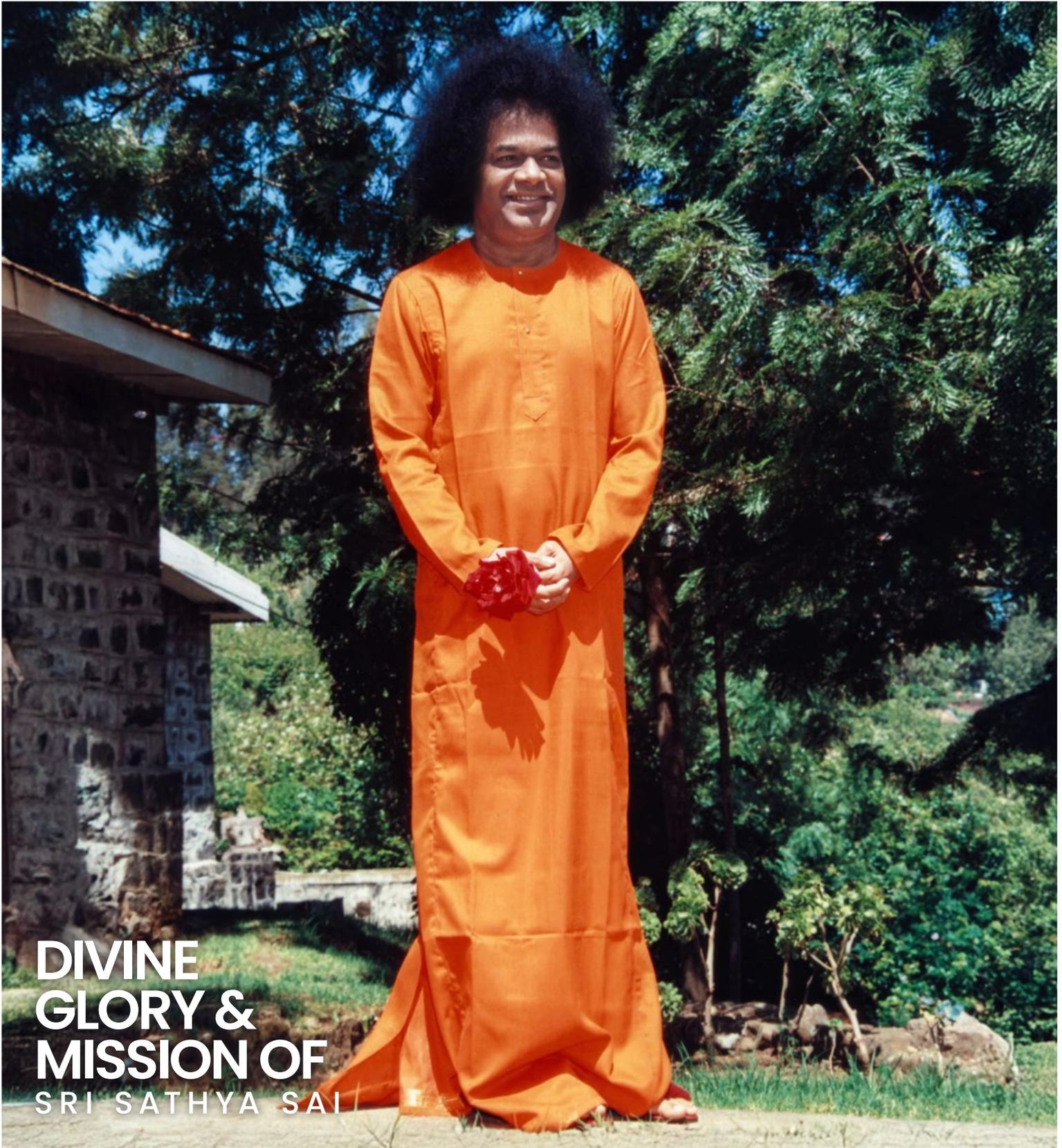


SATHYA SAI  
THE  
**ETERNAL**  
COMPANION



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3  
MARCH 2026



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



Contemplate on God, who is present in your heart, and earn His grace. Right from this sacred day of *Ugadi* (New Year's Day), see God in everyone. Whomsoever you come across, offer your salutations to them, considering them as the embodiment of God. This is true meditation. God is in you; you yourself are God. Then where will you go in search of God? Does anyone go out somewhere in search of themselves? When you yourself are God, how can there be one more God? Turn your vision inward and see God within you.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
March 16, 2010

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DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO

**BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA**





Volume 5 • Issue 3 • March 2026

ISSN 2831-6908 (Online)

ISSN 2831-6916 (Print)

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Riverside, California, USA

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Editor: Dr. Narendranath Reddy

Published by: Sri Sathya Sai International Organization

[sathyasai.org](http://sathyasai.org)

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# PREPARATION FOR ATTAINING THE KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN

(Taittiriya Upanishad–*Shiksha Valli*)

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and all ancient scriptures proclaim that the purpose of human life is to realize our true nature, which is divinity—that we are the embodiments of the divine Atma or Brahman. We can acquire this knowledge, this realization, through *Brahma Vidya*.

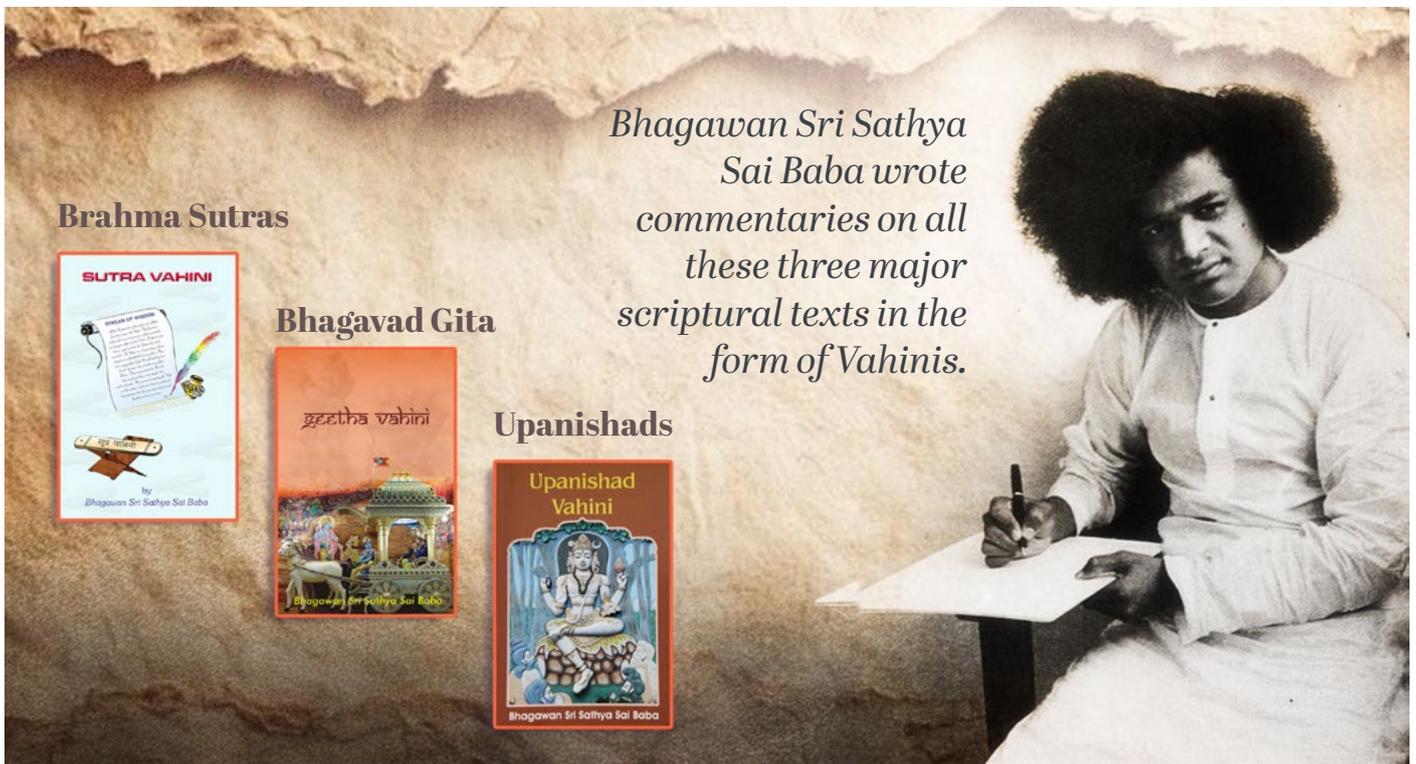
*Brahma Vidya* is described in many scriptures—the *Vedas*, *Itihasas* (historic epics), *Puranas* (sacred mythology), and *Smritis* (sacred codes of Hindu *dharma*). But there are three standout scriptures called the *Prasthanas Trayam*, which are the canonical texts for a spiritual seeker who wants to attain the knowledge of Brahman. They provide guidelines for those who sincerely want to tread the spiritual path. They are:

- The **Brahma Sutras**, which expound on the knowledge of Brahman.
- The **Bhagavad Gita**, the discourse that Lord Krishna gave to Arjuna in the middle of the Kurukshetra battlefield, which is also a very oft-quoted scripture.
- The **Upanishads**, which constitute the part of the Vedas called Vedanta (the final wisdom section of the Vedas).

Our good fortune is that Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba wrote commentaries on all these three major scriptural texts in the form of **Vahinis**. The *Sutra Vahini* is on the *Brahma Sutras*, *Gita Vahini* is on the *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Upanishad Vahini* is on the Upanishads. These are comprehensive and exhaustive scriptures, so we are going to only touch on the highlights of this theme, in preparation for attaining the knowledge of Brahman.

## Link Between Sri Sathya Sai Organizations and the Vedas

The Upanishads constitute Vedanta, the culmination of the Vedas, because they are the quintessence of the knowledge of Brahman. The Vedas are also called *Shrutis* because they were ‘heard’ and not written by any one person. These revelations to the sages were passed from generation to generation over many millennia. They are also called *Apaurusheya* (not of human origin), which means they are revelations from God and are also considered as the breath of God.

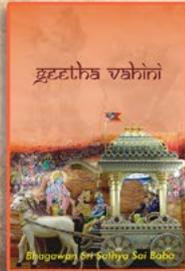


Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba wrote commentaries on all these three major scriptural texts in the form of Vahinis.

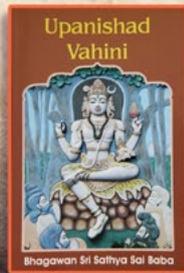
### Brahma Sutras



### Bhagavad Gita



### Upanishads



These profound revelations were subsequently codified by the great sage Veda Vyasa into the Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva Vedas, each of which is also divided into three sections:

- *Karma Kanda*, which focuses on various sacrificial rites and rituals related to *Karma Yoga*.
- *Upasana Kanda*, which contains mainly sacred hymns and rituals for worshipping the Supreme Brahman in various names and forms. It also delves into *Bhakti Yoga*, or how to develop devotion.
- *Jnana Kanda*, which contains all the Upanishads, mainly focuses on the knowledge of *Atman* or Brahman.

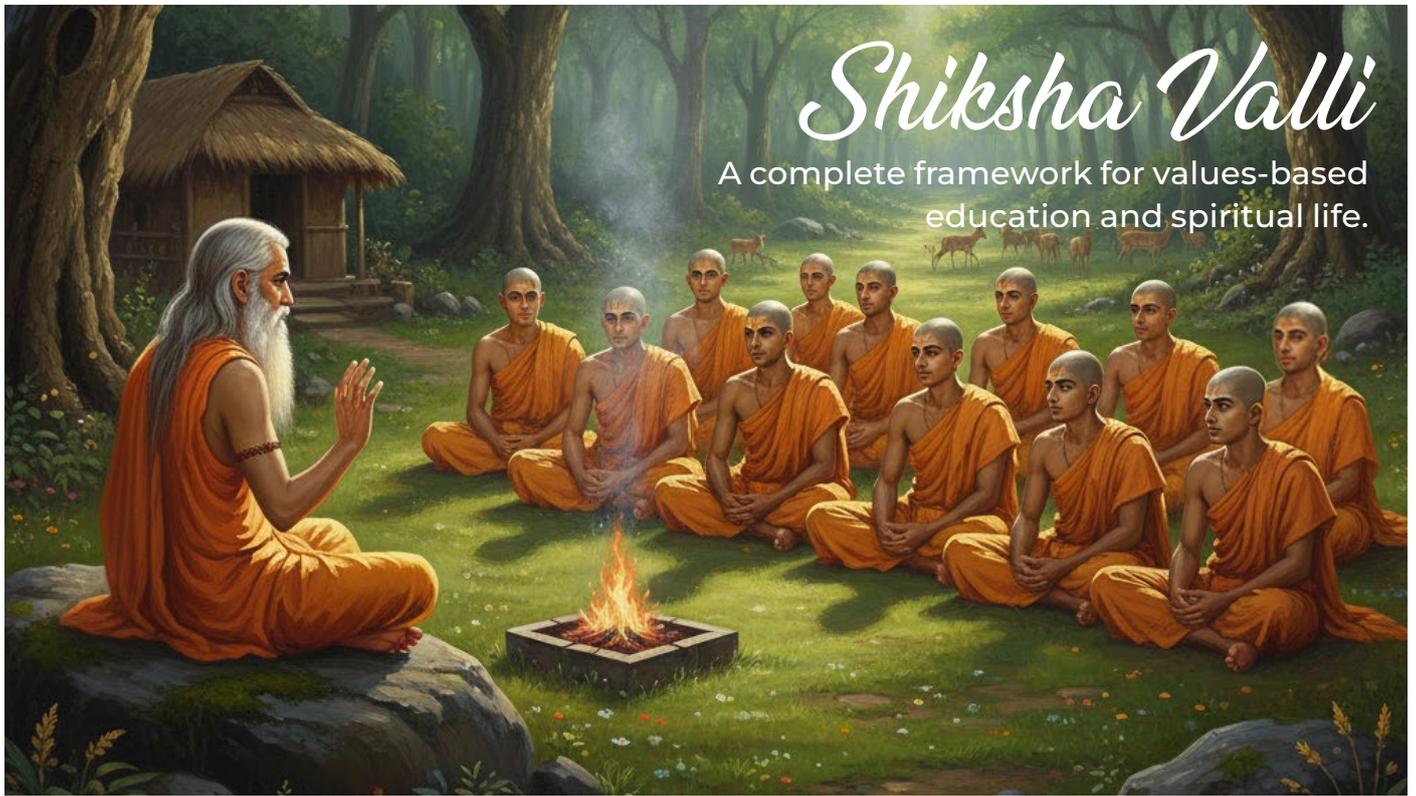
All three sections—*Karma Kanda*, *Upasana Kanda*, and *Jnana Kanda*—are reflected in our organization’s service wing (*Karma Yoga*), devotional wing (*Bhakti Yoga*), and educational wing (*Jnana Yoga*). It is in the *Jnana Kanda* that we delve deeply into the teachings of Bhagawan through these Upanishads.

### Taittiriya Upanishad

When the Upanishads were originally revealed, there were 1,180 in total. Over

time, only 108 were preserved. Of these 108 Upanishads, only ten received special attention because of the great Advaitic master, Adi Shankara, who gave detailed commentaries (*bhashyas*) on them. Swami has also written brief commentaries on some of these Upanishads, which have been published as part of the *Upanishad Vahini*.

Among them, the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, belonging to the *Krishna Yajur Veda*, is one of the most profound and practical Upanishads for spiritual aspirants. It is interesting to know how this word, “*Taittiriya*,” came about. When the great sage Vaishampayana punished his student, the great sage Yajnavalkya, by commanding him to return all that he had learned from him, Yajnavalkya vomited out all the scriptural knowledge he had attained. Some wise sages recognized that Yajnavalka’s vomit contained very valuable knowledge. So, they transformed themselves into *Tittiri* (partridge-like) birds and ate the vomit, which contained the ultimate knowledge. As *Tittiri* birds, these sages then became a source of the profound knowledge, called



# Shiksha Valli

A complete framework for values-based education and spiritual life.

the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, which is in the *Krishna Yajur Veda*.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* has three major sections. The first is *Shiksha Valli*; the second is *Brahmananda Valli*; and the third is *Bhrigu Valli*. **While the *Brahmananda Valli* and *Bhrigu Valli* mainly explore the knowledge of Brahman and the nature of bliss (*Brahmananda*), the *Shiksha Valli* serves as a guideline, laying the foundation for disciplined living, sacred learning, ethical conduct, and credentials to attain *Brahma vidya*.**

## Invocation Prayer in *Taittiriya Upanishad*

All three sections of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* begin with the famous peace chant or invocation prayer:

*om sahana vavatu  
sahanau bhunaktu  
saha-veeryam kara-vaavahai  
tejasvi naavadhee-tam-astu  
maa vidhvi shaavahai  
om shanti, shanti, shanti.*

*(May the Lord protect us. May the Lord nourish us. May we acquire the capacity to study and understand the scrip-*

*tures. May our study be brilliant, and may we not cavil at each other.)*

This prayer fosters a trusting relationship between the teacher and the student who are both in pursuit of the knowledge of Brahman. It also prays for threefold peace:

- At the *adhyatmika* (arising from self) level, which includes physical illness (fever, pain, disease), mental distress (anxiety, fear, anger, grief, depression), and emotional conflict, confusion, and doubt.
- At the *adibhautika* (caused by other beings) level, which includes harm from other people, trouble from animals, insects, and microbes, and environmental disturbances caused by living beings.
- At the *adidaivika* (caused by forces beyond human control, such as acts of God) level, which includes natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones, lightning, drought, and extreme heat or cold.

It is for avoiding these three types of calamities that we recite 'Shanti' thrice.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says that *Brahman* cannot be described: '*yatho vacho nivar-tante aprapya manasa saha,*' which means that *Brahman* is beyond the comprehen-

sion of the mind and cannot be expressed in words.

### **Shiksha Valli: Treasure Trove of Practical and Highest Knowledge**

The word *shiksha* means instruction, discipline, and phonetics. It includes training of speech, taming the mind, and development of character. **It is a complete framework for values-based education and spiritual life.**

There are 12 *anuvakas* (sections) in the *Shiksha Valli*, and they contain invaluable guidance through immortal sayings for daily spiritual practice. It also contains information on the various *vyahritis* (sacred cosmic syllables representing the planes of existence and levels of consciousness), which are part of the Gayatri Mantra, the *Pranava Upasana* (meditative worship of the *pranava*, 'Om,' as *Brahman*), and the importance of *svadhyaya* (study of the scriptures). The importance of Om has been discussed in detail in a [past editorial \(October 2022\)](#).

### **The Convocation Address**

Perhaps the most celebrated part of *Shiksha Valli* is the convocation address, in which the teacher gives guidance to the graduating student. It includes the famous injunctions or sayings often quoted, including '*matru devo bhava, pitru devo bhava, acharya devo bhava, athithi devo bhava*' (Treat the mother, father, teacher, and guest as God), and '*sathyam vada, dharmam chara*' (Speak the truth, practice right conduct). These aphorisms form the ethical backbone of Indian civilization. They are not just commandments or instructions, but expressions of wisdom, born of insight. In fact, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba proclaimed

*sathya* and *dharmam* as two of the five universal human values, along with peace, love, and nonviolence. Baba sees these injunctions as universally and eternally true and relevant.

### **Sathyam Vada**

Bhagawan Baba's very name includes the word *Sathya*, Truth. But this *sathyam*, Swami says, is different from 'fact.' A fact or

factual truth relates only to what is happening. Real or eternal 'Truth,' however, is that which remains true at all times—past, present, and future—and in all places. Swami gives a beautiful example to illustrate the difference between fact and *sathya*, which is eternal. We say that the sun rises in the east and sets in the

west. That is an observed fact by everyone, including scientists. But the ultimate truth is that the sun never sets, never rises. That is *sathyam*, truth for all times.

'*Sathyam vada*' exhorts one to speak the ultimate, eternal truth, which doesn't change—*Brahman* or *Atman*. Everything else—the body, mind, intellect—changes. That is why the supreme reality is described by Vedanta as *asti* ('is' or existence), *bhati* ('shining' or consciousness), *priyam* ('pleasing' or bliss), and also composed of *nama* (name) and *rupa* (form). The first three are eternal, while the latter two are transitory and changing.

*Asti* means 'it exists,' pointing to the fact of existence; *bhati* means "it shines" or "is known," referring to consciousness or awareness; and *priyam* means "it is dear," indicating the intrinsic joy or value of what is experienced. **Together, they express the divine essence underlying all things—existence (*sat*), awareness (*chith*), and bliss (*ananda*)—which Vedanta identifies verily**



As one practices **ceiling on desires**, it becomes easier to divert the focus away from worldly objects and develop **one-pointedness towards God**.

as **Brahman**. *Nama* (name) and *rupa* (form) also exist, but they keep changing.

For example, suppose you see a beautiful flower. Firstly, it exists (*asti*), then, you are aware of it (*bhati*), and lastly, you feel delight in it (*priyam*). The flower's name and form may change or fade, but the three aspects—existence, awareness, and bliss—remain constant in every experience. These are the five components of the ultimate reality. Of these, two components are transitory, subject to change—that is, name and form. But *sat*, *chith*, *ananda*—existence, knowledge, bliss—which is also called *asti*, *bhati*, *priyam*, are eternal, never change with time and space.

### Practicing *Sathyam Vada*

Delving deeper into *Sathyam Vada*, Swami says, whenever you speak, make use of four filters to decide.

1. Is it necessary to speak?
2. If it is necessary to speak, is it truthful?
3. If it is truthful, is it kind?
4. If it is kind, is it an improvement over silence?

Speech should be soft like butter and sweet as honey. It should also be brief, concise, and to the point—not verbose. Speech should also be helpful. **Swami gives the example of Lord Rama as the perfect master of speech.** He says Rama is *sathyabhashi*—speaks the truth; *mithabhashi*—talks very little; *hithabhashi*—says what is good; and *madhurabhashi*—talks sweetly.

Lord Krishna speaks about the true penance of speech (BG 17.15):

*anudvega-karam vakyam  
sathyam-priyam hitham cha yath  
svadhyaya-abhyasanam chaiva  
van-mayam thapa uchyaate*

*(Words that do not cause distress, are truthful, inoffensive, and beneficial, as well as regular recitation of the holy scriptures—these are declared as austerity of speech.)*

### **Dharmam Chara**

A famous quote from the Mahabharata is '*dharmo rakshati rakshitah*'—the one who protects *dharma* will be protected by *dharma*. Swami says that the purpose of living is to live in *dharma*. There are four *purusharthas*—the four fundamental goals of human life, which are *dharma* (right conduct), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire), and *moksha* (liberation)—which together guide a balanced and purposeful life. The closest translation for *dharma* is righteousness or right conduct. *Artha* is having wealth in its various forms—money, knowledge, courage, etc. *Kama* is desire, which could be good or bad; and lastly, *moksha* is liberation. These are the four goals of human life.

Swami beautifully integrates the *purusharthas*, saying,

*“The four purusharthas are dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. They have been listed in that order on purpose. Righteousness (dharma) must direct and control the process of earning wealth*

(*artha*), and desire (*kama*) should be for liberation (*moksha*). All wealth acquired through unrighteousness (*adharma*) is to be treated with contempt and is unworthy of you. All desires that do not lead to the one supreme desire for liberation are to be given up as beneath your dignity. So, the spiritual basis, *dharma* and *moksha*, must be the root of *artha* and *kama*. Without this order, earning degenerates into plundering; desire degenerates into death.”

(Divine Discourse, July 14, 1966)

That means the only desire one should have is the desire for *moksha* or for God. The desire for God is not considered a desire. For that, Swami recommends that one should have a ceiling on desires. **As one practices ceiling on desires, it becomes easier to divert the focus away from worldly objects and develop one-pointedness toward God.**

The greatest example here is Lord Rama. It is said, *Ramo vigrahavan dharma*—Rama is the embodiment of *dharma*. He led an exemplary life as a human being. He demonstrated how one should live as an ideal king, ideal friend, ideal foe, ideal leader, ideal husband, and ideal father. In all aspects, he showed the ideal way a human being can live at home, in society, as a leader, or as a worker.

### Focus Only on *Atma Dharma*

To start with, Swami says that *dharma* depends on one's gender. Men have their *dharma*—how they should conduct themselves in life, supporting the family and earning a living. Similarly, women have their *dharma*—helping with household duties and responsibilities, taking care of their spouse and children. *Dharma* also depends on the *ashrama*, or stage of life. If one is a *brahmachari* (a student), the focus should be completely on studies. Once the studies are finished, the next stage is that of a *grihastha* (householder). One should find a job or career, earn by righteous means,

support the family, and also support society. The next stage is *vanaprastha*—living as a recluse. Having completed all duties, one should now focus on spiritual pursuits with God as the sole aim of life. **The fourth and final stage is *sanyasa*, the stage of renunciation, where one completely gets rid of worldly bondage and attachment, whether to family, work, or anything else. The heart, mind, soul, and strength are all fully dedicated to God and used in the pursuit of knowledge of Brahman.** This is the *ashrama dharma* that ultimately fulfils the *Atma dharma*.

Then there is the *varna dharma* (rules for profession), depending on one's aptitude, as Lord Krishna says:

*chatur-varnyam maya srishtam  
guna-karma-vibhagashah  
thasya kartaram-api mam  
viddhya-kartaram-avyayam*

(The four categories of occupations were created by Me according to people's qualities and activities. Although I am the creator of this system, know Me to be the non-doer and eternal.)

However, these *dharmas* refer to transience. They are related to body, mind, and intellect, because gender, *ashrama* (stage of life), and *varna* (occupation) are all related to the body. **But the highest *dharma* of all *dharmas*, Swami says, is *Atma dharma*, which supersedes all other *dharmas*.** Anything in conflict with *Atma dharma* should be overruled, and one should focus only on *Atma dharma*.

### Regard Parents as God

Another important teaching of the *Shiksha Valli* is to regard one's parents as God. Swami says that you should treat parents as divine, and love and respect them sincerely. Many faith traditions also emphasize this, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Even in Chinese tradition, filial piety—that is, honoring

one's parents—is strongly emphasized, especially during Lunar New Year celebrations.

Swami says that one's head (intelligence and knowledge), blood (life), and wealth are all gifts from parents. Playing on the word 'parent,' He says beautifully that one should 'pay rent' by respecting them, loving them, and expressing gratitude to them.

Swami Himself is the greatest example of loving and serving His parents. He fulfilled all His mother's wishes for the good of humanity. When His compassionate mother was moved by the hardship of village children for basic education, and pleaded with Him for help, Swami started educational institutions, which now provide free values-based education from the primary to doctoral level. Also, when she saw the need for basic healthcare in the remote village, He started a small general hospital which has now grown into a worldwide medical mission providing primary to tertiary healthcare with love and compassion. When His mother appealed for a water-well in the drought-stricken village, the compassionate Lord provided that too, which grew into a mega-project providing free potable water to millions of people in India. Inspired by Him, the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization continues to implement many projects across 114 countries, providing free education, free health care, and humanitarian relief to the needy and the distressed.

### Revere Teacher as God

When we are told to respect the teacher, it is not only for teachers of secular subjects like physics, chemistry, mathematics, botany, astrophysics, or calculus. Of course, we respect them because they have educated us, providing a means to make a livelihood. **But the real *acharya* is the one who shows us the path to God.** This is what even the little prince, Prahlada, tells his demonic father, Hiranyakashyapu. In fact, he goes on to say that the real father and mother are the ones who take us toward God.



*Swami says that you should treat parents as divine, and love and respect them sincerely.*

It is said,

*gurur brahma, gurur vishnu,  
gurur devo maheshwara  
gurur sakshat parabrahma  
tasmai sri gurave namaha*

It means that Guru is God as the Trinity—Brahma (creator), Vishnu (sustainer), and Maheshwara (destroyer)—and also the supreme *Parabrahman*. So, we need to have absolute faith in teachers (*acharya*), and also in their teachings. **The important quality of the teacher can be understood from the term *acharya*, which means 'the one who puts precepts into practice.'** So, by following them and serving them, we get closer to enlightenment.

When we serve the teacher with love, respect, and selflessness, he will take us toward enlightenment. **The greatest respect one can show a teacher is to follow their teachings implicitly.** That is why even Lord Jesus said, "What is the use of calling me Lord, Lord, when you don't do what I say?"

### Revere Guest as God

This is a very important principle that has been observed by the Bharatiyas (Indians) over millennia. It is a deep-rooted Hindu

tradition, which means that anybody who enters the house should be treated as God. A guest is not only one who has been invited; *atithi* means one who comes uninvited. You should also treat uninvited guests as if God has come in that form and serve them.

### Charity Should Be a Way of Life

Another important lesson in the *Shiksha Valli* concerns how one should give charity. It says that a very important part of living is to help others by giving part of one's hard-earned earnings. This is also a part of Swami's mission. The *Shiksha Valli* beautifully explains how one should give charity. It says:

- *shraddhaya deyam* (give with faith)
- *ashraddhaya adeyam* (do not give without faith)
- *shriya deyam* (give with generosity)
- *hriya deyam* (give with modesty)
- *bhiya deyam* (give with reverence)
- *samvida deyam* (give with understanding and discrimination).

Therefore, one should give with the sincerity and faith that one is serving God. One should give generously and avoid being stingy or selfish. On one occasion, Swami advised that one should give liberally and in plenty, whatever one has. All of this becomes possible if we think we are serving God in that form. That is the attitude we should have.

Swami and the great teachers say that the attitude of gratitude is very important when we are serving or giving in charity. One should do charity with humility, not with a condescending attitude, since this is for our own transformation. **It is said that giving without reverence or humility reinforces the ego, while, on the other hand, charity is intended to purify the mind and the heart.**

The *Shiksha Valli* also issues strong directives to the students as part of the convocation address. Let us also consider this with the same sincerity and devotion: "You will not swerve from Sathya, and you

*will not swerve from Dharma—neither will you swerve from well-being. You will not swerve from study and teaching nor from the duties toward gods and ancestors."*

### Preparing Oneself for the Highest Goal

By sincerely following the *Shiksha Valli*, we can become ready for the knowledge of *Brahman*, which is dealt with in the next two sections of the Taittiriya Upanishad, namely the *Brahmananda Valli* and *Bhrigu Valli*.

The *Brahmananda Valli* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* describes the different degrees of bliss experienced by human beings, with the highest being the bliss of *Brahman*, called *Brahmananda*. It begins by saying that the knowledge of *Brahman* is the highest, which one should seek because the knower of *Brahman* becomes *Brahman* itself. **The *Brahmananda Valli* gives the closest definition of *Brahman* as 'sathyam jnanam anantam brahma.'** *Brahman* is truth, knowledge, and infinite. To underscore this aphorism, Swami beautifully sings the bhajan 'sathyam jnanam anantam brahma.'

*Bhrigu Valli*, the third and final section of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, recounts Bhrigu's spiritual inquiry, guided by his father and guru, Varuna, to realize *Brahman* through meditation and introspection. *Bhrigu Valli*, also called *Varuni Vidya*, takes one inward from the gross level of the body to the innermost level of the bliss sheath. It describes successive realizations through food, life-force, mind, intellect, and finally bliss (*ananda*) as *Brahman*.

We shall deal with the *Brahmananda Valli* and *Bhrigu Valli* in the editorials of future issues of *Sathya Sai—The Eternal Companion*.

Jai Sai Ram.

# MIND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

*One may be a learned brahmin having comprehended all the shastras (scriptures), puranas, Vedas, and Vedanta.*

*One may be a king enjoying living in magnificent palaces.*

*One may be a great hero having attained great fame by vanquishing his foes on the battlefield.*

*One may be a wretched, poor servant, at the mercy of the goddess of poverty.*

*Bereft of devotion to God, they are all useless.*

*A poor servant with devotion to God is more revered than an emperor without love for God.*

*What more shall I tell you, O august assembly of the noble and the virtuous?*

(Telugu Poem)

## The true character of *sadhana* (spiritual practice) is the effort in directing the mind to the holy path of *Madhava* (God).

Embodiments of the sacred *Atma*! The same sky is above all our heads, and the same earth lies beneath everyone's feet. Everyone breathes the same air, and the same principle of *Atma* is present in all. The entire world, where all human beings reside, is but a single home. Then what about these acts of cruelty? Why this mutual hatred and jealousy? Should this precious human life go to waste? One day or the other, this body will inevitably return to the earth. **It is imperative for every person to realize the truth that one's life is fulfilled only when one lives right, speaks good things, and acts nobly before merging back with the earth.**

It is the basic duty of ordinary human beings to obey social customs and rules. Adhering to truth and noble virtues is the duty of spiritual seekers. Only when we lift the veil of social customs and courtesies, remove the layers of ego, and search within the depths of our inner Self, can we discover Atmic bliss. Fears, vices, and anxieties are external to us. However, you are the embodiment of eternal truth; you are the embodiment of immortality; you are Hiranyagarbha, you are verily pure gold.

Imagine the gold telling the goldsmith: "O Goldsmith! You torture me in so many ways, melting me and causing me great trouble. Go ahead! I am happy. The more you put me in fire and melt me, the purer I become. I am getting rid of all my impurities and increasing my value. In the end, I emerge as pure gold. By making me go through these travails, your eyes are filled

with smoke, and all this dust of mine envelops your face. That is the reward (punishment) for you, and this is the reward (purity) for me."

### *Trikarana Shuddhi*

In this world, whatever task we undertake, whether good or bad, it is essential to have the rightful qualifications to do it. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna has commanded that one must first develop the skills for action. If a bridge has to be built to cross a river, the builder must have the necessary skill and knowledge; the person must have an engineering degree. Likewise, to win justice in a court case, one must be an expert in law, a qualified lawyer or judge.

When an illness occurs, it is necessary to have an experienced doctor to cure one's disease. Only a doctor who has proper credentials can cure the disease effectively. When we need such skill and authority for ordinary worldly matters, then we must realize the truth that to perform Vedic rituals (*yajnas* and other sacred ceremonies), it is even more important to acquire proper qualifications. To perform Vedic rituals, we often think it is important to cleanse the body, do penance, apply sacred *vibhuti*, and eat less or survive on air alone, or eat only edible root tubers. But can these outer observances alone bring purity of heart (*chitta shuddhi*) or Self-confidence?

We believe that bathing every day is an essential discipline for performing religious rituals, but a fish lives permanently in water and is, in a sense, always bathing.



Does that mean it possesses the necessary purity and discipline and leads a ritualistic life? A snake enjoys air all the time; does that make it a practitioner of Vedic rites and rituals? Rats constantly roam in mountain caves; can we therefore consider that they are doing penance? Goats eat nothing but leaves; can that be considered a Vedic ritual? A dog gets excited upon seeing sacred ash (*vibhuti*) and rolls in the ashes. Does that mean this dog is observing the Vedic rituals? Certainly not!

Merely performing outer ritualistic actions, or taking up the name of a ritual, does not make one truly qualified for Vedic practices. **The inner significance and essence of Vedic rituals lie in the purity and harmony of thought, word, and deed—that is the inner meaning, *trikarana shuddhi* (triple purity).** Only when these three are made pure can one be considered truly qualified to perform Vedic rituals.

It is to attain such purification of thought, word, and deed that sacrificial rituals such as *yajnas* and *yagas* (sacred Vedic fire rituals) are performed. It is a common misunderstanding in the world to think that these sacrificial rituals are meant

merely for attaining great material wealth, possessions, cars, or to acquire and enjoy selfish pleasures, or for attaining heaven. **The true intention behind performing all these sacred rituals is much higher; they are performed with the wish, “*lokaḥ samastah sukhino bhavantu,*” may all the worlds be happy.**

### What is True Sacrifice?

The word ‘*bhutabali*’ is often used in these rituals. However, *bhutabali* does not mean ‘sacrifice’ as used in the common usage, accompanied by violence or causing harm to living creatures. Just now, Bhagavantham (translator for this discourse) translated ‘*bhutabali*’ as sacrifice. Many ignorant people in this world have interpreted *bhutabali* only in a worldly sense and have been spreading an incorrect meaning of it. They have taken it to literally mean the offering of living beings as sacrifice, which is a common misunderstanding.

The true meaning of *bali* is ‘tax.’ In this sense, *bhutabali* means the tax we owe to the five elements. In the world, we usually pay house tax, water tax, electricity tax, and so on to the city or the government. But why are we paying these taxes? We pay house tax to the local governing body (municipality) to dispose of the wastewater through the drainage system and remove waste from our homes. We pay water tax to bring water to our homes from distant places that are not readily accessible to us. We also pay electricity tax for receiving electricity generated at distant places to our homes. We pay these taxes to the government for receiving a variety of such services and conveniences.

**Similarly, in this life, sacrifice is like a tax we pay to the five elements—for removing the restlessness, ignorance, pain, and sorrow engulfing us, and for granting us the bliss and happiness that otherwise seem beyond our reach. The sacred sacrifi-**

cial rituals we perform—such as *yajnas* and *yagas*—are our duty, and an offering of gratitude to the *bhutas* (five elements) that free us from all our sorrows, pain, and ignorance and bestow us with peace, happiness, comfort, and eternal bliss. But how do we attain this spirit of sacrifice, purity of mind, and the Atmic bliss? To experience this inner purity and bliss, we must reach that state—the inner space where such peace resides.

### ***Shama and Dama for Self-Realization***

In front of large mansions or homes of important officials, we often see security guards standing at the entrance. We can enter inside only if we win them over and get their permission. How can we win over these security guards? We can do this either by becoming friends with them or by having the power to control them. Similarly, in this grand mansion of the body, two security guards are standing on vigil. These are *shama* (control of the mind) and *dama* (control of the body and senses). How to win them over? **In fact, when the *jiva* (individual) wishes to enter the inner Self and move freely within and to be within the depths of the inner consciousness, effort must be made to gain control of these two security guards (*shama* and *dama*).** *Shama* means control over inner instruments, the mind, and inner senses. *Dama* means control over the outer senses.

To start with, it is essential to control the outgoing senses. For this, the mind takes the primary role. But the mind's nature is to do everything other than what is instructed. It wants to get everything it desires and experience all that it sees. At such times, without giving freedom to the mind, we should invite and engage the intellect and use it to discriminate: Is this right or wrong? Is it necessary or unnecessary? Is this desirable or undesirable? Is it

beneficial or harmful? The mind, by itself, is blind, and by following the blind mind, we too may fall into a ditch. So, at such times, our attempt should be to let the intellect inquire and discriminate whether the thoughts and intentions arising in the mind are good or bad. The mind is like a steering wheel. When we turn the steering inside, the wheels outside move accordingly on the road. In the same way, whatever direction the mind takes, our actions tend to follow.



*The inner meaning of all the sacred rituals we perform is to restrain our mind, purify it, and enable us to experience the sacred and divine atmic bliss.*



The mind plays dual roles. It plays the role of the good as well as the bad. The mind is just like a camera lens; whichever direction you turn and press the switch, that image gets captured. But the ignorance of today's human beings is such that although they seek God, they turn the lens (mind and vision) toward the world and click. Later, when they see the picture, they find only the world and feel disappointed that they did not find what they were hoping for (the divine).

*You sow the seeds of poisonous fruits,  
yet desire the harvest of delicious  
fruits.*

*Unable to eat the bitter fruit, you  
throw the blame on Me (God) and  
argue.*

Therefore, if we truly wish to obtain what we desire (i.e., God), we must make a determined, sincere effort. Only through deliberate effort can we attain the results we seek.

### **Attachment and Non-Attachment**

There are two words, *apeksha* (attachment) and *upeksha* (nonattachment). *Apeksha* drowns one in the ocean of this *samsara*, with cycles of birth and death and challenges of worldly existence, whereas *upek-*

*sha* (detachment) frees one. *Apeksha* is the nature of the mind, and *upeksha* is the characteristic of the intellect (*buddhi*). *Apeksha* is filled with worldly desires. *Upeksha* is filled with divine bliss. It is only *apeksha* that is the cause of human bondage. In contrast, *upeksha* leads one to liberation. The nature of *apeksha* and *upeksha* can be compared to the bottle gourd (vegetable). *Apeksha* is filled with worldly desires and is like a green bottle gourd, full of juice. If this green bottle gourd is placed in water, it will sink. *Upeksha* is the same bottle gourd which, as it dries up and becomes lightweight, now floats in water! It is now filled with bliss. Therefore, it is attachment to desires in our lives that drowns us in the waters of *samsara*. **The true character of *sadhana* (spiritual practice) is the effort in directing the mind to the holy path of Madhava (God), with one-pointedness, and not letting the mind wander in different directions, craving desires.**

Here is a small example to illustrate this. A human being is born with two legs. A true human being has only two legs. But as one grows, their sensual desires increase, desiring family life (*samsara*), and gradually acquires two additional legs, namely a spouse, from marriage. But when these

two come together, the person turns into a four-legged animal. A human being is not satisfied even with this and wants a son or a daughter. With the addition of a newborn child, the person becomes a six-legged creature, like a crab or a lobster. After a son or daughter is born, one wants to have a second child. With the addition of a second child, the person becomes like an eight-legged spider. Gradually, with unlimited desires, a human being adds more and more legs, becoming like a centipede. Because of these tendencies (*vasanas*) and desires, a human being is devolving into a worm or an insect.

### Move from *Ajnana* to *Brahmajnana*

What is the reason for becoming like an animal or an insect? Our desires are the root cause of this. The bestial qualities of hurting others (like insects) are a result of these desires. **Evil desires are at the source of all these violent acts, mutual discord, and jealousy.** Evil desires are the sole cause. Therefore, we should avoid moving toward animality and develop the desire to come closer to *Paramatma* (God) and make appropriate effort in this regard. The one who has the authority and deserves proximity to God is also called *daksha*. When we usually talk about worldly matters, we say, "Sir! You need to be an expert or skilled person (*daksha*) to achieve it", which means that one should have the authority or deservedness.

In our Indian history, there was a person named Daksha, who performed a great *Daksha Mahayajna* (a great sacrificial ritual). Daksha was a knowledgeable person in all fields of education. He had a daughter named Sati Devi. Sati Devi means wisdom (*jnana*), and her other name was *Brahmajnani* (one who has the highest spiritual wisdom of Brahman). Only because Daksha had a daughter named

*Brahmajnani* (Sati Devi) was he able to acquire a close relationship with Ishwara (Lord Shiva).

Even today, when we attain the knowledge of Brahman, like Sati Devi, we can have a close relationship with Ishwara. But without acquiring *Brahmajnana*, we want to develop a relationship with the Lord. So, we go on increasing our desires, giving rise to the children of ignorance (*ajnana*), and become enemies of the Lord instead of developing a close relationship with Him. In fact, Daksha had a good relationship with *Paramatma* because he had a daughter who was an embodiment of supreme wisdom (*brahmajnana*). The Lord then became a close relative, his son-in-law.

But do you know how today's sons-in-law are behaving? They pretend to be a 'docile cat' until receiving the hand of the daughter in marriage and change into a 'tiger' after marriage. **So, to truly attain a close relationship with God, and to attain and experience the supreme wisdom of Brahman (*brahmajnana*), we need to approach the elders (learned ones with spiritual knowledge), listen to their teachings, and put them into practice.** To the extent possible, we should try to take up spiritual practices to restrain our minds.

### Mind is the Cause for Both Bondage and Liberation

The vagaries of the mind are mysterious in many ways. To restrain this 'monkey mind' and bring it onto the righteous path, first of all, we need to experience the fortune of being in the presence (*sannidhi*) of the Lord (*pennidhi*, true treasure). As it is said, the mind is the root cause of bondage and liberation (*manaeva manushyaanam kaaranam bandhamokshayoh*).

When the mind is turned toward God, it leads to liberation (*moksha*). When the mind is turned towards the world, it leads to bondage. All our experiences in the

world are reflections of the mind. Therefore, if there is no mind, there is no world. The whole world depends on the mind. In deep sleep, the world does not exist for us because the mind is dissolved. Therefore, rather than dissolving the mind in deep sleep, when this mind is merged in *Paramatma*, we attain eternal bliss.

Embodiments of divine *Atma*, while performing our normal duties and actions, while fulfilling what we need to do in our daily life, **if we regard the entire world as a manifestation of the Lord and whatever we are doing is for the pleasure of the lord, the mind will merge with the Lord easily.**

When we consider everything as part of and a reflection of the cosmic form (God), sacred feelings will also increase within us.

When our mind is filled with love, it becomes sacred and divine, filled with divinity. When the mind is under the influence of infatuation (*moha*), it turns a human being into a mere animal. *Moha* (infatuation) is attaching ourselves to the sensory desires of our body, which turns us into an animal. **Love that yields to sensual desires is only a lowly animal quality.**

Animals, birds, and beasts also experience this kind of love. Having attained this sacred and precious human birth, if we keep following animal instincts, then where is the greatness in being born as a human? All animals, birds, and beasts are under the control of the mind, but a human being can control the mind. When one is unable to control the mind, such a person is a human only in form, but remains an animal in behavior.

### Be Masters and Not Servants

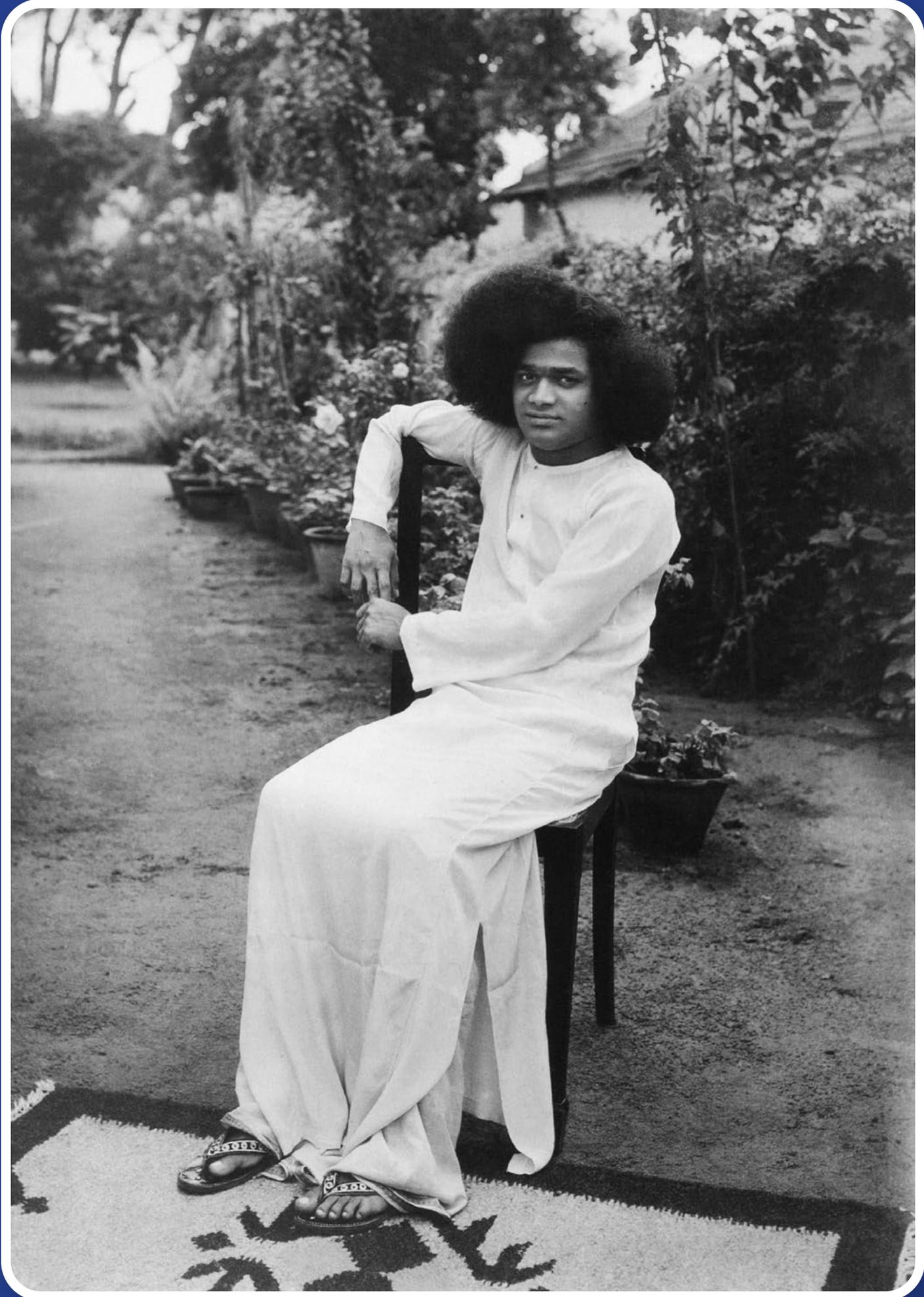
We should become the owner of the house and not a servant of the house. The servant only knows the things kept outside, not the valuables kept in the safe. But the homeowner is aware of the valuable items kept carefully in the safe. Today, we see things

that are outside in the 'house' of this world. We are not seeing the precious gem existing in the depths of the heart, in the *Atma* and *antahkarana* (inner senses/instruments). So, we are really servants in the household and not the owners of the house. **The one with outward vision is called an animal (*pashyate iti pashuh*). The one who has inner vision is the Lord (*Pashupati*).** The inner meaning of all the sacred rituals we perform is to restrain our mind, purify it, and enable us to experience the sacred and divine *Atmic* bliss.

Embodiments of divine *Atma*, this precious human existence must eventually merge with the earth. Therefore, before the body returns to the earth, it is the duty of every human being to experience divinity. **Human birth is attained only to purify one's own essence and prove one's own true nature.** Human birth is not just for experiencing material pleasures. Many kings have ruled over the ages. Where are they? Great kings, great rich people, and great officials who were here before have all left the world. Are they here today? Only the good and bad deeds they did have remained in the world forever. Therefore, since we have taken a human birth in this world, it is our duty to behave like humans and earn an untarnished good reputation (*satkirti*) before we depart from this world.

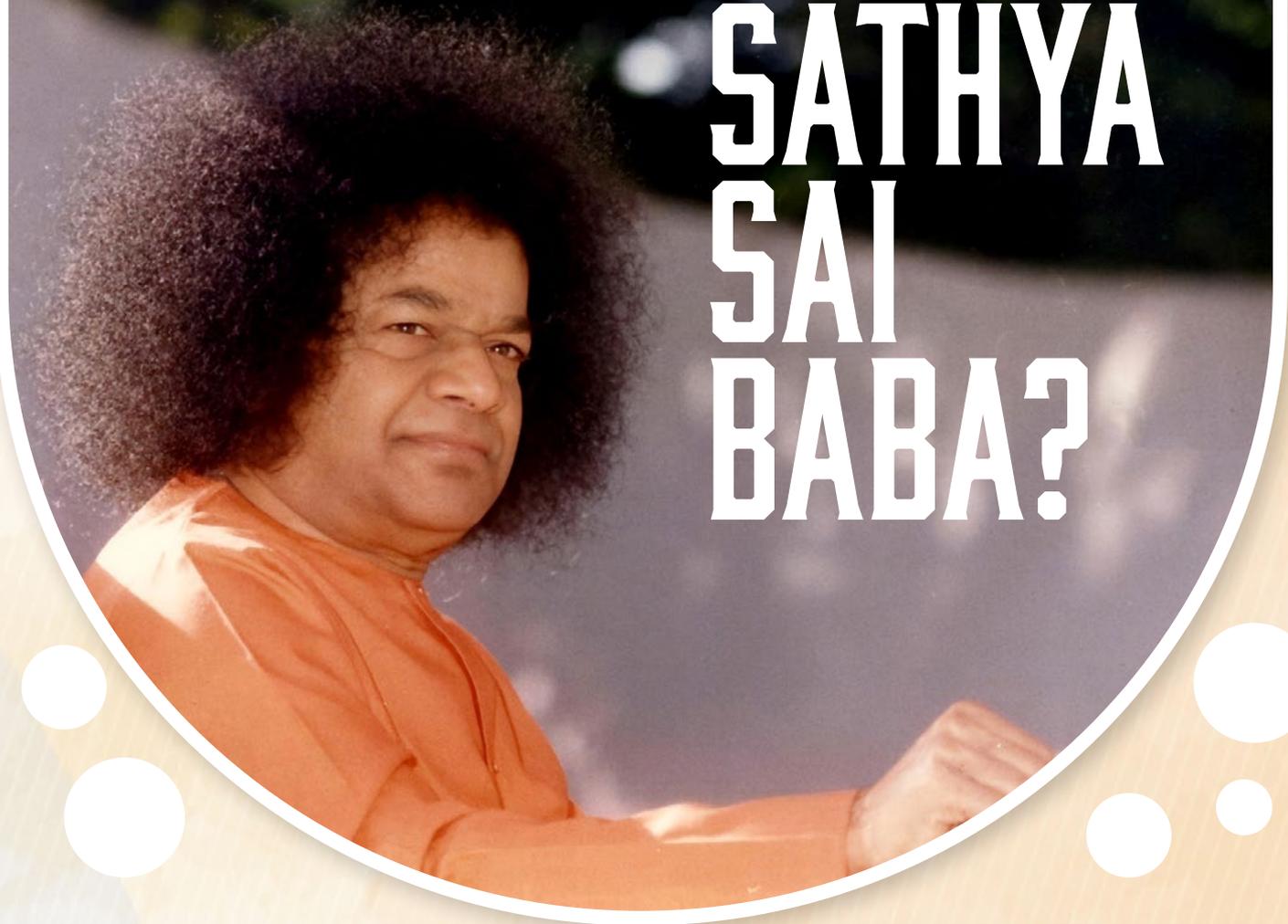
When we gradually make our mind tread this pure path and do not let it be entangled in the impure path, by developing love for God, the mind too will become a helpful instrument and a good companion. **To attain this state, there is no better instrument, no greater power and ability than love.** As we develop love for God, day by day, we will have the opportunity to control the mind and senses to attain peace and tranquility, and roam freely in the kingdom of the *Atma*.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba  
September 26, 1976





# Who is **SATHYA SAI BABA?**



*Excerpted from 'Good Chances' by Howard Levin*

The ladies were given a ground-floor room at the back of Sai Baba's residence. The gents were given the room at the far end of the long front hall, just under the stairs that led to Swami's private quarters above. We had access to our room only from the outside door; the inside door, separating the long hall from the rest of the first-floor area, was kept bolted. Swami later said the gents could sleep on the roof outside His room if they wished, and we were free to use the garden for meditation.

We were to have the same kitchen as before, and Sai Baba arranged for milk to be delivered to us daily from the dairy in nearby Whitefield.

**How can days so filled with peace and contentment be described?** If I had known then what I know now, I probably would have gone into *samadhi*.

### **The Morning Schedule in Brindavan**

While sleeping on the roof of Sai Baba's residence, we could hear Him in the early morning. Long before dawn, He would already be in His bathroom. We would take that as a cue to get out of our sleeping bags, get dressed, and do our meditation. Apparently, these were Sai Baba's instructions to the group before I arrived, and I found it easier to do what everyone else did and ask questions later.

After the meditation, we would line up, ladies on one side and gents on the other, at the foot of the backstairs, which led from the roof to a rear veranda. Swami would come out of His room between 6:30 and 7:00 AM, walk down the stairs, and proceed across the veranda to the dining room for breakfast.

As He came down every morning, He greeted us. "*Good morning, sir,*" He would say over and over, to ladies and gentlemen alike. Some days He would come down the stairs, beaming with a big smile, and say, "*Very happy, very happy,*" or "*Who are all these rowdies?*"

He had pet names for most of us. The girls' names were 'India' (hers, He never changed); Marsha He called 'Gowrie'; Michelle He called 'New York Lady'; and then there were gradations of Hysterias, i.e., 'Hysteria Number One,' 'Hysteria Number Two,' 'Hysteria Number Three,' etc. Tal was 'Rowdy'; Gil, because he always asked for freedom, was called 'Freedom'; Carey, because of his red hair, was called 'Carrot Top'; Jai, because he never changed his garment, was called 'Dirty.' Tony wore a headband, so Swami called him 'Band Man'; Bruce was called 'Bur-ruce,' and

I was called 'Dog Man,' because of my dog Singe.

Singe—what good *karma* she had! She got to stay longer in the Lord's house, longer than I did. I always used to tell people that Singe only barked at people with negative vibrations. Well, at one of the first *darshans* I attended, Singe chased Swami down the driveway barking at Him. Sai Baba turned and looked over His shoulder. Singe stopped, remained quiet. My heart also stopped, and I was so embarrassed. I ran after her and grabbed her, and just as I was about to beat her, Sai Baba came up to me.

"*No, don't beat her,*" He said, "*She's a good dog.*"

It was so humiliating. "You thought she barked only at negative people," I said mockingly to myself, and the next moment was crying. I hurried away from the stares of those in the *darshan* line and thought, "Could He know what I used to say about her barking?" Yes, I knew that He knew.

The following morning, as I was about to go upstairs from the veranda behind Sai Baba's house, He came out. Singe, who was following me, went over to Sai Baba, wagging her tail and sniffing at His feet. Sai Baba put His arms up, bent at the elbows, palms alongside His shoulders in a gesture of surprise, and took three dainty steps backwards.

"*Oh, what is this?*" He asked, pointing at Singe. "It's a Tibetan dog, Swami," I said.

"*Yes, yes, dog, I know.*" Then He said sweetly, "*Do you know why she barked at Me?*" He made a gesture with His hands around His hair. "*It's because I have big hair.*" He smiled and went back inside. I felt better about the whole incident.

### **Who is Sai Baba?**

"Who is He?" I thought. "You pray for an Avatar, and you get one. Is it that easy?" I had many doubts.

Every evening, we had *bhajans* with Swami inside the shrine room at the rear of the bungalow. He would sing to us, and we would try to follow, repeating the lines. One evening, Singe strutted in, wagging her tail. Tal quickly grabbed her and roughly put her outside, but Sai Baba just smiled, and continued to sing for us and then lead the *bhajans*.

The following morning, Sai Baba came down the rear stairs, following his general routine. He said his usual, “*Good morning, sir,*” and then He handed each of us a little red book titled, “Who is Sai Baba?”

**“Do not try to measure Me, you will only fail,” it read. “I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am not young, I am not old, I am all of these. First, try to understand yourself, then you can know Me.”**

We were called for *bhajans*, and He asked each of us to sing a *bhajan*. It was very difficult for me to understand the *bhajans* at first, but I quickly learned ‘*Madhura Madhura Murali Ghanashyama.*’ Baba asked Michele to sing ‘Door of My Heart’ and ‘Listen, Listen, Listen to My Heart’s Song.’ He called them ‘those Yogananda songs.’ After *bhajans* that morning, we talked it over and decided to surprise Sai Baba with some English *bhajans*. **So, Bruce decided to compose an English song based on one of Sai Baba’s sayings. It went:**

*Love is my form, truth is my breath,  
bliss is my food  
My life is my message,  
expansion is my Life  
No reason for love, no season for love,  
no birth, no death.*

Then Bruce added:

*Prema, Sathya, Ananda,  
Dharma, Shanti, Ananda  
Shirdi Sai, Parthi Sai,  
Prema Sai, Jai Jai  
Shirdi Baba, Parthi Baba,  
Prema Baba, Jai Jai.*

Tony had also written a song:

*Sai Baba, Sai Baba, so kind, so kind  
He’s our mother, father, sister, brother,  
all in one  
He’s the earth, air, fire, water, moon,  
and sun  
Sai Baba, Sai Baba, so kind, so kind  
He’s everything that we have ever been  
He is everything that we will ever be  
And we are here today and tomorrow  
So that He may help us see.*

We rehearsed the new songs on the back veranda that evening before going inside. We planned to sing Bruce’s song in two parts, with the ladies singing the line, ‘*Prema, Sathya, Ananda, etc.,*’ while the gents sang the line ‘*Shirdi Sai, Parthi Sai, etc.,*’ in unison. *Bhajan* time came. Swami led for a while, then He asked, “*New songs?*” **He was extremely pleased when we sang ‘Love is My Form.’** Then He said, “*Dhoosra?*” meaning, the second one? We began ‘*Sai Baba, Sai Baba, so kind, so kind.*’ He interrupted, saying, “*So kind or no kind?*” Everyone laughed.

We continued singing. Swami was beaming the most radiant smiles on His children. He was, as He put it, “*very, very happy.*” Swami always encouraged us to learn new *bhajans*, and He would sing them to us over and over until we sang them with ease. One evening He tried to teach us ‘*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho,*’ but it was too difficult for us. So Swami, on the spur of the moment, began to sing Telugu folk songs from His boyhood days. **He sang for a full hour, and I then understood the real meaning of the word ‘sweetness’ as I listened to His voice.** That night He took my heart... He never gave it back!

### Divine Mother and Guru

Since we were sleeping on the roof outside Sai Baba’s room, it was the habit of some of the gents to get up and do exercises in the back courtyard in the early morning before Swami came out. Amos, one morning, jogged around in his undershorts, the

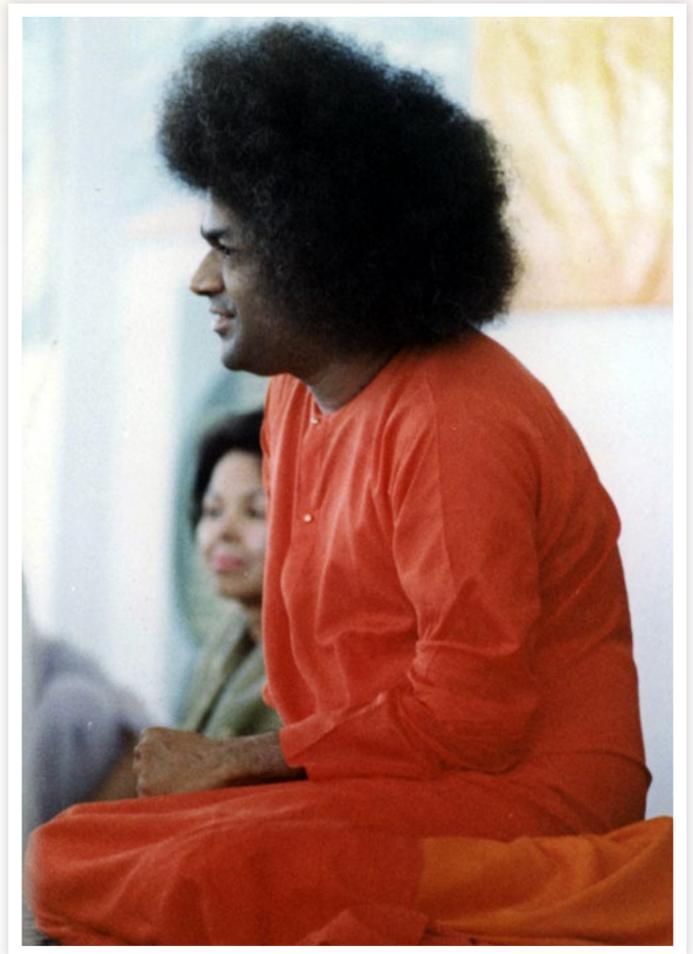
He was wearing a crimson-red robe, and His hair, in a large Afro style, was predominantly black with some grey. It came clearly to me that He was not of this physical world.

typical pin-striped boxer-style that village men wear in public.

A few mornings later, Sai Baba's tailor arrived with many yards of red silk to make Swami's new robes. The silk, curiously enough, was wrapped in a pink, blue, and white striped fabric. I wondered what the cloth was for since it obviously was not for Sai Baba. That evening, we were all gathered on the rear veranda as usual when Swami came out. He mentioned Amos' running around in his shorts. *"This is not proper nightdress,"* He said, *"There are ladies here."* He pointed to the window of the back room where the ladies were staying. *"Next, I'm giving proper night dress for gents,"* He said, as He motioned the tailor to take our measurements.

The very next day, Swami came and presented all thirteen gents with regular Western-style pajamas made from that pink, blue, and white striped cloth. They buttoned down the front, had little collars, and had the proper chest pocket on the left side. **He was just like our loving mother when He presented us with our pajamas.**

One morning, several days after we moved into Swami's house, He called us for a group interview, foregoing the public *darshan* that morning. All twenty of us crowded into the small room near the driveway, facing the gate that separated His private compound from the public.



There was a scramble for the front seats, and, still feeling like a new man, I did not want to push my way to the front, so I sat in the back. I just sat there looking at Him, watching His every move. He was wearing a crimson-red robe, and His hair, in a large Afro style, was predominantly black with some grey. It came clearly to me that He was not of this physical world. I sensed the great energy that filled His being, and I could actually see an aura of light around Him. I didn't remember a word He said in that, my first interview. **The thought kept running through my mind that He wasn't from this planet, and how very, very beautiful He was.**

In the second group interview, a few days later, we all gathered around, as usual. He said with a smile, *"Come sit closer to Swami."* We all squeezed in to be as close as we could to Him. *"What do you want?"* He asked.

"Your grace, Swami," Bruce replied.

*"No, no, some worldly gift? I'm always ready!"* He held out His hand as He does when He

is preparing to materialize something. “Do you want rings, watches, japamalas? Any?”

“No, Swami, only Your grace,” was the chorus. He was extremely pleased. He discoursed on the longing of the soul for God and the longing of God for the individual soul. He said Ramakrishna (a well-known saint and divine incarnate) frequently expressed it as, “Mother, Mother! I want your darshan. Mother, Mother! I want your darshan.”

That interview was my first experience with His teachings, with His *upadesh* (spiritual counsel). **He told us that just as the individual soul longs for God, so does God long for the individual soul.** He used the words *Jivatma* (individual soul) and *Paramatma* (universal soul). Using His hands, He pointed the index finger upward from one hand and the index finger downward from the other hand, bringing the tips of both fingers together.

He said, “*Like the stalactite and the stalagmite in a cave, the souls grow toward each other naturally.*” Then He stopped and said, “*This is not a good example.*” He indicated that He wasn’t pleased with His fingers trying to give the correct image. I was sitting closer to Him this time, near His chair. He held out His right hand, palm down, fingers extended.

He began to move His hand in a circular motion, and it vibrated like a tuning fork. Instantly, a small, black stone appeared, which He grabbed as it materialized. He passed the stone around for us to examine. It was about 1 1/2 inches to 2 inches in diameter, round in shape, and solid like granite or marble.

After each of us had examined the stone, He retrieved it. He raised it to His lips, and then, holding it between His thumb and first finger, blew on it gently but firmly. He passed it around the room a second time, and we could see that it had a small indentation on its surface, like two circles inter-

*Only love is important;  
only through love can  
we merge with God.  
Meditation and yoga are  
useless without love.*



secting each other to form a figure eight. The object stopped at Gil, who held onto it and wouldn't let it go.

While it was being passed around, Swami said,

*“See, like that. That’s a small cave, and there are the stalactite and the stalagmite. They represent the Jivatma and Paramatma merging toward each other. Only love is important; only through love can we merge with God. Meditation and yoga are useless without love. **Karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, all three must be saturated with love.** Karma yoga is like traveling third class on the train, bhakti is like second class, and jnana is like first class. All three compartments arrive at the station at the same time. Third class requires some hard work; second class, more comfort, easy ride, accessible to the public; first class, difficult to obtain for ordinary people. I’m the engine. I’m pulling you to your destination.”*

After the interview, He stood up. We all stood. He rotated His right hand, and from its palm came hot *halwa*, an Indian sweet. He distributed some to all of us, and there was plenty to go around.

### Life is A Dream—Realize It

After several nights, I decided to give up sleeping on the roof and stayed downstairs, outside the room Swami had allotted to the

gents. The night air on the roof was becoming increasingly damp, and I would wake up in the morning wet with dew.

One night, I had a dream in which I was riding a train leaving India. En route, I met a man who told me not to leave India but instead to go and see Sai Baba. The next thing I remembered, I was standing at the foot of a barren hill. On top of the hill was a white rectangular building surrounded by a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire. I proceeded to walk up the long dirt driveway that wound to the top of the hill.

Then I was sitting in a room on a couch with plastic upholstery. Sai Baba came in and sat down next to me. He told me about Lord Buddha. He said, *“Buddha gave up all worldly attachments and searched for truth.”*

Then I bent down and touched Sai Baba’s feet. I prayed, “Please give me liberation,” but He didn’t answer. Rather, He sat there, swaying back and forth, gently.

When I woke in the morning, I had the feeling that the dream had been real. It remained so vivid in my mind. Only later did I learn the dreams of Sai Baba are actually His visitations.

Mr. Howard Levin  
USA 

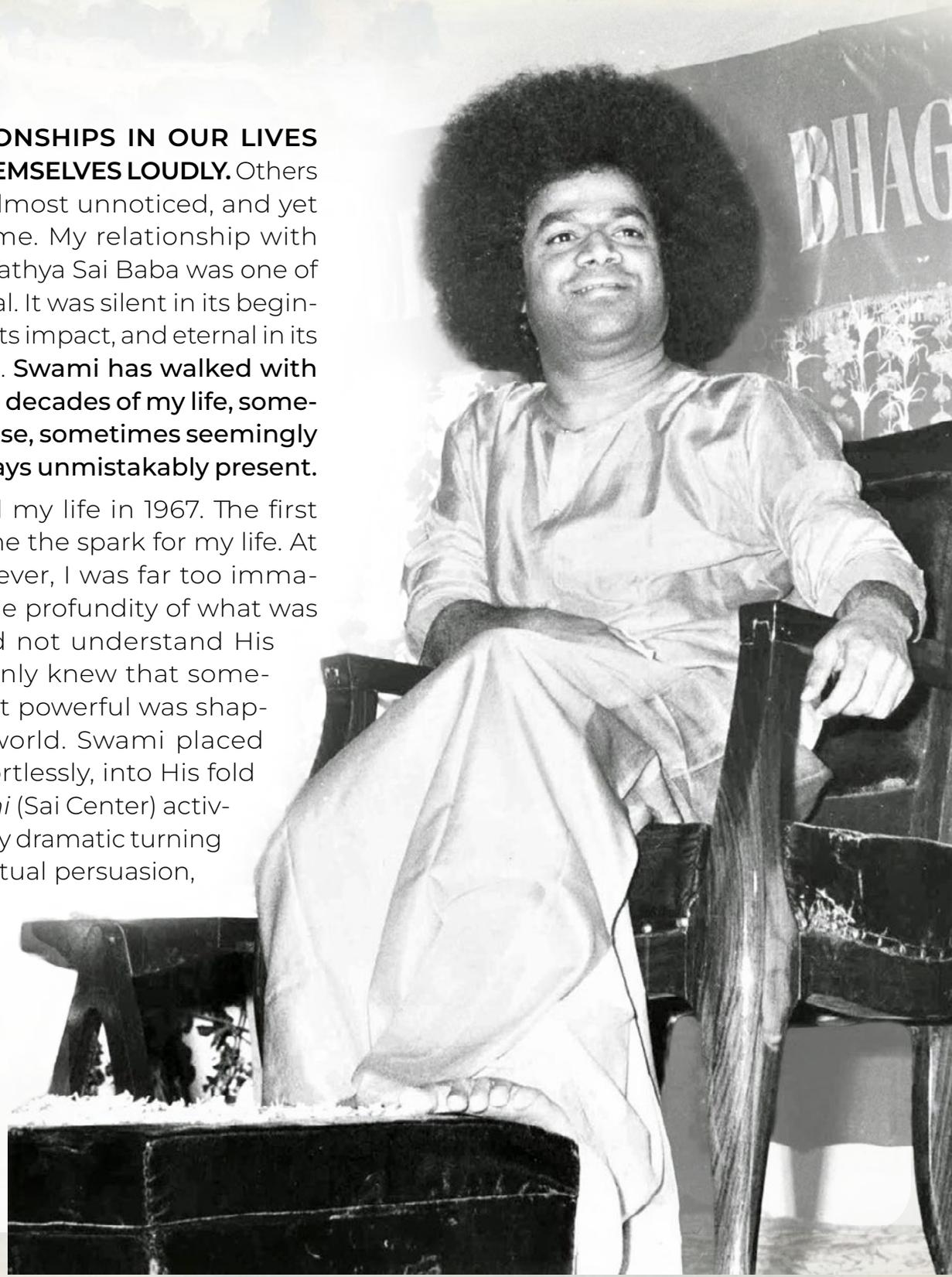


**Mr. Howard Levin** was an interior designer in New York and San Francisco who adopted the life of a hippie, hitchhiking to India, where he met Sai Baba. He is one of the original “Sai Hippies,” a group of young people who visited the ashram and had the privilege of spending precious time with Sri Sathya Sai Baba in the 1970s. On the second day after meeting Him at Whitefield, Bangalore, Swami invited him to stay at His residence. He was also involved in setting up the planetarium at Puttaparthi. Mr. Levin is the author of two books on Sri Sathya Sai Baba: “Heart to Heart” and “Good Chances.” He has been the manager at the Feathered Pipe Ranch in Montana, USA, for more than 20 years.

# S(a)ilent and Salient Eternal Companion

**SOME RELATIONSHIPS IN OUR LIVES ANNOUNCE THEMSELVES LOUDLY.** Others arrive quietly, almost unnoticed, and yet stay for a lifetime. My relationship with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was one of such quiet arrival. It was silent in its beginnings, salient in its impact, and eternal in its companionship. **Swami has walked with me through the decades of my life, sometimes visibly close, sometimes seemingly distant, yet always unmistakably present.**

Swami entered my life in 1967. The first *darshan* became the spark for my life. At that time, however, I was far too immature to grasp the profundity of what was unfolding. I did not understand His divine *leela*; I only knew that something gentle yet powerful was shaping my inner world. Swami placed me, almost effortlessly, into His fold through *Samithi* (Sai Center) activities. Without any dramatic turning point or intellectual persuasion,



*One can sit at His feet and yet be distant from Him.  
But one can live oceans away and yet be guided and  
led lovingly by Him.*

---

He simply kept me close, allowing love and discipline to do their work quietly.

Then came the World Conference in 1968, when our entire family became actively involved in *Samithi* activities—*bhajans*, service projects, and special events. It was not a conscious decision; it felt more like natural gravitation. Swami had gently rearranged our priorities.

### **A Month That Changed a Lifetime**

In 1972, Swami deepened this bond in a way I could never have imagined. He blessed me to be selected as a delegate to attend the first Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality in Whitefield (Bangalore) for college students from all over India. For one full month, I lived in close physical proximity to Swami, observing and absorbing Him.

The days were filled with lectures by eminent scholars on Indian culture, philosophy, and spirituality. But the true highlight came every evening when Swami delivered His discourse, distilling the essence of the day's learning into simple, crystal-clear language, explaining the truths. **What scholars took hours to explain, Swami conveyed in minutes, with love, humor, and infinite compassion.**

The events of that month inspired me and reoriented my life. When the course ended, I returned home carrying sweet memories of Swami's physical presence. But more importantly, I returned with a burning urge to serve.

### **Service as a Way of Life**

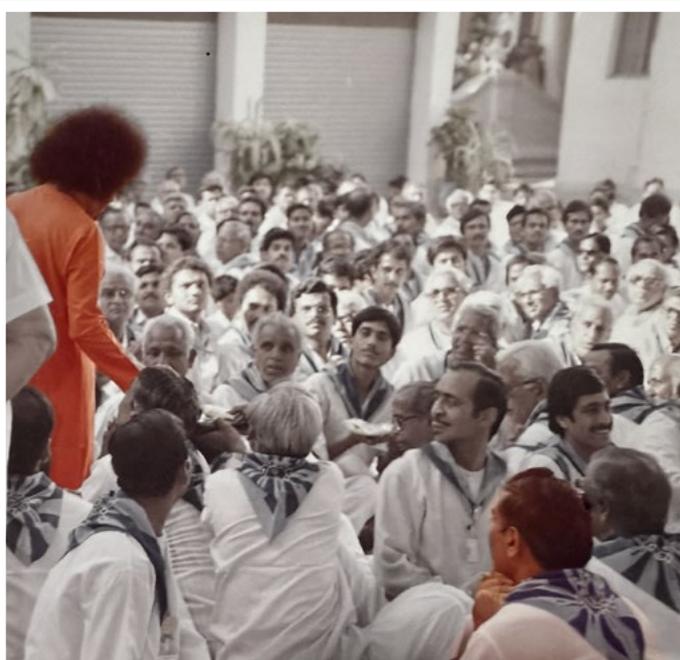
One service initiative that Swami especially inspired us to undertake was to offer free coaching classes to underprivileged chil-

dren. Growing up in a railway colony, we saw firsthand how many children of railway personnel could not afford private tuition. A few of us who were college students decided to regularly offer free tuition.

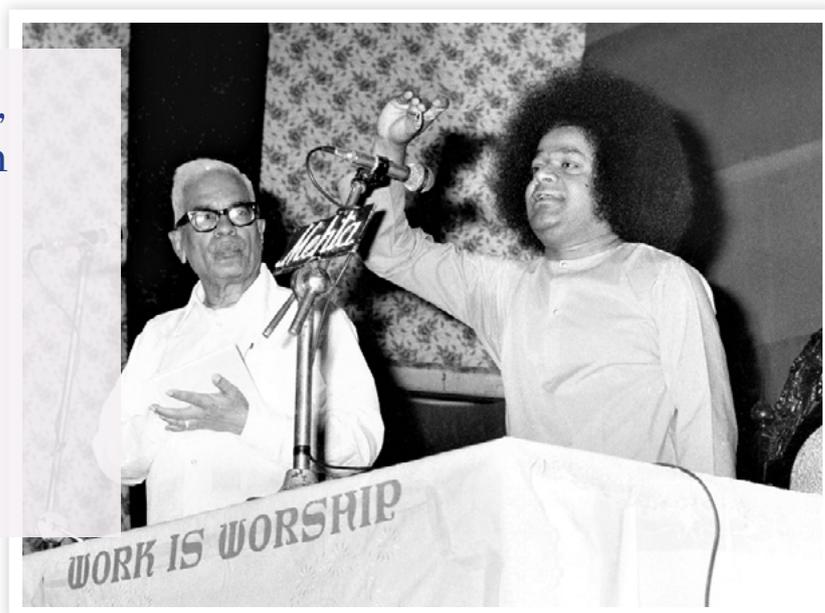
What began modestly soon took on a life of its own. Word spread quickly. Children from villages 15-20 miles away began arriving every evening to attend these classes. We taught key subjects to help them prepare for their exams, rotating responsibilities among ourselves.

As numbers grew, Swami once again worked silently in the background. The principal of the local Railway High School, upon hearing of our efforts, offered us full use of the school facilities after hours. It was as if the infrastructure had been waiting just for us to utilize.

After each day's coaching, we would spend 15–20 minutes narrating value-based stories drawn from different religions. This became



We witnessed, in real time, how Swami works through us, providing resources, people, and momentum exactly when and where needed. We were not the doers; we were just His instruments.



a regular feature not for weeks or months, but for nearly 15 years. The most touching reward was seeing former students, now in college, return to teach the younger children! Soon, this model spread to other towns and cities. *Seva Dal* (volunteer) members across our state adopted similar initiatives in their own *Samithis*. **We witnessed, in real time, how Swami works through us, providing resources, people, and momentum exactly when and where needed. We were not the doers; we were just His instruments.**

As *Seva Dal* members, we were blessed to undertake fortnight or month-long service stints at Prasanthi Nilayam, usually in February, when it was our state's turn. These periods of intense *seva* culminated in a beautiful opportunity when Swami would bless us with *padanamaskar* and personally distribute *Vibhuti* packets.

In this way, I was enjoying the proximity to Puttaparthi and closeness to Swami, when suddenly, it all changed!

### When Life Takes an Unexpected Turn

Circumstances began to shift, and we found ourselves considering a move to the United States. It was not an easy decision. My heart was anchored in India, rooted in the *Samithi* life, and sustained by Swami's physical pres-

ence and proximity. Unsure of what to do, I prayed fervently, wrote letters to Swami, and sought signs.

At one point, I tried to secure admission for my son to Swami's school in Puttaparthi, thinking that if he were accepted, it would be a clear indication not to immigrate to the USA. But that did not materialize. At that time, I could not understand Swami's divine play.

In 1994, during another service session as *Seva Dal* at Prasanthi Nilayam, I wrote a letter to Swami with a simple prayer, "If You take this letter, I will understand that You want me to go." Swami indeed took the letter during *darshan*!

**From that moment onward, everything fell into place with uncanny ease—passport, medical exam, and visa interview.** In December 1995, we moved to the USA with our son and daughter, then 11 and 9, landing in Memphis at my brother-in-law's home.

### Discovering Sai's Presence in the United States

I missed Swami intensely. The absence of physical nearness felt heavy, but Swami had His own plans. The very next day after our arrival, He sent a devotee who was going to the Sai Center for *bhajans* and invited me to join. I accepted readily. **Attending bhajans in**

the USA for the first time, I felt Swami whisper: “*Did you think I would abandon you?*”

From that day onward, we immersed ourselves in Sai Center activities, just as we had done in India. Over the years, we moved to Huntsville, Alabama (1997) and later to Arkansas (2008). Our children grew up, went to school and college, and life settled into a steady rhythm.

Then came the storm!

### **When Swami Reveals His Plan**

In 2013, shortly after my son completed his master’s degree and began working, he was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease. He had to be placed on in-home dialysis treatment. We were shattered. He was in Alabama; we were in Arkansas. Fear, helplessness, and uncertainty engulfed us.

Once again, Swami stepped in—not dramatically, but decisively.

In Arkansas, we met Dr. Swami! The name itself thrilled me. He was the Head of Nephrology and a Sai devotee who guided us step by step with compassion and clarity. Through the grace of ‘Swami,’ a matching kidney was found in 2014, and a transplant operation was successfully performed! Our worry and fear thus gave way to overwhelming gratitude.

**Only then did I fully understand why Swami had orchestrated our move to the USA so**

**smoothly years earlier.** What seemed like a long-distance move then was in anticipation of the future. Had we not been in the USA, I don’t know how such a transplant could have happened in India.

### **Dearness Over Nearness**

Today, my daughter is married and actively involved in Sai activities with her family. My son is married, settled, and blessed with a two-year-old son. Life has come full circle.

And somewhere along the way, I realized something profound: nearness to Swami is not geographical; it is emotional, spiritual, and eternal. **Dearness is what truly matters. One can sit at His feet and yet be distant from Him. But one can live oceans away and yet be guided and led lovingly by Him.**

Swami has been my S(a)ilent companion, working quietly behind the scenes. He has been my salient guide, revealing His presence unmistakably at life’s most critical moments.

Today, with overflowing gratitude, I choose consciously to hold on to the lotus feet of my Eternal Companion. I know I am dear to Him and that He is dear to me—and that dearness brings me close to Him.

**Mr. Ragesh Sheth**   
USA



*Mr. Ragesh Sheth was born in Madhya Pradesh, India. He was associated with the Ratlam Satya Sai Samithi in Madhya Pradesh since 1967. He served as Seva Dal (volunteer) from 1970 to 1995, and was appointed Samithi president in 1980. He later moved to the USA, where he continued to serve the SSSIO. Mr. Sheth was the Center President in Memphis, Tennessee; Huntsville, Alabama; and Little Rock, Arkansas. He has been the Vice President of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Northeast Atlanta, Georgia, since 2024.*

# LOVE IN ACTION



## FIJI

### New Specialist Sai Medical Center for Viseisei

The Viseisei Sai Health Center started operating in April 2011, after receiving Swami's blessings in 2010. In celebration of the 100th Birthday of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a new specialist medical center was established to complement the primary health care services provided by the existing Viseisei Sai Health Center in Fiji. Though the formal inauguration of the new center was done on November 15, 2025, by Fiji's Minister of Health, following a multifaith prayer ceremony, the Viseisei Sai Health Center actively supported a massive Sai Medical Camp conducted by Zone 3 of the SSSIO in August 2025. Before this camp, the Center was fully equipped, and over 600 patients were treated. **The operating theatre was also successfully used for the first time to perform gastroscopy procedures, after which, specialist clinical services commenced with gastrointestinal**



**clinics and endoscopies already underway, addressing the urgent need for early detection of digestive tract cancers.**

The fully functional new center has professional consulting rooms, a modern operating and recovery facility, and telemedicine capabilities to access specialist expertise, both locally and internationally. With continued support from the Ministry of Health, dedicated volunteers, and generous donors, the Center stands as a living expression of "Love All, Serve All," delivering hope and healing to those most in need.



## MAURITIUS

### Community Outreach and Food Distribution

On November 30, 2025, SSSIO volunteers distributed 40 food packs across three villages in Mauritius, offering support and compassion to those facing day-to-day challenges. Dedicated volunteers personally visited 11 families in Beauchamp, 14 in Poste De Flacq, and 15 in Panchvati, bringing food packs containing essential non-perishable items to help these households. Each box of nourishment also symbolizes love, compassion, and the joy of giving without expecta-



**tion. This initiative strengthened the bonds of community, fostering a sense of unity and hope.**



## INDONESIA

### From Floodwaters to Faith and Hope

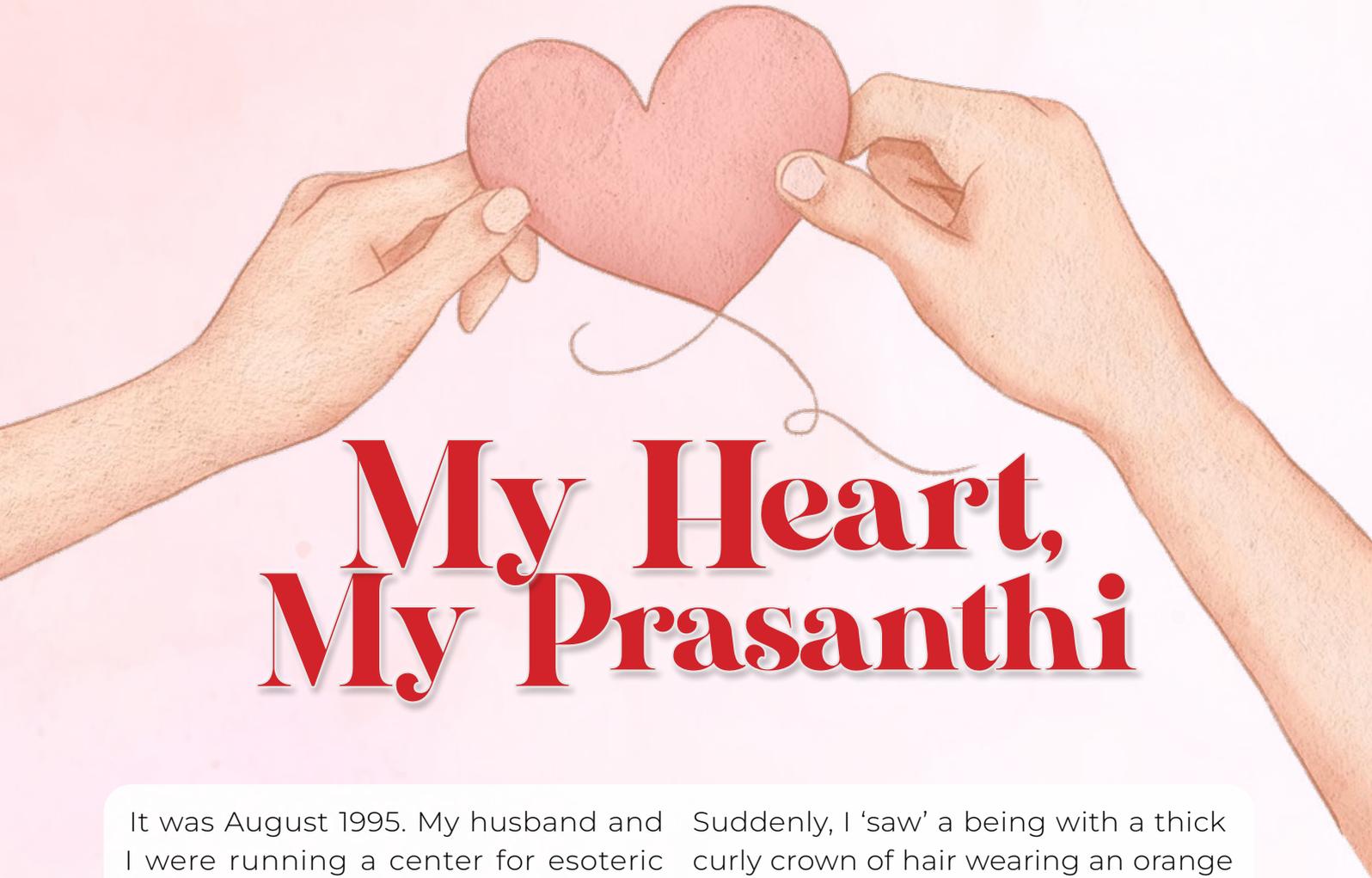
Heavy rainfall and river overflow triggered severe floods and flash floods in several parts of Indonesia in January 2026—including Java (Jakarta and Central/East Java), North Sulawesi, and Sumatra provinces.

Volunteers from the Sai Study Group (SSG) Indonesia lovingly served flood-affected families across Medan–Sunggal, Pematang Tengah (Langkat Regency), and Tanah Berongga (Aceh Tamiang Regency) on Sumatra Island in January 2026, offering timely relief and heartfelt care to help communities rebuild their lives. Essential supplies, including 538 kg of rice, 198 liters of cooking oil, and 58 LPG gas cylinders were distributed to help during the recovery.

**Special attention was given to children, who received school shoes, bags, and uniforms, restoring not only their readiness to return to school but also their sense of hope and dignity.** Additionally, SSSIO volunteers delivered three 800-liter water tanks, one water pump, and 30,000 liters of clean water. Moments of joy filled the day as volunteers engaged children in trauma-healing activities through songs and inspiring stories, helping them regain confidence and emotional strength. In a gesture of spiritual renewal, volunteers also cleaned the carpets in the flood-affected *mushola* (small prayer room used by Muslims), enabling the community to resume worship in a clean and welcoming space.



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



# My Heart, My Prasanthi

It was August 1995. My husband and I were running a center for esoteric studies called the *Center for the Integration of Man and the Universe*, where we offered courses to spiritual seekers. Through a friend, we met Ms. Marilu Martinelli, who offered to teach a course on Human Values Education at the center. We accepted with great love! That was probably the first time we were touched by Swami without even knowing Him.

He introduced Himself to me pretty soon after that.

During one of the sessions, as we performed the *Sacred Dances* (slow, intentional movements as a form of meditation), we stood in a circle, fully present, our attention turned inward.

Suddenly, I 'saw' a being with a thick curly crown of hair wearing an orange robe, standing in the center of the circle. His gaze was fixed on me! It was such a wonderful and special experience, though I did not realize its significance back then.

It was the beginning of His divine call—the call to a devotee who, until then, had been far from His divine presence.

## Repeated Assurances of His Omnipresence

Over time, we were introduced to Swami. We began reading books, attending a Sai Center, singing *bhajans*, and even traveling to Puttaparthi. **My connection with Swami has always been internal, and He has repeatedly assured me of His omnipresence.**



For instance, during the inauguration of our Educational Center for Human Values, as we sang *bhajans* and began the ribbon-cutting ceremony, I saw our dear Swami at the office doorway, blessing everyone.

On the sacred eve of Sri Krishna Janmashtami, I visualized the charming form of Lord Krishna as I sang *bhajans* alone, at the temple of *Fazenda Furquilha*, headquarters of the Rural Nature Association, which we had founded. And suddenly, I saw Swami rising from the chair, walking toward me, and saying, “*I am Krishna.*” I was deeply moved to receive confirmation of what I always believed at heart.

In that same temple at *Furquilha*, during another afternoon of meditation, I perceived Swami rise from His chair and walk toward me. His presence was so powerful and palpable that I thought to myself, “Oh my God! What a feeling! I hope He doesn’t go away!”

Immediately, Swami said, “*I won’t, because this is where I live.*”

And then He entered my heart!

**Swami is always with us, as the indweller of our hearts!**

### Divine Manifestations

On every trip to *Prasanthi Nilayam*, I would bring back many photos of Swami—some portraits and others full-length—and frame them. I donated one to Aunt Nena from the *São Rafael Daycare*. After some time, that photo began to manifest *vibhuti*, which Aunt Nena used for healing and blessing the children.

I placed another full-length photo of Swami at the head of the therapy table at the *Man–Universe Therapy Center*. Many people asked who the person in the photo was, and I would explain. Several of them even said that they could see Him during the healing sessions! It was thrilling for me to hear that, and I expressed my deepest gratitude to Swami.

After a while, that photo began to produce *amritha* (divine ambrosia), and it has continued to do so to this day. The picture

is now with me at home, and I cherish it with great love.

During another of my trips to India, I decided not to buy a beautiful picture of Swami that my heart longed for because it was too large, and the picture tube wouldn't fit in my suitcase. I spent the entire return journey regretting not having bought the picture of that sacred, lovely form.

When I arrived home and began unpacking my luggage, I suddenly found a small photo roll wrapped in newspaper among my things. Puzzled, I opened it—and to my astonishment, it was the very same photo I regretted not buying!

Swami Himself had gifted it to me!

**I wept with joy for two reasons: first, for receiving the cherished photo, and second, for the tenderness of the Master in manifesting it inside my suitcase!** And though it appeared without a tube, it did not have a single wrinkle or crease!

### Oneness of Swami and Jesus

While reading [Sathya Sai—The Eternal Companion \(June 2022\)](#), I came across a beautiful article about the resemblance between Swami and Jesus Christ—in their way of being and teaching, in their words, gestures, and actions, and even in their miracles, that includes bringing people back to life.

I personally experienced the truth that **they** are truly one and the same!

It had been many years since I last attended church or participated in Sunday Mass. Since meeting Swami, my former Christian practices had gradually faded

away. Many times I had wondered whom I should follow, Jesus or Swami? But since Swami had filled my life completely, I had put Jesus Christ aside.

On Palm Sunday, we celebrated the beginning of Holy Week at our spiritual community in Monte Alegre do Sul. We invited a priest to celebrate a special outdoor Mass for the occasion. After the reenactment of Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey, we sang *Hosanna in the Highest* and waved palm branches to honor Him.

The Mass began, and I was transported back to my school days and to old devotional practices. I followed the rite with reverence. Then came the moment of Holy Communion. A doubt arose in me, “*How can I receive Communion if I haven't confessed in so many years?*” I hesitated for a few moments, but something gently led me to the altar, and I received Communion.

I took the consecrated host with deep devotion and began my prayers of thanksgiving, feeling Jesus within me once again after so many years. But the host would not go down! It began to vibrate on my tongue. I didn't understand what was happening and stood still, amazed, when suddenly I heard a loving voice from my heart say, “*Daughter, it is I who am here.*”

It was Baba, reassuring me, showing that the two are one and the same, and that it doesn't matter who we follow. I embraced that moment of union between my two ‘beloveds’—an experience that filled my soul with indescribable joy and divine light!

WHETHER HE MANIFESTS AS BABA,  
AS CHRIST, OR AS THE SUBTLE  
VOICE WITHIN, HIS PURPOSE  
REMAINS THE SAME—TO AWAKEN  
US TO OUR OWN DIVINITY AND DRAW  
US BACK TO LOVE.



### My Heart, My Prasanthi

Through visions, inner assurances, miracles, and moments of profound grace, Swami has gently but firmly shown me that He is not bound by form, name, or tradition. He has revealed Himself as Krishna, as Jesus, and as the silent indweller of the heart—always present, always loving, always guiding.

What once appeared to be a choice between paths dissolved into a deeper understanding: Truth is One; Love is One; the Divine is One. **Whether He manifests as Baba, as Christ, or as the subtle voice**

**within, His purpose remains the same—to awaken us to our own divinity and draw us back to love.**

Today, my faith no longer seeks outward validation. It rests on direct experience, in the certainty that He walks with us, enters our hearts, and never leaves. In that knowing, there is my Prasanthi (supreme peace)!

**Ms. Sonia Mesquita**   
BRAZIL



*Ms. Sonia Mesquita lives in Brazil and has been a devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for 30 years. She has visited the Ashram 20 times to be in the divine presence. She has served in the SSSIO of Brazil as a National Devotional Coordinator and President of Southeast Region 1.*

# from the International Sai Young Adults



## **BROTHERHOOD THROUGH LEARNING**

The Young Adults of Hong Kong launched a tuition program in April 2025 to provide sustained academic support to 20 children from Refugee Union Hong Kong, an organization dedicated to empowering refugee communities by safeguarding their rights and improving their overall well-being. Initiated in alignment with SSSIO's tuition and community adoption initiative for SAI-100, the program set an ambitious goal of delivering 100 hours of tuition to these children by Swami's 100th Birthday. Through dedicated effort and collective commitment, the Young Adults surpassed this goal, completing 108 hours of tuition over six months (April-September). Sessions were held on the third Saturday of each month, from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, with 10-15 Young Adults participating. The program catered to multiple age groups and covered a wide range of subjects, including Mathematics, Science, English, and Cantonese. Beyond academic instruction, the initiative fostered consistent mentorship and a nurturing learning environment for children facing the challenges of refugee life, standing as a living expression of Swami's call to use education as a means of selfless service and upliftment of the underprivileged.

*"I want you to become ideal leaders. Make use of your education to serve the poor. Conduct free tuition classes for the poor children and share your books with them. Only then will the feeling of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God develop."*

**–Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

July 26, 1999  
(Valedictory Function of the  
First Sri Sathya Sai Seminar on Values)

# “Their Happiness is Our Own”



Sai Young Adults across the different South American countries engaged in very similar service activities, particularly food and snacks distribution for individuals experiencing homelessness. In the spirit of the Christmas season, these initiatives echoed the message of Christ, who announced Himself as a Messenger of God and identified His body as an instrument given to Him for alleviating human misery and serving the helpless and the homeless. Inspired by this sacred ideal, Sai Young Adults came together to translate love into action through selfless service.

On December 14, 2025, the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Montevideo, Uruguay conducted a food distribution activity in the Parque Rodó neighborhood. Led by Sai Young Adults, this initiative was a heartfelt expression of love in action. The volunteers served meals to individuals experiencing homelessness, fostering a growing spirit of selfless service among the Young Adults. Beyond providing food, the group offered care, respect, and human warmth, creating meaningful moments of connection with those they served. The experience was deeply rewarding for all involved. One participant shared that serving others while coordinating the activity alongside fellow youth was both gratifying and

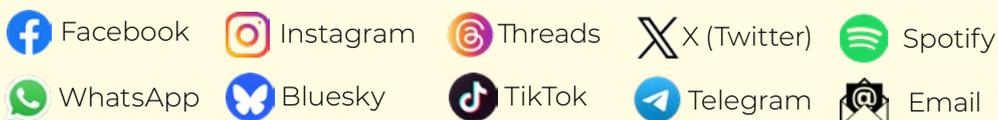
an important step toward forming and strengthening a committed service group. Similarly, on December 27, 2025, eight Sai Young Adults from the Vila Isabel Sai Center, Brazil, with the support of the Southeast II Regional Coordination of the SSSIO of Brazil, carried out a snack kit distribution at Saens Peña Square in the Tijuca neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro. Prior to the distribution, the Young Adults gathered at the Sai Center to prepare 50 snack kits in an atmosphere of harmony and unity. Each kit contained bread, cake, water, a banana, and chocolate milk, and was distributed to individuals experiencing homelessness in the area.

Reflecting on the experience, one participant shared:

“It was very rewarding and inspiring to put Sai’s teachings into practice and truly feel what it means to live them. Seeing the smiles and gratitude of our brothers and sisters on the streets made us realize that their happiness is also our own.”

This Christmas service activity further reinforced Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s message that love finds its truest expression through selfless service. Through these simple yet sincere acts, the Sai Young Adults strengthened their commitment to compassion and love in action.

## Follow Young Adults on Social Media



[yacoordinator@sathyasai.org](mailto:yacoordinator@sathyasai.org) | <https://sathyasai.org/ya>

# COMING HOME

## How Sri Sathya Sai Baba Came into My Life

**IT WAS THE YEAR 1997 WHEN MY PARENTS TOOK ME, FOR THE FIRST TIME, TO A SAI CENTER** in the city of Monterrey, México. I was only seven years old. At that time, of course, I was not particularly interested in finding a spiritual Master in this lifetime. Today, almost twenty-nine years have passed since Sri Sathya Sai Baba called me to Him.

I have no doubt that it was not the merits of this life—nor even just of the previous one—that allowed Sai to call me so early. I have often heard that it is the accumulated merits of hundreds or even thousands of lives that enable us not only to be born during the time of Bhagawan, but also to be called to follow Him. Even so, this calling remains, for me, a deeply loving mystery.

### Early Roots of Faith

From a very young age, my mother kept me close to God. She taught me the traditional Catholic prayers—our Father and the Hail Mary—and spoke of God as an all-powerful being, the Creator of everything. I was baptized shortly after birth and enrolled in a Catholic school, where the Gospel of Christ was taught. My early childhood unfolded within a fairly orthodox Catholic tradition.

I did not question much at the time. God seemed interesting to me, even fascinating. Gradually, questions about creation and the origin of everything began to arise. Over time, my spiritual world started to expand; while at school I learned about Jesus and the Gospels, at the Sai Center

I sang *bhajans* and saw images representing different names and forms of God. Something within me began to understand that divinity was not confined to a single expression.

### When Questions Found a Form

Around the age of eight or nine, I began attending spiritual education classes at the Sai Center. I was the only student. My questions intensified, but I did not resist them; I welcomed them with a mixture of curiosity and wonder. I do not recall exactly what happened to me the first time I saw a picture of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, but I do remember that I was there—for Him. And, of course, also because of my parents, who had been called as well.

Before long, I was told that Sri Sathya Sai Baba was God. Period. There were no elaborate explanations. He was God, and I was expected to accept it. At the same time, I was introduced to the lives and teachings of other great Masters and traditions, such as Lord Buddha, Allah, and Zoroaster. I was beginning to understand that Catholicism, while deeply meaningful, was not the only path through which God revealed Himself.

I accepted all of this quite simply—perhaps even blindly. If I was told that Sai was God, then He was God. I remember wearing a necklace with Swami's photograph to school, and when classmates asked who He was, I would reply quite naturally, "He is Jesus' father." Fortunately, no teacher ever questioned me further; I suspect I might have been reprimanded had they done so.

## Resistance, Doubts and Lessons Learned

At school, we studied the Gospels, yet I did not see my classmates being particularly transformed by them. On the contrary, many were quite noisy and, at times, rather unkind. Meanwhile, I continued receiving a more structured spiritual education, one that went beyond a single tradition. After completing my spiritual education classes, I became involved in human values classes taught by my mother in various community spaces, including public libraries.

In 2003, when I was thirteen years old, I traveled to India for the first time with my parents and my younger sister to see Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam. We joined a group of devotees from México, as was common at the time. By then, I was a full-fledged teenager with a clear idea of who Sai was, and I felt a deep curiosity to finally see Him in person.

That journey came with all kinds of physical discomforts to which I was completely unaccustomed to. Today, I understand that all of it was part of the divine drama. My first *darshan* arrived after waking up early, standing in line, and entering the *mandir*—a vast hall where we sat waiting, surrounded by many flies, for Sai Baba to appear.

### The Silent Transformation

When He finally came out, I do not have a vivid memory of His physical form. I cannot recall whether He walked or came out in the small golf cart He sometimes used. What I do remember with absolute clarity is that the moment I saw Him, my heart began to race. I experienced what so many others describe: an indescribable emotion, as if I had finally arrived home, to the place where I truly belonged. In that instant,



I knew that Sri Sathya Sai Baba was the path for me. That moment marked only the beginning of a long journey.

I know that the grace of seeing Him physically was not a coincidence, but the result of accumulated merits. I also know that my journey of returning to the Self—to the source from which I had once departed—was gaining deep and silent strength.

### The Awakening is Now

I have grown up surrounded by Sai's teachings and by His devotees. I have listened to Him in my heart. He has guided me, shaped me, loved me, and protected me—sometimes as a teacher, sometimes as a close friend, sometimes as a mother, and sometimes as a father. I have walked the path of life gradually understanding, more and more, His message of love and unity. I continue to learn. And if there is one thing I know for certain, it is that Swami did not come to change my life—He came to remind me of who I truly am. I understand now that life is a divine play, an opportunity to realize ourselves through conscious action and personal effort. To have Truth as my Master and Lord is the greatest blessing.

Now is the time. The awakening is now. And I have no excuses.

Miguel Montes  
MÉXICO



# WHERE *is* GOD?

## Where is God?

I asked the wind; it whispered His name.  
I asked the river; it flowed in grace.  
I asked the stars; they twinkled His love.  
I asked my heart, and it smiled.  
"For He lives within you."

He is in kindness; in every warm embrace.  
He is in laughter; in a child's sweet face.  
He is not distant, He is not far -  
He is in you, no matter where you are.

Rithika K | Group 4 | USA



I sat still today.  
no chants, no checklist.  
Just me and Him.  
or maybe just...the quiet

I caught myself reaching for my phone,  
but stopped,  
and read His words instead.  
"Watch your thoughts"  
So I did.

They wandered.  
I wandered.  
But I kept coming back.  
And He was always there  
waiting, not judging. just...there.

"You take one step towards Me,  
I will take a hundred towards you" -Baba



Riana S | Group 4 | SSE Online

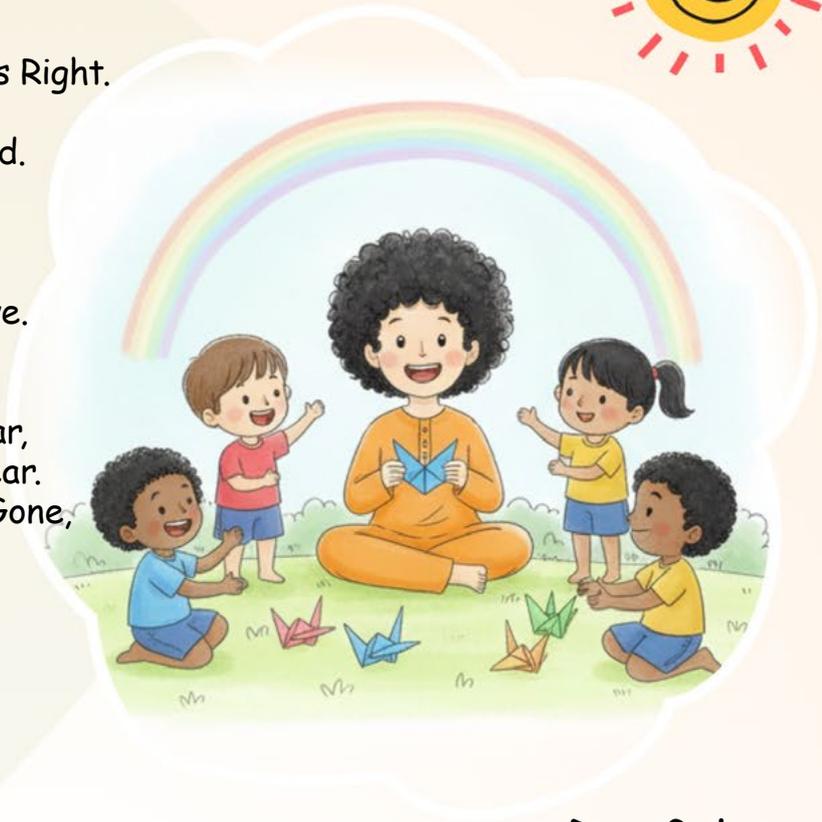


## A Beacon Of Eternal Light

"Maa Sai, So Cute and Bright,  
You Taught Us to Love and to Do What is Right.  
In Every Aspect, in Every Kind Deed,  
You Showed Us That Love is All We Need.

You Spoke of Truth, Peace,  
Care and to Always Be Fair.  
You've Made Our Nerves to Always Serve.  
Your Love Gave Hope,  
Helping Us Find a Way to Cope.  
You Made Truth Look So Simple and Clear,  
Which Made Sai Feel More Dear and Near.  
Maa Sai, Even Though You're Physically Gone,  
Your Lessons Will Never Be Forgone

Maa Sai, a Beacon of Eternal Light,  
Pure of Love and Always Bright.  
Always by Our Side,  
Maa Sai Forever You'll Be Our Guide.



Purav C | Group 3 | Fiji

Dear God,

Today, I have thought about You. I'm writing this letter to tell You how much I appreciate being alive one more day, sharing with my family and friends happy and unique moments by Your side.

When I think of you, the first thing that comes to my mind is that You are unique and incomparable, that all I need is only You.

Since I was little, I was always so close to You. I used to like and I still do, to attend mass; or just to think of You. When I need help or feel that I can't achieve something on my own, I go to You. Your unconditional love helps me, accompanies me when I need it most.

Thank You for granting me good health, for having such a beautiful family, loyal friends and people that are a special part of me. For this and much more things, thank You, thank You, thank You.

Everyday I am thankful for having You in my life.  
From someone who loves You deeply.

Estefanía T | Group 4 | Mexico



# Upcoming SSSIO Events

Please visit [sathyasai.org/events](https://sathyasai.org/events) for details on scheduled events, local dates and timings.

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
April 18-19, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri
April 24, 2026	Friday	Aradhana Mahotsavam
May 1, 2026	Friday	Buddha Pournima
June 13-14, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri



Streaming [on sathyasai.org/live](https://sathyasai.org/live) and YouTube



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



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X (Twitter)



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Threads



Google Books



Email



Eternal Companion email list



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



Learn to chant the sweet name of Rama with a pure, unsullied heart, in a spirit of selfless devotion. Learn to speak in a sweet and pleasing manner. Sweet speech confers peace. It is the means to Self-realization. Sri Rama loves to dwell in the heart of those who speak sweetly.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

April 14, 1989



**sathyasai.org**

Love All • Serve All  
Help Ever • Hurt Never

