time on frivolous and useless activities during these sacred occasions, feasting on sumptuous dishes. **The inner meaning of the Navaratri festival is to transcend the three *gunas* of *Sathwa*, *Rajas*, and *Thamas*, represented by Maha Durga, Maha Saraswati, and Maha Lakshmi, and strive to experience the true nature of a human being.**

One has to strive to realize the transcendental nature of divinity by controlling the three *gunas* at least to a certain extent. That is the spiritual practice (*sadhana*) to be undertaken during the nine days of the Navaratri festival so that one may attain God's grace. Only then can one experience true mental peace. Through peace, one can attain happiness. We can experience this as the bliss of Atma. The great poet-saint Thyagaraja has explained this in his famous kirtan "*Santhamu leka Soukhyamu ledu*" (without peace, there can be no happiness). **Therefore, peace is most essential for a human being. That is his very life-breath.**

Peace cannot be attained by physical strength, nor intellect, nor wealth, nor progeny. King Dhritarashtra (ruler of the Kuru dynasty) had enough of all these kinds of power—including physical prowess, intellect, power of wealth, and royal retinue—yet he never enjoyed peace. Why? He did not have the power of *dharma* (right action) and strength from the divine to support him. Therefore, he became a

*Truly, there is only God
in the entire universe,
nothing else. What all exists
is an illusion, and the entire
universe is nothing but the
reflection of divinity.*



victim of wicked thoughts, bad qualities, and evil deeds.

Embodiments of *divine Atma*! **The strength of righteousness (*dharmabala*) and the strength that comes from God (*daivabala*) are the two most important strengths needed for a human being. It is very important that you dedicate your life to acquiring these two strengths and realize that the same divine Atma resides in all beings.** Do not become a victim of hatred, jealousy, pride, and ostentation. It is highly essential that every individual should gladly dedicate their life to the service of society and live in bliss. It is customary during the Navaratri festival every year to hoist the Prasanthi (supreme peace) flag on the *mandir*. It signifies visualizing *Sath-Chit-Ananda swarupa* (embodiment of existence, consciousness, and bliss) that is installed in our heart and

thereby experience the *Atma thatwa*. It is not just the simple physical act of hoisting the flag on the *mandir*. We must try to hoist the flag of *Prasanthi* at all times and at all places in our conscience, which reigns in the kingdom of our heart.

Embodiments of *divine Atma*! Today, the nine-day Navaratri festival has commenced in Prasanthi Nilayam. There will be several programs during these days. I wish that all of you participate in those programs, cultivate noble qualities, and derive *Prasanthi* (supreme peace). **During these days, we shall try to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the mind.** I conclude My discourse with the hope and blessings that all of you will dedicate your time and energy wholeheartedly to understanding these concepts.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
September 1976





Calling for Your Articles, Poems, Audios, Videos!

Anything that is associated with 'His' Story alone is worthwhile to preserve as 'History.' We are all blessed to have experienced the love and grace of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and continue to experience the same in our daily lives. That is why Swami is our Eternal Companion.

The editorial team of the 'Sathya Sai–The Eternal Companion' magazine warmly welcomes articles and poems based on authentic personal experiences with the Avatar of the Age, our beloved Bhagawan. You may send in your contributions as a document, audio file, or video file. Apart from being published in the magazine (if selected), these contributions may also be published in the SSSIO's digital media channels. All of these contributions will be safely stored for posterity in the SSSIO's digital archives by the SSSIO Archive Committee.

It is time to open up your hearts and share the treasures gathered from Swami. These treasures only grow by sharing.

Please upload materials at: <https://sathyas.ai/upload>





Experiences of
Devotees

Do Swami's Work, *and He Will* *Do Yours*

It is often said in the Sathya Sai circles that if we do Swami's work, He will do our work. Over the years, I have experienced the profound truth of this simple assurance. My life has taken many unexpected turns, and I have faced many uncertainties and tests. Yet, each time I placed my faith in Swami and sincerely performed His work, He helped me in ways that were both miraculous and profoundly personal.

Over time, these experiences have taught me, and continue to teach me, to fully surrender to Swami without any expectation of results.

Early Steps in Seva

I came into Swami's fold through service, which has now become a natural expression of my love for Him. Whether it was participating in *bhajans*, engaging in youth activities, or helping with community service projects, I always felt this was my offering to Swami. I never felt that I was making a sacrifice. For me, it is always a privilege to do His work.

As the years passed, my professional responsibilities increased. Balancing my career with *seva* was not always easy. **Yet I discovered that when I gave Swami's work priority, everything else fell into place beautifully.** I never missed out on any service oppor-





tunities in spite of my increasing workload, although at times it seemed impossible.

Little did I know that Swami would put this principle to the test, not just once, but multiple times, in ways I could never have foreseen.

The First Challenge

My first challenge occurred when I lost my job. It came as a shock. The future looked bleak and uncertain, considering my personal responsibilities and obligations. For a few days, my mind wrestled with many questions: 'What will happen now? How will we manage?'

But then, I remembered Swami's reassuring words, "Why fear when I am here?" I held on firmly to His loving words and feet. After all, isn't the Avatar's life His message? **For me, His words are verily Him!** I decided that rather than allowing fear of the unknown to consume me, I would continue my *seva* wholeheartedly. During *bhajan* sessions, I sang with even greater enthusiasm and gusto. During service activities, I gave it my all. **I prayed, not for a job, but for the strength to do His work steadfastly.**

Within a few months, a new opportunity arose, and my life was back on track.

The Second Challenge

A couple of years later, I lost my job again. Once again, uncertainty stared me in the face. This time, it felt like a more severe test. I thought, "Was the first experience just a coincidence? Could I still hold on to my faith?"

Again, I resorted to focusing on doing Swami's work. Instead of worrying, I immersed myself in *seva* with all my heart and soul. I remember organizing many service activities during this period with renewed vigor. I was always available for any opportunity to serve, thanking Swami for everything. In fact, every time I get an opportunity to serve, I tell myself that Swami is thinking of me! I found peace in forgetting myself in His service.

On Swami's birthday, while the entire world was celebrating the advent of the Avatar, Swami gave me another reason to rejoice! I received a new job offer—one that was not only more rewarding with higher pay, but also better aligned with my interests. I felt as if Swami was assuring me, "See, if you do My work, I will take care of you."

The timing was so perfect and convenient for me that I had no doubt that this was His blessing. Swami had given me a perfect birthday gift.

*When everything
else feels uncertain,
immersing ourselves
in Swami's work
brings peace, clarity,
and strength.*



The Third Test

A few years went by. Life moved on. And then, it happened again. I lost my job for a third time. By now, I should have gotten used to it, but each experience was different, and it affected me in a unique way. Deep inside, I knew that if I kept doing Swami's work, He would take care of me. So, I continued participating in *bhajans* and service, though with a heavy heart.

Over time, I received many job offers and had to reject them as none of them were right for me. Then, unexpectedly, a role opened up that was perfectly suited to my skills, location, and family needs. It was so perfect that I could never imagine that such a happy and satisfying work environment existed, even in my wildest dreams! Most importantly, it offered me a hybrid work model, which allowed me to carry on with Swami's mission, continuing to offer my time, effort, and resources unconditionally!

Looking back, I realized that Swami had been holding me back only to give me the best. When God says 'yes' to you, He grants you what you want. When He says 'no' to you, He gives you something better. But when He makes you 'wait', He gives the best! That lesson was imprinted in my heart through

the experience of the three unique challenges in my life.

His Orange Glove

As I continued to participate in service activities, many incidents occurred, one of which is shared below. To me, these were signs of Swami's omnipresence and love.

When I was serving as the National Service Coordinator of the SSSIO Australia, I was responsible for organizing 'Working Bees'—opportunities for devotees to serve at the Sathya Sai School. Young adults and senior devotees came together from various parts of the country to participate in different tasks at the school—gardening, cleaning windows, etc. Later, this evolved into more specialized work, including constructing a roof, paving paths, painting classrooms, and more.

These "Working Bees" also gave volunteers an opportunity to connect with school staff, students, and parents—providing a chance to witness Swami's vision of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) in action. Many people, including myself, felt Swami's presence deeply during these activities.

It was truly a collective effort. Based on personal experience, I always emphasize that '**WE**' = **W**isdom of the seniors + **E**nergy of the young adults.

Building on the momentum of past 'Working Bees,' more volunteers attended the 2019 service activities. We enjoyed a wonderful weekend. One Sunday afternoon, after completing the tasks, a few of us stayed back to lock up the school. As I expressed gratitude to Swami for being with us throughout, He clearly showed that He was indeed with us!

We found a pair of gardening gloves abandoned next to the steps. The color of the glove was orange, distinctly the color of Swami's robe—not a shade lighter, not a shade darker! It was the exact orange color of His robe! Thinking someone had lost it, I checked with everyone, but no one claimed it. I even went through the entire list of volunteers. Nobody wore gloves like that. **That's when it hit me: the gloves were Swami's way of saying, "I was here, working along with you."**



What was more meaningful to me was the realization that when we talk with Swami, we often expect a token or a sign—maybe a flower falling, *vibhuti* on a photo, or a dream about Him. Swami responds in many different ways. He is omnipresent, omnipotent, and all-knowing. If we compartmentalize our expectations, we might miss His very real and tangible presence right in front of us.

Reflections

As I share these experiences, I cannot help but marvel at Swami's unseen hand. Each time, He allows a storm to rise in my life—it is not to shake my faith, rather to strengthen it. Each time, He closes one door only to open another one, leading to better outcomes.

Through these events, I have learned three simple truths:

Seva is the anchor. When everything else feels uncertain, immersing ourselves in Swami's work brings peace, clarity, and strength.

Faith bestows Divine grace. The mind may worry, but the heart that trusts in Swami will always be at peace.

His timing is perfect. What appears to be a delay is often Swami's way of arranging something far more beneficial than we could ever imagine.

Swami says, *"If you take one step toward Me, I will take a hundred toward you."* I have experienced this as reality. Each time I chose to take a step toward Him, He came running a hundred steps to take care of me.

A Message for Fellow Devotees

In today's world, facing professional and personal challenges is inevitable. Jobs are uncertain, economies fluctuate, and responsibilities weigh heavily on us. But if there is one assurance I can offer from my own journey, it is this: **Swami never abandons those who faithfully serve Him in all sincerity.**

*Swami never abandons
those who faithfully serve
Him in all sincerity*



He may test. He may stretch. But His tests are never to break us; they are designed to make us stronger, more rooted in faith. When we dedicate ourselves to His mission—whether in the Sai Organization, in *bhajans*, or in simple acts of service—He makes sure that our worldly needs are met in ways we cannot even imagine. **Looking back, I see my challenges not as setbacks, but as blessings. They were Swami’s way of teaching me unwavering faith. They were lessons in surrender. They were proof that He is our Eternal Companion.**

Today, when I share this story with younger devotees, I tell them, “Do Swami’s work wholeheartedly and leave the rest to Him. He knows what you need better than you do.” Life has shown me that worldly roles may come and go. Jobs may start and end. But the work we do for Swami—whether big or small—transforms us, protects us, and draws us closer to Him forever.

Truly, if we do Swami’s work, He will unfailingly look after ours. Swami has gone ‘nowhere.’ He is ‘NOW HERE!’

Mr. Vignesh Shanmugam
AUSTRALIA



Mr. Vignesh Shanmugam hails from Malaysia, where he was an active SSE student and part of the Young Adult program. He migrated to Australia in 2006 and is the National Council President of SSSIO, Australia & PNG. He has held several positions in SSSIO, including National Service Coordinator, Humanitarian Relief Coordinator, and Chair of the National IT & Media Committee for SSSIO Australia & PNG. Professionally, Vignesh has held senior positions in several multinational organizations. He is currently the Director for North America, Asia Pacific, and Japan, leading the Restaurants Customer Success division at Oracle.



The Divine Union

MY MOTHER WAS THE FIRST IN OUR FAMILY TO FALL HEAD OVER HEELS IN LOVE WITH SRI SATHYA SAI BABA, the Avatar of the age. She braved many difficulties and gave up all worldly comforts to travel to Puttaparthi to see Him. She was blessed with interviews, and Swami materialized a ring for her. It was clear that she had surrendered completely to the Lord of the Universe. That is how our quiet little home in London became a showcase for every Baba picture that was available! **No conversation with mom would be complete without a quote from Swami's teachings or an apt anecdote about Him!**

Soon, my father, who had been a life-long Christian, joined her on the trips to Puttaparthi, and he too experienced



“When a house is to be certified as habitable,
the engineer tests the foundations. The Lord too tests
the foundations to see whether faith is true and deep.”

Swami's love, interviews, and witnessed the amazing miracles of materializations. During one of those interviews, Baba asked him what he wanted. “May I have something for Greg, Baba?” he asked. Baba blessed him by signing a book for me, with the words, “With Love, Baba”.

Though both of my parents became devotees, I didn't want anything to do with Swami. In fact, one evening, a big argument erupted between my mother and me about Baba, and my final position on the topic of ‘Sai Life’ was that it was fine for her, but I wanted to be left out of it! **Unbeknownst to me, that moment marked the start of my personal expedition to God.**

My Unforgettable First Dream

In the early morning hours of the next morning, a vivid dream unfolded, the likes of which I had never experienced before:

I found myself sitting ringside in an ancient Greek amphitheater, looking out across the sand and waiting for the show to begin. All around me sat dignified old men with flowing white robes and long white beards. They looked like judges from an ancient council.

To my surprise, I saw an exact mirror image of myself walking out on the sand to the center of the circle. I proclaimed to all in a loud voice how wrong it was to be following an Indian Guru! This mirror image of me kept repeating negative statements like this while coming closer to where I was sitting.

It was at this moment that I noticed from the corner of my eye that Sri Sathya Sai Baba was sitting right next to me, and our shoulders were touching! I was terribly embarrassed and wished I could just vanish. Suddenly, a golden beam of light shone on me, like a giant spotlight. In an instant, I felt particles of the golden light entering my body, mind, heart, and soul. ***I could feel the love and warmth of a thousand mothers, and all the mistrust and ignorance melted away. All I wanted was to remain in that light.***

Then, both Baba and I floated up into the light. It was a marvelous sensation. Being in this light felt like being on the doorstep of my long-lost home – I wanted nothing else! My mirror image, still standing far below, kept repeating the same negative statements.

*As Baba and I began to descend back to earth, I turned to Baba and begged Him if we could float up high into the golden light again? He agreed, and we did! **We floated up in pure bliss three times, and as we descended for the third time, I could feel the golden light slowly receding, and then, it vanished.***

That phenomenal dream experience stayed with me for some time. One day, I had a quiet conversation with my father. **I asked him if he thought Sai Baba was God. Without hesitation, my father replied, ‘Yes.’** His opinion meant a lot, but still, I was not spiritually fully awake.

A few weeks later, a good friend of mine who had been intrigued with all that I had shared about Sai Baba went to the local library, found some books on Baba, and was greatly moved by what he read. On his coaxing, we found a Sai Center nearby and started attending devotional meetings regularly. We learned to sing *bhajans*, chant the Gayatri mantra, and also started the process of building our heart-to-heart connections with Baba.

Disentangling oneself from the enchantments of the age of materialism takes effort and time. I realized that the happiness gained from material things, and the limited happiness they give, was ephemeral and short-lived, at best. **My view of life on the earthly plane changed. The milestones I wanted to achieve were now more aligned with my spiritual development than with material achievements.** And so, slowly but surely, I started spending more time at the Sai Center and learned to see Swami's unseen hand in all that I did. I was 32 years old, and it was a new and beautiful experience for me at that point in my life.

Matters of Marriage

My mother once came to visit me, fresh from her trip to India. She proudly wore a gold necklace and pendant that Swami had materialized for her, and she suggested that it was about time I got married! I was taken aback, and thought that during her time in India, she had been clearly influenced by the mother's role in 'arranging' a bride for her son.

That night, Baba came in my dream again.

My mother and I stood in front of a huge throne where Baba was seated. My mother looked up at Him and said that she knew a girl she wanted me to marry. Baba looked down and into my eyes and said, ***"No. No. I have the perfect person, and she is right here with Me."***

The matter of my marriage was thus settled with my mother. The Lord had a plan!

It was 1997, the year of the very first World Youth Conference in Prasanthi Nilayam. Two weeks before the conference, I got a phone call from a friend who was at Prasanthi Nilayam. Though she now lived in southern California and ran a Sai Center in her home, she had grown up in Puttaparthi, where her family lived, and she had been a student in Swami's college.

In an excited voice, she explained that she had been fortunate enough to sit in the front row for *darshan* and had managed to hand over a letter to Swami. From the tone of her voice, I understood that Baba taking a letter from a devotee meant a blessing, a divine acknowledgment, and an outpouring of grace earned over lifetimes of performing good deeds and yearning. I was very happy for her,

but was truly stunned when she revealed the contents of her letter. In it, there was a line that said it would be nice if *"Greg would marry my sister"*! Her sister was Ms. Rani, but would I be ready to follow Swami's blessings?

I had to confirm this for myself. The sequence of events prompted me to book my ticket to



India for my first-ever *darshan* of Baba, who says, **“When you said yes to Me, you gave up the right to be like anyone else”**. I felt this was a test of my faith, and I also believed that this must be the perfect person that Baba had told me about in the dream. I also imagined being called in for an interview and receiving instructions from Baba to do some special work.

Sai's Personalized Welcome at Prasanthi Nilayam

Three other Young Adults (YAs) from my region were preparing for this special pilgrimage to God. I, too, prepared for the trip with a lot of energy and enthusiasm, and purchased many high-tech camping items in preparation for the trip.

Finally, the day of departure arrived, and the four of us arrived at Los Angeles International Airport. A day or so later, we arrived in Prasanthi Nilayam, where we were in for a shock! We found out that the age range to qualify as an attendee for the YA World Conference had somehow changed while we were in transit, and we were now considered too old to qualify! That meant there were no rooms for accommodation and thus, no place to stay!

Feeling crushed, we grimly trudged back toward Sai Kulwant Hall and the ashram's main gate. Adding salt to our wounds was the realization that the afternoon *darshan* had begun, and we would be missing the *darshan* of Baba, too! From the heights of ecstasy, we had descended to an abysmal low in spirits.

As we were trudging in dejected silence, dragging our baggage with us, *darshan* was underway in Sai Kulwant Hall, where thou-

sands were receiving Baba's grace. But all we saw were our own dark shadows in the blazing sun. But suddenly, there He was – a flash of orange robe! His beautiful form emerged from the hall, out through the gates where we stood, baggage and all! He raised both hands in double blessings! **A thrill coursed through us as we realized that there was not a single soul out there other than the four of us! He knew that His boys had traveled across lifetimes for this moment, and He was not going to let us down.** He did not let us miss that *darshan*. Instead, He made it into the most memorable one of our lives!

Journey of Faith

We found a small place to stay in the village, and the next morning, Swami had yet another surprise for us—first row for *darshan*! I had not forgotten about getting married to the perfect person that Baba told me about in the dream, and I knew this might be my only chance to ask Him.

It was through great, good fortune that I was able to get a small scrap of paper from a devotee sitting on my right and a tiny

pencil stub from someone on my left. I wrote, “Dear Baba, if you take this letter, you want me to marry Rani, who is the perfect person you described in the dream.” The paper was so small that it was all I could write, and at that moment, it was all I needed to ask.

As the *darshan* music began, my heart raced. Baba glided toward us, pausing for letters. When He came close—maybe twenty feet away—He looked straight into my eyes for the first time. My heart nearly stopped. I awkwardly knelt on my knees. Swami smiled and said softly, “*Sit down, sit down,*” and took my letter. **That loving gesture was an answer to my burning question.** Then the

“
When
you said yes
to Me, you
gave up the
right to be
like anyone
else.”

realization hit me: I had just promised *God Himself* that I would propose to and marry a complete stranger!

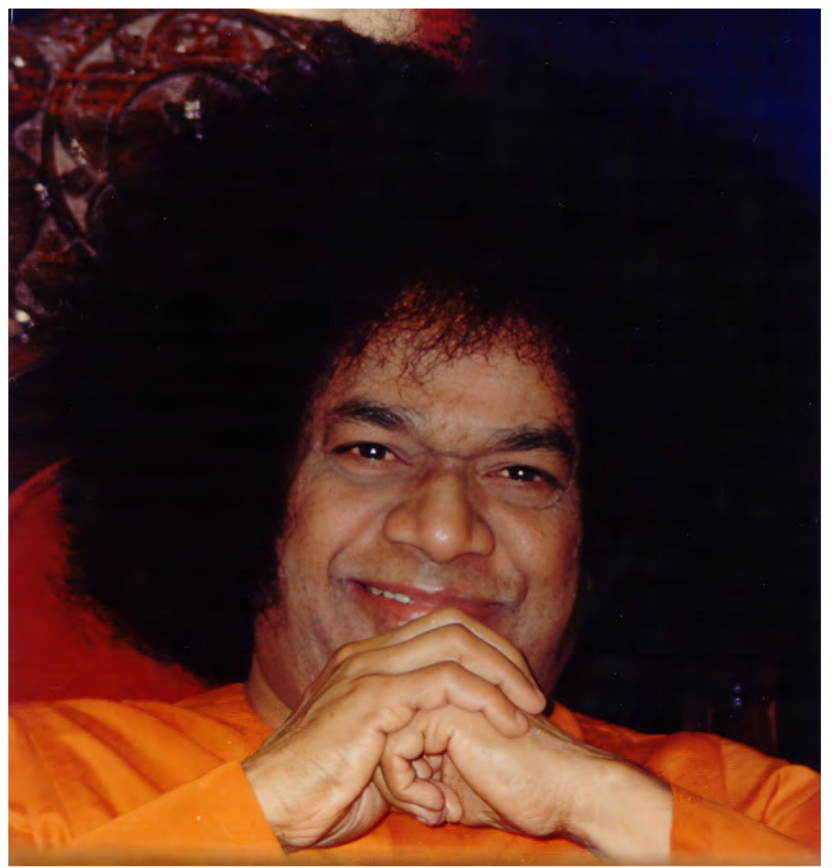
I sat quietly thinking about what had just happened. I would have to locate my bride-to-be among the thousands and thousands of devotees in Puttaparthi. After *darshan*, among the throngs of people outside, the very first person I met was my friend, who had given the letter to Baba, saying that it would be nice if I were to marry her sister! I told her the incredible news, and she said, “That’s great! Let’s talk.” We walked through the village when she suddenly mentioned, “My sister and mother are right behind us.”

Things were unfolding quicker than usual; we were on the Lord’s timetable rather than my own carefully planned life back home. I looked over my shoulder, and there she was—a vision of beauty in a soft pink saree and jasmine flowers in her long hair. She was radiant in the morning sun. Before my mind could put together a strategy to solve my unkempt hair situation, we found ourselves in a small group at a spot that only Swami could have chosen for our first conversation. It was the peaceful sandy banks of the Chitravati River. The location meant a lot, as I had read that in the early days, Swami would take a small group of very fortunate devotees with Him to sit here in the evenings and would materialize things from the sands.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba says,

“When a house is to be certified as habitable, the engineer tests the foundations. The Lord too tests the foundations to see whether faith is true and deep.”

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
October 23, 1961



We sat at this sacred place, forming a small circle. Brief introductions were made, followed by an awkward pause. My salesman instincts nudged me: Say something.

And so, I did—perhaps one of history’s least polished marriage proposals: “I just gave a letter to Baba that said if He took it, you’re the perfect person to marry. So, if it’s okay with you, it’s fine by me.” Ms. Swarupa Rani, whose name meant “embodiment of a queen,” looked at me and, in a somewhat serene, calm, and majestic manner, said, “We shall see.”

Rani’s answer caught me by surprise, but I felt that I had done my duty. The conversation with my prospective family had come to an end. It was decided that Rani’s father would meet me at the ashram’s main gate at 10:00 am the next day for further discussion.

Interestingly and ‘coincidentally’, my parents had also arrived in Prasanthi Nilayam. I had not mentioned anything to them about the possibility of a marriage, as I had convinced myself that such an unusual and divinely

planned marriage was definitely not something that Swami would bestow on a person like Greg!

A Mother's Ultimatum

I finally reported the happenings to a not-so-amused mother and a father who tried their best to understand their son. My mother countered my statements and gave me an ultimatum. She would only accept the marriage if Baba took yet another letter that said this marriage should take place.

Swami says,

“Practice goodness with the mother and the father. Serve them, please them, bring honor to their memory, become worthy of their gratitude.”

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

October 14, 1967

I had to respect my mother's wishes, though it felt like my attempt at full faith and surrender had been derailed. The *ashram* was now at full capacity, and I probably would not get another chance to offer Swami a letter.

But the next day, by His grace, I managed to get a place to sit in the second row! As I sat waiting for the Lord to come, I was racked with worries as to whether He would take the second letter. **I needn't have worried, our all-knowing and omnipresent Lord**

knows all! He alone understands our frailties and never gives up on us. He took my letter a second time! I returned to my parents triumphantly with the news.

A couple of days later, Baba took a third letter seeking His blessings for the auspicious date selected for the marriage ceremony itself!

Getting Married in the Rain

It was a challenge to complete all the preparations for a proper Hindu wedding in the short time before I left for the USA. Swami granted us success, and our marriage was performed in a beautiful Hindu traditional ceremony. It was pouring rain as the prayers started, which was a sign of His blessing for us on that special day. I went back to the USA, a happily married man - a married man who, through his trust in God, had married the person literally of his dreams!

Looking back almost 30 years later, we are still happily married, and yes, she was and is the perfect person and a wonderful companion in my spiritual journey. We have a beautiful daughter, a Sai center in our home, and our lives are dedicated to the mission of Sai.

Jai Sai Ram.

Mr. Greg Slee
USA 



Mr. Greg Slee lives in the USA. He has made many trips to Prasanthi Nilayam to be in the divine presence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Greg's greatest joy is sharing the teachings and leelas of Swami. He has been a staunch devotee of Bhagawan for 33 years.

Greg currently serves as the devotional coordinator at Sai Prema Nilayam, Riverside, California, USA. He was the previous devotional coordinator for SSSIO – USA, Region 8 (Southern California). Professionally, Greg works in IT Cloud Solutions.

LOVE IN ACTION



AUSTRALIA

A Centennial Offering of Care and Compassion

In a heartfelt celebration of Ladies Day and in honor of Swami's 100th birthday, the SSSIO Australia devotees, in the Victoria Region, united in a beautiful act of compassion to support "Share the Dignity," an organization dedicated to promoting healthcare for women and girls in need. During the regional retreat, titled *Journey with Sai*, SSSIO members came together in a spirit of love and service to prepare 120 care packages filled with essential hygiene items—from toothbrushes and soap to sanitary pads and tampons. **Each bag was thoughtfully packed to bring comfort, dignity, and hope**



to those facing homelessness, domestic violence, or severe financial hardship.

The impact of this offering was immediate and deeply moving. A representative from "Share the Dignity" was overwhelmed by the generosity, noting that they usually receive only a few bags at a time. But this time, this outpouring of love far exceeded their expectations and touched many lives.



SSSIO ZONE 8

Six Nations Unite to Serve People

More than 90 devotees from 34 SSSIO centers and groups in Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova teamed up with 33 volunteers from the public to serve with devotion and unity. With heartfelt care and compassion, the volunteers prepared nourishing hot meals that included soups, porridges, stewed vegetables, warm drinks, and delicious sweets. **Through this collective effort, 693 individuals received fresh food filled with love.**

In several cities, this spirit of selfless service is also manifested in the distribution of clothing for the needy. The recipients shared their



struggles, their gratitude, and their need not only for warm garments but also for understanding, guidance, and human warmth. The circle of love also extended beyond humanity. Volunteers lovingly fed animals in shelters, parks, forests, and city streets—offering food to birds, squirrels, and other creatures.



USA

Inspiring Families at a Baby Shower

On July 19, 2025, the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Fort Lauderdale participated in the annual Deerfield Beach Community Baby Shower in Florida, USA. This event, organized in partnership with the Deerfield Beach Community Cares and the Broward Healthy Start Coalition, hosted and served around 200 expectant and new parents. **The Sai Center sponsored a booth focused on effective parenting, specifically highlighting the profound importance of story time and selecting human values-based books.**

SSSIO volunteers introduced the mnemonic “W.A.T.C.H.” (Watch your Words, Actions, Thoughts, Character, and Heart) to emphasize how a parent’s behavior serves as the primary model for their child. The booth activities linked this W.A.T.C.H. concept directly to reading:

Words: How the **Words** in books benefit reading development.

Actions: The benefits derived from the **Action** of reading together.

Thoughts: The positive **Thought** processes promoted through story time.

Character: The value-based **Character** development through choosing inspiring books.

Heart: The necessity of **Heart-to-Heart** connection forged during story time.

To make the interaction even more exciting, they hosted a ‘Jeopardy’-style game focused



on the W.A.T.C.H. content from the flyer. Participating mothers received token gifts, including pacifiers, bibs, bottles, baby wipes, and clothing. Most importantly, each mother received a values-based children’s book as a gift to encourage family reading.

This special opportunity to serve expectant parents touched the volunteers as they experienced the joy of giving love. Volunteers witnessed how even small acts of kindness, such as sharing a book or offering a gentle reminder to “WATCH” our words and thoughts, can plant the seeds of transformation in families.

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



SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

CELEBRATION OF THE 100TH YEAR OF THE ADVENT OF SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



More than 1,100 delegates from 43 countries gathered in Riverside, California, USA, from November 19-24, 2025 to celebrate the 30th Ladies' Day, 11th World Conference of the SSSIO, and the 100th year of the advent of the *Paripoorna Avatar*, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

With the theme, 'Purity is Enlightenment,' the historic conference was held at the beautiful Sai Prema Nilayam facility. It was preceded by the 30th anniversary of Ladies' Day on November 19. The program included videos of excerpts from Swami's divine discourses, outstanding speakers, soul-stirring bhajans, thought-provoking workshops, lively processions, and delicious multi-cuisine food. For many, a highlight was the mesmerizing personal stories from those who had interacted with Swami or who had been impacted by His amazing miracles. The conference highlight was the landmark 100th birthday celebration of Bhagawan on November 23, followed by a concluding celebratory program on November 24. This auspicious centenary event was an opportunity to go deeper and achieve a

greater understanding of our relationship with Sai, realizing that Sai is the indweller of our hearts, our Eternal Companion, the I in "i am I"!

For the fortunate ones called by Swami, His divine presence was intensely felt, ranging from the **strong Shiva-Shakti energy radiating from the beautifully decorated altar to the appearance of a brilliant double rainbow which manifested over the sacred grounds of Sai Prema Nilayam.**

Swami's divine presence was evident during a flag ceremony when the Ukrainian and Russian flags, along with the Israeli and Iranian flags, were unexpectedly placed side by side in front of the stage, underscoring the unity of all nations, irrespective of outward conflicts and differences. As the flags from 113 nations came together, the display was a subtle reminder of the united world that Bhagawan had envisioned. "No way could we have arranged that," said Leonardo Gutter, Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation. "He is taking care of everything in this conference and everything in our lives."



i∞ Ladies' Day Celebrations



Ladies' Day celebrations began with a grand procession by the ladies, bearing pictures of Swami and Mother Easwaramma, while chanting the Vedas and singing *bhajans*. The entire day's program honored the seven sacred qualities of the women with heartfelt speeches and musical performances from around the world. The beautiful altar hosted the heavenly paintings of Mother Mary and Mother Easwaramma, making it special for the occasion.

The lighting of the lamp marked the formal beginning of the day. It was followed by

Swami's divine discourse on the sacred qualities of women.

Ms. Shruthi Vijayakumar, the deputy International Young Adults coordinator from New Zealand, reflected on the theme, 'Purity is Enlightenment,' and noted the beautiful assurance that Swami revealed to a devotee in the interview room many years ago. He told this devotee, "*When you say 'Yes' to Me, your life is like a cake being baked. I twist. I knead. I stir. I pound. I bake you. I drown you in tears. I scorch you in sobs, but I make you crisp and sweet, an offering worthy of God.*"

Ms. Vijayakumar continued, "It's quite a scary quote, right? I knead you. I pound you. I twist you, but of course, our divine Mother is the only one who can do that with unconditional love. And I want to share today what it has been like growing up with Swami, **seeking His feet and how that twisting, pounding, kneading journey has been unfolding in this little child's life and what are some of the lessons, the grace, and the wisdom that He has conferred, hoping that it can help us all to get closer to His feet.**"



Ms. Shruthi Vijayakumar



Mataji Pravrajika Vrajaprana

Mataji Pravrajika Vrajaprana, a senior monk of the Vedanta Society of Southern California in Santa Barbara, spoke on the beatitude taught by Lord Jesus, 'blessed are the pure in heart' from the Bible. Noting that it relates to a higher plane of spirituality that has been seen for years among Indian saints and sages, **she quoted Swami Vivekananda, who said that this sentence alone would have saved mankind if all prophets and books were lost.** She said Swami Vivekananda also noted that purity of the heart will bring the vision of God, and by removing the veils of ignorance through purity, we will manifest ourselves as we truly are.

The morning program included a touching musical offering by Estonian soprano

Ms. Evelyn Kanepi, and a panel discussion on the 'Seven Virtues of Women.'

The next session also began with the divine words of Swami's discourse. Bhagawan emphatically stated that modern society often undervalues women, assigning limited roles and ignoring their vital contributions to family well-being, moral strength, and selfless sacrifice—qualities that once earned them revered titles like '*Grihalakshmi*' and '*Ardhangi*.' True prog-



Ms. Evelyn Kanepi



ress requires empowering women through education and meaningful work, recognizing their innate love, patience, and capacity to share responsibility alongside men. An uplifting musical program was then presented by the 32-member Sarva Dharma Choir from Europe on the theme 'Message of Sai.'

Mrs. Jenny Monson, Central Coordinator for Zone 3, shared her experience of purifying the heart. She shared many personal experiences, including one in which a psychic in Australia told her that Sai was watching over her before she knew Swami. **She spoke of her realization that love is about being**

and not doing and emphasized that the end of all spiritual practices is the purification of the mind. One example she cited was coming to terms with her son's death at age 26 due to a traffic accident. "Due to Swami's grace and teachings, I have been strengthened through this loss and accepted that this was my son's time, all part of my purification of the heart." She cautioned that everything we think or say reaches the inner divinity, and we must be careful about what we think or say.

The day ended with melodious *bhajans*, a sumptuous dinner, and a wonderful evening concert, 'Beacons of Nations.'



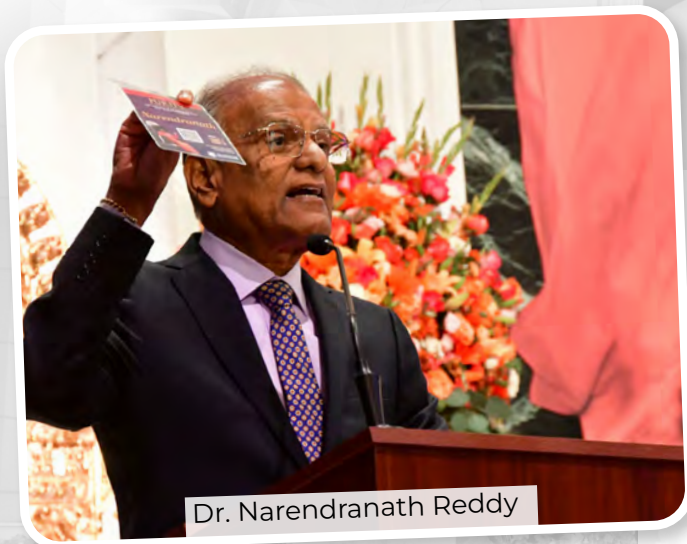
i∞ 11th World Conference - Day 1

On November 20, Mr. Alex Grana, chair of the SSSIO Events Committee, opened the conference by welcoming all delegates and the online audience from around the world. He noted that it was fitting to start the conference with the traditional ceremony of lighting the lamp, as Swami had declared on July 8, 1968, that He had come *“to light the lamp of love in your heart to see it grow every day so that it shines with added luster.”*

The young adult Masters of Ceremonies (MCs) for the morning then introduced the colorful flag ceremony of 113 countries/territories, recognizing those who had traveled from around the world to pay homage to the Lord at Sai Prema Nilayam. Soul-stirring *bhajans* followed.

The stage was set for Sri Sathya Sai’s divine discourse to sanctify the first session. In the discourse given on June 20, 1990, Swami said that the only way to see the impurities within us is to develop faith that God is present in all living beings. **He said that when we recognize that God resides in everything and there is no duality, then we attain purity of mind.** With proper enquiry, He said, we can realize that all faults arise from the body or the mind.





*Swami has no birth and no death. He has no beginning and no end because **He is eternal and infinite.** He was with us; He is with us, and He will be with us forever.*

An inaugural address by Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman, SSSIO, set the tone for the conference, as he emphasized that although all those gathered were celebrating the 100th year of the advent of Sai, “Swami has no birth and no death. He has no beginning and no end because He is eternal and infinite. He was with us; He is with us, and He will be with us forever.” Hence, he said, “Among the 8.2 billion people on this Earth, those of us who have experienced Him are the most blessed and fortunate. We should make the most of this opportunity, because we are the few that God has called to serve in His mission.”

Citing the Bible, he noted, “Many are called, but few are chosen. We have been called because of His grace. It is not an accident. Swami has said that He has been preparing us for many lifetimes to be instruments of His love.”

Dr. Reddy expounded on the conference theme, noting that although many say there are many paths to God, “Swami said that purity is the only path. He said purity is enlightenment, and the minute we are pure, we are enlightened. Swami also said that purity of the mind and heart is more powerful than any *mantra*.”

“So what is this purity, and how do we obtain it? External purity includes taking care of your body, for example, by taking a shower or brushing your teeth. It also includes dressing well and being neat and clean. Purity should be maintained not only in the food we consume, but also what we take in through the eyes and ears, like spending time in nature or listening to *bhajans*. Additionally, other forms of purity include purity in the family through mutual respect and harmony, and purity of the environment by reducing the use of plastic and fossil fuels.”

“However, Swami said the most important form of purity for the spiritual seeker is inner purity, or purity of the mind and heart,” said Dr. Reddy. “Once we have achieved that, no more spiritual practices are needed. But why don’t we have spiritual purity? We forget that we are embodiments of the divine *Atma*, divine bliss, and that we are *Brahman*, because of the impurities covering it: desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and jealousy, with the major impurity being our ego.”

Dr. Reddy concluded his remarks by encouraging devotees to dive deep into Swami’s teachings, referring to Swami’s proclamations from the First World Conference on



May 17, 1968: “Swami gave a glimpse of His divinity, and there were three important things that one should remember. Swami said He is the embodiment of all names and forms, yet beyond all names and forms. He also said, *“Never try to understand Me. If you really want Self-Realization, then follow My teachings with absolute faith.”*”

Following Dr. Reddy’s remarks, the attendees learned about the launch of a new app, SSSIO Events, the new official conference digital tool, developed by a dedicated team of IT professionals in the SSSIO. The app allowed conference delegates to enhance their experience with easy access to the program, session schedules, and details, organized notes, and ratings. This remark-

able, innovative tool brought the SSSIO event into the digital age by sharing information in real-time, seamlessly, and in an environmentally-friendly manner.

Attendees were encouraged to visit the on-site exhibition video gallery to experience the glory of Sri Sathya Sai, His works, and His legacy around the world. Topics for viewing included the Divine Love of Sai Across the United States; Take My Message to Every Corner of the World: SSSIO History and Work Around Its Zones; Health is the Greatest Wealth: Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare; and Education for Life: Education Program.

Following lunch, Mr. Gutter spoke on a topic that many could relate to: “How Fortunate We Are.” He said, “I don’t think we realize that fully. But the purpose of this conference is to help us realize how fortunate we are, so that we leave this conference with a smile on our face and with more love in our hearts. We have been born as human beings, which is incredibly important, but we have also been born at a time when the *Paripoorna Avatar* came. There are 8.2 billion people on this planet, but that is not the real number of interest for us. Every second, someone is born, and someone dies. But how many people have been born on this planet over the last 5,200 years since the time of Krishna? There are trillions and trillions of such people, and out of this incredible,



Mr. Leonardo Gutter



infinite number of souls, we have been born when the *Paripoorna Avatar* descended on this planet."

Of this number, said Mr. Gutter, only a few are awakened on a spiritual path. "Those participating in the conference are already awakened. As His disciples, many lifetimes ago, He called our souls to His presence, and said, 'Yes. I will be your Master. I will be your Guru. I will guide you. I will protect you, and I will love you until you wake up and merge back in Me.'"

Mr. Gutter reminded those listening that "Swami is available for us 24x7, but are we available for Him? That is the question that we must ask ourselves in this conference. You may have traveled hundreds or thousands of miles to get here, but you actually have traveled thousands of lifetimes to come to Him. **So we are here to have more determination, more intensity on our spiritual path. We have been called by God to be His instruments in the most important time in human consciousness. He gave us this opportunity. Are we grabbing it? Are we doing our part? Do we have the intensity, the dedication needed to say "Yes" to Him?"**

From there, the floodgates opened, and Swami offered a torrent of divine blessings on the theme 'Individual Purity.' Dr.

Sunder Iyer offering the *Nirvana Shatkam*, a glorious and moving musical tribute to the devotee who realizes his true nature is divine. He was followed by Dr. Suresh Govind, who outlined the conference program, and Dr. Madhuri Manohar, a Young Adult from Oman, who spoke of the 'Power of Visualization.' She spoke about a traumatic encounter she experienced in the Washington D.C. subway and said **that if we imagine Swami in every aspect of our lives, we are rewiring our brains to His divinity and the purity of every moment, thus changing our inner and outer worlds to experience His divinity.** Her talk was fascinating, highlighting a simple way of making Swami our partner and protector in our lives.

The afternoon session featured a workshop on individual purity and a divine discourse in which Swami reminded us that when we purify the three fundamental elements within the body – mind, speech, and deed – we become pure and sacred. **He urged us to cultivate spirituality, morality, and righteousness and to have only one desire – a desire for the divine.**

Then an uplifting panel discussion on 'The Path Of Devotion as a Means to attain Purity' was presented, followed by 'The Enlightenment Quest,' which playfully engaged the participants with useful spiritual knowledge.

i∞ 11th World Conference - Day 2

On November 21, the divine discourse clip emphasized the message of the presence of God in the individual heart. An Interfaith panel was held in the morning, featuring speakers from the Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu faiths. The SSSIO logo featuring the five human values formed a beautiful backdrop as well as a foundation to their discussions because each one of them, in their own way, pointed to it, stating that it represented their religion! Swami said that He has come to nurture the roots of all religions, and **the speakers presented their thoughts on purity as it related to their chosen paths, showing how the truth taught by Swami was also reflected in their faiths.**

Then came the Sai 'TED Talk' of Mr. Miguel Montes from Mexico, a Young Adult who pulled at the strings of every heart present as he spoke of 'The Second Birth' that Swami gave him. Mr. Roger Castle from the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank next spoke on the organization's mission to feed the hungry and the invaluable contribution of the SSSIO as part of 'Stories of Transformation and Community.' He was followed by Dr. Sunder Iyer, one of Swami's personal attendants at one time, and the only person ever to receive a Gold Medal for Yoga from Swami. He discussed purity and the importance of the heart.

Dr. Iyer shared two moving stories about how opening his heart allowed him to establish a personal connection with Swami, even when he was full of doubts. When he joined the school, he said, "I had heard about His powers, but in my heart, I didn't have a one-on-one connection with Him. I was yearning for a deep connection



In clockwise order, Swami Mahayogananda, Rabbi Guershon Kwasniewski, Imam Dr. Mahmoud Harmoush, Swami Sarvadevananda, Father Alvaro Palacios, and Venerable Hui Ze



Mr. Roger Castle



Dr. Sunder Iyer

with Him. I was asking 'Where is my God?' That connection manifested not through inspiring books or sermons, but by personally experiencing Swami's omniscience."

Describing one incident, he shared that his sister and her husband had been trying for 11 years to have a child with no success. They had been to various doctors, had undergone many tests, and had prayed fervently to Lord Shiva and Lord Muruga, their family deities. "The whole family was worried, and they were looking for a miracle," said Dr. Iyer, noting that his father was constantly sending letters to him saying that his mother wanted him to ask Swami for help.

"I said, Yes, when I get a chance, but in my mind, I knew that I was never going to do that for two reasons. It was very embarrassing to me to go and ask for a child for my

sister, and I didn't think that a person in Puttaparthi could help my sister, who was so far away."

One day, Swami went on to tell him in great detail about his family's dilemma, "And for one minute, it was an outpouring of omniscience. I just stood there staring and saying how is this possible?" Still, he doubted even after Swami gave him *vibhuti* as prasad to send to his sister, telling him that she would have a son in eight months. **"I wanted my faith to be in black and white," said Dr. Iyer. In eight months, Swami's words came true.** "He proved to me beyond doubt that '*I know*', and '*I can*', and that was all that I needed at that moment."

The afternoon was filled with workshops, a divine discourse, and a 'Selfless Service Panel' that discussed selfless service as a means for purification. **An uplifting Carnatic musical offering by Ms. Anuradha Sridhar followed. After dinner, hearts were warmed by the melodious music of the renowned Sarva Dharma Choir, who presented, 'The Message of Sai.'**



i∞ 11th World Conference - Day 3

Day 3 began auspiciously with a divine discourse. Swami said that when humans cannot recognize humanity within themselves, how can they recognize the divinity within? Therefore, He said, one should recognize humanity first. He spoke of the importance of right vision, right resolve, sacred thoughts, divine feelings, good listening, and sacred living. **He said that *sadhana* is eliminating the impurities from the mind, and *Samyak Samadhi* is to regard pleasure and pain with equal-mindedness, which leads to *Nirvana*.**

The theme of the day was 'Purity in Action in Leadership,' and a lively and thought-provoking debate took place. Six panelists discussed, 'Which Path is the Most Effective? *Karma* (Service), *Bhakti* (Devotion), or *Jnana* (Knowledge)?' Swami said that each path leads to the same goal, but one can focus on any path depending on one's spiritual background and tendencies or integrate all

three paths in one's spiritual life. **The discussion concluded with the consensus that all three paths are valid and needed.**

Then came another unique offering titled, 'Purity in the Corporate Environment,' featuring a panel of corporate leaders reflecting on this real-world subject in relation to spirituality. The delegates heard about selfless leaders, creating an environment of values, staying true to alignment, not selling but inspiring customers, respecting Nature in consuming resources, recognizing the wide pool of stakeholders, building trust and confidence, upholding truth and accountability, and the importance of finding good mentors. The incisiveness and applicability of Swami's teachings in the 'real world' were evident and undisputable.

The report on the SSSIO's Centennial Offering, the SAI-100 Initiative, was presented by Dr. Suresh Govind, a member of the Prasanthi Council, in the form of a colorful and





impressive coffee-table book featuring pictures of myriad selfless service projects being implemented by SSSIO members around the world.

There was a workshop in the afternoon titled 'Purity in Society.' In an afternoon dialogue, Dr. Govind and Dr. Reddy reflected on the inner journey of leadership, service, and surrender. When asked to what extent leaders should sacrifice, Dr. Reddy stated, "One should offer everything, body, mind, intellect, and wealth to Him. **People say they give money and time, but that sacrifice is nothing compared to the divine love and grace one receives from the Lord.**"

Asked if he had ever been disappointed when it came to anything regarding Swami, Dr. Reddy discussed how he was planning a U.S. tour for Swami that Swami had agreed to, but it never materialized. He noted that one may pray, but it doesn't mean that it will happen in our timeframe – it happens "in His timeframe!"

Dr. Govind commented that recent challenges in the organization, including the structural changes with the

Global Council, had made the chairman's position an unenviable one, asking, "How do you sleep at night?" Dr. Reddy replied, "As long as one sticks to the path of truth and righteousness, the world may be against you, but one is not bothered because you are there to please God."

Mr. Gutter later delivered a Valedictory Address, urging all those attending to share what they had learned during the conference, "so that it doesn't end here. **We have a duty and responsibility to share what we have learned, all the joy we have experienced, and all the love we have felt, with all Sai Centers in all countries.** This will help us become more effective instruments in the divine mission."

In the evening, there was a delightful musical performance and play presented by the SSE children. The play titled, "Golden Age: Marching in the Light of God", was a humorous take on the predicament of man and the way out based on Swami's teachings.

The day ended with a wonderful drama by Young Adults titled, 'The Fire That Freed the Light.'





i∞ 100th Birthday Celebrations of Baba

The conference was followed by the grand 100th Birthday celebrations of Baba. It began with a magnificent palanquin procession for Swami led by the assembled devotees. The program began in the auditorium with the divine discourse, in which Swami spoke of the love He wants from His devotees: not thoughts of material things but thoughts of God and intense longing. He spoke of the Gopis and of Prahlada of yore, who endured much suffering because they did not have body consciousness but were immersed in love for God.

The day was filled with stories, with speakers sharing personal anecdotes about their interactions with Swami and the miracles witnessed. Dr. Reddy shared how his father, in his 80s, had been rushed to the hospital after having seizures and convulsions. "Doctors said that the cause could be a brain tumor or a stroke. We all prayed to Swami, and when the results were available, the tests showed that his father had very low blood sodium. Unbeknownst to the family, he stopped eating salt completely, and that led to the acute episode. After he was treated with intravenous saline, he recovered fully within 24-48 hours. It was all Swami's grace."





He continued, “A few weeks later, when I went to Prasanthi Nilayam and expressed my gratitude to Swami for saving my father. He said, *“What could I do? Your mother was praying in the puja room, holding on to My feet so tightly, I had no choice!”* **This showed Swami’s omnipresence, omnipotence, and immediate response to sincere prayer.**

Mrs. Aparna Chitturi, President of SSSIO–USA Region 2, shared a story about realizing that “The Swami I worshiped outside was actually within me.” She explained how she, her mother, and her sister had once gone to a temple on Swami’s Birthday and did several hours of *seva*, including serving lunch and making garlands. At about 10:30 that night, the women left exhausted. When they reached home, Mrs. Chitturi thought in her mind, “Swami, look at how much we’ve done to celebrate your Birthday. In an hour, it will be my birthday. What are you going to do for me?”

The next morning, she went to check her email on a nearby computer, and **a picture of Swami mysteriously appeared on the computer monitor. The picture had not been there before. The words beneath**

said: “To Whom Much is Given, Much is Expected.” In that moment, she realized that “Swami was hearing my every single thought, observing every single action, and cognizant of every single word I was speaking.”

Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya, Swami’s personal photographer for five years, asked the audience what gift they could give Swami for His Birthday, noting that Swami had said one could offer a fruit, a flower, a leaf, or water. With any of these, Swami said He would be happy. Mr. Balasubramanya suggested, however, that for a fruit, one could offer the fruits of one’s actions willingly; for a flower, the fragrant flower of the divine feelings in one’s heart; and for a leaf, one could offer their body and actions that Swami likes, like dressing appropriately or speaking kindly. **As an offering of water, he suggested that one should offer one’s tears of devotion and joy.**

Before lunch, there was another concert by Ms. Evelyn Kanepi. Drawing from her released albums, Ms. Kanepi’s pure, high-pitched vocals carried the scent of sincerity and devotion. Each song seemed to rise



effortlessly, touching subtle inner chords and creating a shared atmosphere of reverence and stillness. The gathered listeners were visibly moved, many experiencing moments of quiet upliftment as the music transcended language, becoming a prayer. **It was a beautiful reminder of music's power to unite hearts in devotion.**

During the lunch break, devotees were blessed with a rare *darshan* of the Hira-nyagarbha Linga, which had emerged from Swami during the Maha Shivaratri of 2004. Swami promises that those who witnessed the emergence of this Linga will not have rebirth! This Linga was gifted by Swami to Dr. Narendranath Reddy in 2004, and he reverently brought the sacred Linga to the altar and kept it there for several hours. This allowed hundreds of devotees to experience an atmosphere of sanctity and grace. **They enjoyed the *darshan* of this sacred Hira-nyagarbha Linga with profound gratitude, cherishing the opportunity to be intimately connected with Swami's divine *leela*, and making the experience unforgettable.**

After lunch, Mr. Satyajit Salian, who served as Swami's personal attendant for over a

decade, spoke. He described an event which "Solidified for me the permanence of Bhagawan in our lives." It began with the unfolding of a vision in 2012, one year after Swami left His body, when Mr. Salian had a dream of Swami performing CPR on him, or "a resurrection."

He wondered if Swami was warning him of a heart attack, and he later remembered a surreal encounter in 2007 with Mother Easwaramma in the very room where Swami was resting. He saw her appear in the subtle form, and Swami confirmed the experience



Mr. Satyajit Salian



by asking Mr. Salian, “*Did you see her? Did you see her?*”

Mr. Salian confirmed that he had seen Mother Easwaramma and had the good fortune of her darshan. He continued, “Swami talked about how she kept returning because her love for Swami kept her attached to His body. That was an anchoring moment for me. If her love for Swami could bring her back, what about Swami’s love for us, and what could prevent Him from coming back again and again?”

In the evening, there was the *Jhoola* (Swing) Ceremony and special musical offerings, including one by the renowned artist Sri ‘Mandolin’ U Rajesh. Accompanied by many instruments, he kept the audience spell-bound with his enchanting performance. There was a special recognition ceremony for Dr. Jack Hawley, a long-time devotee of Bhagawan and a leader in the field of applying human values in the business world, for his decades of valuable contribution to the divine mission.



Sri ‘Mandolin’ U Rajesh



i∞ Divine Memories

November 24, the concluding day of the grand celebrations at Sai Prema Nilayam, unfolded in an atmosphere of deep devotion and reflection. The program commenced with soulful devotional singing, setting a serene and elevated tone for the spiritual journey.

This was followed by a series of profound talks. Mr. Leonardo Gutter opened the session with a riveting account of his journey from skepticism to surrender, sharing remarkable experiences and miracles that revealed Swami's unseen yet intimate guidance across continents. Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya offered deep reflections on Swami's transformative process, beautifully articulating the spiritual progression from miracles (*chamatkar*) to refinement (*samskar*), service (*paropakar*), and ultimate Self-realization (*sakshatkar*), illustrated through moving personal experiences. The session concluded with a talk by Mr. Satyajit Salian, who shared powerful first-hand insights from his years of close association with Bhagawan, presenting vivid experiences, divine confirmations, and a compel-

ling reminder of the eternal presence of Sai. Together, the talks brought the celebrations to a contemplative and uplifting close.

Thousands of Touched Hearts

The experience would stay long in the hearts of the conference delegates, and many expressed gratitude and a desire to put the lessons learned into action. Though it was described as a celebration of His Advent, His Glories, and His *Leelas*, it was more – it was the healing balm for the hearts of everyone present and beyond, who had been pining for their Guru and God, wanting to be immersed in His Love. Sai reminded us He has not gone anywhere.

Mr. Doug Gaum, former president of SSSIO–USA Region 2 and Zone 1 Envirocare coordinator, said, “The conference was awesome. **On the first day I was here and walked into the building, a tremendous amount of love and light just poured into me, and I noticed everyone else was affected the same way.**

It was beautiful, and the theme of purity motivates us to improve ourselves and to just fill ourselves with that light that is pure



Swami, and to become pure, not just in a physical sense, but mentally and spiritually.”

Mr. Pinky Garg, a devotee since 1988 from Redlands, California, said, “We came here the day before the conference started, and I really felt a big umbrella of love. I felt I was on another planet where there is only love, where there is only service, where there is only purity, and it brought tears to my eyes. So, I pray to Swami that what we experienced at the conference will prevail in the world.”

Ms. Rajani Kanukollu, a member of the Holmdel Center in New Jersey, remarked, “The aspect of constant integrated awareness of the self in thought, word, and deed was a very big part of this conference, and oftentimes we think our thoughts are pure and good enough, but it has to be truly pure and filled with love. I remember my parents always saying, ‘count to 10 before you react,’ especially if you are not happy with the situation. This is something that I think is a big part of purity.”

Ms. Veena Sundararaman, from Melbourne, Florida, stated, “One strong reinforcement that I found for me was Swami’s teachings on reflection, reaction, and resound. I had acute awareness of areas where I found impurities in the behavior of others, but I also saw within myself more impurities than usual.”

She was so impressed by the numerous people at the conference, ‘lovingly offering a huge amount of selfless service’ that I want to find out how I can be a better instrument in Swami’s mission.”

Swami orchestrated everything. He filled every heart and mind with abundant joy. He showered His love and blessings on all, and He nudged every earnest seeker to strive harder for their purity to earn the fruit of sadhana, because He is within reach. He fulfilled every wish, and He left everyone with one thought: “*Follow Me.*”

–Editorial Team

(with valuable contributions from Ms.Edith Billups and Mr. Ashok Sakhrani)





Swami Is Always with Us

INITIALLY, MY FAMILY WAS NOT DEVOTED TO SATHYA SAI BABA, but my eldest uncle and his family were ardent followers of Swami. My uncle served in the British Army in Hong Kong, Brunei, and Malaysia during the 1950s and 1960s, along with my father-in-law. He and his family regularly organized Sai *bhajans* at home. After retiring from the Army, he settled in my hometown, Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh, India, where he continued to hold devotional gatherings. Inspired by his faith, my mother decided to include Swami's picture in our family altar. **I vividly remember the year 1974, when I was 6 years old and was blessed to witness Swami's miracles in our home. It was the sacred day of Maha Shivaratri.** My mother woke up at 5 am, as she usually did, to offer her morning prayers. She was surprised to find the entire house filled with the sweet scent of burning incense. Wondering who could have started prayers so early, she went to the altar—and to her amazement, she saw *Amritam* (holy nectar) materializing on Swami's photo and



“This experience reaffirmed my faith that when we completely surrender to Swami, He takes care of all our needs.”

vibhuti (sacred ash) appearing inside a seashell placed below the picture.

News of this divine manifestation spread quickly, and many people started visiting our home. My mother lovingly distributed the *vibhuti* to all visitors until the seashell was empty. Yet, twice a day, in the morning and evening, it would be filled again with fragrant *vibhuti*. This continued for several weeks. My sisters then started fasting on Thursdays in Swami's name and held regular Sai *bhajan* sessions at home. We would offer fruits and *prasadam* to Swami during the *bhajans*, and by the time we performed *arati* (ritual waving of a lighted lamp), the sacred symbol Om would appear on the fruits! The flowers in the garland offered to Him would rotate on the string, and flowers placed above Swami's photo would spin rapidly like a fan, even though there was no wind. These were the wondrous miracles of Swami. **For a 6-year-old like me, it felt like magic. But now I understand it was Swami's *leela* (divine play), showing us that He was truly present in our home.** Thus began my connection with Swami in 1974.

My First *Darshan* of Swami

My first *darshan* of Swami came many years later, in 2002. I had to take my mother-in-law, father-in-law, and youngest son from Kathmandu, Nepal, to Puttaparthi for my mother-in-law's medical check-up

because she was suffering from a heart ailment. At that time, we were unaware that one must first visit Swami's General Hospital for an examination and then receive a referral to Swami's Super Specialty Hospital.

The taxi we hired took us directly to Swami's Super Specialty Hospital, where some young volunteers stopped us at the gate, saying we could not enter without a referral. However, by Swami's divine grace, an elderly volunteer instructed them to let us in, as we had come all the way from Nepal. All the tests, examinations, and consultations were completed on the same day. **When the heart specialist reviewed the results, she was astonished and asked how my mother-in-law had managed to travel such a long distance, with only 15% of her heart functioning.** She prescribed medication and advised us to return to Nepal, cautioning us not to travel anymore, due to her condition.

The next morning, I went alone for *Suprabhatam* (early morning prayers). When I saw Swami's photo, tears began to flow uncontrollably. Then, I worried about how embarrassing it would be if the same thing happened during Swami's *darshan* later. But to my surprise, when Swami came for *darshan* that day, not a single tear came. Swami must have known my concern and ensured that I remained composed.

We stayed a few more days and were blessed with Swami's *darshan* several times. Those were my in-laws' first and last *darshans* of Swami. My mother-in-law, a retired and devoted teacher from the British Army school, passed away two years later in 2004, on the auspicious day of Guru Poornima. Looking back, I realize that despite her heart condition, she was able to make the journey to Puttaparthi only because of Swami's grace and His will. He wanted to bless my in-laws with His divine *darshan* one final time.

Swami Cures the Pain in My Body

A couple of years ago, while I was in Brunei, I began experiencing unbearable pain in my right shoulder and leg, which made it hard to sleep on my right side. One night, I decided to apply Swami's *vibhuti* to the affected areas before going to bed, but I forgot to do so as I was very tired. That night, Swami appeared in my dream. I was among a group of devotees, and Swami stood beside me, His body gently touching my right side. He whispered something into my ear, but I could not understand His words.

When I woke up the next morning, I realized the pain on my right side was completely gone. Since then, I have been able to sleep comfortably on my right side without any pain or discomfort. Through His divine touch, Swami healed me.

Swami's Blessings Can Do Wonders

After my marriage in 1989, I lived with my in-laws in Kathmandu while my husband, a teacher at a British Army school, returned to Hong Kong for work. A few months later, I joined him there. My husband always longed for a daughter, but after our two sons were born in 1991 and 1992, he began to lose hope.

When I became pregnant for the third time in 1994, the British Army doctor often reassured me that this time it would be a girl, knowing that was our deepest desire. One day, my husband's colleague and close friend visited us at home. She brought a handkerchief that had been blessed by Swami. **Knowing how much we longed for a daughter, she asked me to rub the handkerchief on my belly and said, "Swami's blessings can do wonders."**

And indeed, they did. In September that year, I gave birth to our beloved daughter, our greatest joy, to the surprise of the doctor and the medical staff. The nurses later confided that the doctor had told them in confidence that it would be another boy. We were overwhelmed with gratitude and realized once again that Swami knows all our innermost desires. Truly, His blessings can do wonders.

When We Surrender to Swami, He Takes Care of All Our Needs

Recently, I had to travel alone to India to attend my niece's wedding. I was a little concerned about lifting my baggage since I had my gall bladder removed a month earlier. The doctor had cautioned me against lifting heavy weights, although she assured me I was fit to travel.

When I arrived in Delhi, I had trouble lifting my luggage from the baggage belt, and at that very moment, a young man came to my rescue and helped me. I then had to go to the domestic airport for the connecting flight to Dharamshala. Fortunately, this young gentleman was also heading there and continued to assist me with my bags.

Since our respective flights were not until the next morning, we were not allowed

“He knows even our most unspoken thoughts and wishes and is always there to help us, often in the most unexpected ways.”

to go into the terminal and had to sit outside. As we started talking, I learned that his name was Rohan Kompella and that he was a writer who had published several books. He was polite, warm, humble, and well-mannered. It was clear that his parents had raised him with strong values and good discipline—something rare to see in today’s world.

Rohan stayed with me and kept me company to ensure I was safe until it was time for him to check in. He even texted my husband in Madrid to reassure him that I was fine. **That’s when I realized that nothing happens without Swami’s divine will, and that Rohan was truly God-sent. This experience reaffirmed my faith that when we completely surrender to Swami, He takes care of all our needs.**

After Rohan left to check in at 9 pm, I remained seated on a chair outside the terminal entrance because my flight wasn’t until 6:40 am and passengers were not yet allowed inside. The night air was cool and quiet, and as I sat there alone, I started to feel the weight of my bags beside me. I thought how much easier it

would be if I had a trolley—but there were none in sight. I wondered how I could find one at that hour.

Just as this thought crossed my mind, a foreign traveler appeared, pushing a trolley with a large kayak balanced on it. When he reached the entrance, the kayak wouldn’t fit through the doorway. He lifted it off and, to my surprise, left the empty trolley right next to where I was sitting. Without hesitation, I took it and placed my bags on it, feeling a deep sense of gratitude.

In that simple, perfect moment, I silently thanked Swami. I realized once again that He knows even our most unspoken thoughts and wishes and is always there to help us, often in the most unexpected ways.

All these experiences of Swami’s miracles merely confirm the truth that Swami is always with us, no matter where we are or what we do.

Jai Sai Ram.

Mrs. Sarita Thapa
SPAIN



Mrs. Sarita Thapa completed her higher education in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, India. Shortly after her marriage in 1989, she moved to Kathmandu, Nepal, before joining her husband in Hong Kong. In 1995, Sarita and her husband moved to Brunei where her husband was the Deputy Headteacher at the British Army School. Sarita also became part of the school community, working for several years as a Learning Support Assistant, before moving to Brunei.

In March 2023, she and her husband moved to Spain, where they participate in the Sri Sathya Sai Center in Madrid. By Swami’s loving grace, Mr. and Mrs. Thapa continue to support several seva projects in Nepal.

from the International Sai Young Adults

Joy in Every Heart

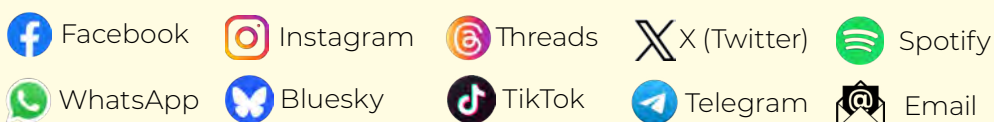
The “Kids’ Fun Day” was organized by the Young Adults of the Sri Sathya Sai Organization of Fiji as a joyful celebration filled with fun, food, and games for specially-abled children on October 5, 2025. **Children from the Gospel School for the Deaf, Fiji Society for the Blind, Harland Home, and WOWs Kids participated in the event.**

The day started with a warm morning tea for the children, followed by a series of exciting fun activities such as painting, face painting, board games, soccer, tin & ball, balloon blowing, hula hoops, musical chairs, singing, and dancing. Laughter and cheer filled the air as the children eagerly participated in each activity with enthusiasm and delight.

A delicious and sumptuous lunch was served, and each child received a thoughtfully prepared goodie bag to take home. The event not only brought together these wonderful children but also created a meaningful opportunity for Sai families to unite in loving service. **It was a heartfelt offering in honor of Swami’s 100th Birthday.**



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RECOGNIZING OUR DIVINITY



From September 11–14, 2025, the Zone 2B (South America) Sai Young Adults (YAs) Festival was held in Itaboraí, a municipality in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The event took place at Sítio Bebele, a serene venue surrounded by trees and birds, creating an atmosphere of harmony and tranquility. The last YA Festival in Zone 2B was held in Córdoba, Argentina, in 2018; therefore, this gathering was a special opportunity for the Sai Youth of the South American countries to reconnect.

The festival theme, **‘Recognizing Our Divinity,’** invited participants to become aware of their innate divinity and explore ways to manifest it in daily life. The objectives of the festival were to:

1. Demonstrate the importance of the SSSIO for the spiritual and personal growth of Sai YAs.
2. Introduce and explain the Sai YA program.

3. Create bonds of brotherhood, sisterhood, and unity among Sai YAs in South America.
4. Offer a comfortable and trustworthy space for YAs to connect, share, and learn.

More than 70 participants from the ten countries of Zone 2B attended the festival, including the leaders of Zone 2B. The festival began with a heartfelt offering at the lotus feet of Swami, accompanied by the flag procession by the ten countries in Zone 2B. Each day started with *Omkar*, *Suprabhatam*, *Veda* chanting, and *bhajans*—setting a sacred and uplifting tone for all activities that followed.

Program highlights included *Agnihotra* (a Vedic ritual fire ceremony for purifying the environment and the mind), conversation circles, a cultural festival, dance performances, devotional singing, games, group dynamics, icebreakers, study circles, talks, and yoga sessions. Five inspiring talks were delivered: **Sri Sathya Sai YAs Program, Life**



is a Game, Sai Leadership—Leaders Like Lions, Sai YAs Program—A Unique Opportunity, and Human Development.

The festival concluded with a group reflection activity, where participants pondered upon questions such as: “*What spiritual practices will you do to recognize your inner divinity?*” The closing session included reflections and words of grati-

tude from Ms. Dakny Hoffmeister and Ms. Natalia Uehara (National YA Coordinators of Brazil), Mr. Sérgio Espíndola (Zone 2B Chairman), Ms. Divina Chandiramani (Zone 2B Deputy YA Coordinator), and Mr. Brian Jaramillo (Zone 2B YA Coordinator). The festival served as a meaningful opportunity to bring together the Sai YA family of Zone 2B, inspiring all to continue strengthening the sacred Sai YA program of the SSSIO.

Experience Sharing by Ms. Sathya Lanzillotti, Chile

*This year, I experienced something I never imagined: attending a Sai Youth Festival in Brazil. It was a beautiful event, full of learning, internalization of values, and peace of mind. Day by day, I felt my spiritual connections deepen, sharing with everyone the same path that united us as one. One morning, while we were singing bhajans, I closed my eyes and saw Swami’s smiling face. Shocked, I opened my eyes to see if others could see it too—but they could not. I closed my eyes again, and His form appeared once more, as real as if I were seeing it with my eyes open. Then an inner voice whispered: “If you open your eyes, you will also see Me, because I am also them. We are all One. We are all God.” **At the age of 24, I can say that it was one of the most profound and transformative experiences of my life—seeing Swami and truly understanding His message.***



The Dogs Who Taught Us Love

Every Sunday, a group of dedicated Young Adults from Perak, Malaysia, gather for a mission rooted in love, compassion, and service—the weekly Papan Dog Feeding. Conducted at the Papan Dumpsite in Ipoh, this ongoing initiative is a collaborative effort with an NGO (Non-Government Organization), Persatuan Prihatin Haiwan Terbiar Ipoh, Perak (Papan Souls). The goal of this noble activity is to feed, care for, and show compassion to the hundreds of homeless and abandoned dogs that inhabit the area.

This feeding service has been running for the past five years, having begun in 2020. What began as a humble biweekly effort by a few volunteers quickly grew into a regular weekly service, as the number of dogs and the need for consistent care increased. Over time, the dedication and love of the volunteers deepened, transforming this small initiative into a long-standing mission of compassion and hope.

Each week, between four and eight Young Adults participate in this act of selfless service. The day begins with the collection of food prepared by a designated cook, after which the team proceeds to Papan to feed the animals. **Approximately 350 dogs are fed during each session, receiving not only nourishment but also affection and attention from the volunteers.** The activity extends beyond feeding—the volunteers also clean enclosures that shelter ill, injured, or recovering dogs and puppies,


ensuring they have a safe and comfortable environment. Those suffering from sickness are treated, receive medicines, and nursed with care and compassion. Sadly, there are times when the team encounters dogs that have passed away; these souls are respectfully buried with love and dignity. Whenever possible, the volunteers also feed the monkeys living around the dumpsite, showing kindness to all beings that crossed their path.

What makes this service truly meaningful is not just the act of feeding, but the emotional bond formed with the animals. Despite enduring neglect, hardship, and abandonment, the dogs of Papan continue to show boundless trust and affection. **Every week, they greet the volunteers with wagging tails, gentle eyes, and hearts full of love. These simple yet powerful interactions remind the team of the transformative strength of compassion and the purity of unconditional love.**

Through this experience, volunteers have gained invaluable lessons. From the dogs of Papan, they have learned what it truly means to love without expectation, and to find joy even in the face of suffering. These resilient beings, once victims of human cruelty and indifference, continue to respond with unwavering affection and gratitude. Their strength and innocence teach the importance of empathy, humility, and kindness.



Reflections from the 11th World Conference and Swami's 100th Birthday



Mr. Sriram Sankar

YA Drama Lead (USA)

On Swami's 100th Birthday, I was blessed with the sacred opportunity to gently push Swami's *jhoola* (swinging throne) for a few minutes. The scene instantly transported me to memories of His physical *darshans*—those moments when He would softly sway on the swing, radiant with grace. **I had long cherished the hope of experiencing something like this, and that wish was fulfilled in the most unexpected and enlightening way.**

At first, another brother and I were brimming with excitement, which quickly translated into pushing the *jhoola* a little too enthusiastically. After a few strong pushes, the coordinator gently reminded us to slow down and be gentler.

That simple reminder changed everything. I recalled a technique shared by a Young Adult during her talk to visualize Swami. As I pictured Bhagawan seated on the swing, enjoying a gentle and loving motion, my next push became completely transformed: calm, mindful, and filled with devotion. A quiet inner joy arose, affirming that this was the offering He accepted.

In that moment, I understood a deeper truth: devotion is not just intention; it is mindful presence. **Every act, however small, becomes sacred when performed with awareness and the desire to please Him.**

This insight led me to reflect on all the activities I was part of during the conference. Using this "*jhoola* moment" as a guide, I began to evaluate each offering more honestly and gratefully, and in doing so, Swami revealed many subtle lessons for my inner growth. Thank you, dear Swami, for this gentle awakening—for teaching me to pause, visualize, reflect, and rejoice.



Mr. Ritesh Reddy

Co-lead YA Organizing Team (USA)

It was a privilege for me to be involved in the comprehensive end-to-end planning of the 11th World Conference, specifically the YA programs. The behind-the-scenes glimpses gave me many opportunities over several months to see **Swami's hand in planning His event for His devotees**. It was the 100th Birthday of our dear beloved Lord, and an event of this magnitude is bound to create incredible expectations. On the day itself, while I felt blissful, the more pressing feeling inside me was, *"This was a beautiful milestone celebration and a confluence of devotees' love; however, Swami's mission continues. What must our role be in His mission?"* I left with a renewed sense of energy to walk the path laid out by our beloved Lord, in earnest.



Ms. Anushka Guru

Game Show Lead and Host (USA)

Something that stood out to me while creating the Game Show was the depth of each experience we were writing questions about. Since I was born and raised in the US and am fairly young, many of the stories about Baba's life were just stories for me that I had been taught. As we got to the conference and started asking questions, **I quickly realized that people in the room with me had been present for those stories and had seen them firsthand**. What was an important part of my growth from a child into a YA was an important part of their lives and their stories with Swami!





Ms. Monisha Shivakumar
YA Participant (USA)

Attending the conference with my one-year-old son was a profound experience of love. I had anticipated chaos and imagined spending most of my time running after him, but instead, **I received constant grace from Swami's devotees.** From a volunteer who lovingly entertained my son so I could join a workshop, to a kind soul who offered me a chair outside the main hall so I could listen to Dr. Sunder Iyer's talk while my son played nearby, and even a fellow attendee—a pediatrician—who rushed to help when my son fell and injured himself, I felt Swami's unconditional love surrounding us at every moment.



Ms. Siya Sharma
Actor in YA Drama (USA)

Bhagawan has a way of making His presence felt in the most unexpected scenarios. One such moment occurred during the preparations for the Young Adults play. As we were getting ready, we didn't get a chance to finalize all the costume details. Yet the sisters helping me, and I, truly felt Swami working through us to ensure the character of Krishna was beautifully portrayed on stage. In the final moments before going backstage, everything began coming together at once—an unexplainable feeling, but one we have all experienced many times before.

The cherry on top was that we couldn't find a garland, but at the very last moment (literally while we were backstage), an aunty overheard us and handed me a garland that had just been removed from the Shirdi Baba idol at the Sai Prema Nilayam altar! **Lo and behold, it fit perfectly and brought the entire costume to life. We are eternally grateful to Swami for taking care of everything in our lives, no matter how small or big.**



Ms. Ingrid López

Co-lead YA Organizing Team (México)

In the lead-up to the conference and Swami's Birthday celebration, I faced a few personal challenges. At one point, I even started questioning whether I was meant to be there and if my efforts were enough for Swami. Then the day arrived, and there I was, in Sai Prema Nilayam, surrounded by all these incredible people I had only known on screens for nearly a year. Suddenly, everything felt right—the pieces of this vast puzzle finally fell into place.

As the days slipped by almost unnoticed, my heart began to melt with love: from every warm "Sai Ram" exchanged with my peers, every genuine smile, and even the challenges we tackled together. I reconnected with familiar faces from the past and formed bonds with new ones whom I believe will remain in my life forever. This love grew deeper each day, culminating in a vivid memory, with a tear trickling down my face during the musical offering at the Birthday celebration. It was a genuine surprise, honestly, because—big disclaimer here—I don't get emotional that easily. Trying to make sense of it, I turned inwardly to Swami: "This isn't normal; what is this feeling?" Almost

immediately, the answer came clear as day: **"It is just love, pure love."**

As you can imagine, my heart overflowed that instant, flooding me with immense compassion for myself and everyone around me. **I realized then that it's not about the quantity of what you do or how hard you work; it's the authenticity and purity of your intentions that truly matter.** I asked myself: Am I doing all this out of love for Swami? Was the effort to be here worth it? Is this exactly where I need to be right now? Time and again, the answer was a clear 'Yes.' **Swami reassured me, "Yes, my child, yes—if you accept me and come to me, you will have me forever."** In that profound moment, I felt something truly unique and magical: a sense of pure unity and love, where everything suddenly made perfect sense.

So, the lesson I took away—one that's still unfolding—is this: Don't fixate on what you're doing; focus instead on why you're doing it. That shift helps cultivate true purity in every action, thought, and word, making it easier to recognize that Swami is always with me.



Ms. Vahinie Pillay

International YA Coordinator and Co-lead of Ladies and YA Organizing Team (South Africa)

They say that “to travel is better than to arrive”, and this journey was filled with grace from the very beginning. Before leaving Durban, South Africa, I offered the official program and proceedings at my shrine, and Swami lovingly materialized *vibhuti* upon it; His divine assurance that He would guide every step. Throughout the conference, we witnessed how **He is the true doer, gently orchestrating every detail** and providing help, resources, and direction whenever the path seemed uncertain.

Connecting with Young Adults and delegates from around the world was deeply enriching. The love, warmth, and dedication of the *sevadals* (volunteers), along with the joyful faces of everyone who attended the event, created an unforgettable atmosphere. I was especially inspired by YAs who travelled great distances, some even journeying 50 hours by train, to participate. Beyond SAI100, our time together has motivated us to forge ahead with love, vigor, and enthusiasm as we continue to serve.

This conference has reminded me of the sacred power of pure love, selfless service, and complete surrender. When we offer everything to Swami, He resolves it for our highest good.



Mr. Anubhav Verma

YA Participant (USA)

For as long as I can remember, I've carried a deep yearning and curiosity about who I am, why I'm here, and what life truly means.

Over just three transformative days at the conference, that lifelong questioning softened into clarity and insight. The journey began with Dr. Sunder Iyer's rendering of *Nirvana Shatakam*—perfectly timed—followed by the *bhajan* “Remind Me, My Lord, Who I Am,” which stirred something so deep within me that I could neither stop nor explain the rivers of tears rolling down my face.

My heart felt a mysterious yet familiar emotion of divine bliss that transformed the stillness inside me. Gradually, I began to recognize the divinity not only within myself but also in everyone around me. I understood that the purpose of life is simple yet profound: to offer every action with complete sincerity and devotion, without attachment to outcomes. To give, to care, to uplift: these are the acts through which we transcend the material world and discover that life, at its core, is all about love. Love is the glue that holds the entire cosmos together, and perhaps it is the missing link in our current scientific model of life as we know it.



Dr. Madhuri Manohar

Co-lead YA Organizing Team (Oman)

One thing that struck me at the conference was the way love seemed to bubble through every corridor and corner of space. One experience stays close to my heart—a lady from Azerbaijan. We didn't speak the same language, yet from the very first day, we were somehow drawn to each other. Throughout the conference, we kept meeting. She would speak to me in her language, I would respond in English, and every exchange ended with beautiful hugs. Till today, only Swami knows the true contents of our 'conversations' and whether they made any literal sense. But through every interaction, I felt so much genuine love from her that language simply did not matter.

Sai Prema Nilayam was truly a testament to its name—an abode of love. We were all at the conference to learn about 'Purity is Enlightenment', but my deepest lesson on purity came from experiencing the pure, unconditional love radiating from everyone present. Swami's words, *"There is only one language, the language of the heart,"* were not just true—they were alive every moment.

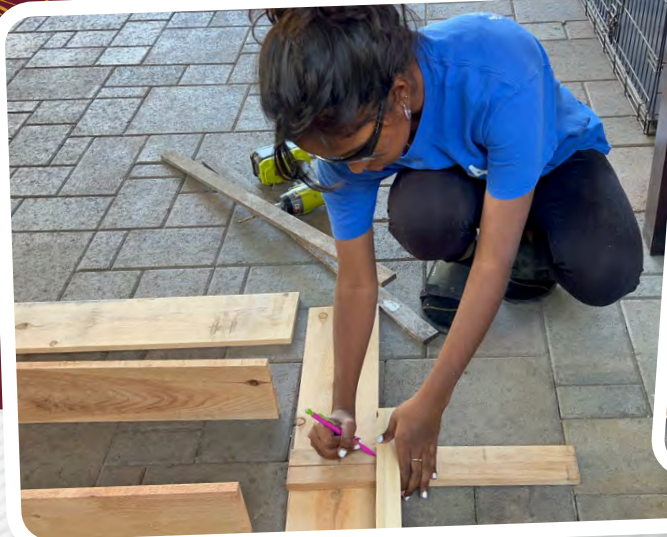


Ms. Anvitha Marlapati

YA Participant (USA)

Surrounded by hundreds of devotees united in service, I realized the extent of meaningful change we can create when we come together with a purpose. *The collective energy of so many hearts reminded me that transformation blossoms through unity.* From workshops encouraging us to envision new ways to uplift society, to the inspiring performances by the SSE children and YAs, every moment affirmed the strength of acting as one. **I felt Swami's guidance deeply, revealing what becomes possible when love flows through a united community.** This experience has truly been a blessing. May we carry His message forward with unity and love.

Serving *with* Humility



I have been blessed to be born into a family of devotees of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. From a young age, I was exposed to Baba's teachings, and my mother would drive my sister and me an hour to the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Glendale for the SSE class every Sunday. I felt at peace when I sat and sang bhajans wholeheartedly. Through singing, I could express my devotion to Baba, and I also realized that I have a natural talent and passion for singing.

As I grew up, I always felt like something was amiss in my life. My father had studied in Sri Sathya Sai Primary School and Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School in India. One day, he asked my sister and me if we wanted to study in the same boarding school for a few years. At first, I couldn't understand that this meant moving across the world because I was so young. Since I had been devoted to Swami and my father's side of the family lived in Prasanthi Nilayam, I didn't feel I would be alone. I felt as if it was a chance for me to get closer to Swami and

experience life differently. Once we discussed more about the possibility of studying at Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, it became clear that we were eager to start this new chapter of our lives.

Soon enough, our family boarded the flight to India, and we arrived in Puttaparthi. There was a sense of nervousness as we had to take an entrance exam and speak with the headmaster about why we wanted to join the boarding school. I had rehearsed and rehearsed what I wanted to say, but once I got to the school, I was surprisingly at ease with myself. I expressed to the headmaster how I felt and that I wanted a deeper connection with Swami, and that this school would be fitting for my identity.

After finishing the entrance exam, I felt confident, and I prayed at the *mandir* in Prasanthi Nilayam before the results were announced. After a week, we heard back and were informed that my sister and I were successful in getting admitted to the school. I adjusted fairly quickly to the new school, and the routine became instilled in me. Waking up early and chanting the *Suprabhatham*, then going to eat breakfast or playing sports, going to class, having lunch, then singing *bhajans*, followed by *darshan* or free time—they were all new to me, but I enjoyed every moment. **Swami became my best friend, and I felt that sense of belonging here.**

Two years passed, and we decided to return to the United States to continue our education here. Returning to SSE in Glendale, I felt the same presence of Swami as I did in Prasanthi Nilayam. Once I settled back into school and my extracurricular activities in the USA, I joined the Girl Scouts of America, where I felt Sathya Sai Baba's teachings



My journey through SSE and scouting has shaped my character, instilling in me the values of service, discipline, and gratitude.



were aligned with some of the principles of scouting. **Sathya Sai Baba's teachings emphasize the human values of truth, right conduct, peace, love, and non-violence, which resonate with the Scouts' focus on character building, duty to others, and personal development.** Both advocate service to society, moral integrity, and self-discipline as key principles for becoming responsible and compassionate individuals. As I progressed through both the Scouts and SSE, I advanced in my scouting rank and soon was preparing to start my Eagle Scout Project. This is a leadership service project that a Life Scout plans, develops, and executes to benefit a community organization, demonstrating their ability to organize, lead, and complete a significant initiative. **When I began brainstorming ideas, I knew I wanted to give back to an organization that had profoundly impacted my life, and for me, that organization was Sri Sathya Sai Baba's.**

At that time, my family and I were at an event in Sai Prema Nilayam in Riverside, California. Since it was newly constructed, I noticed that a few things were missing. As I was about to enter the building, I noticed there was no shoe rack to keep the devotees' shoes. It was at that moment that I realized this would be the perfect project for me to undertake. I started by picking up a scrap piece of paper from my mother's car and sketching an initial design for what I could build. After returning home that day, I contacted a few adults at Sai Prema Nilayam to see if this project would be beneficial and permissible. Soon enough, I received approval from both the Sai Prema Nilayam committee and my Scoutmasters after submitting a detailed proposal outlining what it would take to build four wooden shoe racks.



As the process started, I prayed to Swami for guidance and strength, knowing that this project was more than just fulfilling a requirement; it was about giving back to a place that had been meaningful to my family and me. With His blessings, I organized a team of volunteers, gathered materials, and started building the shoe racks. Step by step, what started as a simple sketch turned into the realization of my vision. With the support of my family, friends, and the community, we successfully completed the project by creating four durable and beautifully crafted shoe racks that now stand at Sai Prema Nilayam, poised to serve devotees for years to come. **This project not only taught me valuable skills in planning, leadership, and teamwork, but also reinforced the importance of giving back to those who have shaped my life in meaningful ways.**

As I begin this new chapter of my life at university, Sathya Sai Baba's teachings continue to be my guiding light, reminding me to lead with love, serve with humility, and strive to make a positive impact on others. My journey through SSE and scouting has shaped my character, instilling in me the values of service, discipline, and gratitude. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to express my devotion and give back to a community that has deeply influenced me. **No matter where life takes me, I know that Swami's presence and teachings will always be with me,** inspiring me to be the best version of myself and to keep serving selflessly wherever I go.

Ms. Akshara Adusumalli
USA



Ms. Akshara Adusumalli was born into a family devoted to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. She currently resides in California and is a student at the University of California, Riverside. Akshara attended Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) in Southern California and studied at the Sri Sathya Sai Primary School in Puttaparthi for two years. She has been an active participant in many SSSIO–USA pilgrimage trips to India with the SSE group from the Glendale Sri Sathya Sai Center.

Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
February 7-8, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri
February 15, 2026	Sunday	Maha Shivaratri
April 18-19, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri
April 24, 2026	Friday	Aradhana Mahotsavam



Streaming on sathyasai.org/live and YouTube



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The Sankranthi festival should be regarded as the day on which man turns his vision towards God. Man's life may be compared to a stalk of sugar cane. Like the cane, which is hard and has many knots, life is full of difficulties. But these difficulties have to be overcome to enjoy the bliss of the Divine, just as the sugarcane has to be crushed and its juice converted into jaggery to enjoy the permanent sweetness of jaggery. Enduring bliss can be got only by overcoming trials and tribulations. Gold cannot be made into an attractive jewel without being subjected to the process of melting in a crucible and being beaten into the required shape. When I address devotees as *Bangaru* (Golden one), I am considering you as precious beings. But only by going through the vicissitudes of life with forbearance can you become attractive jewels.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

January 15, 1992



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