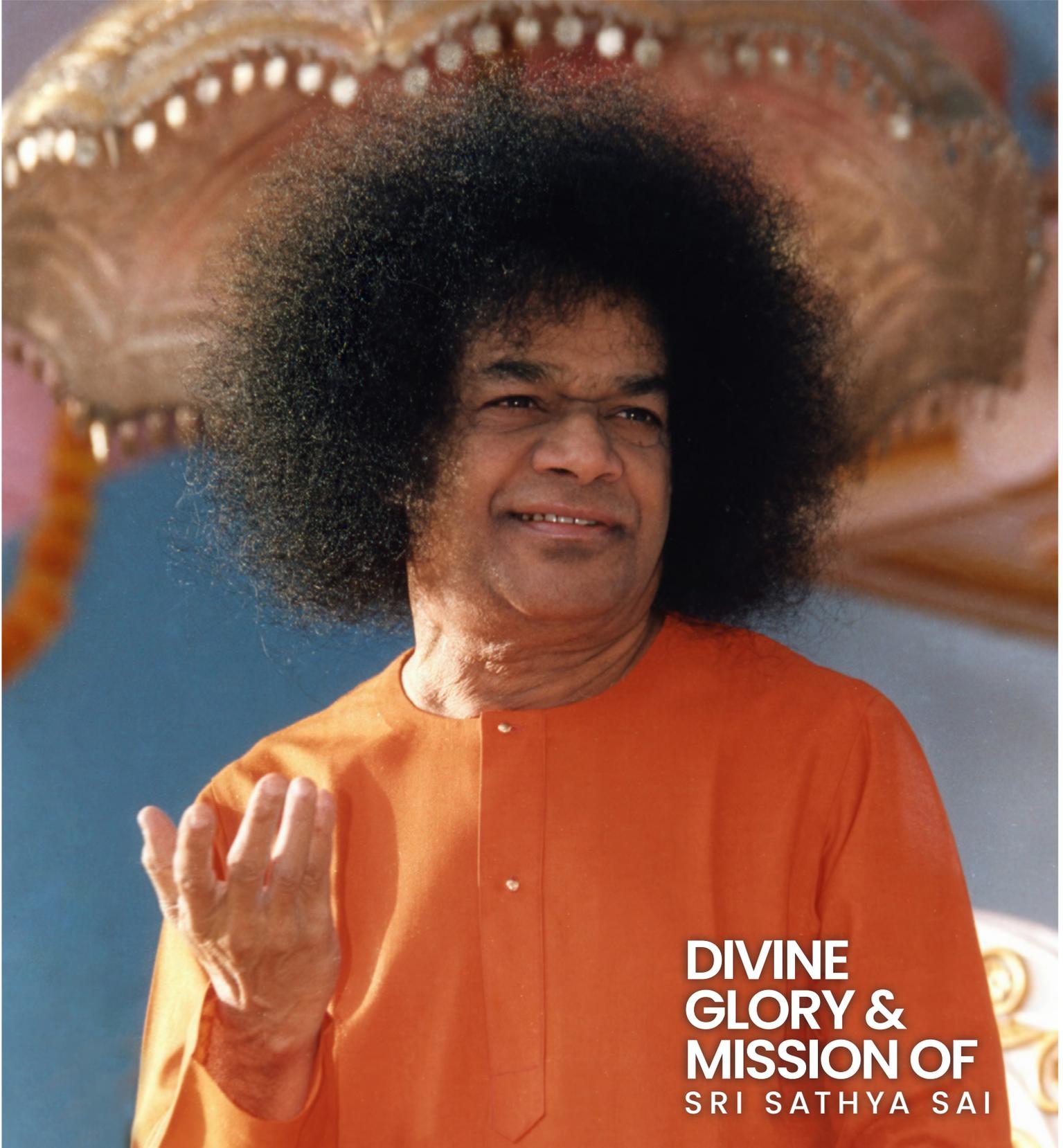


SATHYA SAI  
THE  
**ETERNAL**  
COMPANION



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 4  
APRIL 2026



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



Swami is always in a state of bliss. Happiness is the very nature of the Divine. What is the use of lamenting over anything? All things are passing clouds. Nothing is lasting. Why then, bewail over any loss? You should not bother about them. This is the teaching of the Avatar. Don't feel distressed over anything that may happen. Every pain is followed by some pleasure. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. It is on this basis that you should lead your lives.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
August 14, 1990

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DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO

**BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA**





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publisher at [info@sathyasai.org](mailto:info@sathyasai.org)

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume 5 • Issue 4

April 2026

## 6 Editorial

Realizing Brahman as Infinite Bliss  
(Taittiriya Upanishad–Brahmananda Valli)

## 14 Divine Discourse

Cultivate Good Thoughts, Feelings, and Desires, Dasara 1976

## 20 Experiences of Devotees

Living with God is True Education by Mr. Benno Wesener  
The Power of Gayatri by Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya  
Paripurna Avatari Sai by Dr. A. Adivi Reddy

## 36 Humanitarian Service

Love in Action–New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Suriname, and USA

## 38 Glory of Womanhood

My Family’s Journey from Chamatkar to Sakshatkar  
by Mrs. Jaya Narayanaswamy

## 42 Ideal Sai Young Adults

Welcoming 2026 in Langenfeld, Germany  
Strengthening Iztapalapa Through Service, México  
Sadhana is Simple by Ms. Shivani Soogrim  
Finding My Way Back to Seva by Ms. Divya Janaswamy

## 48 Sathya Sai Education

“His Life” by SSE Students of Rochester, Minnesota, USA:  
Khushi, Mahashree, Maya, Myra, Nirbhuy, Prisha, Rathai, Samaira,  
Shanvitha, Sreesha, Tanmayi, and Tarini

## 52 SSSIO Events and Websites

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# REALIZING BRAHMAN AS INFINITE BLISS

*(Taittiriya Upanishad–Brahmananda Valli)*

Part 1 of 2

The *Taittiriya Upanishad*, part of the *Krishna Yajur Veda*, is a systematically structured and organized Upanishad. It consists of three chapters:

- *Shiksha Valli*, which covers instructions and preparations for *Brahma Vidya* (the Ultimate Knowledge);
- *Brahmananda Valli*, also called *Ananda Valli*, which reveals Brahman as infinite bliss; and
- *Bhrigu Valli*, which describes the spiritual seeker's (in this case, Bhrigu's) direct experience of Brahman through *tapas* (austerities).

Together, these three form a complete curriculum of spiritual education—preparation, revelation, and realization. What makes this Upanishad extraordinary is its insistence that *Brahma Vidya*, the supreme knowledge of *Brahman*, cannot be attained without adequate preparation.

## ***Shiksha Valli*—The Foundation**

The direct teaching about the infinite Brahman begins only in the *Brahmananda Valli*, but the *Shiksha Valli* is the essential foundation upon which the entire structure of Self-knowledge is built. In the editorial of the March 2026 issue of this magazine, we

discussed *Shiksha Valli* and how it prepares the body, speech, mind, and character for receiving the highest knowledge. We also explored in detail the most renowned passage in the *Shiksha Valli*, specifically the convocation address delivered by the teacher to the graduating students, which contains important ethical exhortations treasured for millennia. **Based on this code of conduct, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba exhorts that the seeker should never swerve from the path of truth and *dharma*, or duties toward God and ancestors.** He emphasizes that they should treat mother, father, guru, and guest as God, and resort only to actions free from errors, omissions, and faults. Without this moral foundation, knowledge of Brahman cannot be acquired.

## **The *Vyahriti* Meditation**

Besides what we already explored in the *Shiksha Valli*, we need to examine this important concept. *Vyahriti* meditation involves contemplation of the seven great mystical utterances, which are considered the essence of the Vedas. They are *bhur* (earth), *bhuvah* (atmosphere), *svah* (heaven), *mahah* (heart), *janah* (cosmic power), *tapah* (divine Intellect), and *sathyam* (ultimate truth). These terms represent

# THREE PARTS OF TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

## SHIKSHA VALLI

Preparation

OM  
BHUR  
BHUVAH  
SVAHA



MAHAH  
JANAH  
TAPAH  
SATHYAM

## BRAHMANANDA VALLI

Revelation



Pancha  
Koshas  
(Five Sheaths)

## BHRIGU VALLI

Realization



progressively subtler levels of reality from the gross to the ultimate truth.

The seeker who meditates on these *Vyahritis* learns to move through the entire spectrum of existence in consciousness, preparing for *Brahmananda Valli's* teaching about the *koshas* (sheaths covering the *Atman*), which similarly range from the gross to the subtle.

### *Pranava Upasana* (Chanting of Om)

Also, the eighth *anuvaka* in the *Shiksha Valli* reveals *Om* as the key to all knowledge. *Om* is *Brahman*, and *Om* is everything. The

sacred syllable is described as the essence of the Vedas, the sound form of the ultimate reality. Meditation on *Om* purifies the mind and creates a direct conduit between the individual consciousness and the universal consciousness. For an in-depth discussion on *Om*, the reader is referred to the editorial, *Om: Its Power and Secrets* in the October 2022 issue of this magazine.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba exhorts all spiritual seekers to start the day by chanting *Om* (*Pranava Upasana*), since ***Om* is *Brahman* itself**. That is why we chant *Om* 21 times early in the morning. The first five *Oms* purify the *Karmendriyas*, organs of action; the next five purify the *Jnanendriyas*, organs of perception; and the following five *Oms* purify the five vital airs, *Pancha Pranas*—*Prana*, *Apana*, *Vyana*, *Udana*, and *Samana*. The last set of five *Oms* purifies the *Pancha Koshas* (five sheaths), which will be discussed in the next section. The 21st *Om* represents *Atman*, or *Brahman*. **Finally, after we purify everything through chanting *Om*, which is *Pranava*, only then can we experience the *Atman*.**

Lord Krishna also emphasizes this point (BG 8.13):

*om ityekaksharam brahma vyaharan mam anusmaran  
yah prayati thyajan deham sa  
yathi paramam gathim*

(Anyone who leaves the body while remembering Me, the Supreme Personality, and chanting the one syllable *Om*, will attain the supreme goal.)

### *Tapas* According to *Shiksha Valli*

Another important section discussed in the ninth *anuvaka* (section) is *tapas*—austerity, self-discipline, and commitment to the pursuit of truth. Multiple forms of austeri-



## Three Attributes of Brahman

**SATHYAM**  
(Truth)



**JNANAM**  
(Knowledge)



**ANANTAM**  
(Infinite)



ties are described, namely: *ritam* (order in the universe according to truth); *sathyam* (absolute unchanging truth) that remains unchanging in all the three times of past, present, and future; the study of scriptures (*swadhyaya*); and finally, the act of teaching (*pravachana*). This is very significant because it shows that *tapas* is not merely a physical exercise or mortification but an all-encompassing discipline that includes intellectual pursuit, moral integrity, and selfless service in sharing knowledge.

Finally, the *Shiksha Valli* concludes with a meditation that integrates everything that has come before, ending with a peace invocation. **The student is now ready—purified in speech, disciplined in conduct, trained in meditation, and endowed with ethical discernment to recognize *Brahman* as the underlying reality of all existence.** The curtain is ready to rise on *Brahmananda Valli*.

### Transition to *Brahmananda Valli*

In the Taittiriya Upanishad, the second chapter, the magnificent *Brahmananda Valli*, which focuses on the bliss of *Brahman*, is the crown jewel. The transition from *Shiksha Valli* to *Brahmananda Valli* is marked

by a new peace invocation—the famous *Sahanavavatu* prayer:

*om sahana vavatu  
sahanau bhunaktu  
sahaveeryam karavavahai  
tejas vinavadhi tamastu  
ma vidhwishavahai  
om shanti shanti shantihi*

*(May Brahman protect us both, the teacher and student. May Brahman nourish us both. May we work together with great energy. May our study be illuminating. May there be no hatred between us.)*

This prayer sets a tone where it is recognized that both student and teacher are already part of *Brahman*.

### ***Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma*** **Threefold Definition of *Brahman***

The *Brahmananda Valli* begins with one of the most profound statements in Vedantic philosophy, “*Brahmavid apnoti param*” (the knower of *Brahman* attains the Supreme). The entire spiritual philosophy of Vedanta is encapsulated in this aphorism. *Brahman*, the absolute, the boundless, the innermost reality of all things, can be known, and this knowledge is the highest one can attain.

The knower of *Brahman* who realizes 'I am *Brahman*,' (*aham Brahmasmi*) fulfills all desires, transcends all sorrow, and attains the ultimate bliss—the highest state.

It then describes *Brahman* through three attributes—*sathyam*, truth or reality; *jnanam*, knowledge or consciousness; and *anantam*, infinite or limitless—highlighting the essential nature of *Brahman* itself. Bhagawan Baba often sings this in His beautiful, melodious voice in the *bhajan* "Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma." He also explains these three terms with clarity and precision.

*Sathyam* means that *Brahman* is the unchanging reality. No matter what form an object takes, if that form stays the same under all conditions, at all times, and in all places, it is *sathyam*, the ultimate reality. If it changes, it is *asathyam* (not *sathyam*). *Brahman* alone is that which never changes.

*Jnanam* here doesn't mean ordinary knowledge that involves a knower and the known, like most materialistic sciences and worldly knowledge. It signifies pure consciousness, the Self-luminous awareness that enables all forms of knowledge.

*Anantam* means that *Brahman* is eternal and not bound or limited by time. It is all-pervading and not limited by space. It is also not limited by any other object. It is one without a second. Together, these three characteristics point to a reality that is the very basis of all that exists—it is the pure, Self-aware, boundless presence that the Upanishads call *Brahman*.

*Brahman* is that from which all beings are born, by which they live, and into which they merge when they cease to exist.

Lord Sri Krishna explains the same concept in the Dhyana Yoga, which is also called Atma Samyama Yoga (BG 6.21 to 6.23).

*sukham athyanthikam yath tad  
buddhi-grahyam athindriyam*

*vetthi yatra na chaivayam  
shitash chalati tattvatah*

(In that joyous state of Yoga, called *samadhi*, one experiences supreme boundless divine bliss, and thus situated, one never strays from the eternal truth.)

*yam labdhva chaparam labham  
manyate nadhikam tatah  
yasmin sthito na dukkhena  
gurunapi vichalyate*

(Having gained that state, one does not consider any attainment to be greater. Being thus established, one remains unshaken even in the face of the greatest calamity.)

*tam vidyad dukkha-samyoga-vi-  
yogam yogasanjnitam  
sa nischayena yoktavyo yogo  
anirvinna-chetasa*

(That state of severance from union with misery is known as Yoga. This Yoga should be resolutely practiced with determination and without pessimism.)

Thus, Lord Krishna assures us that once we experience *Brahman*, it leads to eternal bliss and the permanent cessation of sorrow. (*atyanthika dukha nivriti* and *niratisaya ananda prapthi*).

### **Pancha Kosha Viveka Knowledge of the Five Sheaths**

Having defined *Brahman* as truth, knowledge, and infinite reality (*sathyam*, *jnanam*, and *anantam*), the Upanishad presents a challenge: if *Brahman* is all-pervading and already present within every heart and every place, why do we not recognize it? The answer lies in the concept of the *Pancha Kosha*, the five sheaths, which the Upanishad describes as the layers of identification that hide the light of pure consciousness. **Therefore, the *Pancha Kosha Viveka*, or discrimination of the five sheaths, is the central meditative technique of the *Brahmananda Valli*, guiding the student's**



## THE FIVE KOSHAS (SHEATHS) COVERING THE ATMA

mind gradually from the grossest to the most subtle dimensions of experience, until all objects are perceived as infinite *Brahman*.

First is the *Annamaya Kosha*, or the food sheath. The outermost layer of identity is the physical body. The Upanishad teaches that all creatures come from food, survive through food, and return to food. This is the most basic level of self-identification—"I am this body." The seeker must recognize that while the body is real as an instrument, it is not the true Self. That is why Baba beautifully says that this body is like a temple, but the inner reality is the indwelling Self, the *Atma* (*Deho devalaya proktho jeevo devah sanathana*).

To transcend from the gross to the subtle, the body given to us should be used for service. As Swami often says, "the body is meant to be sanctified by serving others" (*Paropakartham Idam Shareeram*). He also urges us to "Bend the body, mend the senses, end the mind"—this is our duty in the pursuit of the knowledge of *Brahman*.

Swami also beautifully explains that we are three entities: the one we think we are—the body (not true); the one that others think we are—the mind (also not true); the one we really are—the *Atman* or *Brahman* (the only truth). **To realize this truth, we first need to purify our body through good deeds, service, and spiritual practices like *japa* and meditation, which purify the body and the mind.**

The Self is the witness of all five sheaths. It is that which knows the body, knows the life force, knows the mind, knows the intellect, and even knows the presence and the absence of bliss.



**Second is the *Pranamaya Kosha*, or the vital energy sheath.** The life force that animates the body is subtler than the physical body. There are five *pranas*—*prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana*, and *samana*—which regulate the body's vital functions. *Prana* is the air in the heart and lungs; *apana* is in the abdomen; *vyana* permeates the entire body; *udana* is in the throat; and *samana* is present in the navel region. These are the various vital airs that make the embodied being function properly. However, when *prana* departs, the body collapses into inert matter. Yet *prana* itself is not the Self. It too is an object of experience, an energy that arises and subsides.

**Third is the *Manomaya Kosha*, or the mental sheath.** This is the layer of emotions, desires, memories, and the constant flow of thoughts. The mind is considered a bundle of thoughts (*sankalpa vikalpatmakam manaha*), and it is here that most human suffering originates. Swami says that the mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation. A series of divine discourses on the mind and its mysteries is being published in this magazine, showing its significance for a spiritual seeker who wants to attain liberation. **The mind, along with the five sense organs, makes up this sheath. It is subtler and more powerful than *prana* because it directs the life force.** Yet, it is changeable, can be deluded, and it disappears in deep sleep, while the Self, the *Atma*, continues to exist at all times.

Swami offers simple solutions for controlling the mind, and He explains them beautifully. First, in the beginning stage, watch the mind. Don't try to catch the mind, just observe it. Be a witness, noticing the different thought processes. Once you observe it, do not let negative thoughts enter, and only entertain positive thoughts. Then still the mind or calm the mind so that it doesn't wander all over. Once you still the mind, slowly try to replace bad thoughts with good thoughts. Ultimately, even remove the good thoughts. It is just like how you remove a thorn in your foot with another thorn and ultimately throw away both thorns! **Similarly, a state comes when the mind is annihilated (*manonasha*), enabling you to experience the Self.**

**Fourth is the *Vijnanamaya Kosha*, or the sheath of intellect.** It is the faculty of discrimination, reasoning, understanding, and determination. While the mind deliberates, it is the intellect that decides (*nischayatma buddhi*). If the *buddhi* says that this is the right course of action, then we follow *buddhi*. **But in spiritual life, one must practice fundamental discrimination between the eternal and the transient, and the *buddhi* should be guided to follow only the eternal and not the transient.** This is the layer closer to *Brahman* in the ascending hierarchy of the *Pancha Koshas*. When the intellect is purified and turned inward, it becomes the very instrument of Self-realization. However, even the intellect is not the Self; it is an instrument.

**Fifth and final is the *Anandamaya Kosha*, the sheath of bliss.** It is the most subtle and innermost of the five sheaths. This is the experience of bliss one feels in deep, dreamless sleep, where the mind and senses have ceased functioning, leaving one in a state of peace and joy. This is also experienced in moments of deep meditation. **Yet even this bliss sheath is not *Brahman* itself. It is a reflection of *Atman*'s inherent bliss rather than *Brahman* in its full nature.**

### **True Self is Beyond the Sheaths**

The deeper teaching of the *Pancha Kosha Viveka* shows that the five sheaths are not a cage to escape from, but rather a doorway to continued learning. One learns an important lesson after going through all five sheaths and recognizing that none of them is the Self. **The Self is the witness of all five sheaths. It is that which knows the body, knows the life force, knows the mind, knows the intellect, and even knows the presence and the absence of bliss.**

That is why in this *Pancha Kosha Vivarana*, the famous quotations are:

- *Yatho vacho nivarthanthe aprapya manasa saha* (*Brahman* is that phenomenon that words cannot describe and the mind cannot fathom).
- *Anando brahmano vidvan na bhibheti kutaschaneti* (*Brahman* is beyond all fear in this world and elsewhere.)

Having explored the profound framework of the *Pancha Koshas* and understood that the true Self lies beyond these layers, the seeker stands at the threshold of a deeper revelation. What is this *Brahman* that pervades all creation? How does this infinite reality manifest as the universe, and more importantly, how is it experienced as bliss? In the next part, the Upanishad unveils the mystery of creation, reveals *Brahman* as the very essence of joy, and takes us through the awe-inspiring gradations of bliss—culminating in the realization of absolute oneness and fearlessness.

Jai Sai Ram.





# Cultivate Good Thoughts, Feelings, and Desires

*Without giving up indolence and ignorance (tamas),  
how can one attain the essence of truth?  
Without giving up restlessness and desire, true  
devotion will not arise  
Purity and clarity (satwa) alone make devotion possible  
These are the words of truth.*

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Sacred *Atma*, whatever object the mind contemplates upon, its impressions settle in the heart in the form of subtle tendencies (*vasanas*). Gradually, these tendencies grow and manifest as intellect. This is the experience of every human being. Today's thoughts, today's delusions, today's worries, are a part of the human experience in daily life. **So, if we want to do well, experience good, and live in peace and security, it is important to keep our thoughts and feelings sacred.** Today's feelings take shape as thoughts and grow like trees, ready to yield their fruits in the future. But the primary defect in people today is that they have become adept at finding faults in others, instead of searching for their own faults and correcting them.

For human beings, the primary sign of ignorance is to depend on and follow others, and to fall into the delusion that they will be protected in various ways by fellow men. They are becoming ignorant, unable to recognize the truth that one fruit cannot protect another fruit. Nor are they

able to realize the truth that it is only the tree that protects and sustains all its fruits. A human being is merely like a fruit. It is only the tree called *Atma Shakti* (power of the Self) that protects all these fruits, the human beings.

In the history of the *Bharatiyas* (Indians), the *Bhagavatham* holds a prominent place. The author of the *Bhagavatham*, Potharaju (Poet Saint Pothana), was completely devoted to God and sought to sanctify his entire life by devotion. Although he faced many difficulties and often lacked even food and other necessities, he spent his time joyfully offering various prayers to his chosen deity, Lord Ramachandra. Pothana's words are extremely valuable and profoundly sacred.

He was also a great poet. Concerned that he was wasting his poetry without gaining any worldly benefits, his brother-in-law, Srinatha (another great poet), one day advised him, 'Pothana! You are wasting your poetry. If you dedicate it to the king, you will be well rewarded and can enjoy a comfortable life. Your family, too, can expe-



*It is Lord Sri  
Ramachandra,  
the embodiment of  
the Self (Atma),  
who protects all  
beings and is always  
protecting me.*

*—Pothana*

rience many kinds of pleasures. Therefore, dedicate all your poetry to the king.'

But the response Pothana gave on that day was exceptionally noble, sacred, and exemplary. He said in sublime poetry,

*"It is better for a good poet to be a farmer or even procure roots and tubers in the forest to support his wife and children than to dedicate his literary work, which is like his own daughter, to undeserving persons and eat the food gotten from that."*

(Telugu Poem)

You may believe that one fruit (human being) can protect another fruit (human being), **but it is Lord Sri Ramachandra, the embodiment of the Self (Atma), who protects all beings and is always protecting me.**

"I will not offer this supremely sacred text, this embodiment of goddess Saraswati, to the king and then suffer the misfortune and ill fate caused by partaking of the food they give in charity. Therefore, I dedicate

them only to Sri Ramachandra," he declared.

With many such direct and pointed words, he transformed Srinatha's heart. This Potharaju was a great soul who dedicated his mind, speech, and actions entirely to the supreme Lord. That is why it became evident that his philosophy and composition were wholly dedicated to God. Potharaju did not seek anyone's patronage or depend on others.

Now, there was another person—Goparaju (Bhadrachala Ramadasu). He, too, was a devoted servant of Lord Sri Ramachandra. During the reign of Taneshah (the last ruler of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, also known as Abul Hasan Qutb Shah), he served as a Tahsildar (district magistrate) under the name Kancharla Gopanna. He was a sacred soul who dedicated all his actions to Lord Sri Ramachandra. His entire life was offered to Sri Rama, and not in pursuit of worldly desires.

However many afflictions and difficulties befell him, however many sorrows arose, and whatever forms of hardship he encountered, he dedicated everything, even his body, as an offering to the Lord.



Is wealth truly a  
source of happiness?

Or is being in the  
divine presence  
greater joy?

—Saint Tyagaraja



Though he endured severe suffering in prison, he never abandoned contemplation of his beloved Lord, Sri Ramachandra.

To such a steadfast devotee, Goparaju, **Sri Ramachandra Himself appeared, removed his sufferings, and granted him the direct realization of the eternal truth that He is present everywhere and at all times by his side, as his constant companion, at his home, and as the very light of his eyes, always protecting him.**

The third among these noble devotees is Tyagaraja. He, too, dedicated his mind, speech, and body entirely to Sri Ramachandra.

When the king offered him wealth, gold, riches, and vehicles, he looked upon them and questioned his own mind through the immortal refrain:

*“Is wealth truly a source of  
happiness?*

*Or is being in the divine presence  
greater joy?*

*O mind, tell me truthfully.”*

(This profound introspection reflects the spirit of his celebrated *kriti* (devotional composition), *Nidhi Chala Sukhama* (Is material wealth truly a source of happiness)?

What is the root cause behind the spiritual ideals embodied by the great devotees, Potharaju, Goparaju, and Tyagaraju? Mind alone is the cause. Therefore, the entire world, as we experience it, rests upon and is shaped by the mind.

Without the mind, the world doesn't exist. Therefore, it is essential that each individual strive to direct their mind along the right path, making human life meaningful and allowing them to experience divine realization. If this very mind is allowed to follow another path, it degrades even humaneness into something inferior. Another bad habit of the mind is that instead of perceiving the good in others, it continues to search for their faults.

But who truly has the authority to seek the faults of others? Only one who is completely free from faults has the right to look for faults in others. Those who are

flawed have no authority whatsoever to criticize others' shortcomings. And indeed, one who is truly faultless would never attempt to search for faults in others.

**Therefore, the foremost duty of a sincere spiritual aspirant is to begin by identifying and eliminating one's own defects.**

If a snake is in our bedroom, can we sleep peacefully? We continue to make unending efforts to either drive it out, catch it, or even kill it. Until then, we cannot be at peace.

But today, a human being allows poisonous snakes in the form of sense indulgence and worldly attachment to build nests, lay eggs, and grow comfortably within the heart, and yet the person continues to sleep peacefully in the temple of that very heart. How astonishing this is!

It is the duty of a spiritual aspirant to make an effort to pull out and cast away these poisonous snakes—these defects of worldly attachment—that have entered the temple of the heart. **As long as such venomous snakes remain in our hearts, bliss (*ananda*) cannot be attained; nor can we make any sincere effort toward a sacred path.**

Embodiments of divine *Atma*! Life is indeed very strange. What we consider to be wrong, we readily set out to follow. What we believe to be good, and what good we desire, we do not do.

*“People desire the fruits of virtue,  
yet they do not think about  
performing virtuous deeds.  
They do not desire the fruits of sin,  
yet they constantly engage in sinful  
actions.”*

(Sanskrit Poem)

**We keep proclaiming that we do not want the results of sin. Yet we commit sinful acts. We long for the fruits of merit, but we make no effort whatsoever to perform**

**meritorious deeds.** Desiring is one thing; striving is another.

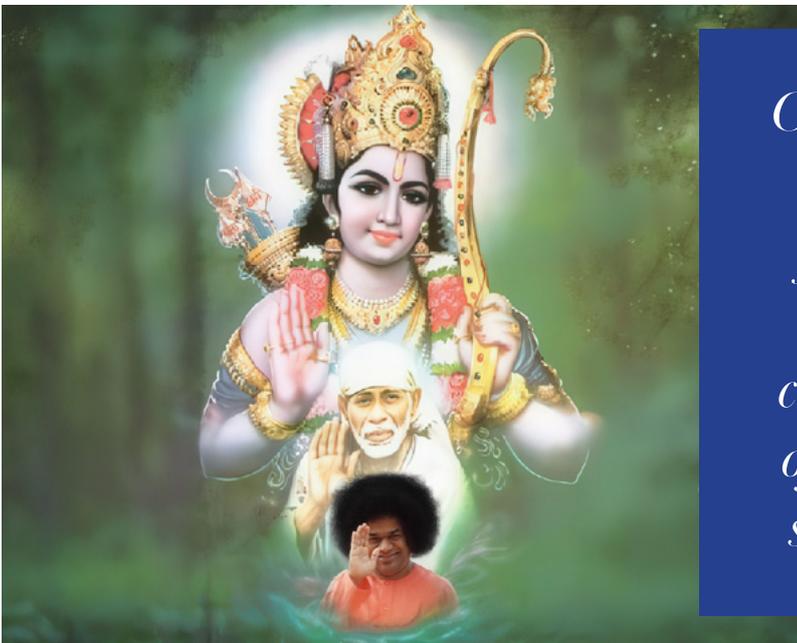
How can we expect good results without making appropriate efforts? It is our duty to make the effort that matches what we desire. First and foremost, it is the responsibility of every human being to shape and refine their own mindset.

We are born. What is the purpose of this birth? We are born so that we may not be born again. Yet, we do not make even the least effort to inquire into the secret of our birth. '*Jantunam Narajanma Durlabham*'—Among all living beings, human birth is rare and difficult to get. On what basis did we obtain this sacred human life? We will be able to follow the right path only when we regard human birth as a blessed boon earned through the accumulated merit of many births.

Is this life merely for eating, sleeping, enjoying, and dying? *Khana* (eating), *peena* (drinking), *sona* (sleeping), and *marna* (dying)—is this the goal of life? No, no! Then, for what purpose are we born? For what purpose are we living? Why do we aspire for sacred liberation (*moksha*)? We must reflect and inquire at least a little on the purpose of life.

To achieve this sacred goal, we must first train the mind; we must enter into a sacred practice. **We should recognize the truth that the mind alone is responsible for both good and bad.** Others are not the cause; impurities in our mind are the real cause. We must clearly believe the truth that our own mind is the cause of both good and bad.

**To train the mind, we should make sincere efforts to cultivate thoughts of God (*Madhava*), engage in sacred service to society, and practice selfless behavior.** Even if we have not put into practice all the injunctions of the Vedas, scriptures, epics, and Puranas, and even if we are not able



*Choose a pure path, give up the habit of finding fault with others, and make sincere efforts to cultivate a sacred vision of the Supreme Being by seeing the divine in all.*

to fully follow the commands of elders, we should at least understand the nature of our mind to some extent and experience an ideal life.

Therefore, during these 10 days (of Dasara), we must carefully inquire into the nature of the mind and make sincere efforts to understand its key principle, its inner secret, and its ultimate goal. We must also, to some extent, recognize the characteristic of the mind that performs this dual role.

O embodiments of the divine Self! First of all, we must make a sincere effort to keep the mind from being carried away by agitations and establish it in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. **No matter how many hardships, losses, insults, or harsh criticisms we may encounter, we must firmly believe that we are merely witnesses and clearly understand the truth that all these are but creations and reflections of the mind.** The root cause of all these sorrows is attachment. As mentioned yesterday, we must recognize the characteristic of the mind that performs this dual role and is drowning us. Our essence should reside in a state beyond all attachments.

First of all, before we can properly understand and recognize the mind, we must realize the truth that the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts.

In all circumstances, we must keep the mind under careful watch and prevent it from entering impure paths or developing the evil tendency of looking for faults in others. We must clearly understand the truth that there is no greater sin than searching for the faults of others. By focusing solely on faults, we are allowing our lives to drift into wrongdoing, accumulate sins, and, in the process, make our lives meaningless.

Therefore, spiritual aspirants, those who follow the path of faith and spirituality, must **choose a pure path, give up the habit of finding fault with others, and make sincere efforts to cultivate a sacred vision of the Supreme Being by seeing the divine in all.**

For many years, we may have begun the spiritual journey, practicing disciplines according to our capacity, attending spiritual gatherings, engaging in righteous deeds, and performing various acts of service to society. Yet, despite doing so many good deeds, we often fail to recognize our own inner nature—we overlook and forget to examine our own mindset.

No matter what spiritual practices we undertake, no matter how many sacrifices we make, or sacred rituals we perform, as long as we fail to recognize and understand our own mental nature, we will never attain

true rest, a pure mind, or sacred feelings. Inner purity is very difficult to attain merely through external actions or outward rituals.

Without Self-confidence and purity of mind, we cannot experience or achieve success in any undertaking. Therefore, first and foremost, we must develop faith and Self-confidence; only then will we attain purity of mind. Through purity of mind, one attains enlightenment (*jnana*).

The primary duty of a true spiritual aspirant is to set an example by being supportive and helpful in service activities without interfering in others' matters, without finding faults in others, and without causing them any harm or loss, while making every effort to purify one's own mind and keep it free from impurities. The same mind exists in everyone, but the thinking process may be different, the efforts may be different, and the paths may be different.

**Therefore, focusing the mind—which causes us to follow many different paths—into a single path, a single feeling, and a single thought is called 'meditation,' or *dhyana*.**

But today, if we carefully examine the unity in diversity and the diversity in unity, it will no longer remain just a saying. It becomes a sacred, natural, true essence. On this basis, it is said that the mind alone is the cause of bondage and liberation for human beings (*mana eva manuṣhyanam karaṇam bandha-mokshayoh*).

The egoistic sense of 'I like' or personal preference should not enter into the mind (*chitta*). The true 'I' (*aham*) exists in everyone and is present at all times. That indeed is constant, eternal, everlasting, true, and pure. However, ego (*ahankara*) is something that comes and goes from time to time.

Therefore, we should not give importance to this ego that appears and disappears.

Instead, we should give due respect to the true 'I' which is constant, eternal, and true. **When we recognize that the 'I' present in all beings is the essence of oneness, there remains no room at all for our ego.**

This ego (*ahamkara*) is what troubles us, causing suffering, and it does not give us happiness. Therefore, to realize the true nature of the 'I' (*aham*), we must recognize the nature of the mind, bring the mind under control, and engage in the appropriate spiritual practices that guide it onto the right path. This is the inner meaning of treading the spiritual path.

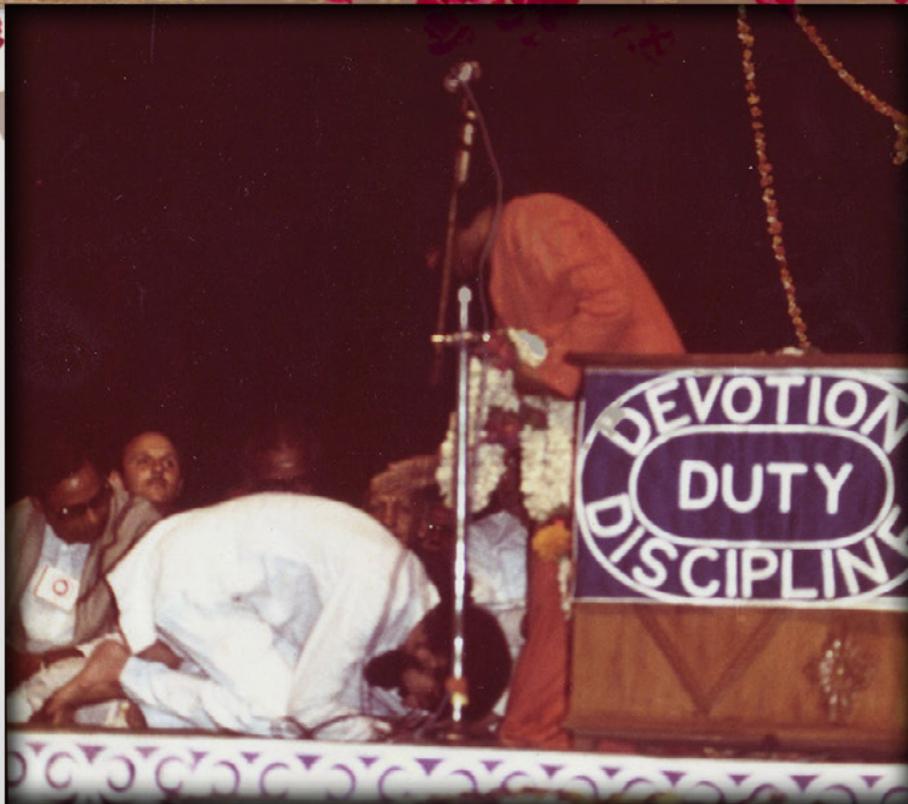
Today, whether it is attachment, dispassion, enjoyment, or anything else, it is the various tendencies of the mind that assume different forms and manifest in diverse ways.

Hence, it is the duty of every participant present to clearly understand the nature and principles of the mind and, through the discourses you are going to listen to over these 10 days, make a sincere effort to calm and refine the mind's true nature.

During these Navaratri days, it is my heartfelt wish and enthusiasm to instruct those gathered here on the true nature of the mind, inspire them, and guide this world in the right direction. For this reason, I have decided to focus solely on teaching the principles and nature of the mind throughout these 10 days. I hope you will make a firm resolve to direct your thoughts onto the proper path after listening to these discourses.

We think we need knowledge of God-realization, divine grace, and the attainment of liberation (*moksha*). But it is not that we need to know. **What we really need to know is the secret of the mind. Once we understand that, liberation will come to us on its own. Self-realization will come by itself.**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba  
Dasara 1976



# Living with God is True Education

**I DID NOT GO TO INDIA IN SEARCH OF GOD. I WENT BECAUSE I WAS YOUNG, CURIOUS, AND RESTLESS.** Like many seekers of my generation, I traveled by land and across continents, drawn by an irresistible longing for God. On the second trip, I wandered for nearly a year through India, visiting Kathmandu, Goa, and countless other sacred places of pilgrimage. I met wandering *sadhus* whose presence stirred something profoundly spiritual within me. Without realizing it, a change had already begun in me, both internally and outwardly. I wore a *dhoti* (traditional Indian menswear), carried a *sadhu* bag, and my skin was so

sun-tanned that people sometimes mistook me for an Indian.

### Meeting Destiny on the Road Taken to Avoid It

It was 1970, and I was 25 years old. One day in Bangalore, when I was standing in a busy market, a stranger suddenly approached me and insisted I must see “Sai Baba” and another *yogi*. I was reluctant and refused. I had already visited several *ashrams* and thought I had seen enough. But destiny has its own ways of persuasion. I began hitchhiking as always, and my journey took me to Hyderabad instead of Madras (known as Chennai today), which was my planned destination. Near Muddenahalli by Nandi Hills, an American couple stopped their minibus and offered me a lift. Inside was a large photograph of a man with an extraordinary hairstyle. I remember thinking he looked like Jimi Hendrix. They told me it was Sathya Sai Baba, and they were going to Puttaparthi for the sacred Maha Shivaratri celebration on March 6<sup>th</sup>. It was a major festival in India that involved fasting, singing the praises of Lord Shiva, and an all-night vigil that drew large crowds. So, I went along.

### Self-Confidence is Most Important

When I arrived, nothing matched my preconceived notions. I had imagined something like a small *Kumbha Mela* (a Hindu pilgrimage, celebrated every four or twelve years with one of the world’s largest public gatherings), with a congregation of *sadhus* and ascetics. Instead, I found ordinary people sitting quietly. I slept on the banks of the Chitravati River on a straw mat, bathed in its waters, and attended *darshan* daily. Yet my mind was in turmoil—swinging between euphoria and dejection, especially at night. At that time, I could not relate to Swami’s outer form at all.

After Maha Shivaratri, Swami called in the Westerners for an interview on the 13th

**The greatest miracle was not visions or wonders. It was the love He radiated. That love transformed lives —beginning with mine.**

of March. When my turn came, He spoke with me privately about my health and my constant hesitation in making decisions. He said that I lacked Self-confidence, the most important prerequisite for a spiritual aspirant. **As He spoke, something extraordinary happened. The storm inside my mind suddenly became still. It was like a raging sea turning perfectly calm. Inwardly, I felt I had arrived home—as if my travails and travels were over.**

### Austere Life in the Ashram

In those days, Puttaparthi was a tiny village. Within the *ashram*, there were a few sheds for accommodation, a Mandir for worship, and a small canteen. I slept outdoors near the meditation tree (*Vatavriksha*). Sometimes six or seven of us shared a small room, where we securely stored our luggage, spending most of our time on the veranda of the Mandir, or under the open sky. Later in Whitefield, I lived for two months beneath a single tree opposite Brindavan Ashram. That tree was our shelter, our roof, and our address.

When the students went home for their semester break however, Swami called us into the *ashram* sheds where the classes were held. Later on, He welcomed us right into His own home in Brindavan. We were given a small room near the staircase leading to His private quarters upstairs—though

we used it only to keep our belongings—continuing to sleep outdoors. It was an intimate and divine fatherly gesture that showed how much He cared for us, even in the smallest practical ways.

Swami treated us Western youths like kindergarten children learning spirituality. **Every evening, He called us, taught us simple *bhajans*, explained Indian traditions, and revealed the deeper symbolism of the epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.** We had enthusiasm but no foundation. He patiently built that foundation. There were distractions from the group dynamics, and even conflicts arose. It was a challenge to shut out all these distractions and focus on Swami alone—valuable training for the life of a spiritual aspirant.

### Follow the Heart

What impressed me most were not Swami's miracles or displays of power. It was the freedom He gave us all. With some teachers, you feel overwhelmed, as if something is being imposed on you. For instance, I had previously stayed in Ayodhya, feeling a deep connection with Lord Rama. But within three days, I felt pressured by the *ashram* residents to convert me to a monk! In fact, some masters weren't genuine; they wanted to cultivate Western disciples and followers as 'trophies' to show off.

That wasn't the case with Swami. **With Swami, I always felt inwardly free to follow my heart. He was there to guide me. Nothing was forced.** Many times, I felt that He was in my heart itself! I simply knew I was home. I had once turned away from the church, yet in India, my heart opened again to religion in a profoundly new way. During those months, I even rediscovered Christianity.

Swami never asked us to abandon our faith or traditions. On the contrary, He told us to firmly stand true to our own culture and

rediscover its essence. Once, he corrected Western women who were imitating Indian rituals around a Ganesha statue, asking why they were copying customs that were not truly their own. Authenticity mattered more than blind imitation.

### Interviews and Inner Silence

In that first year, Swami blessed us with nearly 50 to 60 interviews! It started with learning *bhajans*, and then He often brought us in to talk about spiritual topics. For us, it was all new territory, understanding the symbolism of Krishna, Radha, etc., and their deep inner meaning. It was about the transitory versus the eternal, about '*jiva*' and '*paramatma*,' and the inner Self and the mind.

Once, when we were talking with Him, it occurred to me that I had little money left, perhaps only a few rupees. While we were sitting with Swami, He suddenly turned around and asked, "*Do you need money?*" I was perplexed and couldn't say anything at all.

I rarely spoke in interviews. His presence overwhelmed me. When He addressed me, I felt like a rabbit before a lion—awestruck and speechless. I didn't really have any questions or comments. It was the others who asked questions, and I would eagerly listen. I had more 'contact' with Him through dreams, and was guided through dreams, because in dreams, external inhibitions fall away, and you are simply different.

After several months, I had a vivid dream where Swami and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa merged into one form. I had been an admirer of Sri Ramakrishna for a long time. After this dream, Swami became like a Sadguru or God for me. **The next day, I felt ready for the first time to bow and touch His feet.** I had promised myself I would never imitate rituals unless they arose from within. Now I really wanted to touch His feet.



*We should not measure grace by outward signs—interviews, attention, recognition—but by inner transformation. If fear decreases and courage grows, grace is already at work.*

### Unity with the Universe

The most important message He gave me was to be true to oneself: “Don’t imitate.”

Each person must have their own unique relationship with the divine. This became clear when our close-knit Western group began to fracture. Conflicts arose. Interpretations spread. **I realized spiritual life cannot be lived collectively through imitation; it must be lived authentically, both individually and personally.**

At one point, I even left Puttaparthi for Kerala, thinking my time there was done. But every night I dreamt of Swami. I finally understood that nothing was over. When I returned, I had a profound experience—and that also deepened my relationship with Swami.

I was sitting on the roof of Rajmata’s house in the *ashram*. During meditation, I noticed that even basic concentration was very difficult for me, let alone the next stages, contemplation and meditation. But when I sat back and relaxed, I suddenly felt something come over me. **Suddenly, everything was gone; my whole mind vanished! I had a feeling of complete unity with the whole**

**universe!** It only lasted a short time. But you can’t measure things like that in time. Sometimes it’s just seconds, but the impact lasts a lifetime.

### Inner Experience—Beyond Form

Another early experience occurred while I sat in *darshan* watching Him walk some distance away. Suddenly, everything felt far away. I could still see His physical form, but that seemed insignificant. **What filled me instead was an intense inner sense of merging—something entirely inward, unrelated to the physical form.** Experiences like these slowly reshaped my understanding. At first, I saw Him only as a guide. The idea of Him being God or Avatar felt distant. Spiritual understanding ripened and matured gradually, like a fruit on a tree.

He used to call us Western youths ‘Americans,’ no matter where we were from, and sometimes jokingly called us ‘rowdies.’ We were impulsive seekers, and He guided us with humor as much as with wisdom.

### Grace is Measured by Inner Change

Later, even when outward contact with Him became less frequent, I never felt abandoned. Dreams, intuitions, and moments of



Baba supervising and blessing western volunteers painting messages on stone slabs.

sudden clarity continued to guide me. That was when I understood that physical proximity is not spiritual closeness. Divine presence does not diminish with distance.

**We should not measure grace by outward signs—interviews, attention, recognition—but by inner transformation. If fear decreases and courage grows, grace is already at work.**

I had another experience of overcoming fear. I loved music but had no sense of rhythm. Still, I bought a small drum and played it very softly during *bhajans* so as not to disturb anyone. One day, during *bhajans*, I closed my eyes and focused on Swami. Suddenly, energy flowed through me, and the drum played perfectly.



From that moment, I could keep the rhythm. My fear had dissolved.

Another time, we painted stone tablets with His profound spiritual messages in preparation for His Birthday. None of us was a painter, yet somehow it worked. It taught me: begin first—His help and guidance will follow.

Later, when asked to paint fabric banners, I decided to slip away in fear. Just then, Swami arrived and asked me, “*What are you doing?*” I stammered, ashamed. But the message struck me inside: do not run from what you think you cannot do. Go ahead and do it.

That lesson shaped my life. I had no technical knowledge, yet I later worked for 15 years in the media department, transferring and archiving recordings for the Sai Organization. Courage begins where self-doubt ends.

### Privilege and Humility

In 1975, during the Golden Jubilee 50th Birthday Celebrations, I had the privilege of presenting Swami a birthday garland on behalf of SSSIO Germany. Five years later, in 1980, I did so again. At that time, I worried that the garland was too small, so I bought another and joined them together. When I placed it over His head, it suddenly gave way and opened at the bottom! I was terri-



For me, the greatest miracles were not visions or wonders. It was the love He radiated. That love transformed lives—beginning with mine.

### When the Form Disappears

Years later, when I heard He had left His physical body, I was not shocked. He had often told us that when we returned to the West and faced difficulties, He would always be with us and grant us His 'special grace.' I allowed myself a day of grief. **Then inwardly came a command: "Swami is within."** Do not cling to the outer form. The divine is not confined to a body.

bly embarrassed. Yet in that instant, a beautiful thought arose inside me: it was as if He were symbolically breaking the wall separating East and West Germany. It happened 10 years later, but I was sure it would.

He showed me what love truly means—serving others. When we serve selflessly, we serve God, and ultimately our own deepest Self. But service requires discernment. We must ask whether we are truly helping or merely interfering. True help empowers others to help themselves.

At first, I had known Him only as a guide. Gradually, I understood something deeper. Labels such as God or Avatar mattered less than experience. What mattered more was that the presence I once experienced externally now lived eternally within me.

**Mr. Benno Wesener**   
GERMANY



*Mr. Benno Wesener traveled from Germany to India in 1969 in a spiritual pursuit. After meeting Swami, he lived in Prasanthi Nilayam for extended periods from 1971 onward. After returning to Germany, he became one of the early pioneers in establishing the national Sai Organization. Between 1973 and 1975, he founded the first bhajan group in Nürnberg, and in 1976, he established the first German Sai Center there. At the professional level, he was the Chair of the Workers Council at a home for the handicapped.*

*Over the decades, Mr. Wesener served the SSSIO in numerous leadership roles at both regional and national levels. He organized the first German Sai Retreat in 1980. He served as the Nurnberg Center president, national media coordinator, national devotional coordinator, and the national council president from 2014–2018.*



# THE POWER OF Gayatri

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is revered as a Guru by millions worldwide. Swami's message is open, universal, and all-inclusive. Aside from a few rare and exceptional cases, Swami has not personally initiated anyone by giving *mantras*. In fact, one incident involving the renowned biographer of Swami and translator of His discourses, Prof. Kasturi, beautifully illustrates this fact.

## No Exclusive Mantras—Only Universal Truth

On one occasion, Prof. N. Kasturi approached Him with an intense, heartfelt desire for spiritual initiation and to receive a *mantra* from Swami, believing it would bring him closer to God. This happened in April 1961, during Swami's visit to the holy city of Kashi (Varanasi). Initially, it appeared that Swami was ready to grant his wish, raising Prof. Kasturi's hopes. However, after Prof. Kasturi completed all the obligatory preparatory rituals to receive a *mantra*, including a ceremonial dip in the holy river Ganga, Swami did not initiate him with a *mantra*.

Deeply disappointed, Kasturi sat down to dine with Swami, visibly crestfallen. Swami noticed this and asked him the reason.

“Swami, You promised to initiate me with a *mantra*, but You didn’t give me one,” Kasturi responded.

Swami gently asked, “*Why do you want a mantra?*”

“To get closer to God,” Kasturi replied.

Swami leaned closer and lovingly whispered into his ear: “*How much closer, Kasturi?*”

**That single question dissolved the very notion of any distance between the seeker and the divine.**

### **One Mantra that Swami Universally Recommended**

Swami’s message is always clear—*nothing is hidden, nothing is exclusive*. Everything He came to give, He gave openly—through public discourses, recorded talks, and writings available to all in *Sathya Sai Speaks* and the *Vahinis*. Swami never advocated spiritual exclusivity—anyone can follow His path.

Yet there is one powerful *mantra* that Swami repeatedly and universally recommended—privately and publicly, to men and women, children and elders, Indians and foreigners, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, and religion.

That mantra is the *Gayatri Mantra*.

**If Swami ever came close to ‘initiating’ anyone with a *mantra*, it was through His tireless emphasis on the *Gayatri mantra*. He taught it, explained it, glorified it, and urged humanity to embrace it as a daily spiritual discipline.** In fact, in His discourse of June 20, 1977, Swami says, “*Never give up the Gayatri; you may give up or ignore any other mantra, but you should recite the Gayatri*

*at least a few times a day. It will protect you from harm wherever you are—travelling, working, or at home.*”

### **Gayatri: The Divine Mother of All**

Swami often describes Gayatri as “*Gayatri Chandasamata*”—the mother of all Vedas. He declares that Gayatri is not merely a *mantra* but the embodiment of all gods and goddesses. **According to Him, the *Gayatri mantra* contains within itself the power, potency, and miraculous capabilities of all other *mantras* combined.**

Gayatri is often depicted as a radiant divine mother with five faces. Swami explains that these five faces represent the five vital life forces (*pancha pranas*) that sustain human life, reminding us that Gayatri governs life itself.

### **Benefits of Gayatri Mantra**

On August 23, 1995, Swami spoke extensively about the *Gayatri mantra* and revealed its deeper meaning:

*“Sarva roga-nivarini Gayatri”*  
(*Gayatri prevents all diseases*).

*“Sarva dukkha-pariharini Gayatri”*  
(*Gayatri removes all misery*).

*“Sarva vancha phala-siddhi Gayatri”*  
(*Gayatri fulfils all desires*).

Swami warns devotees never to treat the *Gayatri mantra* casually. Even chanting it once, He says, can bestow immense benefit. But it should be done in all sincerity and faith.

What follows are direct experiences of devotees about the power of the *Gayatri mantra*.

### **When One Chant Could Have Changed Destiny**

Dr. Vijai Kumar, in his book *The Avatar’s Prescription*, recounts a deeply moving incident that happened in 1985.



**It has the capacity not just to change one person's destiny but also the destiny of hundreds!**

**Dr. Vijai Kumar**

During an interview, Swami spent considerable time interacting lovingly with a six-year-old girl—talking to her about simple things and even advising her on where to place Swami's photograph at home so she could see Him from every room. Meanwhile, the child's mother sat silently, tears streaming down her face—not tears of joy, but of profound grief. Observers were puzzled. They wondered why Swami was giving so much attention to the child and not to her mother, who seemed to need it more!

Swami then quietly whispered: "*Kanishka... Air India.*"

The Air India Kanishka flight had been blown up mid-air by terrorists, killing everyone on board. Everyone present understood that the child's father was among the victims!

Later, Swami made a very deep and powerful statement:

*"There were more than 250 people on that aircraft. If even one of them had chanted the Gayatri mantra, the story would have been different."*

What that 'different story' might have been, Swami did not explain. But the implication shook everyone present and revealed the unfathomable, protective power of the *Gayatri mantra*. **It has the capacity not just**

**to change one person's destiny but also the destiny of hundreds!**

### **Gayatri as the Supreme Protective Shield**

The very word *Gayatri* can be broken as: "*Gayantam trayate iti Gayatri.*"

***Gayatri is that which protects the one who chants it.*** This protection is not just symbolic; it is tangible.

Group Captain Yashas, who served as a pilot in the Indian Air Force for 29 years and also taught the Awareness Course at Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, always recites the *Gayatri mantra*. He discovered during a medical checkup that his Vitamin D levels were critically low, below 4 ng/mL, when the normal level is around 30 ng/mL. Many experts recommend maintaining a level between 20 and 40 ng/mL for good health.

Captain Yashas did just one thing regularly. Every day, during *Brahma Muhurta* (the sacred pre-dawn hours), he would start chanting the *Gayatri* 108 times. **A few months later, acting on a hunch, he had**



**His Vitamin D level had risen to over 26, near normal. No medication. No dietary change. Only the power of Gayatri.**

**Group Captain Yashas**



The experience left the couple reflecting in awe on the profound miracle of divine love and protection. Gayatri had protected everyone, on the road and at home.

Mr. Stig Meincke

his medical tests repeated. His Vitamin D level had risen to over 26, near normal. No medication. No dietary change. Only the power of Gayatri.

Even in his late seventies, he remains energetic and healthy, with the vitality of someone decades younger.

### Protection on an Icy Road to Destiny

Another extraordinary account comes from Mr. Stig Meincke of Copenhagen, published earlier in *Sathya Sai—The Eternal Companion*,

During a severe snowstorm, Mr. Meincke received an urgent call; his mother-in-law, living in Vordingborg, over 100 km away, had a medical emergency. Authorities had advised everyone to stay home and not travel due to bad weather conditions. Roads were covered with ice and heavy snow. In addition, the fuel in Mr. Meincke's car was low. Yet, with no other option, despite official warnings against travel under such treacherous road conditions, the couple was determined to drive to Vordingborg.

Thick snow covered the roads, visibility was extremely poor, and conditions worsened as they started on the highway. Feeling overwhelmed by the danger, Mr. Meincke surrendered to Swami. At one point, the car completely lost control. In desperation, Mr. Meincke let go of the steering wheel, folded his hands, surrendered, and began chanting the Gayatri *mantra*. Miraculously, the car stabilized and began moving smoothly—even at high speed—on icy roads. When he touched the steering wheel again, the car lost control. When he let go, it corrected itself to go smoothly. **Throughout the journey, they chanted the Gayatri *mantra* continuously, trusting completely in divine potency and protection.**

The car moved swiftly and smoothly through deep snow, passing stalled vehicles without incident. After just over an hour, they reached his mother-in-law's home. The on-call doctor, who had also just arrived, was astonished by their quick travel time under such conditions and noted that the short distance he had to drive had taken much longer. The mother-in-law was found to be safe. The experience left the couple reflecting in awe on the profound miracle of divine love and protection.

Gayatri had protected everyone, on the road and at home.

### Protection on Life's Journey Itself

A moving account by Sri Krishna Srinivasan, one of the directors of Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation (SSSWF), who lives in the USA, clearly demonstrates the divine power inherent in the Gayatri *mantra*. Here is his inspiring story.

"My mother, Late Smt. Vijayalakshmi Srinivasan, lovingly called *Amma* by Sai devotees in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India, lived a life immersed in constant remembrance of God. For her, prayer was not just an activity; it was her very life-breath. Her prayers included *Omkara*, Sri Sathya Sai Suprabhatam, Sri Venkatesha Suprabhatam, and the recitation of 1,008 divine names of Vishnu, Lali-



A few minutes after the Gayatri chanting concluded, my mother gently merged into eternal silence—her life resting in peace, embraced by the Gayatri mantra.

Sri Krishna Srinivasan

tha, Dakshinamoorthy, and Sathya Sai, along with other prayers. But among all these, the Gayatri mantra was very special to her. Her prayer list also kept growing continuously—not for herself, but for helping others. She lived for others, and through that selflessness, she lived in God.

Though she asked for nothing, she once expressed a single wish—that I should perform her final rites. I brushed aside the thought then, unaware of how the future would unfold as per her sincere wish.

In May 2020, during the global uncertainty caused by the COVID pandemic and shut-down, my mother suffered a severe head injury and was admitted to the hospital ICU (Intensive Care Unit) in Coimbatore. Although surgery was performed, she remained in a coma. Medical opinion suggested that recovery was unlikely. **International travel was suspended, and reaching India from the USA seemed impossible. Yet, when all external supports collapsed, prayer remained the only recourse.**

At that very moment, the SSSIO was preparing for the first online *Akhanda Gayatri* chanting, a continuous global chanting of the sacred *mantra*. Holding firmly to Bhagawan's lotus feet and surrendering every obstacle to His will, I immersed myself in planning the production of Swami's *darshan* videos that were to accompany the chanting of Gayatri by Swami.

Against all odds, doors that were previously closed opened. The Government of India approved my travel on the only flight leaving Chicago and arriving in Bengaluru on June 8th. Every travel restriction, including the two-week quarantine at the Bengaluru airport upon arrival, was removed, one by one. I reached India and stood beside my beloved mother in the ICU on June 13, 2020—the very day *Akhanda Gayatri* chanting commenced in India.

Her condition deteriorated. Doctors advised us to prepare for her passing. Remembering her wish for a peaceful transition, we moved her from the ICU to a regular ward. As the *Akhanda Gayatri* began, something extraordinary unfolded.

Her pulse stabilized! Oxygen levels improved! Vital signs returned to normal!

My sister, brother, and I sat beside my mother's bed, softly chanting the Gayatri, in awe and gratitude. Throughout the entire period of the chanting of the *Akhanda Gayatri*—from June 13 to June 14—we remained anchored in the *mantra*.

A few minutes after the Gayatri chanting concluded, my mother gently merged into eternal silence—her life resting in peace, embraced by the Gayatri mantra. **By Bhagawan's grace and the cumulative power of a lifetime of prayer, the impossible became possible: I was present when she merged with Bhagawan. Her wishes were fulfilled. Her transition was serene and peaceful.**

This sacred experience transformed my perspective on the power of prayer. The Gayatri *mantra* is not merely a chant—it

is a living, luminous force that guides the soul, purifies the mind, and bestows eternal peace.”

### Gayatri and Inner Peace

At the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School (SSSHSS) in 2017, Grade 10 students from the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School collectively undertook the *sadhana* of chanting the Gayatri *mantra* daily. They did this very sincerely as a group *sadhana*, chanting the *mantra* whenever they could.

**The results were amazing. The class prepared well and produced exceptional academic performance in the Board Examinations.** Apart from that, these students also excelled in sports and extracurricular activities. At the same time, the students demonstrated exemplary discipline and calmness, becoming role models for the whole school.

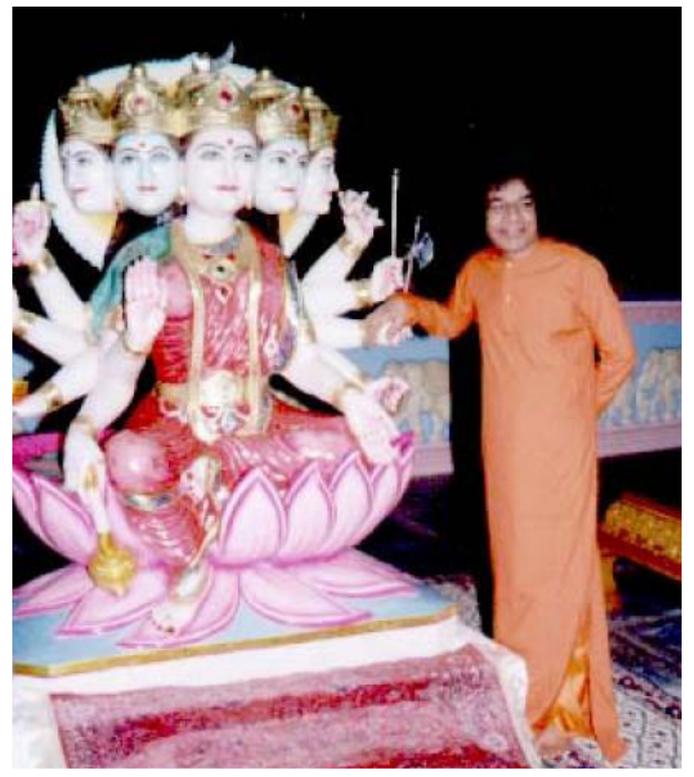
Coincidentally, a group of researchers arrived the same year to conduct scientific studies on stress levels among student groups. While the national average for students was around 50/100, the students in the SSSHSS had low stress levels of just 25!

**Students of one class—tenth graders—chanting the Gayatri *mantra* recorded an amazingly low stress level of 3!**

### When, Where, and How to Chant Gayatri

Traditionally, the Gayatri *mantra* is chanted three times a day, at sunrise, noon, and sunset. However, Swami emphasizes that Gayatri can be chanted at any time. There are no restrictions or limitations! **The Gayatri *mantra* can be chanted anywhere at any time, and for any length of time!**

Chanting this *mantra* during bathing transforms the bath into an *abhishekam* (sacred bathing of the deity). Chanting it before eating turns the food into *prasadam*. Chanting the Gayatri while walking changes the



walk into *pradakshina* (circumambulation). **Thus, every action or work becomes worship through the power of the Gayatri.**

Everyone can chant this *mantra*, and Swami imposes no restrictions based on age, gender, religion, or nationality. However, He emphasizes that it must be done with reverence, devotion, and sincerity—never casually.

### Gayatri: The Breath of Life

The Gayatri *mantra* grants worldly benefits, no doubt, but the true purpose of chanting is higher. It is to illumine the intellect to attain oneness with the divine, a permanent place at His lotus feet.

May the Gayatri *mantra* become our life breath.

May it protect, heal, guide, and awaken us.

And may our love for Swami grow stronger with every passing moment.

Jai Sai Ram.

Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya

INDIA





# PARIPURNA AVATARI SAI

పరిపూర్ణ అవతారి సాయి

కం॥ పరిపూర్ణము నీ విభవము,  
పరిపూర్ణము నీ చరిత్ర, పరి పూర్ణంబౌ  
నరయన్ బోధలు, ప్రేమయు  
పరిపూర్ణము; నవతరణయు పరిపూర్ణమహో!

*Perfect is Your glory  
Perfect is Your life story  
Perfect are Thy teachings  
Perfect is Your love  
O, Your incarnation is Supremely perfect!*

.....

తే గీ॥ సర్వదేవతామూర్తివి సగుణలీతి  
నిర్గుణమ్మగు పరబ్రహ్మ నీవెసాయి!  
నీది సన్నిధి మాకు పెన్నిదియె సుమ్ము  
సచ్చిదానంద! మాజన్మ సఫల మయ్యె!

*O Supreme Lord! Who is the embodiment of all the gods  
You are the attributeless Supreme Parabrahman  
Being in Your Presence is our greatest wealth  
O Satchidananda, our life is truly fulfilled!*



కం॥ మధురము నీ సచ్చరితము,  
మధురము నీబివ్య నామ మరయన్, పలుకుల్  
మధురము, రూపము, గానము  
మధురము; భవదీయమెల్ల మధురము సాయీ!

*Sweet is the story of Your sacred life  
Sweet is Your divine name  
Verily, sweet are Your words  
Sweet are Your beauty and singing  
Sweet indeed is everything about You!*



తే గీ॥ సర్వశాస్త్రాల మూట మాసాయి మాట,  
సర్వధర్మాల బాట మాసాయి బాట,  
సకల లోకాల ఆట మాసాయి ఆట,  
సకల అమృతాల ఊట మాసాయి పాట.

*Our Sai's words are verily the bundle of scriptures  
The path of all religions is our Sai's path.  
The play of all the worlds is our Sai's play.  
The fountain of all nectars is our Sai's song.*

ఉ॥ పండిత పూజ్య డార్తజన బాంధవుడుజ్వల  
ప్రేమజ్యోతి, భూ మండల మెల్ల నింపు న సమానయశస్వికి,  
సాయి శూలికిన్ రెండవ సాటి దైవమిల లేడనుచున్ గడగట్టి,  
భేరికా డాండ డడాండ డాండ నినదంబుల జాండము నిండ,  
మత్త వే దండము నెక్కి చాటెదను దైవశిరోమణి, సాధుహృన్మణి!

*Revered by scholars, friend of the suffering, a radiant flame  
of love filling the entire earth with unparalleled glory.  
There is no second deity equal to Sai Siva, I proclaim boldly,  
mounted on an elephant, beating the drums loudly,  
filling the whole universe.  
I proclaim You as the crest jewel among the divine,  
the jewel in the hearts of the noble.*

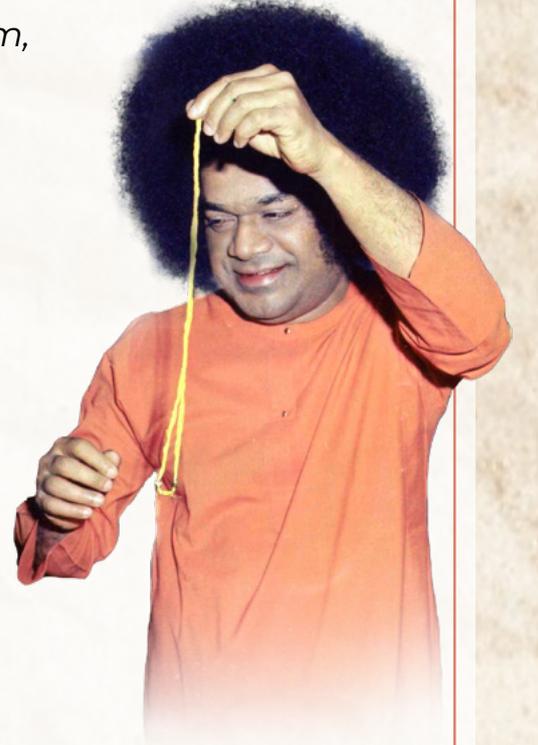
ఆ వె॥ సత్య, ధర్మ, ప్రేమ, శాంత్యహింసలు సర్వ  
మతములందు సారమనుచు, వాని  
విశ్వమతమునకును, విశ్వవిద్యకు గూడ  
విశ్వ వ్యాప్తి జేసె విశ్వమూర్తి.



*Truth, righteousness, love, peace, and nonviolence,  
declaring these as the essence of all religions,  
You spread them throughout the world  
as a universal religion and universal wisdom,  
O Lord of the Universe!*

కం॥ కని విని యెఱుగన్నేరని  
ఘన మహిమలు లీలలెన్నో కన్నారము; వా  
కొన విన్నారము; వీనులు  
కనులును ధన్యంబులయ్యె కరుణామూర్తి!

*We have seen and heard many wonders,  
great miracles beyond imagination.  
We have witnessed them with our own eyes  
and heard them with our own ears.  
Our eyes and ears have been sanctified,  
O Compassionate One!*



ఆ వె॥ నామ శూన్య! సర్వనామ ధారియునీవె,  
రూపులన్ని నీవె రూపరహిత!  
అద్వితీయ సచ్చిదానందమూర్తివి  
అణువు కణము క్షణములన్ని నీవె!

*O Nameless One! Yet bearer of all names,  
All forms are Yours,  
yet You are the formless.  
You are the embodiment of nondual Satchitananda,  
Every atom, every cell, and every moment are You.*



సీ॥ ఏ యవతారము లెన్నడు చేయని  
 కార్యక్రమము లెన్నో ఘనత మీర  
 విశ్వమంతట చేసి విశ్వజనాళికి  
 సుఖశాంతులొన గూర్చుచుండు స్వామి  
 పరిపూర్ణ అవతార! పత్తిశ! కనేలేదు,  
 కనబోము, వినలేదు, వినగబోము  
 ఉచిత ఉన్నత విద్య, ఉచిత ఉన్నత  
 వైద్యముచితభోజనమును, ఉచితముగనె

*Never before has any incarnation  
 performed such noble works across  
 the whole world—bringing peace and  
 happiness to all humanity.  
 O Perfect Avatar! O Lord of Puttaparthi!  
 We have never seen, nor shall we see  
 we have never heard or will  
 hear of another like You,  
 who provides free higher education,  
 free advanced medical care,  
 and free food.*



తే గీ॥ మంచినీటిని, అన్నిటి మించినట్టి  
 ఆత్మ విద్యను నీవలెనందరికిని  
 ఎవరొసంగిరి ఎక్కడ నెన్నడేవి?  
 సత్యబోధక! సాయీశ! శరణు, శరణు!

*Providing pure drinking water,  
 and above all, imparting the supreme  
 knowledge of the Self to everyone  
 Who else has ever given such gifts  
 anywhere, at any time?  
 O Teacher of Truth! O Lord Sai!  
 We surrender to You, again, and again!*



కం॥ పలికితిని సాయి పలుకులు  
 పలికించిన విభుడు సాయిప్రభువే; మలినే  
 పలుకగ భవహారమాయెను,  
 పలుకుదు వేరొండు పలుకు పలుకగ నేలా?



డా॥ ఆ అడివి రెడ్డి  
 జై సాయీరామ్!

*The words spoken here are  
 Sai's words.  
 It is Lord Sai Himself who  
 made me speak.  
 Uttering them removes the  
 bondage of worldly existence.  
 Why should I speak any other  
 words?*

**Dr. A. Adivi Reddy**  
 Jai Sai Ram!

# LOVE IN ACTION



## NEW ZEALAND Sai School Becomes Center of Community Joy and Service

In February 2026, SSSIIO members in New Zealand hosted the annual Rongomai Sathya Sai Pre-School Community Fun Day in Otara, bringing together nearly 200 community members, including many children and families. The event began with a traditional Māori Karakia (prayer), followed by joyful performances by preschool children and teachers. **Families enjoyed a variety of activities. There was a distribution of clothes. Complimentary health checks were offered by registered nurses, along**



**with guidance on healthy living.** With food, refreshments, and a warm spirit of togetherness, the day strengthened community bonds while reflecting the values of service, well-being, and loving care for all.



## SRI LANKA 'Watering' The Roots of Education

Sri Sathya Sai Center of Thalawakele in Sri Lanka commissioned the Sri Sathya Sai Water Project at Fernham Tamil Vidyalaya in Thalawakele on January 24, 2026. Established in 1941, the school has served generations of children from communities despite many challenges. **The new water facility now provides safe and reliable drinking water for students and staff, which is benefiting their health and well-being.** The impact has already been visible in the increase in new student applications received after the installation, reflecting renewed trust and confidence among parents. The commissioning



ceremony was followed by an Education in Human Values (EHV) awareness program emphasizing the importance of character, discipline, and values-based living. Conducted in a spirit of unity and selfless service, the event reflected Swami's message: *"Service to man is service to God."*



## SURINAME

### When Santa Comes to Town

Between December 15-21, 2025, volunteers from the Sri Sathya Sai Center, Sonja Straat, Suriname, organized a heartfelt service initiative called 'Christmas for Sai.' SSSIO members distributed 30 Christmas care packages to families in the districts of Commewijne, Wanica, and Paramaribo. **Each package included essential food items such as rice, oil, beans, macaroni, oatmeal, peanut butter, chocolate spread, tea, and festive Christmas breads and cookies.** Through this initiative, devotees exemplified Swami's teaching, 'Love All, Serve All,' bringing joy, happiness, and the true spirit of Christmas to families in need.



## USA

### Attitude of Gratitude from Young Hearts

Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) students from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Detroit Metro in Michigan created heartfelt gratitude cards to honor police officers and school security personnel who help keep their communities safe. Through school visits and trips to local police stations, the children personally presented their cards, expressing appreciation for the dedication and sacrifice of those who protect and serve. **The simple gesture deeply touched many officers and beautifully reflected the SSE values of aware-**



**ness, humility, and gratitude.** By recognizing those who safeguard their communities, these young students showed that character building begins with genuine appreciation and a heartfelt "thank you."

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 FAMILY'S JOURNEY FROM CHAMATKAR TO SAKSHATKAR

The sacred name, *Om Sri Sai Adbhuta Charyaya Namaha*, from the Sathya Sai Ashtothram (the 108 names of Sri Sathya Sai Baba), describes Swami as the one who performs extraordinary, unprecedented miraculous deeds that evoke wonder. Miracles are Swami's 'visiting cards,' and serve as divine introductions that validate His divinity. **However, Swami Himself downplays their importance, comparing a miracle to a "mosquito on the elephant," encouraging us to look beyond sensational events to the profound, immeasurable spiritual truth and divine love** He embodies, a truth far greater than any single 'miracle.' Swami has clarified that miracles are intended as evidence of divinity rather than for display or show. Over the last six decades, our family has witnessed awe-inspiring acts of grace that confirm Swami is the *Sarvanyami*—indweller of all hearts and the eternal witness.

## Swami Comes Home

In 1964, I had my first *darshan* of Swami in Chennai and immediately recognized Him as the divine incarnation. The following day, my parents and sisters accompanied me to see Swami. As Swami came out to grant *darshan*, I nudged my handicapped eldest sister to ask Swami to heal her polio. But before she could say anything, Swami indicated to her that He was aware of her condition. He blessed her with *Padanamaskar*, touched her head, and promised constant protection. In a remarkable turn of events, the following Thursday, she secured a job that provided her with financial independence.

My father was deeply awed by Swami, yet he struggled with a profound inner conflict, torn between his deep-rooted loyalty to the Paramacharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham and his newfound admiration for Swami. As this troubled him, *vibhuti* (holy ash) began appear-

**“Swami has clarified that miracles are intended as evidence of divinity rather than for display or show. Over the last six decades, our family has witnessed awe-inspiring acts of grace that confirm Swami is the Sarvantaryami—indweller of all hearts and the eternal witness”**

ing on the black-and-white photo of the Paramacharya on our wall. **Pleasantly surprised, my father realized this was a clear sign from Swami. His inner turmoil vanished completely.** From then on, he never questioned or doubted Swami’s divinity again. I firmly believe that it was the Paramacharya himself who directed my father to Swami.

It didn’t take long for our home to transform into a local *samithi* (Sai Center), where neighbors gathered weekly for *bhajans*. With my father and sister serving as office bearers, our family was deeply involved. I felt truly blessed that Swami chose my sister and me to serve as volunteers in Prasanthi Nilayam. In those days, Swami personally distributed sarees, badges, and volunteer scarves to the selected volunteers. During the 1960s, Swami often visited Chennai, and we were fortunate enough to prepare the sacred *Thummi* (*Leucas aspera*) flower garlands for Him. Seeing Swami adorned in those pristine white garlands, with His thick crown of hair and orange robe, was a truly divine sight to behold!

### **Miracles of Manifestation**

Sacred items such as *vibhuti*, *kumkum* (vermillion), and sugar candy began to manifest in our home altar. One morning, while our family was gathered, we

witnessed bright red *kumkum* falling from the picture of Goddess Raja Rajeshwari. My mother casually remarked that the vibrant red color resembled decorative *rangoli* powder rather than the deep maroon, traditional mixture of turmeric and vermillion, considered auspicious for married women. Immediately after her observation, the falling vermillion instantly changed from bright red to a deep maroon, leaving us all astonished and spellbound.

One morning, while my younger sister and I were tending to our chores, I suggested removing an empty wooden chair from the altar room to clear some space. My sister agreed, noting that the room felt cramped for both the devotees and us. **However, when we entered to remove it, we were stunned to find Shirdi Baba’s idol, which had previously sat on the floor, perched upon the chair, covered in mounds of sacred *vibhuti* on the head and lap.** Taking this as a divine sign that Swami wished for the chair to stay, we left it exactly where it was.

During Maha Shivarathri *bhajans* at our home, *vibhuti* began to cascade like a brilliant shower of light, emanating precisely from the point where the Ganges flows from Lord Shiva’s matted hair in His portrait. One Christmas, I expressed a wish to host *bhajans*. My

father readily agreed and purchased a picture of the Sacred Heart of Christ, which was added to the altar. It is important to note that we were a staunch Hindu Brahmin family, but being in the fold of Swami, we learned to embrace the unity of all religions. **During the bhajans, Swami manifested His presence by covering the entire image of Christ with vibhuti. Remarkably, the holy cross and the Tamil letter Om appeared inscribed within the sacred ash.** We felt it was a divine sign that all paths lead to one God. At the time of this incident, the *sarvadharmā* symbol or the *sthupa* (pillar) had not yet been introduced by Swami.

For years, a cow appeared weekly after *bhajans*, climbing the four steps to our porch to wait for my mother, who would greet and worship the cow with turmeric, vermilion, a garland, and *prasadam*. To prepare the *payasam* (rice porridge), she would painstakingly hand-sort rice grains during her spare time, chanting “Sai Ram” as she selected only the perfect grains, despite most rice in those days being broken rice.

### Swami's Constant Presence in Our Lives

As a family, we used to visit Puttaparthi during festivals. I have fond memories of staying under the cool shades of the *ashram* trees and bringing all our own supplies, right down to the stove to prepare our food! During one such trip, Swami called my parents for an interview and directed them to arrange my marriage, which He ultimately blessed. However, marrying into a family of

‘non-devotees’ meant I would be separated from seeing Swami for many years. My bond with Swami was eventually rekindled when I began enrolling my children in *Balvikas* (Sai Spiritual Education), participating in local *samithi* activities, and attending devotional and service activities at Sundaram, Swami's residence and the main *mandir* in Chennai.

In April 1993, while driving from Chennai to Kodaikanal to visit Swami, my daughter and I were involved in a serious accident with a bus. My daughter suffered multiple pelvic fractures, an event Swami had enigmatically foretold months earlier. In October 1992, while I was at Puttaparthi, Swami singled out an envelope from a stack of letters I was holding and told me to keep it. Inside were drawings of a young woman on an operating table, surrounded by medical staff and receiving Swami's blessings. At the time, the imagery was confusing, and I eventually set it aside. During her recovery, my daughter was devastated to have missed the Summer Course. However, Swami appeared in her dreams, promising she would attend the final two days. When we arrived at the Brindavan *ashram* in Whitefield, we learned that Swami had extended the Summer Course by two days that year, allowing her to attend the Course. When she showed Swami the prophetic drawings during *darshan*, He simply remarked, “*Theek hai*” (It is alright). With those words, He confirmed His protection and granted her a miraculous recovery.

**“The true miracle lies not in material wonders, but in the internal transformation of the human heart. Swami emphasized that consistent daily remembrance of the Lord is the only way to ensure He is remembered in our final moments.”**

### **Journey to Self-realization**

Swami says that the path of spiritual advancement unfolds in four progressive stages, beginning with the experience of miracles (*chamatkar*), progressing to internal transformation (*samskar*), inspiring the spiritual aspirant to engage in selfless service (*paropakar*), and culminating in the final stage of Self-realization (*sakshatkar*). As I look back on my life journey, I can clearly see how Swami has guided my family through each of these stages.

**The true miracle lies not in material wonders, but in the internal transformation of the human heart. Swami emphasized that consistent daily**

**remembrance of the Lord is the only way to ensure He is remembered in our final moments.** He once advised a devotee to pray for only two things: “*Anayasena maranam, vinadainyena jeevanam*”—a peaceful death without suffering, and a life free from poverty and dependency. My father, mother, and eldest sister lived by Swami’s teachings, dedicating their lives and actions to Swami. In their final days, their thoughts were fully absorbed in Him. I am truly blessed to be born in such a devoted family that still continues to be an inspiration to me.

**Mrs. Jaya Narayanaswamy**



USA



**Mrs. Jaya Narayanaswamy** came to Swami’s fold in 1964. She was a dedicated volunteer at Prasanthi Nilayam, Super Specialty Hospital, and Sundaram, Swami’s residence in Chennai. Her family’s devotion to Swami spans four generations, each blessed with many personal interactions. Today, she remains an active member of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Northeast Atlanta, USA, and continues participating in service activities.

*from the*  
International Sai Young Adults

## Welcoming 2026 in Langenfeld

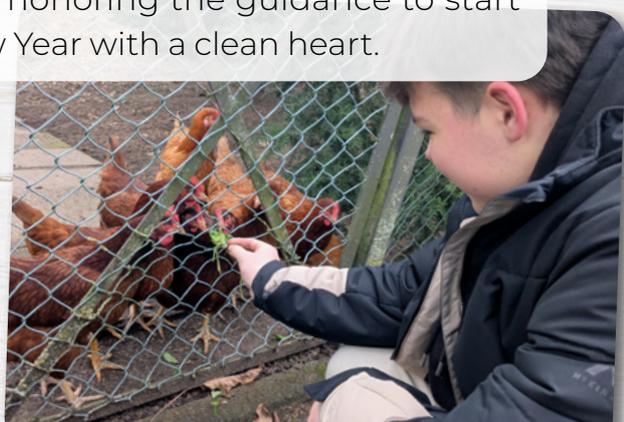


Under the evocative theme '**Shape Your Destiny, Circle of Life**,' 18 Young Adults from Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands gathered for a retreat in Langenfeld, Germany, from December 30, 2025, to January 3, 2026. This retreat served as a lively meeting place to welcome the New Year in a spirit of devotion and self-discovery. Each day began with the resonance of prayers and *bhajans*, followed by a communal breakfast. The daily schedule balanced introspection and activity, featuring nature walks, workshops, study circles, and singing devotional songs in the evening.

December 30 marked the first day of the retreat, with **arrivals and introductions**. Arriving just before dinner, the participants immediately immersed themselves

in the spirit of community. A joyful 'Bingo' session served as an icebreaker, helping the group bond, and the night ended with a soulful *bhajan* session.

December 31 was dedicated to **reflection and transition** as the group prepared to leave 2025 behind. The first workshop focused on gathering insights from the past year, while the second explored spiritual growth through sharing best practices. The evening featured a team-based DIY (do it yourself) pizza session and a 'sharing circle' about New Year's traditions from different countries. The year concluded with a powerful two-hour *bhajan* session, welcoming 2026 at midnight, accompanied by the chanting of the Gayatri Mantra. In a symbolic fire ceremony, participants burned papers representing habits they wished to leave behind, honoring the guidance to start the New Year with a clean heart.





The first day of the New Year focused on **visioning and self-awareness**. A workshop on relationships emphasized that **harmony with others starts with our relationship with ourselves**. This was followed by a visioning workshop where participants wrote letters to their 'future selves' to be opened at the end of 2026. The afternoon included a *bhajan* workshop and a study circle based on a past New Year's discourse by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, ending with popular games adapted to reflect spiritual values.

The next day was filled with **guidance and a search for purpose**. The group received practical and spiritual advice from SSSIO leaders, including Mr. Thomas Rohland (National Council President of SSSIO Germany), Mr. Pavel Marčík, and Ms. Mariel Beltrán Gutiérrez, the Zone 7 YA Coordinator and Deputy YA Coordinator. A Q&A session addressed the modern challenges faced by youth, while **the final workshop explored professional purpose, teaching participants how to balance their careers with spirituality and view their work as a form of *sadhana***.

January 3 marked the final moments of the retreat as participants prepared to take the light home. The retreat concluded with the sacred vibrations of Veda chanting and *bhajans*. Following a feedback session and breakfast, the participants departed. They returned to their respective home countries carrying not just new insights and inspiration, but the lasting bonds of a Sai family.





## Strengthening Iztapalapa Through Service

Nestled in the Iztapalapa borough of México City, the Sri Sathya Sai Community Center began 2026 by reaffirming its commitment to the local community. Throughout January, the Center served as a vital hub for transformation, blending education, nutrition, and social assistance to support the area's most vulnerable population.

### **The Rhythm of Service: Weekly Holistic Care**

Every Saturday, the Center comes alive with activity, where about 50 children receive a blend of academic tutoring and Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV). This holistic approach ensures that while minds are sharpened, hearts are also nurtured. Additionally, the day culminates in community service, with nutritious, complete meals served to both beneficiaries and volunteers alike. **The success of these Saturdays relies on a dedicated intergenerational team: the Young Adults who bring energy and mentorship each week and the local mothers who actively manage the**

daily operations and maintenance of the Center.

### **Celebrating Tradition: Three Kings' Day**

On January 17, the Center was transformed into a space of festive joy to celebrate Three Kings' Day. For the 45 children present, the day was a wonderful mix of learning and laughter. Along with lessons on human values, the children were gifted with toys and sweets, symbolizing the community's care for their happiness. A heartwarming highlight was the donation of soccer balls by a local parent, a gesture that underscored the spirit of 'community helping community'.

### **Strengthening Ties: Leadership and Vision**

The month was further enriched on January 24 by a visit from Mr. Miguel Montes, the National Young Adults Coordinator of the SSSIO of Mexico. Accompanied by his family, Mr. Montes interacted with the children and the volunteers. The visit served as a powerful moment of connec-



tion, providing national leadership with a firsthand look at the grassroots impact of the Iztapalapa initiatives.

### Honoring Our Elders: Food Assistance with Dignity

January ended with a heartfelt reminder of the Center's mission to care for people in all stages of life. On January 31, the Center distributed 32 food packages to senior citizens. This program, created in response to the economic challenges of the pandemic, continues to serve as a critical safety net for elderly residents facing financial hardship. **Mr. Oscar Sánchez, President of the SSSIO of México, joined this distribution, spending time interacting with the beneficiaries. His presence highlighted the**

**organization's ongoing dedication to ensuring that the elderly in Iztapalapa live with dignity** and know that they are not forgotten.

The activities of January 2026 reflect a profound dedication and demonstrate a strong commitment to selfless service, and the Sri Sathya Sai Community Center continues to strengthen the social fabric of Iztapalapa. These efforts serve as a beautiful reminder that a community is built on many small, silent acts of service.



# FINDING MY WAY BACK TO SEVA

## **EVER SINCE I WAS A CHILD, SERVING OTHERS HAS FELT NATURAL TO ME.**

Growing up attending Sai Spiritual Education (*Bal Vikas*) classes and being around Swami's teaching, "Love All, Serve All" wasn't just a quote by Baba—it quietly shaped who I am.

But over the past few years in the United States, life has become busy. Routines changed, priorities shifted, and somehow *seva* (service) slipped into the background. I didn't realize how much I missed it until I found the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Central San Jose and the YA community there. What began as a simple addition to a WhatsApp group slowly opened the door to something my heart had been craving all along.

When the *seva* opportunity to prepare and serve a warm breakfast came up, I signed up immediately. But then, just as quickly, my introverted brain started overthinking everything. "What if I mess up? What if I can't continue consistently?" And of course, I messed up at first. I signed up in the wrong column! That tiny mistake felt enormous at that moment. Then I was asked to help at the Evergreen Center instead of the Roosevelt Community Center. I hesitated (I was just recovering from the flu, and it was 'freezing' cold), but something gently nudged me to say yes.

The night before, I had the worst headache and barely slept. I drove to the venue, anxious and tired, and honestly questioned why I had signed up in the first place. But the moment I arrived and saw the volunteers already setting up and lovingly speaking with people from the shelter,

something shifted in me. My anxiety eased, and the headache didn't feel as heavy.

I met the kindest people, the volunteers who made everything feel natural and welcoming. As we served oatmeal, a few people came up and blessed us so sincerely it almost caught me off guard. I loved watching people return for second and third servings and noted how happily we encouraged them to take more.

But what touched me most were the conversations. They wanted to talk, to be heard, to share their stories. Even when someone spoke Spanish, and we couldn't fully understand each other, it didn't matter. There were smiles, gestures, and laughter. There was a connection. And standing there in the cold fog for over an hour, I realized my headache had completely disappeared.

Driving home, my heart felt full in a way I couldn't quite explain. I have volunteered before through work and university, but it never felt like this. There was always effort involved—scheduling it in, pushing myself to show up. But here, in the Sai community, it feels effortless. It's not something I have to remind myself to do, but something that naturally flows. Consistency doesn't feel forced. It just happens.

**And I know, deep down, it's all Swami's grace. Somehow, at the right time and in the right place, I was gently guided back to something that feels like home. *Seva* no longer feels like an activity anymore—it feels like a purpose.** And my heart is simply, overwhelmingly grateful.

Ms. Divya Janaswamy  
USA





Ms. Shivani Soogrim  
Trinidad & Tobago



### *Sadhana* is Simple

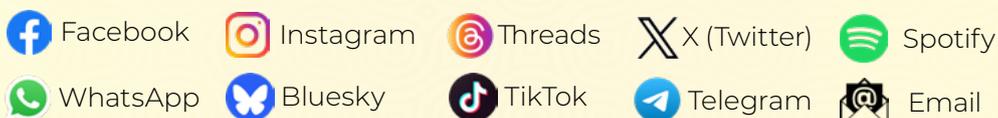
Swami says, “All kinds of *sadhana* (spiritual practices) are meant only to attain purity. The moment you attain purity of the heart, the omnipresent God will manifest right in front of you.”

For Swami’s 100th Birthday, the International Sai Young Adults launched the ‘*Rise with Sai*’ collective *sadhana* initiative. Comprising 20 different *sadhana* options, Young Adults were invited to choose one that resonated with them and practice it consistently each day in the lead-up to this sacred milestone.

One of the participants, Ms. Shivani Soogrim from Trinidad & Tobago, shares her reflection on practicing a *sadhana*:

“Swami has recommended the method of *likhita japam* (writing the Lord’s Name) as a powerful means of purifying the mind. For me, this *sadhana* blended effortlessly into my existing spiritual practices. It did not feel new or burdensome; rather, it felt like a quiet deepening of a relationship that was already alive in my heart. Each day, I made a sincere effort to write Swami’s name 108 times. On days when I fell short, I did not allow guilt or discouragement to take root. Instead, I turned to Baba in conversation, just as I always do, and shared honestly that while the pen had paused, the chanting had not. Throughout the day, especially during my drives to and from work, I would softly repeat “*Om Sri Sai Ram*” 108 times or more, accompanied by gentle, healing frequencies in the background. What began as part of a collective program gradually revealed itself as something deeply personal. Even though the formal *sadhana* initiative has concluded, the practice continues. **Writing or chanting His Name has become a steady anchor in my daily life—a simple act that is a constant reminder of His loving omnipresence.**”

#### Follow Young Adults on Social Media



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

# His Life

## 18 of the Most Memorable Moments in Our Beloved Swami's Life!

SSE Students of Sathya Sai Center of Rochester, Minnesota, USA

### 1926 - The Divine Light & Mother Easwaramma

In the quiet village of Puttaparthi, Mother Easwaramma prayed daily. One dawn, when she was getting water from a well, a bright blue light came above and settled gently into her womb. On November 23, 1926, a baby was born - Sathyanarayana Raju.



### 1926 - Unknown Music in the House

In the quiet Before Sathya was born, miracles occurred. Musical instruments in the house appeared to play themselves, even though no one was near them. The family searched everywhere - yet the music played on, sweet and celestial.



### 1927 - The Cobra in Baby's Bed

One morning, the family awoke to find a large cobra coiled gently beneath baby Sathya's bed. Instead of striking, it stood hood raised, like a guard protecting its master.



### 1936 - The Pandari Bhajan Group

Young Sathya formed a small group of children who went from street to street singing bhajans. His voice carried unusual sweetness, and wherever He sang, people felt peace fill their hearts. When cholera raged through the surrounding villages, Parthi was kept safe by the loving bhajans!





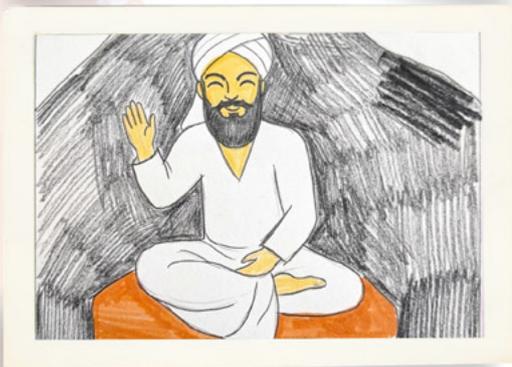
### 1937 - Sathya Sai Baba & the Teacher

In school, Sathya's teacher, not believing that He knew the answers without taking notes, decided to punish Him by making Him stand on top of His bench. Soon after, he realized he could not stand up! He was stuck to his chair until another teacher who recognized Baba's power told the teacher that when he asked Baba to step down from his chair, he would be able to stand back up.



### 1938 - Sathya Sai Baba's Scout Troup

When He could not afford to join His Scout Troup on their field trip to Pushpagiri's annual cattle fair, Sathya walked the entire distance alone. Without a scout uniform to wear, He wore the only clothing He had and ardently carried out His service, even stopping on the way back home to pick up presents for His family!



### 1939 - Cheppinattu Chesthara

Sathya wrote, directed, and executed a values-based play called "Cheppinattu Chesthara," or "Do deeds follow words?" to remind the people of His village about the importance of unity of thought, word, and deed. He Himself played the main character in the drama and showcased His acting skills!



### 1940 - The Scorpion Sting

In the middle of the night, a huge scorpion stung Sathya while He slept, but He continued on to sleep without any indication of being in pain. However, the next night, Sathya became stiff and was not able to speak or breathe. Although Sathya remained unconscious throughout the night, the doctor declared that He was fine the next day. After the sting, Sathya's behavior began to change as He exhibited signs of being different.



### 1940 - The Declaration of the Avatar

After returning home from school one day, Sathya threw His books aside and told His family, "I am no longer your Sathya - I am Sai." He continued to say that His devotees were calling Him and He could no longer come home. He said that someone in the family had prayed for the Avatar to be born into their lineage, and so He had come. Sathya threw a handful of jasmine flowers into the air, and when they fell, they spelled out "Sai Baba."

### 1940 - Manasa Bhajore Guru Charanam

After His declaration as the Avatar, Baba went to the garden of one of His devotees and sat on a rock there. While He sat, many came to hear what He had to say. He began to teach them the first Sai bhajan - "Manasa Bhajore Guru Charanam". Baba sang this bhajan with such sweetness that hearts melted instantly.



### 1948 - The Beginnings of Prasanthi Nilayam

The foundation was laid for Prasanthi Nilayam, or the Abode of Supreme Peace. What began as a small mandir of mud and love would later become a world destination for devotees of Baba. The ashram was officially inaugurated two years later, on Baba's 25th birthday.



### 1957 - All India Divine Life Convention

Baba presided over the 9th All India Divine Life Convention, which was intended to bring back the glory of Indian culture and spirituality after British colonial rule. At this convention, Baba shared that divine life was essential to every single thing in life and emphasized the importance of being surrounded by good company and doing good deeds.



### 1963 - Baba Cures His Paralysis and Reveals Sai Trinity

On Guru Purnima of 1963, Baba cured himself of paralysis in front of the crowds of His devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam. He had taken on this paralysis to save a devotee of His who would not have been able to be cured. He also revealed Himself as Shiva-Shakti and announced the Shirdi-Sathya-Prema Sai trinity of Avatars.



### 1968 - Sri Sathya Sai Educational Institutions

In 1968, Baba inaugurated the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women at Anantapur, which became the first in a long series of Sri Sathya Sai primary and secondary schools and colleges across the globe. Currently, there are 39 Sathya Sai Schools around the world, and 28 Institutes of Sathya Sai Education, which are intended to train teachers and adults in Sathya Sai Education in Human Values.





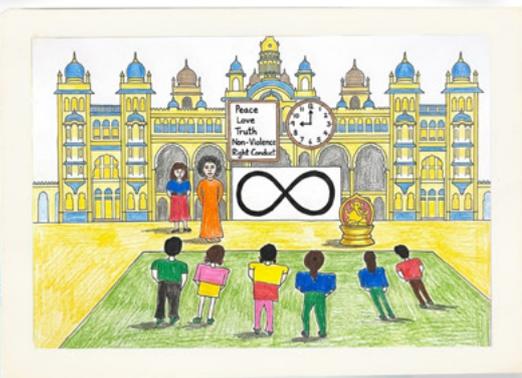
**1991 - Sri Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospital**  
 As one of His promises to Mother Easwaramma, Baba resolved to build a world-class hospital - free for all, to provide care to everyone who needed it. As the hospital network grew, more hospitals were developed to provide free healthcare, including the multiple healthcare projects the world over.



**1994 - Sri Sathya Sai Water Project**  
 The Sri Sathya Sai Water Project, taken on as another promise to Mother Easwaramma, was intended to provide clean drinking water to villages in Andhra Pradesh. The project was able to provide clean water to 750 villages and 900,000 people to date.



**2008 - World Education Conference on SSE**  
 With over 1,000 delegates from 90 countries and representatives from Sri Sathya Sai Schools across the world, Swami addressed the World Education Conference to advise them about the expansion of Educare worldwide, as well as the importance of unity in education.



**2025 - Sai 100 & Our SSE Class**  
 Sai 100 has brought numerous initiatives that have made and will continue to make major impacts around the globe and to help more people than ever before. SSE classes across the world have shaped countless children's lives, turning them into responsible people and morally grounded adults. Although Rochester SSE is online, we are united in our love for Swami!

Created by students of the Rochester, Minnesota SSE Program:  
 Khushi, Mahashree, Maya, Myra, Nirbhuy, Prisha,  
 Rathai, Samaira, Shanvitha, Sreesha, Tanmayi, and Tarini

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



Jesus said that the bread taken in the 'last supper' was His flesh, and the wine, His blood. He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are to be treated as He Himself and that no distinction should be made of friend or foe, we or they. Every body is His body, sustained by the bread; every drop of blood flowing in the veins of every living being is His, animated by the activity that the wine imparted to it. That is to say, every man is divine and has to be revered as such.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

December 25, 1978



**sathyasai.org**

Love All • Serve All  
Help Ever • Hurt Never

