



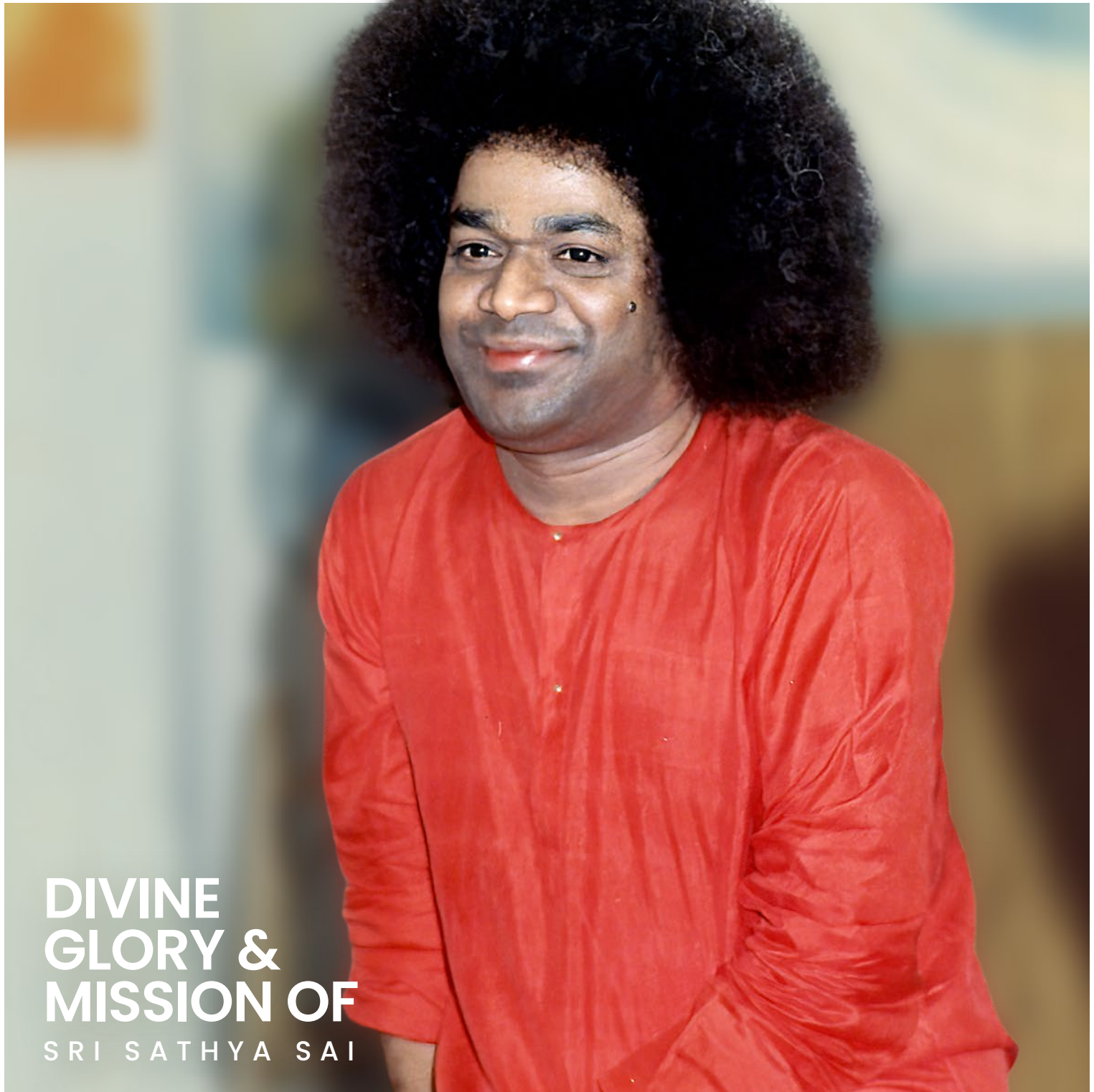
S A T H Y A S A I

THE ETERNAL

COMPANION

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

A PUBLICATION OF THE SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION



Wherever you may be and whatever you do, regard yourselves as instruments of the Divine and act on that basis. You need not wait for a whole year to observe Guru Poornima. Treat every moment of your life as being intended for dedication to the Lord. This is the way to experience the Divine all the time at all places. This is true Divine Vision (*Sakshatkara*). Serve all and love all. Firmly believe that the Divine is in everyone and constantly act on this belief. Only by continual practice can you develop this sacred attitude. Fill yourself with self-confidence and courage. Make your life a complete offering to the Divine, who is the real source of all that you are and all that you have.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

July 7, 1990



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
ON THE OCCASION OF GURU POORNIMA





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SEE GOD HERE AND NOW

With love, gratitude, and reverence we offer this special Guru Poornima edition to our Guru, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, He is *Jagat Guru*, the universal teacher; *Sadguru*, the true teacher; *Gurunaam Guru*, the teacher of teachers; and *Parama Guru*, the divine teacher. We are blessed and fortunate that the Avatar of this age came as our Guru to show us the *Guri* – the goal. He has shown us that the goal of this life is to realize and manifest one’s innate divine nature – and also see the same divinity pervading everything, everywhere, and forever.

As proclaimed in His discourse of July 30, 1996, **everything is Brahman; every atom, every cell, and every moment in creation is divine**. Swami says it is foolish to seek God elsewhere in mysterious, faraway places – we should always strive to see God everywhere and in all things, for there is nothing other than God. The divinity is hidden behind the screen of Maya, and the unreal manifested world in front of the screen is deluding us. The screen which hides the truth is the veil of ignorance or Maya. However, Swami assured us that if we hold on to Him steadfastly with absolute faith and walk with Him without stopping, He will reveal to us the truth behind the screen, which is divinity itself.

The Four Spiritual Qualifications

To be able to walk with Swami, we need to walk in His footsteps and practice His teachings in our lives. In the Sutra Vahini, Swami enumerated the four qualifications necessary for *Brahma Vidya*, or the Supreme Knowledge of Brahman.

The First qualification is discrimination (*Viveka*), to discern the real from the unreal, the transitory from the eternal. In this publication, one of the devotees shared his experience from a drama enacted before Swami in which King Janaka pondered about what was the reality “Is this real, or is that real?” We should always exercise this discrimination to hold on to the truth and discard the transitory, the ephemeral, the unreal.

The Second qualification is detachment (*Vairagya*). Once we realize what is unreal, we should get detached from the unreal and get attached to what is real. Therefore, we must get detached from the unreal world and be attached to God, our true reality. In this magazine, another devotee describes how he realized that this world is unreal and then developed detachment from objects of the senses and focused only on realizing the truth.

The Third qualification is the set of Six Virtues (*Shat Sampathi*). Once we

detach from worldly objects and become attached to God, we should then develop *Shat Sampathi*, or six primary virtues:

The first is **Sama, mind control**. The mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation. During the 1976 *Dasara* celebrations, Swami delivered a series of nine discourses about the mind, which was published as a book titled “The Mind and Its Mysteries.” In these discourses, Swami described in detail ways to control the mind, by practicing meditation, repeating God’s name, singing devotional songs, and worshipping God.

The second virtue is **Dama, control of the body and senses**. Swami says that a spiritual seeker should bend the body – that is, use the body to serve others. They should also mend the senses, and use the senses for the right purpose: see good, see no evil; hear good, hear no evil; think good, think no evil; speak good, speak no evil and do good and do no evil – this is the way to God.

The third virtue is **Uparathi, withdrawal from sensory objects**. This aspect is beautifully described in the Bhagavad Gita, where Lord Krishna says, “Like the tortoise withdraws its limbs when it encounters any potential danger, a spiritual seeker in search of truth should similarly withdraw from sensory objects. We should constantly evaluate if our action is beneficial (*Shreyomarg*), taking us towards God, or pleasure-seeking (*Preyomarg*), taking us away from God

Fourth is **Titiksha, forbearance**. Swami gave a wonderful discourse on May 25, 2000, about forbearance being the noblest virtue for a person on the spiritual path. Swami Himself was the greatest example of forbearance, which He demonstrated His actions throughout His life.

The fifth virtue is **Shraddha, unwavering faith**. Swami says one should have unwavering faith in the scriptures, faith in the Guru, and most importantly, faith in oneself – Self-confidence. Absolute, unwavering faith is crucial in the spiritual path. In the Shirdi Avatar, Baba frequently asked the people who visited Him for the offerings (*Dakshina*) of faith and patience (*Shraddha and Saburi*), and in the Parthi Avatar, Swami also stressed the importance of faith and love (*Shraddha and Prema*).

The last of the six cardinal virtues is **Samadhana, equanimity** – treating everything as a gift or blessing of God. One should be joyful in all the pairs of opposites one encounters: pleasure and pain, praise and blame, profit and loss, honor and dishonor, and success and failure. If we have this joyful attitude under all circumstances, we will accept everything as His blessing (*prasad*).

The Fourth qualification for Brahma Vidya is an intense longing for liberation or Self-realization (*Mumukshatwam*). Once one develops this genuine spiritual hunger, it will surely lead one to the goal. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa emphasized that if one has intense longing for God, the goal is automatically assured. He said one should have an intense longing for God as a drowning man has for the last breath of air. He showed by example how to see God by intense prayer and by crying in anguish for Him. Once I asked Swami, “What is devotion?” He replied, “If you have intense longing for God, it means that you have devotion.” This intense longing for divine love is truly a gift of God. It can be attained only by the Grace of God and is the royal road to Self-Realization.

Divine Love is the Royal Road

Divine love is the royal path to God. Just as the moon can be seen only by moonlight, God, who is Love, can be experienced

only through love. Swami says, “Love is God, God is Love, Live in Love.” He also exhorts us, “Start the day with love, spend the day with love, end the day with love, and this is the way to God.” In contrast to worldly love, divine love is unconditional, pure, selfless, and never changing.

How should we love God? It is essential to have **one-pointedness**. Swami urges us to never change our focus from the chosen Guru or spiritual practices. Second, He advises us to give **priority to God**. If we want **SAI** in our lives, we should have **Swami first, All others next, and I (oneself) last**. He exhorted us to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. That means we surrender completely to God and become full-time devotees, not part-time devotees!

How do we nurture this love? It is important to be in the presence of God constantly. **First, we should have absolute faith that God is omnipresent**. If we are aware that He is always present and watching over us, then we will have fear of sin (*papa bheethi*) and will do the right thing which will please Him (*daiva preethi*). The great saint, Brother Lawrence, a Carmelite monk, practiced being in the presence of God every moment at all times, even when he was serving as a cook in a monastery. Thus, he was always in communion with God.

Second, it is essential not to find faults in others but recognize one’s own faults, and try to correct them to nurture Divine love. Swami mentioned that another way to foster this love is to be with like-minded people who love God, serve God, and love to sing His glories and praise Him (*Satsang*).

Self-realization through Love In Action

Love in action is service. Swami emphasizes service to man is service to God. Service done to animals, plants, and nature is to recognize the divinity in everything, everywhere. SSSIO members lovingly serve the communities by providing food, shelter, water, clothes, education, and healthcare to those in need. Service offers an excellent opportunity to see God in everyone and allows us to experience that the giver is Brahman, the recipient is Brahman, and the act of serving is also Brahman. All is Brahman. Such experiences purify the heart and get rid of our egos. Service can also be a kind gesture, a smile, a pat on the back, sweet and loving words, noble thoughts, and praying for others. Another wonderful way to serve the Lord is by spreading His message and love to everyone, and one of the most important services is leading someone closer to God.

The Greatest Service

Once in answer to my question, Swami said that the greatest of all services is to realize oneself as God. Finding our true nature, realizing that we are Brahman, the Atman, is the greatest service. Once we realize that we are divine, then we experience that everything, everywhere is divine.

Swami says on the auspicious occasion of Guru Pournima, the **best offering to Him (Guru Dakshina) is to realize oneself as the Guru**. We can achieve this by getting rid of our ignorance by acquiring the requisite qualifications mentioned in the first aphorism on Brahman (*Brahmasutras*) and living in divine love.

Then we **SEE GOD HERE AND NOW!**

Jai Sai Ram.

All is Brahman
Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma



SEEK THE GURU WITHIN YOU

*All the stars are Brahman; The Sun is also Brahman;
The Moon is Brahman; Water is Brahman;
Heaven is Brahman; the abode of Lord Vishnu is Brahman;
Mother is Brahman; Father is Brahman
Wealth is Brahman; authority and Lordship are Brahman
All creatures are Brahman; the individual is Brahman
Birth is Brahman; Sustenance is Brahman;
Death is Brahman; housewife is Brahman;
All actions are Brahman; the body is Brahman
The entire nature is Brahman; Life is Brahman
Everything is Brahman. This assembly is Brahman.
The Sai proclaiming this Truth is Brahman.*

(Telugu Poem)

*The tree growing out of the soil returns to the soil;
The creation arising from Brahman becomes Brahman;
But it appears differently to the eyes;
That is the wonder of this mysterious world.*

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Brahman (the Supreme Self)! When a seed is sown in the earth, it sprouts as a sapling and grows in due course into a big tree. In the tree, the branches, the leaves, the flowers, and the fruits all appear distinct from each other. Moreover, each of them is used for a specific purpose. But all of them are different forms of the soil from which they have originated.

Seeing a rope at a distance, suspecting that it may be a snake, a man screams out of fear. Soon another person arrives and assures him that it is not a snake but a rope. The moment he realizes that what he feared as a snake, was only a rope, he gets rid of his fear. During all these stages, the rope was always a rope.

“*When you follow the command of God,
you will certainly attain divinity.
The primary requisite is to attain God’s love,
then everything will follow.*”

This rope is Brahman. But the ignorant man perceives this world (*Jeeveswara Prakriti*) as a snake till a wise person (*jnani*) comes and tells him that it is not a snake, but it is only a rope and reveals the truth that what he is seeing as nature is in reality, Brahman. All that one sees in the entire universe is a manifestation of the Brahman. Some people declare: “Where is Brahman and what are we, petty human beings? How can we be equal to the all-encompassing Brahman?” This is not correct. **You are that omnipotent, all-pervading Brahman. Because of your worldly outlook, you are not recognizing the Reality.** You are separating yourself from the Divine. All that you see is Brahman. To search for God as something different from you is a delusion. But this truth is not easily recognized by man.

When you look at the ocean, its endless series of waves and the foam from the waves, all appear separate from each other. But the truth is they are all one. The water in the waves and in the foam comes from the same ocean and has the same qualities. Likewise, from the infinite ocean of *Sath-Chith-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss), innumerable living creatures emerge like waves.

Fill Your Vision with Love

Embodiments of Divine Atma! When you fill your vision with love, the entire creation will appear divine to you.

The Universe appears to you as a manifestation of diversity, but in reality, there is no diversity. No one makes any effort to discover the unity that underlies diversity.

In every human being, both Divinity and the *maya* (illusion) principle are immanent. When we enquire about this Divinity and *maya*, there are five aspects: *Sath, Chith, Ananda, Rupa, and Nama* (Being, Awareness, Bliss, form, and name). *Sath-Chith-Ananda* is the form of Brahman. *Rupa* and *Nama* represent the *maya* principle which is only apparent but not real.

On the ocean, the wind is the cause of waves. On the ocean of *Sath-Chith-Ananda*, the mighty power of *maya* gives rise to the innumerable living creatures. Thus, the wind is *maya*, the waves are the individuals, and the ocean is *Sath-Chith-Ananda*. Therefore, the individuals who have emerged from the ocean of *Sath-Chith-Ananda* are manifestations of the Divine. Once we recognize this truth, we become Divine. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi*). Today, we are carried away by the diversity of names and forms. *Sath-Chith-Ananda* coexists with *maya* (illusion). However, this *maya* will gradually disappear just like how the waves arise and merge back into the ocean. That which is born is bound to perish. It is only the nature of the body to be born and die. That which is beyond birth and death is Brahman. Hence, Brahman signifies infinity, and vastness, and is all-pervasive. Brahman is everywhere and there is nothing in this world that is not Brahman. Not being able to understand this truth, out of ignorance, man succumbs to innumerable difficulties.

The Trinity and the Three Gunas

The true meaning of **Guru** is “one who dispels the darkness of ignorance.” Another meaning of the word **Guru** is “one who is beyond attributes (Gunas) and forms, namely, the Supreme Self (Brahman).” When this Self is within you, where is the need to search for someone to teach you? A teacher who teaches others has had a teacher himself. The one who has no **Guru** above him is the true **guru**. The Sanskrit stanza which hails the **guru** as **Brahma**, **Vishnu**, and **Maheshwara** and as **Parabrahman** is misinterpreted. The right approach is to consider **Brahma**, **Vishnu**, and **Maheshwara** as the **guru**. These three are symbolized by the three **Gunas** (attributes): **Brahma** is *Rajas*, **Vishnu** is *Sathwa* and **Shiva** is *Thamas*. The entire cosmos is constituted by the three **Gunas**. The three **Gunas** are present in man. The Trinity is present in the form of the three **Gunas** in every human heart.

Hence, you are your own **guru**. You need not seek him elsewhere. The so-called **gurus** of today seek to impart some mantras and receive fee offerings as *Guru-Dakshina* on **Guru Poornima** day. The mantra is whispered in the ear and the palm is stretched for an offering. It is not the proper sign of a **guru**. What is *Guru-Dakshina*? **Realizing oneself as **Guru** is true *Guru-Dakshina*. You are a **guru** unto yourself.**

All potencies are within you. This is indicated by the Gayathri Mantra, ‘*Om Bhur-Bhuvah-Suvah*’ – *Bhur* refers to the material world (materialization), *Bhuvah* is the life force that animates (vibration) and *Suvah* represents the knowledge which is ‘*Prajnananam Brahma*’ and this is called radiation. All these three, materialization, vibration, and radiation are within us. Therefore, we don’t have to worry about anything. Our duty is to take up noble activities that are helpful to others.

You must always feel your inherent divinity, which is also present in everyone. When you help someone, you must feel that the one who is offering help is **Brahman** and the one who is receiving help is also **Brahman**. Great sage **Vyasa** said that the essence of all scriptures (**Puranas**) is “Help Ever; Hurt Never.” So, help everybody, helping others is helping ourselves. **Vedas** declare that “Whomsoever you respect and pay obeisance, it reaches God (*Sarva Jeeva Namaskaram Keshavam Prathigacchathi*).”

Follow Swami to Get the Powers

Embodiments of Divine Atma! For long you have been pursuing the wrong paths full of doubts and confusion leading to a turbulent life. The main reason for this is you consider yourself as a separate individual (*vyashti*). The truth is you are not the *vyashti*. You are part of the *Samashti* (society). This society is a part of *Srishti* (creation). Beyond creation is *Pushti* (the cosmic energy). Transcending that energy is *Parameshti* (the Supreme Self - God). You are all these as an embodiment of the Divine. You have to proceed from an individual (*vyashti*) to the realization of the Self (*Parameshti*).

All are manifestations of the Divine. No one is higher or lower. You may ask whether you can ever acquire the powers possessed by **Swami**. **Follow me. You are bound to get that power.** That power is latent in you. But you are not aware of it. You want to experience bliss. If you truly follow **Swami**, you will discover that bliss is within you. That is not all. You will find that bliss all around you, wherever you go. You are the embodiment of Bliss. You cannot find that bliss in the physical world. Everything is a reflection of the inner being. It is wholly within you. Consider yourself as **Brahman** at all times and in all situations. You will thereby become one with the Divine.

“*Every man should strive to become an ideal human being. Just as God is an eternal witness, every man should stand as a witness.*”

Turn your mind Godward and you will experience the bliss of the Divine. It is for this reason that Swami gives you advice from time to time as to what you should do and what you should avoid. All this is not for My sake but for your own good, to make you take the path of God-Realization, to teach you the Supreme truth about the Brahman, and to make your sacred life an ideal one.

Reality Hidden Behind the Screen

Every man should strive to become an ideal human being. Just as God is an eternal witness, every man should stand as a witness. It is not possible for anyone to see the reality hidden behind the screen. The cause (*karanamu*) is behind the screen and the effect (*karyamu*) is in front of the screen. So, recognize this relationship between the cause and effect, and redeem your life. Embodiments of Love, imagine how happy everyone would be if the entire world is filled with this pure, sublime, and sacred ideal. Do not show hatred towards anyone. Whomsoever you neglect or disregard it also reaches God (*Sarva Bhootha Thiraskaram Keshavam Prathigacchathi*). Recognize that God is your preceptor. He is the preceptor of preceptors. When you have such an all-pervading guru Himself, why should you worry and go after other gurus? All are children of God, all are sparks of the same divinity, and all are embodiments of the Divine, as declared in the Bhagavad Gita. There is no place where

there is no Brahman. Scientists declared that the cosmos is pervaded by atomic energy. Vedanta has declared that God is smallest in small and biggest in big. God is everywhere. Everything is atomic energy. So also, everything is Brahman. So, embodiments of Love, don't worry about anything. Contemplate on God. There is nothing more than this. That will provide you with everything and leads to the merger with Brahman.

Shraddha and Bhakti

Shirdi Sai Baba used to ask for two rupees as an offering (*Dakshina*) from devotees who visited him. The two rupees symbolized faith (*Shraddha*) and devotion (*Bhakti*). These are the two qualities He expected from the devotees. The combination of the two is essential for spiritual progress. Only then will bliss dawn just as a plant emerges from the seed.

From this day onwards, give up all differences and concentrate on the realization of the Brahman. All are embodiments of Brahman. In due course, all will realize this truth by eschewing narrow-minded differences. However, it is not so easy to develop this sense of spiritual oneness except through constant practice. When you follow the command of God, you will certainly attain divinity. The primary requisite is to attain God's love, then everything will follow.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
July 30, 1996

"GOD IS"

THE POWERFUL FIVE-LETTER MANTRA

On this Guru Poornima Day, I do not intend to give you any *Ashtakshari* (eight-letter) or *Panchakshari* (five-letter) mantra based on any particular deity's name. Nor am I enjoining you to study any Upanishad, or the Gita, or the Brahma Sutras.

There is a simple five-letter pronouncement. "God Is" ("*Devudunnadu* - దేవుడున్నాడు," in Telugu). Make this your sheet anchor.

If you go on reciting it, thinking over it, acting up to it and conveying it to others, immersing yourself in the bliss of this experience, you will be making the greatest contribution to the welfare of the world. (Swami recited a poem on the glories of God's creation to prove "*Devudunnadu*").

Consider this mantra (God Is – *Devudunnadu*) as the message for this Guru Poornima and proclaim it in all circumstances and at all places, with all the conviction and strength you can command. If you strengthen your faith in this belief, the world can verily become a paradise on earth. This mantra will be an ultimate powerful weapon (*Brahmastra*) that will give courage to face all kinds of problems and difficulties. By propagating this mantra, we will promote the love of God and the fear of sin among the people. Among all other mantras 'God Is' (*Devudunnadu*) is the most powerful mantra. Greater than the power of mantra or yantra is the power of a pure heart (*chitha-suddhi*). Your faith must come from the heart—that is verily the seat of the Divine...

HAVE THIS FIVE-LETTER MANTRA AS YOUR CONSTANT COMPANION AND STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH IN GOD.

Spiritual disciplines determine the character of a person. Character determines destiny - whether good or bad. Character is built up by the constant practice of good actions. Actions, in their turn, are based on one's thoughts and intentions. Therefore, the good fortune or bad fortune depends on our own thoughts; so always foster good thoughts. Whenever any thought arises in the mind, one should examine whether it is right or wrong, whether it will do good to society or cause harm to it. Actions should be based on such inquiry. It would be wrong to blame anyone for our misfortunes. Our thoughts and actions alone are responsible for our plight. Only when one entertains pure thoughts, he will be entitled to win God's Grace.

Have this five-letter mantra as your constant companion and strengthen your faith in God. This will lead in due course to God-realization. Unwavering faith in this five-letter mantra 'God Is' will promote the power of the Atma (Atma-shakti) and will confer supreme bliss. Doubts should not be allowed to sprout. Faith is essential for accomplishing anything in life. Without faith, even ordinary things in life cannot be accomplished.

From today, develop your faith in God, engage yourselves in dedicated service to society, and make your lives purposeful and helpful to those in distress or need. Remember that whomsoever you serve, you are serving God. This is my benediction for all of you.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

July 21, 1986

Guru Shows the Way to Truth & Divine Bliss

I FIRST VISITED PRASANTHI NILAYAM IN JULY 1987 ON THE OCCASION OF GURU POORNIMA. For spiritual seekers of truth, this is the most auspicious day to pay homage to our divine master, who has come to lead us:

<i>Asato mā Sat Gamaya</i>	From the unreal to the Real
<i>Tamaso mā Jyotir Gamaya</i>	From darkness to Light
<i>Mrityor mā Amritam Gamaya</i>	From death to Immortality

However, I did not know the importance of this day at that time. Nevertheless, when I had the first darshan of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Baba, I knew that finally, after a long search, I had found my true master and guide. One glimpse told me He could lead me to what I was longing for in my soul – knowledge of the divine truth and the experience of universal love.

Since then, I have been a regular and active member of Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO), which Swami established all over the world to help us reach the divine truth. All the tools we need can be found in His name **S A I**:

S stands for Service, **A** stands for Adoration, **I** stands for Illumination

In everything He said and did, Swami turned the compass inward. To the modern world driven by technology, WWW means the World Wide Web. However, Swami would advise us to “Surf the Innet, not the Internet!” To spiritual aspirants driven by divine knowledge, the three W’s, in His words mean Work, Worship, and Wisdom. These three words define the three pillars of the Sathya Sai Organization: *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, and *Jñāna Yoga*.

The word 'idea' literally means, "that which is seen."
This implies that human ideals are not just moral principles but divine truths that can be seen through the inner eye of the soul.

Service, Karma Yoga

At the entrance of the Sri Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospital in Puttaparthi there is a saying in Sanskrit:

"Paropakarārtham idam śarīram"

(The purpose of this body is to serve others)

At Swami's *Mahasamadhi*, out of volumes of His teachings, just four words have been chosen to be engraved, to remind us that, above all, His organization stands for the spirit of loving service.

LOVE ALL - SERVE ALL

The global magnitude to which His work has quietly grown is astounding and unparalleled in the history of mankind. Inspired by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the SSSIO continues to spread His universal message of pure love and selfless service in 111 countries outside India.

Adoration, Bhakti Yoga

One of Swami's favorite bhajans explains the power of devotion:

Hari bhajana bina sukha shanti nahi

Hari nama bina ananda nahi

Prema bhakti bina uddhara nahi

Guru seva bina nirvana nahi

Without singing to the Lord, there's no peace or happiness

Without praising His Name, there's no feeling of bliss

Without love and devotion, we will never be free

Without service to Him, no salvation can there be.

Sri Sathya Sai Centers all over the world conduct weekly group devotional singing to foster adoration for God. He taught us to use our hands to serve all and our lips to praise God in all forms.

Illumination, Jñāna Yoga

The third pillar of the organization is focused on illuminating the mind. To help us do that, Swami created a more transformative kind of education.

EDUCARE

Sathya Sai Educare has been aptly described as the Veda of the 21st century revealed to the modern world by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. *Educare* is the Latin root of the English word Education, coupled with *Educere* which means "to bring forth, manifest, educe." The purpose of Educare is to bring out from within the hidden treasure of human values: Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love, and Nonviolence – *Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, and Ahimsa*.

Human values are the divine ideals, that serve as beacons to guide our lives. The word *ideal* comes from the Greek word *idea*, introduced to philosophical thought by the great Greek philosopher Plato. The word 'idea' literally means, "that which is seen." This implies that human ideals are not just moral principles but divine truths that can be seen through the inner eye of the soul. Swami gave us the ideal version of education and made it our reality with Educare.



Greek devotees performing “The Tales of Janaka”

While I immersed myself in all the pillars of His organization, I traveled from Greece as often as I could for divine interactions with Him. Bhagawan Baba recognized the importance of ancient Greek philosophy, which is the foundation of western philosophical thought. In interviews, He often asked Greek devotees, and me personally, about the father of Greek Philosophy. “Who was the Guruji of Alexander the Great?” We answered “Aristotle, Swami.” He then continued: “Who was the Guruji of Aristotle?” “Plato, Swami.” “And who was the Guruji of Plato?” “Socrates, Swami!” When He heard Socrates, Swami was blissfully content. He loved and held Socrates in high esteem.

Know Thyself

One day He told us: “Socrates is not the right pronunciation. The right pronunciation is So-crat-is.” We were all taken by surprise because this is indeed the right pronunciation in Greek: So-crat-is. And then Swami continued, “His name reveals His identity: ‘So’ means He, ‘Crat’ means Creator. He is the Creator, He is Divine!” And He continued: “Socrates was the same as Me but in a different time. He was teaching young students the same fundamental inquiry as I do: “Know Thyself. *Ninnu neevu telusuko.*” Always inquire: “Who am I? Who am I?”

Then you will know the answer: “I am not the body, I am not the senses, I am not the mind. I am the Master of the body, I am the Master of the senses, I am the immortal *Atma!*” Socrates was totally detached from the senses. He did not have body consciousness. He was fully aware of his divine nature. So, Socrates died with his mind totally focused on God and he achieved complete union with Him. That is why Swami loved him so much.

Truth, Goodness, and Beauty

Swami asked us in many interviews: “What was the essence of Plato’s teachings?” Despite our Greek heritage, we were unable to respond, when he first asked this question. Then Swami Himself gave the answer: **“The essence of Plato’s teachings was Truth, Goodness, and Beauty: Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram.”** Swami’s biography is titled ‘Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram.’ Just like that, with three simple words, He showed the unity between Greek philosophy and Sai’s teachings.

In November 1996, during Bhagawan’s 71st Birthday celebrations, the Greek devotees performed a drama in Poornachandra Auditorium. The drama was entitled “*The Tales of Janaka.*” King Janaka was a *karma yogi*, dedicated to serving his people. Though he was burdened with the responsibilities and duties of a King, he remained detached from the world and firmly focused on the spiritual path and the final goal, Self-realization. The drama consisted of three stories selected from Bhagawan’s divine discourses. These stories described the yearning of King Janaka for truth and his meetings with three great sages of ancient times: *Vasishtha, Śuka, and Ashtāvakra.*

Swami used to call our group ‘drama boys’, and showered us with special blessings during the rehearsals. He would visit us daily



Every interaction, every moment with Swami reminds us to question the illusion we live in and pursue the divine reality, which is One without a second.

at Poornachandra Auditorium to supervise the rehearsals, give advice and guide us on every detail. In the drama there were two female roles, one was the Queen, the wife of King Janaka, and the other was Mother Sita, the wife of Sri Rama. However, Swami had given us strict instructions that only boys should perform all the roles in the play. So, the two female roles were assigned to two boys in the group, by Swami Himself. One of the two was me, who received the role of Sita! At first I could not appreciate what later turned out to be a unique blessing for me.

As Swami used to come daily to Poornachandra, we had the chance to ask for every little detail to get clarity in our minds. We reviewed all the discourses of Swami relating to the play, as well as other books, but we could not find the name of King Janaka's wife anywhere. So, one day we decided to ask Swami about this, "Swami, please tell us the name of King Janaka's wife." Then, Swami became very serious. He closed His eyes as if He was connecting with the Tretha Yuga thousands of years in the past. We eagerly awaited His answer. Then Swami opened His eyes, looked at us mischievously, and with a big smile said: "The name of King Janaka's wife was... Mrs. Janaka!!!"

The next day, He came to my friend who was playing the role of the Queen and asked him: "How are you, Mrs. Janaka?" As

I jealously longed for His attention, Swami responded immediately. With the same playful smile, He asked me: "How are you, Mrs. Rama?" This was the divine humor of Sai!

In the first story of the drama, King Janaka returns to his palace very tired. He is seated on his throne and in front of him is a table full of delicacies. The Queen, seated by his side, tenderly massages his feet. King Janaka falls asleep and has a strange dream. In the dream, he has lost his kingdom and he is wandering exhausted and hungry in a forest. There he comes across three robbers who take pity on him and invite him to share some food with them. Before he has a chance to take one bite, a tiger appears. Scared, they scream, "Tiger! Tiger! Run for your lives!"

Is This Real or Is That Real?

At that moment, Janaka wakes up, full of fear. He looks around and finds himself seated in a comfortable sofa; with a table full of delicious food and the Queen is tenderly massaging his feet. He falls into a trance, and wonders aloud, "Is this real, or is that real? Is this the truth or is that the truth?" Perplexed, the Queen asks: "What are you talking about, my King? What do you want to know Maharaja?" But King Janaka does not respond; he keeps asking, "*Idi nijama? Adi nijama?* Is this real or is that real?"



The worried Queen calls the ministers, but no one comprehends the dilemma of the King, who continues to question “Is this true or is that true?” They try to bring him back to his normal state, with no success. Finally, they decide to call the great Sage Vasishtha, the family preceptor. When Vasishtha arrives, he sees the King in this trance, and with his yogic vision, he understands the depth of his dilemma. Then he says to him: *“King Janaka! Life during daytime is a daydream; during nighttime is a night-dream. They are both illusions. Idi nijamu kadu, adi nijamu kadu. This is not true, that is not true. You alone are true! The Self that is present as Pure Consciousness in both dream and waking states is the only true reality. The world is constantly changing; the Self alone*

is real and changeless. Only the Self exists, and He is Brahma, the One without a second.” Every interaction, every moment with Swami reminds us to question the illusion we live in and pursue the divine reality, which is One without a second (*“Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma”*).

Gift of Guru – *Brahmānandam*

My search for the gift of divine knowledge led me to my guru Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, on that auspicious Guru Pournima day. Over 35 years in His presence and His organization has granted me the most valuable gift of all: oneness with my Guru to experience divine bliss, *Brahmānandam*.

Jai Sai Ram!

Mr. George Bebedelis
Greece



Mr. George Bebedelis serves as the Director of the Institute of Sathya Sai Education of South Europe (ISSE-SE) and Co-Chair of the SSSIO Education Committee. He served as National Council President of SSSIO, Greece, and has an extensive background in Sathya Sai Education, having received guidance from Swami over many decades.

Mr. Bebedelis was born and lives in Athens, Greece. He has a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from the National Technical University of Athens, a Diploma in Pedagogy, and a master's degree in History and Philosophy of Science from the National University of Athens. He teaches Mechanical Engineering in secondary vocational education in Athens.



My Journey to the Sai Within

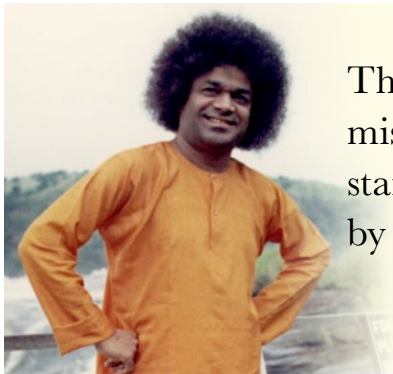
Our Eternal Companion

**I WAS IN MY 20s WHEN I WAS AWAKENED BY
A DEEPLY SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE.**

My upbringing had given me a solid moral foundation, but I knew nothing about spirituality. I had an abstract understanding that the objective world was unreal and non-existent, but I knew nothing about God or had anything else to believe in. I was carefree and content, but also rudderless.

One day, while crossing a road, I had a peculiar sensation that I had stopped breathing. I stood frozen in the middle of the road yet felt no fear for my personal safety. My mind concluded I was dead. The mind, still functioning, walked the body across the road, and sat it on a bench. I recall seeing a field of grass across the road with an alley of poplar trees at a distance and felt it was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. My mind stood still while my heart felt a sense of peace and profound love.

Then the breathing returned. But the mind was in a state of stillness as if its engine had stopped. For about a week, I remained in that state. The body neither needed sleep nor food, though it went through the motions out of habit rather than need. I would wake up after about 2 hours of sleep and study or listen to music until I had to leave for work. Eventually, things went back to “normal.” But I never forgot that time – a sense of “no-mind” and feeling content, peaceful, and happy. I was still able to carry out my daily routine during this period of transformed awareness. Everything went on perfectly, without my planning, control, and worry.



The objective world (*Jagat*) is unreal and non-existent, and the misunderstanding that it is real has to be renounced. The understanding that the idea of the objective world is a superimposition by our mind on the Reality is spiritual wisdom (*jnana*).

Sutra Vahini

Stream of Aphorisms on Brahman

But alas, “normal” life no longer satisfied me. I became aware of how meaningless my life was. I felt that if I stopped existing, there would be no loss. I decided I needed a teacher who could guide me to find meaning in it all. I visited many churches; I enjoyed the peace they offered. I visited a Zen meditation center and felt at home. I received a picture of Shakyamuni Buddha and started to meditate in front of this picture daily.

I once happened to visit a person who had on his wall a picture of a man with an orange robe and an Afro hairstyle. I was curious and inquired if there were any albums available by that Soul Musician. The owner laughed and informed me that the “Soul Musician” was Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He invited me to visit the Sri Sathya Sai Centre. It was a strange experience – it seemed they were just repeating some rituals without much understanding. But I felt content, peaceful, and relaxed. I kept going back.

Then, I read ‘The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist,’ by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss and I immediately knew everything recounted in it was true. I learned the Gayatri mantra and started reciting it before meditation and throughout the day. I still held Buddha as my teacher and guide. Until one day, while I sat in peace, enjoying the beautiful image of the Shakyamuni Buddha and having an internal conversation with him, I had a moment of insight. I could see a

very clear image of a Buddha, alive at this very moment, that I could visit in Prasanthi Nilayam. **I became firmly convinced that Sri Sathya Sai was Buddha Himself. It was so absolutely clear.**

Strong Scent of Jasmine

I did not have the money to go to India. I attended a Sai Youth Summer camp in south Europe instead. When the camp was over, I stayed behind to help clean up. While walking down a road leading to a parking lot, with large fields of grass on the sides of the road and an alley of majestic trees, I felt a strong scent of jasmine. It could not have come from the incense sticks in the hall, and there were no children around playing a prank on me. The smell was steady in its intensity and did not alter with the gusts of wind. I finally understood that scent was not an external stimulus, coming through the senses. It arose from within, bypassing the senses, and experienced through the heart-to-heart connection that I sought to maintain with my Sai teacher.

When I arrived in Prasanthi Nilayam later that year, I learned that it was customary to desire an interview with Sri Sathya Sai. I tried to develop such a desire, but I just could not. After my experience of smelling jasmine directly from within, I developed my own way of connecting with Swami and communicating all my doubts and questions directly to Him. He would answer them by providing an insight immediately

and a fuller understanding of the issue eventually.

Reward for Service

The daily darshans provided me with intense experiences of love and extreme bliss from being able to witness the material manifestation of my Teacher. One day, a service opportunity at the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum arose. I volunteered to help but it meant sacrificing afternoon darshans. During the first week of serving in the Museum, as a reward for sacrificing afternoon darshans with Sathya Sai, I was provided spiritual guidance and invaluable lessons through various incidents with the visitors I served. Swami granted me these experiences, navigated me through them, and became a guide in my spiritual journey. It has been like this ever since. **He truly is my 'Eternal Companion.'**

My first visit lasted about a month from early December 2000 to mid-January 2001. I did not know what to ask from the Lord. I prayed for the well-being of one member of our family, and I was grateful for His guidance through my experiences. And then I realized that the way of life I had led before due to my ignorance had probably generated karmic consequences. So, I prayed fervently that He would help me leave the old life behind so I could be His instrument without the burden of my past deeds. I prayed for this intensively, not understanding what I was seeking.

Near-Death Experience

The next day I was given a laddu, an Indian sweet, as *prasad*. Within hours of eating, I got so sick I had to leave my post at the Museum. I could barely walk and took almost 2 hours to get to the shed where I was staying. I vomited and had diarrhea all night. The next day was worse and then

at night, I had a near-death experience. I felt I was at death's doorstep. I remember all the thoughts that crossed my mind – what my mother would say, the unfinished projects at work, and so on. I had no power to suppress these thoughts. All I could do was witness the thoughts overwhelming my mind, becoming stronger and more intense each minute, and the overpowering emotions they triggered. Silly things I had done, thinking no one would notice or care, came back to haunt me, but now with a painful understanding of their adverse effect. Mostly, I could make no sense of it. I had no control. It felt like I was being pulled into a maelstrom of memories of my past. Whilst I knew we are advised to think of God during our last moments, I could not. I was a helpless passenger swept along in a flash storm of everything that had happened before. And then I lost consciousness. When I woke up, I felt like the insides of me were emptied and cleaned out, like I was just the outer skin of some object with nothing inside. Someone brought me water and I was able to build up strength over the next few days.

Ever since this experience, I have kept that Prince of Death as a friend and guide. Sometimes I would sit down and ask Him to sit with me while I reflected on my situation. Am I ready to go tomorrow? Am I ready to go right now? What luggage am I still hanging on to which I cannot take with me when the time comes to drop the body?

If I should sum up my interactions with Sathya Sai, he took two letters, one from me and another for which I was a messenger. His robe touched me once when he was passing by me while I was in the first row. And he looked at me. It was the first darshan where I got to sit in the first row, near one of the columns in the Sai Kulwant

Everyone has to make their exit someday. That moment should not be a moment of anguish, one should depart gracefully, with a smile and a bow. In order to do that, a lot of preparation is necessary. To depart, leaving all that has been accumulated during a long lifetime, is a hard task, so prepare for it by discarding attachment to one thing after another from now on.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

August 1, 1956

Hall. He came out from around the corner, stopped, turned his head towards me, and looked in my eyes...about two or three thousand years went by when I realized I was still sitting there with my mouth wide open while He had already moved on, interacting with the people sitting across the aisle.

He has taught me many lessons including one key principle—not just for me but for all.

All will be free. Every single one will be liberated or enlightened, call it what you will. The goal of the journey is guaranteed.

The date of our ascension has been written down and stored in the divine archive ages ago. It is inevitable! The wise, the righteous, the devotees, those who hate God, the sinners, the ignorant, the scoundrels, the rich, the poor, the tall, the short, the obese, the psychic, the wicked—every single one will be liberated. Maybe today, maybe tomorrow, maybe in 10 years, and maybe in one of the next lives, but the goal will

surely be reached. So then, why fear when He is here? While the goal is guaranteed, how we are going to spend the journey will be a reflection of our thoughts, words and deeds, and we will reap the joy and suffering they bring.

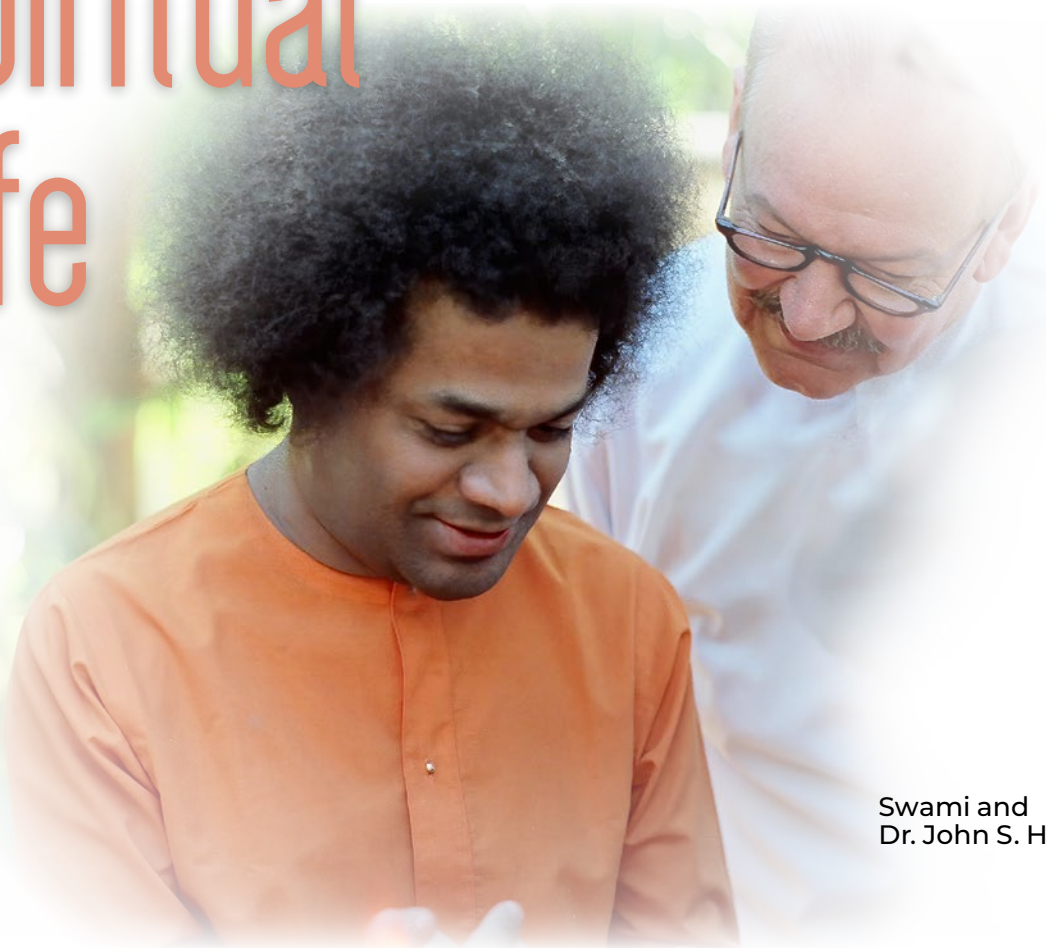
However, if we stay in that awareness that our liberation is inevitable, it will become our reality in the now, and we can partake in glimpses of it. Yet, the liberation we can achieve in the now is temporary as the impurities will prevent it from being permanent. But even then, the impurities relate to the body and why worry about the body and its impurities when we can stay in the awareness of the impending liberation. **The impurities will take care of themselves if we can hold on to our ‘Eternal Companion’ and remain firmly convinced that liberation is guaranteed.**

Mr. Jiri Blazek
Czech Republic



Mr. Jiri Blazek is the Central Coordinator of Zone 7, Region 71 which includes Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. He has held number of positions in the SSSIO over more than 20 years. He was a designer of the Zone 7 Newsletter magazine and Zone 7 Media Coordinator. Mr. Blazek graduated from the Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, where he teaches as a guest lecturer. He works as a Management Consultant.

The Goal of Spiritual Life



Swami and
Dr. John S. Hislop

I am very happy to be here in this beautiful country of yours, New Zealand, and especially happy to be here with Sai devotees.

The Only Reality

I would like to explain to you that although we say about Sai that He is here with us, the fact is—He *is* here. To illustrate, we are all sitting here in this room, separate from one another. To a stranger coming into the room, it would seem that this is a room full of individuals, each one unique and separate from the other. The fact is that Swami is the only reality that exists. He is the *only* reality. Everything else is *maya*, it is not truly real; it is transient and it does not last.

The only reality is Swami; and in every person here, Swami is the only reality. Therefore, when we look at each other, we should realize that we are looking directly at the Lord, directly at Swami. We should look right through the transient personality, pay no attention to the beauty or lack of beauty in the person, pay no attention to the personality—whether it is pleasant or

obnoxious. We simply look right through that person and see that God is the only reality in that person.

Therefore, we can, when we look at another person, quietly to ourselves, secretly—because it is a secret between God and ourselves—we can say, “Dearest Lord, I love You.” Immediately, there will be a flash of happiness across your heart. The person you are talking to should not know. That is a secret between you and the Lord. You continue treating the person according to his actions and his status. If it is a taxicab driver, do not invite him into the house and bring out your checkbook, sign it and tell him to fill in the amount. You treat him as a taxicab driver. He does not know.

The Story of the Crucifix

I must tell you one more story and that is the story of the crucifix—the crucifix that Swami created. Some folks here in New Zealand telephoned me in California and asked me if I would please bring the crucifix. I had rarely taken the crucifix anywhere before. I said, “All right. For New Zealand, I will bring the crucifix.” So, it is there on the altar and after the meeting, if you would like to come up and look at it, you are quite welcome to do so.

The Story of the Lingam

Now, the story of the crucifix. For many years, Swami brought a *lingam* (ellipsoid-shaped stone worshipped as the symbol of creation) up from His stomach during Mahashivarathri (Hindu festival, literally “the night of Shiva”). In Prasanthi Nilayam, He would sit on the platform and the audience would be out in front of Him and they would start to sing *bhajans*. After a while, Swami would look uneasy, He would move and look as if He was suffering a bit. When that started, the *bhajans* would start to go faster and faster, until finally Swami would put His hand near His face, and out of His mouth would come a flash of light and a great big *lingam*.

I was sitting close to Him one time and I saw it, and what landed in His hand was a *lingam* sitting on a stand with three legs. How that came up out of Swami’s throat and out of His mouth, I cannot imagine. What I saw was a flash of light, and then I saw the object in His hand. So, I do not know if the flash of light comes out first and then coalesces into the object. As far as I know, Swami has never said.

Every time He produced the *lingam*, it would be a different *lingam*. Sometimes the *lingam* would have a flame inside of it. You could see the flame inside the *lingam*. The *lingam* would be passed around and looked at by the devotees. Sometimes Swami gives *lingams* to some of His devotees. I believe here in Auckland, some people have received *lingams* from Swami.

Swami finally stopped doing the Sivarathri *lingam* ceremony. So, the next year, at the time of Mahashivarathri, He said to me, “Hislop, have a taxi ready at five o’clock in the morning and tell no one because we are going to go on an expedition.” We were going up to the Bandipur Forest in Mysore State.

We were there to do the *lingam* ceremony out of the sight of the general public. We drove around the forest, and Swami was looking for a good place to have the ceremony. We passed over a wooden bridge and there was a dry riverbed underneath and Swami said, “This will do.”

We came back a couple of hours later and prepared for the ceremony. We were walking toward the edge of the riverbank when Swami reached over and pulled two little twigs off a tree and He crossed them on the palm of his hand and said, “What’s that, Hislop?” So, I said, “Well, it’s a cross, Swami.” Then He put the two little twigs in His hands and blew for quite a few seconds. When He opened His hands, there was the crucifix—this extraordinary, gorgeous sculp-

The first goal of devotees should be to achieve liberation, to find out—“who am I?”

ture of Christ on the cross. I think it must be the greatest sculpture of the figure in the history of the world. It is simply outstanding.

I did not know what to say. There was a hole near the top of the cross and so I said, “Swami, what is that hole there for?” He said, “Contrary to popular belief, the cross was not put into the ground, it was hung on a peg on a standard.” I said then, “Swami, what are all these broken places on the body?” These were especially evident after the first photographs were taken. Swami explained that not one inch of Christ’s body was left uninjured. Every square inch had been beaten and bruised, with blood coagulating under the skin. The blood coagulated and made a series of little bumps all over the body. So that is the story of the crucifix.

The Power of the Crucifix

It is a very powerful thing, that crucifix. I do not know if you remember Mrs. Cowan, she had the first Sai Bookstore in America. She wanted to have pictures of the crucifix for sale in the Sai Bookstore, so we asked Swami if it would be all right and He said, yes, that could be done. So, she sent a commercial photographer to take the photographs; and about a week later he came to my home with the prints.

The photographer, my wife and I, were sitting at the table, studying these gorgeous prints of the crucifix. At the time, we were living in Mexico where we had a big house



with long French windows facing the ocean. Typically, in Baja, California, the sky is very, very clear. This was a typical Baja, California day with not a cloud in the sky. As we sat looking at the photographs and studying the crucifix itself, suddenly, we heard a tremendous peal of thunder.

We looked out the window at what, just a moment before, had been a perfectly clear sky to see a black cloud with flashes of lightning coming from it. Then a terrific wind arose and banged all the doors in the house and blew all the curtains aside. We were stunned. We wondered what was happening here.

Then my wife remembered. She said, “It tells about it in the Bible.” So, she went and got the Bible and found the passage where it describes what happened at the death of Christ. High winds came and wrecked the curtains of the temple, and so on.

Swami Corroborates the Story

Dr. Fanibunda wanted to know about the crucifix. You know of Dr. Fanibunda who wrote *Vision of the Divine*; you are familiar with that. He is a dentist in Bombay. He wanted an account for his book. So, I wrote down the account of exactly what had happened and sent it to him. He had it sitting beside his typewriter when Swami came to Bombay.

When Swami comes to Bombay, He usually stops at Fanibunda’s house because Fanibunda is an old-time devotee. Baba stopped there, and beside the typewriter

He saw my paper sitting there. Fanibunda asked, “Swami, is that right?” Swami looked at it and said, “Yes, what Hislop says is correct. That was a recapitulation of the death of Christ.”

Miracle in El Salvador

Devotees wanted me to go to El Salvador to talk at the Center there. So, to honor their wish, I took the crucifix with me. The head of the organization there is a chap who runs an American corporation in El Salvador. All the devotees were there, the crucifix was on the table, and they were looking at it. It was a nice bright day, and suddenly, it started to rain and thunder and winds came and blew the windows of his house open and banged all the doors in his house, too.

The Earth Shakes

When we were back in Baja, some chap up in Northern California sent a telegram saying that he would like to stop by the house and see the crucifix, and we agreed. He came and was sitting looking at it—and we were looking at it with him—when the whole house started to shake as in an earthquake. I thought it was an earthquake. After it was over and the man had gone, I went to our neighbor and said, “That was quite an earthquake, did you have any damage?” and she said, “What quake, what quake are you talking about? There was no earthquake.”

So that crucifix is a tremendously powerful symbol of the Lord. It is here, and you are welcome to look at it after the meeting.

How to Merge with God

It is my duty and my pleasure too, when I talk to Sai devotees, to tell them what Sai says as to how every devotee can realize his dearest dream—that dream being: to unite with God, to merge with God, and to

realize his own true nature. What I think you might *need* to hear may be quite different from what you believe you would *like* to hear. Therefore, I will tell you what Swami has said, for a while, and then I will ask you to tell me what you would like to know.

Since I have been with Swami for many years, I have heard many talks and had many conversations with Him, I can remember what He has said to just about any question that you might ask. When I answer your question, you can be sure it will be what Swami has said about that question or a very similar question.

The Goal of Spiritual Life

Why are we here—not at home watching television or a movie or something like that? It is because we have an interest in spiritual life. Most people do not have an interest in spiritual life. Swami said that if you take an ordinary worldly person and sit him down quietly and explain to him in the clearest possible language what spiritual life is, what the goal of spiritual life is, and how one proceeds to lead a spiritual life, that person would not have the slightest interest in what you are saying. No interest whatsoever.

That is why Swami tells us, “Do not talk about Me to anybody who is not already My devotee.”

You might reply, “I am supposed to help people. I help people by telling them about Swami.” Not true. You help people, you help everybody—all of humanity—by achieving liberation yourself. The first goal of devotees should be to achieve liberation, to find out—“who am I?”

Dr. John S. Hislop

Mt. Eden Center, New Zealand

October 21, 1993

Dr. John Hislop was a long-time devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who lived in California, USA. He started his spiritual journey at age 16 and came to Swami in 1968. He was a noble instrument of Bhagawan Baba, who worked tirelessly in the divine mission. He is the author of many books about Swami. In 1975, Swami appointed him as the founding President of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Council of the USA. He also served as the President of the Sathya Sai Society of America.





Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam P.O., Srirangapatna Dist., S.P.

We shall be judged not by the creed we profess or the label we wear or the slogan we shout but by the work, the industry, the sacrifice, the honesty and purity of character. Realise the heaven within you and all at once all the desires are fulfilled, all the misery and suffering is put an end to. Feel yourself above the body and its environment above the mind and its motives, above the thought of success or fear. The great cause of suffering in the world is that people do not look within: They rely on outside forces.

With love

Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

30-9-80

Realise the Heaven Within

We shall be judged not by the creed we profess or the label we wear or the slogans we shout but by the work, the industry, the sacrifice, the honesty and the purity of the character. Realise the Heaven within you and all at once all the desires are fulfilled, all the misery and suffering is put an end to. Feel your self above the body and its environments above the mind and its motives, above the thought of success or fear. The great cause of suffering in the world is that people do not look within: they rely on outside forces.

With Love

Sri Satgya Sai Baba

30-9-80

LOVE IN ACTION



ARGENTINA Noccan Kani House

For the past 30 years, SSSIO volunteers in Argentina have served the local indigent community at the Noccan Kani House, located near Santa Fe. Many low-income and disadvantaged families reside in this area. In 1995, a photo album of the facility, including pictures of its construction, was presented to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Blessed by Baba, this album has been preserved at the Sai Center in Santa Fe.

The first SSSIO Retreat was held at the Noccan Kani House in 1997, marking the starting point for many gatherings for service, educational, and devotional activities. Volunteers taught cooking, knitting, weaving, and sewing clothes; making sheets, duvets, pillowcases, and tablecloths, and painting on canvas – to help the recipients earn a livelihood using the skills. In addition, the volunteers also provided food, clothing, and school supplies; organized sports activities for children, and offered human values education through stories



and illustrations. In 2021, SSSIO volunteers served about 100 children and 40 women twice a week.

Wherever you are, whatever work you do, do it as an act of worship, an act of dedication, an act for the glorification of God who is the inspirer, the witness, the Master.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, April 21, 1967



IRELAND

Clean-up Service

A family of four Sathya Sai devotees who are new to Ireland worked with a group of about 18 volunteers and picked up trash from the banks of the Royal Canal. On April 24, 2022, 20 volunteers from the Sri Sathya Sai Centre of Dublin took part in a community cleanup project in the beautiful Booterstown Nature Reserve on the South Dublin coastline. The cleanup project was chosen to commemorate Earth Day on April 22 and Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Aradhana Mahotsavam on April 24. Some volunteers cleaned the strand of washed-up debris, while others cleaned the saltmarsh area, which is an important feeding and resting point for migrating birds.



JAMAICA

Medical Camp

In observance of Aradhana Mahotsavam, the SSSIO of Jamaica, along with local doctors, Campion College students, and the Indian High Commission at Jerusalem, Jamaica, organized a medical camp on April 24, 2021. About 120 people with physical and mental challenges were examined and treated by 18 volunteers. Medicines were also dispensed. In addition, 40 dresses were given to the girls of the Mustard Seed Community, a non-profit organization serving the impoverished and the challenged.



See more stories of loving service by volunteers from around the world at the Sri Sathya Sai Universe website:

- <https://saiuniverse.sathyasai.org>



KYRGYZSTAN

Hot Meals at a Shelter

In March 2022, SSSIO volunteers from Kyrgyzstan served 37 people at a local homeless shelter with hot food, including soy and vegetable pilaf, and distributed biscuits and chocolate. The recipients were grateful to receive the food and were touched by the love and compassion of the volunteers. The volunteers dedicated the project to Sri Sathya Sai Baba with love and gratitude.



SPAIN

Serving Mother Earth

On April 25, 2022, six volunteers from the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Madrid celebrated Earth Day by collecting recyclables such as glass, cardboard, and plastic from a large open space in eastern Madrid. They also distributed educational booklets with stories about Mother Nature and human values.



SURINAME

Honoring Ramadan, Easter and Aradhana Mahotsavam

In April 2022, Sri Sathya Sai Center of Sonjstraat, Suriname, organized a service project in honor of Ramadan, Easter, and Aradhana Mahotsavam. SSSIO volunteers distributed 15 packages containing rice, butter, jam, pasta, beans, oatmeal, flour, sugar, salt, oil, tea, and medical supplies and diapers to the needy in the districts of Commewijne and Paramaribo.





AUSTRALIA



Sathya Sai Primary School

1966

Howard Murphet and his wife Iris were on a mission to find "The highest manifestation of God in man"



"Pink Twins" at the Sai National Conference, 1994



Sai National Conference, 2019



FIJI



1970s

Devotees visiting Swami



Viseisei Sai Health Center opened in 2011

NEW ZEALAND



1980

John and Jeannie Peel started bhajans at their house and eventually had a center at the Crystal Palace Cinema Theater



1994 Youth Group
at Whitefield



Rongomai School opened in 2000



A Blessed & Memorable Day

On a beautiful November morning in Prasanthi Nilayam, a few days before Baba's Birthday, we were all sitting in the darshan area. The crystalline air smelling of jasmine, the chirping of birds, and the slight buzz of the many devotees gathered there set the background for our longing to see Swami walk towards us with His elegant and graceful floating gait. Suddenly, in unison, we perceived that He was coming, and here He was walking towards us, smiling. He embraced us with His eyes. After a while, the volunteers (*sevadal*) guided our group of Italian women to the area adjacent to the veranda, arranging us in parallel rows so that Baba could easily walk among us. I thought that Swami was giving us a '*pada-namaskar*,' (blessing to touch His holy feet) and I was so happy with this special opportunity. Time was crystallized in a paradisiacal dimension where every expectation, every thought, and every emotion dissolved in a sparkle of love and peace.

"Woman has been, is, and will be the backbone of progress, the heart of the nation, indeed its very breath of life. In the spectacle of life, she has been assigned the most sacred and important role, namely the mission of establishing the criteria of righteousness and ethics, as well as the moral and spiritual preparation of the children. If the mother is virtuous and respectful of morals, the children too will be moral and will automatically and advantageously follow her example. This is why the education of the woman, reflecting itself in her way of acting, determines the rise or decline of society."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Dharma Vahini



Sacred Gift

Baba came out, followed by the volunteers (*sevadal*). They carried in their arms some packages that He, displaying a broad and sweet smile, personally began to distribute to each one of us. What an unexpected gift! In the package, there was a magnificent sari, and as soon as the distribution was finished, Swami asked

us to wear it for darshan on the morning of November 19th, two days later. Once the darshan was over, we went outside to have the blouses made, the fabric of which was attached to the sari. We were all gripped by irrepressible anxiety, knowing well the delays of the village tailors. How could they satisfy so many requests in one day? With great confidence, we entrusted our saris to those good tailors with the promise to collect them the following evening.

On the morning of November 19th, carefully dressed in the sari given by Baba, we went to the Mandir for darshan. The volunteers (*sevadal*) seated us in a row inside the temple waiting for Baba who came shortly after. He started heading towards the Poornachandra auditorium, followed by His students who recited the Vedas, followed by the volunteers (*sevadal*) with an entourage dressed in saris like ours, and then all our group following in a sacrosanct procession.

Baba Declares Ladies' Day

Baba consecrated that day, November 19, 1995, as "**Ladies' Day**," with a Vedic ceremony in which only women participated. I had the feeling that something very important was happening. The solemnity of the initiation ceremony, the chanting of the Vedas, the magnificence of the place, and the words of Baba with their Divine power, ushered in a new era for women. The women present would become aware of being part of a Divine Plan to help themselves and humanity to land on the gilded shores of the Golden Age, where human values are the pillars of a noble and prosperous lifestyle, in harmony with creation.

If you want to acquire all joy, happiness, and prosperity, you should accumulate this particular wealth which is the Name of the Lord; a wealth that will also serve you to improve your good qualities.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba


June 18, 1989

The divine teachings of Sai continue to shape my character, my mind, my attitudes, and my habits making me different every day and immensely grateful for all the gifts received. In rare circumstances, my impulsiveness prompts me to react to an emotion or a particular circumstance. Then, His words resonate within me, reminding me that God is present in every situation and every person, and just like a ray of sunshine pierces the darkness, the tension, disappointment, or expectation vanishes.

Noble Qualities of Women

What fascinating alchemy! On the chessboard of life, there are many opportunities for a woman to show that values are the lifeblood that sustains and protects her. Qualities, such as compassion, patience, sensitivity, humility, modesty, tolerance, altruism, tenderness, gentleness, and understanding, are inherent in women. The woman has been entrusted with the most important task: that of an educator. It is the mother who teaches the children, and they emulate her, learning respect for parents, elders, and teachers, along with discipline, basic behaviors for good living, self-care, good manners, and much more. The mother will always be there to help, encourage, discipline, comfort, and correct.





The following aphorism, which comes from a very distant time, underlines what is the true value of the woman, which has persevered over centuries and must always be recognized, especially in this very particular historical moment.

“Not the beauty, but the good reputation of the woman must be known to many.”

Gorgias - Fragments - (5th Century BC)

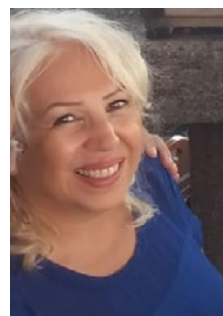
Ms. Bettina Di Carlo
Italy

॥ समस्त लोकाः सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥

Samasta lokāḥ sukhino bhavantu

(May all the worlds be happy!)

Bettina Di Carlo came to Swami in 1991 and has served in the SSSIO of Italy since 2000. She is the National Educational Coordinator of SSSIO, Italy. In 2007, she produced a handbook for women called “The Path of Excellence” and has written articles about women on the Sai Vivere website. She also wrote a Compendium for the women’s section. Bettina is a retired elementary school teacher who taught human values in public schools in Italy.



from the International Sai Young Adults

We are pleased to share updates on the recently held first virtual International Sai Young Adults Retreat themed Reconnect and Recharge. We are also happy to present two personal reflections from Sai Young Adults, a personal letter written by Sri Sathya Sai Baba to His students and put on your thinking caps for a puzzle!

SSSIO International Young Adults Committee

PUZZLE TIME

How well do you know Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings?

1. Life is a challenge, _____ it! Life is a dream, _____ it,
Life is a game, _____ it! Life is love, _____ it!
2. Love lives by _____ and _____. Ego lives by _____
and _____.
3. The end of wisdom is _____. The end of _____ is
perfection. The end of knowledge is _____. The end of
_____ is character.

Answers on page 40

International Sai Young Adults Retreat



On May 21-22, 2022, the International Sai Young Adults Committee hosted the first-ever online International Sai Young Adults Retreat (IYAR) themed: *Reconnect and Recharge*. The retreat was held over two days where around 250 Sai Young Adults (YAs), from around the world, participated in this exhilarating program.

On the first day, the program commenced with Veda Chanting by the YAs and a prelude followed by a welcome message by Ms. Vahinie Pillay (International YA Coordinator, SSSIO). An inspiring address was delivered by Dr. Narendranath Reddy (Chairman, SSSIO) emphasizing the role of YAs in the Organization and how dear YAs are to Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Thereafter, a panel discussion moderated by Ms. Piya Sukhani (Malaysia) titled, "Lights are many, Current is One" provided a refreshing platform for the guest panelists. Ms. Anu Venkateswaran (USA) and Ms. Raksha Mahtani (Spain), the panelists, shared their personal reflections and learnings based on the questions put forward by YAs worldwide.

The enthusiasm and energy continued to shine on day two where guest speaker, Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya shared his personal experiences and reflections with the YAs on how ideal YAs should lead their life according to Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings.

On both days, the YAs had the opportunity to reconnect, recharge, and refuel through various interactive activities, breakout sessions and sharing of heartfelt reflections. The sessions on both days culminated with Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Divine Discourse, a garland of blissful bhajans by the YAs and Mangala Arathi.

The IYAR 2022 was a resounding success evident in the love displayed by all participants. After the event, YAs shared that the retreat brought YAs from around the world closer and they felt the electrifying energy of all. The International Young Adults Committee launched a new initiative, #ServeSai and the YAs felt even more inspired to go out and serve the community. It was indeed a memorable and enjoyable experience for all.

Dewdrops of Divine Wisdom

My Dear Boys,

Accept My Blessings and Love. Watch your words, watch your action, watch your heart. Character is power. Patience is all the strength that a boy needs. Sai is not far from you, or away in some distant place. He is within you, in your own inner altar. Man suffers, he is unable to discover Him there and draw peace and joy from that discovery.

Boys! A loveless heart is a dry desert. Love is the foundation of life. The air that is inhaled and exhaled has to be loved in order that it may replenish and revive.

With Blessings and Love
Baba

Prema Dhaara, Volume 1

Follow the @saiyoungadults accounts on social media



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Sai Young Adults

<https://sathyasai.org/ya>

yacoordinator@sathyasai.org

Puzzle Answers

1. Life is a challenge, **meet** it! Life is a dream, **realize** it! Life is a game, **play** it! Life is love, **share** it!
2. Love lives by **giving** and **forgiving**. Ego lives by **getting** and **forgetting**.
3. The end of wisdom is **freedom**. The end of **culture** is perfection. The end of knowledge is **love**. The end of **education** is character.

Reflections of Sai Young Adults

Reflections of Sai is an initiative of the Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana of Love Subcommittee. This is an avenue for Sai Young Adults across the world to express their love for Sai by sharing their experiences and the positive impact He has had on their lives. Submissions of stories of gratitude, miraculous occurrences, and interactions with Sri Sathya Sai Baba are shared periodically on YA social media platforms.



Mr. Sershan Naidoo
South Africa

Like most 23-year-olds, I had moments where I questioned Swami when things were not working out or when I faced obstacles. I would ask, "Why me? What is the reason behind this?"

Indeed, this past year had not been easy with its challenges and work environments shifting online. There was one experience that helped me understand the importance of taking on and practicing a sadhana (spiritual practice). In 2021, I was faced with a decision that had the possibility of changing my life. At the time I was participating in the Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana of Love (SSSSOL) Programme for Sai Young Adults and was encouraged to pick a sadhana of my choice. After speaking to a friend who told me about the power of Omkar, I decided to practice this. Every day, without fail, even though the times differed, I made sure that I did my 21 OMs. As the days progressed, I felt a strong connection, like a pull; I needed Swami's approval to confirm that He was happy with my decision.

On September 3, 2021, I had His darshan in a dream. In the dream, the distinct smell of Vibhuti (holy ash) was very strong. Swami was there, and next to Him was Prema Sai – His hands were like a cross, one holding the other and His hair was curly with an intense shine. I was absorbed by the sight of both Avatars and the scent of Vibhuti; it was divine. They both said just three words to me, "I am happy", and I remember waking up convinced that I had made the right decision.

This incident made me realize that sometimes we go through a lot; we have our battles and feel lost, we feel like Swami is not listening to us, or that our prayers are not being answered. However, when we undertake a sadhana, no matter how simple or difficult it may be, we should offer it to Him. We need to ensure that those few moments when we engage in this sadhana, are just between us and Him. We will then feel a change occurring as we establish this heart-to-heart connection with the Lord. At that moment we and Him are one – all we need to do is just pause, introspect, and reconnect.



Ms. Chandni Melwani Indonesia

I was introduced to the International Sai Young Adults events team in 2016 in Prasanthi Nilayam, and there are so many memories to be treasured. Having countless sleepless nights, setting up the double-decker building, running around under the scorching summer heat in a saree, and the constant rush are some of the things I now look back on with nostalgia, when I started planning an international event. I feel blessed for the wonderful opportunity to have worked and interacted with hundreds of Sai Young Adults worldwide and to feel His immense Love through every one of them.

One memory that comes to mind is the 2019 Sri Sathya Sai International Leadership Program (SSSILP) Residential Course that took place in Prasanthi Nilayam. It was the last day of the course and everything that could go wrong did. The day's agenda was changed multiple times which extended to an hour longer than planned, cutting too close to evening darshan.

The event started and as the time got closer to 3.30 pm, the closing ceremony was yet to take place and my anxiety started to rise. I restlessly paced around and prayed to Swami to please take care of everything and let things go as smoothly as possible. At 3:45 pm, the Aarthi took place and I calmed down as the adrenaline rush subsided. I was filled with the sudden realization that despite our apprehensions, Swami had beautifully orchestrated it so that none of the agenda items had to be cut short and there was sufficient time for the YAs to attend the evening darshan.

We often feel that we have the power and ability to make things happen, and we forget that Swami is the ultimate doer, and we are just His instruments. He makes us realize that nothing goes against His will, and everything falls into place as He wills.

Today, as we step into another year of planning, we are happy to have hosted the first International Sai Young Adults Online Retreat (IYAR) where Young Adults from around the world came together to unite in His Divine Love and share their journey with our beloved Lord.



SRI SATHYA SAI

My Guru, My Guide



Reeja B. | Group 3 | Philippines

Who is a Guru? A Guru is someone who guides you through your life. That was Sri Sathya Sai Baba for me. Swami has always taught me to practice loving all and to never resort to violence. With Swami's guidance, I know I will be on the right path. My favorite quote of Swami is "Anger, rage, jealousy are the biggest diseases. Keep yourself aloof from these diseases."

Thank you. Jai Sai Ram.

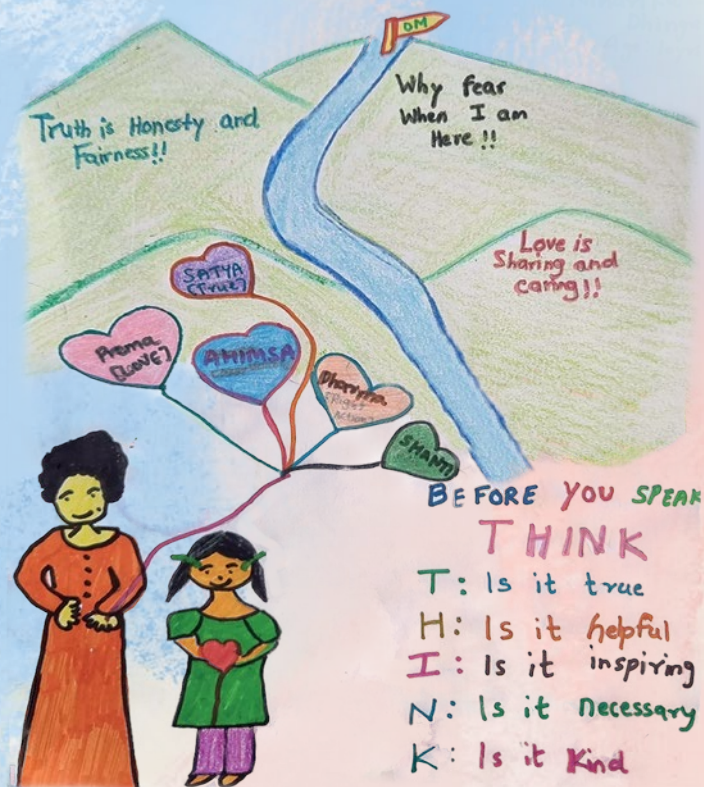
Roshan K. | Group 4 | Malaysia

Hi everyone! Sai Ram, I'm Nivia here from SSE Group 4. I started my journey with Swami when I was 13. Swami purified me with abundance of His blessings since then. Once, I started writing *likitha japam* (writing of God's name), I realize that Swami was changing my life to become more disciplined in my daily life routine. Then, I became aware that I still have long way to go on my spiritual journey. My Guru (Swami) knows how much is ahead and these are my life changing moments after attending SSE. Sai Ram!

Nivia M. | Group 4 | Malaysia



Aashini B. | Group 2 | Philippines



Niharika D. | Group 2 | Philippines

I'm truly amazed and have started admiring Swami's beautiful divine teachings of human values since my involvement in the Sai organization. The knowledge I receive is precious. The most noteworthy impact in my life is that I started chanting Gayatri Mantra and Sai Namavali (Bhajans, devotional songs) on a daily basis. Perhaps, that's how I feel about Swami, that my Guru always protects and guides me when I surrender to Him totally.

Kashvin V. | Group 4 | Malaysia

Sathya Sai Baba is my divine Guru. He always never fails to protect and guide me during hard times. Perhaps, He gives me a lot of strength to face obstacles in my life and I always feel His presence the moment I chant Om Sai Ram.

Pehshrivan V. | Group 3 | Malaysia



Daarshika J. | Group 2 | Malaysia



Darvin S. | Group 2 | Malaysia

Baba has taught me many things as my Guru. Truth and right conduct are just the first two. Peace, love and non-violence are the remaining three. Thank you Baba for I am forever a devotee of thee.

Maithreyi L. | Group 2 | Thailand



Ganesha C. | Group 2 | Malaysia



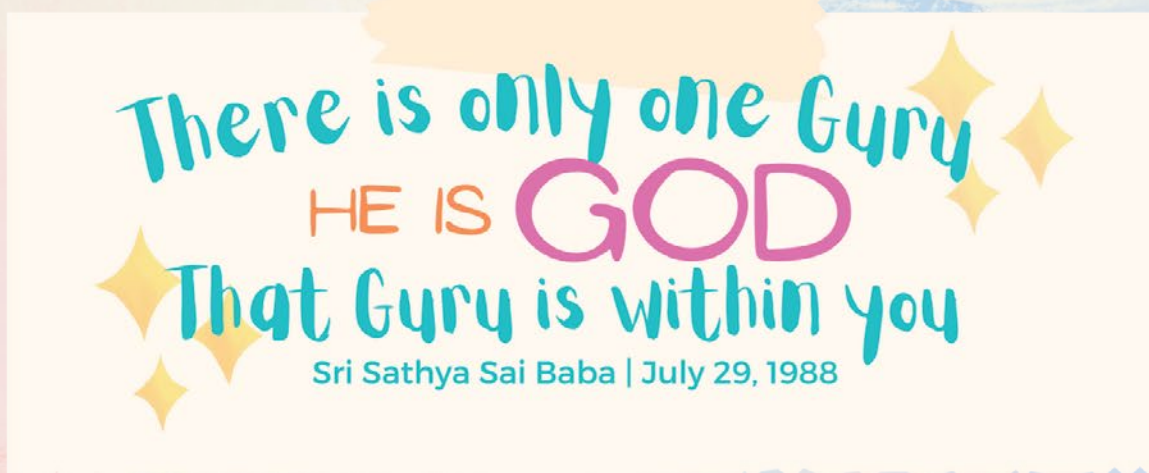
Yashasvi M. | Group 2 | Malaysia



Karishma RK. | Group 2 | Malaysia



Aswitta S. | Group 2 | Malaysia



SATHYA SAI BABA, MY GURU

RITIKA CHOPRA | GROUP 4 | THAILAND

One's own heart is one's Guru. Whatever comes from the depth of one's own heart is the real teaching of Guru. – Sri Sathya Sai Baba | July 28, 2008

As we move further along the path called life, we meet many kinds of people. Some of them become our close friends, some just a fleeting memory, while some leave a deep mark in our hearts, just like our Gurus. Gurus are guides who lead us down the path to our destinations. While we have many 'guides' (Gurus) in our life, be it teachers, friends, parents, siblings, and others, all of them want us to gain the ultimate peace, wisdom, and happiness. I have learned that God is our ultimate Guru, and that God is in everyone. God is the all-powerful Supreme Being, who is watching over us and guiding us on the righteous path.

My family is religious, and we strongly believe in Hinduism and Sikhism. We love to visit Gurudwaras, temples and all other holy places. As I started to mature, I began to have questions about life, and needed answers. I prayed to God every day to take me along the right path, and that is when we came to know about the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization. My mother immediately enrolled me in Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) (Bal Vikas) classes, almost 8 years ago. After just a few months, I was able to see significant changes in my life by simply following Baba's teachings and chanting slokas. I would like to share one of the most memorable incidents which occurred recently that changed my life, which reassured me that I made a wise decision by following the path shown by Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

I was applying for a scholarship in 'Bangkok Prep', which is one of the top international schools in Thailand, and I was nervous at that time. It was time for the interview and when I saw the list of applicants, I was sure that I would not get the scholarship. I remember saying to Baba, "Oh Lord, please be with me. You and I are one. My success is your success, please help me get this scholarship, I really want it."

As I stepped into the interview room, I felt all my worries immediately vanishing and was feeling very confident. I was able to answer all the questions nicely and did my presentation well. The interviewers really liked my presentation, and secured the scholarship, thanks to the grace of God. Now whenever I face challenges and tough situations, I always tell myself, "I am loved by God. No one can ever hurt me. I am strong and will forever stand tall."

To conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to convey my heartfelt thanks to all my teachers in SSE for teaching me and leading me towards success in life, finding happiness and gaining confidence in myself. I wish to thank my mother for believing in me and being my strength and my backbone, for without her, I would be lost. Most importantly, I wish to thank my supreme Guru, God, who incarnated in the form of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, for always watching over me, guiding me to be my best and always holding my hand throughout this journey.



Upcoming SSSIO Online Events

SSSIO has been conducting online events to share Swami's love, message, and works with everyone around the world. Hundreds of thousands of people have been reached through these events streamed on the sathyasai.org/live page.

Please visit sathyasai.org/events/worldwide for further details on scheduled events, including timings.

Date of Online Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
July 9 & 10, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Guru Poornima
August 13-14, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
August 20 & 21, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Zone 2A, 2B Presentation: <i>Sathya Sai Baba in Latin America</i>
September 17 & 18, 2022	Saturday, Sunday	Zone 6 & 7 Presentation: <i>Path of Unity</i>

 [Watch on sathyasai.org/live](https://sathyasai.org/live)



Stay in touch with SSSIO news and activities, by visiting the SSSIO websites and following/subscribing to the various communications channels below.

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- Sri Sathya Sai Education [🔗](#)
- Healthy Living [🔗](#)



The greatest obstacles on the path of surrender are egoism and attachment. It is something that has been inherent in your personality for ages, sending its tentacles deeper and deeper with the experience of every succeeding life. It can be removed only by the twin detergents of discrimination and renunciation. Devotion is the water to wash away this dirt of ages and the soap of repetition of God's name, meditation, and yoga (oneness with the Divine) will help to remove it quicker and more effectively. The slow and the steady will surely win this race.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

July 7, 1990



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never