

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



The best teacher is one's own heart. Time is the best preceptor and awakener; the world is the best scripture; God is the best friend for man. So, there is no need to wander in search of a guru (spiritual guide). Learn the lessons from every living being, everything that you find around you. Learn faithfulness and gratitude from the dog, patience and fortitude from the donkey, perseverance from the spider, farsightedness from the ant, and monogamy from the owl. It is not possible to consider creation and the creator, Nature and God, as different or separate. Can we say that waves are separate from the sea? They are of the sea, with the sea, and from the sea. Man, too, is of God, with God, and from God.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
July 17, 1981



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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BHRIGU VALLI

THE JOURNEY TO REALIZATION OF BRAHMAN

Part 2 of 2

The *Bhrigu Valli* describes one of the most practical and experiential spiritual journeys in the *Upanishads*. Guided by the sage Varuna, his son Bhrigu, who was also his disciple, undertakes intense *tapas* and progressively realizes *Brahman* through the stages of *annam* (food), *prana* (life force), *manas* (mind), *vijnana* (wisdom), and finally *ananda* (bliss). Through this inward journey, the *Upanishad* demonstrates how the seeker moves from the gross to the subtle, transcending layer after layer of identification until the truth of *Brahman* as infinite bliss is revealed. Yet such realization does not end in abstraction or withdrawal from life. Having attained the highest truth, the *Upanishad* returns to the world—to food, service, compassion, and reverence for all existence—showing that **true spiritual realization sanctifies life rather than rejecting it. It is this profound culmination of the *Bhrigu Valli* that we now continue to explore.**

Insights from the Inquiry

This process of inquiry that leads to realization and illumination teaches important and valuable lessons. It teaches that partial truth is not false, but incomplete. Food is *Brahman* in the sense that *Brahman* appears as food. *Prana* is *Brahman* in the sense that life force is an expression of *Brahman*. Mind and intellect are also manifestations of *Brahman*. **But none of these limited expressions can fully describe *Brahman*.**

The spiritual journey also teaches that one should not be satisfied with incomplete realization. Bhrigu did not cling to his first experience. He kept marching forward. That is why the *Katha Upanishad* says: “Arise! Awake! Stop not till the goal is reached.” We too should keep going until we reach the goal, and not stop with partial realization.

The sincere seeker represented by Bhrigu does not stop until he reaches the ultimate goal. Also, the guru, represented by Varuna,

provides guidance and indication but does not simply give away the knowledge. He makes the student discover the truth for himself because truth is found through a progressive journey, inwards. It moves from gross to subtle, from outer to inner, from object to subject, from experience to the experiencer, and finally beyond even the experiencer into pure Reality.

Having experienced these five stages of realization, one finally realizes that *Brahman* is beyond all these, because it is beyond the comprehension of the mind and beyond the description of words.

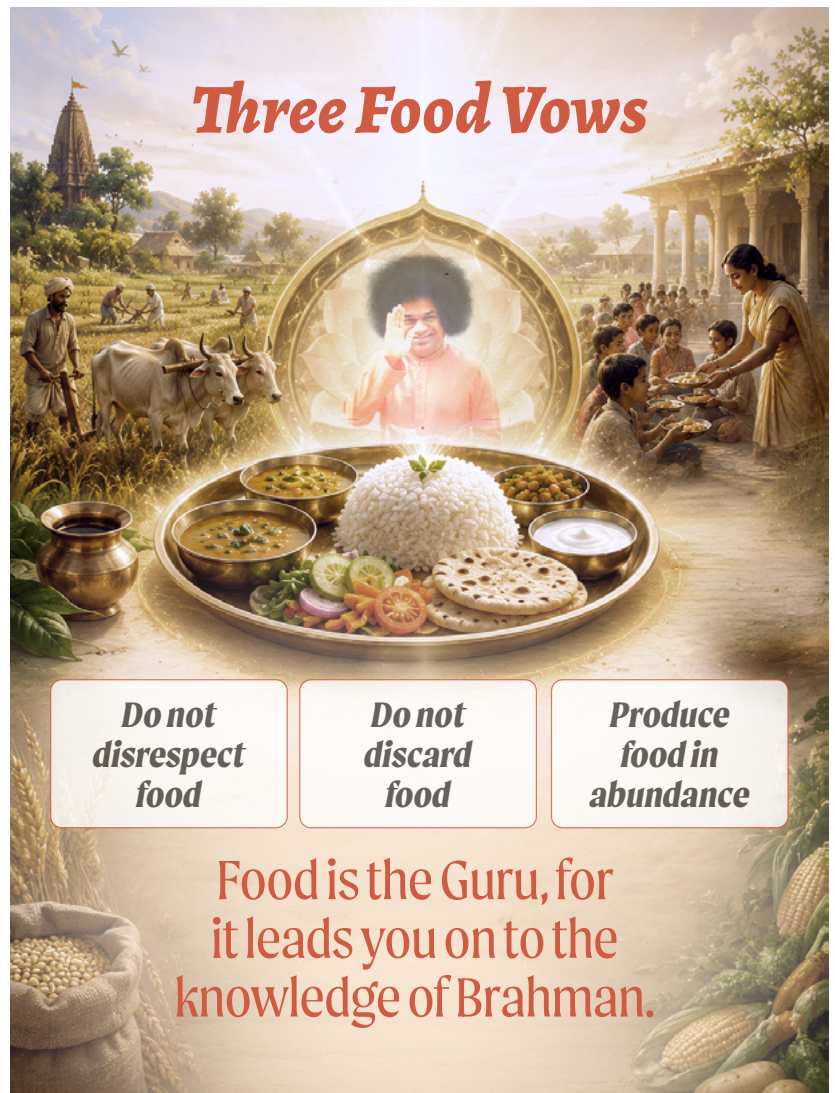
Annam Brahmopasana Hymn to Food

Having reached the peak by leading the seeker to the highest realization, the *Bhrigu Valli* does something remarkable. It then lovingly and reverentially descends back to food. The *Upanishad* bursts into hymns of reverence for food over several verses. Spiritual life does not reject the world; it sanctifies it.

The *Bhrigu Valli* prescribes three vows in relation to food:

1. *Annam Na Nindyaat*
Do not criticize or disrespect food.
2. *Annam Na Parichaksita*
Do not reject or discard food.
3. *Annam Bahu Kurvita*
Produce food in abundance.

Expanding on this in the *Upanishad Vahini*, Swami says, “Food (*anna*) is not to be decried; that should be the vow of the wise. The vital airs (*prana*) are all food. The physical body is the gift of food, and the vital airs have the body as the vehicle. So, food should not be slighted. That should be the resolution.” He further adds, “Food is the Guru, for it leads you on to the knowledge of Brahman.



Therefore, it should not be treated with disrespect. That must be observed just like a vow by the aspirant.”

Food is one of the most vital elements because it sustains the body, which is the temple of God. The body is an instrument to realize God. Therefore, we need to nourish the body, and this can be done only through food. **Thus, by practicing the food vows described in the *Bhrigu Valli*, one can connect with *Brahman*.**

Sage Uddalaka and Shvetaketu

A very interesting episode in the *Chandogya Upanishad* highlights the importance of food through a famous dialogue between the sage Uddalaka Aruni and his son, Shvetaketu. Sage Uddalaka explains that food is not merely a physical means to sustain the body; it is deeply connected to life, mind, and spiritual understanding.

He teaches that when food is consumed, the gross part becomes waste, the subtle part becomes flesh, and the subtlest part becomes the mind. The Upanishad presents this idea explicitly.

To demonstrate this truth in practice, Sage Uddalaka asked Shvetaketu to fast for fifteen days, drinking only water. After the fast, Shvetaketu realized he could not properly remember or recite the Vedas he had learned. When he began eating again, his memory and understanding returned. **Through this experiment, the teacher showed that food nourishes not only the body but also supports memory, thought, and intelligence.** Therefore, food is sacred and essential for spiritual life.

Service to Man is Service to God

Understanding of this Truth manifests as reverence, generosity, and service. **If all beings arise from *Brahman*, live in *Brahman*, and return to *Brahman*, then feeding others becomes worship, hospitality becomes spirituality, and service becomes *Vedanta* in action.** That is why Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings are especially relevant, particularly His emphasis on selfless service as love in action.

Swami teaches that "Service to man is service to God" is the highest truth. If the same *Brahman* dwells in all, then feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, educating children, and comforting the distressed are not just social duties; they are the highest worship.

Importance of Food

Food is a vital part of life, especially for spiritual seekers. **Swami often speaks about food, about the quality of food, the amount of food, and how it should be obtained and eaten.** One should eat *satvic* food, only in the quantity necessary to satisfy hunger. Food should be obtained through *dharmaic* (righteous) means, without exploiting

anyone. Finally, food should ideally be eaten in the company of holy people. **Sometimes we do not have control over these factors. Therefore, one should offer the food prayer before eating to remove the negative elements.**

Lord Krishna also speaks about the types of food we eat in the *Shraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga*, in the 17th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. In Shlokas 8, 9, and 10, He explains *satvic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic* foods, respectively.

*Ayuh sattva balarogya sukha
priti vivardhanah
Rasyah snigdham sthira hridya
aaharah sattvika priyah*

The good and the pure (*satvic*) prefer food that promotes life span and increases virtue, strength, health, happiness, and satisfaction. Such food is juicy, succulent, nourishing, and naturally tasty.

*Katvamla lavanaatyushna teek-
shana ruksha vidaahinah
Aahara raajasasyeshta dukha
shokaamaya pradaah*

Food that is too bitter, too sour, salty, very hot, pungent, dry, and full of chilies is dear to one with passion (*rajasic*). Such food produces pain, grief, and disease.

*Yatayaamam gatarasam puti
paryushitam cha yat
Uchchhishtam api chaamedhyam
bhojanam taamasa priyam*

Food that is stale, stinking, polluted, not freshly cooked, and impure is dear to the ignorant (*tamasic*).

Since the essence of food becomes the mind, which is responsible for both bondage and liberation, one should pay special attention to the food one eats.

Swami also says that food is not just what we consume through the mouth, but also the inputs received through the eyes and ears. One should see good, hear good, and

If the same *Brahman* dwells in all, then feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, educating children, and comforting the distressed are not just social duties; they are the highest worship.



use all the sense organs only for good and godly purposes.

Vedanta is often misunderstood as denying the world, but the *Bhrigu Valli* teaches the opposite. **Seeing *Brahman* everywhere naturally fosters compassion and reverence for life.** Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba repeatedly emphasizes this ideal by exhorting, “*Love all, serve all. Help ever, hurt never.*” True realization expresses itself as universal love.

Therefore, in summary, the *Bhrigu Valli* states that the seeker is not separate from *Brahman*, and **the bliss one seeks is the very essence of one’s own Self. This realization is liberation.**

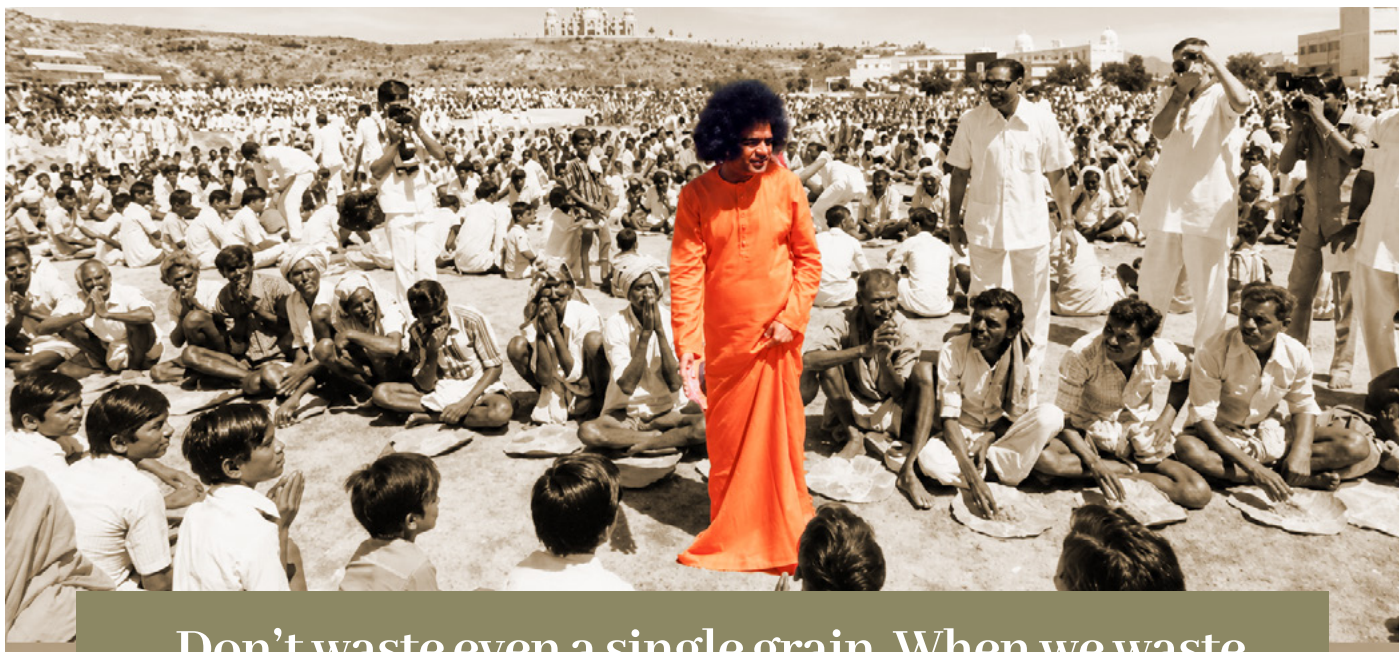
***Sadachara Pradarshanam* Living the Realization**

Bhrigu Valli closes not with abstract metaphysics but with a code of right conduct for the realized soul: *sadachara pradarshanam*, the exemplification of right living. The Upanishad instructs one, “*Na Kanchana Vasatau Pratyachakshita,*” (Do not turn away anyone who comes seeking shelter), emphasizing that one should always serve others because the realized one sees *Brahman* in everything.

Baba says the essence of all scriptures is the five fundamental human values: Truth (*Sathya*), Right Conduct (*Dharma*), Peace (*Shanti*), Love (*Prema*), and Non-Violence (*Ahimsa*). Practice of these human values is essential not only for spiritual seekers but for all beings. The basis of the five human values is Love. Swami exhorts us to start the day with love, fill the day with love, spend the day with love, and end the day with love, to realize God. Baba says that the best way to love God is by loving all and serving all. His life is His Message, and His Message is Love. He exemplified love and service by providing humanitarian services to millions of people by giving food to the hungry and the impoverished, supplying drinking water to the thirsty, and giving education and healthcare to those in need. Inspired by His example, millions of devotees around the world are engaged in selfless service.

***Brahmananda Anubhava* Song of Liberation**

In the final verses, the person experiencing *Brahmananda Anubhava* (experience of highest bliss) blissfully sings the song of liberation. The liberated sage is described as, “*Sa Yaschaayam Purushe Yascha Savaditye Sa Ekah.*” (He who is here in person and He who resides in the Sun are the same.)



Don't waste even a single grain. When we waste food, we insult the divine mother who provides.

This means that the individual Self and the universal Self are one and the same.

This is the realization of the *Mahavakya* (great proclamation) “*Tat Tvam Asi*” (that thou art), which is repeated nine times in the *Chandogya Upanishad*. This aphorism is echoed in Swami’s great declaration, “*I am God: you are also God. But while I am aware of it, you are still unaware. That is the only difference.*”

The *Upanishad* closes with the spontaneous cry: “Haa Vuu, Haa Vuu, Haa Vuu!”—a spontaneous song of unbridled joy, beyond words, expressing the overflowing bliss of the enlightened seer. Words fall away into a song. Most ecstatically, the realized soul sings, “*Aham Annam! Aham Annam! Aham Annam! Aham Annado! Aham Annado! Aham Annado!*” “I am food! I am food! I am food! I am the consumer of food! I am the consumer of food! I am the consumer of food!”

Why return to food after reaching the peak of bliss? This is because true realization does not reject the gross; it elevates, sanctifies, and divinizes it. **Having seen *Brahman* as *ananda*, the sage now sees that the same**

***Brahman* is also the food on the plate, the hand that serves, and the mouth that eats. The threefold repetition signifies the unshakable joy of this realization. The subject, the object, and the one who experiences the action are all one!**

Swami, who personally fed thousands and launched massive free food programs across villages, embodies this teaching. He says that food is God, and so we should not waste even a single grain. When we waste food, we insult the divine mother who provides. In the same vein, feeding the hungry is the highest worship.

This teaching is strikingly practical in our age of food waste and food insecurity. That is why the *Upanishad* says, “Produce food in abundance.” This axiom is not just a spiritual command, but also essential for the survival of civilization.

Summary and Conclusion

The *Bhrigu Valli* gives a complete map of *sadhana*. It begins with reverence for the guru. Bhrigu, a sincere spiritual seeker, approaches the teacher Varuna with humility, openness, and receptivity.

He possesses the proper credentials to be a worthy student, as described in the Brahma Sutras in the *Sadhana Chatusthaya*. He has *viveka* (fundamental discrimination), *vairagya* (dispassion toward the unreal and the temporary), *shat-sampatti* (the six noble virtues), and finally *mumukshutva* (intense desire to realize the ultimate goal).

Then the sincere student approaches the guru, represented by Varuna, who is not only his father but also his teacher. Varuna is patient and confident that the disciple will reach the goal if he practices intensely and sincerely.

The teacher gives a simple definition of *Brahman*: “That from which all beings arise, by which they live, and into which they return.” This provides the foundation for the student to contemplate *Brahman*. Then he explains the method to reach that stage, namely *tapas*. We have already described in detail what *tapas* is in the first part of this editorial: intense spiritual practice that takes

us through the various stages of realization, culminating in *Ananda*, bliss.

Through all these stages, the seeker discovers that *Brahman* is not far away. *Brahman* is present as food, life, mind, intelligence, and bliss. Yet *Brahman* is beyond all these—it is all these and beyond all these.

Thus, this path does not reject the world; it elevates and divinizes it. It does not deny the body; it sanctifies it. It does not glorify the mind; it purifies and transcends it. It insists on continuing the journey until one realizes that everything is *Brahman—Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*.

Thus, the *Bhrigu Valli* serves both as a scripture and a spiritual guide to Self-realization.

It tells us what *Brahman* is, how to inquire into *Brahman*, how to live in *Brahman*, and how to transform every act, such as eating, breathing, thinking, knowing, and serving, into a pathway to reach God.

Jai Sai Ram.



Satvic Food and Satsang Will Help Control the Mind

*The white ants start little by little at first,
Soon they will eat away the whole log.
The evil qualities appear to be
insignificant in the beginning.
Soon, they will destroy even a person of stature.*

*Even a yogi who fails to curb
attachment is bound to fall;
**True yoga is attained only by those
who renounce worldly pleasures.***

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Sacred *Atma*! For man's progress, a strong mind and purity of thought, both are essential. Mental strength is the foundation for a person's rise or fall. Man has two states of mind based on his perception at a given point in time. One is *hitha* (beneficial) and the other *ahitha* (not beneficial). The reason for this is that the mind may make something look bad at a given time, when it looked good at another time. The river flows through the hills, plunges into the valley, gains momentum due to the rise and fall of the terrain, and then flows swiftly, changing course now and then as other streams, rivulets,

and tributaries join it. Similarly, the stream of life flows swiftly and turbulently due to both the ups and downs of life and the relationships that man establishes with others.

No one can escape this swift current and the ups and downs in life's stream. Whether at the beginning of life, in middle age, or in old age, everyone experiences them at some point. It is very important for man to realize this truth. **One who has realized this truth has no scope for panic or fear. Only those who have not realized this natural phenomenon will be haunted by sorrow, panic, and fear. Hence, one must realize this truth at the outset.**

If a person listens to the advice of the intellect, he will be happy and fulfill the purpose for which he came. His life will be sanctified.

Importance of Focus and One-Pointedness

Man is prompted by several desires constantly arising from within and also from outside, which ultimately become resolves (*sankalpas*) in the mind. However, the mind cannot hold all these *sankalpas* at one time. Hence, the *sankalpas* that are important and beneficial for one's spiritual progress must be retained, and the others should be rejected after proper inquiry. It is only then that one can have peace of mind.

This process of steadily fixing the mind on some important objective is called *avadhana* (focus). In fact, the objective of the mind is focus. The process of eliminating undesirable *sankalpas* and retaining only desirable ones in the mind is also called one-pointedness of the mind (*chittaikagrata*). When focus is put into action, it is called *abhiruchi* or deep interest. Both deep interest and focus are interrelated and inseparable. Without one-pointedness of the mind and focus, one cannot achieve even a small task. It is essential for man to realize 'I,' his true nature, through total awareness.

The activities of the mind are very strange. The *sankalpas* of the mind spread everywhere and envelop the entire world. **Even though man dies, his *sankalpas* will not die.** The inner meaning of this statement can be understood with the help of Ahalya's example. Though Ahalya was transformed into a stone due to the curse of her husband, Maharishi Gautam, her *sankalpa* of unwavering faith and devotion to the Lord did not undergo any change. That is why, when Lord Sri Rama was passing through her *ashram* (hermitage) and His foot touched this stone,



she was transformed back into her original form, of a woman, Ahalya.

The Mind Should Always Follow the Intellect

Embodiments of Divine *Atma*! We should not wish for a new birth or a change in our physical form. This is not desirable. Instead, it is highly important that we pray for a change in our behavior, cultivate sacred desires, and lead a life of contemplation on divine thoughts.

The human being is truly a marvelous mechanism and organization. Everyone in this organization, whether the chief or ordinary worker, has to discharge their duties well. Every employee in an organizational hierarchy has to follow the formal chain of command and discharge their duties properly. In the same manner, the body functions beautifully by carrying out and obeying orders from the chain of command.

In this organization, there are four important workers. They are the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect. **The chief of this organization is the *Atma*. Since the intellect (*buddhi*) is close to the *Atma*, it wields a lot of power.** That is the reason why the mind should follow the command of the intellect. In turn, the senses should follow the commands of the mind, and the body should follow the commands of the senses. This is the proper order.

Another example: The charioteer is the chief of the chariot. However, people usually think that horses are the most important component of the chariot. This is a mistaken notion. Whatever the nature of the horses may be, if the charioteer is an expert, it becomes easy to drive the chariot. The human body can be compared to the chariot, the senses to the horses, the mind to the bridle, and the intellect to the charioteer. **In this analogy, the charioteer, called the intellect, is yoking the horses,**

namely the senses, to the chariot called the body and driving it carefully, holding the bridle of the mind. This is the proper method. On the other hand, if the mind is given charge of the chariot, it will lead to disastrous consequences.

Be Happy by Listening to the Intellect

In this context, a small example can be cited. We all gathered here as early as 4 p.m. Swami's discourse may conclude in another half hour. Among those sitting here, one person may think, "Oh! God! It is already 7 p.m. I have to go to the canteen for dinner." Thus, the mind makes a resolve (*sankalpa*). If he follows the mind's resolve, he will miss the opportunity to listen to the nectarine discourse of Swami. How unfortunate! Meanwhile, the intellect (*buddhi*) steps in and chides him, "Oh! Foolish man! You have come here from a long distance of four hundred miles and have been sitting here for over four hours. You have taken so much trouble. Can't you sit for another half hour and patiently listen to Swami's valuable discourse fully? What great joy you will derive by listening to Swami's nectarine words! Don't listen to the foolish mind. Sit down!" **If a person listens to the advice of the intellect, he will be happy and fulfill the purpose for which he came. His life will be sanctified.** However, if he disregards the advice of the intellect, he will forget his true nature and the purpose of his visit and miss his goal of life.

The intellect gives several instructions even in small matters. But the mind refuses to follow those instructions. Since it is not guided by the intellect, the *sankalpas* arising in the mind will not be clear-cut, leading to distortions and restlessness. In such situations, the mind will even forget the path of devotion. If the *sankalpas* become fruitful, the mind will become obedient. Otherwise, it will not hesitate to rebel. Not only will it go its own way, but it will also



Let the *Intellect* Guide the *Mind*.

The human body can be compared to the chariot, the senses to the horses, the mind to the bridle, and the intellect to the charioteer.

instigate the senses to rebel. Thus, the mind treads the path of anarchy.

The Mind Is Key for Liberation

Spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is an effort to guide such a wavering mind in the right direction. We must be very careful in training the mind on the spiritual path. Suppose a small stone is thrown into a pond. Even though the stone is small, its impact will create ripples on the surface that spread over the entire pond. Similarly, in the lake of our mind, no matter how small a stone of *sankalpa* is thrown, it creates ripples that will spread to the entire being. If we drop the stone of bad *sankalpas* into the lake of our mind, we will develop bad thoughts, speak bad words, see bad things, listen to bad words, and go to bad places. This bad *sankalpa* will permeate the entire being and prompt us to commit bad deeds. **On the other hand, if we drop the stone of good *sankalpa* in the lake of our mind, it will encourage all our senses to perform good deeds.**

Man's life is guided by the waves in the ocean of his mind. His mind will lose its

stability on account of the waves. He will forget his very human nature and even defile his innate divinity. That is the reason why it has been said, "Mind alone is the cause of bondage or liberation." (*Mana eva manushyanam karanam bandha mokshayoh*). We have been making an effort for the last seven days to understand the nature of the mind and its mysteries. In fact, this is our foremost duty. **Once we can unravel the mystery of the mind, that itself is *moksha* (liberation).**

What is Satvic Food?

Then, the question arises as to what the basis of the mind is. First, consider the food we eat. As is the food, so are the thoughts. As are the thoughts, so is the mind. Hence, first and foremost, we must provide *satvic* (pure, natural) food to our body. *Satvic* does not mean simply eating items like fruits, milk, and curd. In fact, the human body takes 'food' through all five senses. But people generally think they take in food only through one sense—the tongue. This is a mistake. **The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin are the five senses through**

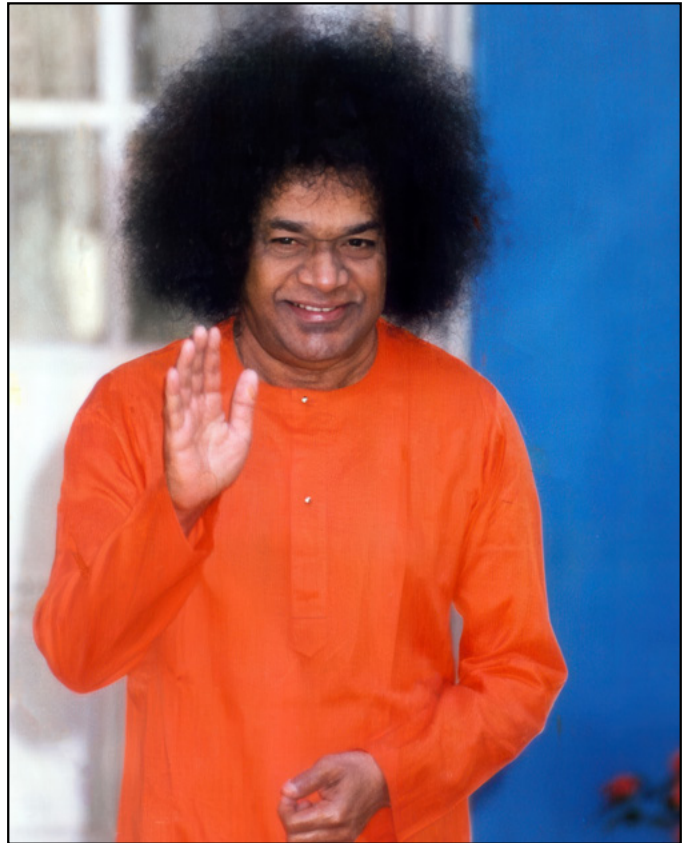
which we feed the body. Therefore, all the food we take through these five senses must be *satvic*.

This means that the eyes must have sacred and divine vision. The ears must listen to sacred words. The nose must smell divine fragrance. The skin should experience divine touch. Thus, all five senses must be purified by consuming *satvic* food. It is only to stress this point repeatedly that I exhort you to refrain from committing the *panchadoshas* (the five evils). These five evils are *drishti dosha* (seeing bad things), *sravana dosha* (hearing bad things), *vak dosha* (bad speech), *kriya dosha* (doing bad deeds), and *mano dosha* (entertaining bad thoughts). **If you can stay away from these five evils, you will verily become God.**

At times, we may have to listen to some unpleasant and undesirable things. Since we dislike such conversations, it is better to move away from that place rather than sit and listen to unpleasant talk. Unfortunately, we do not make an effort to do so. Instead, we constantly recollect those words and even try to believe them, although unwillingly. After some time, we develop a liking for these unpleasant and undesirable things. This is human nature. Not only this, but we are even prepared to share them with others. This is the reason why man's mind is becoming polluted. In fact, we should not lend our ears to scandals. But instead of keeping away from them, we take part in spreading the scandals. Why should we indulge in such sinful activities? **To lend our ears to scandals is itself a serious mistake. To spread them is another mistake. By doing so, we commit two mistakes and expose ourselves to great sins.**

Satsang Helps Cultivate a Pure Mind

The faculty of the mind acts as a master illusionist. However, it is possible to remove



the impurities from such a deceptive mind and divert it to the divine path by God's grace. If we cultivate an evil mind, the evil thoughts in our mind will spread to the people around us, affecting not only us, but also others. On the other hand, if we develop a pure mind with sacred thoughts, they can be shared with others as well. For example, if I hold a beautiful and fragrant rose flower in My hand, its fragrance will spread not only throughout My entire body, but also to others around Me. Conversely, an object with a foul smell will spread its odor and impact everyone nearby.

Therefore, a wicked mind not only torments itself but also sets out to torment those in its surroundings. Hence, we should not cultivate an evil mind. **There are certain methods by which the mind can be trained to cultivate pure and sacred thoughts. Satsang (company of the good and the godly) is one such method that will greatly help the mind to tread the divine path.** However, only when we make an effort to understand the functioning of

the mind as a whole will we be able to realize its true nature.

It is not possible to determine the true nature of the mind by identifying a small fraction of the mind. Take, for example, this rose flower. It is only when its form is revealed to you in full that you can identify it as a rose. Similarly, when you make an effort to fully understand the functioning of the mind, you will be able to grasp its true nature. Once you understand this clearly, there will be no scope at all for fear and delusion.

In fact, the mind is illusory. It has no fixed form. I have told you many times that the mind is like a camera lens. When the lens is turned toward people sitting on this side of the dais and the shutter is clicked, the camera takes their photograph. If it is turned to the other side and clicked, the camera captures a photograph of the people sitting on that side. It is like air, which has no specific form. When air is pumped into a football, it assumes the form of a football. On the other hand, if air is filled into a balloon, it will take the form of a balloon. In fact, air has no form—neither of a football nor of a balloon. Depending upon the object that it fills, it takes that form. **In summary, the mind assumes a particular form based upon one's resolves or thoughts.**

Purity of Mind is Most Important

Embodiments of Divine *Atma*! First and foremost, we must put special effort to ensure that our *sankalpas* are sacred, pure, and helpful to others. We must make a conscious effort to achieve this purpose. Furthermore, it is also essential that we partake *satvic* food. Instead of engaging in undesirable activities, we must engage

in activities helpful to others and participate in social service. It is common knowledge that people do physical exercises and gymnastics to keep their bodies fit and strong. **Just as exercise and gymnastics are necessary for the well-being of the body, *satvic* feelings, *satsang* (good company), good deeds, and service activities are necessary for regulating the mind. They all contribute to the nourishment and well-being of the mind.**

One must recognize that *satvic* food and *satsang* are essential for controlling the mind. Good thoughts are fundamental to controlling the mind. It is also necessary to realize the truth that ups and downs are bound to occur in life at one time or another, and therefore one has to develop *samachitta* (equal-mindedness) at all times. Then only can one experience bliss. **One may study *Vedas*, *shastras* (scriptures), *ithihasas* (epics), and *puranas* (mythological lore); one may have the darshan of elders and noble souls; one may read many spiritual texts; one may undertake any number of *sadhanas* (spiritual practices), but, without attaining *chitta shuddhi* (purity of mind) and *satsankalpa* (good thoughts or resolutions), one cannot attain *jnana* (enlightenment).**

One may be able to memorize and recite the Vedas and auxiliary Vedic sciences;

One may be able to recite beautiful poetry and prose;

If one has no purity of mind and heart, the person will ruin himself.

What else can I reveal beyond this?

(Telugu Poem)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Dasara 1976

A Long, Blessed, Happy, and Divine Life

THREE DECADES WITH SWAMI

When people ask what Swami means to us, only the simplest words will do.

Christiane: For me, Swami is my new life, a new purpose, and a new beginning. That is what He means to me.

Walter: And for me, He is, quite simply, God. After more than 30 years of journeying to His lotus feet, visiting Puttapartha every year since the early 1990s, I can come to no other conclusion.

We are grateful beyond words for the chance to know Him—even more grateful that we could love and adore Him. And most thankful that we have been able to serve Him. **Bhagawan once told His students that the highest blessing in life is to serve Him. That is what we have been doing, together, for over three decades.**

But it did not begin with joy. It began with a marriage in trouble.

“Give the ring back to Me.”

He took the ring in His hand (I was sitting about three feet away), closed His fingers, opened them, and now a diamond sparkled where the portrait had been!

How We Came to Swami

Christiane: I grew up as a Catholic in Germany, the sacristan’s daughter, immersed in the rhythms of faith from childhood. When I married Walter, a Protestant, the Catholic Church at that time excluded me from the sacraments that had shaped my life. The pain was sharp; my faith faltered, and for many years it was simply gone. It returned slowly, through our children, when they made their First Communion. Walter, too, found his footing again during those years, and our family came back to faith.

Then, after 20 years of marriage, our marriage itself began to crack. I prayed for guidance. I tried astrology, counseling, and anything that might help us move forward. Finally, I told Walter, “I can only continue if we go to therapy.”

In October 1991, that decision led us to a couple who were therapists. On their wall hung a small photograph of an Indian man in an orange robe. We had never seen Him before. They told us stories about Him that were all Greek to me, and I simply could not follow them. But they pressed two books into our hands. Walter received John Hislop’s *My Baba and I*; I received Phyllis Krystal’s book called *The Ultimate Experience*. They invited us to join their group on its annual journey to Puttaparthi. Walter was excited right away. I wondered what on earth we would do in India when we did not even speak the languages there, but I went.

In January 1992, three months after first seeing His picture, we were standing before Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The First Interview

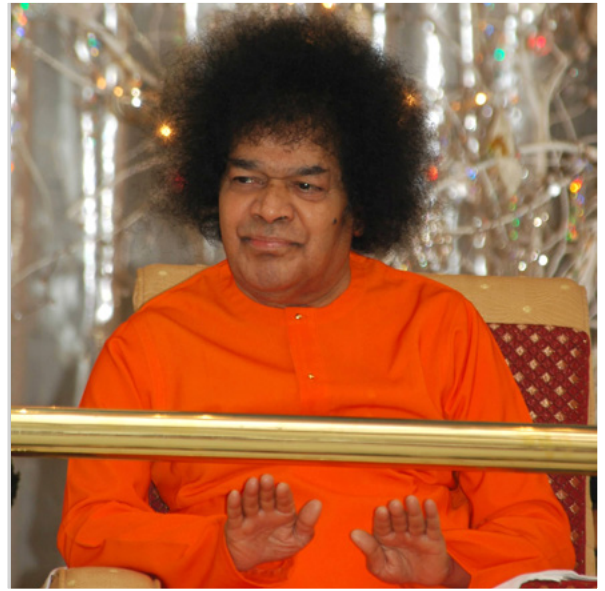
That first journey almost felt like a vacation. Swami had gone to Bombay (Mumbai today) for eight days, and we had time to explore the area. When He returned, we had *darshan* (a sacred glimpse of the divine) and then flew home. To us, He was still a stranger.

By the second trip, a year later, we had the courage to ask Him for an interview.

Walter: Swami, with that gentle insistence of His, asked, “*What do you want?*” I said I wanted an interview. He made me say it out loud one more time, even though I was shy. Then He said, “*Go.*” After a year of waiting, we were inside the interview room.

There were eight of us: our therapist couple, an elderly Indian couple, a young Indian woman with her baby, and the two of us. Swami materialized a ring for the older gentleman, set with His own portrait. “*Do you like the ring?*” Swami asked. The man said ‘Yes’, but Swami was not convinced. “*Give the ring back to Me.*” He took the ring in His hand (I was sitting about three feet away), closed His fingers, opened them, and now a diamond sparkled where the portrait had been! The mind goes blank when one sees such a thing. The brain shuts off; the eyes simply look.

The young mother’s baby began to fuss. “*Stay calm,*” Swami told her, “*Nothing will*



Walter playing the trumpet on Christmas Eve, 2006, at Prasanthi Nilayam.

happen to you here.” With a small wave of His hand, a piece of *misri* (rock sugar) appeared, which He placed in the child’s mouth. The baby quietened down instantly.

But what followed was, to me, the most precious moment. When the interview ended, Swami stood in front of me and made the usual blessing motion with His hand, a movement I have never forgotten and will cherish forever.

“You will have a long, blessed, happy, and divine life,” He said.

We were still young. We had known Swami for just two years. I wrote down His words, but I did not yet understand what He had given me.

I would understand it only 15 years later!

A Second Heart

Walter: Christmas 2006: I sat in the Christmas choir with my trumpet to my lips and played *Amazing Grace* in front of Swami in Sai Kulwant Hall. There is even a video of it. I was in bliss.

Three months later, in March 2007, I had a heart attack. I had to undergo emergency

open-heart surgery. As I was wheeled into the operating theater, the anesthesiologist and a nurse prepared me in a small anteroom. There was a phone on the wall. **Lying on the gurney, I silently chanted the Gayatri Mantra three times to myself. Then I prayed: “Swami, please guide all the hands that touch me now.”**

When my prayer ended, the phone rang.

The nurse glanced at her colleague. “Who’s calling now?” she asked and picked up the phone. There was no one on the line. She set it down, puzzled. I understood at once. “Thank You, Swami,” I said to myself. “You called!” Then the anesthesia knocked me out. Five coronary bypasses were performed successfully.

That was nearly 20 years ago now. I sometimes call the years after the surgery a second life, and the heart that beats in my chest, a second heart. Only after the surgery did I understand what Swami said in that first interview so long ago: *“Long, blessed, happy divine life.”* He had spoken the truth before I even knew what to ask.

Bathed in Bliss

Christiane: Year after year, we returned. Word seemed to have spread that whenever Walter asked Swami for an interview, Swami said 'Yes', and soon devotees were asking to join our group. At one point, we were 45 people. Each year, we wore matching scarves so that we could be readily recognized in the crowd.

One year, when Walter went up to give Swami the count, he miscounted. He said "44." Swami, smiling, corrected him: "No! 45." We were sent away.

The next day, our group gathered again, all 45 accounted for, and we were allowed to file onto the veranda to wait for our interview. While we waited, a German lady with a different scarf arrived and insisted she had been told in a dream she could join us. A senior volunteer tried to send her away, but she would not leave. The mood grew tense. Swami came; even He confronted her. Still, she would not leave. Finally, Swami declared that all the women would have to return to the *darshan* lines. Only men would be admitted to the interview.

I spoke very little English during those days. The whole exchange (the woman, the dispute, Swami's pronouncement) washed over me without affecting me. Something else was happening to me.

I experienced such a blessing, such *ananda* (bliss), from Swami that I was completely absorbed in it. I didn't even notice we were being asked to leave. Mechthild, who was in our group, took my hand and led me away. Only then did I realize she was shaking. We sat aside while the men went in, and I was still in that wonderful state of energy. Honestly, it could not have been better for me, even if I had been allowed inside the interview room.

Only over the years have I realized what grace I received that day. I had not been admitted to the interview room; I had been simply sitting on the veranda, but He bathed me in bliss.

"Next Time, Come with Your Wife"

Walter: A year or two later, I had another interview. Christiane, troubled by problems with blood circulation, had stayed in the *darshan* line. There were four men in the group. At the end of our interview, Swami sent the others out of the inner room and, for a few moments, kept me alone with Him.

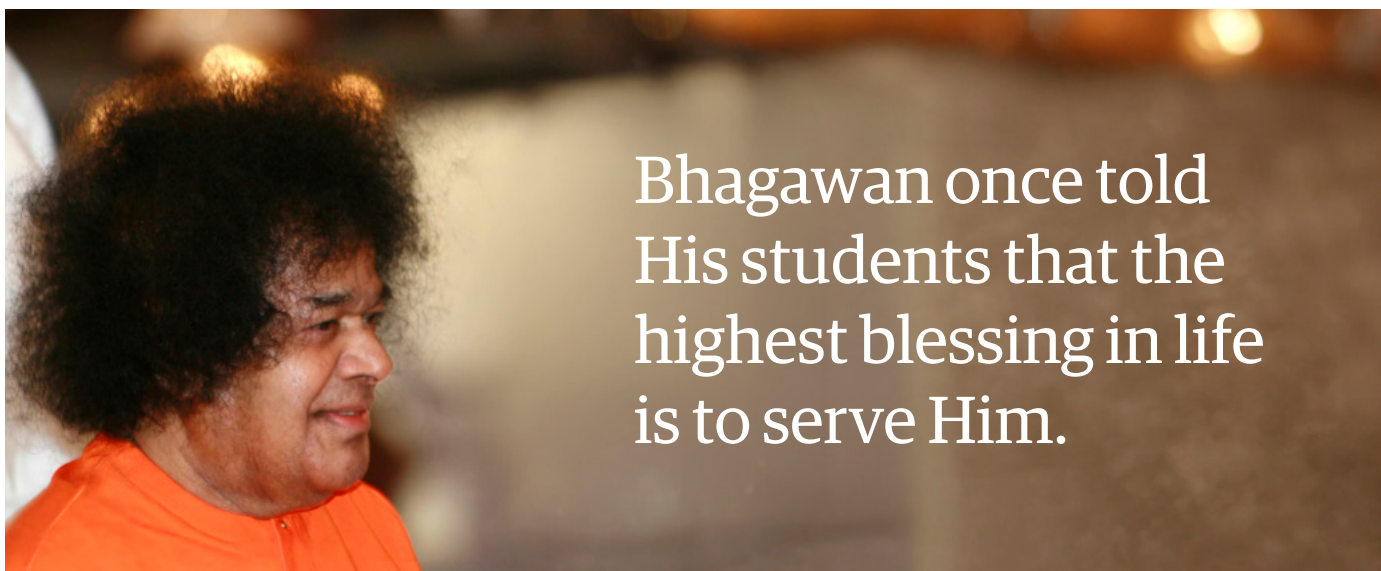
Imagine that. God and me. Little Walter and God in the same room. Swami took my hand, patted it gently, and said, "*Next time, you come with your wife.*"

The literal meaning was clear. The deeper meaning came only later. "*Come with your wife*" meant: show her more affection, spend more time with her, and do more activities with her. That was Swami's way. He rarely gave instructions plainly; He used images, hints, and gestures. The instructions would unfold inside you over months or years, and when they did, you knew it had been Him all along. In another interview, He had spoken twice about Christiane's empty seat: "*She is a good lady. She is a good lady.*"

From Hospice to Prison Service

Christiane: When we first came to Swami, in the early 1990s, we asked ourselves what *seva* (selfless service) we might offer in His name. We decided to do hospice work. Three times we tried to start. Three times the path was blocked. We were puzzled. Then, at the Munich Sai Center, the situation became clear from another angle: we were supposed to serve in the prison.

We joined a group affiliated with a Catholic men's welfare association, a small group of lay volunteers serving male inmates at the



Bhagawan once told
His students that the
highest blessing in life
is to serve Him.

Stadelheim Correctional Facility in Munich. **Walter took a letter of intent to Brindavan and laid it at Swami's feet, and Swami accepted it. From that day on, we felt His blessing for the work. We felt it inside, and everywhere things began to flow.**

It has now been over 30 years. We are the only volunteers remaining from the original group, others have come and gone over the years. The unit we work in is the most challenging ward in the prison: a sex-offender unit, where the men are kept separate from other inmates for their own safety. The work is heavy, the men are often broken, and so we wanted to stop doing the service, but we have not stopped.

Inside the prison, we never talk about Swami. We are not allowed to proselytize, and we wouldn't want to. We simply try to be ourselves. The men somehow sense that we belong there. Swami works through us, through our very being.

From Saul to Paul

Once, working with a particularly difficult man pushed us to our limits. We wrote about him in a letter to Swami and asked Him to handle this man because we could not. Walter gave the letter to Swami at *darshan*.

When we returned to the ward a few visits later, the man asked us almost shyly, "Could I have one of Baba's books?"

We were stunned. We had never talked to him about Baba. He explained that in the unit's common room, there was a television, and he had seen a documentary on Indian *gurus* and *Avatars*. Swami had appeared in it. "I have to know more," he said.

We asked the prison management for special permission and brought him a copy of John Hislop's *My Baba and I*, the same book that first opened the door for us. He read it. **Slowly, the man completely transformed: from Saul to Paul, as the Bible says.**

Eventually, he was released. We continued to guide him outside, just as we had inside the prison. He got married, and during the marriage ceremony, Christiane served as a witness. To this day, his wife still calls us. He went from being a difficult prisoner to a dear friend.

A Lesson Returned

Christiane: For some years, I ran a vegetarian cooking class inside the unit. I insisted on being a vegetarian. "If you want a schnitzel," I would tell them, "you can fry it yourself; that's not something you need to learn from me." They had imagined they wanted meat, but instead, they came to love veggie pizzas

and lentil dishes. Someone almost always arrived sulking. “Just chop the carrots first,” I would say, and by the time the meal was on the table, the cloud would have lifted. Often these were men whose marriages had ended while they were inside the prison, whose families had let them go, and who carried more grief than they could speak about.

One of them, a young man I had once privately thought was a little hopeless (“such a neglected boy,” I had thought; “he doesn’t understand anything”), was released and disappeared from our lives.

Five years later, right before Christmas, the phone rang. It was him.

“I can’t forget you all,” he said.

I asked what he was doing now. He said he was doing volunteer work. Why? Because, he said, **“You told us once in cooking class that you have to do something good to be content.”**

I did not even remember saying it, but he had carried that one sentence with him for five years.

That moment changed me. I learned to be mindful of every thought, every word. You never know which one will become the seed of someone’s grace. Even when you think a person is not listening, even when you think he doesn’t understand, grace can still come. Now I give every difficult inmate the benefit that I believe in him; I trust the divine in him is real, even when I cannot see it. The men sense the difference. They sense every thought. I have felt no fear in that ward in 30 years.

Walter: Once, when I voiced concern about Christiane being alone with the men in the kitchen, the prisoners’ elected spokesman stood up. “Walter,” he said, “if a single hair on Christiane’s head is harmed, that prisoner will not leave this ward alive.”



The authors along with other SSSIO service volunteers at Uwe’s grave.

She has always been treated, in her own words, divinely.

Uwe’s Mea Culpa

The first man entrusted to our care was named Uwe. He had spent most of his life in prison. First, in the former East Germany, he refused to submit to the regime, and then in West Germany for other reasons. He had been incarcerated for 10 years when the parole officer asked us to take him on.

Uwe was released. He often visited us, feeling lonely. We took him to family events and to the nursing home where Christiane’s mother lived. While she pushed her mother’s wheelchair down the corridor, Uwe pushed the wheelchair of another resident beside her. He was tasting freedom and tasting service, and for a time, he flourished.

Then he fell again. He met a woman, and old patterns reasserted themselves. He was sent back to long-term prison in Straubing, hours from us. We could not visit him very often. He would plead for letters, and we would write to him.

It was during this second imprisonment that something deeper occurred. Eventually, after probation in another federal state prison followed by a transfer to a halfway house, the day came when Uwe wrote a

letter we had waited many years to receive. He said 'sorry' to the victims. Sorry for what he had put us through. Sorry that he had relapsed. "What a fool I was not to see that" were his exact words.

When we read those words, the line from *Amazing Grace* came to mind. It was the hymn Walter had played on his trumpet that Christmas before his heart attack:

"I once was blind, but now I see."

A few months later, he was released, which we hoped would be the last time. He called us every Sunday. He visited friends, started his medical check-ups—a man recently freed and able to live again.

Then one Sunday, he did not call, and the next Sunday, he did not call. We called the halfway house. "We received a message this morning," the man on the line said, "Uwe passed away in the hospital."

He had no phone with him at the end, and he could not reach us. **But he had written, "I'm sorry" before he died, a true *mea culpa*.**

For us, that was the core of his life. To die having seen, having understood, that was the purpose Swami had set for him.

Through Him, All This was Possible

Without Swami, none of this would have happened. Our marriage would not have lasted. I would not have received a second life with my second heart. We would never have experienced bliss on the veranda. We would not have been able to serve for 30 years inside the prison and witness the transformation of so many difficult and troubled individuals. We would not have learned how a single sentence spoken during a cooking class could transform a boy who carried it in his heart for five years, and we would not see Uwe's last apology to God.

Every day, as we recite the *Vedas* and offer our prayers, the last sentence is always the same:

"Thank You, Swami, for letting us know You, and for protecting us."

Mr. Walter and Mrs. Christiane Ketterer
GERMANY



Mr. Walter and Mrs. Christiane Ketterer live in Germany. They have been devotees of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba since the early 1990s. Mr. and Mrs. Ketterer have visited Prasanthi Nilayam many times and received blessings from Bhagawan. Walter also performed in the Christmas Choir in the divine presence in 2006. Following Swami's teachings, they are dedicated to community service projects in the SSSIO Germany. Professionally, Walter was trained in metalworking and worked as a bookbinder before retiring in 2010.



LOVE IN ACTION



ECUADOR

100 Food Kits & Tees for 100th Birthday

To honor the centenary of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's advent, eight members of the Sai Center of Loja, along with four volunteers from the Renal Dialysis Clinic of Loja, took His teachings to the streets of the San Pedro neighborhood. On April 5, 2026, **100 white T-shirts bearing Swami's timeless messages, Love All, Serve All and Help Ever, Hurt Never**, were distributed along with **100**



food kits to the underprivileged in the city known as the Music and Cultural Capital of Ecuador.



USA

When 'God Provides' Fresh Food

In September 2025, the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Jersey City started a weekly distribution of fresh produce at the North Bergen Public Library in partnership with the Coalition for Food and Health Equity. The project was originally envisioned by Ms. Sai Lakshmi Rao, Director of the North Bergen Public Library and a member of the local Sai Center. She wanted to offer food bags to the first 100 attendees at the SSSIO health fair to commemorate Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 100th Birthday. The idea had been lying dormant until just two days before the fair, when the Coalition called the library unprompted, requesting them to set up a produce stand. Since then, farm-fresh vegetables from local New Jersey farms have been distributed every Thursday, a day selected by



the Coalition's founder, Dr. Leeja Carter, without knowing its significance for Sai devotees. When asked how she provides such gifts in abundance, week after week, Dr. Carter's reply said it all: "God provides." **Two to three Sai volunteers continue to support each event, arranging home deliveries for those unable to attend and donating leftover produce to a local homeless shelter.**



SPAIN

Sai Seva at Madrid's "Mi Casa"

To commemorate *Aradhana Mahotsavam* 2026, nine members of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Madrid traveled on April 18 to the Mi Casa Nursing Home, run by the Little Sisters of the Poor, to spend quality time with its vulnerable residents. **The volunteers filled the home with music and joy, singing a blend of popular songs and spiritual songs—many of which the residents joyfully recognized and joined in.** The visit also included warm personal conversations and the donation of an electrocardiograph machine and



essential food items. The day concluded at the Sai Center, where the members reflected on the experience and explored ways to intensify their service in the future.



SOUTH AFRICA

Mother and Child Project

On May 9, 2026, the newly established Gledhow Sai Center brought the Mother and Child Project to the rural community of Gledhow on KwaZulu-Natal's North Coast, serving 40 mothers and 39 children with the help and support of 40 dedicated volunteers. The program integrated hygiene, nutrition, and mental well-being through a rich tapestry of activities. The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (AISSE) led an engaging parenting workshop using songs, movement, and storytelling. Children explored canvas painting and decoupage to build confidence and emotional expression, and the Go Green Team planted mango, lemon, and Spekboom trees. Each child adopted and named a tree with a human value. Hygiene packs and stationery were distributed, and the day ended with a warm, nourishing meal for all.



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

LOVE IN **ACTION**

A STITCH IN TIME INSPIRES NINE



From One Small Thought to Infinite Possibilities

As the world geared up for Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 100th Birthday celebrations, members of the Sri Sathya Sai Center in Nashville, Tennessee, USA, knitted and delivered 50 baby caps to the Nashville General Hospital at Meharry, supporting families with low income. Each of these tiny caps carried warmth, dignity, and love woven into every stitch.

Looking at those caps, it was hard to believe how far the journey had come. Just two years earlier, on the occasion of Swami's 98th Birthday in 2023, the initiative started as a simple personal idea: *Could*



old fabric become an opportunity for seva? Could sustainability and service go hand in hand?

That single thought led to the launch of a fabric-recycling project at the Sai Center, where the members came together to create 225 tote bags for a local women's shelter using old Indian shawls and recycled sarees. What seemed like a small environmental initiative soon became something much more profound — an offering of love inspired by Swami's teachings on selfless service and *Ceiling on Desires*.

Movement Gathers Momentum

This effort continued into 2024 during the *Sri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsavam*. The project steadily gained momentum as devotees discovered joy not merely in the final products but in the spirit of working together. Dining tables became sewing stations. Sarees, once tucked away in cupboards, found new life in the hands of volunteers. Conversations flowed, laughter filled homes, and *seva* quietly stitched hearts together.

Meanwhile, another beautiful initiative started unfolding in parallel.

Members of the Nashville Sai Center, including children, learned knitting and created 99 baby caps for the *Room to Grow* organization. **What started as a local learning session quickly spread beyond the Center itself.** The 'learn-to-knit' sessions expanded



Individually, a^2 and b^2 represent separate efforts. But hidden within the equation is the mysterious $2ab$ — the extra value resulting from the two forces coming together. That invisible $2ab$ becomes visible through *seva*.

One person would donate a saree. Another would stitch a bag. A child would knit a cap. Someone else would coordinate deliveries. **But when all these efforts were combined with unity and love, something extraordinary emerged that was far greater than the sum of individual contributions. Through this initiative, devotees had first-hand proof of the mathematics that Swami speaks about.**

Then came another major milestone.

The Seva Continues To Grow

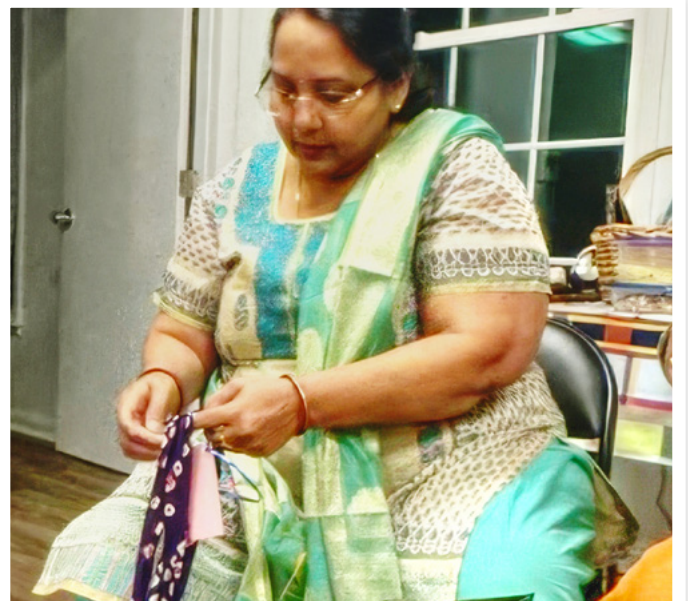
In 2025, the recycled tote bag initiative was featured at the Sathya Sai National Conference of the SSSIO–USA in Dallas, Texas. Tote bags made from recycled sarees were distributed to participants, and the concept was warmly embraced by attendees from across the country. Many took the idea back to their own Centers as a meaningful service aligned with Swami’s message on sustainability and Ceiling on Desires.

across the SSSIO–USA Region 4 (Mid-Central USA) and beyond. During the Region 4 Retreat, both men and women enthusiastically learned to knit baby caps that were later delivered to a local hospital in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Seva Synergy

The *seva* grew organically from an individual effort to a Center initiative, to a Regional movement! And somewhere amidst these experiences, a profound spiritual truth quietly revealed itself through a simple mathematical equation that Swami mentions in a divine discourse:

$$(a+b)^2=a^2+b^2+2ab$$





Small traditional drawstring pouches called *potli* bags were crafted from recycled scraps, and the funds raised supported the education of underprivileged girls in India through the Education for All initiative.

When Seva Becomes Empowerment

The project continued evolving not only in scale but also in creativity.

In September 2025, the focus shifted toward empowering vulnerable mothers to generate sustainable income. Innovation overcame the challenge of geographical distance as three Zoom sessions were held for mothers at Clarksdale Baby University in Mississippi, teaching them how to crochet baby hats. The joy on the mothers' faces upon seeing their completed creations was unforgettable. Many expressed excitement about continuing the work and eventually selling the hats as a source of income.

Another initiative soon followed: plans to provide five sewing machines to a women's shelter in Clarksdale, Mississippi, so women could learn to sew bags from recycled materials and earn a livelihood through their own skills and creativity.

What started as a recycling project has now become a tool for empowerment! What started with stitching bags has become a

Soon after, donated sarees began arriving from St. Louis, Austin, Houston, and other cities.

That is the nature of love-inspired service. A single candle can light a thousand others without losing its flame. **One sincere act of service sparks another. One inspired volunteer motivates many more. What began with a few recycled bags in Nashville was now spreading across Sai Centers throughout the nation.**

Using the donated sarees, 101 diaper bags were created and distributed to young mothers through the Room to Grow organization, which supports parents for a period of three years or more by providing parenting assistance and essential baby supplies. Even the leftover fabric found a purpose.



tapestry of confidence, dignity, and hope for many.

Infinite Growth Potential


As devotees reflected during Swami's 100th Birthday celebrations, the official SSSIO centenary logo carried a profound symbolism: the outline of Swami preceding the infinity symbol.

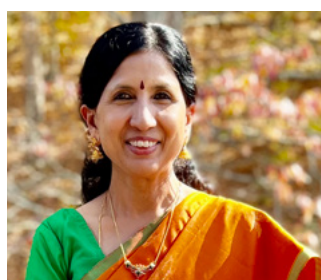
It felt truly appropriate because once Swami enters an initiative, possibilities become infinite. A small idea turns into a movement. A few volunteers become an entire region. A regional initiative is adopted at a national conference. Old sarees become opportunities for dignity and empowerment. Knitting sessions become income streams for

struggling mothers. Service inspires further service in ways no one can anticipate.

These projects are not just about recycling fabric or knitting hats. They embody skill, innovation, determination, discipline, and above all, joyful service rooted in love. Recognition is never the goal, but transformation is.

And with every stitch, every cap, every bag, and every inspired heart, Swami continues to remind us that when love and unity come together, He always adds the bonus '2ab'—the unseen grace that turns small efforts into endless possibilities.

Ms. Geetha Bhatt 
USA



Ms. Geetha Bhatt was born and brought up in India, living in the surroundings of Bangalore and Brindavan. She came into Sai's fold in 1995 and has been Swami's devotee for over 30 years. She is involved in many SSSIO service projects, such as recycling old fabric and knitting baby hats. Ms. Bhatt is a software engineer by profession and moved from California to Nashville with her husband about five years ago.

Swami's Glory Transcends All Boundaries

HIS LOVE EXPANDS

With heartfelt gratitude to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, we are delighted to share the momentous and inspiring stories of how the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) continues to share His glory and expand His love in many countries.

MEXICO

Steady Growth

In Mexico, there are encouraging signs of steady growth in the divine mission. Although recovering from the impacts of the pandemic and evolving circumstances, there has been a thoughtful and structured effort to increase and strengthen Sai Center activities.

A particularly noteworthy approach has been the introduction of practical workshops on spiritual topics, providing participants with **direct experience of meditation, study circles, and service.** Through these experiential initiatives, sincere seekers are gradually guided into forming active Sai Centers within the SSSIO framework.

As a result of these sustained efforts, several new centers have been established, and several older centers have resumed activities with renewed vigor and dedication.

Looking ahead, there is strong momentum, with 28 more centers expected to start soon. A dedicated initiative to support



Zihuatanejo, Mexico



Mazunte, Mexico

Mexico

New Sathya Sai Centers



1. Cabo San Lucas (Baja California Sur)
2. Ciudad Valles (San Luis Potosi)
3. Cuernavaca (Morelos)
4. Jardines de Santa Monica (Mexico City)
5. Lagos de Moreno (Jalisco)
6. Mazunte (Oaxaca)
7. Pachuca (Hidalgo)
8. Polanco, Guadalajara (Jalisco)
9. Poza Rica (Veracruz)
10. Presidentes (Mexico City)
11. Tlalpan (Mexico City)
12. Zihuatanejo (Guerrero)

the formation of new centers has been established to ensure that emerging groups receive guidance and encouragement.

This experience has also provided valuable insights into how to nurture Sai Centers. **Emphasis has been placed on deepening the understanding of Swami's teachings, making progress in spiritual practice, and ensuring that centers remain welcoming and inclusive spaces for all. The importance of unity, exemplary conduct, and clarity of purpose has been reaffirmed.**

Three key pillars have emerged as essential for sustained growth: Integration, Consolidation, and Growth. Integration focuses on bringing devotees together in unity and shared practice. Consolidation ensures that centers are firmly rooted in devotion, service, and education. Growth then unfolds naturally, supported by outreach initiatives such as workshops,



Cabo San Lucas, Mexico



Cuernavaca, Mexico



Australia

New Sathya Sai Centers

1. Northwest Sydney
2. Southeast Melbourne

public programs, and community engagement.

At its heart, this journey underscores a simple yet profound truth that **the most powerful way to share Sai's message is to live it**—through personal transformation. When individuals embody His teachings in daily life, it naturally inspires others to walk the same path.

AUSTRALIA

Renewed Energy and Youth Leadership

In Australia (SSSIO Zone 3), there has been a notable surge of enthusiasm and participation. With Swami's grace, new leadership teams have assumed responsibility with great energy and dedication, supported by increasing Young Adult involvement. Particularly heartening and inspiring is **the establishment of two new Sri Sathya Sai Centers—one in Melbourne and another in Sydney**, which are fully functional with support from other centers and national leadership. Plans are also underway to establish a new center in the Gold Coast to support the growth of Sai activities in the region.

Educational and service initiatives in Zone 3 continue to flourish. **All three Sai schools in the zone are operating effectively under dedicated governance**, and



Northwest Sydney, Australia



Southeast Melbourne, Australia





South Africa

New Sathya Sai Centers

1. Amanzimtoti
2. Gledhow
3. Glenhill

the Sathya Sai Specialist Center in Fiji has begun operations with support from medical professionals across Australia and New Zealand. Plans for a hospice facility further demonstrate the commitment to compassionate, value-based service.

SOUTH AFRICA

Expansion Through Service and Community Impact

Similarly, in South Africa (SSSIO Zone 9), the spirit of expansion and service remains strong and inspiring. Educational programs are witnessing active engagement from students, educators, and local communities, with a visibly positive impact on the ground. A newly formed Zone 9 Education Committee, with members from different SSSIO Zones, is further strengthening this effort.

In South Africa, the opening of three new Sathya Sai Centers marks a significant milestone.

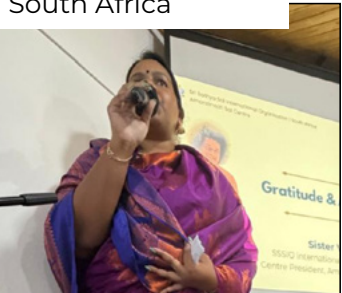
These centers stand as vibrant hubs of devotion and service, and as beacons reflecting the dedication of local devotees and the growing interest in the Sai movement. Plans to further expand the number of centers in the region are underway.



Gledhow, South Africa



Amanzimtoti, South Africa



Nepal

New Sathya Sai Centers

1. Bhaktapur
2. Chisapanitol
3. Dhanwantari Hadigau
4. Duipiple Lamjung
5. High Vision
6. Kalikasthan, Kathmandu
7. Swayambhu

NEPAL

A Quiet Re-emergence Rooted in Conviction

Nepal (SSSIO Zone 4), a land long blessed with a vibrant Sai presence, has been home to decades of dedicated spiritual and service activities inspired by Bhagawan's universal message of *Love All, Serve All*. Over the years, Sai devotees in Nepal have actively engaged in a wide spectrum of initiatives ranging from devotional gatherings and education in human values to impactful humanitarian service.

During times of great need, this spirit of selfless service has shone especially brightly. **The response to the devastating 2015 earthquake stands as a testament to this commitment, when large-scale relief and rehabilitation efforts were undertaken by the SSSIO with compassion and efficiency.** Similarly, humanitarian services such as drinking water projects have continued to benefit communities across the country, embodying Swami's teaching that hands that serve are holier than lips that pray.

In recent years, a period of transition presented certain challenges as devotees in Nepal found themselves distanced



Kalikasthan, Nepal



Bhaktapur, Nepal

from the SSSIO framework due to developments beyond their control. However, guided by inner conviction and a deep connection with Bhagawan, a renewed awareness began to emerge to pursue the divine mission with the SSSIO.

Several Sai Centers in Nepal have consciously reaffirmed their alignment with the SSSIO, the organization lovingly established and guided by Bhagawan Himself. This quiet yet powerful return has been marked not by reaction, but by reflection, understanding, and steadfast devotion.

We are happy to welcome seven new Sai Centers, which are now integrated into the SSSIO.

This collective effort and dedication represent a significant and heartening milestone, carrying immense strength and promise and reflecting unbridled enthusiasm and commitment. **Each Center is a beacon of dedication, committed to nurturing spiritual growth, unity, and service in alignment with Swami's teachings.** This momentum in Nepal is not an isolated development, but part of a broader worldwide pattern of quiet strengthening and expansion of the divine mission by the SSSIO.



Chisapanitol, Nepal





Dhanwantari Hadigau, Nepal

The Divine Mission Continues to Expand

Across these diverse geographies, a unifying thread is clearly visible—a quiet yet strong reaffirmation of Bhagawan’s mission and the values He so compassionately taught. Whether through the re-emergence of centers, the formation of new ones, or the strengthening of service initiatives, the SSSIO continues to grow as a living expression of His teachings.

These developments hold a special significance. They reflect not just a return, but a renewal. It is a conscious recommitment to the ideals of unity, purity, and selfless service. They remind us that while circumstances may change, the underlying call of Truth and Love is timeless and universal.



As these centers join the universal Sai family of the SSSIO, we celebrate and welcome them with gratitude and optimism. We look forward to continued growth, intense collaboration, and ever-expanding services, inspired by Swami’s boundless grace.



Never Mind! *I shall take you to Liberation*

In 1978, during my very first visit to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, we were in Puttaparthi after a fulfilling summer course on 'Indian Culture and Spirituality' in Brindavan, Bangalore (now known as Bengaluru). Swami called us in for an interview in Puttaparthi. He was speaking with my dear friend, Lila Youngs. He asked her, in His gentle, yet probing way, whether she had been getting up early to meditate.

"No, Swami," she replied honestly. "That's too early for me."

"*Did you come for bhajans in the morning?*" He asked.

"No, Swami."

"*Did you go for nagarsankirtan?*"

Again, she answered, "No, Swami. I can't walk with all those people."

Swami paused. Then, with a compassionate smile that seemed to embrace all human weakness, He said words that have never left me:

"*Never mind. I will take you to liberation.*"

Those words stunned me.

“We make mistakes. We fall. We doubt. We struggle. Yet the Avatar walks beside us through it all, quietly guiding us toward our highest destiny.”

Over the years, I have come to realize that those words were not meant only for Lila. They were meant for all of us seekers who stumble and struggle along the spiritual path. **When I look back at the events of my own life, I see clearly how Swami had been guiding me, correcting me, protecting me, and drawing me slowly toward that ultimate destiny long before I even knew His name.**

The Old Man on the Beach

I was born and raised in Key West, Florida, USA, an island that felt like paradise to a child. My childhood was filled with tropical flowers, fruit trees, and an endless blue ocean. Orchids seemed to grow everywhere, and the air itself felt alive with beauty.

Yet despite that idyllic setting, I must admit that I was a mischievous kid. I was daring and adventurous. If someone challenged me to do something risky, I usually accepted the challenge without hesitation. I enjoyed exploring alone and testing my courage in ways that probably worried the adults around me. But along with this adventurous spirit, there was something else in my life from the very beginning—a natural love for God. **As far back as I can remember, I talked to God inside my heart.**

I did not learn this from anyone; it was simply something I felt compelled to do. My grandparents reinforced that inclination. My grandfather was a Methodist minister, and my grandmother was one of the gentlest souls I have ever known. When I visited them during the summers, she would tell me Bible stories and sing beautiful hymns. Through them, I developed a deep love for Jesus and the Bible, which I read often as a young girl.

One day, when I was about 10 years old, I decided to ride my bicycle to the beach alone. Back then, Key West was a quiet place, and my mother was not overly worried about such adventures. I rode down to the shoreline, leaned my bicycle against the sand, and noticed that there was no one else around.

The water that day was crystal clear. You could see the bottom for a long distance—shells scattered across the sand and little fish darting through the currents. It was irresistible. I waded in and began swimming into the ocean.

I had gone a fair distance from shore when suddenly I saw something drifting toward me in the water. It was a Portuguese man-of-war—a sea creature that resembles a jellyfish but is far more dangerous. Their tentacles can trail fifty or even a hundred feet beneath the



Blessed Devotees of the Early Years

surface, and their sting can be extremely painful.

I turned and started swimming back toward shore. But before I could escape, I felt something wrap around me. Instantly, my body exploded with pain. It felt as though hundreds of wasps were stinging me all at once—around my neck, my waist, my arms.

In sheer terror, I cried out, “God save me! God save me! God save me!”

When I looked up, I saw a man standing on the shore. He was elderly, with dark skin, and he spoke to me in a language I did not recognize. In Key West, many people spoke Spanish or Cuban dialects, so I assumed the language was one of those.

He motioned urgently for me to come ashore. Somehow, I managed to reach the shore. When I stood up, my body was covered with blue welts and thin lines where the tentacles had touched me. The old man told me to lie down on the sand. Then he helped me pack cold,

heavy, wet sand all over my body, covering the stung areas.

“Lie here for ten minutes,” he said. “When you feel better, rinse off and go home.” Then he simply walked away. I followed his instructions exactly. Ten minutes later, I rinsed off in the water and rode my bicycle home.

When my mother saw me, she immediately took me to the doctor. The doctor examined me and said something remarkable: “That treatment was exactly right. Whoever told her to do that knew precisely what to do.”

Only faint red marks remained. **But what stayed with me was the mysterious old man who had appeared precisely when I needed help.**

Hearing the ‘Sai’ Name

As I grew older, my life followed a typical path. I left Key West to study nursing in Virginia, and it was there that I met the man who would become my husband. After we married, we

“...for me, the incident was unforgettable. It was the first time I consciously called on Swami for help. From that moment on, whenever I faced difficulty, I simply repeated His name. And help would come.”

moved to San Diego and were blessed with two wonderful children, Eric and Elizabeth. I loved life and enjoyed many ordinary pleasures—dancing, parties, and laughter with friends. Yet my spiritual quest continued quietly in the background. I read books about numerous spiritual traditions and teachers, searching for someone who could answer the deeper questions of life.

Then, in 1970, something happened that changed everything. At that time, I was working as a nurse in the hemodialysis unit at University Hospital in San Diego. Hemodialysis is serious work; the patients we treated were often fighting for their lives. Our department had a psychiatrist who met with the nursing staff regularly. His name was Dr. Samuel Sandweiss.

One day, he gathered us and shared about a spiritual teacher in India named Sathya Sai Baba. He explained that he had recently traveled to Mexico to visit Indra Devi’s ranch, where he first heard about this remarkable figure. Dr. Sandweiss openly admitted that he had gone to India mainly to investigate the spectacular claims. In fact, he fully expected to disprove them. But when he returned from India, he was completely changed. He spoke to us about witnessing materializations, experiencing overwhelming love, and having conversations with Sai Baba that instantly transformed him.

Some of the nurses were skeptical. A few thought he had lost his mind. But something in his words resonated deeply within me. That was the first time I heard the name Sathya Sai Baba.

That night, as I lay in bed, the name kept repeating itself over and over again in my mind: “Sathya Sai Baba. Sathya Sai Baba.” It continued all night long, as though someone inside me was gently calling me.

My Life Collapses

Soon after that, my life seemed to fall apart completely. My daughter Elizabeth was only four months old when I was diagnosed with cancer. The diagnosis came as a shock that shook my entire world. As if that were not enough, my marriage eventually ended. My husband left, and I was left alone with two small children. I lost my home and struggled with my health. The sense of stability that had once defined my life disappeared.

Yet strangely, this painful period also deepened my spiritual journey.

By 1973, I had started attending Sai Center meetings and meeting people who had actually traveled to India to see Swami. I devoured books about Him and eagerly listened to every story and experience that had ever been shared. During this time, I moved into a small cabin in the mountains where I lived

with my children, goats, and chickens. It was a simple, quiet life.

One evening, something terrifying happened. A fire suddenly started climbing up the stovepipe in our cabin. Flames were shooting upward toward the roof, and I knew that if the roof caught fire, the entire house could burn down in minutes. The nearest fire station was far away, and the house was surrounded by oak trees. **In desperation, I looked at the flames and said aloud, “Sathya Sai Baba, put out that fire.” Immediately, the flames subsided and retreated down the pipe!** I still called the fire department, and they repaired the problem.

But for me, the incident was unforgettable. It was the first time I consciously called on Swami for help. **From that moment on, whenever I faced difficulty, I simply repeated His name. And help would come.**

Meeting the Avatar of the Age

In 1978, I had a chance to travel to India for Swami’s summer course at the Brindavan *ashram*. My friend Lila Youngs was organizing a group trip, and despite my responsibilities at home, I felt an irresistible urge to go.

When Swami came out for *darshan* the day after our arrival, something extraordinary happened inside me. The moment I saw Him, I knew. There was no doubt, no question. He was the Divine.

Within a few days, our group was called for an interview. It was a beautiful building with wide verandas and large rooms. I remember sitting far at the back on the floor while Swami spoke. Lila was seated close to His feet. At one point, Swami noticed several of us sitting on

the floor and said jokingly, “*I am very poor. I do not have enough furniture,*” which made everyone laugh.

But as He spoke about God being everywhere, something extraordinary happened. He seemed to grow younger before my eyes. Although He was around 50 years old at that time, His face appeared radiant and youthful—almost like that of a young man of 25. I found myself overwhelmed with emotion. Tears streamed down my face.

Later in the interview, Swami briefly left the room. As He walked away, His robe covered His feet. I suddenly remembered hearing that Swami’s feet were very beautiful. A thought crossed my mind: *When He returns, I want to see His feet.* When Swami returned, He walked straight toward where I was sitting and gently lifted His robe. His feet were indeed beautiful—small, perfectly shaped, and luminous. I felt He answered my silent prayer.

The Feet of the Old Man

But something even more mysterious happened later. During another interview, I asked Swami if I could take *padanamaskar* (reverential bowing at the divine feet). I had never done it before and did not really know how. Swami smiled and pulled back His robe. When I bent down to touch His feet, I was startled. The feet I touched were not the delicate, beautiful feet I had seen earlier. They were larger, rougher, and older—like the feet of an elderly man. For a moment, I was confused, but I kissed them reverently and stepped back.

As I sat down again, my mind immediately went back to the mysterious old man on the beach who had saved me



“When I reflect on my life...I see a single thread running through everything. The divine is endlessly patient.”

Author at the Ashram in 1978

when I was 10 years old. Whose feet had I just touched? Were they the feet of Shirdi Sai Baba, Swami’s earlier incarnation? Or were they the feet of that same old man who had appeared out of nowhere on the shore of the ocean when I was stung by the Portuguese man-of-war? Swami never explained it, and I never asked Him. With Him, explanations are rarely necessary. Sometimes, He reveals just enough to let you know that the events of your life are not random at all. This incident felt like another gentle hint from Swami that He had been guiding me long before I knew Him.

A Master Who Knows Everything

Two years after that first visit, around 1980, I felt a strong urge to return to India. A close friend, Lance Nelson, decided to travel with our group. Lance was a Sanskrit scholar working on his doctoral dissertation. He had brought his unfinished dissertation in a small backpack. He wanted Swami to tell him whether to complete it or not.

On the airplane, he warned me to be careful about food in India. “You must watch what you eat,” he said. “Some-

times the *ghee* (clarified butter) they cook with can be rancid.”

When we arrived in Puttaparthi, we were soon called for an interview. During that interview, two boys were being initiated by the sacred thread ceremony. Their parents had brought trays with bananas and fruits, and two ceremonial threads. Swami said, “*Why did you bring the threads? Everything is in Sai’s palm.*” He waved His hand, produced the sacred threads, and put one on each boy. Then He recited the *Gayatri Mantra* very softly and beautifully, three times to sanctify the ceremony. I used to feel that Veda chanting usually sounds harsh, but Swami’s voice was so sweet and heavenly. We all felt we were being initiated along with them into the *Gayatri Mantra*.

He told the boys they could chant the *Gayatri* anywhere—before meals, in the shower—and He even acted like He was out scrubbing Himself while saying it.

During that interview, Swami asked an elderly woman named Althea (mother of Ms. Faith Penn, and mother-in-law of Mr. Charles Penn—both renowned devotees of Baba) to hold her palms together like a bowl. Then Swami gently

rubbed His thumb and middle finger together over her hands, and as He did this, warm *halva* began to flow into her hands—a sweet semolina pudding filled with raisins and almonds. He began distributing portions of it to everyone in the room, yet the quantity never seemed to diminish. “Eat,” He said gently. “*This is food from God.*”

Then He looked directly at me with a playful twinkle in His eye and said: “*And the ghee is good.*” At that moment, I realized that Swami had heard the conversation Lance and I had on the airplane thousands of miles away. **His knowledge was not limited by distance, time, or physical presence.**

Afterward, we went to the outer room. Althea told Swami that she was having trouble hearing and asked Him whether it was *karma* or old age. Swami said, “*Old age!*” As we were leaving, Lance and Swami were standing in the doorway. Lance wasn’t sure whether to go first. Swami pointed to his backpack—the one with his dissertation—and said, “*Do.*” That was all Lance needed. He finished the thesis and later became a professor of religious studies at San Diego University. Again, Swami had shown His omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.

Swami Removes the Darkness

During another interview, Swami spoke with me privately about my life. At that time, I used to feel deep shame about my divorce. It weighed heavily on my heart, and when the opportunity arose, I quietly confessed it to Him. “I’m divorced, Swami,” I said. He looked at me firmly and replied, “*Never mind. That is finished. You do sadhana, sadhana, sadhana.*”

At that very moment, something extraordinary happened within me. Suddenly, I felt a powerful surge of anger rise inside me—an anger I did not even realize I had been holding onto for years. It seemed to rush out toward Swami like a dark force. For a brief moment, He leaned back physically, as if He was receiving it. **Then His face changed completely, and His eyes filled with an indescribable bliss. The whole experience lasted only a few seconds, but when it was over, I felt as if something heavy had been lifted from my being.** When I walked out of the interview room that day, the shame, the bitterness, and the pain that had been haunting me since my divorce were simply gone. Swami had taken them away.

From that moment onward, I made a silent promise to myself that I would try my best to follow whatever Swami instructed.

The Blow on the Head

Years later, during another interview, something happened that at first seemed almost humorous, but a deeper meaning was later revealed. As the interview was ending and we were leaving the room, Swami suddenly struck me on the head with His knuckles. It was not painful, but it was completely unexpected. I remember thinking in surprise, Swami just hit me on the head!

That night, I had a vivid dream. Two radiant beings who looked like angels stood behind me. One of them reached into the back of my head and started pulling something out. Slowly, they extracted what looked like a long, dark worm. When it finally came out, one of them said, “She is rid of it now,” and they carried it away. When I woke up,

the dream remained crystal clear in my mind. I knew immediately that something within me had been removed. **Looking back, I feel that Swami's sudden knock on the head was like a 'spiritual surgery'—a way of removing some deep impurity lodged in my mind.**

Experiences like this taught me that the Lord does far more than simply teach us; He works directly on the inner nature of the devotee.

The Gentle Promise

Through the years, I had many more encounters with Swami—some joyful, some corrective, but all meaningful. However, the words He spoke to Lila that day remain the most powerful lesson of all.

“Never mind. I will take you to liberation.”

When I reflect on my life—the rescue on the beach in my childhood, the fire in the mountain cabin, the mysterious feet during *padanamaskar*, and the many small ways He has corrected and guided me—I see a single thread running through everything. The divine is endlessly patient.

We make mistakes. We fall. We doubt. We struggle. Yet the Avatar walks beside us through it all, quietly guiding us toward our highest destiny. **All He asks is that we remember Him with love. If we do that, the rest is in His hands.** And one day, when the final door opens, He Himself will lead us through it.

Mrs. Patricia Wing
USA



Mrs. Patricia “Pat” Wing, a devoted Christian and former Sunday School teacher, was first introduced to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in 1970 while working as a nurse in San Diego, California, USA. In 1978, she had her first darshan of Baba, an experience that deepened her faith and marked the beginning of her lifelong devotion to Swami.

In 1980, she started a Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) program in San Diego. Pat also served as the SSE Coordinator for Region 8 of SSSIO–USA from 2000 to 2005 and completed the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Diploma Course. Pat compiled the Sathya Sai Educare Study Guide, a widely acclaimed book on the five human values. Blessed with several personal interviews with Swami in the 1970s and 1980s, she was deeply committed to living and sharing Swami’s teachings.

Mrs. Pat Wing was a loving mother of two and a proud grandmother of five.

from the International Sai Young Adults



INTERNATIONAL YA CALL 2026

On May 9, 2026, Sai Young Adults from across 10 zones of the SSSIO gathered for the International YA call, a satsang to bring together YAs from every corner of the world for inspiration and to strengthen their bonds of love and brotherhood. Ms. Vahinie Pillay, the International Young Adults Coordinator, opened the call by welcoming all Young Adults. Then, the Zone YA Coordinators presented updates on activities and upcoming events in their regions, **offering fellow Young Adults a glimpse into new initiatives that could be adapted and implemented across zones. Project team leads from YA initiatives such as Empowering Leaders, Veda, Creative Media, and Serve Sai also presented opportunities for Young Adults worldwide to participate remotely.**

Since the call was held soon after Easwamma Day, Mr. Satyajit Salian also reflected on the life of Mother Easwamma. He spoke of the chosen mother's journey from a humble village upbringing to witnessing the extraordinary unfolding of her son's divine mission, from the child who brought the poorest to her doorstep to the young Swami who lovingly but firmly stepped beyond the bonds of family. He discussed how Swami gradually expanded her consciousness, from a mother's simple, innocent, protective love to a vision vast enough to ask three boons: a hospital, a school, and water for the people of Puttaparthi, which became the very seeds of Swami's humanitarian works worldwide. The full talk can be viewed at this [link](#).

The call ended with a clip of Swami's divine discourse from the 2nd World Youth Conference held in November 1999, where He urged the youth to protect their physical, psychological, and spiritual energy. Swami reminded the Young Adults that once this is achieved, one is Divine. Leading a sacred life is all that is needed, for God's grace and help will follow us in every way, as that is His job.

CLEARING THE PATH

On February 28, 2026, Young Adults (YAs) from the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Fairfax, VA, USA, spent a meaningful day expressing their gratitude to Mother Nature through service. Under the warm sun, the six-member team cleaned up the Wilcoxon Trail, a popular hiking and biking trail in Wilcoxon Park.

With supplies provided by the Fairfax City Public Works Department, including safety vests, gloves, trash grabbers, and collection bags, the group worked from 2 to 4 p.m., picking up litter along the trail. Going beyond the expected service, the group also uncovered and cleared hidden trash deeper in the woods and even waded into a nearby stream. It was a day marked by unity, hard work, and a profound sense of connection to the environment. The team even came up with an inspiring, playful slogan: “Trash is worth it!”

For one participant, one of the most inspiring aspects of this project was the genuine enthusiastic support from the Fairfax City Public Works Department, as shown by their statement:

“They didn’t just provide guidance on where our efforts were needed most; they equipped us with everything we needed. This partnership makes it incredibly easy for any volunteer group to organize its own cleanup because the city provides the necessary supplies, and teams can schedule service activities at their own convenience. We hope this model inspires other groups within our center to take the lead and

give back to our local green spaces.”

For another member, their actions embodied Sri Sathya Sai’s message: “Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray” and “Cleanliness is next to Godliness,” both perfectly aligned with this service activity.

During the service, more than four bags of trash were collected, weighing about ten pounds.

Mr. Manoj Gootam, the YA representative of the Fairfax Sai Center and the project lead, shared,

“The preparation phase was solely focused on logistics. But when we actually started, something shifted. As we spread across the trail, I stopped seeing it as a ‘project,’ and it became a conversation with Mother Nature. For me, every piece of litter I picked up felt like I was clearing a bit of noise out of my own mind. Leading this effort was a powerful reminder that our spiritual path, much like a physical trail, requires constant care. As we cleared away the debris, I realized how easily the ‘path’ can become hidden if we aren’t mindful and consistent in our spiritual efforts. By the end of the day, I was left with a deep sense of peace and a renewed commitment to keeping my own internal path just as clean as the trail we left behind.”



The Lotus in Muddy Waters



"The lotus, born in slime and mud, rises up through the water and lifts its head high above the waters; it refuses to get wet, though water is the element which gives it life! Be like the lotus."

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba
January 1, 1964

SWAMI HAS ALWAYS BEEN PART OF MY LIFE IN A VERY PRACTICAL WAY.

As a parent of young children, always on the go, my relationship with Him has gone through different stages. **I often find myself asking, how do I experience Swami throughout my day? How do I serve our community? How do I help our children find their own relationship with Him?**

Life is busy with managing properties, overseeing projects, school runs, and all the beautiful chaos of family life. In the middle of all that, I try to talk to Swami throughout the day. I look for opportunities to serve, to grow, and sometimes, to be surprised by the people around me. One such opportunity arrived in a way I didn't expect.

The property I manage became vacant, so I advertised the vacancy and started reviewing applications. Several applications came in, and as part of the process, I contacted an applicant's previous landlord for a reference check. The landlord was full of praise and spoke highly of the person. During that conversation, the previous landlord was pleased with my work and offered to hand over a small portfolio of her own properties for me to manage. It felt like a positive opportunity, a door opening, and I accepted!

But then the door revealed what was really behind it. The very next day, when I met her in person, she admitted the truth. She had given a glowing reference because this man was a drug dealer and a gang member, and she desperately needed to get him off her property. At that moment, I questioned why Swami would put me in a position that started with dishonesty. But by then, it was too late to step back from the tenancy agreement, which had already been signed.

I told Swami to take my hand and guide me through this. I did what I needed to do, but inside, I asked Swami to create an opportunity for me to transfer management of those properties to the landlord because I did not want to continue a relationship built on dishonesty. And in His own gentle way, Swami arranged for that door to close. Those properties found their way back to their owner.

Meanwhile, my journey with the new tenant was just starting. At first, I was very cautious. The previous landlord had warned me that people would come to the property demanding money, that there was gang activity, and that the house would smell of drugs. I chose neutral public places for our initial meetings. **Each time, I silently say a prayer, and invite Swami to join us, and consciously send love to this man.**

I kept a close watch, and during inspections, there were times I saw signs of the world he lived in: gang patches, unfamiliar visitors who would drive off the moment they spotted my car, and the smell of air freshener to mask other odors. Each time, I would remind myself to say a prayer and send love.

Slowly, something began to shift. Over time, my relationship with him became more positive. One day, I met his two kids. There was something so genuine and innocent about them. And watching this man with his children, I knew he was trying to change. Quietly and steadily, he was making an effort to become someone different for them. I saw someone who cared about his children and was trying, in his own way, to make changes. I noticed the property was being looked after. His manner softened, and I could sense he was making a genuine effort.

One day, during a conversation, he mentioned the kind of work he did and asked if I knew anyone who might hire him as a contractor. I took a chance and brought him on as a contractor for one of my projects. I was cautious initially, checking in every day and keeping a close eye on him. But gradually, as I gained trust, I felt more at ease. What I found was not the person I had been warned about. It was someone working hard, showing up on time, and doing good work.

At the end of the project, he also told me that he would be vacating the property. He was moving back to his hometown to be closer to his family and spend more

time with his children. We had a long talk. He opened up about the difficult life he had lived, how much courage it had taken to step out and try to make a change, and his resolve to leave the gang life behind and take care of his family. He was honest about his fears too, worried that the environment in his hometown might pull him back into his old habits.

He told me something that truly stuck with me. He was grateful for the opportunity and support he received, which gave him a chance to change for the better and believe in himself. I recommended his business to others. I told him to reach out whenever he needed support. He was in tears, and we ended that conversation with a hug.

And as I drove away, I felt Swami's presence in that moment. The glimpse of seeing God in everyone and the courage to be the lotus in muddy waters. There was no plan here, no intention of making a difference. I was just trying to navigate a difficult situation as best as I could. But looking back, that is often exactly when I can see Swami's hand at work.

This is what I try to share with my own children as well. Our connection with Swami is not confined to the altar. Swami lives in our heart, and how we treat people around us, often those who challenge us the most.

Thank you, dearest Swami, for this most beautiful journey.

Young Adult





Ms. Sadhana Ravichandran
NEW ZEALAND



Sadhana is Simple

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 leading up to this sacred milestone.

On July 12, 1995, during His discourse on Guru Poornima, Swami said, *"Guru Poornima is an occasion for cleansing the mind to make it absolutely pure. It is not enough to praise God. You have to love Him. You have to become love itself so that you can love the entire universe. I address all of you as 'Embodiments of love.' When you become embodiments of love, you can love all."*

Inspired by Swami's divine words, one of the participants, Ms. Sadhana Ravichandran from New Zealand, took up the *sadhana* of doing positive affirmations daily. Reminding herself each day, "I am love," she shares her reflection:

*"The **sadhana** journey of practicing affirmations was truly transformational for me. There were days when I faced situations where I had no choice but to hold firmly onto those affirmations. In doing so, they became all the answers I needed. At times, I found myself worrying about things beyond my control. However, through this process, I developed a deeper self-awareness and remembrance that Swami is always with me and is the controller of all things, so why worry? **Each day felt deeply satisfying as I made sure to repeat my affirmations at least twice: I am strong. I am brave. I am love. The more I repeated the affirmations, the more I embodied them. This also made me feel closer to Swami.** This practice guided me through some of the most challenging moments of my life, and I will continue to embody Swami through this *sadhana* for the rest of my life."*

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My Baba, My Song

My heart beats with just one name,
Sai Baba, ever the same.
In joy, in pain, in darkest night,
You are my truth, my guiding light.

Each step I take, I feel You near,
Your voice in silence, soft and clear.
When I stumble, when I fall,
It's You who lifts me through it all.

Your bhajans rise like morning prayer,
A sacred wind that fills the air.
With every note, my soul takes flight,
Wrapped in Your love, bathed in Your light.

No riches I seek, no worldly fame,
Just to sing forever in Your name.
With claps and chants, I call to Thee,
O Baba, stay always with me.

You are my path, my truth, my fire,
Your love alone is my desire.
And as I walk this life's long span,
Guide me always, Sai, hand in hand.

Hamithraa A | Group 3 | Malaysia



GURU

PURNIMA



Riya N | Group 3 | Online SSE

Sai is in my name, and Sai is in my heart,
A love that fills me deeply, that makes me whole.
When I sing Your bhajans, Baba,
I feel Your grace, A warmth that embraces me,
a smile on Your face.

Each note I sing, each word I speak,
Is a prayer from my heart, so humble, so meek.
Sai, You are the light in my darkest night,
Guiding me softly with Your endless light.

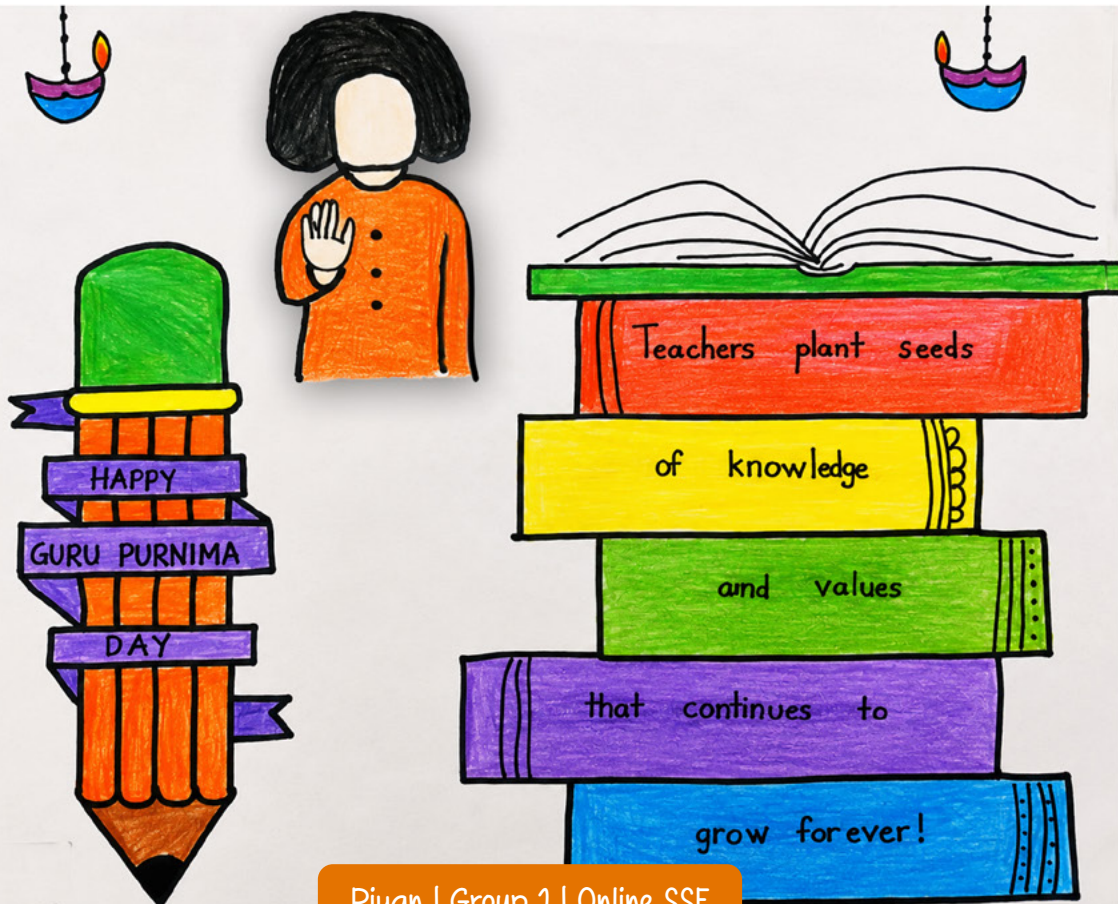
In every breath, You're there with me,
A constant presence, pure and free.
With every step, You guide my way,
Turning each moment into a prayer, each day.

Sai, in my name,
You live and thrive,
In Your love,
I'm truly alive.

Through every storm,
through joy and pain,
In Your grace, I remain.

So, I sing not for the
world, but for You alone,
For You're my companion,
my heart's true home.
Sai in my name,
and Sai in my heart,
In Your love, Baba,
I'll never depart.

Jhanani A | Group 4 | Malaysia



Riyan | Group 1 | Online SSE

Aum Sri Sai Ram

My humble pranams at the lotus feet of my beloved Swami.

I'm Isurya, a Group 3 SSE student from Sri Lanka. I would like to share my experience of coming into Swami's fold. Well, I wasn't born into a Sai devotee family. So how did I know Swami? My mom, she used to meditate, so one day while she was meditating, she got a vision of Swami, and He guided her to go to Mandir.

After this experience she got curious, and she found out that there was a Sai Mandir in Colombo, and so we went there (on March 6, 2023). It was the first time I came to the Mandir at Barnes place. My mom instantly knew she had a connection with Swami and after that every Thursday we attended bhajans.

The funny thing was, at first, I didn't like the fact that my mom was praying to Swami. Not that I disliked Swami, but it was because I had to sit in one place for an hour during bhajan. I used to be a hyper kid and staying in one place was quite torturous. After some weeks, I eventually warmed up.

After a few months of coming to bhajans, my mom learnt about SSE and so she enrolled me in along with my little sister. Since I was happy with Swami, I agreed to go to SSE. Since then, it started feeling like home and I belong to Swami. Now I'm inseparable from Swami to the extent that I wish that SSE is an actual school where we can go to on all weekdays, while we attend our academic school just on the weekend.

In this past one year of being with Swami, I have changed a lot. My anger issues have reduced, and I am able to take some time to think before reacting and calm myself down. Sometimes when my parents don't understand me, I tell Swami and He helps me to calm down and release all my stress. He has helped me a lot. The main thing that I know is Swami is there with me, I know Swami is in me guiding me throughout the day, be it at school, with friends or wherever I am and in whatever I do. I know that this bond I have with Swami is unbreakable.

It is easy to know Swami but not easy to have faith in Him. Swami has given me a lot of good and a lot of tough experiences. Yep, even not so happy experiences. But it's for my own growth, I believe that everything that Swami does is for my own good. I'm just Swami's instrument to use when required. All I ask from Swami is for me to have full devotion and faith in Swami always and forever, and to make my life His message.

Isurya G | Group 3 | Sri Lanka



So-Hum means I am God.
God lead me from untruth to truth.
A good tongue is a best friend of every man.
God is everywhere and in everyone.
Namasmarana means that you are saying
Om Sai Ram all the time.

Truth, right-conduct, peace, love, non-violence.
Concentrate on your target when you are doing something.
Concentrate all the time. Presence of mind, concentration. Don't be bad, be good. Help people when they are hurt or when they have a broken bone.
The big bang which created the world was God and the sound of the bang was Om. Om is God's name.

Listen to your parents and everyone else that you know who is good.
Control your mind by concentrating on your breath.
Be calm and then concentrate on your breath.
Every hour take a one-minute break and sit in silence and breathe in and out.
Breathe in and out till you can focus.
When you are anxious, focus on your breath in silence.

You are never alone because Baba is everywhere and in everyone.
Become a master of breathing. Jyoti means light.
Be thankful whenever someone does good things for you and then greet that person and say thank you politely. Meditation makes you calm.

Be kind to everyone. Help clean the house, and always clean up your own messes. Be kind, caring, and polite. Pray to God every night. Live a happy life.
God, lead me from darkness to light. May all the universes be happy. Don't give up courage.

Vaneesa S | Group 2 | Thailand



Upcoming SSSIO Online Events

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












Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
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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Only the day when the mind is rid of the darkness of ignorance and achieves illumination is the real Guru Poornima Day for man. Looking merely at the full moon in the sky and calling it Guru Poornima is only worshipping the external, while internally there is a void (*shoonya*). It is only when you have cleansed your heart by getting rid of ignorance, sorrow, worry, greed, and envy that you can celebrate Guru Poornima and realize the fullness of your Reality.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

July 24, 1983



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

