

SATHYA SAI
THE
ETERNAL
COMPANION



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 8
AUGUST 2026



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



Doing good deeds means doing selfless service to others. One has to shun bad company and seek friendship of the good, who can cleanse us and heal us. Man is consumed by time; God is the master of time. So, take refuge in God. Let God be your Guru, your path, your Lord. Adore God, obey His commands, offer Him your grateful homage, hold Him fast in your memory. This is the easiest way to realize the Divine as your own reality. This is the one and only way.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
July 2, 1985



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





Volume 5 • Issue 8 • August 2026

ISSN 2831-6908 (Online)
ISSN 2831-6916 (Print)

Copyright © 2026 Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation
Riverside, California, USA

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or publisher.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any manner without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

To request permissions, please contact the
publisher at info@sathyasai.org

Editor: Dr. Narendranath Reddy
Published by: Sri Sathya Sai International Organization

sathyasai.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume 5 • Issue 8

August 2026

6 Editorial

The True Guru, Part 1

14 Divine Discourse

The Only Guru is the Self Within, July 7, 1990, Part 1

22 Experiences of Devotees

How the Divine Teacher Nurtured My True Self by Dr. William Jackson
Sai-The True Transformer by Mr. Swarnim Narayan

34 Humanitarian Service

Love in Action-Colombia, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Ukraine

36 Glory of Womanhood

Prasanthi Nilayam is in Your Heart
by Ms. María de Lourdes Martínez Rodarte

42 Ideal Sai Young Adults

"Who Am I?" Workshop, Brazil
Walking His Legacy, Mexico
No Child Sleeps on the Floor, USA
Seva Turns to Sewa, Germany

48 Sathya Sai Education

With contributions from Deetya, Dheepica, Eva, Gambar, Getha,
Hoojeayaan, Jenarthan, Kirti, Lakshmi, Livithraahi, Naveen, Ramani,
Samhita, Sanjuktha, Shaast, Stivano, Sudhakar, and Udit

52 SSSIO Events and Websites

Subscription for **Sathya Sai – The Eternal Companion** is Free

[Click here to subscribe](#)

Past issues of Eternal Companion are available on sathyasai.org and [Google Books](#)

THE TRUE GURU

Part 1 of 2



Guru Poornima is an auspicious occasion celebrated in the month of *Ashadha*, on the sacred Full Moon Day, to express our gratitude, reverence, and love for the Guru, who shows us the *guri*—the goal of life.

The Guru is the one who reveals the supreme goal and ultimate purpose of human existence. As the scriptures declare, and as Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba often reminds us, **the purpose of human existence is to realize our true nature—that we are the embodiments of divine love, the divine Atma, and divine bliss.**

Inner Significance of Guru Poornima

This sacred festival is celebrated every year by spiritual seekers around the world. However,

Baba has often emphasized that festivals should never be observed merely as rituals. We should understand and live their inner spiritual significance.

Guru Poornima honors one of the most profound truths of spiritual life—that God, out of His infinite compassion and love, assumes the role of the Guru to guide humanity from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom, and from the ephemeral to the eternal.

Every authentic spiritual tradition recognizes that the journey from the finite to the Infinite requires guidance, and that the Guru is the guiding light. This day is also celebrated as Vyasa Poornima, honoring Sage Veda Vyasa, who codified the Vedas, gave us the Fifth Veda, the Mahabharata, and composed the

18 Maha Puranas (sacred religious legends). Therefore, in his honor, this day is also called Vyasa Poornima.

The title of this magazine, *Sathya Sai – The Eternal Companion*, beautifully captures this timeless truth. Sathya Sai is not just a historical figure remembered only on special occasions—He is the true Guru.

The Guru is the Eternal Companion, guiding, supporting, and staying with us through every joy and sorrow, every success and setback, every birth and death, until we attain the final realization of our true nature.

Parents: Our First Teachers

The Guru appears in many forms throughout a spiritual seeker's life, from the very beginning of the journey until the realization of the ultimate truth. The first Guru is the mother, who is the child's first teacher. She not only teaches the child how to eat, walk, and speak, but can also be the first guide who points the child toward God.

Thereafter, she introduces the child to the father, who also becomes a guide on the child's spiritual journey. To be blessed with parents who have genuine spiritual interest and live a God-centered life is truly a testament of divine grace.

In this regard, I was very fortunate. My mother was a devotee of Lord Sri Rama, and from childhood she taught my brother and me how to worship the Lord regularly, punctually, and with devotion. Every morning and evening, we performed devotional practices, offered prasadam, sang devotional songs, and practiced writing the sacred name of God (*likhita japam*). In 1995, when I happened to be with Bhagawan in Kodaikanal, He acknowledged this aspect of my life and told the audience, “*He got this devotion to God from his mother.*”

My father was well-versed in scriptures such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, so I was also exposed to Vedanta from early childhood. Thus, he too helped us under-

stand the spiritual concepts and inner significance of the scriptural texts, strengthening the foundation in the path toward God. Because of his deep spiritual interest and devotion, he also brought us into contact with many great saints and sages. From early childhood, we visited Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's *Ashram*, met monks of the Sri Ramakrishna Order, and had the privilege of meeting many great saints of the day.

Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavad Gita that those who have accumulated noble merits in previous births are born into families of sages or spiritually evolved people—or at least into families that possess deep spiritual values (BG 6.41-42). Thus begins the seeker's journey in an environment conducive to spiritual development.

Then, by God's Grace, a person comes into contact with holy people—saints and sages whose exemplary lives illuminate the spiritual path. Because of association with the holy, one steadily advances in the spiritual path.

Holy Company and the Saints

Adi Shankaracharya, a saint and a staunch proponent of non-dual philosophy (*Advaita Vedanta*), beautifully extols the transformative power of holy company (*satsang*):

*Satsangatve nissangatvam,
Nissangatve nirmohatvam,
Nirmohatve nischalatattvam,
Nischalatattve jivanmukti*
(Bhaja Govindam, verse 9)

(The company of the good and the godly leads to detachment.
Detachment removes delusion.
Freedom from delusion instills
steadiness of mind.

Steadiness of mind culminates in *jivan-mukti* (liberation while alive).)

Thus, *satsang* itself becomes a Guru, gently guiding the seeker toward Self-realization. **One of the finest illustrations of the transforming power of holy company is found in the Ramayana, in the life of Sabari.**

THE THREE *Blessings*

- **Human Birth**
(*Manushyatwam*)
- **An intense longing for God or liberation**
(*Mumukshutwam*)
- **The company of a great, realized soul**
(*Mahapurusha Samshrayah*)



Sabari, a woman saint, possessed no formal scholarship. Yet through her association with great sages and rishis, she silently absorbed spiritual wisdom just by listening to them with profound devotion. More importantly, she developed an intense longing for God. Finally, when she beheld the beautiful form of the Avatar of the age, Lord Rama, a single *darshan* was enough for her to merge with Him and attain God.

Such is the transformative power of *Satsang*.

Scriptures as Teachers

The scriptures are our guides and signposts on the journey to the ultimate goal. They are divine revelations—the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Itihasas, Torah, Dhammapada, Bible, Quran, and other sacred texts—in which eternal truths have been revealed through most profound spiritual inquiry and realization.

When we study these scriptures with sincerity, delve deeply into their teachings, and practice them, the darkness of our ignorance is dispelled, and we are guided toward the light of truth.

Three Blessings

Then, by the grace of God and through the influence of holy company and the scriptures, one comes into contact with a *Mahapurusha*—a great, realized soul.

Adi Shankaracharya beautifully explains that there are three blessings attainable only through divine grace. In the scripture *Vivekachudamani* (the crest jewel of discrimination), he says that these blessings are:

- Human birth (*Manushyatwam*)
- An intense longing for God or liberation (*Mumukshutwam*)
- The company of a great, realized soul—a *Mahapurusha* (*Mahapurusha Samshrayah*)

Among the 8.4 million species of living beings, both scriptures and Swami have declared that human birth is the pinnacle of creation because only a human can consciously strive for Self-realization. There are more than 8 billion people on this planet, yet only a handful possess a sincere and earnest longing to know the truth and realize the Self. Even for those who have such a

longing, one still requires the guidance of a realized Master.

To come into contact with such a great soul like Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, Samarth Ramdas, Swami Vivekananda, or another enlightened Master is possible only through divine grace.

The Universe: A Great University

The Srimad Bhagavatam teaches us that the entire universe can serve as our teacher. **The universe, in fact, is the greatest university of life. We all live in this university, learning its lessons, until we finally graduate with the degree of God-realization, realizing our true identity as the children of immortality.**

Swami beautifully and eloquently explains this experience as an evolution. First, He says, *"Nature is a gift from God."* Then He says, *"Nature is the manifestation of God."* Finally, He declares, *"Nature is God."* Therefore, we should regard the whole of Nature as our Guru. Nature presents us with many gurus.

Many Teachers of Lord Dattatreya

Lord Dattatreya is the embodiment of the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara.

Our Swami, as well as Shirdi Sai Baba, have been declared to be Datta Avatars. On one occasion, when someone asked Swami who He really was, He asked them to take a photograph of Him. Lo and behold, when the Polaroid photograph was developed, it revealed the glorious form of Lord Dattatreya instead of Swami's physical form, thereby affirming His identity as Lord Dattatreya.

One of the most inspiring examples of learning from Nature is found in the life of Lord Dattatreya, who is regarded as the embodiment of the Guru Principle and is documented in the Srimad Bhagavatam, Canto 11, Ch. 7, v. 33-35. His life teaches us that the entire universe becomes a Guru when we cultivate humility, awareness, and discrimination.

Legend has it that King Yadu once encountered Dattatreya, who was wandering freely

in perfect peace and bliss. Impressed by his extraordinary serenity, freedom, and bliss, the king asked him the secret of his inner peace and inquired, *"Who is your Guru?"*

Dattatreya replied that he had learned from **twenty-four Gurus**. Remarkably, these Gurus were not limited to just human beings. They included elements of Nature, birds, animals, insects, and even everyday incidents of daily life.

The **Earth** teaches patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and selfless service. Although it is constantly trodden upon and exploited, it continues to nourish all beings without complaint.

Water symbolizes purity, humility, adaptability, and the ability to refresh and sustain life wherever it flows.

Fire embodies purity. Whatever is offered into it is transformed. Likewise, the spiritual aspirant should burn away impurities and radiate light and warmth to the world.

Air flows freely everywhere without attachment. It reminds us to live in the world while remaining inwardly detached.

Space accommodates everything without being affected by anything. In the same manner, the *Atma* remains untouched by the activities of the body and mind.



Constant contemplation of the guru makes us like the guru.



The **Sun** tirelessly performs its sacred duty, giving light and life to all without expecting anything in return. It also appears reflected in countless bodies of water, reminding us that the one divine consciousness is reflected in every heart.

The **Moon** appears to wax and wane, but the Moon itself never actually changes. Similarly, birth, growth, old age, and death belong only to the body, never to the eternal *Atma*.

The **Ocean** remains full despite receiving countless rivers. It neither overflows with gain nor diminishes through loss. It symbolizes equanimity amidst life's changing experiences.

The **Python** accepts whatever comes without anxiety or restless striving, teaching contentment and complete surrender to divine providence.

The **Honeybee** gathers nectar from many flowers without damaging them. Likewise, a seeker should gather wisdom from many noble sources while taking only what is essential.

Dattatreya also learned another lesson from the **Honey Gatherer**, who takes away the honey painstakingly collected by the bees. Excessive accumulation ultimately causes

anxiety and loss. Therefore, we should avoid greed and unnecessary possessions.

The **Moth**, drawn to the flame, destroys itself. It warns us against becoming enslaved by the allure of sensory pleasures.

The **Fish** becomes a victim, unable to resist the bait, thereby teaching the importance of mastery over the tongue and control of taste.

The **Deer**, enchanted by sweet music, reminds us to beware of becoming too captivated by pleasant sounds and sensory distractions.

The **Elephant**, trapped by its attachment, demonstrates how uncontrolled desires bind the individual.

The **Pigeon**, overcome by excessive attachment to its family, teaches that love should never degenerate and turn into possessiveness.

The **Hawk**, harassed while carrying a piece of meat, finds peace only after letting go of it, teaching that renunciation brings freedom from anxiety and confrontation.

The **Serpent**, which has no permanent home and lives without unnecessary possessions, teaches detachment, simplic-

ity, and the value of living without worldly entanglements.

The **Spider** spins its web from within itself and finally withdraws into it. Similarly, the entire universe emerges from God, exists within Him, and ultimately dissolves back into Him.

The **Wasp** teaches the transformative power of constant contemplation. Dattatreya observed that one gradually becomes what the mind dwells on continuously. Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba often illustrated this Truth through the well-known *Bhramara-Kita-Nyaya*.

According to this Vedantic illustration, the worm, held captive by the wasp, contemplates it so intensely and constantly that it is eventually transformed into its very likeness. Likewise, **Bhagawan teaches us that the devotee who lovingly and unceasingly contemplates God is gradually transformed into divinity itself. Constant contemplation of the Guru makes us like the Guru.** According to the traditional illustration, the insect that constantly dwells on the wasp eventually becomes transformed. Similarly, by continuous remembrance of God, we gradually become one with the divine.

The **Courtesan** teaches that true peace comes only when someone gives up worldly expectations and places their hope entirely in God.

The **Child** teaches spontaneity, innocence, freedom from ego, and the ability to stay joyful without anxiety or worry about the past or future.

The **Maiden**, removing her bangles to prevent their clattering before serving guests, teaches that solitude and silence are conducive to spiritual life, whereas unnecessary company leads to distraction.

The **Arrow-maker**, so completely absorbed in shaping an arrow that he does not notice even the king's procession passing by,

demonstrates the power of one-pointed concentration.

Thus, for Dattatreya, every experience became a lesson. Every encounter became an opportunity for growth. Every circumstance became a Guru.

Many Teachers, According to Swami

Swami often says in His discourses that we can learn forbearance from the Earth. Water always flows downward; it never flows upward. Thus, water teaches us humility. It also purifies everything it touches. Fire burns away all impurities, while air, which is all-pervading, does not discriminate. Air serves everyone equally—whether one is rich or poor, saint or sinner, learned or ignorant. Air represents the life force dwelling in every being. Then, *Akasa* (space) teaches us expansiveness, inclusiveness, and non-attachment. While clouds may come and go, space itself remains completely unaffected. Similarly, He tells us that we learn faithfulness, gratitude, and loyalty from the **dog**. Once you show kindness to a dog, it remains devoted to its master with unwavering loyalty. From the **donkey**, we learn patience and forbearance. It carries heavy burdens without complaint. From the ant, we learn foresight. **Ants** gather grains and store them for the future, teaching us foresight and preparedness. From the Spider, we learn perseverance. Even if its web is repeatedly destroyed, the **Spider** patiently rebuilds it again and again without giving up.

Swami says that even human beings can be our teachers. Swami once jokingly—but very truthfully—remarked that we learn from some people what to do, because they lead noble lives and embody virtue. From others, we learn what not to do, because their mistakes serve as valuable lessons of what to avoid or shun.

Swami also says that we should learn many lessons from Nature. Trees give fruit and shade for the good of others. Rivers flow for



Learning from Nature

THE FIVE GREAT TEACHERS



Earth — Forbearance



Water — Humility & Purity



Fire — Burns Away Impurities



Air — Serves Everyone Equally



Space — Expansiveness & Non-attachment

the benefit of others. Cows produce milk for the nourishment of others. Similarly, we should remember that the human body has been given to serve others, for their welfare, through selfless service.

Other teachers also viewed Nature as a teacher. A beautiful example is Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, who regarded the sacred hill of Arunachala itself as his Guru, seeing it as the manifestation of Lord Shiva. He also encouraged devotees to perform *giripradakshina* (circumambulation of the sacred Arunachala Hill).

Coming in Contact with a Realized One

Swami has warned us that many so-called gurus, whom He calls “*badha gurus*” (teachers who cause pain), themselves live in darkness and lead others into darkness. It is like “the blind leading the blind.”

But coming into contact with a truly holy person and saintly teacher (*bodha guru*)—one who has realized the Truth—is truly by God’s grace. Today, the word Guru is often used loosely, as if it simply means ‘teacher’. However, there is a profound difference between a teacher and a Guru.

A teacher imparts knowledge in a particular field. One might be a teacher of physics, biochemistry, music, literature, arts, or the sciences. Such teachers are indispensable for worldly life and deserve our respect and gratitude. However, the knowledge they impart, despite being valuable, cannot by itself lead us to the supreme goal of Self-realization.

That is why Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavad Gita, “Among all forms of knowledge, I am the knowledge of the *Atma*.”(BG 10.32)

Only spiritual wisdom can permanently remove ignorance. That supreme wisdom is imparted by the Sadguru—the true Guru and the divine Guru. Thus, only God’s grace can lead the sincere seeker eventually to the true Guru in human form.

The Testimony of the Great Masters

In the Hindu tradition, the primordial Guru is Lord Dakshinamurti, another manifestation of Lord Shiva. He is depicted as a young teacher seated beneath the sacred banyan tree, surrounded by aged, wise disciples whose doubts are dispelled—not through lengthy discourses—but through the power of silence.

The famous verse declares:

“Beneath the banyan tree sits the youthful Guru, surrounded by aged disciples. The Guru teaches through silence, and the disciples’ doubts are destroyed.”

In the *Dakshinamurti Stotram*, Adi Shankaracharya beautifully conveys that the highest truth, the Supreme Parabrahman, is ultimately communicated from heart to heart through silence.

Swami has a beautiful image of Lord Dakshinamurti installed in front of His Higher Secondary School, underscoring the fact that the deepest wisdom transcends words.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa expressed the same truth very simply, *“Sat-Chit-Ananda alone is the Guru.”* When the human Guru awakens spiritual wisdom within the disciple, it is God Himself working through that human form as the true Guru.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, similarly proclaimed that the eternal Guru is the *Shabad*—the Divine Word echoing within the heart.

He also praised Nature as God’s own household, declaring:

Pavan Guru, Pani Pita, Mata Dharat Mahat.
(“Air is the Guru, Water the Father, and the Great Earth the Mother.”)

Lord Jesus also pointed His disciples toward Nature as an open scripture revealing divine love, and said:

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin.”

(Matthew 6:28)

Through the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, He taught complete trust in divine providence. Centuries later, **St. Francis of Assisi praised God through Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Wind, and Sister Water, greeting the whole of creation as one divine family.**

Thus, every teacher, every scripture, every saint, every experience, and every aspect of Nature serve as a stepping stone on the seeker’s pilgrimage to God. They prepare the mind, purify the heart, and awaken the yearning for the highest Truth. Yet, their purpose is ultimately fulfilled when they lead us to the Supreme Guru—the Avatar, who not only illumines the path but also awakens us to the Eternal Guru dwelling within as our own *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. It is this beautiful progression—from the many outer manifestations of the Guru to the realization of the Inner Guru—that forms the culmination of the Guru Principle.

In the September 2026 issue of Sathya Sai—The Eternal Companion, we shall explore the *Avatar* as the Supreme Guru, His unique mission of dispelling ignorance, His profound insights into the scriptures, and His constant guidance that leads every sincere seeker to discover the Inner Guru—their own true Divine Nature.

Jai Sai Ram.

To be concluded in Part 2 in the September 2026 issue.



The Only Guru is the Self Within

Part 1 of 2

*Samsara svapna-tulyo hi
raga-dveshadi sankulah
sambhavam satyavad bhati
prabodhe satya-sattvatah*

(Sanskrit Verse)

*Worldly existence is verily like a dream,
filled with attachment and aversion.
Before the dawn of wisdom, it appears to be real;
On awakening, only the Truth is found to be real.*

Embodiments of Love! As long as one is dreaming, everything seen, heard, and felt in the dream seems real. Similarly, worldly life, full of attachment and aversion, appears real until wisdom dawns. **But the moment one reaches the higher state, paramartha (supreme reality), the whole world becomes no more than a dream.**

*Panchendriya maha-bhuta
sambhavam karma-sanchitam
shariram sukha-duhkhanam
bhogayatanam uchyate*

(Sanskrit verse)

*The body, born of the five elements
and the five senses
and built up by accumulated karma,
is said to be the dwelling-place for
the experience of pleasure and pain.*



*We must firmly believe in the ultimate truth
that the divine residing within everyone is
one and the same.*

Earth, water, fire, air, and ether: the combination of these five great elements, in their proper proportions, forms this body. It is called the gross or physical body (*sthula sharira*). It is this body that connects us to the entire world; it may also be called panchikarana (the fivefold compound). In it, the *Atma* (Self) abides in the waking state, and all the senses function fully. This body is the seat of pleasure and pain.

The body is divided into three aspects: the gross, the subtle, and the causal. The gross body is merely *annamaya*, the sheath of food. It is completely inert, serving only as an instrument. What we see is only this gross body, and, believing it alone to be real and everlasting, man forgets the *Atmic* principle, which is his very all.

The Subtle Body and the Dream State

*Panchaprana manobuddhi
dashendriya samanvitam
apanchikrita bhutottham
bhogayatanam uchyate*

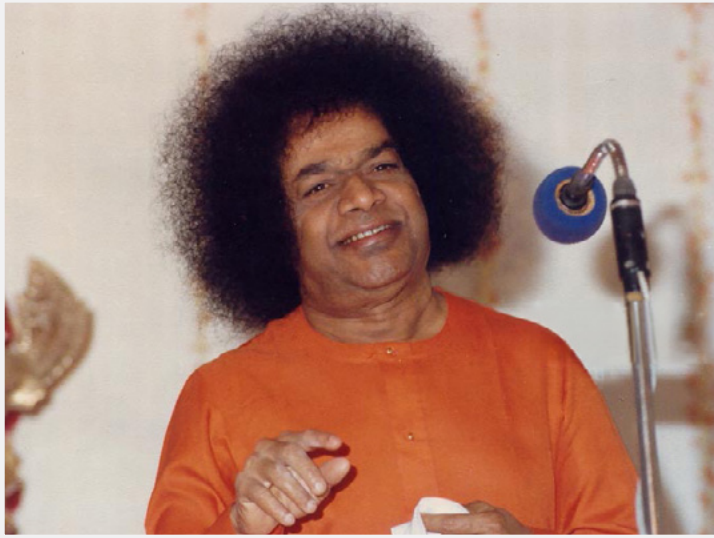
(Sanskrit verse)

*Made up of the five vital airs, the mind
and intellect, and the ten senses,
and arising from the
unquintuplicated elements,
this subtle body is said to be the
vehicle of experience.*

The combination of the five vital airs (*panchaprana*), the mind and intellect,

and the ten senses constitutes the subtle body (*sukshma sharira*). It may also be called the dream state. Here, the individual turns inward. **In this subtle body, a person creates an entirely new world for oneself; it stands as its own authority, complete in itself, connected to no one else.** In the dream state, he creates everything himself: a form that is no form, a sound that is no sound, a taste that is no taste—yet this whole creation is confined to himself alone. Though ten people may sleep in a single room, each person's dream is one's own; each person's experience is one's own; each person's *karma* is one's own. The dream has no connection whatsoever with the waking state.

A man dreams that his friend has tormented him in many ways. When he wakes up in the morning, he goes to his friend and asks, "O friend, why did you trouble me so much last night?" And the friend replies, "You silly fellow! I never even set eyes on you last night." It was the man himself who created the friend in his dream, created the friend's cruelty, and created all those experiences. So, every experience during the dream state is confined to oneself and does not extend to anyone else. It is this dream state that experiences pleasure and pain. **It is this dream state, that is, the subtle body, that takes rebirth according to one's karma.** And in it, the mind is supreme.



The names
and forms may
appear different,
but the basis of
them all is the
Atma.

The Mind and the Inner Instrument

It is this mind that creates everything. *Mano mulam idam jagat*: the whole world has the mind as its root. Although the mind is one, it acquires many names based on the different functions it performs. Because it engages in *sankalpa* and *vikalpa* (resolve and doubt), it is called *manas* (mind). Because it discriminates between the eternal and the transient, the same instrument is called *buddhi* (intellect). Because it ceaselessly recollects, it is called *chitta* (memory). And when it identifies itself with the body, it is called *Ahamkara* (ego). ***Manas, buddhi, chitta, and Ahamkara* are just different names for the mind; the combined form of these four is the *antah-karana* (inner instrument).**

So, the waking state and the dream state are alike; both are nothing but creations of the mind. The third state is *sushupti* (deep sleep). *Su* means good, and *shupti* means sleep: signifying a deep state of sound sleep. But in this state, there is no mind. Because there is no mind, there is no world. Because there is no world, there is neither pleasure nor pain. The world exists only as long as the mind exists; pleasure and pain

cling to us only as long as the world clings to us. **Therefore, the world is the root cause of pleasure and pain, and the mind is the cause of the world.** That is why it is said, *mana eva manushyanam karanam bandha-mokshayoh* (the mind alone is the cause of both bondage and liberation for man).

But the highest state beyond all of this is the state of the *Atma*. It is only by identifying himself with the three bodies of the waking, dream, and deep-sleep states that man forgets the *Atma*. Yet the *Atma* is the very basis of all experience.

One Atma, Many Forms

*Mrit-pindam ekam
bahu-bhanda-rupam
suvarnam ekam
bahu-bhushanani
go-kshiram ekam
bahu-dhenu-jatam
ekam param brahma
bahu-deha-varti*

(Sanskrit verse)

*One lump of clay takes the shape of
many vessels;
One gold becomes many ornaments;
Milk is one, though it comes from
many cows;*

The one Supreme Self dwells in many bodies.

Clay is one, yet the shapes of pots are many. Ornaments are many, yet the gold in them is one. In the same way, although forms differ, the *Atmic* principle is one. Forgetting this underlying fundamental *Atmic* principle, and instead following the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect, man falls into ignorance.

Countless waves form on the sea. One wave never looks quite like another; the waves appear separate to us, and so we forget the truth that the water in every wave is one and the same. **The forms of human beings appear as countless separate forms, but they are only waves rising on the ocean of Satchidananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss). The names and forms may appear different, but the basis of them all is the *Atma*.**

In human life, this *Atma* is covered by five sheaths: *annamaya* (food), *pranamaya* (vital air), *manomaya* (mind), *vijnanamaya* (intellect), and *anandamaya* (bliss). Covered by these five sheaths (*pancha koshas*), the *Atmic* principle is not easily perceived. The body is the *annamaya* sheath. The *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, and *vijnanamaya* sheaths together form the subtle body. The *anandamaya* sheath is the causal body. It is called “bliss,” but it is not true bliss; **it is only a reflection of *Atmic* bliss, experienced in the causal body under the name *anandamaya*.**

The Moon is not self-luminous. The Moon shines only when sunlight falls on it. The same is declared in the verse, “*chandrama manaso jatah, chakshoh suryo ajayata*” (Moon is born out of the mind of the supreme cosmic being, and the Sun from the eyes). The mind is like the Moon, which has no light of its own. The *Atma* alone is self-luminous, and its light, falling on the intellect, the mind, the senses, and the body, makes them all appear to

be suffused with consciousness. Actually, it is *Atmic* consciousness that moves this world.

This consciousness is the very foundation of the whole moving and unmoving universe. By forgetting this fundamental principle, man falls prey to all kinds of trouble, sorrow, and worry. **The pleasures and pains that arise through the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect have no connection at all with the *Atma*.** Relying on sunlight, people perform many actions. Some do good while others do evil; some perform meritorious deeds, and some commit sinful ones. Some may help others, and some may do harm. But the fruits of these actions do not belong to the *Atma* in the slightest. The Sun is not affected by the results of any actions done in sunlight whatsoever. The Sun is merely a witness.

Similarly, the consequences of the actions of the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect do not touch the *Atma* in the slightest. The *Atma* is the witness. **Yet, because man is in contact with the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect and identifies himself with them, he imagines all actions are done by the *Atma*.** The mind is the root cause of it all. It is the mind that is responsible for all these actions. And when the mind is forgotten, all that remains is the pure Self.

Walls and Delusions

Suppose we build a house. Inside, we designate one room as a bedroom, one as a kitchen, one as a dining room, and one as a bathroom. But why do these divisions exist? It is only because we raise walls as boundaries, to suit our convenience, that they become separate rooms. Knock down the dividing walls, and everything becomes one open space. Similarly, there is only one *Atmic* principle that exists everywhere. By building walls around the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect, we

hide the *Atmic* principle and think they are separate. This is the result of narrow feelings and the lack of a broad, divine outlook. **These attachments are the root cause of all the unrest in humanity.**

Just as paddy is pounded to separate the rice from the husk, similarly, through *shra-vana*, *manana*, and *nididhyasana* (listening, reflecting, and deep contemplation), the husk of the five sheaths (*panchako-shas*, or the five sheaths of food, vital air, mind, intellect, and bliss) is removed, and the true “I,” the *Atmic* principle, is revealed. These sheaths are only the husk covering the body, senses, mind, and intellect. Remove the husk, and what remains is the rice. As long as the husk remains on the rice, the cycle of birth and death repeats (*punarapi jananam, punarapi maranam*). But once we remove the husk from the rice, for that rice, there is no regermination, namely no rebirth (*punarjanma na vidy-ate*). The root cause of all bondage, then, is the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect, while the *Atmic* principle remains equally present in all.

Take another example. When we touch an iron ball that has been placed in the fire, it burns our hands upon contact. We say the iron ball burned us, but that is not the correct answer. The iron ball did not burn you; the fire contained in the iron ball burned you. Is the fire inside or outside the ball? The fire is both inside and outside. Similarly, **Narayana dwells everywhere, pervading all, within and without (*Antar bahishcha tat sarvam vyapya narayanah sthitah*)**. Though it was the fire (within the ball) that burned us, we blamed the ball. This whole world is like one giant iron ball. Inside it, pleasure and pain, profit and loss, hardship, blame, and reproach afflict us. But what is it that is afflicted? We say it is the body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect. No. Only one *Atmic* consciousness exists,

pervading this whole world, within and without. **Only those who cannot recognize the truth that the *Atma* is the one reality behind all things lay the blame elsewhere. The root cause of everything is the *Atma* alone.**

Inquiry into the Self: “Who Am I?”

To realize this, what is the path? We don’t need to look for any path. It is a Self-luminous state. It is not something to be newly acquired; it is present at all times and in all conditions. Why search for what is already there? What a folly to use another lamp to look for an already lighted lamp! **The light of *Atma* shines forever. There is no need to seek it through another spiritual discipline.** It is only because man cannot recognize his own Self that he imagines it to be somewhere far away. **Like fire hidden under ash, the delusion of the body conceals this knowledge of the *Atma*.** All this disappears only when one recognizes the truly blissful “I.” It was only after the word “I” was born that the whole of creation came into being.

If there were no “I,” there would be no creation. So, what is this “I?” Who is it? It is Existence itself. Because Existence shines forth in everyone, it is also called the *Atma*. It is also called *Brahman*. It is also called the Heart. It is also called *Aham* (the “I”). **“I,” *Brahman*, Existence, Heart, *Aham*—all these are only different names for the *Atma*.** By “Heart,” today we mistakenly mean only the physical heart in the body. That is not the Heart. The Heart has no limit. What is present everywhere, that is the true Heart. Forgetting this, we take the narrow, limited, physical heart to be the Heart.

We spend our whole lives using “I” as the basis of everything we speak. That is *Aham*, and that *Aham* is *Brahman*. You say, “I am a householder,” but before the word ‘householder,’ must come the word ‘I.’ One



The light of
Atma shines
forever.

There is no
need to seek
it through
another
spiritual
discipline.

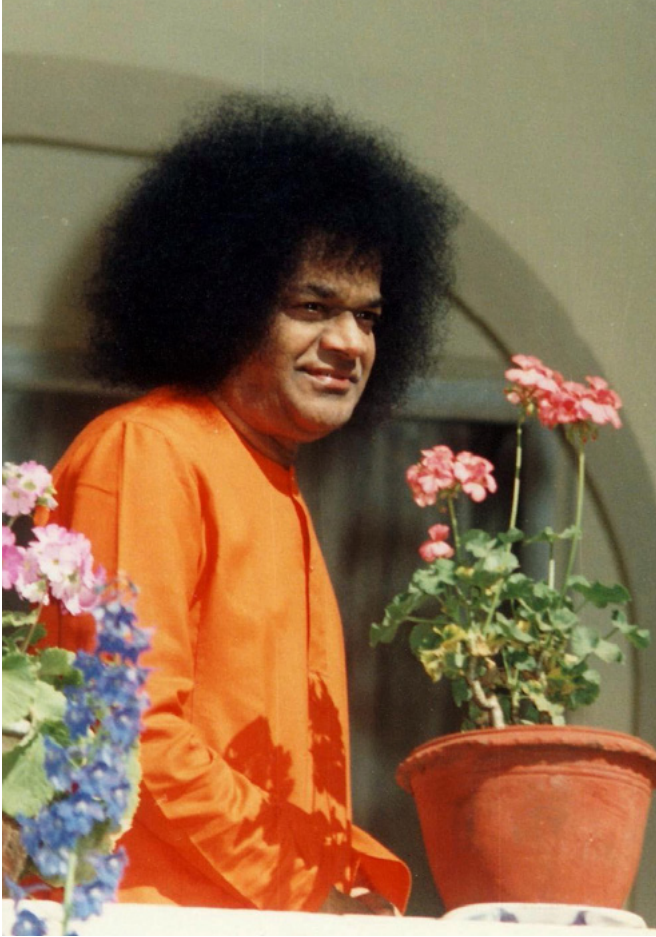
says, “I am a *sannyasi* (renunciant),” but before ‘*sannyasi*’ must come ‘I.’ One says, “I am a man,” and before that word ‘man’ must come ‘I.’ So when the subjects in the sentences “I am a householder,” “I am a renunciant,” “I am a man,” “I am a woman,” are removed, the “I” remains as the one Eternal constant. **This “I” is the basis of all, and this “I” is the *Atma*.**

Man falls prey to a lot of suffering, many sorrows, and many doubts because he forgets this *Atmic* principle, which is omnipresent and omniscient. **What we ought to love is not the body but the *Atma*. Forgetting the *Atma* that deserves our love, we love instead the body, which does not deserve it.** This is why we do not have faith in the *Atma*.

You have a mother, a father, and children. You love them, whatever the circumstances. However much trouble or pain

they cause you, you love them. If any harm comes to them, you will suffer a lot of pain. Why? You suffer only because of your firm conviction, “this is my father, this is my mother, this is my child,” and the love you have for them. These relationships are like passing clouds. **Many doubts arise within you because you do not have full faith in the eternal *Atma*, God, and divinity.** When you feel “he is truly my father,” you will have steady love for him! You have such a great love for a body that is no more than a water-bubble, while your faith in the *Atma* is wavering! This is because you believe truth as untruth, and untruth as truth.

The *Atma* alone is true and eternal. Man, who ought to develop firm faith in the *Atma*, instead develops attachment to bodily relationships. That is why one’s faith is never firm and steady. To gain firm faith,



you should develop the conviction, “This is mine.” **Only then do you become *sthitaprajna* (steady in wisdom), find true bliss, and reach the eternal, true abode.**

All of these are merely the nature of delusion. As long as we remain under delusion (*bhrama*), the ultimate Truth (*Brahman*) stays distant from us. Therefore, it is only when we shed this delusion that we realize the divine (*Brahman*). **We must firmly believe in the ultimate truth that the divine residing within everyone is one and the same.** Only then will there be no room in this world for feelings of division, discord, and turmoil, attachment, and aversion. Humanity is steadily declining because we harbor divisive thoughts, cultivate attachment and aversion, and lose sight of our inherent divinity.

When we speak, we frequently use the word ‘I,’ ‘I,’ ‘I.’ We must recognize who that ‘I’ is and its true nature. That ‘I’ is the awareness of the *Atma* (Self). The real goal is to remain steadfast in this awareness of the

Self. It is the fundamental basis for resolving all problems. Today, the world is rife with problems. The root cause of these problems is attachment (*raga*) and aversion (*dwesha*). The primary cause of attachment and aversion is selfishness, and the pursuit of self-interest is the root cause of selfishness. This self-interest stems from the delusion of identifying with the body (*deha bhranti*). The principal cause of bodily delusion is the mind. Surrendering the mind to the divine is the *mantra* that unlocks the profound mystery of it all. **Thus, the primal *mantra* is simply “I, I” (*Aham, Aham*). It is the fundamental *mantra*. This is the essence of the aphorism, *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman, I am Divine). We must make our lives meaningful through this realization.**

Whatever we see, eat, say, or do, we must dedicate it all to the Self (*Atma*). There are two types of “I”s here: the ‘I’ associated with the mind and the ‘I’ associated with the Self. **In essence, the *Atmic* feeling is the true “I.”** However, when it is associated with the mind, it transforms into ego (*Ahamkara*). **When the ‘I’ rooted in *Atma* unites with bliss, it reveals that everything is one.** Truth is one, though the wise describe it in various ways (*ekam sat viprah bahuda vadanti*). While there is only one reality, people perceive it in many different ways. Recognizing this unity in diversity is the essence of the *Atmic* principle (*Atma tatva*).

***Sadhana* and Mastery of the Mind**

Embodiments of Love! Everything is subject to change, undergoing many changes every moment. The mind is the root cause of these changes. Indeed, the influence of the mind’s fluctuating thoughts and resolves is the fundamental cause of experiences in this world. **The mind is inherently always restless and never stable; such is its very nature. When we merge such a mind with divinity, the**

mind itself ceases to exist as a separate entity. That is why people engage in various spiritual practices. But all these practices are merely the result of illusion (*bhranti*). You undertake various spiritual practices (*sadhanas*) simply to satisfy the mind. All spiritual practices performed today are driven by the mind, and therefore, they are only impermanent. There are no two separate paths—one of spiritual practice and the other of the goal to be attained. Nor are there three distinct entities: the Knower, the knowledge, and the goal.

There is only one reality. When the ‘non-Self’ feeling (*anatma bhava*) is put aside, only the awareness of the Self (*Atma bhava*) remains. Therefore, when you wish to undertake spiritual practice, establishing the awareness of the Self firmly in your heart is true spiritual practice. Without such conviction, no matter how many types of spiritual exercises one performs, they remain merely the products of mental imagination. **Just as clouds formed by the Sun’s heat eventually obscure the Sun itself, the clouds of the mind, which originate from the Self, veil the very Self. Thus, it is the mind that obstructs our vision of the Self.** Only when the mind is annihilated does the Self shine alone in its purity.

What, then, is the mind? It is nothing but the shape of our own delusions. We must strive to gradually subdue these delusions. But today’s spiritual aspirants (*sadhakas*) who consider themselves devotees and spiritual seekers are multiplying their desires and worldly resolves day by day. How will they attain Self-realization? This is just impossible. Gradually, we must suppress our selfishness and self-centered interests. Therefore, it is this selfishness that causes many distortions and negative tendencies in humans. We should make every effort to develop a broad and divine outlook in the world.

Today, many efforts are being made to bring about changes in the world. If individuals do not change, how can the world change? The world is nothing but a collection of individuals. Therefore, if we want to change the world, the change must begin with the individual. We must eliminate the bad qualities and nurture pure and sacred feelings within. Only when the individual becomes good does society become good. Only when society is good can we build a good nation.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
July 7, 1990

To be concluded in Part 2 in the September 2026 issue.



How the Divine Teacher Nurtured My True Self

I first saw Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Brindavan toward the end of 1970. I had traveled a very long way—overland from Europe through Turkey and Iran, then south through India—as a young American in search of something I couldn't quite name. My very first glimpse of Him was brief: a figure in orange stepping out of a doorway near the driveway and walking to His car. He was leaving for Goa. It was like seeing an actor appear at the curtain before the play begins. The first impression was of someone vivacious, mysterious, and intriguing, and as the car drove past, He smiled and waved, and all eyes were upon Him.

The First Darshan

It was after His return that I had my first true *darshan*. As Baba moved among the people, I sensed He was different from anyone I had ever seen before. **His rhythm was graceful and unhurried, flowing from an unknown depth, and His eyes seemed to hold another level of consciousness altogether. When the sacred is present, you simply know.**



God's grace is like radio waves—always transmitting through the air. If you do not turn on the receiver, you will not get the news, but the waves are always there.

As He came near me, I was crying. Swirls of deep emotion kept rising—fear, awe, unworthiness, hope, and a mysterious release, in blissful sobs. I had felt cast out of my childhood religion, with no clear place for my soul, and I had come to India with a wide-open heart, hoping for a fresh start. At that crucial moment, Baba walked toward me. He moved His right hand in small circles, created sacred ash, and poured it into my hand, telling me to eat it, as though it were a remedy for my weeping. To me, it was a sign that, against all odds, my life could still turn out to be good. *"I will see you,"* He said, and walked on. "That means He will speak with you," the devotees sitting around me explained.

After a few more *darshans*, on an afternoon in January 1971, Baba paused before me and said, *"I will see you tomorrow."* I was thrilled by my good fortune. Baba was going to take time for me, a nobody. When He called me in, I went and waited by the interview room of His Brindavan residence, an old image from a Bengali mystic's poem in my mind: surrender to the guru, *Thy will be done*. When Baba arrived, He asked, *"Where is your wife?"* We had not realized that when a husband is called for an interview, his wife can join too. I ran to find my wife, Marcia, and together we hurried back, and He stood smiling graciously at the open door.

An Interview and Inner View

Inside, He sat on His chair, and we sat near Him on the floor. His first words of teaching to me were the ancient truth of the *Katha Upanishad*: *"Bliss and happiness are different. Happiness is of the world and comes and goes; bliss is everlasting."* He went on,

"You have two selves, one as you see yourself, and one as others see you. Then there is a third—the one you really are." He asked for my age. "Twenty-seven," I said. "A good number," He said, *"because it is a nine number. Nine is the divine number. All its multiples resolve back to nine, just as God is always the same."*

He held out a handkerchief. *"This is not cloth,"* He said. *"It is threads. It is not threads, it is cotton. The mind is made of desires."* He asked, *"What is yoga?"* "Union," I ventured. He glanced at an Indian gentleman in the room and said, as if reading his thought, *"Not that kind of union."* "Union with God," I said. *"Yoga means sense control. Self-control,"* Baba replied. ***"Self-control, self-confidence, self-sacrifice, and self-satisfaction make for Self-realization."*** Then He looked at me kindly: *"Do not do japamala or meditation for show. Meditation is for the soul (Self), not for show. Do good."*

He knew our hearts without being told. *"Every week you are having heat,"* He said to me. *"Do not worry, I am helping."* To Marcia, who longed for a child, He said, *"Every month, disappointment. I know. Do not worry. I am giving."* He made a thin gold ring set with a moonstone for her and teased her by handing it to me to place on her finger. *"Let the mind be cool and pure like the moonlight when you meditate,"* He said. We always counted that moment as a kind of wedding, a renewal of our vows for life together.

"For every step you take toward God," He encouraged us, ***"He takes ten steps toward you. God's grace is like radio waves—always transmitting through the air. If you do not turn on the receiver, you will not get the***

*news, but the waves are always there.” When I asked where we should go next, He smiled. “Oh no, I never tell anyone what to do. Do not follow leaders—follow your heart. **Start the day with love, fill the day with love, end the day with love. That is the way to God.**”*

Near the end, He lovingly patted my shoulder and told me I was “*a good man*.” It made me want to be one, to live up to His vision of me. Then He gave me a friendly little punch in the stomach, the easy way a teammate might, and said, “*Practice your sadhana*,” as I walked out the door. The very next day, I walked down the road and started volunteering at the Divine Light School for the Blind, and for the next few months, I went there whenever I had free time.

The good fortune of having a teacher recognize and nurture your best Self is something I only came to understand better over the years. When we left for home after those first inspiring months in 1970, He told us, “*Think of this as your mother’s house*.”

Ten years later, that house beckoned us back. And it happened through a dream.

Sai Baba Dreams are Meaningful

Marcia and I had been living in Madras (Chennai) since the autumn of 1980, while I continued working on research for my doctoral thesis. From time to time, we traveled to see our beloved Swami, and in the city, we were regular members at Sundaram, Swami’s newly built *bhajan* hall in Raja Annamalai Puram.

A few days before March 26, 1981, I had a dream I could not shake off. In it, Marcia and I were standing in a small chapel with a few others when Baba came up to me and said, “*I will see you at six o’clock*.” That was all. I woke up, still turning the words over.

Later that day, I told Marcia about my dream. Her eyes widened. “My friend Shanta told me today that a bus full of Chennai devo-

tees is going to Puttaparthi next week,” she said. “Let us try to get tickets. This must have something to do with your dream.”

So we made our reservations along with 38 other members of Sai *Samithis* (Centers) in Madras and spent March 26 traveling through the states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh, arriving at Prasanthi Nilayam around half past eight at night. We were given a room in the Round Building, and after a night’s rest, we went for *darshan* in the morning, which was held early because of the fierce midday summer heat.

Baba came out and warmly greeted the Chennai group. We sat together in neat rows near the *mandir*, and our leaders were pleading with Him to visit their city for the Tamil New Year. Baba gently explained that His schedule in the coming weeks made the trip impossible. Then He turned His attention to me. He asked whether I belonged to the Chennai group, and the others said “yes,” that I was a member of the Sundaram Center. He asked my name.

That question confused me, for Baba had been my *raison d’être* for ten years—my inspiration and my very breath, and I had always felt He had known me since the moment we first met in 1970. I asked Him whether He liked the *Sai Krishna Lila*, a book I had written based on His narration of the stories of the child Krishna. “*Who has it?*” He asked. “Kasturi,” I said. Baba smiled. “*Kasturi is in Bangalore*.” He was teasing me, and we both knew it. Then He gestured with His hand in a circular motion and blessed me by giving *vibhuti*, and told me to eat it. He asked for my name again, and as I said it, He smiled and said, “*I know*.” “*The mother pinches first before making the baby smile*,” He said that day. He was playing His *leelas*, sweetly keeping me off balance.

During the afternoon *darshan*, the Sundaram group again sat together, and Baba

came straight up to me, smiling kindly. *"How are you, sir? Go inside—I will speak to you."* I went to the veranda to wait, and Marcia came and waited too. Before long, we were called into the interview room with a small group: Al Drucker, two American women, two college boys, and the two heads of the Sundaram group, who came to seek guidance with several questions concerning construction projects. Baba created *vibhuti* and distributed it to all of us, then sat and talked with us for a full hour, overwhelming me with the blissful blessing of His love. He first spoke about the true Self, which exists everywhere—not the body, mind, or ego, but the spirit that pervades all. He took the silver ring He had once made for Al Drucker, held it up for us all to see, blew on it, and showed us that it had turned to gold. *"Everything is in my hand,"* He said. *"Not like a magician, who says, 'See, there is nothing in my hand.'"* Then He made a medallion for one of the American girls.

And as He did so, the *bhajans* started in the adjacent hall—as they always do, because it was six o'clock. **I remembered my dream. Baba had said, "I will see you at six o'clock," and here we were, in His presence, at that very hour.**

The dream had been fulfilled to the letter!

Divine Guidance for My Doctoral Thesis

During an interview at Prasanthi Nilayam in 1981, Baba was asking about my work, and then, quite suddenly, He asked me to sing a Tyagaraja song. My heart sank. I had been studying the lyrics as part of my doctoral studies, but not the melodies. I had no trained voice and no confidence in carrying a tune. But Baba simply looked at me and



waited, with an expression that seemed to say, *"Come now, show me you can sing at least a little of a Tyagaraja song."* I knew I could not waste the moment. I would have to leap.

One song came to my mind—a simple, catchy festival piece, one of Tyagaraja's *utsava sampradaya kirtanas*, inviting everyone to celebrate the wedding of Lord Rama and Sita. I had heard it and hummed along with it enough times that a rough outline of the melody stayed in my memory. South Indian music is a demanding discipline, and I felt anything but ready, but I took the leap and hoped for the best. Mentally asking Baba to help me, I surrendered and gave it my untrained voice: *"Sita kalyanam vaibhogame, Rama kalyanam vaibhogame..."*—only the opening lines but offered with my whole heart.

Then an idea came to me, and I said, "Baba, I have read that You used to sing Tyagaraja songs. Would You please sing one for us?" And Baba sang the refrain of a Tyagaraja song in *Dhanyasi raga*, *"Sri Rama dasa dasoham,"* which means, "I am the servant

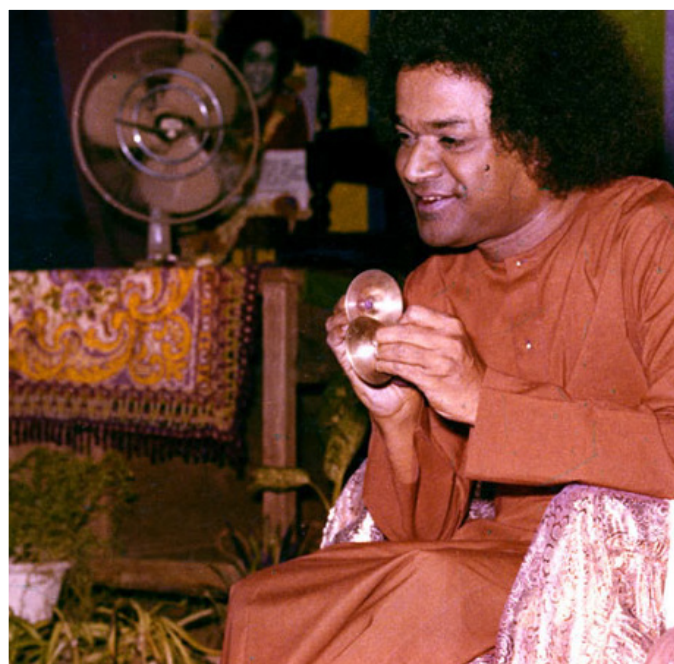
of the servant of the Lord.” In a few sweet phrases, He had shifted the focus away from Himself and turned it back upon us, His devotees, in that small and cozy room.

“Tyagaraja’s songs are pure devotion,” Baba said. *“Perfect songs. And he wrote so many of them!”* I remembered hearing some of His earliest devotees say that when Baba used to sing a Tyagaraja composition, they would marvel that He knew every lyric and every melody. **He would tell them, in effect, “Who do you think inspired Tyagaraja to sing those songs? Of course, I know them.”**

Christmas with Swami

In December 1981, the director and committee of the Westerners’ Christmas program asked me to serve as a liaison between the organizers and the *Ashram* administration. I had been living in India for over a year by then, studying and learning Telugu while conducting research, so I would carry our requests to the administrators and bring their responses back. We were praying for the blessing of Baba’s presence at the program. We longed for Him to be there for the candlelight procession, with representatives of many nations singing Christmas songs in their own languages.

First, the committee sent a written note of welcome, humbly requesting His presence. Then it was suggested that I stand at a specific point on the *darshan* line with a young boy from the program, who held a written invitation. As Baba crossed from the men’s side to the women’s, He would pass near us. When He came close, I spoke softly in Telugu, asking if He would look at our invitation. Hearing those Telugu words from a Westerner, a flow of compassion seemed to beam from His eyes, and He walked over and took the card. I asked if I might touch His feet. *“We’ll see,”* He said. I thought we had done our part.



But when we asked, the *Ashram* authorities told us Baba had not yet made any plans to attend. So a European gentleman who sits on the mandir veranda was enlisted to present yet another invitation, inscribed on a handsome card. Again, we assumed our work was finished. Imagine my dismay, then, when on the hot afternoon before the program, I happened to speak with the administrators and was told, “Baba still does not feel He has been properly invited.”

Unity Leads to Divinity

I was baffled and nearly panicked. I went knocking on the doors of Professor Kasturi, Dr. Gokak, and others close to Baba, but it was the hottest part of the day, when the elders rested behind bolted doors. When I finally reached Dr. Gokak, he kindly helped me to see the problem. Instead of a piecemeal scattering of invitations from different individuals, he suggested that we should offer one proper invitation as a united group. So the senior devotees who were present—Hislop from America, Murphet from Australia, Craxi from Italy—along with the leader of the musicians performing the “Hallelujah” chorus from Handel’s *Messiah* and representatives of various nations, formed a single

welcoming group. They carried flowers, extended a formal invitation, and offered a chorus of entreaty. We hurried to bathe and put on fresh clothes. Richard del Maestro, a respected musician among us, made a large and beautiful invitation adorned with flower designs. We gathered garlands, and we went up to the veranda together as the *darshan* lines grew.

At last, the heavy carved door opened, and Baba stood before us. We tried to be proper and formal, like courtiers before a king, but the stiffness soon melted away. “Swami, please, come to the Christmas program tonight!” Hislop begged, kneeling with folded hands. Baba played it perfectly, coyly acting hard to get. He raised His hands in wide-eyed innocence and asked, “*What can I do? You did not invite me properly,*”—and as those words touched our hearts, He gave Hislop a little slap on the cheek. He was delighted by the small drama, stirring up the longing in everyone’s heart. Murphet and the others began to implore Him like children: “Please, Swami, please.” And like a smiling child Himself, Baba toyed with the grown men, walking among us, giving no sign whether He would come or not. It was His *leela*—He would keep us enthralled and guessing.

Inviting Swami into Our Hearts

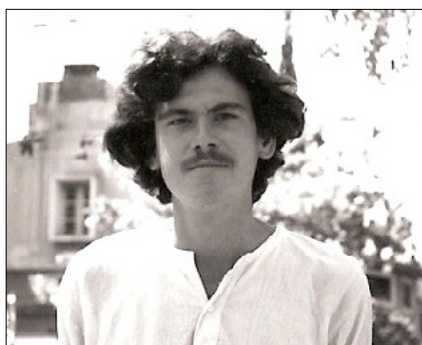
Well, as the *bhajan* says, “*Durlabha Rama, jaya jaya sulabha Rama*”—Rama is hard to

get, and Rama is easy to get. In the end, Baba did arrive that night. We placed His chair in the courtyard of the Round Building and arranged flowers along the path. In the cool darkness, the singers came out in a candlelit procession and stood on all the levels of the verandas facing the central courtyard. We had traditional carols from Italy, Mexico, Scandinavia, Australia, America, Canada, and many other lands; a little play with children as Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men; and a Telugu recitation by Maria St. John. At the close, Richard del Maestro waved the *arati* lamp before Swami. Everything went beautifully. It was indeed a holy holiday evening with the Lord.

The importance of inviting Swami properly has stayed with me ever since: approach Him first with gratitude for the blessings He has bestowed; approach Him with due reverence and do not make demands; make a united effort in harmony with others rather than individually. We need not try to enter God’s heart with a great show of weeping; a simple, full-souled prayer is enough to melt it.

In any case, we must learn to invite Swami properly—for our programs and, more importantly, into our hearts forever!

Dr. William Jackson 
USA



Dr. William Jackson is a long-time devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba of more than 55 years. He earned his Ph.D. degree in the Comparative Study of Religion at Harvard University, USA. Dr. Jackson has published three books on the biographies and translations of South Indian singer-saints and their songs. He is also the author of a book about fractal geometry images in cultures around the world, and an anthology about giving and volunteering. He and his wife, Marcia, live in rural Massachusetts, USA.

Sai

THE TRUE TRANSFORMER

My revered maternal great grandmother was a pious, humble, and simple lady living in one of the ancient, sacred cities on the planet—Benares or Kashi or Varanasi. They say Benares has a spiritual effect on people. Probably it does because in the 1960s, my great grandmother didn't know that, very soon, her destiny was directly going to be shaped by the creator of Benares Himself!

Cancer Cancelled

Her husband (i.e. my great grandfather) was diagnosed with cancer. Of course there was despair in the house. Her children discovered that there is a person of great spiritual prowess called 'Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba' in the south of India. His abode was in the village of Puttaparthi.

My grandmother undertook the travel, with the children. During *darshan*, the

**Grandmother would go into a trance while singing
Vitthala bhajans. She would say, “*Dekho Sai aaye
hain*” (“Oh see! Sai has come!”) Marks of footprints
of *Vibhuti* would appear on the floor and the air
would fill with the essence of jasmine.**

Lord approached her, held her by her arm and said, in Hindi, “*Chalo Amma*” (“Come, mother”). He held her hand and led her into the interview room. As the Lord sat on His chair, as readers we all anticipate what would happen next, won’t we?

The Lord ‘asked’ in Hindi: “*Cancer kahan gaya?*” (“Where did the cancer go?”)

Aah! Yes, we have heard Him say ‘*Cancer Cancelled.*’ But His grace, His power, His majesty, He didn’t even say that. He simply ‘asked.’ The wise men say, ‘The Word of The Lord is Enough.’ But, I humbly beg to differ. Swami need not even state it! ‘A question from the Lord is enough’ is truer. Needless to say, when they came back, my great grandfather’s cancer was gone!

Sai’s Omnipresence

My mother was seven at that time. She shares how grandmother would go into a trance while singing Vitthala *bhajans* which she had learnt during her stay at Puttaparthi. She would say, “*Dekho Sai aaye hain*” (“Oh see! Sai has come!”). Marks of footprints of *Vibhuti* would appear on the floor and the air would fill with the essence of jasmine.

That’s how He touched my mother’s heart. My family members forgot all other Gods and Avatars. Their bodies, hearts and souls were reserved for only the One—Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the One who had given them so much joy!

However, when it comes to my own faith in Sai, I realize that it was not built merely on family faith. Despite hearing stories about Him from an early age, my introduction to Him happened in a direct manner.

The Photograph That Saw Me

In the early 1990s, we were staying at Ranchi. I would have been three years of age. I was a naughty child and that day, I was creating a ruckus. I was alone and I was turning the bed sheets and the mattresses.

Suddenly, I turned the mattress and there was a photograph. I saw the photograph. But the wondrous thing is—the photograph also saw me. In that picture, His curly hair, radiant face, and beautiful eyes mesmerized me. Our eyes locked and in a flash of consciousness, without a moment of doubt, the thought arose and it imprinted upon me effortlessly for life—“This is God.”

As I look back, I realize how fortunate I was. He introduced Himself to me directly. Not through my mother, not through my father, not through any human being, but directly through Himself.

That photo spoke to the kid. That gaze changed my life. The next day when my mother caught me redhanded in my mischief, I found myself saying, “Mom, I promise I didn’t do it. I promise in the name of that God whose photo is under the mattress.” My mom got a bit confused



initially but the dots connected soon enough. She said, “Oh, that’s our Sai Baba.”

Thus, I was introduced to His Name through my mom. The Lord’s name is very powerful and therefore *Namasmarana* is prescribed. But for me, the form came first, and the name next. So, I have always been attracted more to His *Roopasmarana*.

The Gaze That Came Home

Life happened after that. I grew up, studied, worked, traveled and lived an ordinary life. Swami was physically present in the world during much of my childhood and youth, yet I never had the opportunity to see Him in person before 2011.

Strangely, I have no regrets about that because He came to my home to see me! That happened in August of 2018, in Bengaluru.

I had come back home from a family lunch at a nearby restaurant. I had put the mattress on the floor because my bed was being used by a guest. Tired and exhausted, I fell asleep. It must have been 20 minutes and my eyes opened, awake from the slumber.

At my door, The Lord stood!

Two steps forward, then He stepped left and then He walked towards me. No, He didn’t actually walk—it was more of a glide. In Hindi, I thought to myself, “*Kya Khoobsurat Chaal Hai*” (“What a beautiful gait”).

He had a divinely majestic expression on His face. He gently glided towards me. I was awestruck and dumbstruck. I experienced in that moment, what the great Kashmir Shaivism Master, Abhinavgupta, refers to as ‘*Adbhut*.’ (No English word approximates the translation. The nearest would be ‘Divinely Marvellous’ or ‘Divinely Wondrous’).

Ordinarily, such an event would have scared me: say if I were to see my long passed-away grandmother; but this was different—I was awestruck.

I saw Him glide beautifully to the edge of my mattress. He came by my side and I had my face vertically up staring at His gentle motherly face. Then, He bent, as if to give me a closer look. Then, He smiled.

Ah! That Smile! What should I say? It was motherly but divine, simple but profound, so gentle yet so deep.

Our eyes locked. It's pointless to try and describe my mental state. I felt safe, secure, peaceful and joyous. This was my state.

He looked at me, I looked at Him. In Hindi we say—*"Aankhon Aankhon mein baatein ho gayi."* ("Much was said in the gaze").

The gaze changed my life. I never 'saw' Him when He was 'apparently visible' before 2011, but my greatest flex in life will always be:

"I didn't go to see God. He came to my home to see me."

How's that for good fortune?

Sai in My Dreams

I have never had to regret that I didn't see Swami before He left His body in 2011. He gives me *darshan* in dreams. One vivid dream I would like to share.

I saw a pink railway platform. My train had just halted. I got down. The sun is shining. I am alone. Lush green hills. I call it 'crazy green'—a green like no other. Indescribable. There is a lake right ahead of one of the hills. I could clearly see the most exquisite reflection of the hill covered with trees on the serene lake. It's Switzerland on steroids! It's un-articulatable.

(Side note: my hunger for travel got satiated after seeing that dream. How can I find such a place on Earth?)

Then in the next shot of the dream, I am in a small hotel. A lady comes up to me and exclaims, "Baba is coming for Darshan, rush, rush!" What excitement! And then, I see Him. So divine. So beautiful!

This dream was more than real. That excitement, that rush, that anticipation, that love.

And later, when I visited Puttaparthi, I saw that it indeed has a pink railway station. The same lush green hills and a large lake in front of the hills! As a devotee would state in his talks, *"Swapn Darshan Sathya*

Darshan." (Sai's darshan in dreams are Truth indeed). Swami has also said the same in His discourses.

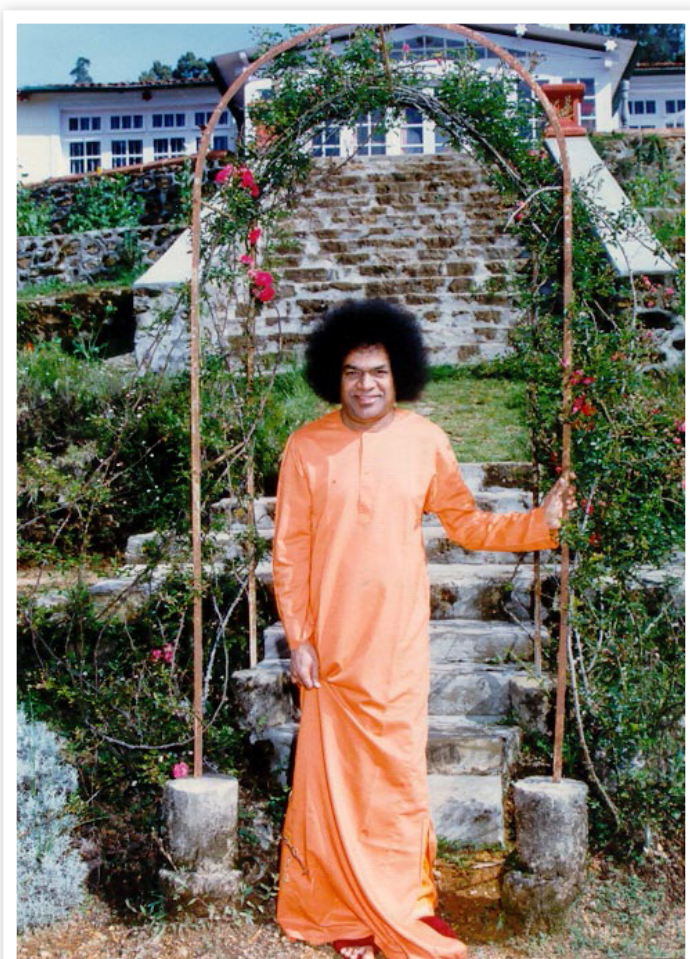
He guides us in our dreams. That is why, when I miss Him, I taunt Him, "Baba, you have not come in my dreams for a long time." He obliges soon.

The Subtle Ways He Reveals His Presence

One day, in 2022, I went to Brindavan, Swami's *ashram* in Whitefield. I was sitting in Sai Ramesh Hall. The thoughts of my great grandmother suddenly flooded my mind. I thanked her for introducing all of us to the Lord.

As I exited the *ashram*, I saw my great grandmother's name, "Triveni," written all over, on multiple billboards, right outside the *ashram*.

Coincidence? Maybe. But for me, it was an acknowledgement from Him. He sees everything, He knows everything and He responds



like no other does. No other means no other—not Rama, not Krishna—just My Lord—Baba.

Angels in His Court

In the same year 2022, I visited Puttaparthi and walked towards the Sai Kulwant Hall for morning bhajans. Something started to change in me. I felt emotional. Now this happens almost every time I visit Prasanthi Nilayam, and so, I didn't think it was anything out of order.

But as the *bhajans* started, I could feel the presence of angels. I could sense several of them. In fact—two of them were floating in the air. They seemed to be made of fire—radiant. They were singing along with the *bhajan* group. Interestingly, they were also singing another song. A song which I could 'hear.' I could hear it very subtly but I could hear it nonetheless.

Euphoria took over me. I became extremely happy. I was listening to their music. But I couldn't catch the tune completely. Later on, the lyrics became very clear:

"Baba tera lakh lakh shukar hai tera."
("Baba, I thank you a million times with all my heart.")

The angels were singing a *qawwali*. Now, I am not musically oriented at all. All through my college days, I had listened only to heavy metal. I had never heard of a *qawwali*.

But here, the tune gradually descended upon me, along with the entire lyrics. It had

some beautiful Arabic words in it. I hum it to myself sometimes as a prayer.

In retrospect, I understood that I had been very scientifically curious to know how composers "get a *bhajan*" from Baba. Now I knew! The Lord, just to satisfy my curiosity, had granted me a first-hand experience.

The Transformer

The greatest miracle of Swami that I experience daily is the transformation He brings in me and the devotion He inspires in my heart. He grants me strength. He balances my personality.

If I am confrontational, He calms me down. If I avoid confrontation, He teaches me how to fight. He has taught me that we have to train our minds to have faith in Him. He transmutes my fear into devotion, awe and love.

I was a materialistic meat-eating alcoholic before 2018, but the Lord's compassionate patience has transmuted me. He is truly *"Patita Pavan"* (Lord of the fallen).

He is the Lord of Lazarus—come to lift us from the deep, dark valley to the realm of beauty. I have no guilt of my past, for He has taken our darkness unto Him, and blessed me with His light. Looking back, that is perhaps the simplest way I can describe Him.

He is the Transformer.

Mr. Swarnim Narayan
INDIA



Mr. Swarnim Narayan hails from India and is a longtime devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He was born into a Sai family and is a volunteer in the SSSIO. He is a Computer Science engineer and Physics graduate, specializing in Software Engineering and Data Science. He has started a small Artificial Intelligence (AI) firm in Bengaluru, India.



LOVE IN ACTION



COLOMBIA Serving the Elderly

Between January and March 2026, the Santa Helena Sai Center in Colombia **organized a series of service activities to support vulnerable, elderly individuals with material aid, healthcare, and fellowship.** Across Apulo, Funza, Soacha, and Bogotá, the volunteers served 68 seniors by visiting senior care homes and communities. An infrastructure improvement project at a residence for the elderly in Bogotá's Los Cerezos neighborhood created a safer, more suitable living environment. Volunteers also delivered food baskets



and nutritious snacks, provided Ayurvedic medicine consultations, complementary therapies, hairdressing, and recreational programs to support the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the recipients.



MADAGASCAR Mother's Day Celebrations

On June 7, 2026, the Sathya Sai Center of Antananarivo in Madagascar celebrated Mother's Day with a program that featured bhajans, kirtans, songs, as well as gifts by school children to their teachers. **The center also hosted lunch and distributed gifts, yogurt, and chocolate biscuits to children, teachers, and elderly members of the local community.** Ms. Monique, a local teacher, gave a special presentation to the children about living a healthier, more respectful, and responsible life through the practice of



human values. In total, 153 staff members and elderly individuals, 28 SSSIO volunteers, and 260 school community children participated in the event, where everyone received lunch and gifts.

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



NIGERIA

Bringing Joy to Children

On May 30, 2026, four SSSIO volunteers in Nigeria visited 'The Heartbeat of God' Children's Home, an orphanage in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. They delivered food items, toiletries, stationery, and clothing. Donations included a 50 kg bag of rice, 50 kg of beans, over six dozen exercise books, boxes of pens, pencils, and erasers, 10 liters of groundnut oil, a basin of *garri* (a staple West African food made from cassava), detergents, washing soaps, liquid disinfectant, and other essential household



supplies. The team served 14 children at the Home, bringing them hope, positivity, and joy. The children and the Home Coordinator, Ms. Tina, welcomed the volunteers warmly, and the children sang, prayed, and expressed gratitude for the visit.



UKRAINE

Winter Warmth and Light

As the conflict in Ukraine continues, so does the compassionate service rendered by SSSIO members in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and the USA. Between September and November 2025, 300 boxes of clothing and blankets were lovingly sent to Ukraine. A partnership with the Südheide, "Rural Women's Association," added 305 additional boxes of blankets and bedding, which were all delivered to recipients in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Poltava, and Taranivka.

When November's energy-grid collapse left households with just 2-4 hours of power a day in temperatures as low as -30°C, generators, wood stoves, gas stoves, sleeping bags, power banks, heaters, and USB-powered LED lamps were provided to about 75 children. The light and warmth allowed them to study and cope emotionally during the blackouts.

The Kyiv Sai Center also serves coffee, chocolate, blankets, and vitamins to 100–120 elderly people each week. The recipients' gratitude is heartfelt. One mother writes, "Now our



children and we have a little light... May God protect you." Another Poltava resident called the blankets "a godsend," while a Taranivka resident said the ongoing support gives them "courage and hope."



Prasanthi Nilayam is in Your Heart

IT WAS IN 1997 IN MEXICO THAT I FIRST LEARNED ABOUT THE SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION (SSSIO). It was a challenging period in my life, and discovering the organization came at the right time to help both me and my family. Slowly but steadily, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba became an integral part of my daily life, which was completely transformed through His teachings.

Two years later, in 1999, I participated in a workshop titled *"Journey to India."* The purpose of this workshop was to provide practical guidance to facilitate a pilgrimage to Swami's *Ashram*, Prasanthi Nilayam, in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, India. As I prepared for the trip to see Swami, it became much more than just logistical preparation. It awakened a deep longing within me to personally know the supreme being who, through His teachings, had illuminated a difficult period in my life, and who was transforming me and my children through love and hope.



“Wherever the heart blossoms with love for Swami, there He resides, and where He resides is indeed Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of Supreme Peace!”

An Anticlimax with an Invisible Teaching

I finally stepped onto the sacred soil of India and had my first *darshan* of Swami. But I did not feel the overflowing love I experienced the first time I heard about Him, nor the immense peace I felt at the Sathya Sai Center back in México City. This puzzled me deeply. How was it possible that, standing before Him, my heart stayed silent? I struggled to find an answer to this question. As the days went by in Prasanthi Nilayam, I realized that Swami was beginning a process of inner purification in me, preparing me for a deeper understanding.

In Prasanthi Nilayam, I met devotees from around the world, young and elderly alike, who had left their homes to stay close to the Avatar until the end of their days. I deeply admired their dedication. However, within me, a different longing arose to return to my home country to serve.

I then realized that Swami's love manifested within me more intensely at home, in my city, and through my daily service. He had a different plan for me. As Swami Himself says in a discourse on March 28, 1975:

“It is not necessary for one to travel all over the world in search of spiritual power, spending vast amounts of money. Stay in your own homes and develop it within yourselves. This spiritual power is within you! There is no need for you to run here and there. God is not external; God is not outside you; God is within you.”

These words resonated deeply in my heart.

The Inner Calling

Swami has prepared us over many lifetimes to become instruments of His love. I felt that calling for the first time at the age of 19, when I chose to study psychology. When the vocational coun-

selor asked me why I had chosen that career, I answered simply and with conviction, “I want to study psychology because I want to help my country.”

Years later, I realized that this answer did not come solely from me but was the manifestation of His inner guidance. That conviction was further reinforced when, during a visit to Mexico, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of SSSIO, said in his speech, **“We have been called and blessed among millions of human beings. It is not by chance; it is due to the accumulated merit from many lifetimes.”** This coincides with the Biblical expression, “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

Principles for Serving the Nation

Swami exhorts us to follow a few principles in faithfully serving our nation:

- Love and serve your country while respecting others.
- Respect all religions.
- Recognize the brotherhood of humanity.
- Practice cleanliness, honesty, and righteousness.
- Be exemplary citizens.
- Love God and reject sin.

The SSSIO is an ideal platform for both family and community spiritual growth and transformation. Society changes only when one transforms oneself first. Through food distribution services, teaching human values, and conducting spiritual workshops in vulnerable communities, Swami has enabled me to make a small contribution toward the betterment of my country. This

confirms that He has prepared us, over many lifetimes, to serve in His Mission.

11th SSSIO World Conference: An Unexpected Calling

From November 20 to 22, 2025, the 11th SSSIO World Conference was held at Sai Prema Nilayam in Riverside, California, USA. I attended it with a sincere desire to receive guidance from Swami regarding the future of the Sathya Sai Organization in Mexico and my role in it, after Sathya Sai Baba’s centennial birthday celebrations.

During the meeting with leaders of the SSSIO from many countries, the importance of Sathya Sai Centers was emphasized by Mr. Oscar Morado, Chairman of Zone 2A. He was invited to speak about opening new Sathya Sai Centers in Mexico. During his talk, Mr. Oscar Morado looked at me, and I clearly heard him asking me, “40 new Sathya Sai Centers, right?” He was referring to the number of new Sathya Sai Centers planned to be opened in Mexico. Surprised, I nodded, although the planned number was 30. But inwardly, I asked my Swami, “40 Sathya Sai Centers, Swami?”

Later, when I talked with Oscar, he assured me that he had only said 30. Why had I heard 40? Was it a case of simple mishearing, or was it a revelation? The answer came the next day, when I opened a PowerPoint file on my computer to review the proposed list of new Sathya Sai Centers to open. As I counted them again carefully, the number appeared with absolute clarity: there were exactly 40!

I was overwhelmed. Then I realized who had planted that number in my mind at Sai Prema Nilayam. Humbly,

“...when love and human values are shared with simplicity and respect, Bhagawan finds ways to silently touch and transform hearts.”



I thought, “Your will be done, Lord. I am only Your instrument, like Krishna’s flute; You are the divine musician who plays the melody.”

“Expansion is My Life”
—A New Sathya Sai Center

The experience and subsequent commitment to Swami at Sai Prema Nilayam in late 2025 motivated me to become more actively involved in sharing Swami’s love and mission in Mexico. I was invited by a devotee to visit his hometown in Zihuatanejo, Guerrero, Mexico. Two events were scheduled for May 16 and 17, 2026, for sharing Bhagawan’s love and teachings of human values and to discuss the opening of a new Sathya Sai Center.

I was warmly welcomed by this devotee. I observed the diversity of spiritual beliefs existing within his family that had been invited to attend the events. Some participants sincerely expressed their deep devotion to their own religious traditions, while others stated that their personal commitments or perspectives kept them away from the Organization. Among the comments shared at the meeting, a common concern was that

engaging in an activity related to Sai Baba might imply changing religions or abandoning personal beliefs.

But Bhagawan never asked people to change their religion. On the contrary, He teaches each person to deepen their own faith through the practice of the human values, love, truth, peace, righteousness, and nonviolence. So I wondered, “What message are we sending as devotees? Are we bringing people closer to a deeper experience of love, peace, and Self-knowledge? Or perhaps, without realizing it, are we creating confusion about the universal essence of His teachings?”

That thought shaped everything I spoke that day, and my experience with the host’s family ended up being profoundly loving. Despite differences in thoughts or beliefs, a heart-to-heart connection was established. We shared genuine conversations, life stories, and moments of loving intimacy. Some members gratefully accepted the books on Sai Baba I had brought as gifts and listened attentively to my personal experiences related to His teachings. As we said goodbye, we embraced warmly, as if we had known each other for a very long

time and called me “sister” naturally and openly.

I returned from those encounters with a deep feeling of gratitude and love in my heart, with the sense that Bhagawan had been working silently, softening hearts and building bridges of love and understanding.

Public Talk and a Deep Experience

On Sunday, May 17, 2026, a talk titled *“Life and Work of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and My Personal Experience”* was delivered in a beautiful place overlooking the ocean. The talk acknowledged the spirit of solidarity in Zihuatanejo and reflected on the importance of preparing ourselves to face life’s difficulties, not only physically but also emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. This focus allowed Swami’s teachings to be presented simply by recognizing the divine nature of human beings and practicing the five universal human values.

A brief exercise in introspection and meditation was also conducted, after which **I shared experiences from my own spiritual journey: moments of crisis, inner search, and the profound transformative impact of Sai’s teachings.** Finally, the work of the SSSIO in Mexico was shown, focusing on community development, selfless service, and the practice of human values. The talk was planned for 40 minutes but ended up being nearly two hours long. People did not want to leave. They stayed back, asking questions, interested in learning more.

During a session on meditation, something happened that deeply moved me.

The sound of the ocean waves could be heard clearly, one after another, serving as a natural background. But when I invited the participants to observe their body, feelings, and thoughts, the sea seemed to fall silent for a few moments as I said, “If I say, ‘my body’ and ‘my mind’... who is that ‘I’ that says my body... my mind? That ‘I’ is the witness... consciousness... the Self.” Shortly afterward, the waves began to be heard once again.

At the end, when the group was dispersing, the last attendee approached me, deeply moved. With tears in his eyes and struggling to speak, he told me that during the meditation, he had a profound inner experience related to Sai Baba. **It was difficult to express in words, and all he could manage to say was: “I saw Him... I saw Sai Baba.”** Interestingly, it appears that when the waves of the ocean fell silent, this man saw our dear Swami!

This was not an isolated experience. Every participant seemed to have his or her own story of divine grace! As we celebrated this blessing, a participant who traveled from Acapulco (a five-hour bus ride) to attend the Zihuatanejo talk expressed interest in exploring the possibility of forming a group in that city. Several participants enthusiastically expressed their desire to join the national online meditation practice at 6:00 a.m. and to continue attending future talks and Zoom meetings.

A New Beginning

Thus, the integration of the new Sathya Sai Center of Zihuatanejo began. Rest assured that each of the 40 new Sai Centers has similar stories of Sai’s grace,

for each of them is His very own Prasanthi Nilayam. Wherever the heart blossoms with love for Swami, there He resides, and where He resides is indeed Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of Supreme Peace!

This whole experience at Zihuatanejo convinced me that when love and human values are shared with simplicity and respect, Bhagawan finds ways to silently touch and transform hearts. As He says during the divine discourse given on February 14, 2009,

*“There is nothing impossible in this world for a person who has self-confidence and courage. Such a person can achieve anything. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen this self-confidence. Do not worry about what others may say. Do not fear even if they ridicule you. **Why should you fear when God is with you? He is the resident of your heart. He is none other than your own Atma.** Call Him God, call Him Atma, call Him consciousness—all are different*

names for the same reality. If you take gold to a goldsmith and ask him to make a ring, he will make a ring. The same gold can be melted and made into a bracelet or a chain. The ring, bracelet, and chain are all made of the same gold. In the same way, the same Atma is present in everyone, though it may take many forms. It is not possible to divide the Atma. ‘One Atma dwells in all beings’ (ekatma sarvabhutantaratma). ‘Truth is One, but the wise refer to It by various names’ (ekam sat viprah bahuda vadanti). No one can attribute any difference to the principle of the Atma. If we carry out our task with this kind of self-confidence, we can accomplish anything. Then we shall be victorious in all our undertakings.”

May these 40 new centers become the true Prasanthi Nilayam in Mexico, abodes of supreme peace for all who come there.

**Ms. María de Lourdes
Martínez Rodarte**
MEXICO



Ms. María de Lourdes Martínez Rodarte holds a degree in Psychology. She has been a member of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization for the past 29 years. Within the organization, she has served in various service roles, including President of the National Council of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization Mexico for eight years, as well as Region 21 Deputy for Central America. She has also served as National Vice President and National Coordinator of Devotion and Service.



from the International Sai Young Adults



WHO AM I?

On May 23, 2026, a Sai Young Adults Workshop was held at the Sai Center of Vila Isabel in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, bringing together 13 Young Adults in person and 2 online participants through a live stream, including three other visitors.

With the theme ***“Awakening Consciousness – Who Am I?”***, the workshop was organized and conducted by the Young Adults themselves, addressing topics relevant to their daily lives and personal development.



Through discussion circles and interactive activities, participants explored themes such as belonging, self-awareness, emotional balance, freedom, the higher Self, and the pursuit of a life grounded in values, morality, and good character, in accordance with the teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. **The workshop provided a welcoming environment for reflection, the sharing of experiences, and spiritual growth, encouraging participants to develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their purpose in life.**

The activity was supported by the Southeast Region II of the SSSIO of Brazil and the Sai Foundation of Brazil, emphasizing their commitment to the holistic development of Young Adults through human values and spirituality.

Walking His Legacy



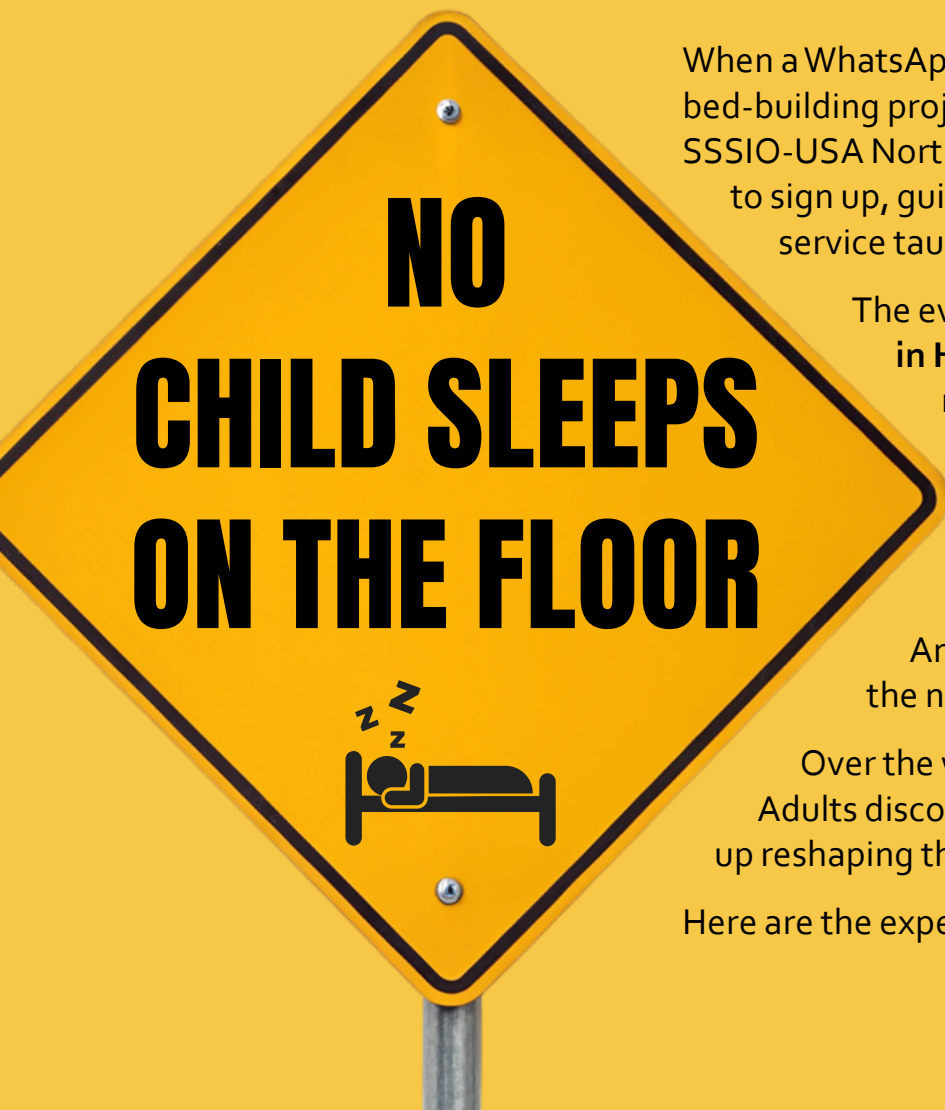
On April 19, 2026, members of the Sai community in Mexico City gathered to participate in a Human Values Walk to commemorate the Aradhana Mahotsavam of our beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, along with the World Human Values Day. The event was organized to honor His legacy and share His message of human values with the local community.

The walk took place at Arboledas Park in Mexico City and brought together 25 volunteers including 9 Young Adults, along with members from the Del Valle, Escandón, and Presidentes Sathya Sai Centers, and representatives from the Sai Community Center in Iztapalapa. **The activity began at the Del Valle Sai Center, where participants gathered with enthusiasm and devotion. Carrying colorful banners displaying human values, the group set out toward the park, led by the Young Adults.** Along the route, a young child joyfully handed out lollipops with

messages on human values to people at the park.

The walk quickly drew attention. Some people smiled and waved; others stopped to take photographs, and even a basketball game nearby paused momentarily as players and spectators watched the procession with curiosity and interest. The event was experienced in a spirit of joy, unity, and love. Participants reflected on how simple acts done with genuine love can make a meaningful impact on others. At the same time, members of the public received the message positively, helping to foster an atmosphere of connection, harmony, and goodwill.

Through this simple yet heartfelt activity, devotees and Young Adults had the opportunity to put Bhagawan's teachings into practice, sharing His message of love and human values with the wider community and keeping His legacy alive through selfless action.



When a WhatsApp message circulated about a bed-building project, the Young Adults from the SSSIO-USA Northern California Region decided to sign up, guided by the principle of selfless service taught by Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The event was organized by “Sleep in Heavenly Peace” (SHP), a non-profit organization whose mission was simple yet profound: *No child sleeps on the floor.*

With an estimated 2-3% of American children lacking a bed, the need is often unseen but real.

Over the weekend, about 15-20 Young Adults discovered that serving others ended up reshaping their own perspectives.

Here are the experiences of two of the volunteers.

The first volunteer recently spent a month building a home temple from scratch, and using his skills to build beds for children felt like a natural next step.

When he arrived at the SHP site, on March 7, 2026, he found a highly organized operation running like a professional assembly line. Volunteers chose their stations, and he started at the marking table before moving on to drilling and sanding operations. The precision of the templates and the steady teamwork created a strong sense of shared purpose. As the day went on, his careful work caught the eye of the quality-check team, who asked him to focus on the final finishing details.

By midday, 120 volunteers had built about 55 beds. As people started to head home,

he stayed behind to help the core team pack up tents, disconnect power stations, and haul away heavy bins of wood scraps. The work was physically demanding, but the shared effort made the time pass quickly.

Afterward, one of the core team leaders, Scott, approached him to say thank you. Impressed by the dedication of the Sai volunteers, Scott shared his own church's mission and the work of the San Jose SHP chapter. In return, the Young Adult volunteer shared the core values taught by our Swami. Though their organizations had different backgrounds, they quickly realized they shared the same commitment to helping people. In the end, he went home tired, but grateful for the opportunity to turn his love for building into something



tangible for the local children.

Another volunteer took part in both the build-day and the deliveries the next morning. During the workshop, she spent the morning marking lumber alongside a member of a local church group. As they worked, they talked about their shared goal of teaching the values of love and service to the next generation. When he mentioned that the teaching of Christ that resonated most with him was to treat others the way you want to be treated, she was struck by how different faiths and spiritual traditions point to the same destination.

The Golden Rule:

"Do unto others as you would like them to do to you."

—Jesus Christ, Sermon on the Mount
(Matthew 7:12)

The next day, the delivery team got ready to visit their first home. The SHP leader asked her to be the one to make first contact at the door. He explained that for many of these families, often headed by single mothers or households going through tough times, seeing a female volunteer first provides a sense of safety and comfort. It was a reminder that service isn't just about moving furniture; it's about respect-

ing people's dignity. They visited three homes that day. In each one, the children's excitement and joy were palpable. They jumped onto their new mattresses, proud of their new Spiderman or Barbie sheets. In one home, a mother had her child close their eyes before walking inside; the surprise brought tears to everyone in the room.

In that moment, **the line between the person giving help (server) and the person receiving it (served) seemed to disappear.** It was clear that everyone, regardless of their current situation, had something to offer. Driving home, she felt a deep sense of gratitude to our dearest Swami for the opportunity to witness that kind of quiet joy and expand her awareness.

Though their tasks over the weekend were different, **both volunteers came away with the identical realization that service is a universal language that transcends differences in culture, religion, or background.** By showing up for these families, they were reminded of the truth that true prayer is expressed through action, and true unity is found in looking out for one another and seeing God in all.

Seva Turns to Sewa 世話

Writing this article is difficult for me because it reminds me of a time when I received amazing kindness and selfless support from people who barely knew me. Looking back, I sometimes regret that I was not able to fully appreciate their generosity in those moments. Only later did I realize how deeply their actions changed my life.

Several years ago, I left Germany with a restless heart, searching for peace, purpose, and belonging. I traveled through Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and finally Japan. During this journey, I experienced many acts of kindness, but the *seva* or 世話 *sewa* in Japanese that I received in Japan became one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.

The story started in Nepal, where I met a Japanese lady in her sixties. We connected deeply while traveling together, and before I left for Japan, she told me that if I ever needed help there, I should contact her family. At the time, I appreciated her offer, but I never imagined how important it would become.

Shortly before leaving Nepal, I badly injured my right foot while playing soccer with children in a village. By the time I arrived in Japan, I could barely

walk and needed crutches. Everything there felt overwhelming—the language, the culture, and especially the high cost of living. Due to my injury, finding work became almost impossible, and I slowly realized that I could not survive on my own.

That was when her family came to my rescue.

The mother of the family, whom I called *Okaasan* (mother), showed me incredible kindness from the beginning. She bought me food when I had almost no money left and later convinced her family to let me stay with them in their small apartment until my foot recovered.

What was initially meant to be a short stay turned into nine months of living with the family. Even though space was limited and money was tight, they gave me food, shelter, and emotional support without ever expecting anything in return.

While living with them, another health problem arose. One of my back teeth cracked, leading to a severe infection that left me in constant pain. I could not afford treatment, but *Okaasan* helped me register for Japanese health insurance



and even used part of her small pension to help cover my medical expenses.

What touched me most was not just their financial support but also their patience, compassion, and acceptance. I struggled emotionally with receiving so much kindness because I felt I was unable to repay them. I often asked myself why they would do so much for someone they barely knew. But their help was never about money or expecting something in return.

The family was devoted followers of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and through them I began to understand the true meaning of *seva*: selfless service with love and humility. **They not only cared for me but also showed me different ways of practicing *seva* myself—through helping others, prayer, patience, and simple daily acts of kindness.** They introduced me to the Japanese culture, spiritual gatherings, and prayer ceremonies,

which deeply influenced my understanding of life.

Despite having little money themselves, they even made it possible for me to travel to some of Japan's most beautiful places. Together we visited temples, mountains, oceans, and peaceful countryside that I could never have experienced alone. Through these journeys, they showed me the beauty of Japan, but more importantly, the beauty of compassion and human connection.

This experience changed me deeply. I left Germany in search of peace somewhere in the world, but in the end, I found it through the selfless love and *seva* of people who treated me as one of their own. Their kindness shaped my understanding of humanity and spirituality, and for that, I will remain grateful for the rest of my life.

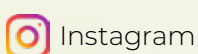
Mr. Daniel Müller
GERMANY



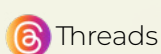
Follow Young Adults on Social Media



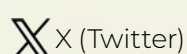
Facebook



Instagram



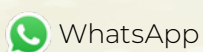
Threads



X (Twitter)



Spotify



WhatsApp



Bluesky



TikTok



Telegram



Email



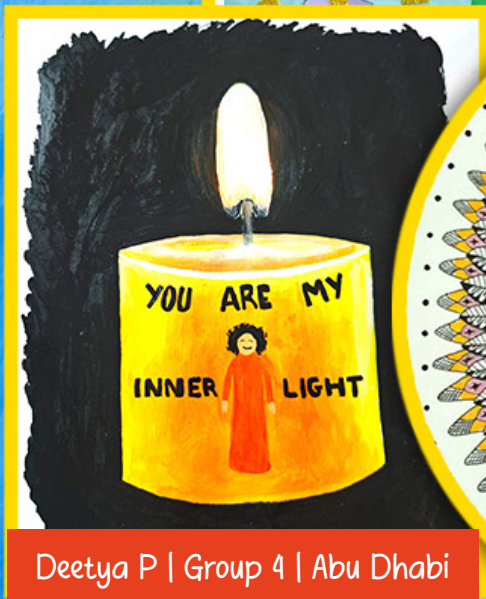
GCalendar

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

Happy Guru Purnima



Hoojeayaan S | Group 2 | Sri Lanka



Deetya P | Group 4 | Abu Dhabi



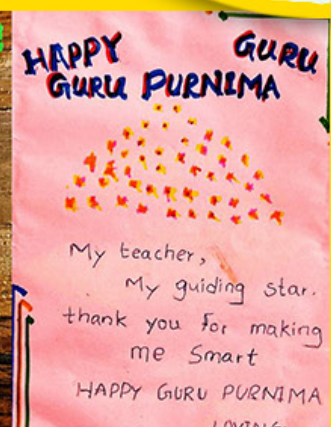
Lakshmi P | Group 2 | Thailand



Kirti S | Group 2 | Thailand



Livithraahi S | Group 1 | Sri Lanka

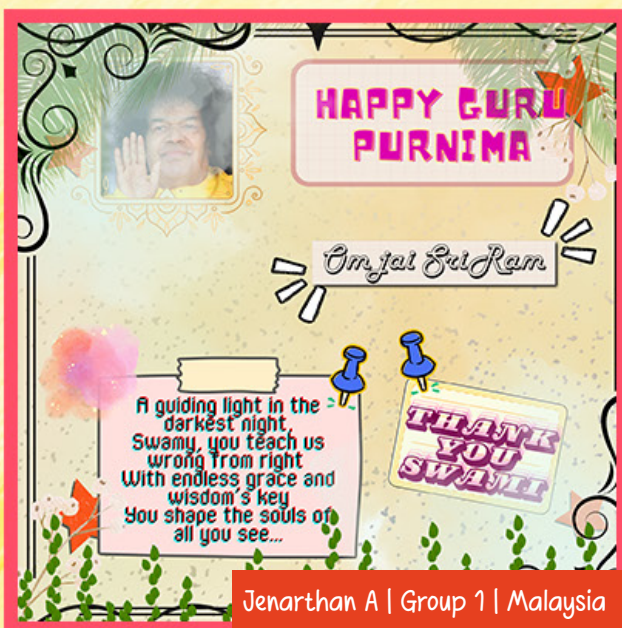


Dheepica J | Group 3 | Singapore

MY INNER VOICE

My conscience is the voice inside my mind. It helps me know what is right and what is wrong. Whenever I have to make a decision, I always try to listen to my inner voice. It tells me to speak the truth, be honest, and help others. My conscience reminds me to be kind to my family and friends. It teaches me to respect everyone. If I make a mistake, it tells me to say sorry and correct it. When I follow my conscience, I feel peaceful and confident. It guides my character in my thoughts, words, and actions. Good conscience helps us become good human beings and choose the right path.

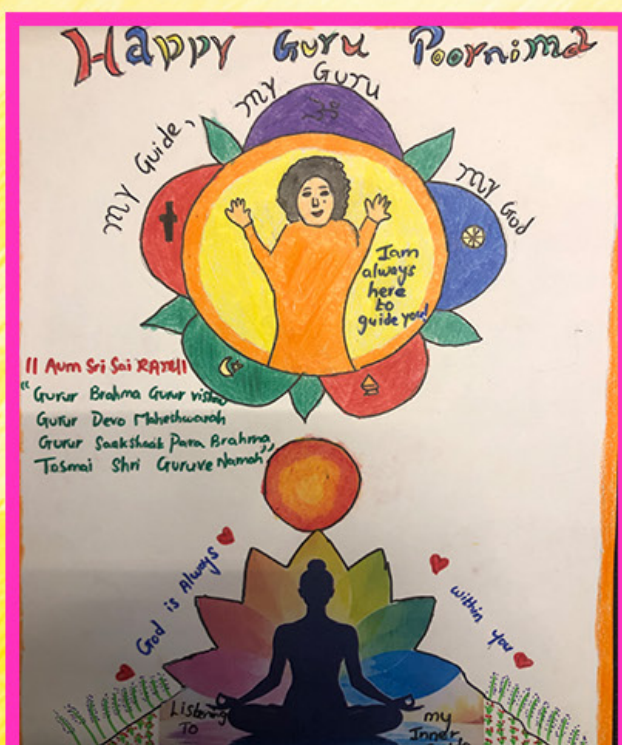
Sudhakar E | Online SSE | India



Jenarthan A | Group 1 | Malaysia



Gambar T | Group 1 | Indonesia



Shaast D | Group 1 | Mauritius



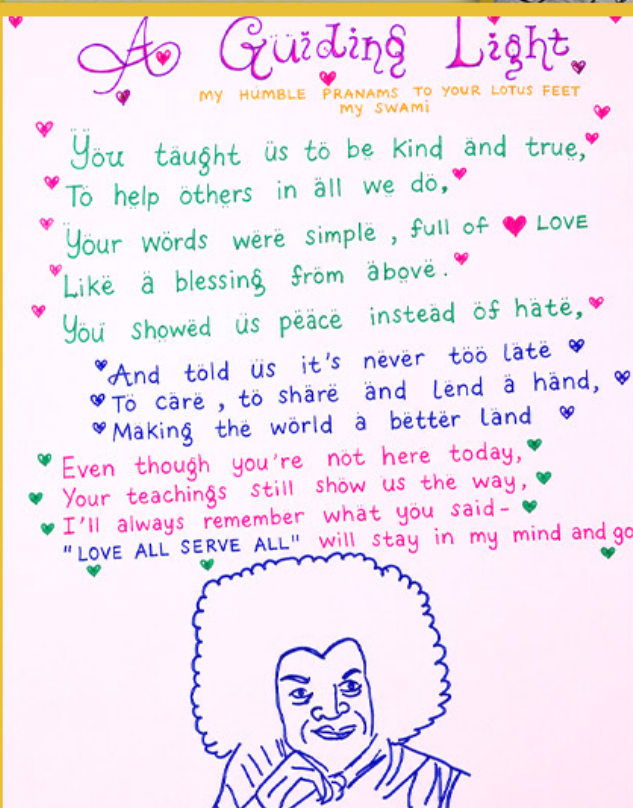
Ramani S | Group 1 | Nepal



Eva | Malaysia



Getha | Malaysia



Lakshmi & Naveen | Group 2 | Malaysia

MY HEART SPEAKS

When the world grows bright,
 My heart still whispers
 through the night.
 It tells of dreams I dare not say,
 Yet carries hope from day to day.

It sings of love, both lost and found,
 Of silent tears with heart aches,
 with pain,
 Yet blooms with joy, a sound,
 Yet finds the strength to rise again.

My heart speaks not in words alone,
 But in each seed I've sown.
 It knows that every scar I bear
 Has taught me how to love and care.

So I will listen, calm and deep,
 To promises my heart will keep.
 For when my soul has lost its way,
 My heart will always light the day.



Stivano | Group 2 | Madagascar

Udita R | Group 2 | Netherlands

WHEN YOU ARE UNSURE, HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT IS RIGHT?

When I am confused about something, I try to be quiet for a few moments to think. I believe that the best solution will bring peace and kindness to the scenario, and I think of the values that Swami teaches and how they can be implemented. I try to come up with a solution that shows consideration to everyone involved. My Inner Guru sends a feeling that lets me know if what I made was the right decision, a feeling like a weight lifted for a good decision or an unease for an unwise one.

Sanjuktha R | Group 4 | USA

HAPPY GURU POORNIMA

Gambar W | Group 4 | Indonesia



Pendidikan harus memberi manusia kasih sayang dan semangat pelayanan - cerdas, tepat waktu, dan puasa. Artinya pendidikan tidak hanya harus memberi informasi tetapi juga harus mentranformasikanya

~BABA~

BABA'S VOICE

Sometimes I feel that someone is helping me and I know that the inner voice is Baba's voice. I know that I can always ask Baba everything and that His answer will be the correct and best answer. If I don't know what to do then I listen to my heart. I always try to be kind and helpful to other people. If I help someone then I become very happy and I have this feeling in my heart that I did something good.

Udita R | Group 2 | Netherlands

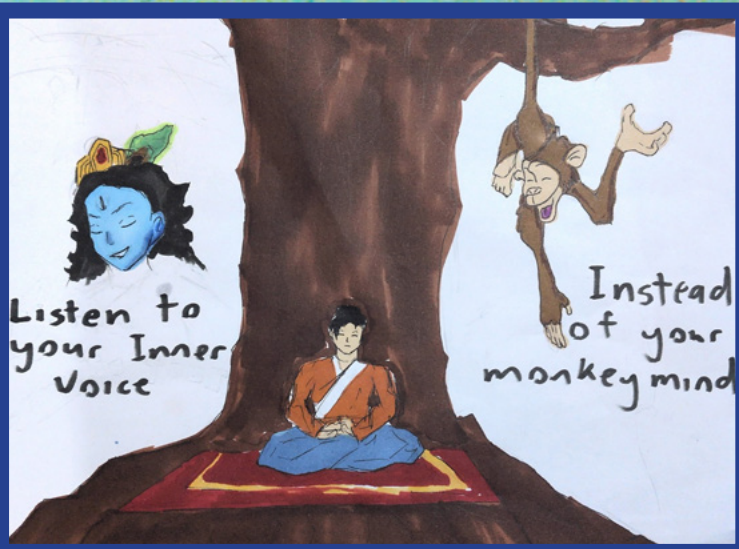
TO MY BEST FRIEND

Dear Baba, my closest friend,
You stay with me from start to end.
When I feel lost or full of doubt,
You help me find my way.

You teach me love, to help and care,
To always choose what's good and fair.
Even when I feel alone,
With You, I know I am not on my own.

I may not see You every day,
But in my heart, You always stay.
My guide, my best friend,
Thank You.

Samhita R | Group 3 | Online SSE



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
August 15-16, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri
October 17-18, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri



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



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



Facebook



Instagram



WhatsApp



X (Twitter)



YouTube



Spotify



Telegram



Threads



Google Books



Email



Eternal Companion email list



Substack



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



What is needed today to save oneself from anxiety and fear is dedication, and diverting the mind towards God. If that is done, the pains of the physical body and pangs of the senses will not affect the mind. *Dhyana* (meditation) is that inward journey, away from the objective world and the senses that run after it. The Upanishads declare that the *Atma* cannot be attained by a weakling (*nayam Atma balaheenena labhyah*). *Bala* (strength) means physical, vital, moral, intellectual, and spiritual toughness. All these are essential to establish mastery over the senses.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

August 31, 1972



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

