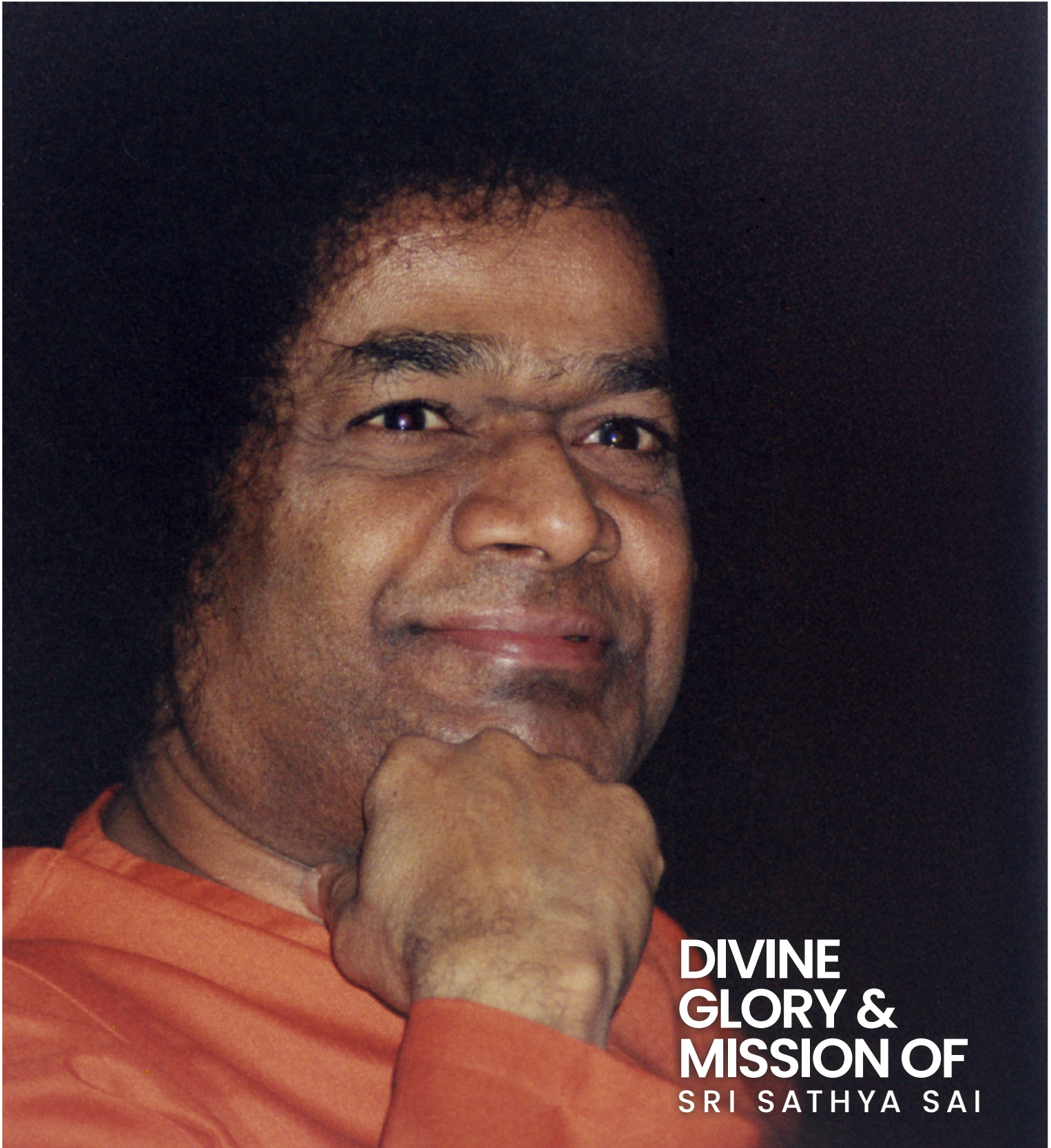


SATHYA SAI
THE
ETERNAL
COMPANION



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 5
MAY 2026



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



Today, we are celebrating Easwaramma Day to spread the glory of motherhood. The world is sustained by the prayers of mothers. A woman's prayer is more powerful than a thousand prayers of men because women are pure and tender-hearted. Never cause displeasure to your mother. Never hurt her feelings. Then God will help you in all your endeavors. One calls one's country motherland and not fatherland. Thus, the mother is given an exalted position in the world. Consider your country as your own mother and work for its progress. Under any circumstances, do not cause any harm to your mother and motherland. This is the significance and main teaching of today's celebration.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
May 6, 2001



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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REALIZING BRAHMAN AS INFINITE BLISS

(Taittiriya Upanishad–Brahmananda Valli)

Part 2 of 2

Shiksha Valli in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* prepares the seeker for the highest knowledge through discipline, reflection, and inner inquiry. It emphasizes the essential moral and spiritual foundation, as well as the significance of *Vyahriti* meditation and *Pranava Upasana*. The *Brahmananda Valli* then dwells on the profound declaration of *Brahman* as *sathyam*, truth or reality; *jnanam*, knowledge or consciousness; and *anantam*, infinite or limitless. The journey then guides us through the *Pancha Kosha Viveka*—the systematic inward exploration from the gross physical body to the subtle sheath of bliss—culminating in the recognition that the true Self is the witness beyond all layers.

Thus, the Self is beyond all the five sheaths. This Upanishad now reveals how the *Brahman* manifests as the universe and is experienced as the supreme bliss. What follows is not just philosophy, but a profound

insight into creation, consciousness, and the very nature of bliss itself.

***Srishti Prakarana* Teaching on Creation**

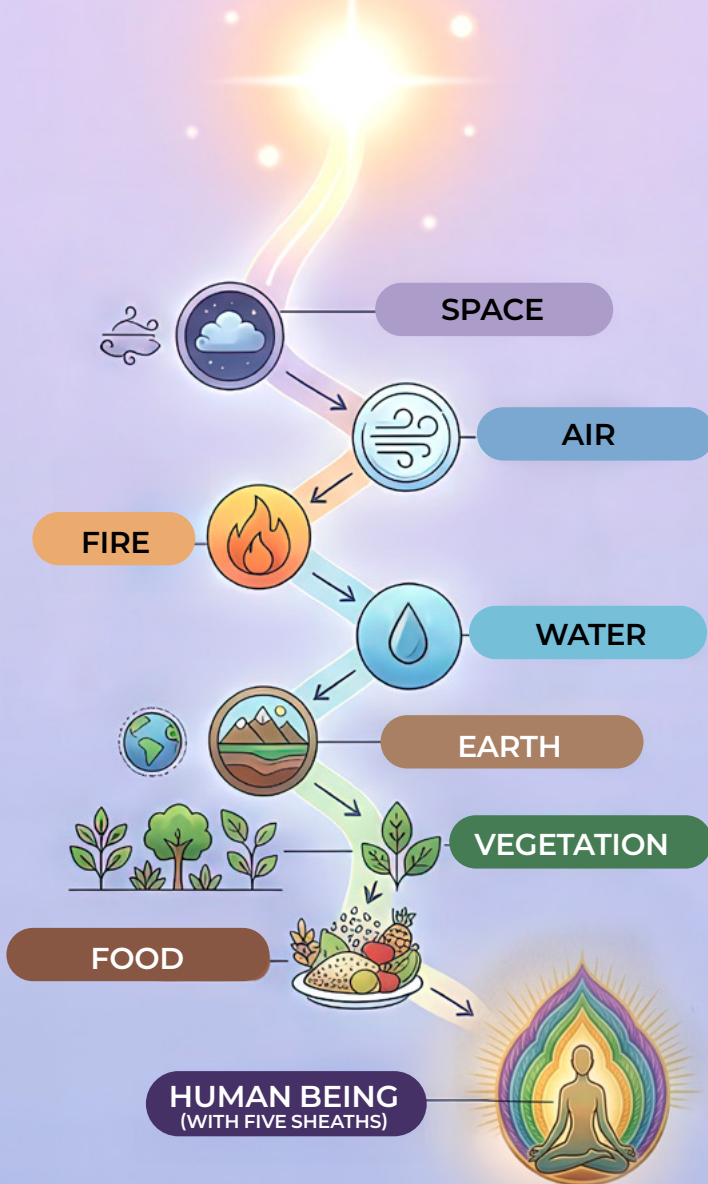
Brahmananda Valli describes the process of creation originating from *Brahman*. It declares that from *Brahman* emerged space (*akasa*); from space came air (*vayu*); from air, fire (*agni*); from fire, water (*apah*); from water, earth (*prithvi*); from earth, vegetation; from vegetation, food; and from food, came human beings. This is a beautiful analysis that shows that the entire manifest universe, including the human body and all its sheaths, came from *Brahman*, the sole cause.

This description of creation in the *Brahmananda Valli* shows that *Brahman* is both the material cause (*upadana karana*) and the efficient cause (*nimitta karana*) of the universe. For example, in the creation of a clay pot, the clay is the material cause. It is

THE PROCESS OF CREATION

Brahman

(The Ultimate Reality)



In the initial stage of spiritual quest, we deny everything by saying, “*neti, neti*”—not this, not this—but eventually, we realize that even what we have negated is also *Brahman*. Swami beautifully explains this concept by teaching that the true meaning of “*neti, neti*” is “not only this, not only this.” This explanation is all-inclusive because nothing exists other than *Brahman*. Swami beautifully says, “*Pashyannapi na pashyati mudho, mudho, mudho.*” (You see and yet do not see, fool, fool, fool!) **We all see *Brahman*, yet we are not truly seeing because of our misunderstanding, ignorance, and misidentification.**

Raso Vai Sah—*Brahman* is the Essence of Joy

Having guided us through the five sheaths, *Brahmananda Valli* now makes a declaration of extraordinary beauty in its seventh *anuvaka*: “*Raso vai sah*”—*Brahman* is verily the essence of joy. **This verse is this Upanishad’s heart-song, its most lyrical and ecstatic affirmation.** It asserts that *Brahman* is not just the source, the cause, or the goal of joy, but joy itself! The entire universe, with all its diversity, is this joy expressed through infinite forms.

the substance from which the pot is made. The potter is the efficient cause who shapes the clay. Unlike a potter who works with clay that is separate from himself, *Brahman* projects the universe from itself, enters into it, and becomes both the manifest and the unmanifest, the defined and the undefined. The Upanishad declares, “having created it, He entered into it.” This is the basis for the declaration that *Brahman* is not somewhere else but is the very Self of the seeker, and everything we see and experience is nothing but *Brahman*.

The feeling of happiness, however transient, however momentary, touches only this eternal *rasa*. The joy a mother feels for her child, the ecstasy of an artist immersed in creation, the contentment of a sage meditating in stillness—all are reflections, to varying degrees, of the one infinite bliss that is *Brahman*.

Baba further asserts that when *sat*, existence, and *chit*, pure consciousness or awareness, unite, the natural result is *ananda*. Just as sugar and water, when

combined, produce syrup or sweet water, the union of *sat* and *chit* produces this experience of bliss. Baba says that bliss is our true nature, and that we are the embodiment of *Sat-chit-ananda*. Because of ignorance, we do not realize this truth. He proclaims that when we remove ignorance by acquiring *Brahma vidya* and stop identifying the Self with the five sheaths, what remains is the endless ocean of bliss, which is always the eternal truth of our being.

Ananda Mimamsa **The Vast Scale of Bliss**

Brahmananda Valli, in its eighth *anuvaka*, explores the profound topic of bliss, or permanent happiness, which every being seeks. As Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, we are all embodiments of divine bliss—*anandaswarupa*. Every being is in search of that bliss. The only problem is that we are searching in the wrong place. Great spiritual masters guide us on the right path to make us realize our true nature, which is *ananda* (bliss). Thus, Swami says, “*Happiness is union with God.*” That is another way of saying that bliss always resides in the knowledge of *Brahman*.

In the *Ananda Mimamsa* (analysis of the nature of happiness), there is an inquiry into the nature of bliss. The Upanishad does not merely state that *Brahman* is infinite bliss. Instead, it creates a graduated scale of joy, beginning with human happiness measured as one unit, and gradually ascending through many levels of existence, culminating in *Brahman*, the infinite and eternal divine bliss. **The spiritual seeker is thus motivated to pursue this eternal bliss, which, once attained, leaves nothing more to attain and results in the**



permanent and complete cessation of sorrow.

This section makes two important points. First, that the bliss of *Brahman* is not only quantitatively greater than worldly happiness by any measure, but also qualitatively different. It is infinite and unaffected by any situation or other factors. Second, more remarkable is the fact that **this infinite bliss is accessible right here and now to anyone who sincerely pursues it.**

When we know that the same Brahman that we are is also the Self of every being, then compassion and service are not moral obligations but natural expressions of our very own nature.



Throughout the *Mimamsa*, this phrase is repeated many times: *shrotriyasya cha akaamahatasya*. This is a term from Vedanta representing a knowledgeable person, well-versed in the scriptures and teachings, who is free from desires. The entire hierarchy of this happiness, the cosmic bliss, is attained by those who have completely shed desires and body-consciousness and have realized their identity with *Brahman*. They live in the bliss of *Brahman*.

To convey that divine bliss is immeasurable and beyond comprehension, the *Ananda Mimamsa* begins by defining one unit of human bliss, or human joy, *manushya ananda*. **This unit of joy represents the happiness of a virtuous, well-educated, disciplined, resolute, strong, and successful young man who possesses all the wealth of the earth. This is the measure of maximum happiness attainable at the human level.** Then the Upanishad multiplies this by 100 and calls it the joy of *manushya gandharvas*, celestial musicians. A further hundredfold increase defines the joy of *deva gandharvas*, divine celestial beings. Yet another hundredfold increase yields the joy of *pitrus*, ancestors dwelling in their luminous realm. A hundredfold greater is the joy of *ajaana devas*, heavenly-born gods. One hundred times higher is the joy of *karma devas*, the ruling gods. Then, another hundredfold increase produces *deva ananda*, the joy of the heavenly gods. Continuing, a hundred times more is the joy of Indra, the king of

gods, and a hundred times greater than that is the joy of Brihaspati, the preceptor of the gods. Another hundredfold increase produces *Prajapati ananda*, the bliss of the creator. Finally, beyond all such happiness is *Brahma ananda*, the joy of *Brahman* itself.

At every step, this *Mimamsa* notes that the *Brahmanishtha*, the one established in the knowledge of *Brahman*, experiences the same joy as each ascending level, starting with *manushyananda*, even while living in a human form. Thus, the entire hierarchy of joy is simply *Brahman* flowing through different, increasingly transparent vessels.

Now, one can understand why humans are never satisfied with any amount of pleasure, because their innermost nature is infinite bliss. No finite amount of joy can satisfy an infinite being, **since the infinite within refuses to be satisfied by the finite outside.** Thus, *Ananda Mimamsa* shows that **what human beings have always sought is infinite bliss, of which finite pleasures are just the tiniest fraction.**

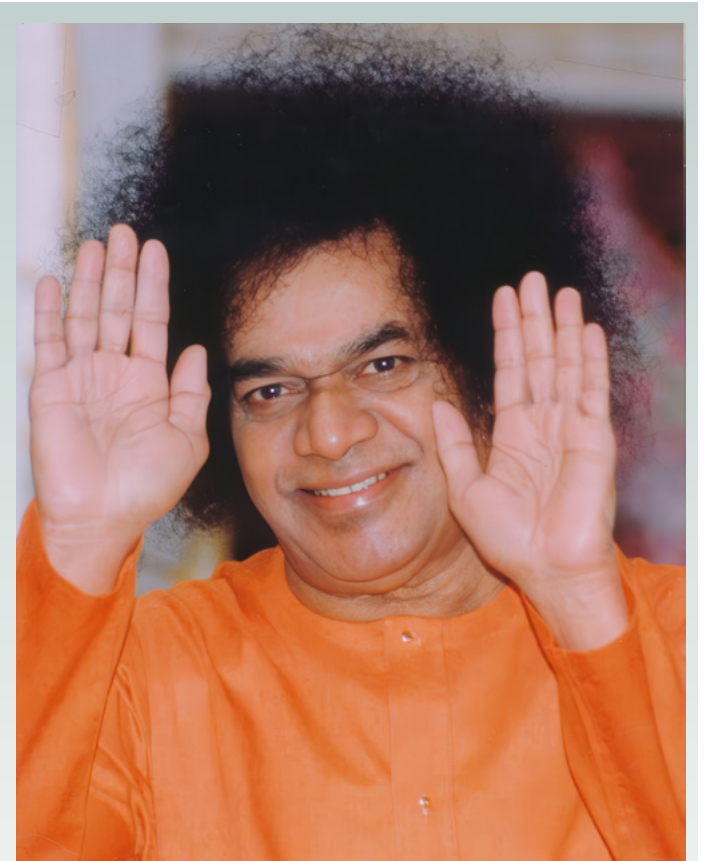
The ultimate level of joy, when measured with human happiness being one unit, is mathematically equivalent to 10 to the power of 20 (10^{20}). But this is something beyond human grasp, which we cannot put into words. That is why it is best described as *yatho vacho nivarthante aprapya manasa saha*—something that words cannot describe and the mind cannot understand fully. So the scriptures say that the one who is in eternal bliss

just remains silent, because it is only experiential and cannot be expressed.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (a great saint and divine incarnate) illustrates this principle with a beautiful example of a salt doll that went to measure the depth of the ocean. When the salt doll entered the ocean and got immersed, it dissolved completely and became one with the ocean. Thus, it never returned to report the results. Similarly, the spiritual seeker in search of the depth of the ocean of *Satchidananda*—existence, consciousness, and bliss—merges in that bliss. The liberated soul loses its sense of separate identity entirely and cannot express that bliss.

There are two interesting facts to notice. Throughout the *Ananda Mimamsa*, it is stated that the person who has conquered desire gains access to that bliss. That is why Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba introduced the concept of a ceiling on desires early in His Avatarhood. Ultimately, to experience bliss, one should have no desires. But one can start by setting a limit on desires and reducing them gradually.

Another important corollary is that selfless service, as advocated by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, is also a way to attain *Brahman*. Since *Brahman* is the reality of all beings, service to any being is service to *Brahman*. That is why Swami says, “Service to man is service to God.” But one should serve all beings with the awareness that each is a manifestation of God. This is the practical consequence of truly understanding *Brahmananda Valli*. **When we know that the same *Brahman* that we are is also the Self of every being, then compassion and service are not moral obligations but natural expressions of our very own nature.**



*With both hands,
He blesses and
assures us, “Be
fearless, be fearless!”*

Vision of Oneness and the Gift of Fearlessness

Brahmananda Valli reaches its spiritual peak in a teaching that appears in its fullness in the ninth *anuvaka*—**the great affirmation that the vision of oneness is sole and sufficient grounds for *abhayam*, fearlessness.** The *sadhaka* becomes free from fear when he attains that oneness. Real wisdom is experienced through this oneness (*advaita darshanam jnanam*), and realizing this oneness alone is real knowledge and wisdom.

As Baba says, people are fraught with fear from birth to death. Human beings have many fears, such as the fear of losing youth, beauty, intelligence, strength, wealth, health, name and fame, power, and ultimately the

fear of death. In the deepest sense, these are not fears of any particular object or circumstance. This fear arises from the sense of being a separate, finite, vulnerable individual in this infinite universe.

Brahmananda Valli declares that this fear completely dissolves when the vision of nondual oneness is experienced. When one understands this, not just as an intellectual concept but as a living experience, then the innermost Self of the seeker and the innermost reality of the cosmos are experienced as the same *Brahman*. As a result, the very basis of fear dissolves permanently.

The concluding verse of the *Brahmananda Valli* states that the knower of the bliss of *Atman* completely overcomes all fear. He is fearless. **The knower of *Brahman* has no sorrow, has no suffering, and is entirely fearless and in a state of peace that passeth understanding.**

As Swami says, the one message that Vedanta stresses is to be completely fearless. That is the greatest blessing that can be

obtained from God. The deities in temples are shown as gods with one hand in *Varada Hastha*, giving boons to people to satisfy their desires, and the other hand raised in *Abhaya Hastha*, granting fearlessness. But Bhagawan Baba uniquely blesses us by raising both hands in *Abhaya Hastha*. **With both hands, He blesses and assures us, “Be fearless, be fearless!” His famous quote is, “Why fear when I am here?”** Thus, when we are in touch with *Brahman*, we live in a state of complete fearlessness.

Brahmananda Valli defines the nature of *Brahman* and how to explore *Brahman* by traveling through the five sheaths. It also provides a glimpse of the bliss of *Brahman* to motivate the spiritual seeker to pursue the path to *Brahman* with intensity and sincerity until it is realized.

In the concluding section of Taittiriya Upanishad, *Bhrigu Valli*, we will discuss how to experience *Brahman*, the ultimate goal.

Jai Sai Ram.



Reduce Your Desires to Dissolve the Mind

*One may be able to memorize
all the Vedas and Vedanta;
One may be able to compose
beautiful poetry and prose;
If one has no purity of mind,
such a person will spoil himself.
What else can I reveal?*

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Sacred *Atma*! **Whether in spiritual or secular pursuits, or in daily life, purity of mind (*chittashuddhi*) is absolutely essential.** Time is most precious in the life of a human being. It is one's duty to sanctify this time. Man is wasting three-fourths of his life and makes no effort to make it meaningful.

He is not making any effort to sanctify it. It has become a habit for man to waste sacred and valuable time in eating and sleeping, idle chatter, and unproductive activities. Man thinks of something in his mind but says something else and finally acts differently. He does not realize that the disparity in thoughts, words, and deeds is a serious fault. Nor does he make an effort to realize his error, with the result that he loses his inner peace and joy. We often see people losing happiness and peace of mind when there is a difference of opinion or a conflict



“ The easiest and best way to control the mind is through love. ”

between the members of a household. Similarly, when conflict is brewing in the inner consciousness, we lose *Atmic Bliss* (*Atmananda*). Added to this, modern man is losing sight of civility and culture, which results in the heart losing its softness, the intellect losing its sharpness, and the mind becoming dull day by day. Life is becoming increasingly artificial and mechanical. Man today is not able to realize the purpose of human life. In spite of being endowed with a sacred human birth, he is not making any effort to realize the divine principle of *Atma* (*Atmatatva*).

Importance of Purity of Mind

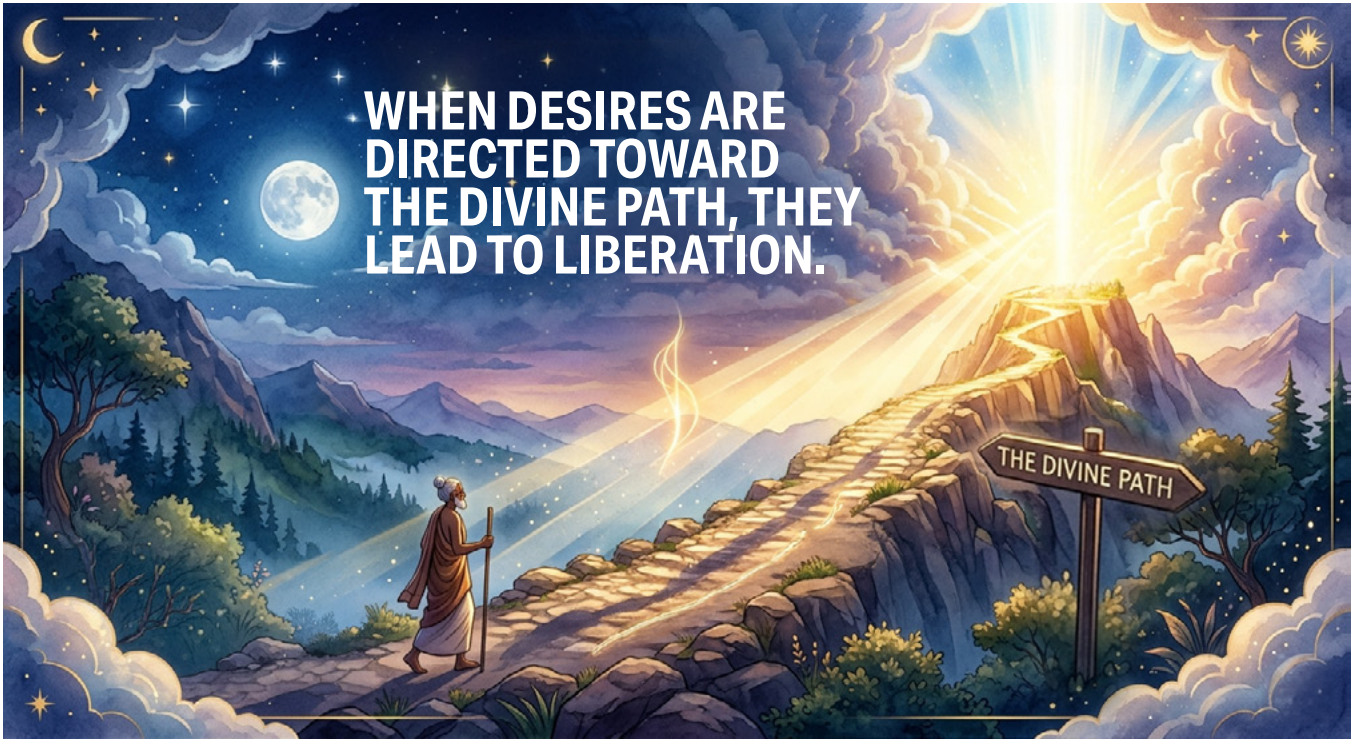
Without purity of mind (*chittashuddhi*), performance of any number of *yajnas* (sacrifices), rites, and *yagas* (rituals), or extensive reading of sacred texts is only a waste of time and not meaningful. The demon (*rakshasa*) king Ravana mastered the four Vedas and six scriptures (*sastras*). Moreover, he was undertaking intense spiritual practice (*sadhana*) through activities such as constant repetition of the divine name (*japa*), austerities, and penance (*tapas*). In spite of acquiring great spiritual power, Ravana ruined himself because he did not have purity of mind (*chittashuddhi*).

Whether it is reading a book, walking in a marketplace, or writing a letter, concentration of the mind is essential. A cart cannot move by itself. For the cart to move, the bullocks must be yoked to the cart. And those bullocks must have been trained to pull the cart. Also, they must be familiar

with traveling the road on which they are pulling the cart. On the other hand, if you engage untrained bullocks on unfamiliar roads, they cannot pull the cart to the destination, and the cart will be involved in accidents and encounter obstacles. Our inner consciousness (*anthahkarana*) is comparable to this cart, and our mind and intellect to the two bullocks. It is only when these two bullocks are trained in truth (*sathya*), right conduct (*dharma*), peace (*shanti*), and love (*prema*) that the cart of our *anthahkarana* can reach its destination safely. **Since our mind and intellect are trained today only in worldly matters, we are losing the valuable opportunity of traveling on the path of liberation (*moksha*).**

Everyone Has Divine Power

When the Sun's rays are focused directly on an object through the convex lens, they get the power to burn. The power of burning, however, is present in every ray of the Sun. Similarly, when the rays of the *Atma* are focused directly on the mirror of the mind, they gain the power to burn away all kinds of delusions. Such divine power is immanent in every human being. Some people may be aware of it, while others may not recognize it. Unfortunately, a human being, who is omnipotent, omniscient, and divine in nature, considers himself weak, ignorant, and dull-witted, and is wasting his precious life. For example, we may have all the cooking ingredients in our house, but if we do not know how to cook, all of them go to waste. Similarly, all kinds of faculties are immanent in our inner being. Since we



**WHEN DESIRES ARE
DIRECTED TOWARD
THE DIVINE PATH, THEY
LEAD TO LIBERATION.**

do not know how to make use of them, we are groping in the darkness of ignorance.

Get Rid of Worldly Tendencies

There are two types of tendencies (*vasanas*) in a human being: auspicious tendencies and inauspicious tendencies. Prominent among the inauspicious tendencies are:

- worldly tendencies (*loka vasanas*)
- scholarship tendencies (*shastra vasanas*)
- bodily tendencies (*sharira vasanas*)

Worldly tendencies include the craving for name and fame, position and power, and honor and prestige in society. A person having such tendencies does not realize his innate divinity, divine power, and sweetness, and seeks external happiness and position and power through which one can earn name and fame. These are worldly tendencies.

Scholarship tendencies (*shastra vasanas*) relate to acquiring scholarly credentials in scriptures and earning a reputation as an omniscient or all-knowing person. Such a person, out of greed for name and fame, and possessed by a malicious desire

to be known as greater than other scholars, wastes his energies in unproductive pursuits, not realizing the purpose of life. He lacks practical knowledge and indulges in mere pomp and show. Unable to realize the truth that the essence of all scriptures (*shastras*) is purity of mind (*chittashuddhi*), such a person tries to exhibit scholarship and knowledge in various disciplines.

The third type of tendencies relates to the physical body (*sharira vasanas*). A person with this type of desire seeks to build a strong, beautiful body. To harbor such desires for a body that could crumble at the mere force of a sneeze constitutes a base, carnal craving. Just like a flower blossoming in the morning and fading in the evening, our beauty too fades away. Just as the passing clouds lose their shape and form, so also the strong muscles that one builds up will lose their beauty and shape day by day. Can the beauty of such a temporary and transient physical body last forever? Giving importance to such a vainglorious ego, or scriptural knowledge devoid of practical experience, or transitory beauty diverts the mind to an unsacred path, cultivating inauspicious desires.

During childhood, man develops an
 absorbing interest in play in the
 company of other children;
 During his youth, under the influence
 of Cupid, he roams about in
 the company of women with
 infatuation;
 During middle age, he gets entangled
 in worldly matters and deeply
 engrossed in hoarding wealth;
 On reaching old age, he craves trifling
 whims, not contemplating on God
 even at that ripe age;
 Unable to get rid of bad habits,
 unable to develop interest in the
 devotional path, man wastes his
 precious human birth deeply mired
 in the cesspool of karma.

(Telugu Poem)

It is a primary sign of ignorance to expect the transient human body to last forever. It is common to find medicines for a particular disease readily available in a country where that disease is rampant. Since the disease of worldly existence (*bhavaroga*) is rampant in Kaliyuga (age of darkness), the medicine of God's grace to cure that disease is also available in plenty. **In fact, the mind is the cause of the disease of worldly existence (*bhavaroga*), as also the medicine that cures it. When you direct the mind in the right direction, it will cure the disease.** The same mind when it takes to perverted ways, aggravates the disease.

In fact, worldly tendencies (*loka vasanas*) are the root cause for the spread of the disease of worldly existence (*bhavaroga*), and divine or godly desires are the appropriate medicines to cure the disease. Both are tendencies, no doubt, but godly tendencies (*daiva vasanas*) are like roasted seeds. They do not sprout. The worldly tendencies are like raw seeds that sprout. Householders will have such worldly tendencies in plenty. **Hence, they must take up spiritual practice (*sadhana*) to gradually reduce these tendencies.**

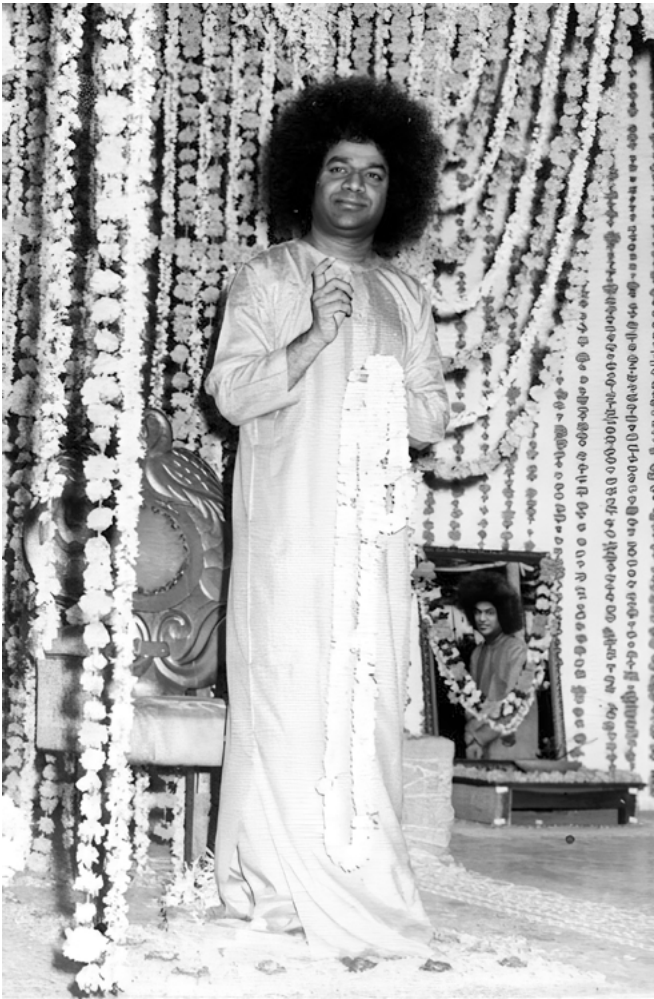
Understand Nature of Mind to Have Vision of God

When desires are directed toward the divine path, that itself will lead to liberation (*moksha*). By its very nature, the mind is agile and versatile. But the process of making use of the mind is subtle. It is like playing with sharp knives or playing with fire. Even slight negligence on our part will land us in trouble, drowning us in worldly bondage (*samsara*). The worldly tendencies (*loka vasanas*) will be waiting for us like tigers in the bushes, ready to pounce upon us. Therefore, we must be careful not to fall prey to these worldly tendencies as much as possible.

Embodiments of Divine *Atma*! We are on a spiritual path, having visited (*darshan*) and touched (*sparshan*) the feet of the elders and noble souls, and listened to their conversations (*sambhashan*). We have read a number of sacred spiritual texts. However, when we ask ourselves what we have actually achieved—despite having undertaken so many practices—we find that we have accomplished absolutely nothing, not even the slightest bit. Hence, it is essential for spiritual aspirants (*sadhakas*) engaged in God-realization who wish to have the vision (*darshan*) of God and experience divine bliss to first understand the nature of the mind. **When we make an effort to explore the origin and nature of the mind, at least to a certain extent, we will have the vision of God.**

The Mind Disappears When You Inquire Into Its Nature

In the celestial wedding of *prakrithi* (nature) and *Paramatma* (Supreme Consciousness), the mind stands as the principal authority. God (*Paramatma*) represents the bridegroom, and nature (*prakrithi*) represents the bride. God symbolizes the inward path (*nivriththi*) and nature the outward path (*pravriththi*). When we try to unify these two, the mind



appears on the scene and tries to exercise control, sometimes favoring *pravritthi* and sometimes favoring *nivritthi*. In fact, the mind has nothing to do with either of them. Finally, when we make an effort to enquire into the truth, the mind quietly disappears from the scene. Here is a small story to illustrate this point.

Once, a marriage ceremony was being held in a wedding hall (*kalyanamandapam*). Everyone was busy at the event. One person was especially busy, going everywhere, giving instructions, and making a lot of hullabaloo. Everybody thought that he was a Very Important Person (VIP) in the proceedings. The bride's party thought that he was from the bridegroom's side, and the bridegroom's party thought he was from the bride's side. Everyone gave him great importance and followed his instructions. This drama went on for some time.

Thereafter, one person from the bride's side had a doubt as to his bona fides. Similarly, doubt arose from the bridegroom's side also. Then, the two parties consulted each other and decided to confront the VIP and question his credentials. Sensing their mood, the pseudo-VIP stealthily slipped out of that place.

Similarly, the spiritual aspirants (*sadhakas*) today are deluded into presuming that the mind is the instrument of God, it is very powerful, and therefore, it is not possible to control it by any means. As a result, the mind gains the upper hand and takes us under its control. **But if we start inquiring into the nature of the mind and its mysteries, our job will become easy.**

The mind is merely a bundle of thoughts and resolves. It has no form of its own. Hence, when we make an effort to reduce our innate tendencies and resolutions gradually, the mind loses its form. The mind is the root cause of worldly tendencies (*loka vasanas*), scholarship tendencies (*sastra vasanas*), bodily tendencies (*deha vasanas*), or *atmabhimana* (attachment to the Atma or spiritual yearning). Therefore, it is the duty of a spiritual aspirant (*sadhaka*) to strive to direct the mind in the right direction.

Whether we are agitated or at peace, whatever the state of our mind, we must analyze it properly and observe its reactions. One should stand aloof as a witness to the mind's fluctuations and not get involved in it. You did not originate from the mind; in fact, the mind has arisen from you. You are the master of the mind and not the other way round. It is your servant. **It is unbecoming of a human being to be subjugated by the mind, which is, after all, a servant. You should never become a slave of the mind; rather, the mind shall become your slave.**

MIND IS THE CAUSE OF GOOD AND EVIL, SORROW AND JOY



Desire-Control and Satsang

One should, therefore, make an effort to reduce one's desires gradually so that the mind may not become strong. This exercise is necessary not only in the spiritual realm but also in daily life. There is no demarcation between the spiritual and secular fields. The nature of the *Atma* (*atmatatva*) and the nature of the mind (*manastatva*) in both spiritual and secular endeavors are one and the same. **To ensure that the mind guides us onto the righteous path, good company (*satsang*) is absolutely essential. We are at present moving in the company of people who fritter away their time and energies in worldly pursuits and develop attachment to sense objects. As a result, the mind is engaged in cultivating perverted and evil thoughts.**

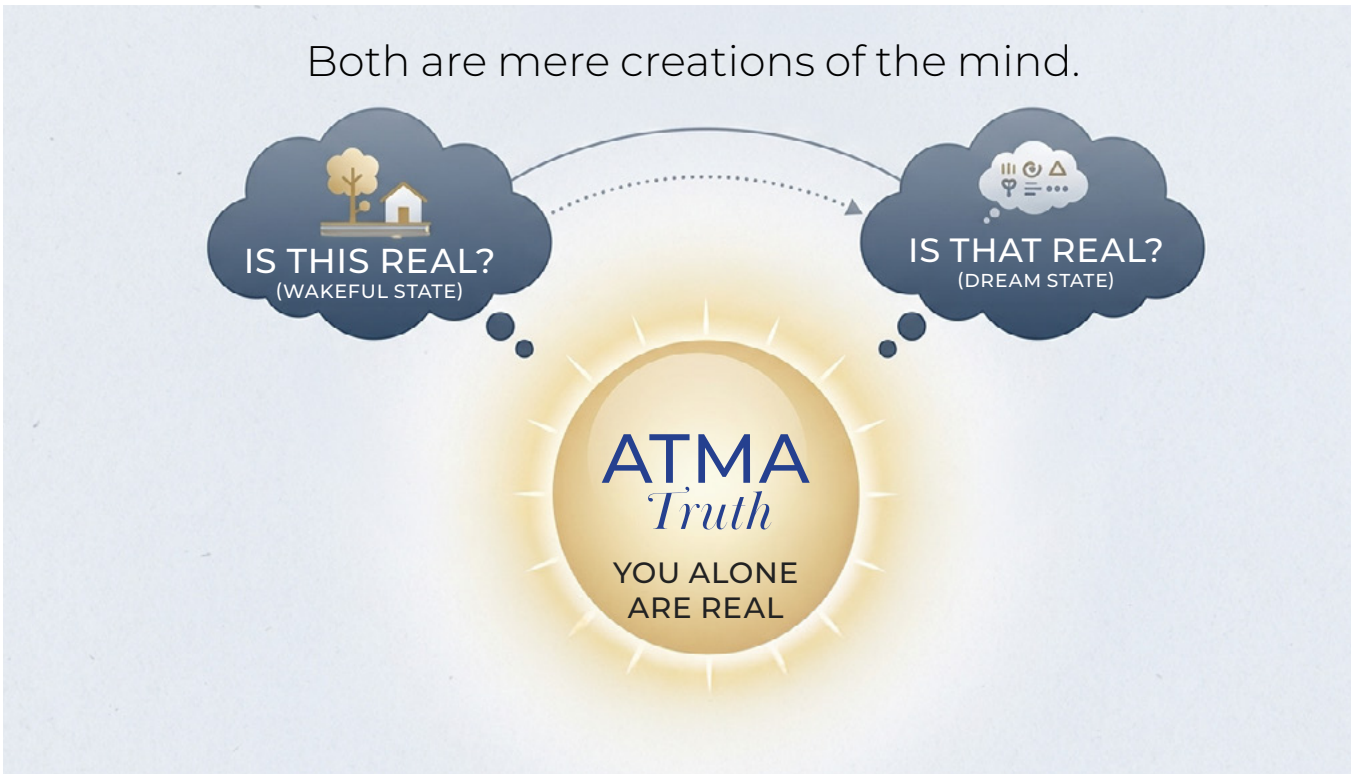
It is, therefore, essential that we conduct a thorough introspection of ourselves, using our intellect, to determine which types of desires are damaging our honor and prestige in society and destroying our human nature. We must also enquire into what we achieved by entertaining such evil thoughts and desires. To tell the truth, we are the embodiments of the divine Self, verily. Those who realize this truth do not follow the mind that prompts them to tread the transient, impermanent, and evil path.

In fact, we ourselves are ascribing a form to the mind. Whatever form we ascribe to the mind, it assumes that form and nature suited to it. A sculptor or a painter creates in his mind an imaginary picture of the object which he wishes to chisel or paint. Thereafter, he transposes that picture onto stone or canvas. It is not possible to directly work on a sculpture or a painting without having a vision or picture in one's mind. Similarly, our desires lie dormant in our inner selves in the form of tendencies (*vasanas*), which form the basis for the mind. Then, these emerge as active mental modifications (*vrittis*) and, in doing so, cause the mind to take specific forms with attributes.

It is, therefore, necessary that we try to gradually reduce our desires, entertaining only those that are essential. If unnecessary desires arise, they should be pushed aside. Desires come into our minds like the waves in the sea, flowing continuously. Just as we take a bath in the sea without being swept away by these waves, similarly, we must try to remove the impurities within us, without being disturbed by these desires.

Such sacred concepts (feelings) and paths are not lacking in the Indian (*Bharatiya*) tradition. **We must realize the truth that the mind is responsible for everything, whether it is good or bad, or sorrow or joy.**

Both are mere creations of the mind.



Thus, when we reflect deeply, we understand that the mind itself is both negative and positive.

How to Control the Mind

In the spiritual path, certain methods have been prescribed for controlling the mind; one such method is meditation (*dhyana*). Actually, controlling the mind is rather difficult. How long can you control the mind? **If we merely restrain the mind, there is always the possibility that, at some moment, it bounces back with full vigor and gains control over us.**

For example, King Ravana, the demon (*rakshasa*), could control his mind and its vagaries for some time. But, at a certain weak moment, he succumbed to its desires. Therefore, one must strive to achieve destruction of the mind (*manonasanam*) or dissolution of the mind (*manolayam*) instead of struggling to control the mind (*manonigraham*). However, initially, it is advisable to make an effort to control the mind to some extent, thereby paving the way to annihilating it completely.

The easiest and best way to control the mind is through love. When you realize the truth that the same principle of

Atma (Atmatatva) permeates every individual and share the love equally among all beings, the mind will not trouble you. However, when certain negative and conflicting thoughts arise in the mind now and then, it is necessary to erase them by engaging ourselves in sacred activities like service to society (*samaja seva*), joining the company of the good and godly (*satsang*), good behavior (*satpravartana*), singing the glory of God (*bhajan*), and cultivating good thoughts (*satchintana*). **In order to see good, hear good, speak good, do good, and be good, we must cultivate pure and selfless love.**

Good company (*satsang*), as an instrument to help spiritual aspirants (*sadhakas*) hear good and talk good and thereby experience bliss, has existed since ancient times. Keeping this in view, Adi Shankaracharya, in his famous composition *Bhaja Govindam*, has explained the efficacy of *satsang* in the following sloka:

*satsangatve nissangatvam
nissangatve nirmohatvam
nirmohatve nischalatattvam
nischalatattve jeevanmuktih*

(Sanskrit verse)

*Good company leads to detachment;
Detachment makes one free from
delusion;
Freedom from delusion leads to
steadiness of the mind; and
Steadiness of the mind confers
liberation while alive.*

Likewise, through purity, the dissolution of the mind is attained, and thereby, liberation is attained while living. What is *jivanmukti*? *Jivanmukti* is liberation, even while one is living. **When one is able to stand apart from the mind and is not affected by its vagaries as a result of spiritual practice (*sadhana*), one becomes a liberated soul (*mukta*), even while alive. He experiences Atmic bliss (*atmananda*). Thus, in the state of *jivanmukti*, the obstacles created by the mind on our God-ward path are removed.**

Separating Real from Unreal

At present, man is entangled more and more in bondage, as age advances. He is not making any effort to reduce or cut the ties that bind him. As long as these bonds increase, man cannot get inner peace (*Atma shanti*). Also, whatever little peace is available, it will be lost slowly. **Even though there is bliss (*ananda*) in our inner consciousness, it is covered by various desires, and we are unable to experience it.** Because of delusion, we develop relationships and bondage while truly there is none.

Worldly relationships are all a flight of imagination created by one's mind. They are not real and lasting. **As long as you think that a particular object or a person is yours, you will develop an attachment to that object or person. The moment**

you develop detachment toward that object or person, there will no longer be any distraction by the mind due to that person or object. When you realize the truth, "I am I only and nothing else," you will be free from this union (*samyoga*) and separation (*vivyoga*) with or from objects or persons in the world.

It is essential to realize the truth that just like passing clouds, all worldly relationships are only transitory and never permanent. Is it not a fact that the mansions and sky-rise buildings we see in our dreams no longer exist once we are awake? We are witnessing several types of scenes in our dreams. Once we are awake, they are no longer to be seen. Where have they gone? They become non-existent. As long as we are in a state of sleep, we establish a relationship with them. Once we come back to the wakeful state, we have no relationship whatsoever with them. Similarly, as long as we are in a state of ignorance, we establish worldly relationships. **Once we enter the wakeful state of wisdom, worldly relationships do not bother us anymore.**

In such a state of wisdom, when we inquire as to what is real, we realize that neither the dream experience nor the experience in the wakeful state is real. Both are products of the mind, which are imaginary. Only you are real. Unfortunately, today we are taking this 'illusion in illusion' as real and forgetting the reality of the Atma (*Atmatatva*).

Embodiments of Divine *Atma*! Through proper inquiry, gradually, you understand the nature of this clever, fickle, and artificial mindset. By doing so, you will be able to realize your true human nature.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Dasara, 1976





BRING SAI

into Your Life

A rich landlord dies, leaving behind nineteen precious horses. In his will, he writes that half the horses should go to his eldest son, one-fourth to the village temple, and one-fifth to his other son. The village elders were perplexed—dividing nineteen horses into fractions was impossible. How do you divide nineteen in halves? How do you take one-fourth or one-fifth of nineteen? If they were pebbles, you could break them, but these were living horses. Life often presents challenges. Sometimes we face situations where we know there must be a solution, yet we cannot see it. We know God is within us, but how do we discover Him? **We know the divine exists in everyone, but how do we live without making judgments? Life brings difficulties—how do we remain in equanimity? What is the missing link?** My own search for the answer to these questions began when I was 17.



All three flaming rings fell on me. Within seconds, I was on the ground, surrounded by fire. Then a hand grabbed me and pulled me out. It was Swami.

Swami's Doors are Open for All

I was born and raised in Bombay (now Mumbai). When my father was transferred to a remote village where there were no proper colleges, the question arose—where would I study? Residential colleges were rare at that time. The few that existed were either for the very rich, which we were not, or for the very intelligent, which I certainly was not.

My family was very traditional. Our *kula devata* (family deity) was Lord Murugan (Lord Subramanya), and we were ardent followers of the Kanchi Shankaracharya. So, a flamboyant, curly-haired Sai Baba was definitely not welcome in our household. Then someone mentioned that Sai Baba was starting a college in Puttaparthi. “The boys will be safe there,” they said. “This boy will not run away anywhere. He will be stuck in a village far away from city life.”

The family said, “No, no, no—Sai Baba? We are Murugan devotees!” But then a friend whispered something magical into their ears: “It is free education.” Immediately, the whole family said, “In that case, go and try!”

Looking back, **that was my first lesson about Swami. His doors are open to everyone without judgment.** One could come for free education, or to sing bhajans, or to

serve, or for knowledge—the door is open to all.

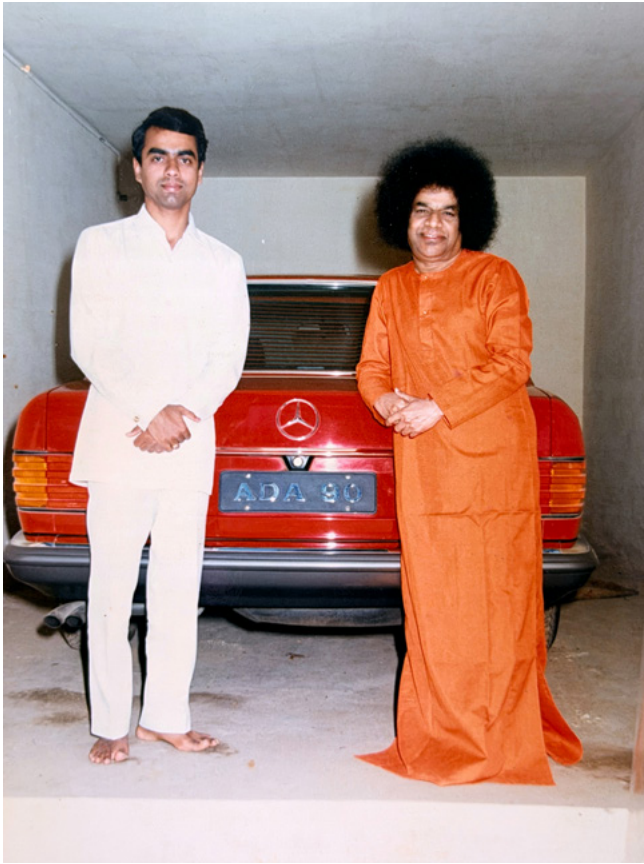
Such inclusiveness can belong only to an Avatar.

Searching for My Guru

I applied and was accepted into the college. When I arrived at Puttaparthi, it was not Swami who first captivated me; it was the village. I still remember getting off at the Dharmavaram railway station and seeing a bullock cart waiting to take me to the *ashram*. As we rode toward Puttaparthi, I saw the hills, the river, and the quiet beauty of the place. For someone raised in bustling Bombay, it felt magical. At that point, Swami wasn't even on my radar. Being away from my parents was exciting enough. But gradually, I started hearing stories from the other boys—most of them came from Sai families, and they spoke about Swami with deep devotion. I listened, fascinated.

“Even if a fraction of this is true,” I thought, “my life will change.” Still, my heart was searching for my Guru.

I loved Swami's teachings. “Service to man is service to God.” “Love is God, live in love.” Those ideas resonated with me. Yet something was missing. I had no personal experience.



And this is important: faith cannot be borrowed. Each of us must experience the divine directly. Devotees called Him *Premaswarupa*, the embodiment of love. But what did that mean? Where was that love? I saw Him giving *darshan*, granting interviews, and blessing devotees. People spoke of miracles and healings, but I had not experienced anything. I wanted that experience, at least once.

The Love of a Thousand Mothers

The opportunity arose on December 25, 1980, when the hostel inauguration was scheduled.

We boys decided to organize a program and invite Swami. Among the performances was a *Bhangra* dance (energetic, ethnic North Indian dance), which was quite revolutionary in the *ashram* at that time! Swami saw the rehearsal and laughed, saying, “*Like monkeys they are dancing.*”

I had another idea.

As a boy, my father had sent me to a gym where I learned to do yoga on ropes. So, I volunteered to perform rope yoga in front of Swami. Finally, I had a chance for a one-on-one moment. As I climbed the rope and did the *asanas*, Swami sat on a swing in the quadrangle area of the hostel building, watching the program. Each time I looked down, He raised His hands and blessed me with a broad smile.

Then came the second act: jumping through rings of fire. At first, it was simple—one ring. Then, during the practice, we added two. Finally, with youthful enthusiasm and a touch of ego, we decided to attempt jumping through three flaming rings for the final performance in front of Swami. Just before the performance, an over-enthusiastic helper poured kerosene on the rings. When they were lit, huge flames burst out. Still, I decided to go ahead.

I jumped through the first ring. Swami signalled me to stop. I ignored it. I jumped through the second ring. Next, I ran toward the third ring. The flames were so intense that I could barely see anything. My foot struck the first ring, and the boys holding the rings dropped them instantly.

All three flaming rings fell on me. Within seconds, I was on the ground, surrounded by fire. Then a hand grabbed me and pulled me out. **It was Swami. He had jumped down from the swing, run across the courtyard, and lifted me out of the flames. As He brushed the fire off my clothes, He said gently:**

“*Bangaru, Bangaru (dear one).. I am here.*”

That day, I realized what is meant by the saying, “Swami has the love of a thousand mothers.”

Years later, I experienced another aspect of Swami’s love. One evening, I was pressing His feet while He read letters. For two hours, He said nothing. Suddenly, He sighed and murmured to Himself, “*I read so many letters. Every letter asks for something—marriage, children, jobs, solutions to problems.*”

Then He said softly, “*But not one letter says, ‘Thank you.’*” After a pause, He continued, “*My plane has come. I am calling everyone to board. But no one comes. When I leave, will even five people come with Me?*”

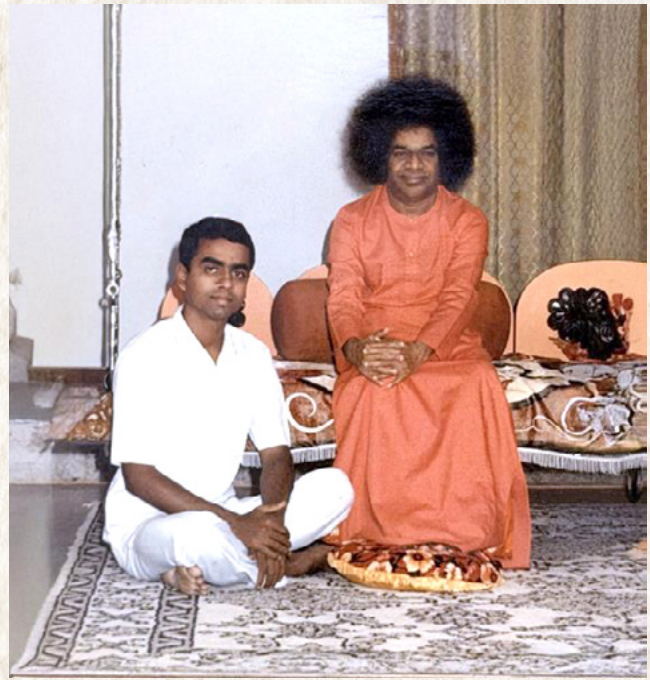
Those words struck me deeply. Swami had come to give. We had come only to receive. And would we at least receive all that He has come to give so lovingly and wholeheartedly?

Ultimate Reward for Service

The third lesson came through my father, Sri Dandapani, who spent many years serving Swami by managing the Central Trust accounts in the *ashram*. He had one simple wish in life—he wanted to leave his body in Puttaparathi at Swami’s feet.

But life had other plans. While visiting my sister in Bhopal, he suffered a heart attack and passed away there. I was really upset. I even questioned Swami silently in my heart, ‘Why did You not grant him this one wish?’

When I returned to Puttaparathi, Swami stopped in front of me and asked, “*Have the boys told you?*” I looked at Him in confusion. “What will the boys tell me, Swami? Which boys?” Swami simply said,





Then He added something that I will never forget: “Do you know why I gave him My Feet? Because he served Me until the very end.”

“Wait. I will come,” and walked away. I was puzzled.

A little later, one of the MBA students came up to me and said, “Brother Sunder, I am very sorry to hear about your father.” I thanked him. Then he asked, “When did your father pass away?” I replied, “April 20th around 3:30 or 3:45 in the afternoon.”

He said, “That is interesting. We were with Swami in Kodaikanal that afternoon, hundreds of miles away from you. Around that same time, Swami suddenly paused while speaking to us. He looked up into the air and asked, “How many of you know Sunder Iyer?” All the boys raised their hands because I was teaching at the college. Swami then said, “His father, Dandapani, has reached My Feet.”

When Swami returned from *darshan*, He called me inside Trayee Brindavan. The devotees who had been called for an interview were sitting in the inner room, but Swami came out to the large hall where the swing was. The hall was empty. Swami sat on the *jhoola* alone, gently pushing it with His feet. When I entered, He pointed to a spot and said, “Stand there.”

I stood about thirty feet away. Then Swami asked loudly, “So, you are angry with Swami?” I remained silent. “Why are you angry?” He continued. “Because your father died somewhere else? That is only the body. Let the body go anywhere. But I have given him My Feet.”



As He said this, Swami lifted His feet while sitting on the swing. *“I have given him My Feet.”* He repeated emphatically. **Then He added something that I will never forget: “Do you know why I gave him My Feet? Because he served Me until the very end.”**

That one statement was enough. Serve. Serve. Serve. And you will **come to Swami’s feet in the end.**

The Twentieth Horse

Sai is the answer to the riddle of the nineteen horses!

A farmer had two sons. He had written in his will how to distribute his 19 horses after his death: one-half to the eldest son, one-fourth to the temple, and one-fifth to his youngest son. The challenge was how to distribute the horses following the will without harming them. A wiseman solved the problem by adding one of his own horses and distributing the horses according to the division in the will. The 20th horse was returned to the wiseman.



Sai comes to the rescue as the twentieth. **Bring Sai into your life, and the impossible divisions of life become solvable.** Don’t ask Him to fight your battles. Just ask Him to be there beside you, like Krishna beside Arjuna.

Hold His hand. And you will find the strength to face every challenge in life.

Jai Sairam.

Dr. Sunder Iyer 
INDIA



Dr. Sunder Iyer joined the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) in 1979 as a student. He was the only student to ever receive a gold medal for Yoga from Swami Himself during the Convocation in 1984. Dr. Iyer was personally chosen by Bhagawan and served as His personal attendant for a few years. He holds a Ph.D. in Banking and Finance and served as a faculty member at the SSSIHL.

After a successful career in corporate IT and teaching Yoga professionally, he decided to dedicate his life to spreading Sai’s teachings through yoga and meditation. He is the founder of Kaivalya Yoga Gurukulam in Kanchi, India, offering courses and classes on Yoga and Vedanta.

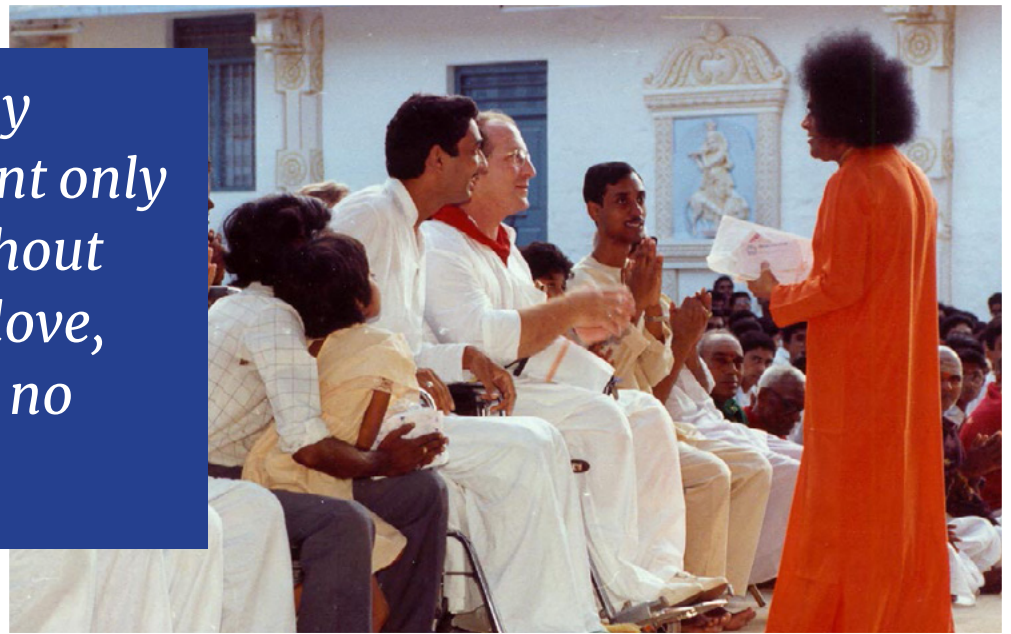
LOVE

In this world, no other virtue is greater than love. Love is truth, love is righteousness, and love is wealth. This world originated from love, is sustained by love, and ultimately merges in love. Every atom has its origin in love. There are innumerable powers, such as atomic power, magnetic power, etc., in this world, but the power of love surpasses them all. Life bereft of faith and love is meaningless and useless.

Sathya Sai Baba

My mother and I were sitting in Swami's house in *Brindavan* one morning. While I was watching Swami interact with others, my mother was meditating intensely on love. She was trying to force herself to feel love. Unexpectedly, Swami suddenly walked over to

Love is my only property. I want only your love. Without the devotees' love, there could be no Swami.



her and whispered in her ear. When He left, she turned to me and, in a disheartened tone, said, “Swami said only spontaneous love counts.” Swami constantly emphasizes that underlying all *sadhana* is love. Without love, *sadhana* has no lasting value. This is the love that arises spontaneously from the heart, not from fabricated emotions.

Love is not only one of Swami's primary teachings, but all the mystics and saints of the major religions of the world teach of its importance. The awakening of the heart is one of the ultimate goals for the spiritual aspirant, but it is often misunderstood. We have come to think of it as something we have to feel towards someone else, or as something we can get from someone else. That which changes and is not permanent, is not truth. God is love. God is truth, unchanging, eternal, and ever-present. But our actions and emotions are constantly changing, so anything that is done or felt is only temporary.

We cannot acquire love or make ourselves feel love, as that would be a mental or sensory process. Love is that principle which not only gives us life but enables us to experience it. As Swami has said, “*I created myself to love myself.*” The primary purpose of creation is the expression of love in multiple ways. Love

can only express itself by entering the physical. **But instead, we spend our life pursuing a myriad of petty pleasures we label ‘love’ and forsake the Divine romance for which we were created.**

The physical body, alone, is lifeless and insentient. It is made sentient only by the life force that animates it. Swami has explained that the nervous system of the human body is designed to serve as a conduit for Divine energy, and the various *sadhanas* are intended to purify our nervous system to enable it to accommodate this Divine energy flow. Our mind and senses filter down, like electrical transformers, the high voltage energy of our pure essence. The mind is incapable of understanding the essence and source of love.

This pure energy of love that animates us becomes polluted and distorted by our ego: attachments, attractions, aversions, and the deadly label ‘mine.’ Once we identify with these, we cease to experience the purity of impersonal, ever-present love. Instead, we experience tainted emotions and sentiments that we believe to be love.

What we often call love is actually emotion. At one *darshan*, a devotee became so carried away that he let out a scream, flung his arms and body around Swami's feet, and held on

tightly. Swami remained absolutely unper-
turbed and calmly told the *sevadal* (volun-
teers), who were restraining the man, to be
gentle toward him. Robert was seated a few
feet away, and when Swami arrived, He gave
a thunderous slap to Robert's shoulder and
sweetly said, "No emotion. Such emotion is
very bad."

During a group interview, an extremely
emotional Italian woman beseeched Swami
to help her sick sister, who was present and
sitting beside her. Swami's response was,
"Why are you asking for her?" The woman
replied, "Out of love." Swami's reply gave us



all a lesson in boundaries. He said, "Love has
its limits too!"

Swami has told us that devotion is the free,
mobile flow of love to God. Compassion is
love that is mobile and flows freely to those
in need. But personal love is neither mobile
nor free and is fixed on a spouse, a child, or,
in this case, a sibling. It is that restricted form
of love that Swami said has its limits.

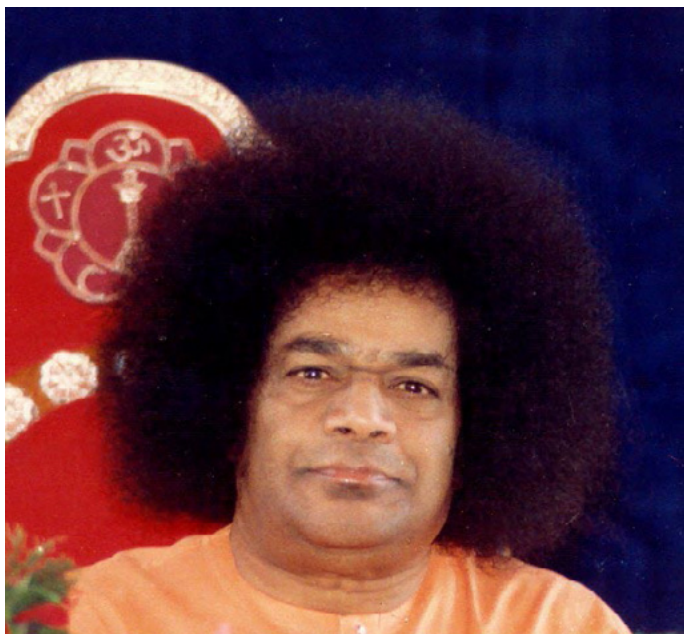
Love is Our Nature

There is nothing we have to do, or for that
matter, we can do, to feel love. Because love
is our true nature, we are love. When every-
thing that is not our true nature is removed,
only the truth of love remains, the truth of
who we are. The removal of untruth through
surrender, profound Self-inquiry, and cease-
less awareness is the lifelong work of the
spiritual aspirant.

**Swami's devotees are particularly fortunate
to have seen His form of love, experienced
the depth of love, and heard the voice of
love in Swami.** It is difficult to love ourselves
when we do not know who we are, or to love
a God whom we have neither heard nor
seen. In our present age of scientific, linear,
and rational thinking, it is very difficult to
accept that which cannot be measured or
proven. Swami's boundless love toward us
not only demonstrates to us our potential,
but gives us the confidence, motivation, and
assurance that the goal is achievable.

The Power of Love

The softest, least provable, most indescrib-
able, and immeasurable quality of love
commands the greatest and most formi-
dable power over mankind. The founders
of each of the major religions of the world
inspired, uplifted, and transformed millions
through the power of love. In spite of their
original message often being distorted and
misinterpreted, even this diluted love is a
mighty force. Mahatma Gandhi demon-
strated how one single man, aligned with



**Start the day with love,
fill the day with love,
end the day with love.
That is the way to God.**

the power of truth and love, was able to defeat an entire Empire.

The power of love has always been underestimated due to its soft, ethereal expression. But Swami, the embodiment of love, describes Himself, *"I am as soft as butter and hard as steel."* There is not a heart He cannot soften, nor a force that can oppose Him. True power stands still and influences everything in its field by virtue of what it is. True power does not exert pressure. By contrast, it is the use of force which dominates the world today. Although it is often mistaken for power, it merely produces counterforce and eventually exhausts itself without lasting change.

God, a perpetual source of power, does not force Himself on us or compel us to do anything. Only those lacking true power need to resort to force. God, as well as love, only enters the heart in response to our

willing invitation. Standing still, the Divine power of Swami draws us into His field of love like a magnet. He makes it possible for us to experience the exquisite feeling of love, which renders all other experiences shallow and insignificant. He thus creates such a strong desire in us to re-experience the presence of love again that we are driven to seek the source within ourselves. On one occasion, Swami told us that He was a *"magnet for our love."* **He then shared with us His relationship with His devotees, stating, "Love is my only property. I want only your love. Without the devotees' love, there could be no Swami."**

God's Instrument

On one occasion, being a little fearful of losing the exquisite feeling love gives, I asked Swami if I would always feel His love in my heart. He assured me that I would, but I remembered many times in the past being saddened by the absence of love. Wanting to know how to maintain this inner state, I asked Swami what was the best *sadhana* I could perform. He replied, ***"Think of yourself as My instrument."***

I discovered the practice of being God's instrument has the great benefit of getting the false sense of the personal self out of the way and becoming emptied of all that is untrue. This automatically leaves room for God, who is using the instrument, to fill the space with His essence. Our daily life and interaction with others also become much smoother as we are inclined to bring only the best and highest ideals to each situation that arises. Being His instrument also increases our responsibility by the discipline of practicing and demonstrating only good qualities.

God's love is Swami's unconditional love-consciousness. It is love that is unsullied by motives and emotions, pure and without expectation of gain in return. In most of His

discourses, Swami begins with the *Telugu* words, “*Premaswarupalara.*” It means “embodiments of divine love,” reaffirming to us our divine nature of love.

Swami gives us such a simple *sadhana* that, if practiced, we would have no need for any other teaching. He tells us, “*Start the day with love, fill the day with love, end the day with love. That is the way to God.*”

I once asked Swami how to feel this love for all, as I did not always feel it present. He replied, “*It is always there for us to use. But there must first be Self-confidence. Where there is Self-confidence, there is love. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is truth. Where there is truth, there is bliss.*” Probing further on this important point, I asked how we could gain such self-confidence. Swami laughed and assured, “*It is there; like a child, if you feed it, it grows!*”

Robert asked Swami, on one occasion, if his meditation practice would help him to realize God in his heart. **Swami advised, “*Meditate with faith and love in your heart. Follow whatever practice makes you happy and comfortable.*”** Swami’s response led Robert

to ask if he should be doing Kriya Yoga, a meditation technique he had learned in the West. Swami, without hesitation, replied, “*No, Kriya is not good. It is for the body only. At death, the body is no more. There are no good Gurus in America to guide you. Do bhakti yoga and bhakti marga (path). Have love in your heart. That is the way to God, the easy path.*” Robert then asked if Kriya Yoga affected the subtle body. Swami re-emphasized that the method of Kriya was difficult, dangerous to health without proper guidance, and unnecessary for him.

Robert asked, “How do I have a heart-to-heart relationship with Swami?” and His simple, single-word response was “*Love.*” Inquiring further, we asked how we could feel that love *more deeply in our hearts.* He clarified further with practical advice, “*Love, Constant Integrated Awareness (CIA), is there, but in worldly life, so are the ups and downs of life. Concentrate on Constant Integrated Awareness, not on the ups and downs, and in that even state of mind, there is love.*”

Ms. Diana Baskin 
USA



Ms. Diana Baskin, an ardent devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for more than four decades, has authored two very inspirational books relating to her remarkable experiences and life transforming lessons learnt during her many close interactions with Baba. Her books titled ‘*Divine Memories of Sathya Sai Baba*’ and ‘*Divine Lessons from Sathya Sai Baba*’ have inspired many devotees around the world in their spiritual quest. In the words of Dr. John Hislop, well-known and exemplary devotee of Baba, her compelling story and experiences are matchless and priceless in inspiring readers, for centuries to come.



LOVE IN ACTION



BRAZIL Monthly Offering of Love and Dignity

In the heart of São Paulo, at the Boraceia Shelter Center, a quiet yet powerful expression of love unfolds each month. Since 2023, members of the Sai Barra Funda Group from the Southeast Region I of the SSSIO Brazil have been engaged in selfless service, bringing 200-300 snacks and distributing them with love and compassion.

In March 2026, this spirit found another beautiful expression as volunteers prepared and handed out snacks. As the food was distributed, something deeper began to unfold, as several recipients shared how the experience stirred memories of home. “I just remembered my mother,” one said softly, holding



a serving of sweet rice. Thus, the offering became more than nourishment, bringing comfort and connection to loved ones.

In a city where social vulnerability keeps increasing, this monthly service serves as a reminder that true *seva* goes beyond just meeting physical needs. It touches the heart, restores human connection, and affirms that what is shared is not merely food but love itself.



KYRGYZSTAN Home-cooked Food for the Homeless

In mid-March, members of the SSSIO Kyrgyzstan lovingly offered food at a shelter for the homeless. **With care and compassion, they prepared and distributed 45 servings of hot food, including three types of pilafs made with soy protein, mashed potatoes, and lentils.** In addition, they offered butter cookies, marmalade, and caramel candies with the tea, adding warmth and sweetness to the gathering. The recipients



expressed deep gratitude for the delicious home-cooked food, repeatedly thanking the volunteers for their care and support.



MALAYSIA

Transforming a Pilgrimage into Life-saving Service

During the Thaipusam festival in Malaysia, the SSSIO launched a nationwide humanitarian effort through its Blood Donation Campaign. Held across Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Perak, and Penang, and supported by the National Blood Bank and government hospitals, **the initiative mobilized 542 volunteers who worked nonstop for 79 hours. The campaign collected 2,723 pints of blood. At Batu Caves, the central hub operated non-stop for 37 hours, where 403 volunteers facilitated the collection of 1,872 pints of blood.** In Penang, a 19-hour drive over two days saw 651 donors step forward, with 506 successful donations, marking the highest turnout since the initiative began in 2006.



Additional contributions included 280 pints of blood in Perak and collections in Seremban and Segamat.

Amidst the large gatherings of devotees, this effort beautifully captured the spirit of Thaipusam, as thousands paused in their pilgrimage to offer a life-saving gift, demonstrating that true sacrifice can take the form of service with compassion.



SURINAME

There is Only One Religion—The Religion of Love

During Ramadan in March 2026, leading up to Eid al-Fitr, and alongside Easter and Ugadi, the Sri Sathya Sai Center Sonjstraat in Suriname served the rural communities of Magenta, Commewijne, Munder, and Wanica. **Sharing Sathya Sai's message of love, 36 gift hampers containing basic household necessities were distributed to families, along with interfaith greetings for these sacred occasions.** Each hamper was thoughtfully packed in a reusable 'Go Green' bag and included an interfaith flyer emphasizing the spirit of service.

The initiative reflected a continued effort by the Center to support these communities



over the years, fostering a sense of connection and care. The joy on the faces of the families spoke deeply of the impact of this service. Over time, the ongoing engagement has brought noticeable changes in people's outlook and behavior. Through these simple yet meaningful acts, the Center continues to share Sai's love—reinforcing the belief that small, heartfelt actions can bring happiness and contribute to positive changes.

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

Sai's Continuing Vision.

*1009 Cataract
Surgeries in
Paraguay*



On February 14, 1968, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba delivered a special discourse, which He began by saying,

*“Dr. Modi has been engaged in an invaluable service during the past ten days at Prasanthi Nilayam, performing cataract surgeries on people who were in great distress, because they could not see; a truly commendable and sacred service. The eye is the main-spring of the body so far as contact with outer nature is concerned. The nethra (eye) is the suthra (guiding principle), as the saying goes. **By this act of service, done selflessly, efficiently, and gladly for years, Modi has become a true Yogi (sage), much greater than many who claim that title.** This is real tapas (austerity), the sacrifice and asceticism that wins God’s Grace.”*

When History Repeats Itself

In the divine discourse, Swami was referring to Padma Bhushan Dr. M. C. Modi,

renowned ophthalmologist and President of the Sri Sathya Sai Organizations in Chitaldurg District (Chitradurga District today). The Guinness Book of World Records lists Dr. Modi as the “most dedicated doctor” for performing the highest number of eye surgeries. He performed as many as 833 cataract operations in one day. **He visited 46,120 villages and examined 12,118,630 patients, and performed a total of 610,564 operations up to February 1993.** He had conducted a historic free eye treatment camp at Prasanthi Nilayam from 5th to 15th February. Though initially planned for 200 surgeries, the camp expanded to perform 511 operations, including 440 cataract extractions, alongside treatments for various other eye conditions. A total of 3,770 patients were examined, and 670 received free medicines. The Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) in Paraguay, South America, resolved to conduct at least one thousand free cataract surgeries for the needy and the underserved, as an offering of love and dedication

to Lord Sai on His 100th Birthday. **Started in November 2019, SSSIO volunteers, doctors, and healthcare professionals in Paraguay conducted 1009 cataract operations by November 2025, exceeding their target.** What began as a mission rooted in service and compassion grew into a landmark achievement as the surgeries were carried out in top-level clinics with trained teams and proper equipment. Operations were done on a monthly basis at the Centro Oftalmológico, Av. Brasilia 1155, Asunción, the capital of Paraguay.

When Patients are Revered as God

Love and compassion for the patients were evident from the inception of the project. Many were unable to afford or access vision care due to poverty and socio-economic conditions. For many patients in Paraguay, reaching the place of surgery was itself a test of determination. Some traveled from remote regions, trekking long distances over difficult terrain. Some patients crossed flooded paths and walked across stretches of water simply to reach the main road.

They arrived, often guided by others, stepping into an unfamiliar environment with quiet trust. There is a deeply human moment that unfolds in such settings—the moment before surgery—when fear, hope, and surrender come together. Patients place their faith in hands they have only just met, trusting that those hands will restore not just sight, but a part of their life that has been slowly fading. And such trust comes from the love with which they have been received and cared for.

Inside the operating room, the process is clinical and professional. Yet, surrounding it is a field of compassion—doctors speaking gently, volunteers offering reassurance, an atmosphere that transforms anxiety into calm.

And then comes the moment that defies description.





“It Is Like Being Born Again”

Vision is more than just a physical sense. It is closely connected to dignity, confidence, and participation in life. When sight is restored, the eye begins to see again—but more importantly, the individual reclaims independence and self-worth. **When sight returns after months or even years of darkness, words often fall short. Yet patients try to share the experience in words!**

“It is like being born again,” one said. Another expressed with simple clarity, “Now I do not depend on anyone. I feel so free. The sight I have is a blessing.” For one woman, the restoration of vision carried a deeply personal meaning. She had long prayed for the ability to read her Holy Bible again. **For her, the surgery was not merely a medical procedure; it was the restoration of the most sacred relationship with God!**

These expressions of gratitude are testimonials of lives restored. The ability to walk independently, to recognize the faces of

loved ones, to see the sky again—these are ordinary experiences that are dearly cherished when they are lost and then restored.

Seva as Sadhana

For the doctors and volunteers, the journey was just as transformative. What began as service gradually deepened into *sadhana*—a disciplined spiritual practice. The decision to conduct surgeries on the first Saturday of every month gave the effort a rhythm, a sacred continuity. It became a recurring opportunity to offer one’s time, skill, and attention without expectation.

One doctor reflected, “We are giving the most valuable thing we have, which is our time. These patients cannot repay you. And that is when you realize you are not an island. You are part of something bigger.”

Time, in this context, takes on a deeper meaning. It is not merely hours spent, but life shared. To give time is to give a part of one’s existence that cannot be regained. And yet, in giving, something unexpected is received.

“After every surgery, we feel full,” another doctor shared. “It fills your soul. It gives you energy to keep going.”

This sense of fulfillment reflects the experience of those who served in 1968. Back then, as now, service dissolved boundaries—of status, nationality, and profession. Whether it was a dignitary, a student, a doctor, or a devotee, all were united in a single purpose.

The Ripple Effect of Love

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Paraguay initiative is how its impact extends beyond the operating table.

Doctors started noticing a change in their patients, not only in their restored vision, but in their outlook on life. Many expressed a desire to help others in their own communities. A quiet chain reaction started to unfold.

“The love we give multiplies,” one doctor observed.

What starts as a single act of healing begins to spread outward, touching families, neighbors, and communities. This ripple effect is perhaps the true measure of such service. It is not confined to the number of surgeries but amplifies into the intangible realm of human relationships and shared compassion—not only at the individual level, but also at the community level. Service becomes the thread that binds people together, dissolving differences and revealing a shared love for all.

A Sacred Milestone

On November 23, 2025, this journey reached a moment of collective reflection and gratitude. A Thanksgiving Mass was held at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Asunción, under the patronage of Cardinal Adalberto Martínez. Around one hundred people, including doctors, nurses, volunteers, patients, and their families, came together. More than just a celebration of numbers, it was a union of hearts touched by the journey.





Testimonies were shared, not as formal speeches, but as heartfelt reflections on transformation—both for those who received care and those who offered it. **A commemorative video traced the evolution of the service project, from its humble beginnings to the milestone of 1,000 surgeries, aligning with the centenary celebrations of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s advent.**

At the conclusion of the Mass, thermal jugs bearing the Sarva Dharma symbol were presented to the medical professionals. It was a simple yet meaningful token that reflected unity, inclusiveness, and the spirit of oneness taught by Bhagawan Baba.

Continuity More Than Repetition

Seeing the Paraguay initiative merely as a repetition of the 1968 camp would be to miss its deeper significance. What we witness here is not repetition, but continuity in practicing Swami’s teachings. In 1968, Bhagawan

proclaimed that selfless service performed with dedication transforms the doer into a true *yogi*. **Decades later, the same principle took root in a different land, among different people, yet guided by the same inspiration in the organization founded by Swami, the SSSIO.**

An Offering Without End

Reaching 1009 surgeries is undoubtedly a major milestone, especially in the context of devotion and dedication. However, for those involved, it does not feel like an ending. It feels like a new beginning. “We hope to reach many, many more,” one doctor said.

When service is offered selflessly, it goes beyond time, place, and circumstance. It becomes a sacred act. It becomes *sadhana*. In that process, both the one who receives and the one who serves become transformed.

Sri Sathya Sai International Organization
PARAGUAY 



glory of
Womanhood

A New Birth with Swami

When I look back now, I know my journey to Swami had already been written deep within me. It was destined long before I consciously chose it. The decision to travel to India, to the *ashram* of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, did not begin my transformation—it just revealed it. And when that moment came, it opened me up completely, as though a hidden door inside my soul had finally been unlocked.

I had always been in love with India. Even in high school, all my essays and projects revolved around India—its spirituality, its ancient philosophy, and its incredible depth. While other students wrote about ordinary topics, my imagination wandered to sages, temples, and ancient wisdom. Somewhere within me lived an urge and a quiet certainty that one day, I would go there. I never questioned that inner longing. **It was as natural as breathing, as if a call had**

already been placed in my heart before I even understood who was calling.

And on top of all this, I dreamed about Baba!

Tragedy Strikes

In 2007, my mother passed away. We were deeply connected, and her death caused a pain I had never known before. My family is traditionally Catholic, and by that time, I had already completed my studies in theology. I believed firmly that my mother had gone to a better place, and yet, after her death, my life changed fundamentally. Belief did not erase grief. Faith did not remove longing. When a mother is no longer there, responsibility takes on a different weight. The ground beneath me shifted, and I felt as though I had to relearn how to stand.

My whole mind, soul, and heart needed to be reshaped. I remember every detail of that inner battle.

“Why are some of us in the West so often unable to respect the faith of others, the spiritual paths they walk, and the sacred meanings of different cultures? What would change if we approached differences not with suspicion, but with reverence?”

What does such an inner battle look like for a traditional Catholic who is also a trained theologian? It is not dramatic from the outside. **It is silent, inward, relentless. It is a struggle between faith and fear, between trust and guilt, between longing and obedience.** After my mother’s death, I left politics and became a Catholic religion teacher. I returned to the house where I had grown up, seeking grounding and familiarity, hoping that the walls filled with childhood memories might steady my trembling spirit. I also decided to travel to India to quench my heart’s thirst.

A Question that Bothered Me

Only a few months before my decision to go to India, I attended a church seminar for religion teachers in Croatia. There, Swami’s teachings were presented—but in an extremely negative manner. He was described as a manipulator, and harsh words were used that I do not wish to repeat. In Catholic theology, the ideas of sin, one God, and Christ as the only way are strongly emphasized. My inner struggle revolved around one painful question:

Am I doing something wrong if I go to Puttaparthi?

That question did not leave me. It followed me into silence, into prayer, into sleep.

At that time, I dreamt often of Swami. I longed for solitude. Something within me was calling for silence, space, and truth beyond fear. It was not a rebellion. It was relentless yearning.

The Calling Grows Stronger

I bought my airline ticket in March. The journey was scheduled for June 26, 2010. I was 28 years old. That year, I learned to love solitude. **My mind was constantly occupied with Swami—there was no room for anyone or anything else. I felt Him everywhere. I felt His presence, and I felt Him calling me.**

That same year, Rama, my dog, became an important part of my life. Her name came from the girls I had begun spending time with. They ran a small Sai Center in Čakovec. Slowly, I started attending their gatherings. Singing *bhajans* brought me deep peace. Rama became a living symbol of that transition—a gentle companion during a time when my heart was opening, and my inner world was changing, even though nothing seemed different on the outside.

Grandfather’s Guidance

One evening, the weight of the future physical encounter with Swami became

too much for me to carry alone. I had to speak with someone. I was raised in a Catholic family. Every Sunday we attended Mass. Yet, at that time, I was already working as a Catholic religion teacher in a school. Everything outside that framework was often seen as sin. Still, I needed to share what was in my heart.

That cold winter night, I took my bicycle. I needed the frost, the snow, and the silence to cool my restless mind. Above all, I longed for a conversation with my grandfather, Ivan. He was the one person who was strong enough and wise enough to question me honestly—to shake me, to argue with me, to help me avoid what I feared might be a mistake.

Ten kilometers separated me from him. I remember the freezing wind biting my fingers as I rode into the darkness—no streetlights, no bicycle light, only determination guiding me.

We sat down at the table, as always. I hesitantly began to tell him about India, about my plan to go. Suddenly, my grandfather—already weakened by Parkinson’s disease—looked at me and said:

“Marta, if you go to India, please go to the One with the great hair. The One who is God in India. And beg Him to heal our Toni, who has suddenly fallen ill with diabetes. I have read so much about Him. I watched documentaries, and I believe He can do anything. Once I even had His picture, but the priest took it away from me. If you go to Him, I beg you—

bring me His picture again. Marta, go to Him.”

I was stunned. I had never spoken to my grandfather about Swami before. I did not even know that he knew anything about Him. **I never found out how Swami had entered my grandfather’s life. But at that moment, the whole universe became aligned.**

On my way home, riding through the frozen night with nothing but stars above me, I knew this was no coincidence. The path was clear and confirmed. I would go.

Experiencing Sai’s Omnipresence

When I finally arrived in Puttaparthi, my feet somehow knew where to take me. I had come home. Everything felt strangely familiar, as if a certain memory had preceded the experience.

And yet, during my first three days, I did not dare to go to *darshan*. I felt Swami’s presence in my room. I knew He knew I had arrived.

On the second day, I met Larissa, a friend who made my stay much easier. She had been to India many times and knew everything about the *ashram* life. We are still in touch and meet to this day. Through her, I began to settle in, observe, and breathe more deeply into this new, yet ancient, reality.

June 29—A True ‘Birth’ Day

My first *darshan* took place on my 29th birthday, June 29! That evening, as I was walking past Sai Kulwant Hall, I turned toward it, and Swami turned His head in my direction.

My mind immediately began offering explanations: 'He is just a man in orange.' But my heart surrendered, and I began to cry uncontrollably.

In that moment, I realized the immeasurable grace of being there. **Among billions of people on this planet, I was there, in that sacred hour and moment. From that day on, I never missed darshan.**

Only later did I understand what had truly happened. June 29 was not merely the anniversary of my physical birth. It was the day my true Self was born!

Catharsis at the Meditation Tree

I often visited the Meditation Tree (*Vatavriksha*) that Swami had Himself planted. Beneath that tree, I often spent time alone. There, memories of my beloved mother resurfaced, and everything we had lived through together in hospital rooms returned to me. I remembered the cold window ledge beneath my fingers, the fear of falling asleep in case she might die at that very moment...

Under that tree, I cried all the tears I had not been able to let out before. It was very cathartic, and it cleansed me deeply. Later, I learned something that thrilled me to the very core.

I even shared my birthday with the *Vatavriksha*! On June 29, 1959, on the full moon day of *Ashadha* month, Bhagawan had materialized a thick copper plate inscribed with *Beeja Aksharas* (sacred mystic syllables) and placed it at that very spot before planting the Banyan tree. On that sacred occasion,

He declared that this tree was the *Tree of Enlightenment*, like the Bodhi Tree under which Buddha attained *nirvana*, or illumination. He said that aspirants who meditate under it would gain fulfillment, steadiness of mind, and control of the senses.

I did not know any of this when I first sat there. I only knew that something within me broke open beneath its branches. **Only later did I understand that day was not only my birthday; it was my day of awakening.**

Grace that Continues Beyond Goodbyes

Three months later, after my memorable stay in India, I returned with a picture of Swami for my grandfather. I sat by his bedside and told him about Swami, about the *ashram*, about the presence I had felt so vividly. My grandfather was bedridden, unable to move. The next day, he passed away. But he had received the picture. He had received Him!

Later, I learned that 2010 was the year Swami had called His devotees to come to India—for many, it was a time of gathering, a time of silent farewell, and a final outpouring of love.

Deep within, I knew my grandfather had become a messenger of God that winter night, guiding me with the words I most needed to hear so I could step onto the path already prepared for me.

Catholicism and Swami

This integration was not easy. I am a theologian who has loved Christ all my life and lives for Jesus. I have attended

Mass every Sunday for as long as I can remember. Before going to India, I read the book *A Catholic Priest Meets Sai Baba*. At the time, it did not fully resonate with me; I considered it one man's testimony. What followed instead was a process—a gradual inner ordering with highs and lows.

I remembered a theology professor explaining the conversion of Saint Paul. He said the scriptures tell us that Paul was blinded when he heard Christ's call, but we do not know how long his inner process lasted. Conversion takes time.

The word *Catholic* means universal. Later, I realized it also means whole.

When I was in Sai Kulwant Hall, I always wore a rosary around my wrist. Once, an elderly Indian woman approached me, took my hand, bowed before the crucifix, and kissed my hand. That moment became a profound lesson. It confronted me with a question that still lives in me today:

Why are some of us in the West so often unable to respect the faith of others, the spiritual paths they walk, and the sacred meanings of different cultures? What would change if we approached differences not with suspicion, but with reverence?

“If You Need Me, You Deserve Me”

This promise from Swami describes my journey to Him wonderfully! I needed Him, and I got Him!

I would not be the person I am today without that journey to India and without my beloved Swami. That path taught me that I truly know nothing, that I must never judge, and that diversity is not a threat but a precious gift. Through Swami's teachings, I became a better Catholic. One does not exclude the other.

I believe I was given special grace I did nothing to deserve. **Through Swami's teachings, I now see everything as a lesson that guides me toward a better version of myself. I experience every person as a teacher. I firmly believe that everything happens ultimately for my spiritual growth.**

I am grateful for each day. I begin every morning with gratitude. Because of Him, I exclude no one. Everything holds equal value. I am braver and confident in my decisions because I know He walks with me. Catholic faith and the Eucharist helped me understand something essential: Swami did not leave. He is here eternally!

We are all students on the path of life—different, yet one. And for me, that understanding began on a single day—June 29, 2010, the day I celebrated my true birth.

Ms. Marta 



Calling for Your Articles, Poems, Audios, Videos!

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

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

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

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

from the
International Sai Young Adults

**SMALL THINGS
GREAT LOVE**

Serving Families in Bugaba, Panama











On February 15, 2026, a school camp was held at the Sai Center of Bugaba, in the province of Chiriquí, Panama, bringing together approximately 300 volunteers, devotees, and members of the community.

At the event, 150 backpacks, each containing two notebooks, pens, colored pencils, a ruler, a pencil sharpener, and an eraser, were distributed to support children as they began the new school year. **In addition, donations of around 1,000 pieces of clothing, 300 pairs of shoes, and reading glasses were received for families in the community.** The surplus school supplies were later delivered to Quebrada Negra, a needy community, allowing more children to benefit from these materials for the school year.

Mother Teresa's wise words, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love," serve as a poignant reminder that even the smallest acts, when done with love, can go a long way. It was a simple yet heartfelt gathering, leaving participants with great satisfaction of having served with love.



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

From a Silent Prayer

Selfless to Service



In January 2026, with a prayer on the lips, the SSSIO Young Adults Program in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa was reactivated to nurture the spiritual growth of YAs through love and service.

A sign-up form drew enthusiastic response from 30 Young Adults. Two 'Meet & Greet' sessions were subsequently held on February 6 and 9, 2026, via Zoom, creating a space for connection and reintroduction to the International YA Program. These sessions fostered a safe environment for open dialogue, where YAs shared personal, deeply sensitive challenges with honesty and courage.

In preparation for the sacred festival of Maha Shivaratri, the KwaZulu-Natal YAs hosted an online Study Circle. A total of 26 participants from around the country joined in. Commencing with Veda chanting, the study circle, based on the SSSIO Maha Shivaratri Study Guide, focused on the inner significance of the festival. The discussion emphasized that the true observance of Shivaratri lies in inner transformation, and in charging the environment with positivity through *bhajans*, right action, and reverence for nature.

This was followed by the Sai Kitchen Seva in Umkomaas and Umzinto, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, from February 28-March 1, 2026. On February 28, seventeen volunteers, including four

Young Adults, procured ingredients and prepared vegetables.

On March 1, 50 volunteers, including 12 Young Adults, began the day with a prayer and were inspired by addresses from the SSSIOSA National Council President and the Umkomaas Sai Center President. Heartfelt *bhajans* created a spiritually uplifting atmosphere throughout the day. **More than 540 meals were lovingly prepared and distributed across the Umkomaas and Umzinto communities, including nearby informal settlements.**

Young Adults played an active role throughout by helping to coordinate, prepare, and distribute the meals. One of the most meaningful aspects of the *seva* was the opportunity to serve directly within the community. Volunteers witnessed firsthand the smiles, gratitude, and appreciation of those receiving the meals.

The reactivation of the Young Adults Program stands as a true testament to Sri Sathya Sai Baba's words: "*When you take one step towards Me, I shall take a hundred steps towards you.*" **A silent prayer and a simple Google Form became the starting point for the Young Adults in the province to come together—growing inward toward Swami and outward in truth and unity to serve society.**



The Hat Exercise



In 2024, I attended the YA Leaders' Retreat at Sai Prema in Athens, Greece. As a Young Adults Coordinator of SSSIO Ireland, I had the opportunity to be part of this leadership retreat, an experience that continues to shape my everyday life. Among all the activities, the **'Hat Exercise'** remains etched in my memory.

For this exercise, we were not given any elaborate instructions or philosophical context. We were simply asked to create hats using paper, colors, and glue. They could be of any shape or design, and we had to write on them the roles and responsibilities we carry in our lives, ensuring the hats actually fit our heads. It felt almost playful on the surface. I remember thinking this might just be an icebreaker to help us get to know one another.

We randomly chose our neighbors for our group and sat on the floor like children rediscovering art for the first time. In those moments, adulthood quietly stepped back. We instinctively shared materials, helped one another without being asked, and admired each other's creations without judgment or comparison. It felt like returning to *Bal Vikas* (SSE).

As we worked, the hats became quiet mirrors to each person's inner world, reflecting pressures, hopes, limitations, and strengths. When we begin to understand our own inner landscape, we become gentler with others. We listen



more, react less, and respond with greater clarity. These are not spiritual abstract concepts; they are practical skills that shape us every day, even in the professional world.

At this stage in my life, I was carrying multiple responsibilities—roles in the Organization, teaching SSE classes, a demanding logistics job, and my family duties. I crafted a simple hat because I wanted the content to matter more than its appearance.

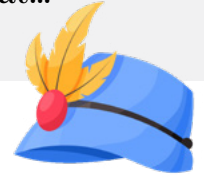
But when I began explaining my roles, a strange heaviness surfaced. The repetition of "I do this... I manage that..." created an inner discomfort. It struck me then that ego hides even in the way we introduce ourselves. The truth became clear: none of these roles was truly mine. Swami had given me the ability, the opportunities, the environment, and the strength for every responsibility I was carrying. Yet my instinctive language still centered around "*I am.*"

That subtle realization quietly shifted my approach to the material world. Achievements no longer felt like ownership, but stewardship. Responsibility no longer felt like a burden, but gratitude. In corporate life, where self-presentation often seems necessary, this insight helped me remain anchored and humble, without losing confidence or clarity.



(author offering his hat)

Once the hats were made, we were asked to wear them, walk towards Swami's altar, kneel, and offer them at His lotus feet. The most transformative moment came when I removed my hat...



Listening to others present their hats deepened this transformation. Many shared responsibilities I had never imagined—personal struggles, family commitments, professional challenges—yet they carried them with sincerity and dignity.

It made me realize how easily we judge others without knowing the invisible burdens they carry. In that room, every hierarchy dissolved. Every role, whether recognized or unnoticed, felt equally purposeful. Previously, I believed one should work only in roles they genuinely enjoy. But the retreat revealed a more grounded truth to me that not every role will inspire us, yet sincerity can make any role meaningful. This understanding has since become a cornerstone for how I navigate work and life, reminding me not to chase validation, not to stretch myself thin to prove my worth, but to do what is needed with steadiness, clarity, and contentment.

Once the hats were made, we were asked to wear them, walk towards Swami's altar, kneel, and offer them at His lotus feet. The most transformative moment came when I removed my hat. As soon as it was lifted, I felt a physical lightness, as though the weight of labels, identities, and expectations had been gently peeled away. Without my roles resting visibly on my head, the only presence I could feel was Swami.

It was a moment of pure surrender, quiet, and powerful. Swami's playful line to the late Sri Ajit Popat, a devotee from the United Kingdom, echoed within me:

“Surrender means—I am **Sir**, and you are **under**.”

Offering the hats at Swami's feet completed the experience with an indescribable sense of release. We were not placing decorated paper at His feet. We were offering our minds, our identities, ambitions, insecurities, and self-images.

Once something is sincerely placed at Swami's feet, the burden no longer remains ours. Time and again, *satsang* has shown me that we see ourselves more clearly when we see ourselves through each other. Alone, we justify our behavior; together, we recognize our truth.

Looking back, I now understand why the 'Hat Exercise' was the perfect beginning to the retreat. It was gentle on the outside, yet quietly radical within. **It taught me how to carry myself in the material world, with humility instead of ego, sincerity instead of comparison, unity instead of isolation, and surrender instead of control. These qualities have become the way I strive to work, lead, relate, and contribute both personally and professionally.**

We walked into the room thinking we were making hats. We walked out, realizing we had removed the biggest one—the ego. And only when the ego was removed did we finally create space for Swami to work through us.

Mr. Sainath Satish
INDIA





Ms. Sanjna Srivatsa
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. Sanjna Srivatsa from the USA shares her reflection:

“As a mom to a one-year-old, my journey lately has been less about ‘gym time’ and more about ‘grace in motion.’ For 100 days, my *sadhana* was a simple but daunting goal: to complete 10,000 steps every single day. There were days when the weather was against me, and nights when caring for a sick toddler made every step feel like a mile. By Swami’s grace, I was able to stay the course for 90 days. Reflecting on this 100th year of Swami’s Advent, I’m not just chasing a number on the scale; I’m learning to weave fitness into my life with my baby by my side. My biggest takeaway from being part of the ‘*Rise with Sai*’ *sadhana* program? We aren’t meant to walk these paths alone. Finding a ‘*sadhana* buddy’ or a supportive group truly is the secret to staying consistent. I am deeply grateful for this community of driven and inspiring souls.”

Prayers for

PEACE



The International Sai Young Adults Veda Team organized a 'Prayers of Peace' initiative, which included two live online sessions on March 14-15, 2026, to collectively pray for the peace and healing of humanity.

Each 45-minute session included guided prayers such as the Gayatri Mantra in Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's voice, Sai Gayatri chanting, and the chanting of Vedic mantras, including *Ganapati Prarthana*, *Namakam*, and the 3rd *Anuvaka* of the *Chamakam* of the *Rudram*, *Kshama Prarthana*, and the *Svasti Vachaka*

mantra. This was followed by prayers from different religions and a divine discourse by Swami emphasizing the importance of chanting the Lord's Name and the peace-bestowing vibrations generated through such chanting. The session concluded with the universal prayer '*samastha loka sukhino bhavantu.*' The two sessions were enjoyed by approximately 500 adults, Young Adults, and children.



Likarjun U | Group 3 | Sri Lanka

MY DIVINE Mothers

Easwaramma Day...

Easwaramma Day is celebrated in memory of Easwaramma, the mother of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This special day is observed to honor the love, sacrifice and care of all mothers.

Easwaramma was a kind and loving mother. She played an important role in shaping the character and values of Sri Sathya Sai Baba from his childhood. Her guidance and affection helped him grow into a great spiritual leader who showed the path of truth, love and peace to the world.

On Easwaramma Day, students and devotees express their gratitude by performing good deeds. They help the poor and show kindness. This day reminds everyone about the importance of the mother's love and the values she teaches us.

In conclusion, Easwaramma Day is not just about remembering one mother, but about respecting all mothers. Mother's love is pure and selfless, and we should always be thankful for her presence in our lives.

Shayeisarana P | Group 3 | Sri Lanka



Sathisswaran H | Group 2 | Sri Lanka

Sarmithan S | Group 3 | Sri Lanka



Aathushan K | Group 2 | Sri Lanka

தினிய தாய் தினம் நல்லாடுதருங்கள்



Anveegha N | Group 1 | Sri Lanka



Devgeessh S | Group 1 | Sri Lanka

என் அன்பைப் பார்த்தும் முன்
என் உதவை கேட்கும் முன்
என் அன்பைத் தவிர முன்
என்னை கிறிசு உதவுவாய்

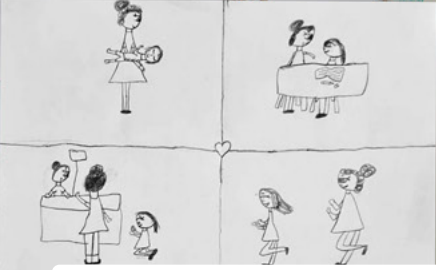


HAPPY MOTHERS DAY AMMA

Kisharikka J | Group 2 | Sri Lanka



Kanish R | Group 1 | Sri Lanka



Sarvashree S | Group 1 | Sri Lanka



Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
May 1, 2026	Friday	Buddha Poornima
June 13-14, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri
July 29, 2026	Wednesday	Guru Poornima
August 15-16, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri



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



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



Man should realize that the five basic elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether) which constitute the fundamental stuff of the universe are common to all mankind and should be enjoyed as such. He should see the divine in every human being. This was the purport of the prayer: *Buddham Sharanam Gachchami* (I seek refuge in Lord Buddha). The second prayer is: *Sangham Sharanam Gachchami* (I seek refuge in society). The implication of this prayer is that, after getting enlightenment, one should enter society (to serve it). The third prayer is: *Dharmam Sharanam Gachchami* (I seek refuge in right action). The meaning of the prayer as a whole is that for the sake of upholding *dharma*, one should use one's *buddhi* (the enlightened intellect) and engage oneself in social activity.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
May 15, 1996



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

