

SATHYA SAI
THE
ETERNAL
COMPANION



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 9
SEPTEMBER 2026



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



Today is Krishna's Birthday (Gokulashtami). But what is a birthday for God? This is only the birthday of the physical form. Do not give importance to birthdays; instead, give importance to the teachings and ideals of Krishna. Krishna is not different from His teachings. Krishna is Gita, Gita is Krishna. Likewise, Swami is not different from His teachings. Swami's word is Swami.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
September 4, 1996



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





Volume 5 • Issue 9 • September 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 9

September 2026

6 Editorial

The True Guru, Part 2 of 2

14 Divine Discourse

The Only Guru is the Self Within, Part 2, July 7, 1990

22 Experiences of Devotees

Living with Swami Every Day by Mr. Gulab Bilimoria

The Divine Connection Across Births by Mr. Sathya Jalilehvand

32 From the Divine Pen—Message from Swami

The Goal of Self-Surrender

34 Humanitarian Service

Love in Action—Chile, Malawi, New Zealand, and Trinidad & Tobago

36 Glory of Womanhood

Sai Baba: Incarnation of Pure Love by Ms. Cathy Daub

44 Ideal Sai Young Adults

Prayers for Healing

Discovering the Inner Hero, Latvia

Oh, How Happy I Am! by Ms. Natalia Uehara

50 Sathya Sai Education

With contributions from Adelina, Ankitha, Ernesto, Gayathiry,
Kamalakar, Kesya, Lelo, Mahalaxmi, Nuri, Rohitaksh, Rudhvika,
Sai Hariesh, Sai Nirush, Stivano, and Theebigha

54 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 2 of 2

In the previous issue, in Part 1 of the Editorial, we reflected on the many ways in which God lovingly guides the spiritual seeker through parents, saints, scriptures, Nature, and the many experiences of life. Each of these reveals an aspect of the Guru Principle and prepares the heart for a higher revelation. Yet, all these outer Gurus ultimately lead us to the Supreme Guru—the *Avatar*, who comes not merely to teach spiritual truths but to awaken us to the eternal Reality within. In this concluding part, we will explore the *Avatar*'s unique role as the embodiment of the Guru Principle, His extraordinary methods of imparting wisdom, and His timeless message that the highest guru is none other than the inner Guru—*Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

The Avatar as the Guru

After learning from our parents, saints, scriptures, and the great university of life, we are fortunate and blessed to come to the *Avatar*. This marks the culmination of the journey and the end of the spiritual quest. The ultimate experience is to come face to face with the *Avatar*.

God, who is beyond name, form, attributes, time, and space, out of infinite compassion and love, takes a beautiful human form with a sacred and sweet name to guide us along

the right path. He not only guides us on the spiritual journey but also protects us in our worldly lives.

The *Avatar* is the complete expression of God as Guru, for the *Avatar* is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* incarnate, functioning simultaneously as the universal Mother, Father, Friend, Guide, and Guru for all humanity. We have our Swami, the *Kali Yuga Avatar*, who is *Gurunam Guru*, the teacher of teachers; *Jagadguru*, the universal teacher; and the *Parama Guru*, the divine teacher. He shows us the way and demonstrates that He is the manifestation of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara. That is why we chant on the sacred Guru Poornima day:

*guru brahma guru vishnu
guru devo maheshwara
guru sakshat parabrahma
tasmai sri gurave namah*

*Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu,
Guru is Maheshwara;
Guru is verily the Supreme Brahman—
to that Guru I offer my salutations.*

Swami clarifies that this *shloka* does not suggest the elevation of one's guru to being Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara. Instead, it implies that the divine alone can be one's true guru. Swami declared this truth about

The Avatar is the complete expression of God as Guru.



Himself at the First World Conference on May 17, 1968:

“This is a human form in which every Divine Entity, every Divine Principle—that is to say, all the names and forms ascribed by man to God—are manifest. Do not allow doubt to distract you.”

Swami is the supreme *Parabrahman*. That is why we say, “Swami is All in One, One in All, All in All, and beyond All.”

- “All in One” means that all names, all forms, the entire universe, all galaxies—everything—is embodied in Him.
- “One in All” means that He is the indweller in every being.
- “All in All” means that everything is permeated by Him. Every atom, every cell, every moment is filled with His divine presence.
- Finally, “Beyond All” means, as the Upanishads declare, that He transcends everything, even the manifested universe.

He is the supreme *Parabrahman* who has descended to teach humanity the path back to divinity. When the Lord descends as an *Avatar*, taking human form, He comes with many missions. In this *Avatar*, He has declared that He has come to revive the Vedas, protect His devotees, give insights into scriptures, and restore *dharma*.

The Guru Who Bears Our Burdens

Guru Poornima holds a unique and sacred significance in the history of the Sai *Avatar*. During the days preceding Guru Poornima in 1963, Bhagawan suffered a stroke and the left side of His body was paralyzed, causing

deep anguish among His devotees. On Guru Poornima day itself, before the assembled devotees, Bhagawan miraculously healed Himself from the illness by sprinkling water over His limbs and immediately rose to deliver a powerful discourse.

He revealed that He had voluntarily taken on Himself the suffering meant for one of His devotees. On that same sacred occasion, Bhagawan also disclosed the mystery of the Sai *Avatar* Trinity—Shirdi Sai, Sathya Sai, and the future incarnation of Prema Sai.

Here we see the true guru—not just as a teacher—but as God Himself, who out of boundless compassion, walks beside His devotees, bears their burdens, and redeems their suffering. Such a guru is not merely an instructor in spiritual philosophy; He is also a friend, companion, guide, and the very Lord of Love.

Unique Insight Into Scriptures

The *Avatar* also comes to give us a deeper insight into the scriptures. For instance, there is an episode that occurred during His previous incarnation as Shirdi Sai Baba.

There is a beautiful verse in the Bhagavad Gita (BG 4.34) in Chapter 4, *Jnana Yoga*:

*tad viddhi pranipatena
pariprashnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam
jnaninah tathwadarshinah*

Learn the Truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him with reverence and render service unto him.

Such an enlightened one can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the Truth.

One of Baba's devotees, Nanasaheb Chandorkar, a Sanskrit scholar, was reciting this verse in Baba's presence. Since he thought that Baba did not know Sanskrit, he was quietly mumbling the verse to himself. Baba asked Nanasaheb to explain the verse he was reciting.

The scholar explained the traditional meaning. Learn the Truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him with reverence and render service unto him. Then, the enlightened one can impart knowledge unto you because he has realized the Truth. Even great commentators such as Adi Shankaracharya have explained it in this way.

But Baba probed him to explain the meaning, word by word, and understand its inner message. The scholar, then, fumbled and failed. Hence, Baba explained the deeper significance of the verse.

He said that the Guru does not "give" knowledge, because true knowledge already exists within us. (Thus it is not *upadekshyanti te jnanam*, rather *upadekshyanti te ajnanam*). We are the embodiments of knowledge. We are the embodiments of wisdom. Nothing new needs to be added. What obscures this innate wisdom is ignorance. Therefore, the Guru's role is not to impart new knowledge unto us but to remove the ignorance that veils our true nature. Once ignorance is removed, the wisdom that is already within shines forth naturally.

Swami often illustrates this with a simple example. Imagine you have a dirty white cloth. When the dirt is washed away, you have not created whiteness. The whiteness was always there. You merely removed the dirt that concealed it. **Likewise, the Guru removes ignorance, and our inherent wisdom shines forth.**

Swami also gives many profound insights into scriptural teachings. Let us consider just two examples. The first concerns the Vedantic approach of *Neti, Neti*—"Not this, not this." Traditionally, when one seeks to realize *Brahman*, one rejects identification with the body, the mind, the intellect, and the external world, saying, "Not this, not this," by a process of negation until one finally realizes *Brahman*.

But Swami gives an even deeper understanding of this teaching. He says that the process does not end with negation. Initially, one begins by saying, "Not this, not this." But once *Brahman* is realized, one recognizes that everything—including what was previously denied—is nothing but *Brahman*. **So the proclamation of "*Neti, Neti*" now becomes, "Not only this; not only this."**

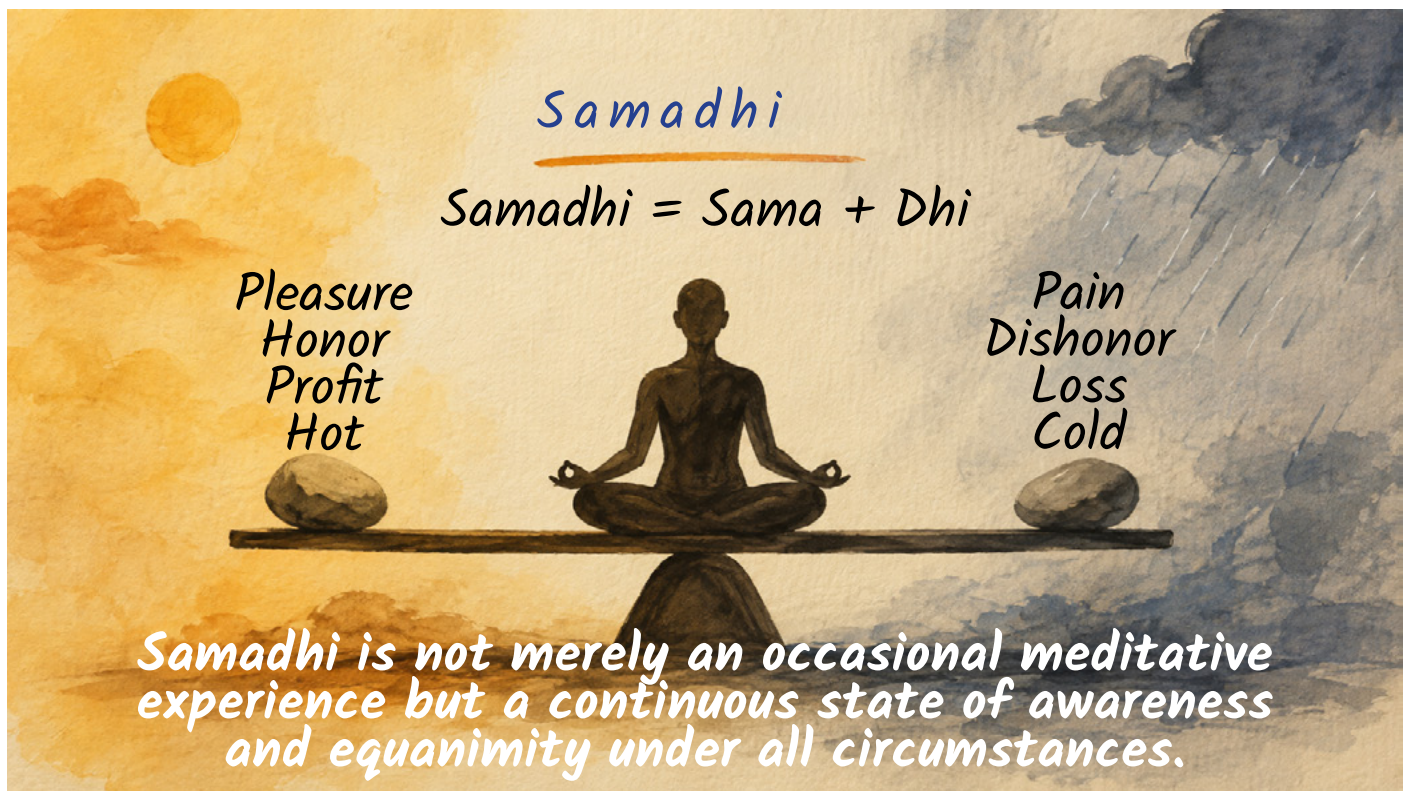
Nothing can exist outside of *Brahman*. Therefore, nothing can ultimately be excluded from *Brahman*. *Brahman* alone is the ultimate Reality.

Another valuable insight Swami provides is the interpretation of the word *samadhi*. Usually, according to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, *samadhi* is seen as the highest state of meditation, where one becomes absorbed in pure consciousness, unaware of the external world. This is the common understanding.

But Swami gives a much broader explanation, saying that one can live in *samadhi* all the time. He clarifies the meaning of the word itself: *samadhi* = *sama* + *dhi*. *Sama* means equal, and *dhi* means *buddhi* (intellect). When one maintains perfect equanimity under all circumstances—whether in pleasure or pain, honor or dishonor, profit or loss, heat or cold—one is living in *samadhi*. **Thus, *samadhi* is not merely an occasional meditative experience but a continuous state of awareness and equanimity under all circumstances.**

Teaching Methods of the Avatar

Another fascinating aspect is the *Avatar*'s teaching methods. Again, let us take an



example from the life of Shirdi Sai Baba. There is a wonderful *Upanishad* known as the *Isha Upanishad* (also called *Ishavasya Upanishad*). It is concise, containing only 18 verses, yet it is one of the most profound scriptures in *Vedanta*. Swami often spoke about it and even wrote a commentary on it, as did many great masters.

During the time of Shirdi Sai Baba, there was a devotee named Das Ganu. He was a fervent devotee who composed many hymns in praise of Sai Baba. At one time, he had an urge to write a commentary on the *Isha Upanishad*. He tried his best but could not understand its deeper meaning. He approached many scholars and saints, but none could satisfy him completely. Finally, someone suggested, "Why don't you ask Sai Baba? He is a realized soul." Das Ganu went to Baba and sought His guidance.

Instead of giving any specific guidance or interpretation of the *Upanishad*, Baba simply told him, "On your way back, stop at Kakasaheb Dixit's (a devotee) house. The maid servant there will teach you."

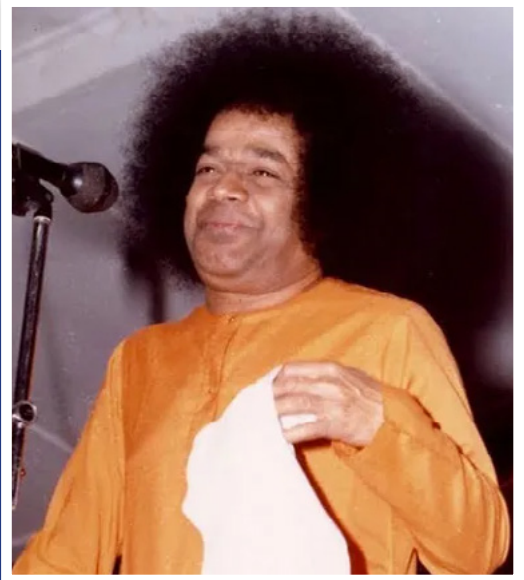
Everyone thought Baba was merely joking. How could an uneducated maid servant explain the profound wisdom of the *Upanishad*? But Das Ganu had absolute faith in Baba. He believed that if Baba had said so, there must be a reason behind it. On his way back, he stopped at Kakasaheb Dixit's house. There he saw a young maid servant dressed in torn clothes, but perfectly happy.

Moved by compassion, Das Ganu asked his friend to buy her a new sari. The next day, she wore the beautiful new sari and danced with great joy. The following day, however, she carefully folded the new sari, put it away for later use, and once again wore her old, torn clothes. Yet she was just as joyful and carefree as before, regardless of whether she wore the new sari or the old, torn clothes.

The opening *mantra* of the *Isha Upanishad* is one of the most concentrated statements of Vedantic spirituality. The text is traditionally rendered as:

*ishavasyam idam sarvam yat
kincha jagatyam jagat
tena tyaktena bhunjitha ma
gridhah kasyasvid dhanam*

Swami would often hold the handkerchief tightly in His hand and then let it go, saying, “Holding on is difficult. Letting go is easy.” Likewise, holding on to worldly attachments brings grief, suffering, and bondage. Letting go brings freedom and joy.



The simple meaning is, “Whatever exists in this changing universe is pervaded by the Divine. Therefore, live and enjoy with a spirit of renunciation. Do not covet what belongs to another.”

Through this simple incident, Das Ganu understood the essence of the Isha Upanishad and received many lessons.

The first lesson is to be content with whatever God has provided you. If you constantly crave more and more, you will never find happiness. The second lesson is to recognize the same divinity in the giver, the gift, and the receiver. The one who gives, the act of giving, and the one who receives are all manifestations of the same divine Reality. Such was Baba’s extraordinary way of teaching. This is what Swami emphasizes when He says that in service, the one who serves, the one who is served and the act of service are all one, the same divine.

Likewise, Swami often uses the simplest objects to communicate the highest spiritual truths. One such object was His handkerchief. With an ordinary handkerchief, He conveys profound spiritual wisdom.

1. Swami would often hold the handkerchief tightly in His hand and then let it go, saying, “Holding on is difficult. Letting go

is easy.” Likewise, holding on to worldly attachments brings grief, suffering, and bondage. Letting go brings freedom and joy.

2. Swami also points out that a handkerchief is made of threads, and the threads themselves are made from cotton. Cotton, thread, and cloth may seem different, but they are essentially the same substance. Similarly, God, creation, and the individual appear different, but in reality, they are one. We must learn to perceive this underlying unity.
3. Swami explains that you cannot easily tear the handkerchief because it is woven together from countless threads. However, if you separate the threads, each one can be torn apart very easily. When the threads are united, they have strength. Similarly, unity gives us strength. Therefore, we should always preserve unity.
4. On several occasions, Swami holds the handkerchief in front of His face and asks, “Can you see Me?” When the devotees reply “No, Swami,” He explains, “In the same way, Maya stands between us and God. Although God is always before us, we are unable to perceive Him because of delusion and illusion. Remove the veil of Maya, and we will see God.”

5. Swami also points out that after repeated use, a handkerchief becomes dirty. What do we do then? We wash it, and it becomes clean again. Similarly, our heart is originally pure. Over time, however, it gets covered with impurities such as desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and jealousy. Through spiritual practices and, above all, by God's grace, these impurities can be washed away, restoring the heart to its original purity.
6. Holding up the handkerchief, Swami says, *"This is my kerchief. I am not a kerchief. Similarly, when I say that this is My body, I am not the body. The body is separate from Me. Who am I then? We need to inquire and find out the answer."*
7. The white handkerchief takes on the color of whatever dye you dip it into. So too, *"Yad bhavam, tad bhavati"*, Swami would say—whatever thoughts and feelings your mind is immersed in, it gets colored by that. Another message Swami would emphasize with the analogy was, *"Tell me your company, and I shall tell you who you are."*
8. On April 12, 1993, Swami crumples His handkerchief in the palm of His hand, and says, *"When I hold the handkerchief like this and ask you, 'What is this?' you will say, 'It is a piece of cloth.' ... When I unfold it and ask, 'What is this?' you will say, 'It is a handkerchief!' Out of that big handkerchief, if you know just a small bit, can that be called full knowledge? No, try to acquire total wisdom. Only God has total wisdom."* Then, Swami says, *"This awareness is Constant Integrated Awareness, which is changeless. It is chith."*
9. During the Summer Showers in Brindavan in 1979, Swami says, *"In our daily lives, when we have to sit somewhere, we choose a clean place and cover the ground with a handkerchief or a newspaper."* Though the entire property belongs to us, we sit only in a clean area, placing our handker-

chief. In the same way, God is everywhere but He manifests in a pure mind and heart.

These are some of the simple and common, yet striking examples through which God teaches the highest spiritual truths.

The Guru Within—*Sat-Chit-Ananda*

Ultimately, however, we should remember that whether it is Rama, Krishna, Shirdi Sai, or Sathya Sai, the physical body has a beginning and an end. But the Sai Principle is eternal. Sai Consciousness is all-pervading. Therefore, now that Swami has left His physical body, we must internalize this truth. That is why Swami repeatedly emphasized that *Sat-Chit-Ananda* is our true Guru—Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss.

Even in the very name Sai, the answer is hidden. S-A-I means "See Always Inside." When we look inward, what do we discover? BABA: Being Awareness Bliss Atma, which is nothing but *Sat-Chit-Ananda*—Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss. Therefore, we must give greater importance to the inward journey, for it is there that we discover the truth.

Let me share a couple of personal experiences that illustrate the importance Swami places on this inward path. In 1996, Swami blessed me with the privilege to speak on the occasion of Sri Krishna Janmashtami, the celebration of Lord Sri Krishna's birth. Before giving a talk, it was common practice to seek Swami's blessings by doing *padanamaskar*, touching His divine lotus Feet. Accordingly, I went to Swami, did *padanamaskar*, and prayed, "Swami, please speak through me."

Swami immediately replied, "No." I was a bit perplexed and taken aback. Then He continued, *"I won't interfere with your inner Swami."* **Even while He was physically present before us, He was giving greater importance to the connection with the inner Swami.**

In fact, on another occasion, I asked Swami about the sacred practice of *padanamaskar*. I told Him that it is such a blessing to touch



His feet and do *padanamaskar*. But many times, we are unable to get that opportunity, even when in Prasanthi Nilayam. So, I said, “At such times, we resort to worshipping Your feet and doing *padanamaskar* mentally. Is it as effective as physically taking *padanamaskar*, Swami?” **He replied that *manasa pooja*, or mental worship of His feet is not only as effective, but also more powerful.** In fact, this is consistent with His first message when He declared Avatarhood and sang the famous *bhajan*, “*Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam*” (Oh Mind! Worship the feet of the Guru.)

This is a lesson for all of us. We must internalize Swami’s love and His teachings. After all, Swami repeatedly tells us, “*I am with you, in you, above you, below you, around you.*” His teaching should not remain a mere saying or philosophy. We must experience it directly.

Let me share another experience. By Swami’s grace, I have had the privilege of visiting Him many times in a year to have His *darshan*, receive His blessings, and seek His guid-

ance regarding my medical practice, family matters, and other important decisions.

But there were times when, due to work or family commitments, I could not travel to Puttaparthi. Even when we did go, there was no guarantee that Swami would speak to us. Everything happens solely according to His divine will. On one such occasion, I asked Him, “Swami, sometimes I need Your guidance immediately. I may be 10,000 miles away from You, or even if I come here, it might not be possible to speak with You. What should I do?”

Swami gave a beautiful answer that applies to all of us. He said, “*Go to a quiet corner. Go to your puja room or to a place where you regularly perform your spiritual practices, because such places are filled with sacred vibrations. Sit there quietly for about 10 minutes. **Silence the mind. Withdraw the outgoing tendencies of the senses. In the depths of silence, the voice of God can be heard.***” He then told me, “*The guidance that comes to you then is from Me.*”

Therefore, we must internalize this all-pervading Lord, this eternal Sai, who is always ready to guide us.

Offering Gratitude to Our Sadguru

We should feel deeply grateful that we have been blessed with the *Avatar*—not merely an *Avatar*, but *Parabrahman*—the Supreme Lord as our Guru and Guide.

He taught us how to progress on the spiritual path. Not only does He take care of our spiritual well-being, but He also looks after our worldly needs and challenges. He protects us just as the eyelids protect the eye. Every one of us has had countless experiences demonstrating how lovingly He takes care of us. But then the question arises: How do we express our gratitude to Swami?

Swami Himself gives the answer: *“Implicitly, completely, and immediately follow My teachings.”*

That is our primary responsibility and top priority. We must delve deeply into His teachings, understand them, assimilate them, and above all, put them into practice. Secondly, we must cultivate absolute and unwavering faith—faith in Him, faith in His teachings, and faith in the Organization that He Himself established. This Organization is unique in the history of any *Avatar*. During His physical sojourn, He established it Himself and gave it to us as His divine gift—a priceless opportunity to participate in His mission. And He assures us, *“Just by participating in this Mission, your life will be redeemed.”*

Therefore, we should cherish and fully utilize this opportunity. How do we do that? Simply by living in love, following His directive, *“Start the day with Love. Spend the day with Love. Fill the day with Love. End the day with Love. This is the way to God.”*

We also need to remember that true discipleship requires complete surrender. Bhagawan often draws attention to the Bhagavad Gita (BG 2.7) on this topic. Although Arjuna was Lord Krishna's friend and brother-in-law, Krishna did not start teaching the Bhagavad Gita until Arjuna surrendered completely and declared, “I am Your disciple. Please instruct me. I take refuge in You.”

Similarly, if we want to derive the fullest benefit from our relationship with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and attain the supreme goal, we must accept Him as the supreme *Parabrahman*, establish the sacred relationship of Guru and disciple, and surrender ourselves completely at His divine lotus feet.

Let us pray to Swami for devotion, dedication, and determination, so that we may implicitly follow His teachings, walk the path He has shown us, and attain the supreme goal in this very lifetime.

By His grace and blessings, may we realize our true nature—that we are the embodiment of Divine Love, the embodiment of the Divine Atma, and the embodiment of Divine Bliss.

Jai Sai Ram.



The Only Guru is the Self Within

Part 2 of 2

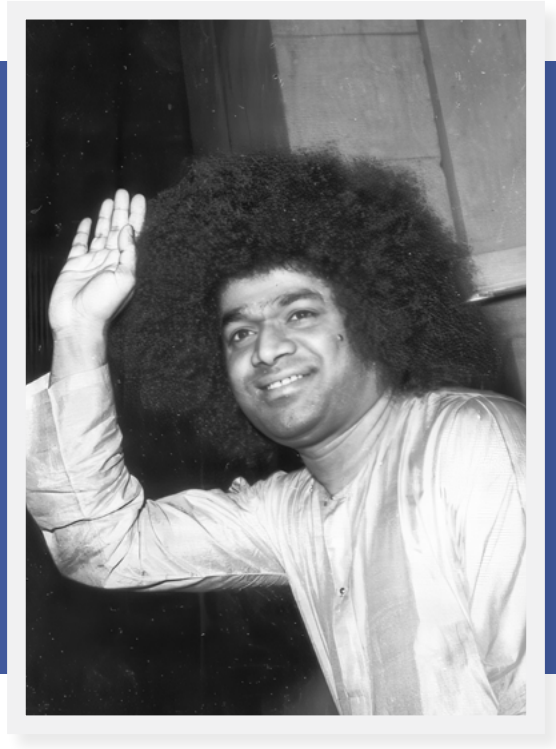
Continued from August 2026 issue



Embodiments of Love! First of all, we must transform our personality into a sacred power. One may study any number of subjects. One may hold any number of positions of authority. One may earn a lot of wealth. One may gain a lot of fame. Are any of these permanent? **Without recognizing one's own true nature, if one thinks, "I have realized," it is nothing but foolishness. What good is it to know many things if one does not know oneself?** People travel millions of miles into space, but they are not traveling even half an inch into the depths of their own hearts. We must turn our minds inward. As long as the mind remains extroverted, the world seems a real experience to us. As long as this world exists, happiness and sorrow are inevitable.

We don't have to go very far. There is no world in deep sleep. When there is no world, there is no mind. When there is no mind, there is no happiness or sorrow. It is only in this state of sleep that we become free from happiness and sorrow by restraining the mind. **Therefore, if a person desires lasting peace and happiness, they must first control their mind and direct it toward God.** This is true spiritual

*Your guru and God are one.
He alone transcends all attributes.
He alone is formless. He
is the only one who removes
the darkness of ignorance and
brings the light of true wisdom.*



practice. Otherwise, if we are only engaging in various chants and meditation, it simply becomes a waste of our time. First of all, one must transform one's mind. If the mind does not change, no matter how much a person changes, there is no benefit. Without a change in character, there is no use in changing dress and appearance. Therefore, what we need to change today is our qualities. These qualities should be transformed into good virtues. One should cultivate divine feelings. This is the true message.

The Inner Meaning of Guru Poornima

Today is Guru Poornima Day. What does Poornima mean? It means the day of the full moon. On this day, the 16 *kalas* (phases or attributes) of the Moon merge into the light of the Sun. Even the mind, which is like the reflection of the Sun, has 16 qualities (attributes). First, there are *Arishadvargas*, six inner enemies: desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and jealousy. In addition to these six, the other two qualities are *tamas* (inertia or darkness) and *rajas* (passion or activity). These make up eight attributes. Then, there are eight forms of pride (or arrogance): pride of lineage,

wealth, learning, youth, and beauty; and spiritual pride, pride of righteousness, and pride of power and authority. These make up a total of 16 qualities or attributes a human being manifests. **The day we surrender all these 16 qualities, we become fully divine, as described in the verse 'That is whole, this is whole; from the whole the whole arises.'** Then only do we manifest our complete (perfect) nature.

Only when we attain that state, free from attributes, do we realize our full and perfect nature. That state of fullness is called *Poornima*. The one who brings about this state of fullness (*Poornima*) is the Guru. A guru is one who is beyond all qualities (*gunas*) and beyond all forms. But unfortunately, today, only those who possess various qualities (attributes) are becoming gurus. Nowadays, the disciples seem to be better than the gurus. The disciples are making sacrifices, while the gurus are accumulating wealth and resources. That is why, in today's world, it has become hard to tell who is a guru and who is a disciple.

A certain kind of innocence or naivety is also developing in human beings. When people see a renowned or holy person, they

feel they should go to them and receive a *mantra*. But what is this spiritual initiation with a *mantra*? Discovering your own true nature is true initiation with a *mantra*. Your *mantra* is already within you. You yourself are the embodiment of *mantra* (Sacred Sound), *yantra* (Sacred Instrument), and *tantra* (Sacred Method), a triad of spiritual practices. **Your inhalations and exhalations themselves are your *mantra*. The sound of inhalation and exhalation with every breath, “so...hum, so...hum,” is itself the *mantra*.** The realization “I am That” and “That is I”—this is the true *mantra*. Then what is a *yantra*? Your own body is a *yantra*. What is *tantra*? Your own heart is a *tantra*. When you yourself are the *mantra*, *yantra*, and *tantra*, and you seek the *mantra* from someone else, how weak are you! How ignorant you are! Can ignorant people like these truly gain knowledge just from external teachings or guidance? It is impossible! Impossible! Impossible!

Your guru and God are one. He alone transcends all attributes. He alone is formless. He is the only one who removes the darkness of ignorance and brings the light of true wisdom. However, it is sheer ignorance on your part to depend on others, accept their teachings as a guru’s instructions, and become even more bound. How can those who are themselves bound by all kinds of attachments free you from your bondage? How can a person who is mired in many delusions remove your delusion? If he himself is begging for alms, how can he provide food for you? Therefore, you need not search for such a guru.

Strengthen your *Atmic* awareness. Strive for the bliss of the Self (*Atma*). **Develop the conviction that ‘I am that Self.’ I am the *Atma*. That is the real message.** The moment one understands this secret, the mind verily becomes the Guru. Once this truth is realized, the mind dissolves, and that is the true nature and state of the

Guru. This state is not limited by time, place, or any set of rules. Ideas such as morning, afternoon, and night are binding only for those who identify themselves with the mind. For the one who is beyond the mind, everything is one, nothing is separate. Everything is experienced as one unified reality. We reach that state only through faith in the true Self (Self-confidence).

Embodiments of Love! We often think of Guru Poornima as only a day meant for worshipping gurus. On this day, gurus get a large income. But in truth, this is not a source of income for them, but a great bondage and burden. True gurus do not desire this. Only false gurus behave like this, causing pain to their disciples. Therefore, when we speak about Guru Poornima and honoring the guru, we should understand that the true Guru is only One (God).

*tvameva matha cha pitha tvameva
tvameva bandhushcha
sakha tvameva
tvameva vidya dravinam tvameva
tvameva sarvam mama deva deva*

(Sanskrit verse)

*You alone are mother and father;
You alone are kinsman and friend;
You alone are knowledge and wealth;
You alone are everything,
O my God of gods.*

To reach that state is the true principle of the Guru.

However, one must set certain limits and practice *shravana* (listening), *manana* (reflection), and *nididhyasana* (assimilation) or living it. **But for this, you do not need to depend on an external guru. Instead, you must awaken the principle of the Guru, the eternal truth, within yourself.** What can a guru do for someone who has no goal (*guri*)? It is a mere delusion to believe that the final goal can be reached only through an external guru. You can attain the goal only by your

**We must dedicate our
lives entirely to God
and not utilize them for
any other purpose.**



own strength, your own nature, and your Self-confidence.

One may have flowers, a needle, and thread, but does a garland come together on its own? There must be someone to string it together. One may have an oil lamp, oil, and a wick, but does the light shine forth on its own? There must be someone to light it. You may have gold and gems, but can they become ornaments by themselves? There must be a jeweler to make them. So also, you may have noble virtues, but only God puts them together to give you bliss.

Therefore, when you perform spiritual practices and offer worship with true dedication to the divine, God guides you and teaches you everything. He not only teaches but also reveals Himself. This revelation does not mean that God comes from somewhere else to appear before you. As the scripture says, He has hands and feet everywhere, and He has eyes, ears, heads, and faces everywhere (*sarvatah pani-padam, tat sarvatokshi shiromukham, sarvatah shrutimalloke, sarvam avrutya tishtati*). What is the point of coming and going for God, who is present everywhere? Only those who see God as separate from

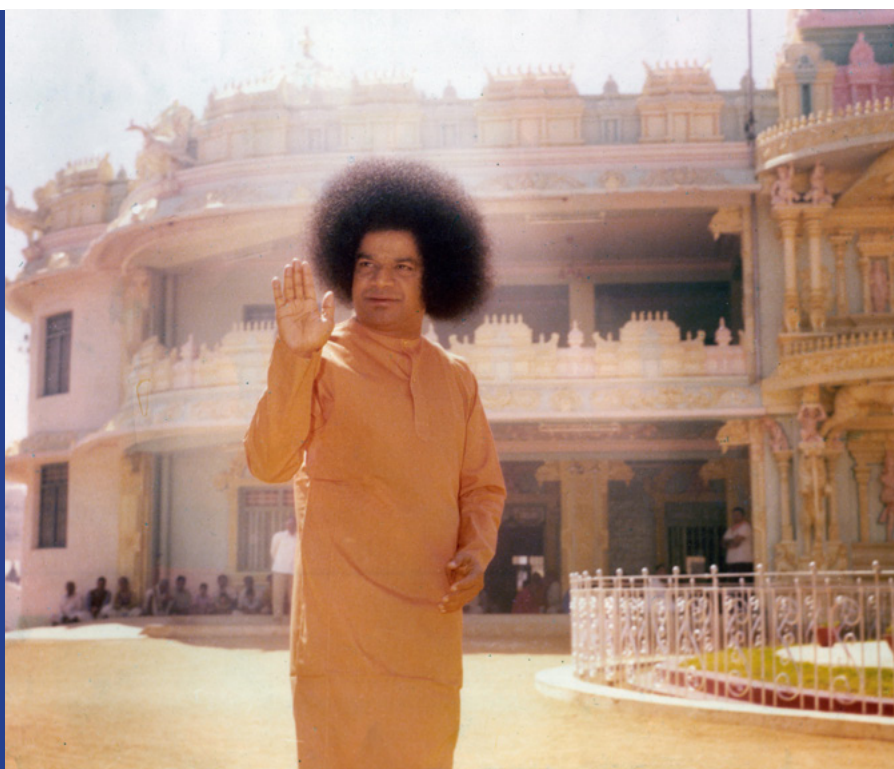
themselves imagine that He comes from somewhere to give them a vision. Such ideas come from small and lowly minds.

The divine is everywhere, and your true nature is also divine. You forget this because you identify yourself with the body, senses, mind, and intellect. You, yourself, cast this *maya* (illusion) over you, and then you imagine that it is the outer world plunging you into *maya*. We forget the drifting clouds and think the moon is racing along, but it is the clouds that move. When we travel by train, as we move along, the trees and hills appear to be moving too. Similarly, everything is within us. He who realizes his true Self realizes everything; that is Self-realization. By our own fault, we are bound by our own body and mind. Therefore, when we truly understand the nature of the mind and body, we realize that we are not separate and become one with everything.

***Aham Brahmasmi* Realizing the Self**

Embodiments of Love! There is only one thing you need to focus on: *aham brahmasmi* (I am *Brahman*). If you adopt and repeat this *mantra*, you will certainly

*True
spiritual
union (yoga)
lies in this
very spirit of
sacrifice.*



become the embodiment of *Brahman*.

Merely saying “I am *Brahman*” yields no benefit; one must realize the truth and live accordingly. There is only One Reality. We must embrace this oneness with steadfast love. It is love that leads to love. Nothing can be attained without love. **To truly embody the principle of love, we must transform ourselves through love.** We simply need to cast aside the limitations of the mind.

Recognizing your true nature, always remember this basic truth: wherever you are or whatever you do, you are using the body only as a tool. Understand clearly that you are not the body, mind, intellect, senses, or *antahkarana* (inner instruments). See all of these as gifts from God and put them to good use. When you act with a spirit of dedication to the divine, everything is put to proper use.

Therefore, we need not wait a whole year for Guru Purnima. At every moment, we must cultivate a mind that is whole and complete. We should foster a broad outlook and shed narrow-minded attitudes. **We must cultivate an awareness of divinity in all our actions. This is true spiritual**

practice. We should not limit ourselves to merely sitting with prayer beads or meditating only at specific times, such as morning or evening.

What is *sakshatkara* (Self-realization)? It is a constant awareness of the divine at all times and in all places (*sarvada sarva kaleshu sarvatra Hari chintanam*). It is the direct experience of one’s true nature.

Realizing every moment that “I am the *Atma*” is *sakshatkara*. This is also called Self-realization, which means recognizing one’s true identity. Here, the idea of “Self” has two aspects: the body and the *Atma*. The body is impermanent, while the *Atma* is the eternal truth. The *Atma* is One and absolute, and that is our true nature. We are not this body. Because of actions performed through the body, we are reborn.

That is why *svabhava*, meaning our true nature, refers to *sva* (*Atma*, the Self). *Svabhava* is essentially the nature of the Self. It is ignorance to believe that making errors is human. Committing errors, sins, and offenses is not truly the nature of a human being. It is the nature of a beast. To

think, “I am human, and to err is human,” reflects sheer ignorance. **A human being should not commit mistakes at all. If a mistake is made, whether knowingly or unknowingly, one should repent and ensure that it is not repeated.**

Thus, today, we all seem to be no different from animals. What defines an animal (*pashu*)? It is one whose vision is directed outward (*pashyati iti pashuhu*). A human being, however, should possess inner vision. There is no benefit in constantly looking only at the external world. Therefore, what we must develop is purity of mind. We must develop focus on the *Atma*. We must believe that whatever happens is through divine will alone and that nothing can interfere with it.

To nurture the practices of *shravana*, *manana*, and *nididhyasana*, one must engage in constant remembrance of the divine name. **Wherever one goes, the tongue that has been given should be used to chant the sacred name rather than to engage in harsh speech, abuse, ridicule, or the disparagement of others. One should not seek faults in anyone.** Instead, one should perceive the indwelling *Atma* in all beings. Do you know what faultfinders are like? Dogs sniff after old shoes; the wicked sniff after faults. Such a person is no better than a dog. Look for the good in others; you are a human being, not a dog. When you see a fault in others, do not regard it as such. When such noble and sacred feelings are developed through the principle of love, then truly, we become embodiments of the divine.

Embodiments of Love! We must serve all. It is not enough to just worship a picture or an idol. We must offer universal worship by recognizing the divine presence in all forms that constitute this cosmic manifestation. **We must hold firmly to the truth that the *Atma* resides within everyone.**

This realization does not come spontaneously; it requires constant practice and training. Think of how much we practiced walking, speaking, and eating. This is no different: we must keep at it. Better than practicing mechanically is knowledge of why we do these practices, better than theoretical knowledge is meditation, better than meditation is renouncing the fruits of action. Permanent peace immediately follows after such renunciation (*shreyo hi jnanam abhyasat, jnanad dhyanam vishishyate, dhyanat karmaphala tyagas, tyagat shantir anantaram*). That peace will be ours.

Consider how much effort and practice one invests in pursuing a simple B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) or M.A. (Master of Arts) degree. Now reflect on the far greater discipline required to attain the highest realization, that of understanding the Truth, expressed in these words: “*shrunvantu vishwe amritasya putrah*” (Listen, O children of immortality), affirming that one is indeed a child of immortality. We must realize our true nature as the *Atma*. We should not describe ourselves in demeaning, derogatory terms such as “sinner,” “weakling,” or “traitor.” These are all signs of weakness. You should not harbor the slightest doubt about whether you can accomplish a task or whether you possess the necessary strength. **If you have a firm conviction, you can achieve anything.**

That is why *Vedanta* declares, the Self cannot be attained by the weak (*nayam atma balahinena labhyah*). One should not be weak in spirit, but instead, cultivate inner strength and steadiness. If one constantly dwells on thoughts such as “I lack this” or “I lack that,” then, even from a psychological standpoint, one is likely to reinforce the very sense of inadequacy. Instead, one should approach the spiritual path with courage and confidence, affirming, “I can do this; I can attain this.”

This sense of enthusiasm and determination must be cultivated and strengthened day by day.

People often struggle a lot for trivial, fleeting pleasures, yet these pleasures do not last. They are temporary and unstable, easily lost at any moment. They are like a false nose stuck on the face; who knows when it will fall off? These temporary pleasures may fall apart and crumble at any time. However, people do not even make a small effort for the pursuit of the *Atma*. **Only the one who makes a sincere effort on this path is a true seeker. Such a person is considered blessed and is worthy of realizing the ultimate reality.**

There is nothing wrong with experiencing worldly objects. However, one must regard them all as gifts from the divine. We should live by the principle of truth that “all actions are performed to please the divine (*sarva karma bhagawad preethyartham*).” **Therefore, we must dedicate our lives entirely to God and not utilize them for any other purpose.** What God has given us must be offered back to God.

People perform many acts of charity and service. In Uttar Pradesh, there lived a virtuous housewife who always gave in charity and performed good deeds with whatever resources she had. Whenever she moved among others, she would walk with her head bowed in humility. Her friends would often tease her, asking, “Why do you walk with your head bent? You should walk with your head held high, for no one performs as many acts of charity and service as you do.” She would reply, “My dear, when God gives with so many hands, isn't it a disgrace for me to give with only one hand?”

In the same vein, it is truly shameful to receive the many gifts God gives yet fail to extend even a single hand in charity. Many hands reach out to receive, but not



even one hand comes forward to give. That housewife taught us that this is a thing society should be ashamed of. **Therefore, we must cultivate the spirit of sacrifice in everything.** That is why the Vedas declare, “Not through rituals, progeny, or wealth, but through sacrifice alone is immortality attained (*na karmana na prajaya dhanena, thyagenaike amritatwa manushuh*).” True spiritual union (*yoga*) lies in this very spirit of sacrifice.

One should perform service with the body and cultivate noble thoughts. **One should give money to charities and support the destitute. Educational institutions and hospitals should be established. We must act as pillars of support for the poor. That constitutes a true life. We should not use money for self-indulgence and grow fat.** We were not born for that purpose. The body is gifted to undertake righteous actions (*dharma*); therefore, we must

uphold *dharma* and practice sacrifice (*shariramadyam khalu dharma sadhanam*).

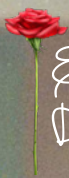
Embodiments of Love! We must perform our actions and discharge our duties while dedicating our time to service and helping others in all endeavors. Whatever we do, we should do it with a sense of devotion to God. There is no spiritual practice greater than this. You need not undertake penance for the sake of your own self-interest. Indeed, performing penance solely for your own benefit is a sin, as it amounts to sheer selfishness. We must not give in to such selfishness. **Instead, we should engage in selfless service for the well-being of others. Your spiritual practice, too, should benefit many in the community.**

Therefore, instead of being selfish, we should cultivate a spirit of altruism and strive to live with awareness of the divinity in all. Some people think, “let me and my family alone prosper, whatever may

happen to others.” Even the life of a beast is better than having this attitude. We should not confine our vision to “me and my family.” We must extend our concern to the wider society. Without society, where would the family be? Without the family, where would the individual be? Both are sustained by the larger whole. Therefore, we must keep the welfare and development of society in mind. We should aspire for the well-being of all, expressed in the prayer: May all the worlds be happy (*samastha loka sukhino bhavantu*). This is a broad and noble outlook, praying for the happiness of everyone, an expansion of heart (spiritual heart) in which divinity is manifest. Thus, we must sanctify our actions through contemplation of the divine and remembrance of the divine name. This alone constitutes the practice of *shravana*, *manana*, and *nididhyasana*.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
July 7, 1990





LIVING WITH SWAMI EVERY DAY

With heartfelt gratitude, I attribute all my strength, determination, and capacity for service to Swami's grace. He has shaped every aspect of my life, often in ways I did not recognize at that time. Looking back, I can now see His guiding hand leading me gently and patiently along the path He had chosen for me.

I owe everything to Him. **I pray that His everlasting presence will continue to illuminate my path and make me a worthy instrument of His love and service.**

Service Invites Sai Into My Life

In 1978, I was working as a land surveyor in Fiji. The chairman of the local Sathya Sai Organization, Mr. Desai, approached me with a request. The SSSIO of Fiji wanted to build a home as a service project and needed a topographical survey of the prop-

erty. He asked whether I would provide my professional services free of charge. I readily agreed.

We visited the property over the weekend, and there was a heavy downpour while we were there! Yet, we completed the survey despite the difficult weather. Later, I received a heartfelt letter of appreciation from Mr. Desai for helping to construct the building named "Sai Mandir." He thanked me for carrying out the work without hesitation and prayed that "Bhagawan" would bless me and enable me to always live in the presence of "Sri Sathya Sai Baba." The letter also contained a picture of a man dressed in an orange robe with an afro hairstyle.

It was the first time I had heard His name and saw His picture. I did not know who He was. Back then, there was no internet to readily

search and find out more. So, I looked at the photograph for a while and filed it away along with the letter.

Swami thus entered my life through a simple act of selfless service. Long before I recognized His presence, He had recognized me. I had no idea that the words written in that letter were prophetic and would become a reality!

Drawn into the Sai Fold

A few years later, I visited a friend's home and saw a large photograph of Swami. When I noticed it, I remembered the photo I had filed away, but that was about it. I did not attach any further significance to it. Looking back, I can see how patiently Swami was introducing Himself.

We then moved and settled in Hamilton, New Zealand. We were approached by a certain Mr. Suresh to attend the house-to-house *bhajans* he was organizing. We went along, but soon I lost interest. So, when this group began holding devotional programs at the Forest Lake School, my wife, Kanta, continued to attend regularly. I limited myself to dropping her off and picking her up.

After doing this for several months, I decided that instead of traveling back and forth, I would stay and observe the program. I sat quietly at the back of the hall. Over a few sessions, I was impressed by the inclusive atmosphere. *Bhajans* were sung in English and other Indian languages, and people from diverse cultural backgrounds participated. Someone accompanied the singing with a guitar, something I had never imagined in devotional music.

Before long, I found myself moving forward in the hall, and soon I was invited to participate and even lead a *bhajan*! **I had progressed from being an observer to a participant! Eventually, I was also inspired to join in these activities and even take on responsibilities.**



Sai Organization Serves with a Difference

At that time, I was also involved in another service organization. Through both groups, I participated in activities such as “Meals on Wheels.” However, I started to notice something deeper in the service provided by the Sathya Sai organization. Here, we did not simply hand over the meal and leave. We talked with the recipients, listened to them, and formed a human connection.

Some of these people were elderly or lonely. The conversation and personal contact were just as important as the meal itself, if not more! **I began to understand and realize that for Sai, service is not merely a charitable activity. It is a spiritual discipline toward the ultimate goal of realizing the divinity in all.** Swami's teaching, “*Service to man is service to God*,” greatly inspired me. I found myself participating increasingly in the service by the Sai organization, where I felt it was in its purest form. I gave up all other organizations and focused only on the Sathya Sai organization.

Every Organizational Activity is for Our Benefit

Later, I was asked to prepare a monthly newsletter for the Sai Center. I agreed, but soon realized that creating a meaningful newsletter required spiritual material.

I began purchasing books, reading Swami's teachings, and selecting passages to share with devotees. While preparing material for others, I was educating myself. The newsletter thus became a form of personal *sadhana*. Swami had found a practical way to make me read, reflect upon the material, and communicate His message.

This taught me that when Swami gives us work, it is always for our own spiritual growth and transformation. We may believe that we are helping the Sai Center or others, but Swami is using this responsibility mainly to educate and discipline us.

The original newsletter eventually evolved into quarterly electronic bulletins, preserving teachings, organizational news, and service activities.

Leadership and Responsibility

My first visit to Prasanthi Nilayam in 1998 was unforgettable. Seeing and physically experiencing Swami's presence was beyond words. There was an indescribable feeling when His eyes met mine. Thousands were present, and yet when Swami looked in my direction, it felt as though He was looking directly into my heart and He had come only for me. I now yearned to serve Him more and dedicate myself more to His work. His work would now become my work.

Swami's response to my decision came through invitations to take on additional responsibilities in the organization, includ-

ing serving as the Center chair, regional coordinator, national reporter, retreat organizer, and media coordinator. Though I never sought leadership, it kept coming to me.

Based on my experience, I took all these responsibilities as Swami's way of helping me grow. After all, the organization belongs to Swami, the work belongs to Swami, and the results belong to Swami. We are only instruments. There were challenges, disagreements, and occasional struggles for positions. These experiences taught me that the higher the position, the greater should be my humility, reflecting Swami's love and forbearance.

The New Zealand Sai Choir

The New Zealand Sai Choir program on January 7, 2009, was another precious experience. Swami gave us the special blessing of sitting on either side of Him on the dais in Prasanthi Nilayam! This opportunity convinced me that *sadhana* always brings us nearer and dearer to the Lord because this choir comprised devotees who were willing and committed enough to attend all practices and had pledged to follow the 9-point Code of Conduct *Sadhana* program. When Swami arrived that day, He saw that there were so many ladies from the New Zealand group that they had to be divided into two groups—with one group sitting below the stage on the hall's granite floor due to limited space. Swami immediately went down and blessed the ladies seated below lest they feel left out, touching their hearts with His love and compassion.

Such blessings should not merely become treasured memories. They come with a responsibility. **A blessing received from Swami should inspire us to serve more, love more, and become humbler.**

Sai Radio and Digital Service

In 2004, we started producing Sai Radio News in New Zealand. Initially, the recordings were done in a studio. As technology



Bhagawan blessing the daughter of Mr. Bilimoria in 2011.



New Zealand Sai Choir Program on January 7, 2009.

improved, much of the production could be done from home. What started as a modest effort grew into more than a thousand episodes, sharing spiritual messages, organizational news, and service activities. Hundreds of videos, including talks, interviews, *bhajans*, celebrations, and service programs, were published through various platforms.

In later years, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, online *bhajans* and video programs helped devotees stay connected. We learned many new techniques and, although the results were not always perfect, the efforts

were sincere. Swami does not ask us to wait until everything is perfect. He asks us to begin with sincerity and offer our best.

Transformation Begins at Home

Swami repeatedly emphasized that spiritual transformation should start within the family. It is easy to appear patient and loving during an event. The real test is how we behave at home! Through Swami's abundant grace and blessings, my family gradually became involved in Sai activities. My daughter, and later my grandchildren, also connected with Swami and His organization.

Looking back, I see a journey that started with a survey. The service rendered in the pouring rain has grown today to envelop my entire family in Swami's love and grace!

None of this was planned by me. Swami orchestrated it all! He knew the path before I recognized the destination. For me, Swami is not just a memory from the past. **He is the eternal companion of my present and the divine guide of my future.** To live with Swami is to allow His love to become our love, His work to become our work, and His message to become our life.

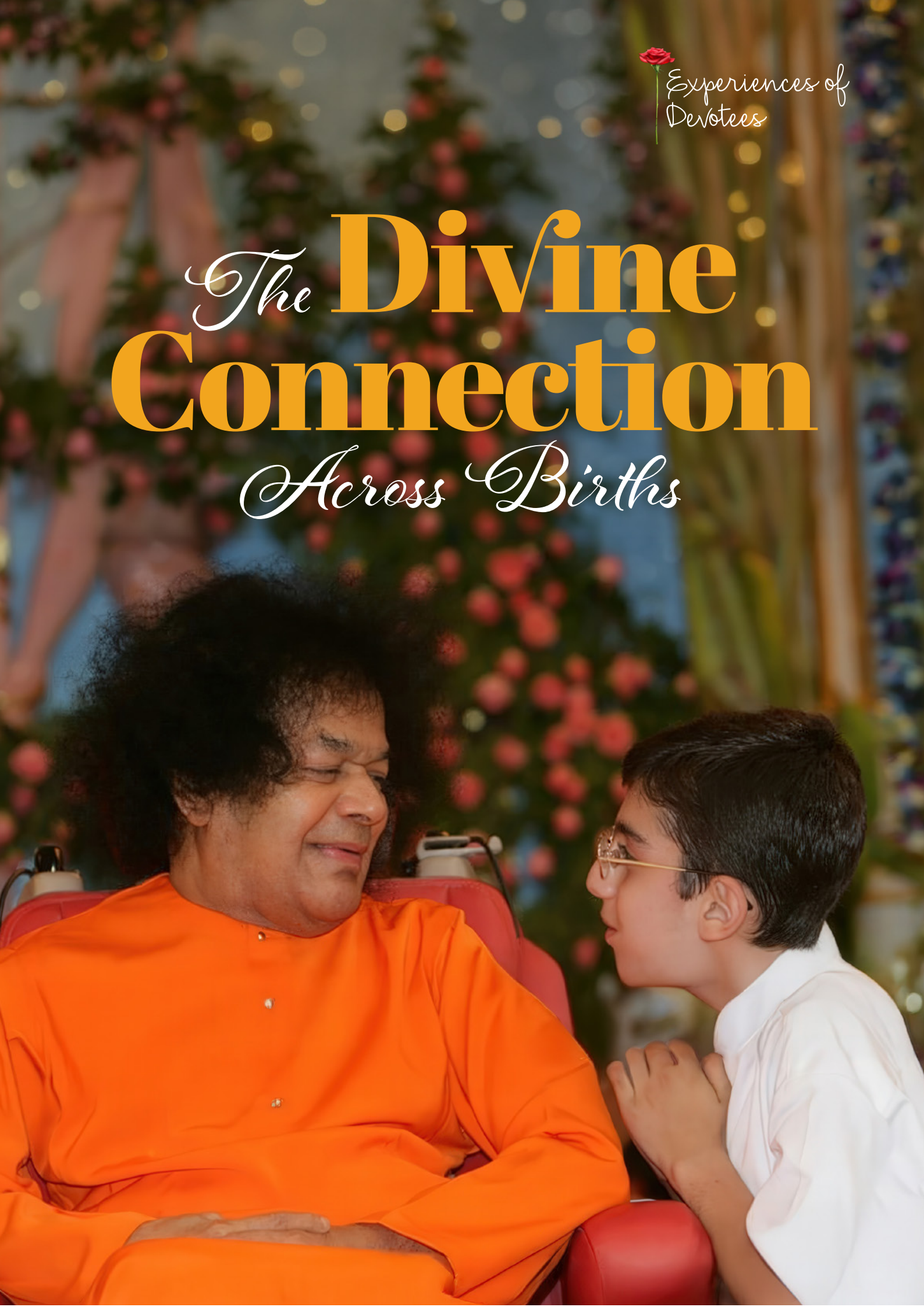
Mr. Gulab Bilimoria
NEW ZEALAND



Mr. Bilimoria at the Sai News Radio Studio in New Zealand.



Mr. Gulab Bilimoria hails from New Zealand and was introduced to the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Hamilton in 1994. He visited Prasanthi Nilayam for the first time in 1998. He has served in the SSSIO in several positions, including Center chair, regional coordinator, national reporter, retreat organizer, and media coordinator. He started Sai Radio in New Zealand in May 2004 and has been involved in publishing videos and eBulletins for the SSSIO of New Zealand for many years. Professionally, Mr. Bilimoria was a land surveyor and owns a planning and consulting firm.



Experiences of
Devotees

The Divine Connection *Across Births*



People sometimes ask me when and how my journey with Swami began. It is a simple question, but I have never found it easy to answer. Should I say it started when I first saw Him? Or when He spoke to me? Or when I joined His school? Or when He called me onto the stage in front of thousands? None of those answers feel adequate. If I am honest, my story began before I was born. In fact, long before anyone even imagined that I would enter this world.

My mother, Mrs. Farzane Jalilehvand, told me this story many times while I was growing up. At first, I listened to it simply because it was our family story. As I got older, I began to realize that it was much more than that. **It was the story of how the Divine sometimes answers our prayers in ways so different from what we expect that we fail to recognize the answer until years later.**

It all began in Iran.

A Trip to Seek a Cure

My grandmother hailed from northern Iran, but she spent most of her life in Tehran. By the early 1990s, both her kidneys had failed, and every day for her was filled with pain. The treatments available at that time could do little to restore her health. She prayed faithfully to Allah five times a day, placing her trust completely in Him. Yet the suffering continued.

My mother often told me that watching her own mother gradually lose strength was one of the most painful experiences of her life. She was willing to try anything that could

bring her mother relief. Although she was living under the Islamic state of Iran, she was born at a time when there was religious freedom and the opportunity to explore one's own spirituality. So, unlike my grandmother, my mother was curious about different spiritual traditions and believed that truth could never be confined within the boundaries of a single religion.

That curiosity and openness led her to become a frequent visitor to underground spiritual circles and yoga practitioners. It was here that she heard about a spiritual teacher in India known as Sai Baba. Stories of miracles, healing, wisdom, and unconditional love surrounded Him. When someone is drowning, they do not ask what kind of hand is reaching out to save them. Although my grandmother had never heard Swami's name before, she agreed for my mother to travel to India in search of a permanent cure for her pain.

Swami's First Reference to Me

In 1993, my mother made the long journey to India with a small group of Sai devotees from Iran. She had only one wish. She wanted to ask only for healing her mother—nothing more, nothing less.

When the group was granted an interview with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, she silently rehearsed what she would say. She observed that Swami was interacting with different people, addressing their issues and problems. She now awaited her turn. Soon, Swami looked at her, and before she could

“It doesn’t matter what name you pray to; I hear all prayers.”

say anything, He gestured to her and said to everyone, *“This girl is so worried for her mother.”* Swami then looked back at her and said, *“I know her (her mother). She is a very old devotee of Mine.”* She was stunned; her mom was a staunch, God-fearing Muslim, and this Indian holy man was saying that she was an old devotee!

Swami continued, *“It doesn’t matter what name you pray to; I hear all prayers.”* He then materialized a ring for her, patted her head, and started asking around the room what each of them wanted. When He returned to my mother, she stretched out her hand with a photograph and said, “Please help my mother.” Swami blessed the photograph by tapping it twice and said, *“I’ll help her, I’ll help her. What do YOU want?”* She replied, “I want to have a spiritual life.” Swami smiled, looked around, and said to everyone, *“She wants a child!”*

“No, Swami, I do not want a child!” my mother protested. She showed Him her mother’s photo once again and said, “My mother, Swami.” Swami took the photo from her, looked at it, and gestured in a circular motion with His index finger, saying, *“I will help her. Second child.”* Mom was so shocked. She thought, ‘I’ve traveled so far for my mother, and He is telling me I have to have two children. What on earth is all this?’ Before she could say anything in protest, Bhagawan said, *“Don’t worry, I will give you two good souls—one boy and one girl, Sathya and Shanti.”*

She returned to Iran deeply puzzled. She had traveled all the way to India seeking help for her mother, and Sai Baba had spent the entire interview speaking about children she had no interest in having.



The most memorable divine interactions while chanting Vedas.

Sathya and Shanti

For a long time, nothing seemed to make sense. And yet, something had definitely changed. Although my grandmother's kidneys did not recover, her suffering gradually lessened. She regained some strength. She could move around more comfortably. Her outlook became noticeably brighter. It wasn't the miracle cure everyone had hoped for. But life became gentler. **Perhaps that quiet improvement was enough to plant a seed of faith in my mother's heart.**

A Birth and a Death

By 1997, my parents welcomed their first child into the world—me, Sathya. My mother had grown fond of Swami by then and also developed faith in Him and His divinity. She wanted to honor Swami's words and named me Sathya.

Living in Iran had its challenges. The authorities would not permit such a foreign name. After much thought, my parents legally named me Ahoora, after Ahoora Mazda, the Supreme Lord in the ancient Zoroastrian tradition. **But inside our home, I was always Sathya. That was the name my mother whispered. That was the name spoken with love. That was the name Swami had given me long before I took my first breath.**

When I was around three years old, another chapter of our family story unfolded. My grandmother passed away, and it devastated my mother. Mom often said that losing her mother felt like the ground beneath her feet had disappeared. They shared an unusually close bond, and the grief left an emptiness that words couldn't fill.

Amidst the gloom and doom, my mother learned she was expecting a second child. Hope slowly returned. Perhaps this was the promised Shanti. But the emotional burden she was carrying proved too great. It was probably the stress and sorrow that caused a miscarriage! The baby girl was lost! The pain was overwhelming. In a short span of



Iran Group Interview in Prasanthi Nilayam.
Mrs. Farzane Jalilehvand is seated to Swami's right.

time, she had lost both her mother and her unborn daughter.

Another Unusual Interview

Seeking comfort, my parents traveled once again to Prasanthi Nilayam. Anyone in my mother's situation would naturally have expected words of consolation from Swami—perhaps reassurance and blessings.

Instead, Swami gazed at her with unusual intensity. *"Where is Shanti?"* My mother was stunned as Swami continued, *"She is waiting to come."* Then came words she would never forget. *"You are not allowing her to come."* What happened next is something my mother described so vividly that, even though I was not present, I can almost picture it.

Swami became completely quiet. He closed His eyes. Then He slowly raised His right hand and began writing something in the air with His finger. After a few moments, He placed His left hand over His own abdomen and started gently making slow circular movements. He continued moving His hand as



Grandmother and Ram shared the same birthmark on the back side of the shoulder.

though rewriting an invisible script. My mother watched in amazement.

She later told me that Swami's stomach appeared to swell, almost as if He Himself were carrying a child. **Time seemed to come to a standstill. Then, just as suddenly, everything returned to normal.** The swelling vanished. Swami opened His eyes. He blessed her, saying, "*She will come.*" And that was the end of the interview. My mother left without fully understanding what she had witnessed or what had happened.

How 'Shanti' Arrived

The following year, she became pregnant again. Everyone expected her to have a girl. Instead, a second son was born. Once again, Swami's chosen name could not be legally used. Just as "Sathya" had not been permitted, "Shanti" and the other name, "Krishna" (considered in view of the gender of the child), were both not permissible.

Then my mother remembered that the *bhajan* the two of us frequently sang while holding hands and walking to the canteen after *darshan* (*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho, Ram Ram Ram*) contained the word "Ram," which was a permissible name under Iranian law, since Ram means peace and calm in Persian.

Peace... *Shanti*, the name fit perfectly. So, my younger brother was named Ram. For most

families, that would have been the end of the story. For us, it was only the beginning.

The Masterplan Unfolds

As Ram grew up, strange things started happening. He would wander through the house, open drawers and cupboards, and point to particular objects. "That's mine," he would say. No one understood why the baby was behaving so strangely. After a while, my mother noticed a pattern. Every object he claimed had belonged to her mother, my grandmother. Never going after anything else, he was claiming only her belongings as his!



Mrs. Farzane, Sathya and Ram at a Sai Center.

Then my mother noticed something even more amazing. My grandmother had a large birthmark on one shoulder, and Ram had an identical one. Same place! Same color! Same shape! The similarities became impossible for my family to dismiss as a coincidence.

Gradually, through Swami's guidance and their own experiences, an extraordinary realization dawned on them. The soul they had known as my grandmother had returned! Not as a granddaughter, not under the name Shanti, but as my brother Ram, to give *shanti* (peace) to the whole family, including eternal peace to my grandmother.

Suddenly, years of mystery started falling into place. Why did Swami ignore the kidney disease? Why had He kept talking only about unborn children? Why had He insisted that "Shanti" was waiting? Why had He told my grieving mother, *"You are not allowing her to come?"*

The answers had been there all along. My grandmother had longed with all her heart to come to India and see Swami. Her failing body made that impossible. The healing she sought was not just the healing of diseased kidneys; it was liberation from a body that could no longer serve her journey. She was given something far greater and more profound than the cure everyone was praying for. She had been given a new beginning.

When I was younger, this part of our family history fascinated me because it seemed miraculous. As I grew older, I found myself touched by something even deeper.

Through all the tough times, I see someone quietly guiding me in every step—not based on human expectations but according to a much greater design.

Today, when people talk about faith, I often reflect on my mother's journey. Faith is not about believing that God will always give what we ask for, in the way we want. Faith is trusting Him to see what we cannot and accept what He gives as best for us.

My mother prayed for healing. Swami granted it—just not in the way anyone expected. She asked Him to save one life. Instead, He lovingly gave us two new lives, mine and my brother's.

Long before either of us entered this world, He gave us names. Long before my parents understood His words, He had already seen the entire story unfold. **When I reflect on my life, I realize this profoundly humbling truth—before I could know Him, He already knew me. Before I could love Him, He had already planned my life for me. Before I even took my first breath, He had already called me by name.**

That realization has stuck with me ever since. And little did I know that growing up in His presence would teach me that the greatest miracle was not learning the Vedas, standing before thousands, or witnessing extraordinary events. The greatest miracle was discovering, day after day, that the One who had called me into this world never stopped calling me closer.

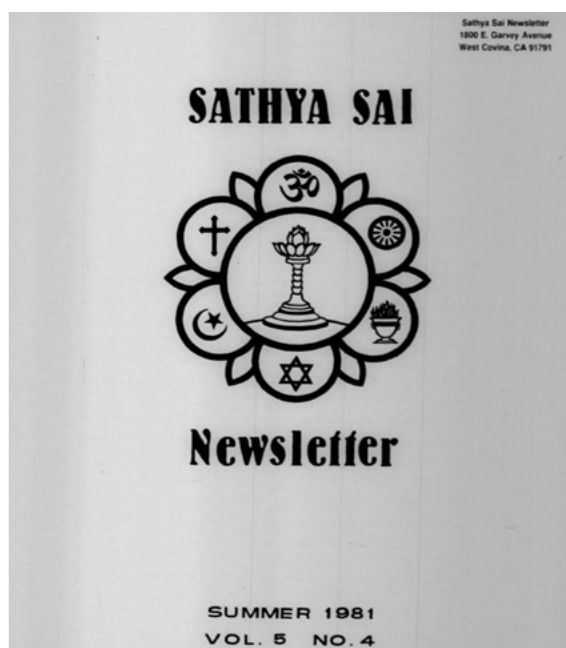
**Mr. Sathya Jalilehvand
(Ahoora Jenab Zadeh)**
CANADA



Mr. Sathya Jalilehvand (Ahoora Jenab Zadeh) was born in 1997 in Iran in a family devoted to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He was known affectionately as the Iran Veda boy and studied in Prasanthi Nilayam under the direction of Swami, who said that Sathya would spread the word of the Vedas around the world.

Following Bhagawan's Mahasamadhi, Sathya moved to Malaysia with his family, where he completed a law degree and worked with both corporate and Non-Government Organizations on social causes. Subsequently, he moved to Canada and works with SSSIO in Sathya Sai Education and Vedas.

The Goal of Self-Surrender



The letter presented here was published in the Summer 1981 issue of the *Sathya Sai Newsletter*, Volume 5, No. 4. This publication was established in the United States in 1976 by the Coordination, Communication, and Information Committee of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Committee of America, which was formed at the Second World Conference of Sathya Sai Organizations at Prasanthi Nilayam in November 1975.

The *Sathya Sai Newsletter* shared Bhagawan's teachings along with information about the activities of the Sathya Sai organizations and their services. From its very first issue, each edition was intended to begin with a message from Swami, written specifically for that issue. These messages are valuable records of His direct communication with devotees around the world.

The letter republished in this issue of *Sathya Sai – The Eternal Companion* is one such personal message from Bhagawan, which offers profound reflections on self-surrender, the stilling of the mind, the disappearance of the ego-sense, and the realization of the Divine.



Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

TELE NO. 30
BRINDAVAN
WHITEFIELD-560 067
TELE NO. 36
PRASANTHINILAYAM P. O.
ANANTAPUR DT. 515134

Through complete self-surrender, the mind becomes still, the ego-sense disappears, and the soul merges into the infinite silence of the spirit. When this state is attained, a human being becomes one with GOD and all his actions flow out in pure spontaneity. The background and basis of his manifest life is then this supreme spirit which animates, activates and illumines his entire life and its movements just as a variety of pictures with different kinds of gestures and movemants appear on a white and spotless screem, leaving an impress upon it, and as the pictures cannot be exhibited without the screen as the backgroumd, so all the phenomena of the universal manifestation and its playful activity are seen on the screen of the silent and still spirit of the Divine. Therefore, it is rightly said that the universe is not a creation but a projection from the divine and immortal Reality. The aim is to realise our identity with this immortal spirit, and its manifestations. It is now that we think, speak and act as the divine power wills in the perfect freedom of the soul. We enjoy a peace and joy which is simply ineffable. This is the goal.

With Love and Blessings

Sai Sa/4- Sai Baba
(Baba)

LOVE IN ACTION



CHILE

Growing Sai Family at Residential Care Home

On May 17, 2026, twenty SSSIO members from Chile visited “El Buen Pastor,” a *casa hogar* (Spanish for “Residential Care Home”), in the commune of Quinta Normal, in Santiago, to bring food, companionship, and fellowship to its residents. Volunteers prepared and distributed refreshments, including sandwiches, yogurt, cake, and fresh fruit, to 25 residents, a community of young people and older adults facing challenges with health, mobility, nutrition, and emotional well-being. Beyond the meal, volunteers spent time in conver-



sation and sang bhajans, creating an atmosphere of warmth and brotherhood. The visit offered attentive listening and companionship alongside material support, strengthening bonds between the volunteers and the residents they served.



MALAWI

Winter Service in Blantyre

Swami would advise students and teachers who served needy villagers to go to each home in the village and distribute food and clothes, rather than having the people travel to a common gathering area. This ensured that nobody in need would be missed. Following Swami’s guidance, in June 2026, three SSSIO volunteers traveled from Blantyre, Malawi, to three villages on the Zomba Plateau, about an hour away, to distribute blankets. With no roads reaching some of the homes, the team walked to the homes of the recipients to make deliveries. One hundred blankets



were distributed across three villages to help the villagers through the cold winter months.

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



NEW ZEALAND

Buckwheat Bag Heating Pads for Oncology Wards

Sixteen ladies from Auckland traveled to Hamilton on May 31, 2026, for a ladies' gathering, where nine ladies from Hamilton taught them to make bags filled with buckwheat—small bags which can be used as a heating pad after being warmed in a microwave. Within three hours, the group worked harmoniously and made 25 buckwheat-bag heating pads, singing bhajans and sharing morning tea and lunch prepared by the volunteers at the Hamilton Center.

Over the past two years, the Ladies Wing of SSSIO New Zealand has been lovingly making these heating pads at the Bay of Plenty (BOP) Region's Hamilton Center for the oncology wards of local hospitals. In fact, in honor of Swami's 100th Birthday, they



prepared 100 buckwheat-bag heating pads and donated them to the BOP hospitals. This initiative has proved inspiring and is now being adopted by the Northern Region of SSSIO New Zealand, with training assistance from the ladies in Hamilton. In July 2026, the Northern Region completed and delivered an additional 27 buckwheat-bag heating pads to the Auckland Hospital's Oncology Ward. Their goal is to establish a regular donation program, possibly twice a year, for hospitals in the Auckland area.



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Annual Walk for Values

On Saturday, May 9, 2026, the SSSIO of Trinidad & Tobago, together with Sathya Sai Schools, hosted the Annual Walk for Values, drawing an estimated 350 participants, including first-timers. The procession moved from the Esmeralda Sports Ground to Sai Nilayam on Ford Trace, Longdenville. Students from participating schools entered a Human Values poster competition, with entries displayed around the venue's banyan tree, and every student participating in the walk received a medal, with special awards for the best posters. A closing program featured cultural performances by students of the Longdenville Sathya Sai Primary School,



along with greetings from Dr. Gautam Tewari, Central Coordinator of SSSIO West Indies, Kaloutie Sumairsingh, National Council President of SSSIO Trinidad & Tobago, and the Chairman of the SSSEB (Sri Sathya Sai Education Board). Young Adults organized ring toss and punchboard games, ensuring every child left with a prize.



Sai Baba

Incarnation of Pure Love

What did I see, standing there in front of me? A magnificent being in an orange robe, with black hair, radiating something I couldn't even name! It was not just the appearance but also the energy pouring out from Him. The only word I can find to describe it is beauty, sheer beauty. I had never in my life seen anything so beautiful, and I felt my heart quiver, though I could not have told you why, since at that time I was a confirmed atheist. I had given up on organized religion, as it felt too restrictive. Without realizing it, I was searching for something much deeper. And yet there I stood, mystified!



Author (in center) with fellow devotees, 1975

“Every word Swami says is a teaching, and every gesture has a reason, and I have carried that small, precious lesson with me ever since.”



When the Call Comes...

The road that led me to that moment began years earlier, on the other side of the world. I was raised a Christian, attending church with my family on Sundays, and thought very little about God the rest of the week. Then in my 20s, my husband and I quit our jobs, saved whatever money we could, bought backpacks and boots, got our visas, and set out to see the world. We crossed the United States, worked our way down through Central and South America, spent a year in Europe and Africa, another year in India, Asia, and the Orient, and returned home after three and a half years. We wanted to learn about the cultures of the world and discovered early on that the surest way to do so was through the spiritual celebrations each culture held sacred. Wherever we traveled, we sought them out.

By the time we crossed from Mombasa (Kenya) to India by boat, someone had given me a copy of the book *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda. It opened a door I had not known existed—miracles, devotion, the words guru and *Atma*, things nobody had

ever told me were possible. In South India, an Austrian couple we met told us they had just come from a place called Puttaparthi where a guru performed miracles. “You have to go,” they said. I was skeptical. Still, I wanted to see for myself. Then my passport and money were stolen from a money belt I had foolishly tucked into my bag, and we had to detour to Madras (now called Chennai) to replace them. On the train going back, we found ourselves in a compartment full of people singing devotional songs to Lord Shiva with such joy that we asked, “Where are you going?” They answered, “We are going to Puttaparthi for the festival of Shivaratri!” It was the second time we later realized that Swami had pulled us towards Him.

We arrived to find the *ashram* quite primitive, with no administration building, no Western canteen, and our tent pitched on the hill behind the mandir. Swami had just returned from Bangalore (now called Bengaluru) and was standing at the end of the still-unpainted *mandir*. Since I had never seen even a photo of Sai Baba, I had pictured the typical Indian guru—an old man with a flowing white beard and a cane, stooped with age. What I saw instead

was a magnificent being in an orange robe, with black hair, and overwhelming beauty.

Darshan of Love and Love of Darshan

There were only about 20 of us that evening. The men directed me to the women's side. I was told to cover my shoulders. I wondered, "Why do I have to do all this?" But as we sat down and Swami stood there, I could not take my eyes off Him.

I had never read or heard much about Sai Baba before, so I started asking questions, half afraid we had stumbled into a cult. "What does He teach?" I asked. What I heard changed my mind instantly and forever.

*"There is only one religion,
the religion of love.
There is only one caste,
the caste of humanity.
There is only one language,
the language of the heart.
There is only one God,
and He is omnipresent."*

I had just spent years meeting seekers of every religion around the world, good people whose goodness had nothing to do with which church or temple they belonged to, and here was a teacher saying exactly that, and speaking for the first time within my hearing. This is what I had always believed, but I had never heard anyone say it with such simple elegance.

On that first Shivaratri, we sat in the Poornachandra Hall as honored guests, simply because we were Westerners. We watched Professor Kasturi hold up a vessel above the idol of Shirdi Sai Baba while Swami's hand miraculously

produced *vibhuti* that poured out in torrents—more than the vessel could ever hold. It stopped the instant Swami withdrew His hand and started again the instant He put His hand back inside and stirred it. There was a huge pile of *vibhuti* on the floor. He also manifested a necklace for the idol of Shirdi Baba nearby. Then, as the singing continued late into the night and the hall became charged with such intense energy I will never forget, He brought forth an oval *lingam* through His mouth. Beaming, He walked down from the stage and carried it right along the aisle where we sat. I did not understand its significance then, but I understand it better now: the *lingam* is oval, with two centers representing duality, while unity is a circle with a single center. Swami has said He manifested the world by separating Himself from Himself so that He could love Himself, and that act of separation is duality itself—day and night, pleasure and pain, each known only because we know its opposite.

I decided to write a letter to Swami and asked someone how one should even address such a letter. Dear God? Dear Sai Baba? In the end, I wrote, "Dear Mother," because as a professional involved in childbirth, that was what came to me spontaneously. As I had watched Him bring forth the *Shiva Lingam* during Shivaratri that year, His face seemed to almost change before my eyes, growing fuller and faintly flushed, as though He were a mother nearing the moment of giving birth.

In the letter, I simply asked: "Swami, could you please help me remember you every day for the rest of my life?"

“...I know that what I felt in that light was consciousness itself, without a body, an expansion I believe I had been yearning for over many lifetimes.”



When He took it from me at *darshan*, He looked directly into my eyes for the first time. Years later, my son, traveling with us as a young adult on another visit, wrote in his own journal about that same kind of gaze, capturing exactly what I felt: “His gaze penetrated my heart. As our eyes met, my mind became silent and time stood still. His eyes are like beads of fire that only emanate love. They are as hard as stone yet as soft as petals. In those split seconds that our eyes met, I was looking into existence itself.”

For years afterward, on every trip, Swami accepted my letters. Then came a day, years into my journey, when I hurriedly scribbled a note, uncertain whether He would even come to our row. That day, He came directly to us, looked at me with great compassion, and took the note. I knew, somehow, that it was the last letter He would ever take from me. I understood then that I had to stop sitting there in the Sai Kulwant Hall, hoping for a letter to be taken, and start receiving what He was actually giving: the *darshan* itself, which is Swami's love pouring forth directly into everyone present.

Looking back, I believe that the entire journey around the world for Shivaratri

with Him was Swami's doing from the beginning. If I had only seen a photo of Sai Baba back home, I do not think it would have touched me the way that a living encounter did. Every step of our trip—the celebrations we sought out, the stolen money belt, the singers on the train—drew us toward Puttaparthi. We stayed three weeks instead of the one we had planned, and I have often wondered what my life would have been like if we had not met Him.

Unforgettable Interview

When we returned home from our trip, no one in our Boston area had even heard of Sai Baba, which struck us as extraordinarily strange—an *Avatar* was living on earth, and no one knew Him! By 1981, we had two children, saved what we could, and went back to Swami that year. The crowds were much larger by then, a lottery system decided who sat where, and I found myself 12 rows back with little hope of an interview.

I only asked Swami in my mind, “Please give me one more chance to truly experience You.” Moments later, I heard my name called! Swami had summoned our family for an interview with my husband, who was holding our 18-month-old son, Aaron, and with our three-year-old daughter by my side.

We all sat on the floor of the small interview room in complete silence, unsure of what would happen. Silence reigned until Aaron, who had just learned to say “Baba,” broke the silence by pointing at a picture on the wall. “Baba,” he said, and then, pointing at another picture on an adjacent wall, “Baba,” continuing in this way, circling the room with his eyes. Swami smiled and said, “Yes, *Baba is everywhere*.” Every word Swami says is a teaching, and every gesture has a reason, and I have carried that small, precious lesson with me ever since.

Human Values Give Value to Humans

I raised my children on human values because Swami said the world would first come to know Him through them. Since then, I have tried to let those values guide everything I do. When I teach piano, I aim to teach a child to play from the heart rather than focus only on the notes—what we call “playing above the notes.” When I cook, I cut my ego and make love a verb. I founded a childbirth organization built entirely around human values. What makes these values so remarkable is the order in which Swami gives them: Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love, and Nonviolence.

Truth is that which never changes, being true in the past, the present, and the future, and the deepest truth of all is that we are divine beings. I find confirmation of that even in human biology—oxytocin, the so-called hormone of love, reaches receptors in nearly every major system of the body. Swami once explained in a discourse that at four months and nine days of gestation, a vibration—what He called the *pranatattva* (life princi-

ple), entering by way of the *Brahman* principle, the life principle—moves into what until then was only a small mass of tissue in the womb, and from that moment the child begins to stir. That union of body and spirit, He said, is one of the secret doctrines of Vedanta, and that is why we can say with certainty that we are divine.

And if we are divine, then it is our *dharma*, our very nature, to act accordingly—an apple tree bears only apples and a banana tree bears only bananas, and neither can do otherwise. The animal tendencies of anger, desire, pride, and jealousy do not replace that inner truth; they simply cover it, like clouds covering the sun. The people who attract us in life are usually the ones who let human values shine from their hearts through the clouds.

Swami has always said we must learn to speak to ourselves as a loving being would, as in the following affirmation or positive thought pattern:

I am I, the indivisible, Supreme,
Absolute (*Akhanda Parabrahman*).

I am Being, Awareness, and Bliss
(*Satchidananda*)

Grief and anxiety cannot affect me.

I am ever content. Fear cannot
enter me.

In the lines above, fear and grief cannot affect me, takes precedence over everything else. This matters more than it may sound, because we cannot hold fear and love in the heart at the same time. Whichever one we let in first crowds out the other.

I remember a trip to Puttaparthi when I asked Swami only for peace. I was over-

whelmed at the time—managing my organization, teaching piano, working full days as a pediatric physical therapist, and raising two small children. I prayed, “I need peace, please tell me how to have it.” Two weeks passed without an answer, and I left the *ashram* thinking I would go home without one. On the flight out of the old Bangalore airport, a stranger in the row ahead of me turned around and said, “You! I know you! You were at Puttaparthi!” “Yes,” I responded. He went on, very excitedly, to say, “Our Mexican group got an interview with Swami.” Now I was very interested and asked, “What happened in the interview?” He continued, “One person asked Swami how to have more peace.” “What did He say?” Now my interest was very high! He said, “*Take the sentence ‘I want peace.’ Take away the I—that is ego. Take away the want—that is desire. What is left? Peace. And, if you do not have peace, your life is in pieces.*” That message has stayed with me ever since.

When truth and right action move in harmony, you have integrity because what you say aligns with what you do. Where there is integrity, there is no inner conflict, so peace follows naturally. Where there is peace, love flows like a spring from the earth, without limit. Where there is love, there can be no violence, so nonviolence follows too, including the simple discipline of speaking positively. Swami says there are five kinds of knowledge: general, bookish, specific, discriminative, and practical. Practical knowledge is the most important of all because it is the only one that actually changes a life. Practicing the five human values builds character, and



character builds Self-confidence, which holds up everything else as a foundation that can't be seen. Confidence brings Self-satisfaction, Self-satisfaction brings self-sacrifice, doing for others without expecting anything in return, and self-sacrifice finally brings bliss, which is simply coming home to the love we already are.

Swami Fixes My Eye

I had another interview in the late 1980s, during which Swami turned to me mid-conversation in the private interview room and said something in English I could not understand. His voice was cosmic—not of this world. “Swami, what did you say?” I didn’t want to miss what He was saying. He repeated it, and still I did not understand it. He said it again more slowly this time and said: “*Right ret-in-a not good.*” I was not expecting this because I had not noticed anything wrong with my eyes, so I had no idea what He meant. We returned to the bigger interview room, and He approached me a second time and again said, “*Right ret-in-a not good.*” I rose up onto my knees and without thinking said, “Swami, could you please fix it?” I didn’t say “heal it,” or “cure it.” My thinking was that He made this body, so as a mechanic He could fix

it. The whole room, full of people, broke out into laughter, and at that moment He firmly pressed His hand on my forehead. I thought they were all laughing because I asked Him to “fix” it, but afterwards I realized my right eye, which had been feeling heavier than the left before the interview, felt lighter, having returned to its place. I had never worried about it, never even properly noticed, but He knew the problem and fixed it.

Life Is a Dream, Realize It

I had heard many devotees describe Swami appearing to them in dreams. In an interview, Swami was standing right in front of me, and this thought was on my mind. I rose to my knees and asked, “Swami, can you please come to me more in my dreams?” He looked down at me, made a small upward gesture with His right hand, and said, “*What? This is a dream.*” So simple and so profound. It took me years to understand what He meant. We all live inside a dream, a movie that is temporary by its very nature—we come, and we go. The movie plays on the screen of the *Atma*. Without the screen, there is no movie, and without the movie, the screen goes unnoticed. Swami is the one who has written and is directing all of it. Our task is simply to be a witness to our part—doing our duty, performing *seva*, thinking positively, and remembering God, without letting any of the ups or downs of life disturb our equanimity.

Swami Fixes My I

There is one more experience I seldom share, but I will narrate it here. I was at a Sai retreat, walking down from the *bhajan* hall to the dining hall with about 200 people ahead of me, when a friend put headphones on my ears. She said, “Cathy, listen! These are Swami’s verses I just brought back from Puttaparthi!”

She was on one side of me, and another friend was on the other side. Within moments, I was out of my body: a ball of light, orange, yellow, and white, the colors of the sun, aware, somehow, of everything I ever needed to know. I could still see the green grass and the red dining hall, but the 200 people walking toward it were only shadows, without bodies. I saw only their *Atma*, their souls, without form. And the thought that came to me clearly and completely was “This is all small stuff. Do not take life so seriously. Everything that happens to us comes and goes like a passing cloud, just as we come and go.” I do not know how long I remained like that before I found myself back in my body, walking toward the dining hall, but I know that what I felt in that light was consciousness itself, without a body, an expansion I believe I had been yearning for over many lifetimes.

Swami Through His Organization

In 1981, at Puttaparthi, I unexpectedly attended the first conference for overseas *Bal Vikas* (now called Sai Spiritual Education or SSE) teachers, without registering, since I was simply told to come. I felt so inspired that I went home determined that my own children, and other children, should grow up learning the human values that had so profoundly changed my life. At one of our earliest regional retreats, I discovered that there was no children’s program at all, so I organized one myself. It featured children dressed in traditional clothes of different religions, dancing around a central pole about eight feet high, strung with colorful ribbons attached at the top of the pole and reaching out to each child. As they danced to music around the pole, the ribbons were woven together around the pole, presenting a living picture of

unity by the end. Decades later, people still remember it. They also remember the Harriet Tubman play I wrote, which the children performed, as it was about freedom and liberation.

These led to my being asked to serve as Regional Coordinator for Sai Spiritual Education across SSSIO-USA, Regions 1 and 2, with no precedent to follow. Over nine years, I built workshops around each component of a lesson plan—prayer, song, story, activity, affirmation, and life application. The principle of Educare, which draws out what already lies within a child rather than pouring facts into them, was promoted. I devoted whole weekends to one element at a time, gathering devotees to share what they knew.

To this day, I breathe “*Sohum*” (I am That), and before I act on anything, I pass it through my heart first, and only then to my hands (Three H’s: head, heart, hands) because that is where the guidance actually comes from.

What Sai Means To Me

What Sai Baba means to me is perhaps best captured in a particular morning at Puttaparthi, under a blue sky with

the sun already hot. We were sitting on the sand, fresh from *darshan*, when Swami, instead of going straight into the mandir for *bhajans* as He usually did, began moving back and forth between the men’s and women’s sides, again and again, making a small gesture with His hand. That gesture, as we later understood, meant, “Why fear, when I am here.” He did this throughout the *bhajans*, almost to the very last one, and by the end, we were crying tears of joy we could not explain. It was as if “the cup runneth over”—a Christian phrase which means so much love was being poured on us, that we wept tears of joy. But it wasn’t merely crying; it was sobbing tears of joy. When we spoke to people on the men’s side afterwards, they told us the same thing had happened to them. He was pouring love and more love on us, and the only way any of us knew how to respond to that much love was to weep tears of joy. I have come to believe that the truest answer to the question people still ask me: “Who is Sai Baba?” I say, “Sai Baba is the incarnation of pure love.”

Ms. Cathy Daub 



Ms. Cathy Daub is a physical therapist (PT), birth-work pioneer, and teacher. She was trained at Boston University, worked as a pediatric PT at Boston Children’s Hospital, and then spent over three years backpacking around the world through more than 60 countries with her husband. In 1994, she founded BirthWorks International, a nonprofit organization for training childbirth educators, doulas, and breastfeeding and Kangaroula specialists worldwide. She’s the author of the book *Birthing in the Spirit*, and has taught Piano for over 30 years. A devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for five decades (as of 2026), she’s spent 40 years as an SSE teacher and Education Coordinator and still teaches today at the Cherry Hill Sai Center, New Jersey, USA. She’s a mother of two and grandmother of five.

from the International Sai Young Adults

Prayers FOR HEALING

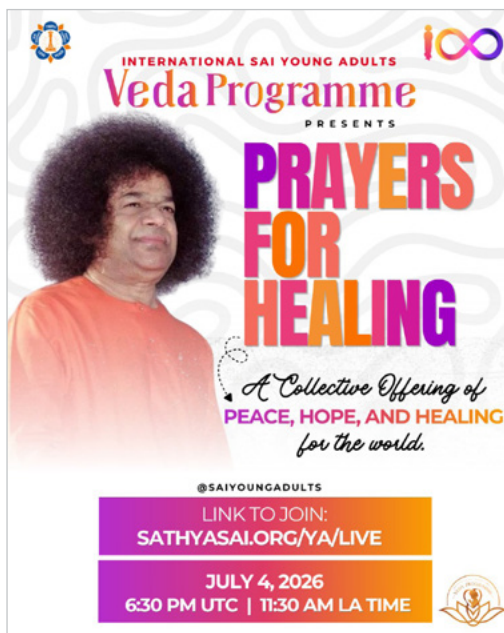
The International Sai Young Adults Veda Team held a live online session, “Prayers for Healing,” on July 4, 2026, to collectively pray for love, unity, healing, and peace for humanity.

The 45-minute program included guided prayers, such as the Gayatri Mantra in Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s voice and Sai Gayatri chanting, along with Vedic *mantras*

like *Ganapati Prarthana*, *Namakam*, and the 3rd *Anuvaka* of the *Chamakam* from the *Sri Rudram*, as well as *Kshama Prarthana* and *Svasti Vachaka Mantra*. This was followed by “Our Father” prayer in both Spanish and English, multi-faith *Sarva Dharma* prayers, and a divine discourse by Swami delivered on November 8, 1986. In this discourse, Swami declares that the **sacred sounds produced during group singing and chanting permeate the atmosphere as ether waves, counteracting negative vibrations and purifying the environment.** By flooding the environment with these sacred currents, collective chanting transforms human hearts, directly fostering harmony and securing peace for all

of humanity. The event concluded with the universal prayer, “*samastha loka sukhino bhavantu*,” invoking joy and peace for the entire world.

The initiative drew 229 adults, Young Adults, and children. Additionally, 70 attendees joined a separate Russian-translated broadcast of the program from Zone 8 of the SSSIO.





DISCOVERING THE INNER HERO

A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION IN LATVIA

The world does not need another hero who is egoistic. It needs love.

From May 13-17, 2026, the historic town of Sigulda, Latvia, hosted the European Sai Young Adults Meeting (ESYAM). Surrounded by quiet forests and ancient castles, 15 Young Adults (YAs) from Latvia, Germany, the Czech Republic, Sweden, and Trinidad & Tobago gathered under the inspiring theme, “The Inner Hero.” **This five-day retreat served as a spiritual sanctuary, inviting participants to step out of the world’s hectic pace and enter into a space where they could simply be themselves, reflect deeply, and connect with the divine.**

The program was designed to guide attendees through progressive steps of Self-awareness and inner growth. Central

to the retreat were three highly interactive workshops:

- **“Inheroation” (Intuition as a Hero):** This session served as an interactive journey to strengthen Self-awareness and conscious relationships. Participants learned to question limiting beliefs, distinguish divine intuition from the ego’s promptings, and balance their inner masculine and feminine energies (*Shiva-Shakti*). Through deep reflection, communication exercises, and group sharing, the YAs gained greater inner clarity and practical tools to make heart-centered decisions.
- **4 Steps to Self:** Led by the Education Coordinator of Latvia, this presentation and workshop explored the four progressive pillars Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba recommends to spiritual aspirants: Self-confidence, Self-satisfaction,





self-sacrifice, and Self-realization. In the interactive session that followed, participants discussed specific obstacles on the path to Self-realization and debated how to overcome them. The discussions focused on identifying personal weaknesses, finding motivation for inner transformation, and building the spiritual strength needed to overcome these limitations. Each group presented the outcomes of their discussion and shared valuable insights.

- **Inner Landscape:** In this creative workshop, each participant created a unique visual “map” of their inner world. It translated the invisible realm of thoughts and emotions into a tangible picture, allowing the YAs to chart the lowlands, mountains, deserts, oases, and rivers of their unique personal life journeys.

Beyond these sessions, the schedule integrated spiritual discipline with joyful activities. Each day started with morning prayers and devotional singing, followed by physical exercises and lively “Sai Games” to promote unity. A significant highlight was the extended nature walk titled “Create Inner Hero,” where the beauty of Sigulda’s natural environment reflected the internal beauty that the participants were discov-

ering. Evenings were spent in heartfelt *bhajan* sessions, culminating in a vibrant bonfire on Saturday night.

Many participants realized they were at similar crossroads in their lives regarding careers, relationships, and life purpose, and the workshops helped clarify that they weren’t starting over from zero but moving forward as ‘heroes.’ As the retreat drew to a close, a poignant vulnerability emerged about the return to daily life—reopening social media, resuming work or studies, and re-entering the world’s frantic pace. Many silently wondered: “*Will this magic disappear?*” The answer unfolded gradually, carried home through farewell tears, quiet moments at the airport, and the sudden courage found in stepping back into reality.

When asked to define their “Inner Hero” in a single sentence, the response was unanimous: Sai Baba, their inner Swami.

While the world they returned to remained unchanged, they left with the realization that their perspective had forever shifted. ESYAM 2026 demonstrated that the greatest change happens within, turning spiritual aspirants into true heroes of love.

Oh, How Happy I Am!



Recently, I had the joy of visiting and serving several regions of Brazil through the 'immersions,' or the frequent gatherings promoted by the National Central Council of SSSIO Brazil to strengthen Sai Centers in the country and to build closer relationships with their members and communities. These journeys carried a beautiful name: Caminho do Coração—the Path of the Heart. And that is exactly what they became for me: a path for listening, surrender, and trust.

For a long time, I heard Swami say, "*the heart is a single-seat sofa*," and "*do My work, and I will do yours*." But honestly, I never truly understood it. My rational mind always objected: How? I have bills to pay, responsibilities at home, work, and other commitments. How can I simply devote myself to the Organization's activities?

There is a very concrete reality in my life: I am an entrepreneur. Anyone who has started a business knows there is little predictability in the beginning stages. There are good months, hard months, critical decisions, clients, deliverables, and heavy financial responsibilities. Entrepreneurship demands presence, energy, and

trust. So, my mind kept asking: How can I travel and serve when my business is just starting?

But gradually, I realized that the problem was never the work. The problem was my belief that my work was separate from God. Swami doesn't ask us to abandon our responsibilities; He teaches us to divinize them. Entrepreneurship can also become service when it is done with love, excellence, and pure intention. Every client served with respect, every project delivered with care, and every decision made consciously can become a form of *sadhana*.

When I put God at the center, even my business takes on a new meaning. Money stops being a source of worry and becomes an instrument. Time stops being a crowded calendar and becomes an offering at His lotus feet. Talent stops being a personal skill or a matter of ego and becomes a tool to purposefully serve the world.

That is when Swami's words came alive and resonated within me: "*Do My work, and I will do yours*." I used to think I had to choose between caring for my personal life and serving God. Now, I am begin-



Natalia sharing at an “Immersion” event

ning to understand that when I serve Him sincerely, Swami arranges what I cannot control—or more precisely, what I believe I can control. In the end, everything happens only by His will and His grace. He opens doors, sends people, and sustains what needs sustaining.

Entrepreneurship has taught me a lot about faith. Often, I have no guarantees, only the next step. And perhaps that is precisely what spirituality asks of us, too: to take the next step with trust.

Over the past few months, I have been conducting a *namasmarana* workshop across Brazil, a practice I learned from Dr. Sanjay Mahalingam, a former student of Swami’s educational institutions, based on reciting the *mantra* “Om Sri Sai Parabrahmane Namaha” in rhythm with the breath. Dr. Mahalingam mentioned that something would transform after 90 days of practice. I began at the end of February, and after completing that period, something shifted deeply within me. It wasn’t an intellectual understanding; rather, I was filled with love and had a profound experience in my heart.

For the first time, I began to grasp what it means to love all and serve all—to feel that there is no real separation between people, and that each face carries a reflection of God.

That is when I felt the call to write this article and travel as much as possible across Brazil to share this practice.

At first, my mind resisted. When the regional gatherings were announced, I was at a professional crossroads where it seemed impossible to attend. No time. No resources. No way to organize it. But the call in my heart was strong, so I asked Swami for a sign. Soon after, I got into an Uber, and the driver happened to be from the very region where the first gathering would take place. To me, that was a clear sign. From the moment I decided to go, the resources began to appear—financial help, devotees opening their homes, and support arriving through thousands of hands. Each helping hand felt like Swami’s own.

It reminded me of a story about Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, who was challenged by his brother to travel to

an unknown city with no money and no return ticket, just to see if he truly trusted the Divine Mother. The story shows how he received care, food, and help to return home. Something similar has been happening to me. The moment I chose to trust Him, help arrived promptly.

Many people say they have no time for service because there is so much to do. I deeply understand that; we all have responsibilities. But I invite you to reflect: look at your screen time. How many hours a day do we spend scrolling? Is it really that we have no time for God, or is it that we haven't yet made God a priority?

Serving doesn't mean abandoning our duties. It involves elevating and sanctifying the way we live—putting love into the routine, presence into our actions, and purity into our intentions. Swami reminds us that youth is a precious phase: *“With pure hearts, embark on service at all times and in all places. Hands in society, head in the forest.”*

Today, I realize that my professional life, my travels, my service, and my spiritual practice are not separate. My business

supports my material life, but service nurtures my soul. When these two wings align, life stops being a race for results and becomes an offering to Him.

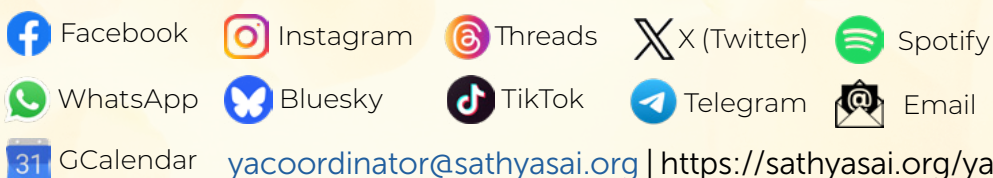
“Hands in society, head in the forest.” To be in the world but not be enslaved by it. To work, care, pay bills, and solve problems, while keeping the mind constantly turned toward God.

So, when I reflect on these experiences, all I can say is “Oh! How happy I am!” Happy not because everything is resolved, nor because there are no challenges, but because, little by little, I am tasting the joy of trusting, of serving, and of realizing that when we take one sincere step toward God, God takes many steps toward us.

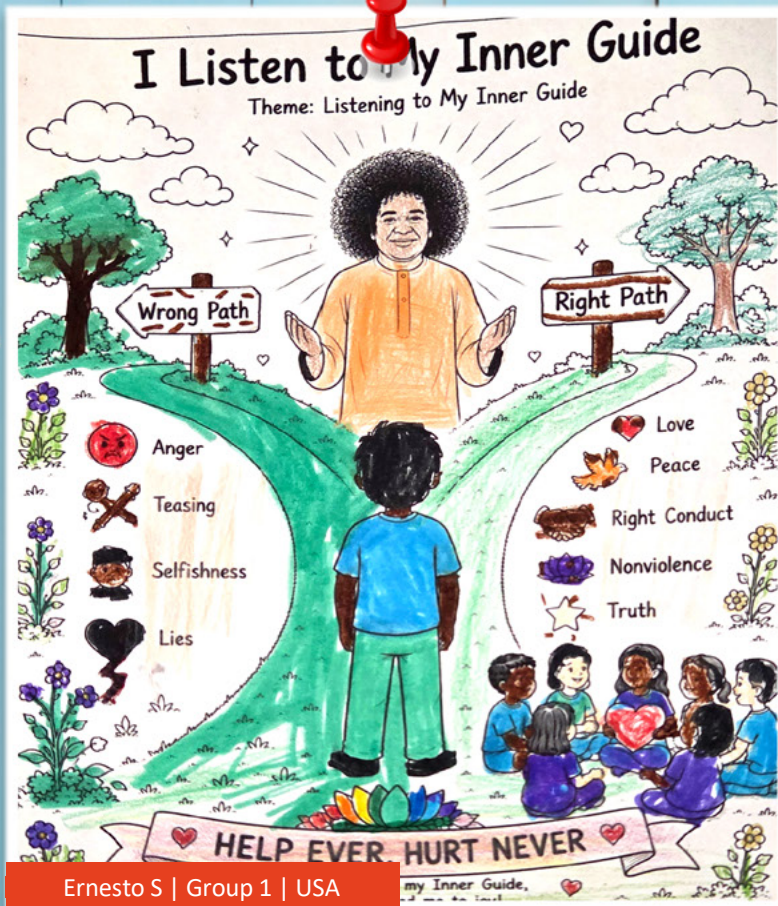
“The Path of the Heart” isn't just about traveling across Brazil. **It is a journey inward—letting go of the calculating mind and embracing the heart that trusts. The great discovery of this season is this: when we do His work, He truly does ours, because in the end, there is no separation. Happiness is union with God.**

Ms. Natalia Uehara 
BRAZIL

Follow Young Adults on Social Media



My Inner Voice



My Inner Swami

What guides me to make the right decision when nobody is around me or when nobody is watching me? I call it my inner guide or inner Swami.

I can tell if what I'm doing is the right thing or if what I'm doing is wrong by understanding that whatever I'm doing isn't going against my morals. I use my inner guide or inner Swami every day in the simplest situations. For example, when my parents tell me to go do something whether it be a chore or anything else, I end up with two options. Option one is to listen to my parents and option two is to not listen and ignore whatever my parents just said. I can tell that option two is the wrong choice because it goes against my morals and teachings of giving respect to your parents

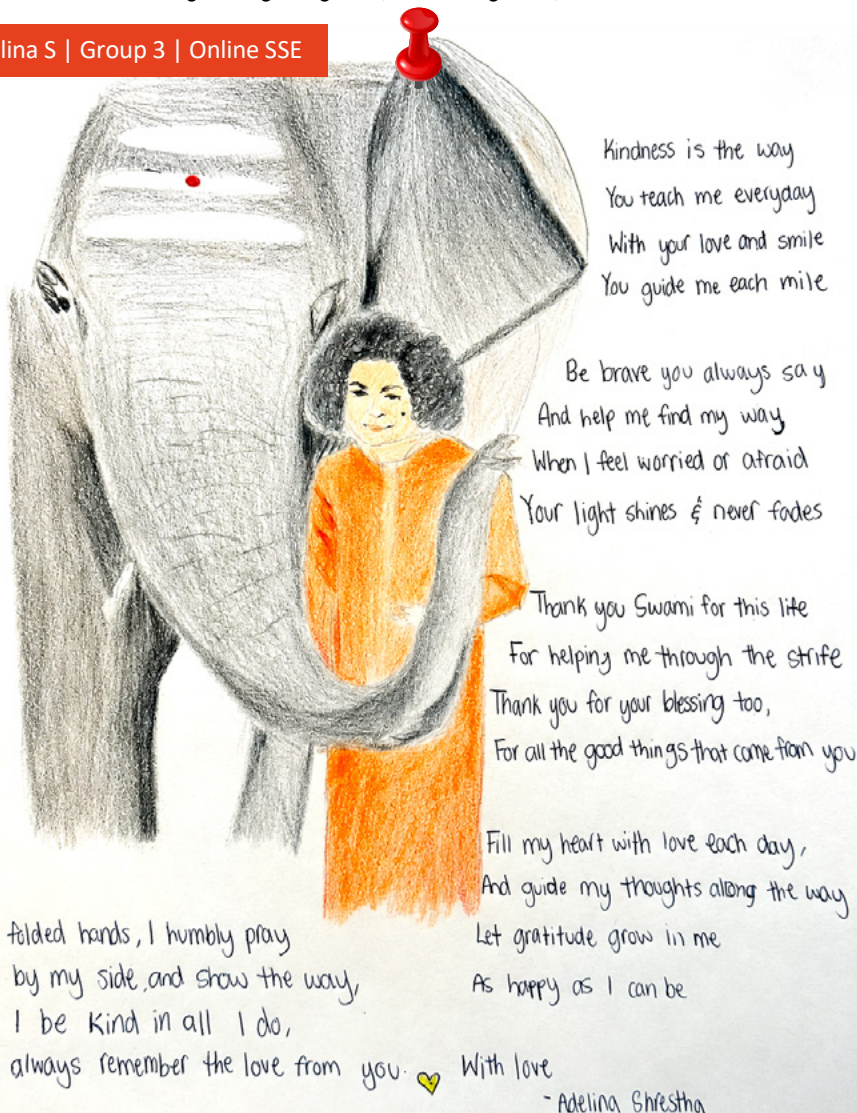
and Swami Himself said to always listen to your parents. Therefore, you can tell that option one would be the right choice because it doesn't go against any morals, in fact it supports the morals instead. But now imagine that I'm alone and nobody's watching. I would still pick the right choice because even if no people are watching, God is still watching.

It reminds me of the story of a young boy in school. Every kid was given an apple and was told that they were not allowed to eat it. Then all the teachers left the room, and the kids were all by themselves. Then the kids started to hide under tables and in curtains and they ate their apples.

The young boy wanted to eat his apple, however he just couldn't. The teachers came back to the room after some time. One of the teachers came up to the young boy and asked him why he didn't eat his apple like the rest of the kids. The young boy just replied, "We were instructed to not eat the apple, but all the other kids ate it anyway because none of the teachers were watching, but they forgot that God is always watching. That's why I couldn't eat the apple."

So, in the end, it's my morals and teachings that help me make the right choices, and that is what builds my inner Swami.

Adelina S | Group 3 | Online SSE



Rudhika N | Group 2 | Online SSE

My Inner Voice

In the quiet spaces of my mind,
A gentle whisper starts to grow.
Leaving the chaotic world behind,
To touch the Sacred truths I know.

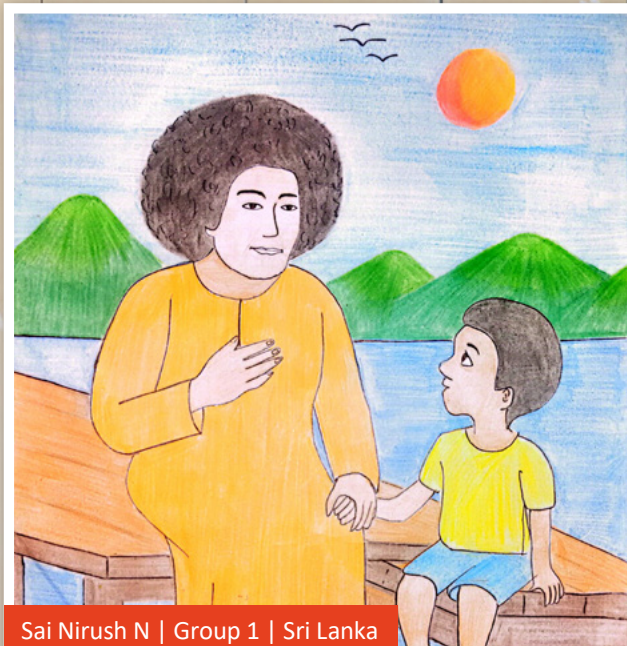
It is your voice, Swami, pure and clear,
Guiding me through the deepest night.
Dispelling doubt, dissolving Fear,
And Filling every thought with light.

By listening to my Inner voice,
I Find your presence deep and true.
In every step and every choice,
I am Forever bound to you.

Theebigha K | Group 3 | Sri Lanka



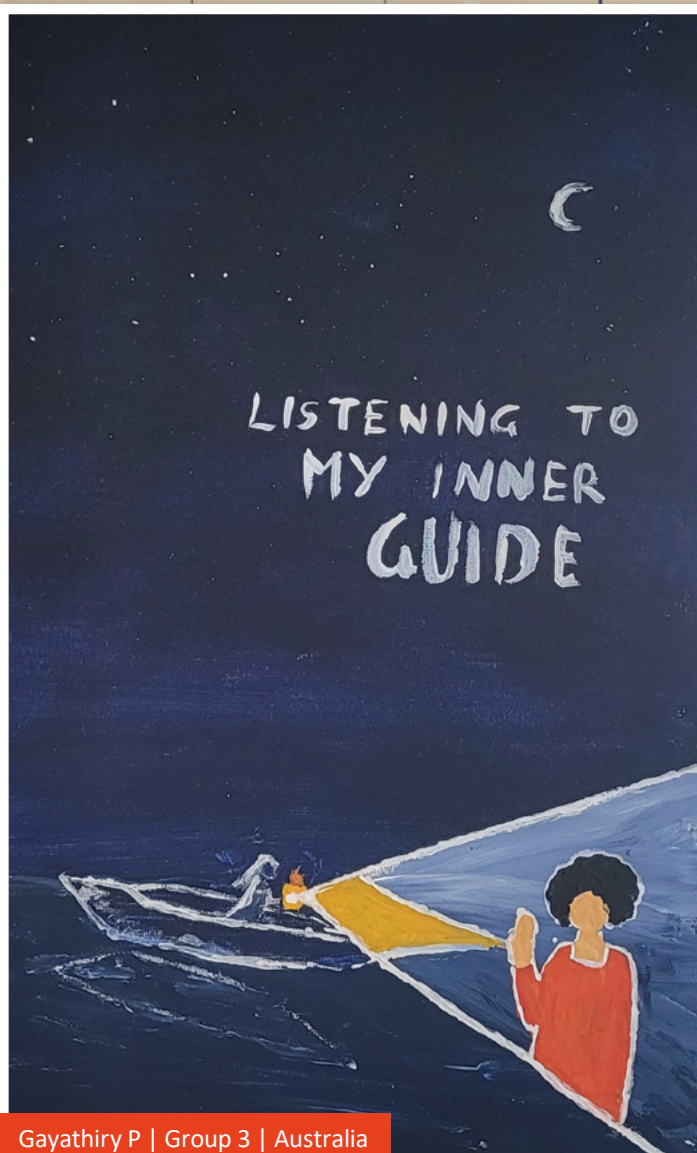
Rohitaksh S | Group 1 | Mauritius



Sai Nirush N | Group 1 | Sri Lanka



Nuri T | Group 1 | Panama



Gayathiry P | Group 3 | Australia

The Quietest Voice

This world has never been silent.
It is filled with opinions, expectations,
and endless noise—each one trying to tell me
who to become and where to go.

Yet somehow, the quietest voice
always seems to know the way.

It does not command. It does not demand.
It simply waits patiently.

Swami teaches that the greatest Guru is
not somewhere far away, but within our own
hearts.

I once thought His guidance would come as a
powerful voice—unmistakable, loud, impossible
to ignore.

Instead, He reminds me softly:

“Be kind.” “Be honest.” “See the goodness in
others.”

Such a voice can easily be ignored when an
easier choice stands right beside it.

Yet whenever I slow down and truly listen,
I discover something this world cannot give
me—peace.

Perhaps listening to my Inner Guru does
not mean receiving new answers. Perhaps it
means remembering the love, the truth, and
the goodness that Swami encourages us to
carry within.

On this Guru Poornima, may I learn to listen a
little more carefully, trust a little more deeply,
and allow that gentle voice to rise above
the noise around me.

For sometimes, the most powerful guidance
is not the voice we hear outside, but the quiet
light that shines within.

Ankitha G | Group 4 | USA

Helping Hands

One sunny afternoon, a boy named Arjun
was walking home from school. As he
hurried along the road, he noticed an
old man struggling to carry two heavy
bags. Many people walked past without
stopping, but Arjun decided to help.

He politely asked, “May I carry your bags
for you?”

The old man smiled and said, “Thank you,
my child, you are very kind.” Arjun carried
the bags all the way to the old man’s
house. The old man thanked him warmly
and gave him his blessings.

As Arjun walked back home, he felt
happy because he had helped someone
in need. When he reached home, he told
his parents what had happened. They
praised him for his kindness and said
that helping others is one of the greatest
virtues. From that day on, Arjun always
looked for opportunities to help people.
Everyone in the village admired him for his
caring nature.

Moral: Kindness always brings happiness
and blessings.

Kamalakar P | Group 3 | India



Sai Hariesh N | Group 3 | Sri Lanka

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
October 17-18, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri
November 14-15, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Bhajan
November 23, 2026	Monday	101st Birthday Celebrations of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



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 [🔗](#)



The Mahabharata War is not a chapter in ancient history; it is taking place in every human heart, between the forces of good and evil. He who recognizes the value of installing the Lord, the Yogeeshwara Krishna, as the Charioteer, is certain to win; others fail to foil the forces of evil; they succumb and fall. Accept Him as your Master; surrender all activities to Him; dedicate your words and deeds and thoughts to Him, as flowers at His Feet; He assures you, '*Mokshayishyami*'—I shall liberate you; He assuages you, '*Ma suchah*'—Do not grieve.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

August 19, 1965



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

