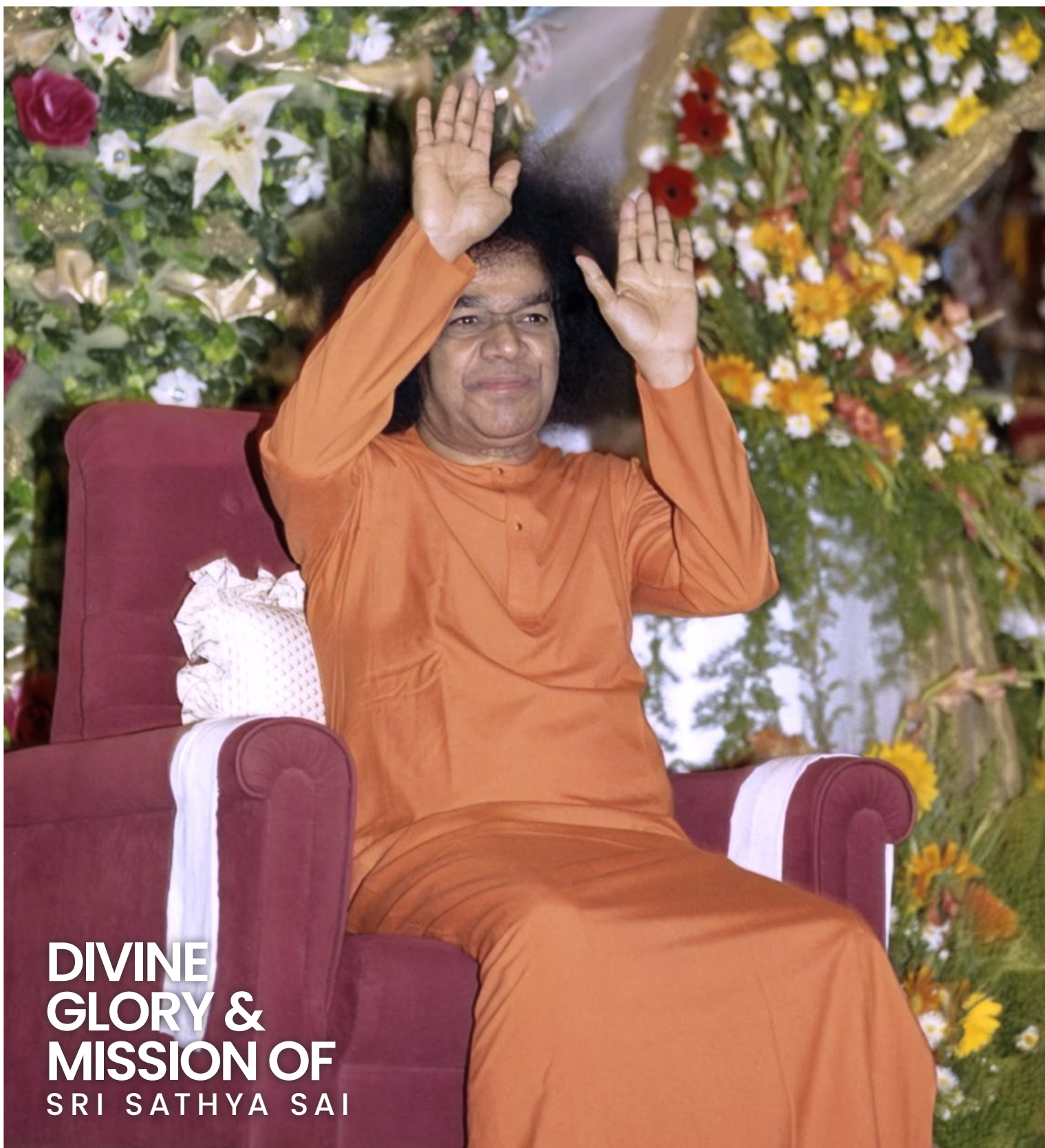


SATHYA SAI  
THE  
ETERNAL  
COMPANION



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 12  
DECEMBER 2024



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





All should realize that they come from God. All are children of God. Everyone should seek to get nearer and nearer to God. That is the *sadhana* (spiritual practice). You must feel that God is *hridayavasi* (resident of the heart). You must develop compassion in the heart because without it, the heart is only a stone. That is the message of Jesus—the message of love. Love is God. Live in love. Start the day with love. Spend the day with love. End the day with love. This is the way to God. Only the person who is filled with love will be dear to the Lord.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
December 25, 1996

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DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO  
**BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA**







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# DIVINE MIRACLES AND MESSAGE OF LORD JESUS CHRIST AND BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

When spiritual seekers read the Bible and hear about the miracles of Jesus, they might wonder if they are true and wish they were contemporaries of Jesus to experience His love and grace. But for some fortunate Christians, this yearning has been answered by experiencing the divine love and grace of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Baba says that the best way to know an Avatar and understand His ways, is to know one's own Self and nature, which is divine love. Another easy way is to study the life of another Avatar and, in that light, understand His life and message. **Many Christians who have seen and experienced Baba feel that they have become better Christians and can better appreciate the life, the miracles, and the message of the Lord Jesus.** Occasionally, Swami revealed that He is the same Christ, as well as the Father of Christ, come again.

In the November issue of the *Eternal Companion*, we narrated the beautiful and touching story of young Walter Bravo Jr., who had a very serious blood disease. The mother

prayed to Lord Jesus to help her son. That was when they were 'called' to Puttaparthi, and Swami granted them an interview saying, "You prayed to me, and I have responded." **Later, copious amounts of *vibhuti* (sacred ash) manifested from the picture of Jesus Christ at their home in Lima, Peru, and for her, that was sufficient confirmation that the two are one and the same.**

## The Special Crucifix

Similarly, Dr. John Hislop experienced this unity during the festival of Maha Shivaratri when Swami presented him with the sacred cross manifested from the original cross of Jesus. This event is well-documented in Hislop's book, *"My Baba and I,"* where he shares further details of this beautiful miracle.

The night before Maha Shivaratri in 1973, Baba informed a small group, including Hislop, to prepare for an early morning trip without disclosing the destination. The group later discovered that their journey would take them to the Bandipur Game Sanctuary in Mysore State.



Baba led them to a dry riverbed. By dusk, the group descended into the sandy riverbed. Baba, walking beside Hislop, broke off two twigs from a bush and, holding them together, asked, *"Hislop, what is this?"* Hislop responded, "It is a cross, Swami." Baba then covered the twigs with His hand, blew three breaths slowly into His fist, and revealed a crucifix, complete with a lifelike figure of Christ on the cross. Handing it to Hislop, Baba explained, *"This shows Jesus Christ as He really was when He left His body, not as imagined by artists or historians. He was in an emaciated state, with His stomach pulled in and His ribs showing, as He had no food for eight days."* **Baba also revealed that the cross was made from wood sourced from the original cross of Christ, reconstituted 2,000 years later at His divine command.**

The beautiful story of the crucifix continued when Hislop returned to Mexico with the sacred artifact. Upon photographing and enlarging the crucifix, Hislop and his wife marveled at the extraordinary details, deeming it a masterpiece of divine artistry. One

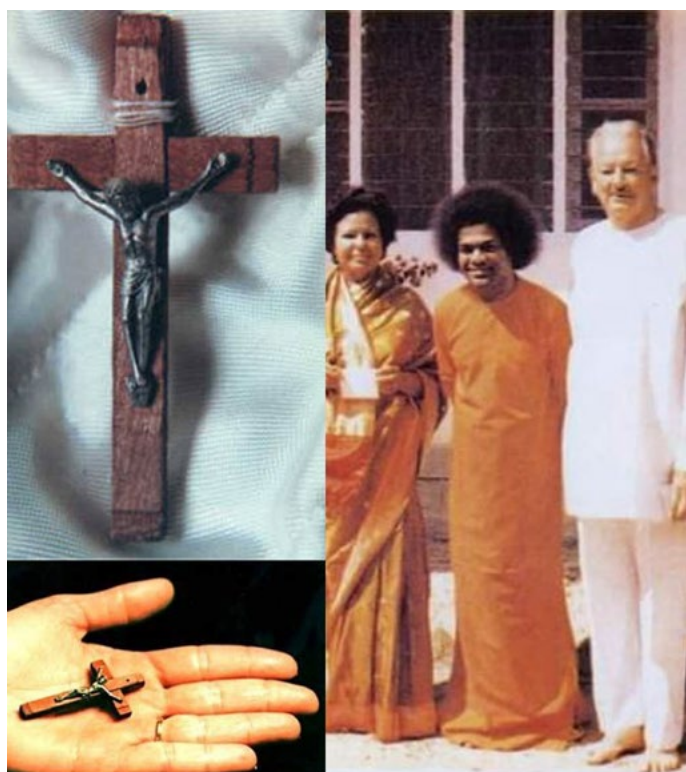
evening, when the crucifix was displayed, a sudden and violent storm arose, accompanied by thunder, lightning, and gusting winds. It echoed the biblical account of conditions at the time of Christ's crucifixion. Hislop's wife identified the phenomenon as a reenactment of the events surrounding Christ's death. This mysterious storm was later confirmed by local newspaper reports as a sudden, inexplicable, and unique weather event.

### Connected with Sai in Connecticut

The story of Mr. James Sinclair, an ardent devotee and a successful businessman who was 'visited' by Baba in Connecticut, USA, is simply amazing. In the 1950s, Sinclair, a devout Christian, often lamented, "How is it possible that I was born at this time and age, missing the opportunity of a lifetime? Jesus walked the Earth two thousand years ago, and here I am now." This sense of spiritual longing fueled his heartfelt prayers as he drove to work. "I know You are out there, but I can't find You, dear Lord. Instead, You must find me!"

**His earnest prayers bore fruit in extraordinary ways.** In 1964, shortly after his marriage, Sinclair and his wife stayed in a wood cabin. One night, as they were preparing to retire to bed, **Sinclair saw an elderly man standing over him in the moonlight, gazing down with maternal tenderness. Without a word, the figure turned and went through the wall, leaving Sinclair in awe.** Amazingly, his wife, too, had witnessed the same vision, affirming the experience they shared. Though deeply impactful, the meaning of this visitation would remain a mystery to them for decades.

Fast forward to 1984. Now a seasoned mediator, Sinclair began practicing relaxation, following a taped recording recommended by a friend. One winter night in Connecti-





## Selfless service is the best way to overcome our ego and attachment and purify our hearts.

cut, while walking down the hallway, he felt a presence. **Turning around, he saw a majestic figure in a long orange robe with voluminous hair. The figure disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared. Later, during meditation, the same figure reappeared and gestured for Sinclair to touch His feet.** Overwhelmed and unsure of the identity of this divine visitor, Sinclair sought answers.

In a New York bookstore, he described the mysterious figure to a clerk, who promptly handed him a book titled 'Holy Man and the Psychiatrist' by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss and a packet of *vibhuti*. The clerk, a devotee of Sathya Sai Baba, explained that the description matched Baba. As Sinclair read the book, the pieces fell into place. The dreams, the candle flame visions, and the visitations all pointed to Sathya Sai Baba. The realization was life-changing.

When Sinclair finally visited Prasanthi Nilayam, Baba blessed him with an interview. As Sinclair entered, Baba lovingly chided him, *"For all I have given you, you have never been happy one moment in your life. I came to you twice. Would you do something for Swami?"* Sinclair, moved to tears, readily agreed. **Baba then gave him the profound instruction, "Be happy."** In 1994, during another interview, Baba referenced the 1964 cabin visitation, confirming He had appeared to Sinclair thirty years earlier.

### The True Form of Jesus

Then, there is also the experience of Mr. Sergio Espindola, a senior leader in the SSSIO of South America from Brazil. He was an active member of a Catholic youth group. **One day, in the late 1980s, while praying on his knees at his church, he expressed to**

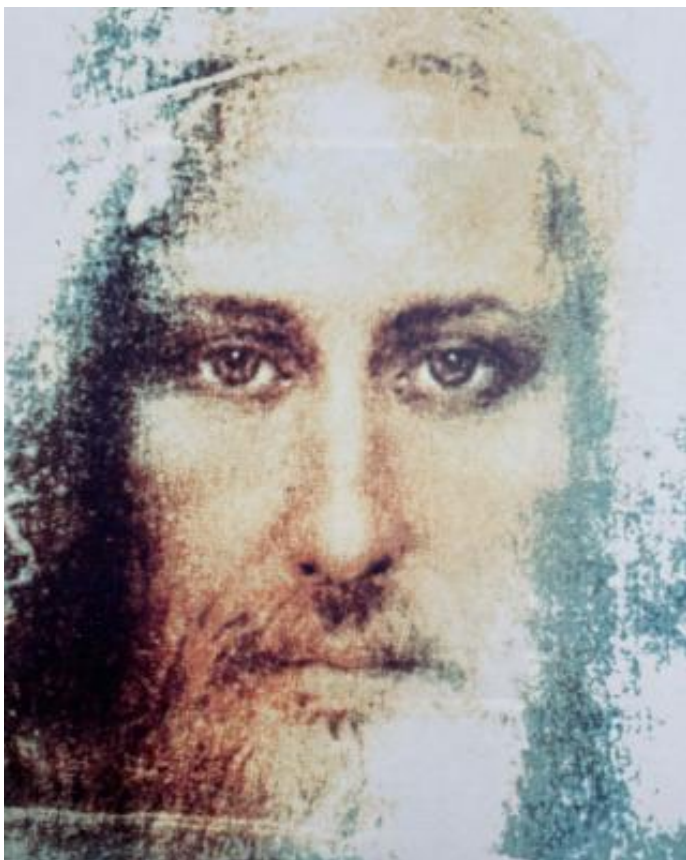
**Jesus his deep yearning. He wished that he had been born during the time of Christ so he could have been with Him, directly hearing His divine words of love and compassion.** This prayer, filled with earnest desire, reflected his yearning for a personal connection with the divine.

To Mr. Espindola's astonishment, only six months after this heartfelt prayer, a friend shared with him the remarkable news that God had indeed incarnated in India. Initially, he was skeptical, thinking his friend had lost his mind. However, as his friend began to share the inspiring teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Mr. Espindola felt an overwhelming connection to them. **Swami's words on love, compassion, charity, tolerance, and faith were the very same virtues that had always been central to his Christian beliefs.**

An incident that deeply strengthened his faith occurred early in his spiritual journey. Mr. Espindola's elder brother, a devout Christian, was skeptical of Baba and did not believe in His divinity. Before leaving for his second trip to Prasanthi Nilayam, Mr. Espindola asked his brother what he would like from Swami. His brother's request was simple, yet powerful: "Ask Him for an authentic picture of Jesus Christ." With confidence in Baba's divine power, Mr. Espindola agreed to make this request on his brother's behalf.

During his 15-day stay at the *Ashram*, Mr. Espindola became deeply engrossed in the spiritual atmosphere and completely forgot about his brother's request. Before returning to Brazil, he visited a longtime devotee of Swami in Canada. As he was preparing to leave for Brazil, he noticed a small picture of Jesus Christ on the devotee's altar and, intrigued, asked about it. The devotee shared a remarkable story:





Authentic picture of Jesus Christ created by Swami

He had brought a color picture of Jesus Christ to Prasanthi Nilayam, hoping Swami would bless it. One day, as Swami passed him during *darshan*, the devotee extended the picture to Swami to get it blessed. Baba stopped before him, looked at the picture, and asked, “*Who is this person?*” When the devotee replied, “Jesus Christ,” Baba responded, “*Jesus did not look anything like that.*” Astonished, **the devotee asked Swami what Jesus really looked like. Swami ran His hand over the color picture, transforming it into a black-and-white image of Jesus, whose appearance significantly differed from the original picture.**

The devotee then gave the picture to Mr. Espindola to present to his brother. Hearing this narration, Mr. Espindola felt a deep sense of awe and reverence. It was a powerful confirmation of Baba’s omniscience and omnipotence.

## Going Beyond Miracles

These incidents form the proverbial tip of the iceberg of experiences that reflect the oneness of Swami and Christ. And naturally so because both Baba and Jesus are divine incarnations of pristine, unconditional love, and their message is the same—selfless service and love for love’s sake. For instance, the divine discourse Swami delivered on Christmas Day in 1981, included in this issue, is all about supreme love. This issue also contains the personal experiences of Mr. Eric Wing from the USA which also highlights the miracles of Baba’s pure love. Experiencing the mind-boggling miracles of Baba in modern times leaves no doubt in our minds about the authenticity of similar, astounding miracles of Lord Jesus two thousand years ago.

Both Baba and Jesus emphasize love and service as the foundation of spirituality and the purpose of human life. Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to **‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.’** **Baba says that Love is the source, Love is the path, and Love is the goal of life.** He often exhorts, “*Start the day with love, fill the day with love, spend the day with love, and end the day with love. This is the way to God.*” He defines love as selflessness and self as lovelessness. **Thus, both make it clear that to develop pure love for God is the ultimate goal of human life.**

That is why Jesus says, “Seek Ye the kingdom of God, and everything will be added unto you.” Baba says that God is the hero or the numeral ‘1’ that lends value to everything else, which are mere zeros. Our wealth, family, influence, power, position, name, and fame are all zeros. They get value only when God is added in front of them. Once there is God, every zero added after it brings increased value.

Jesus and Swami both said we should expand our love for God to all humanity, animals, plants, and creation. In the gospel of Mathew 22:37-39, in the New Testament, **Jesus says, “Love thy neighbor as thyself,”** illustrating that loving others is the path to loving God. Swami emphasizes the summary of all spiritual practices is to **“love all and serve all.”** In the Gospel of Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus speaks about the importance of serving others as a way of serving Him, saying, “For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me in. I needed clothes, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you looked after me. I was in prison, and you came to visit me.”

When His disciples questioned Jesus about when they had rendered such services to Him, Jesus responded, “Truly, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” **Swami puts this succinctly, “Service to Man is Service to God.”**

### **Beyond Apathy, to Sympathy, to Divine Empathy**

The ideal devotee is one who feels the happiness and pain of others as one’s own. When we love anyone, we love God. When we reject anyone, we truly reject God. **From their very early childhood, both Baba and Jesus have shown how to love and serve all. They have shown how to sacrifice for others.** Their lives are replete with many such examples of love and compassion.

For instance, during Passover, Jesus entered the temple in Jerusalem and found that it had become a marketplace permeated by greed. Merchants were selling animals and birds for sacrifices, and money changers were conducting business. Outraged by this desecration of a holy place, Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers and drove out the merchants.

Baba, too, would melt at the sight of animals being tortured or sacrificed. He would constantly speak and act to protect these voiceless and helpless creatures. **In public discourses, He has made it clear that one of the best Birthday gifts He seeks from His devotees is giving up eating meat.**

The missionaries of Christ have done yeoman work in spreading Jesus’ message of love and service by setting up educational and medical institutions around the world. Baba, during His lifetime, also initiated many humanitarian projects, providing food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, and education and tertiary medical care free of cost to the needy. Following His footsteps, His followers and the SSSIO organize and conduct service projects and humanitarian relief in around 110 countries.

Baba emphasizes that selfless service is important for our own spiritual growth and





emancipation. **Selfless service is the best way to overcome our ego and attachment and purify our hearts. This purity is itself enlightenment. Jesus also emphasizes the same point, saying, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”**

Overcoming the ego is the key challenge for any spiritual aspirant. Swami says that is the true meaning of the Christian cross. We have included in this issue an article on how Swami helped Mrs. Elaine Hausman ‘eclipse the ego’ with divine love.

When we love others, we sacrifice for them and forgive them. Baba declares, *“Love is giving and forgiving. Self is getting and forgetting.”* When Jesus was asked how many times one has to forgive the wrongdoer, He replied, “Seven times seventy,” meaning countless times! He also advocated loving one’s enemies and turning the other cheek when slapped on one cheek.

**The greatest example of His sacrifice and forgiveness happened when Jesus was on the cross. Despite unimaginable suffering due to the crucifixion, He said, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34).** Baba also says that forgiveness and forbearance are the noblest of all virtues. He is an exemplar of these very virtues right from His childhood, even when He was put to terrible suffering and torture. Without the least complaint, he bore all and said nothing. A lady even tried to poison Him through food. **Being divine, He was not affected but He used the opportunity to teach the devotees a lesson on how to forgive. He even gave shelter and refuge to the woman who tried to poison Him.**

To develop divine love, Swami says that it is important not to criticize others. Swami says that when one points one finger at others, four fingers point toward oneself. This means that first, we need to correct our own faults. **Jesus says one should not look for a**

**As Baba says, miracles are merely His visiting cards that ‘introduce’ us to God. They instill faith, which leads to transformation of the heart which, in turn, leads people to do selfless service and realize God.**

**speck in someone else’s eye but, “Look at the beam in your own eye.”** For a spiritual seeker, judging others is the greatest obstacle to spiritual progress.

### **Baba and Jesus The Same Eternal Divine Principle**

The miracles of Jesus Christ and Sathya Sai Baba are astounding, mind-boggling, and awe-inspiring. Both made the lame walk, the blind see and cured incurable diseases. Jesus made the paralyzed walk and cured the lepers. Similarly, Baba made the wheelchair-bound get up and walk again. He granted vision to the blind, made the mute speak, and cured those with terminal illnesses, including cancer. People on the verge of death were given a new lease of life. Probably, the greatest among such miracles is raising the dead. There are three instances in the life of Jesus when He performed such miracles. The most well-known among them is Jesus’ resurrecting Lazarus after being in the tomb for four days (John 11:1), much to the delight and gratitude of his sisters, Mary and Martha. Another recorded instance is when He resurrected the son of a widow in the village of Nain when the dead body was being carried in a coffin in the funeral procession. (Luke 7:11) The third instance occurred when He resurrected the daughter of Jairus, the leader of a synagogue (Mark 5:35), asking

her to 'wake up' just as the funeral rites were being held.

Baba also raised the dead on many occasions. A modern-day 'raising from the dead' happened when Mr. Walter Cowan, an American devotee, was resurrected by Baba in Madras (Chennai today) during the Christmas of 1971. That beautiful and thrilling episode, which remains etched in the annals of divine miracles, has been detailed in this issue. Swami also resurrected Sri Radhakrishna of Kuppam in India in 1953; Brigadier S.K. Bose in the Poornachandra Auditorium in 1988; and the famous singer Smt. Sudha Raghunathan in 1958, which is well documented and recorded in Sai history.

Another interesting miracle of Jesus Christ was the multiplication of food. When 5,000 people had gathered to listen to His sermon, He asked for five loaves of bread and two fish and ensured that everyone was well-fed with just these food items. After everyone had been sumptuously fed, twelve baskets of food remained, symbolizing abundance and His providence. Baba has also multiplied food on many occasions by His mere touch, blessings, and sprinkling sacred *vibuthi* over a meager amount of food. In fact, Baba's miracles of multiplying food continue to happen in many parts of the world even today when His devotees serve food in His name. There is never a shortage of food, and everyone is always well-fed.

These miracles are not mere displays of divine power but expressions of His unconditional, supreme love. Miracles reinforce faith in the devotees and give them glimpses of God. **As Baba says, miracles are merely His visiting cards that 'introduce' us to God.**

**They instill faith, which leads to transformation of the heart which, in turn, leads people to do selfless service and realize God.** This is the four-fold path of *Chamatkar* (miracles), leading to *Samskar* (transformation), leading to *Paropakar* (selfless service), and leading finally to *Sakshatkar* (God-realization).

All these miracles and messages show that the Christ consciousness and the Sai principle are both eternal and founded on the same unconditional, supreme love. When we see these remarkable similarities between Lord Jesus Christ and Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba through their miracles and teachings, Swami's declaration, "*There is only one God who is omnipresent,*" gets further reinforced. Swami also states emphatically that there is only one caste, the caste of humanity; only one language, the language of the heart; and only one religion, the religion of love. In this issue, we included such a personal message from Baba to Dr. Hislop, titled "One Family Of Humanity." **All these, in turn, reinforce our faith and encourage us to practice the five fundamental human values—Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Right Conduct), Shanti (Peace), Prema (Love), and Ahimsa (Nonviolence), the underlying current being Love.**

Both masters present their lives as living testimonies to their message, and their universal message can be practiced by anyone, irrespective of race, religion, country, culture, language, gender, faith, and age. Let us pray on this auspicious occasion of holy Christmas that we dive deep into the teachings of Lord Jesus Christ and Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and sanctify our lives.

Jai Sai Ram.







# Supreme Love

The Lord is Love; His Form is Love. All beings are Love. Love saves and serves. Through Love alone, good can arise. Love reveals the God in all. Love binds one person to another. Love attaches one thing to another. Without Love, the universe is naught. The highest Love makes us aware of the Lord in everyone. The Lord is equally present in all. Life is Love; Love is life.

Without God, deprived of God, nothing and nobody can exist. **We live by and through the divine will. It is His will that operates as Love in each one of us. It is He who prompts the prayer, "Let all the worlds be happy." For He makes us aware that the God we adore, the God we love, the God we live by, is in every being as Love.** Thus, Love expands and encompasses all creation.

## Life Is Love

Looking a little closer, we discover that life itself is Love. They are not two but one. Love is the very nature of life, as burning is the nature of fire, wetness is the nature of water, and sweetness is the nature of sugar. We tend to a plant only when the leaves are green; when they become dry, and the plant becomes a life-less stick, we stop loving it. Love lasts as long as life exists. The mother is loved as long as there is life in her; when life departs, we bury her without the least compunction. **Love is bound with life. In fact, Love is life. One with no Love to share is like a dead person.** This is the reason why love expands in an ever-widening circle.





There is only one  
God and that God  
is omnipresent.

Names and forms  
are different  
naturally, but they  
are all aspects  
of the ONE.

Love is the fruit of life. The fruit has three components: the skin, the edible juicy kernel, and the seed. To experience the fruit, we have to remove the skin first. The skin represents egoism, the 'I' feeling, the excluding, limiting, and individualizing principle. The seed represents 'selfishness,' the feeling of 'mine,' the possessive, the greedy, desirous principle. This, too, has to be discarded. What remains is the sweet juice, the *rasa* or the essence, which the Upanishads describe as divine, the Love supreme (*Parama Prema*). *Parama Prema* is divine light (*Paramjyothi*), beyond death (*amritam* or divine ambrosia), and the supreme One (Brahma), '*apo jyoti raso amritam Brahma*.' Everyone has the right to partake in this nectarine *prema* and share it with others. No one is excluded on the basis of race, caste, creed, or place of origin. The only condition is to remove the skin and the seed.

#### **Give Love to God and Be Liberated From Worry**

When the Love principle is known and practiced, man will be free from anxiety and fear. Imagine you are visiting a friend in

a city and planning to stay with him for ten days. You have some money with you, and you are afraid to carry it around with you. If you have handed over the purse to your friend for safekeeping, you can happily go to all the places in the city and suburbs you would like to visit. You can roam through the busiest market with no trace of fear. **The purse you have is Love; give it all to God (your friend). He will liberate you from worry, anxiety, and fear.**

Through the spiritual practices (*sadhana*) of repetition of God's name (*japa*), meditation (*dhyana*), and service (*seva*), you have to cultivate Love toward God. Take the example of Dhruva, a prince and an ardent devotee of God. He prayed and practiced austerities in order to appease God to grant him the rulership of the kingdom. But when God appeared as Lord Vishnu before him, he said, "Lord! I do not desire the kingdom. I want You and You only." Similarly, in the preliminary stages, one prays for worldly boons and material gains, but as thoughts get clarified and purified, one desires just a single boon from the Lord-Himself! For God is the entity clos-



est to man, dearest to man. Your mother and father might be a little afar, but God is right with you and in you. Even if you do not love Him, He will not depart from you or move afar. The vedas say He is “*anorani-yan*” (smaller than the atom). He becomes “*mahatho maheeyan*,” expanding beyond the cosmos and filling all with grace. **He is in every cell. He is in you. You can earn this awareness through intense Love.**

### **Good Work Always Provokes the Wicked**

Jesus was compassion (*karuna*) come in human form. He spread the spirit of compassion and conferred solace on the distressed and the suffering. Noticing the torture of birds and beasts at the temple in Jerusalem, He reprimanded the vendors and drove them out of the holy precincts. He drew upon himself the wrath of the priests. **Good work always provokes the wicked. But one should not falter or fear when opposition is encountered. The challenge gives joy; it evokes hidden sources of strength; it invokes grace to reinforce the effort.** Pleasure springs during the interval between two pains. One has to struggle with difficulties in order to taste the delight of victory.

Jesus was the target of many mighty obstacles, but He braved them all. As a result, His name, His story, and His message are spreading splendorous light all over the world now. Not only Jesus but every prophet, messenger of God, teacher of truth, and spiritual leader had to wade through ridicule, neglect, and persecution. Though a diamond is discarded in a dustbin, its luster remains; its price will not diminish. Though a sweet pumpkin grows on a thorny fence, its taste remains; its attraction will not diminish. Even if a peacock’s egg is hatched by a hen, the peacock’s charm remains, and its nature does not change. The divine, though it



moves among all and sundry, can never be affected or deflected.

Envious folk heaped insults on Jesus. Even among His disciples, some betrayed Him and deserted Him. Selfish people turn envious of greatness and goodness. But since the *Prema* of Jesus had no trace of self, Jesus was unafraid. **The loveless are enveloped in fear. Love instills courage and promotes adventure.** It delights in daring. If you follow the master, you can face the devil, fight to the end, and finish the game.

### **Love Must Unite All Devotees.**

**Jesus was Love. Sathya Sai, too, is Love. That explains the gathering of Christians of all sects we see here.** In Rome today, Catholics gather to celebrate the advent of Jesus. Protestants celebrate it by themselves in their churches. In the presence of Sathya Sai, spiritual seekers of all faiths are equally welcome.

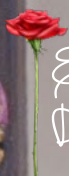
The Jews arraigned Jesus and demanded that He should be punished. In Sai's presence, Jews are celebrating Christmas and adoring that very Jesus. The *Prema* of Sathya Sai has transformed and transcended those memories. It made them realize that there is only one caste, the caste of humanity, and there is only one reli-

gion, the religion of Love. A few moments ago, Al Drucker spoke to you about Jesus Christ. He got the courage and the wisdom to offer homage to Christ because of the influence of Swami's presence. **He understands that there is only one God and that God is omnipresent. Names and forms are different naturally, but they are all aspects of the ONE.**

Love must unite all believers together; not only believers but non-believers, too, must be loved and served as His image. Love must be manifested as service, *seva*. *Seva* must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, and consoling the sick and the suffering. Jesus wore himself out in such *seva*. **The heart full of compassion is the temple of God. Compassion was His message.** He was sorely distressed at the sight of the poor. This day, Jesus is worshipped, but His teachings are neglected. Sai is being worshipped, but His teachings are being neglected. Everywhere, pomp, pageantry, hollow exhibitionism! Lectures, lectures, lectures! No activity, no love, no *seva*. Heroes while lecturing, zeros while putting into practice what is said. Develop compassion. Live in Love. Be good; do good and see good. This is the way to God.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
December 25, 1981





# The Resurrection of Walter Cowan

Ever since they got the blessed privilege to know Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Mr. Walter Cowan and Mrs. Elsie Cowan regularly visited Prasanthi Nilayam and Whitefield. Their shrine at their home in Tustin, California, was known to many as the 'Jasmine Shrine' since it was permeated by the distinct fragrance of jasmine flowers, an undeniable indication of Bhagawan's presence for many devotees. Even the picture in that shrine was mysteriously placed there by Swami in answer to Mrs. Cowan's prayer for that particular picture, which she failed to acquire in India despite her best efforts. On one occasion, in response to a sincere prayer from the Cowans for a sign of Baba's presence, an eight-rayed star jewel appeared in that picture for many days, and many devotees were blessed to witness the miracle. *Vibhuti* showered from the pictures at their Tustin home just as it does in the homes of countless devotees in India and



around the world. Hundreds have seen the sacred vibhuti shower and returned home, convinced of Baba's irrefutable divine blessings, which transcend the laws of science.

However, among the many miracles that the Cowans have experienced, the resurrection of Mr. Walter Cowan stands out among the most celebrated and documented ones, fondly recalled by His devotees. It is as profound and magnificent as the resurrection of Lazarus of Bethany by Jesus Christ. Here is a summary of the astounding recollections of that sacred episode based on the narrations of notable and ardent devotees of Swami: Dr. Jack (John) Hislop, Prof. Narayan Kasturi, Mrs. Ratan Lal, and the chief beneficiaries themselves, Mrs. Elsie Cowan and Mr. Walter Cowan.

### Sudden Death

Mrs. Elsie Cowan and Mr. Walter Cowan arrived in Madras (now known as Chennai) on December 23, 1971, to attend a conference that Swami was hosting. More than 3,000 presidents of various Sai Seva Samitis were in attendance. The Cowans checked into the Connemara Hotel, and later arrived at the venue. Baba at once gave them a warm and affectionate welcome. Mr. Cowan was not feeling well, so the ushers gave him a chair to sit down on that day and during subsequent *darshans*. On the morning of the 25th of December, Christmas Day, news spread quickly among the devotees that an elderly American had had a fatal heart attack and had passed away. Soon the word was out that it was Mr. Cowan.

Mr. Cowan had suffered from what seemed like convulsions early that morning, around 2:30 am, and it appeared that he was having a severe heart attack. Mrs. Cowan prayed to Swami for help at that most trying moment of her life. With great self-control and understanding of human mortality, **she ended her prayer with, "Let God's will be done."** She then reached out to Mrs. Ratan Lal, who was

staying almost next door with her husband. It was around 3:00 am.

When Mrs. Ratan Lal opened the door, Mrs. Cowan was crying. "Come, come help me! Help me! Walter is in serious condition." Mrs. Ratan Lal immediately followed her to the room and saw that Mr. Cowan was still having convulsions. Knowing that Walter is also a diabetic and seeing his condition, she told Mrs. Cowan to hold him down because he could fall from the bed and injure his bones. But soon, his body stopped shaking, became stiff, and appeared lifeless. Mrs. Cowan was now distraught. She kept saying, "Baba, Baba, Baba... Swami, Swami." Mrs. Ratan Lal reminded her, "Elsie, it's three o'clock in the morning. We can't disturb Swami at this hour. Let us go to Him in a few hours..."

The ambulance was called, and Walter was taken to the missionary hospital, Lady Willingdon Nursing Home, but Mrs. Cowan knew that her husband had died in her arms! She was exhausted and did not accompany the then-lifeless body into the ambulance. At around 7:00 am, Mrs. Cowan recovered enough strength to go with Mrs. Ratan Lal to Baba's residence to tell Him the news and ask for His advice and help.

### And the Resurrection

Even as they reached the divine residence of Swami that morning, Mrs. Cowan went on calling her beloved lord, "Swami, Swami, Swami." Swami looked through the window and saw the two women standing at the door. He beckoned to Mrs. Ratanlal alone to come up. She went to Him and conveyed what had happened. He said, "*You go back. See where the nursing home is, find out the visiting hours, and then at 9 o'clock, we will go.*" Once Mrs. Ratanlal had found out all the details, at 8:45 am, Swami said, "*Let us go now*". So, Swami, along with two nurses, two hospital doctors, and the third doctor who had brought Cowan to the hospital, left

I found myself very calm, in a state of wonderful bliss, and the Lord, Sai Baba, was by my side. Even though my body lay on the bed, dead, my mind kept working throughout the entire period of time until Baba brought me back.



for the hospital. Swami asked Mrs. Ratanlal to accompany Him. “What about Mrs...” she ventured to ask, but He immediately said again, “*Leave Mrs. Cowan here.*” Swami then blessed the grieving wife, told her to wait, and left.

When they arrived in the hospital room, Mr. Cowan’s body was fully covered with a white sheet. Swami asked one of the nurses to remove the sheet. The nose and ears were all plugged with cotton. The face was also tied with a cotton bandage, all part of preparations for the disposal of a dead body. Swami asked them to remove all of these. Then, He removed the sheet further and started hitting Mr. Cowan on his stomach with His hand. He called out his name, “*Walter.*” There was no response. The second time, again, He hit him and called out, “*Walter.*” There was still no response. And the third time, Swami hit him hard on his stomach. **Lo and behold, Mr. Walter Cowan slowly opened his eyes!**

A thrill of awe and inexplicable joy coursed through Mrs. Ratan Lal, who was standing there and witnessing this amazing miracle! A man who was dead had come back to life! All the nurses and the doctors present there immediately fell at Swami’s lotus feet.

Swami blessed them and, turning toward Mrs. Ratan Lal, said, “*Now, go and bring Mrs. Cowan.*”

### **The Attending Doctor’s Confession**

At 10:00 am, Mrs. Ratan Lal returned to the hospital accompanied by Mrs. Cowan. Baba had left just before they arrived. Mrs. Ratan Lal had not said anything to Mrs. Cowan, who was overwhelmed to find Walter very much alive! A discerning reader might ponder, “Was there medical verification that Mr. Cowan had died?” After all, neither of the ladies could have verified if Mr. Cowan was dead or alive the way a medical doctor would. This is well clarified by the findings of Judge Damodar Rao of Madras (the father of Mr. Narendar, then the Principal of the Sathya Sai College at Whitefield, Bangalore). He interviewed the doctor who had attended Mr. Cowan when he arrived at the hospital. The attending physician was personally known to Judge Damodar Rao.

The doctor told Judge Rao that Mr. Cowan was dead when he was fully examined shortly after the ambulance delivered his body to the hospital. The doctor said there were no clinical signs of life, and so he pronounced Mr. Cowan dead. He instructed



the staff to have Mr. Cowan's ears and nose plugged with cotton to prevent decay, cover the body with a sheet, and move it into a vacant room. The doctor then left the hospital on some other professional duty and missed Swami when He came to the hospital. The doctor returned only after Swami had left the hospital and, to his utter surprise, found Mr. Cowan very much alive!

### Triple Resurrection

As Swami returned from the hospital, He told Dr. Hislop and others within hearing distance that Mr. Walter Cowan had indeed died, that the hospital had plugged his ears and nose with cotton, covered him over with a sheet, and left the body in a closed room. **Baba said that He had brought Walter back to life as everyone listened with rapt attention.**

A day later, on December 26, Sri Appa, an ardent senior devotee, and Dr. Hislop accompanied Swami to the home of a devotee. From there, they went to a meeting of lady members of the Nigara Sai Samiti, where Swami gave awards and delivered His divine discourse fluently, without any break or hesitation. Sri Appa and Dr. Hislop sat on the stage just a few feet from Swami. After the meeting, they were to go to the home of another devotee for lunch. As soon as Swami got in the car, He turned to the duo and said, *"While I was giving the discourse, Mrs. Cowan called me. I at once went to the hospital and did what was necessary. Mr. Cowan's health had taken a turn for the worse."*

Sri Appa and Dr. Hislop looked at each other in wonderment and awe! Swami had continued His discourse and presence on the stage for the whole time while He had also gone to the hospital and done what was necessary! How does anyone explain this mystery? When they reached the devotee's house for lunch, Swami turned to the duo and said,

*"You will not be able to join me for lunch. Take this vibuthi to the hospital and give it to Mr. Cowan. Put some in his mouth and rub the rest on his forehead and chest... If you walk to the corner over there, you will find Mrs. Hislop in a taxi. She will take you to the hospital."*

When they reached the hospital with the vibhuti, Mrs. Cowan said, "Walter's condition took a very bad turn just a little while ago. I thought he was dead, and I was terrified. I at once called aloud to Baba for help. When I called Baba, I felt His presence at once. Now Walter seems a little improved." Mrs. Cowan had simply and spontaneously corroborated Baba's narration in the car to Sri Appa and Dr. Hislop!

A week or so later, when the Cowans were still in Madras as Mr. Cowan was still recouping in the hospital, Swami told Dr. Hislop, *"Today I received a telegram from Mrs. Cowan. Mr. Cowan was in a very serious condition again. I answered the telegram. Mr. Cowan will be out of the hospital soon and will come to Bangalore. It is My Sankalpa, My Will."*

Of course, there was no physical telegram. The telegram was Mrs. Cowan's ardent, heartfelt prayer. In the same conversation, Baba said, *"Mr. Cowan died three times. I had to bring him back to life three times."*

### Mr. Cowan's First-Hand Narration and Revelations

Mr. Cowan himself narrated the events he had experienced first-hand, with all the details to his wife.

*"While in the Connemara Hotel in Madras, two days after I arrived, I was taken very ill with pneumonia and was in bed. As I gasped for breath, suddenly, all the body struggle was over, and I died. I found myself very calm, in a state of wonderful bliss, and the Lord, Sai Baba, was by my side. Even though my body lay on the bed, dead, my*

mind kept working throughout the entire period of time until Baba brought me back. There was no anxiety or fear but a tremendous sense of well-being, for I had lost all fear of death.

When Baba took me to a very large hall, there were hundreds of people milling around. It was the hall where all the records of all my previous and present lives were kept. Baba and I stood before the Court of Justice. The one in charge knew Baba very well, and He asked for the records of all my lives. He was very nice and kind, and I had the feeling that whatever was decided would be the best for my soul.

The records were brought into the hall—armloads of scrolls—and all of them seemed to be in different languages. As they were read, Baba interpreted them. In the beginning, they told me of countries that had not existed for thousands of years, and I could not recall them. When they reached the era of King David, the reading of my lives became more exciting. I could hardly believe how great I was in each life that followed. As they continued reading about my lives, it seemed that what really counted was my motive and character, as I stood for outstanding peace, spirituality, and governance. I do not remember all the names, but I was included in almost all the history books of the world from the beginning of time.

**As I incarnated in different countries, I continued to carry out my mission for peace and spirituality.**

After about two hours, they finished reading the scrolls, and the Lord, Sai Baba, said that I had not completed the work that I was born to do. He asked the Judge that I be turned over to Him to complete my mission of spreading the Truth. He requested that my soul be returned to my body, under Baba's Grace. The Judge said, 'So be it.' **The case was dismissed, and I left with Baba to return to**

**my body. I hesitated to leave this wonderful bliss, but I knew it was best to complete my mission so that I could merge with the Lord, Sai Baba.**

I related the story to Elsie at once, and she recorded it. I also talked it over with Baba, and He said it was not my imagination, "*It was a true experience.*"

### **Swami Performs the 'Second Marriage' of the Cowans**

Dr. Hislop, always precise in his documentation, asked Swami whether Mr. Cowan's narration was true. Swami replied, "*The experience was a real experience, not an illusion. It was an experience occurring within Mr. Cowan's mind, and I was, Myself, there—directing and clarifying the thoughts.*" The mind, as Swami says, travels across births. Mr. Hislop then asked if every person has a similar experience at death. Swami replied that it was not necessarily so; some had a similar experience, and some did not.

Swami later told Mrs. Cowan that Mr. Cowan was strong enough to make the fifteen-mile drive out to Whitefield each morning and that he was to return to the hotel at noon each day and rest during the afternoon. Dr. Ganeswaran was his attending physician in Bangalore. He considered himself extremely fortunate because he would be in the room when Swami visited Mr. Cowan. Mrs. Cowan graciously allowed him to bring his family inside the room to have Baba's *darshan*. Being Mr. Cowan's physician, Dr. Ganeswaran was also privileged to be in Swami's residence at Whitefield to witness Swami performing a very beautiful and significant Vedic wedding ceremony for the Cowans.

Swami called the Cowans to His Presence at Brindavan, Whitefield, and invited a few devotees like Dr. Bhagawantham, the Hislops, Ms. Indra Devi, and Mr. Richard Bock for the ceremony. The ceremony included



exchanging rings, flower garlands, and marriage vows. Vedic hymns were recited. The American group and the students of the College at Brindavan sang *bhajans*. **Swami explained the meaning and purpose of the Vedic rites, celebrated when persons reached the ages of fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, and one hundred.** He blessed the happy couple by creating wedding rings and jewels. He then asked the Cowans to narrate the story of Walter's death and resurrection.

### A New Walter Cowan

Dr. Gnaneswaran was the physician who attended Mr. Cowan in Bangalore. He had Mr. Cowan's medical history and details of laboratory tests showing severe diabetes of long-standing, as well as various other coexisting conditions. After assuming his responsibility, the doctor compared the findings of Mr. Cowan's laboratory tests done in the USA with the laboratory tests he did in Bangalore. He could scarcely believe the new results!

Not only were the diabetic symptoms completely absent, but the tests for other coexisting disease conditions were all negative. **He explained, "Only Baba—only God Himself could do this."** The extraordinary fact was that when the total organism that was Walter Cowan died, the only entity that returned to life was Mr. Cowan's soul or *Atma*. Mr. Cowan's various diseases died with his body, and the diseases were not reborn. Only Mr. Cowan was reborn!

Mr. Cowan's mental state had also changed. Both the Cowans confessed that previously, Mr. Cowan was one of the world's champion worriers. In the past, he was filled with worry and fear that this or that unfortunate event might occur and that the desired outcome may not happen. **But after this event, the new Mr. Cowan**





became calm, free from worry, with no fear of death or anything else.

### A Peaceful End

On May 8, 1973, Walter Cowan wrote to Prof. Kasturi, "We are delighted that you are printing the story of Sri Sathya Sai Baba bringing me back to life. **Everyone seems very interested in hearing this story, and it gives them encouragement to hear that there really is no death, just the loss of the physical body. It rids people of the fear of death.** I am really feeling fine. Would you believe this? I have gained about 30 pounds since 'coming back'!"

Swami has declared that when devotees whom He chose were threatened with fatal

accidents or 'untimely' death, He rescues them so that they may continue to be instruments for His mission. He also says that He shows His presence during their dying moments and showers consolation, courage, and comfort to devotees who have won His compassion. Eighteen months after his resurrection, Mr. Walter Cowan passed away peacefully in California. Sri Ra Ganapati records in his book that Swami sent a telegram to Mrs. Elsie Cowan, stating, "*Rani (Queen), Walter arrived here in good shape.*" Our beloved Swami not only takes care of our 'welfare' but also our 'farewell.' He makes us focus on truth during our lives and ensures that we attain it even in our passing.

Jai Sai Ram.



**Mr. Walter Cowan** and his wife Mrs. Elsie Cowan lived in California, USA. Mr. Cowan was a land developer who owned a thousand acres in the affluent Orange County, near Los Angeles, in 1944. They were among the earliest devotees of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba from the USA and came to Swami in 1968. In the early 1970s, the Cowans set up a Sai Center in their house and also opened the Sathya Sai Book Center in Tustin, California. On April 28, 1977, Swami inaugurated the 'Walter Cowan Block' of the Brindavan (Whitefield, Bangalore) hostel of the Sri Sathya Sai Arts, Science and Commerce College, in the presence of the President of India, Sri B. D. Jatti. Mr. Cowan finally merged with Swami in 1973 and Mrs. Cowan in 1988.









Experiences of  
Devotees

# Pure Love



**THE IMPACT THAT BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA HAS HAD ON MY LIFE IS INDESCRIBABLE.** Swami has not only guided my life, thoughts, actions, and accomplishments, but has verily shaped my destiny. He has taken the form of my mother and father and given me endless love and support. **In every moment and in every encounter, I have seen Him guiding and guarding me, moving me along the spiritual path. His love has transformed me.**

What is even harder to comprehend is the sweetness of our beloved Lord. We know from most spiritual and religious texts and from saints and sages that God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, but how can we express His all-encompassing unconditional love and sweetness? It is infinite and all-pervading. I can only express my love and gratitude to my beloved Swami for His infinite love and His total care in guiding and guarding me always and everywhere all my life.



We are so very fortunate to have been born on this tiny planet as contemporaries of the Avatar of this age and to have even heard the name Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

***“Remember those two times I saved you!”***

**Swami said to me while I was sitting at His divine lotus feet on December 21, 1995.** Even as Swami was saying this, He perfectly reenacted the scene of a nasty truck accident I was in several years ago when I was miraculously saved. While narrating the incident, Swami looked at me the same way as the truck driver had, with the same angle and expression on His face. Swami even gently bounced up and down in His seat exactly as the driver did in the large earth-moving truck that hit my car that day.

It was an exact reenactment of that day's accident when Swami came to my rescue and saved my life. It was perhaps a forgotten detail for me, but a perfect way of reminding me of His grace, omnipresence, omniscience, and protection.

### **When Grace Overcame Death**

That day, I had been driving on a mountain road with many sharp turns while thinking of Swami. While driving around a curve, a thought flashed that the truck passing me on the inside lane had taken too sharp a turn and would hit the mountainside. Even before the truck's back trailer hit the mountainside, I knew it would bounce into the air, move into my lane, and run over my car, crushing it. With no time to think, I immediately veered off the shoulder of the road on the outside of the curve. While turning the steering wheel, I glanced up at the truck driver. He was bouncing in his seat, looking down at me, while turning his steering wheel. **Swami had exactly reenacted that scene to perfection!**

Glancing to the front, I could now see the bottom of the wheels of the back trailer of the truck suspended 10 feet in the air. It had hit the mountainside and would have landed right on top of my car, surely killing me, had Swami not come to my rescue that very moment. He had intervened the instant the thought of the accident crossed my mind, as He always did. He had given me His grace and protection to prevent the tragedy. **Surely, He had saved my life, and I thanked Him profusely. I even stopped the car and prayed for a few moments, thanking Him over and over again.** After some time, I recovered, drove further up the hill, and stopped again to thank Him with love and gratitude.

### **The Many Blessings From Baba**

We are so very fortunate to have been born on this tiny planet as contemporaries of the Avatar of this age and to have even heard the name Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Some are even more fortunate to have seen Him, spoken to Him, touched Him, and even spent time with Him. **Most fortunate and blessed are those who serve in His Organization.** This reminds me of Swami's amazing and inspiring words during the landmark divine discourse given on May 17, 1968, 'The Revelation.'

*“In truth, you cannot understand the nature of my reality either today or even after a thousand years of steady austerity or ardent inquiry, even if all mankind joins in that effort. But, in a short time, you will become cognizant of the bliss showered by the divine principle, which has taken upon itself this sacred body and this sacred name.*

*Your good fortune, which will provide you this chance, is greater than what was available for anchorites, monks, sages, saints, and even personalities embodying facets of divine glory!"*

Lastly, let me share the transformation I have experienced through Swami's love in my heart.

### **A Sadhana Path for My Transformation**

In my early 20s, I liked to repeat the name of Lord Rama. I love the sacred epic Ramayana, and even as a child, when my mother told me the stories, Rama appealed to me very much. I knew the right thing to do, out of gratitude, was to think of Swami with love. But as much as Swami was my chosen form of godhead, Rama was an appealing sacred name to chant, while picturing the form of Swami. Despite all my efforts, I could not do this with love, and I knew this was wrong. In truth, it was hard for me to love anything other than my parents. I was young and had no other experience of love.

Again, Swami inspired me to direct my love for my parents to the name of Rama and the beautiful form of Swami. This practice and my love grew into something far beyond what I had ever felt. **Repeating the name and focusing the love for my parents blossomed into an expansive love for Swami.** I can compare divine love to sunlight which



I am trying to see with the help of a small flashlight of human love. This divine love verily transforms.

This love in my heart became expansive and has grown far beyond what I thought was ever possible. **Swami's love has transformed me through and through. It has also transformed everyone around me. This divine love is our true reality.** Swami is always present underneath our personalities and the one we think we are. He is our true reality, always helping, guiding, and guarding us, with His infinite grace and unconditional love. He is the ONLY reality.

Jai Sai Ram.

Mr. Eric Wing  
USA 



**Mr. Eric Wing** holds a BA in Economics and an MBA and resides in Southern California. He is the President of SSSIO–USA, Region 8. He grew up in a family devoted to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and attended Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) from childhood. Eric has served in various positions at the SSSIO. He has had the blessed opportunity to interact with Swami during many visits to Prasanthi Nilayam.



# *The Master*

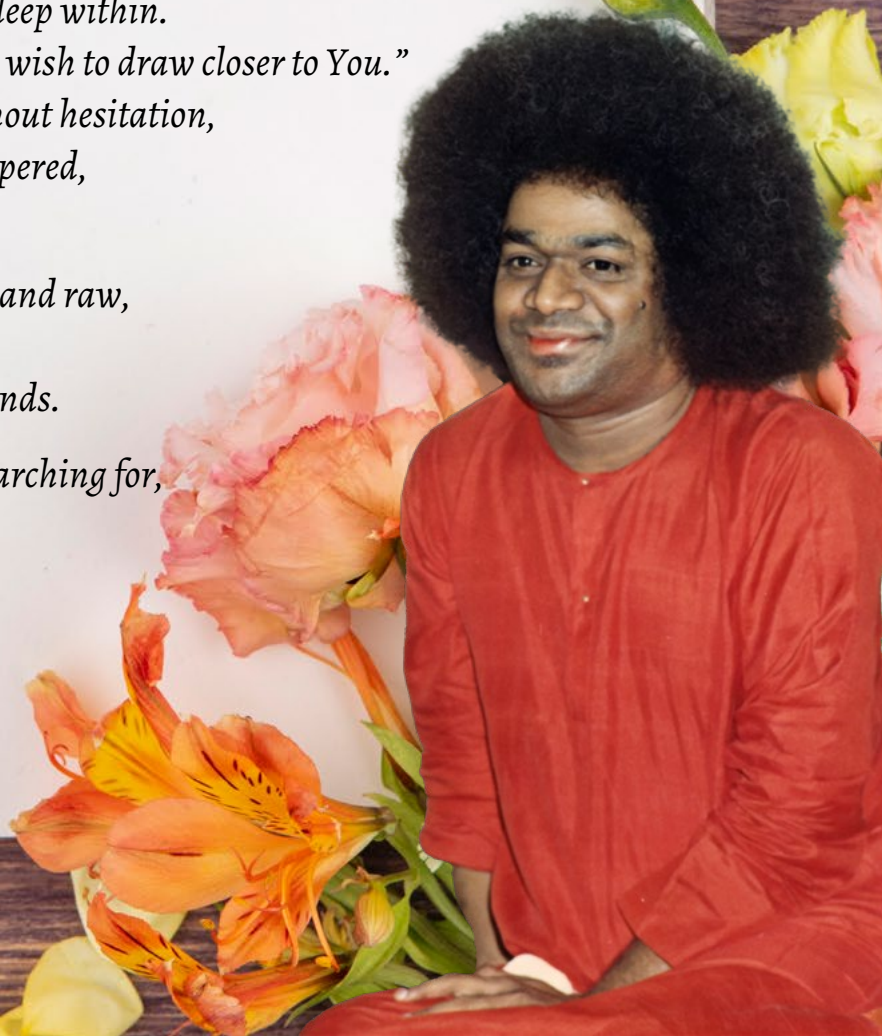
*When I said "yes" to Him,  
I gave up the right to be like everyone else.  
Great is His love, and sharper still His hammer blows,  
For He's been chiseling me through endless lifetimes.*

*In April of 2011, He granted the greatest gift,  
Freeing me from the chase,  
from seeking Him in the outside world.  
Only He knows the many lifetimes I've spent  
Yearning for something special outside myself.*

*But since that day, whenever I've sought His love outside,  
The chisel strikes hard, carving deep within.  
I cried and protested, "But I only wish to draw closer to You."  
And in a profound moment, without hesitation,  
He looked into my soul and whispered,  
"You and I are one."*

*Rough are my edges, unfinished and raw,  
For I am a work in progress,  
Held tenderly in His precious hands.*

*For I AM the Master I've been searching for,  
A masterpiece in the making,  
In the Sculptor's endless love.*



# *One Family of Humanity*

One family of humanity.

The ways may twist and turn, but when you once reach the top, the spiritual landscape which you discern is exactly the same. All others who by difficult routes have come up to the top are people who belong to one family of humanity.

People spend holy days as holidays. They revel in picnics and hikes, gamble and playing cards, films shows and sensory pleasures, feasting on dead bodies\* etc. These are demonic pass-times tarnishing the hoary traditions of the human being thus, is inviting degeneration of mankind. Man forgets that Godhood has to be achieved through humanhood.

Religion is a personal encounter of the individual with the supreme. Do not un-settle anyone's faith. God is one. The religion that leads man to God is also one. Each one comes from God, is of God, is He himself. Each individual is a lovely flower in the garden of Allah.

We Judge by appearances: God gazes into the heart! We applaud outer acts: God sees the interior motives!

With Blessings,

*Baba*

(Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's letter to Dr. Hislop)

\*Eating Meat



BHAGAWAN SRI SATYA SAIBABA  
PRASHANTHI NILAYAM

CAMP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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we judge by appearances: God gazes into the heart! we applaud outer acts: God sees the interior motives!

With Blessings Baba.

# LOVE IN ACTION



## **BOTSWANA** Project Happiness

On September 22, 2024, SSSIO volunteers brought renewed vitality and joy to over 65 elderly residents of the village of Rasesa, Botswana, thanks to the “Project Happiness” medical camp. Organized by the Sathya Sai Trust of Gaborone, the camp provided essential medical services to elders aged 80 and above. Patients were screened and treated by medical practitioners Dr. Sunil Kadiyala, Dr. Swetha, and Dr. Hitesh Kadiyala. General volunteers continued to operate the permanent medical clinic in Gaborone, which is open every Sunday throughout the year.

Led by Prof. Tsayang, a former professor at the University of Botswana, the camp provided holistic care for the elderly, addressing their physical and emotional well-being. The program began with a prayer led by Reverend Mpoeleng, followed by a welcome address from Prof. Tsayang, who highlighted the importance of caring for the elderly and the need for younger generations to take an active part in this service.

The camp was supported by numerous volunteers from Gaborone and Rasesa villages, as well as corporate sponsors who provided blankets and food hampers. Beyond medical care, the camp focused on promoting well-being,



offering guidance on disease prevention and healthy lifestyles, particularly for conditions like diabetes. The elders expressed heartfelt appreciation for the love and care they received. Dr. Kadiyala, on behalf of his team, extended his gratitude to the people of Rasesa for their warm hospitality and support. He also advised healthcare providers to continue to assist the elderly with further medical care and recommendations.

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





## MAURITIUS

### Sight and Support

October 20th is celebrated worldwide by the SSSIO as Avatar Declaration Day, commemorating Swami's announcement of His advent and His promise to guide and support everyone on the spiritual path. True to the spirit of the occasion, SSSIO volunteers of Mauritius expressed gratitude to their universal Master by participating in a march led by a Police Band. Later, the volunteers distributed special white canes used by the visually impaired for 'sight and support.' The day ended with the Vedic chanting of Sri Rudram and singing bhajans to honor the Avatar, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The activities underscored



the importance of selfless service as an offering to God.

Earlier, SSSIO volunteers in Mauritius also participated in the White Cane Safety Day on October 17, 2024, distributing special canes to visually impaired children at the Louis Lagesse Trust Fund in Beau Bassin.



## PERU

### Celebrating 'Three Kings Day'

Every year on January 6, Peruvians commemorate the arrival of the Three Wise Men or Three Kings at Jesus' manger, bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. SSSIO volunteers in Peru traditionally celebrate this joyous occasion with loving service around the country. In 2024, they served the community to implement the ideals of educare and sociocare as taught by Swami.

Volunteers in the San Antonio district, Huarochirí Province, provided toys, clothing, footwear, quilts, sheets, candy surprises, and a chocolate bar to the needy. SSSIO members held a workshop on human values for children aged 6-12 and also offered haircuts. Around 60 children received toys, clothing, footwear, and accessories.

Delicious chocolate was prepared and shared with community members and children in Cerro San Francisco, Villa María del Triunfo district, Lima province, and toys were given to children aged 1-12. Clothing, shoes, purses, and



fleece quilts were donated for cold weather. Free haircuts were given to children and adults. A human values workshop was held for children aged 6-12, focusing on love toward Jesus.



# God in Daily Life

SSSIO International Conference in Estonia, 2024

*"Devotees should recognize the unity of the Atmic principle that exists in all beings. Satsang (good company) is very essential to understand the oneness of the Atmic principle. Satsang does not only mean association with good people, devotees, or spiritual aspirants. 'Sath' is that which is changeless in all three periods of time. It is the Atmic principle. When sath and chit come together, what results is ananda (bliss). Sath-chit-ananda is the very form of Atma. This is referred to as Transcendental Truth."*

**–Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

March 1, 2003

## The Purpose Behind International Sai Conferences

*Satsang* (good company) is essential to achieve *Sath-sang* (oneness with the *Atma*). The Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) regularly holds 'Sai Conferences' across the world to enable devotees to enjoy the bliss and benefit from the company of the good and holy. When people with a yearning for Swami and a passion for practicing universal human values in daily life come together during such conferences, sharing, inspiration, and transformation abound!

*Such international 'Sai events' offer a great opportunity for sharing knowledge while enjoying good company. A great example of a blissful and heart-fulfilling 'Sai pilgrimage' was the annual spring Sai Conference near Warsaw, Poland. That was the experience of nearly a hundred participants of the International Sathya Sai Conference, "God in Daily Life," organized in Estonia during August 16-18, 2024.*



The international events dedicated to Sai teachings are a true-and-true and practical way to bond with devotees worldwide, bring peace and harmony, and raise divine consciousness in the world.

### Pärnu Becomes a Resort for Spiritual Seekers

At Pärnu, the conference delegates had a chance to enjoy group *bhajans*, delicious vegetarian food, invigorating morning yoga, and leisure time for walking on the beach or taking a river cruise. Additionally, while immersed in *satsang*, they enjoyed sharing stories of our dear Swami! The devotees, from 12 different countries, came to this North European town and shared a heartfelt, inspiring *satsang* that filled the mind and soul with universal love and peace. That profound universal love and peace was palpable during the entire event and produced very positive feedback from the participants, even weeks after the conference ended.

***Sai's universal values bond people who practice them.*** It is for this reason that devotees traveled thousands of kilometers to be part of this *satsang*. The deep yearning to spend time in the company of kindred spirits, the lovers of God, and to exchange personal stories about the implementation of the universal values, *Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, and Ahimsa*, in daily life formed the foundation of the conference.



### The 'Sai-lent' Work Behind the Scenes

"*Sathya Sai is a Silent Worker*," says Swami in many discourses. The SSSIO leaders are committed to following Him in thought, word, and deed and make efforts to embody the same principle. This was evident when the Chair of SSSIO Zone 7, Mr. Manfred Müller-Gransee, and Ms. Martina Alexandra Wildau arrived a week in advance at this small resort town beside the Baltic Sea, Pärnu, to organize and guide the conference arrangements.

The building which served as the conference venue was ideally located and perfectly suited for the event. The venue offered a large meeting hall and a dining area. Rooms for parallel workshops, located about 300 meters from the venue, also offered great on-site cooking facilities. Pure vegetarian food is often a problem in many international venues, but having access to a kitchen ensured that tasty, high-quality *satwic* food could be served. The Estonian organizing committee invited the renowned vegetarian chef, Mr. Lennart Eistre, and provided him accommodation and assistance in obtaining fresh fruits, vegetables, and groceries. Additionally, food prayers before every meal, along with the cooking sanctified by a chef



Mr. Manfred  
Müller-Gransee



Mr. Leonardo  
Gutter



Mr. Mart  
Vihmand



Ms. Maria  
Quoos

who is a spiritual aspirant, allowed *satwic* meals to be served.

### Diverse Presentations on a Common Theme

All the presentations during the conference were outstanding and inspiring. They embodied a diversity and variety which emphasized unity and oneness with divinity. Here are the highlights of the two days.

1. **Mr. Manfred Müller-Gransee** from **Germany** shared outstanding examples of applying human values in business with surprisingly great results for all stakeholders.
2. **Ms. Maria Quoos** from **Poland**, Central Coordinator of Region 73, gave inspiring talks on opening the heart, taking care of the body, and harmony and creativity.
3. **Mr. Leonardo Gutter**, a long-time devotee of Swami from **Argentina** and the Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation gave in-person talks on living in the present, the magic of smiling, and positive thinking.
4. **Ms. Agnese Lepse**, headmaster at the Keipene Primary School in **Latvia**, gave a touching presentation on applying human values at her school as a partner of the European Sathya Sai Education (ESSE) Institute.
5. **Mr. Enn Kaljo**, former National Council President (NCP) of **Estonia**, gave a talk on how to become One with God.
6. **Mr. Mart Vihmand**, the current NCP of **Estonia**, presented personal experiences of holding on to God to help cope with the ups and downs in life.
7. **Ms. Külli Kelu**, another former NCP for **Estonia**, talked about walking Sai values in everyday life.
8. **Ms. Evelyn Kanepi**, an Estonian composer, conductor, and spiritual singer, delivered a heartfelt talk on the positive effects of singing daily. Her live performance with soulful singing brought tears of joy and gratitude to the eyes of many in the audience.
9. **Ms. Marianne Meyer** from **Denmark**, a member of the Prasanthi Council, Co-Chair of the SSSIO International Education Committee, and the head of ESSE Institute, gave an inspiring presentation via Zoom about Sathya Sai Education in Human Values and how they are a gift to the world from our beloved Swami.
10. **Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya** from **India** delivered an uplifting virtual talk about practicing Swami's teachings and spiritual life.

The entire conference was held in bright 'Sai light and uplifting colors' by three shining and energetic Masters of Ceremony: Mr.



The conference also highlighted the benefit of following the principle of the 5 P's—Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.



Thomas Lahey from Australia, Ms. Katinka van Lamsweerde from Netherlands/France, and Ms. Evelyn Kanepi from Estonia.

### A Conference of Joy To Cherish

Apart from the diverse and intense program schedule, each day started with morning yoga exercises guided by the energetic Ms. Maria Quoos. Every morning and night, there was *bhajan* singing led by delegates from different countries. Saturday night witnessed a joyful cultural program with folk songs and dances from the participant countries. During the breaks and leisure times, guests ambled along the sunny and white sandy Pärnu beach and the town's green parks. They also went on a river cruise on Sunday afternoon, enjoying inspiring discussions, exchanging ideas, and sharing experiences.

***The conference was a resounding success largely due to the efforts of the organizing team,*** especially the local devotees led by Ms. Nelli Vadam. The local Pärnu Sai Group took care of every aspect of the conference, including venue preparations and flower arrangements, assisting the chef in the kitchen, preparing coffee breaks, and cleaning the dishes after each meal and break. Additionally, the media recording team consisting of Mr. Kaari Uus, YA leader from Estonia, and Mr. Thomas Rohland, who drove to Estonia from Germany, handled all event

media arrangements beautifully. The happy and like-minded Sai devotees, who spent a splendid weekend together in the name of Sai, contributed much to the success of the event.

### Take-home Lessons

Every SSSIO event is followed by a debriefing session to review the learnings on what went well and how things could be improved the next time. The Estonia Sathya Sai Conference showed that 'Sai-Events' make travel and participation truly fulfilling and purposeful. The conference also highlighted the benefit of following the principle of the 5 P's—Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.

Planning for such events should begin early with announcements on social media and other networks. Efforts should go into organizing on a truly large scale for the potential participation of 400-500 participants. Providing more detailed information about accommodation, facilities, travel options, local sightseeing, etc., preferably on a dedicated website for the event, will be of great help to the delegates.

The international events dedicated to Sai teachings are a true-and-tried and practical way to bond with devotees worldwide, bring peace and harmony, and raise divine consciousness in the world.

**Mr. Mart Vihmand**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT,  
SSSIO ESTONIA





## *Eclipse of the Ego*

**IN 1979, I WAS 26 YEARS OLD AND IMMERSED IN A LIFESTYLE OF COMFORT AND WORLDLY PURSUITS** in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. I had dropped out of college and become a fashion model. My spirituality at this time consisted of praying to God and merely hoping to get “enlightened” while high on drugs. My life goal was to be rich and famous. Besides my shady, get-rich-quick schemes in commodities, securities, mortgages, and real estate, I was successfully modeling in fashion shows two or three times a week. I felt that I was so special that I would inevitably be “rich and famous.” I would daily get high on drugs and thought that I was being cool when, in reality, I was headed inevitably toward self-destruction.



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**“God had used my attachment to the ego trip of modeling to remove it from my life for good.”**

### **A Humble Prayer for Humility**

That was when I witnessed something strange when attending the “Awareness Centre” in Salt Lake City. I saw a woman hugging, with great reverence, a framed photo of a man with an African hairdo in an orange robe. I had never witnessed such odd behavior before and asked my counselor about the person in the photo.

“That is Sai Baba, but I know you wouldn’t be interested in Him. He’s not your kind of guy.” But I was extremely curious and interested! So, he gave me a book to read, *“Sadhana–The Inward Path.”*

This book is not a typical book about Sathya Sai Baba filled with personal stories and miracles. There were no miracles or experiences described in it. It is a book of Sai Baba’s core teachings on spirituality and the ideal way of life. I was incredulous that ANYONE would lead a life like this and assumed that it was written only for people in India. But there was something in it that I knew was true and enticing—living on a path where every thought, word, and deed was saturated with God’s love. Somehow, I was blessed to recognize the divine source and authenticity in the writing, solely by His grace, of course. **I also received one major lesson from the reading. I was very arrogant at that time, and I felt that I needed to develop humility.**

*“Do not hesitate to practice humility and obedience, discipline and compassion; give up pride in your status, wealth, scholarship or official position.”*

**–Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
*Sanathana Sarathi 1995*

I prayed to Sai Baba: “Dear Lord, you have given me everything. Now I just need humility”. Incredibly, I prayed for humility while high on drugs and camping alone in the mountains!

### **Coming Down To Earth**

Sai Baba works fast! Within a week, I got a phone call from an ambitious man who was looking for investors for his new company, having to do with investing in gold and silver ‘pyramids.’ I had cultivated business relationships with many investors over the years in my commodities, securities, and real estate endeavors. I was excited by the idea that we would be getting investment money to buy gold and get the gold molded into pyramids, displayed in a beautiful plexiglass case on velvet. How spiritual is that, I thought! Everybody “knows” that pyramids are “spiritual” ... Not only would I become rich, but I would be “holy” no less! My ego was out of bounds.

At the end of November, my ‘partner’ vanished with all the money and the gold—including my own, my father’s, and his friends! He was a classic con artist,



and even though I sought help from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, law enforcement authority in the USA), there was no way to get back the money. I came crashing down to earth from the imaginary clouds of hubris that I was floating in. After all, the root word for humility is 'humus,' which means the mud, the earth. I was humbled in a way that I had never experienced before. I was now scared that people would come after me for cheating them out of their hard-earned money!

### Hope Beckons

In the depths of this crisis, I desperately wrote Sai Baba a letter explaining my predicament and asked Him what I should do. I mailed it to Him without expecting anything much to happen.

A few days later, my mother tracked me down in Los Angeles and called me. (This

was in an era before mobile phones, and I wondered how she managed to do that.) She told me that she had received a brochure from the American Astronomical Society (AAS) to travel to India and see the solar eclipse. The tour would take us to Hyderabad in India to see the total eclipse and then visit the city of Bangalore. I had never known my mother to travel without my dad. Added to this, Sai Baba's *ashram* was in Bangalore! That is why I felt that this was a response from Sai Baba. I gratefully said yes to my mother, feeling very much in my heart that I was saying "Yes" to Baba.

So, in February 1980, we went to India. I packed an assortment of my favorite "recreational substances," and we joined the AAS at JFK Airport in New York City. The AAS had commissioned a photographer to go along the tour for professional eclipse photos and photos of the group of about 80 people. When I informed him that I was a model, he asked me to model a sari for him when we got to the renowned Taj Mahal on the tour. I looked forward with great anticipation to having pictures of myself at that iconic site in my portfolio.

We flew to Hyderabad, where the eclipse was in totality. It was the new moon in February, which, of course, is the night of Mahashivaratri. I was just starting to learn the meaning of it at Baba's *ashram*, where it was a time of all-night prayers, singing, and meditation. I went out into some fields in the countryside near Hyderabad to get a perfect view of the eclipse. I had taken some psychedelic drugs to enhance my experience, as was my habit. As the total darkness ensued, we were astounded to see a huge golden eagle fly right over our heads. I took it as a sign of Sai Baba's Grace. The eclipse was a mystical experience.

Back at the hotel that evening, as people were partying and drinking, I soon realized that the meaning of Shivaratri was



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**The ego requires constant vigilance to control.  
I pray, “Help me see myself and others the way  
you see, Lord, with the eyes of love.”**

being perverted. My lifetime’s misdeeds and egotistical actions weighed on me like an anvil of shame. I was completely mortified and cried for hours. **Teachings that I had so blithely written off when reading the book “*Sadhana–The Inward Path*” became not only desirable but a necessary way to reconcile the mess I had made out of my life.**

### **A Very Special Journey**

The AAS group flew to Bangalore the next morning. I asked at the hotel desk in Bangalore and learned that Sai Baba was nearby at his Whitefield *ashram*, called Brindavan.

At 6 am the next morning, I took about 100 Rupees, my camera, drugs, and a bedsheet in my travel bag, and said goodbye to my mom. I got a cab to take me to Whitefield, Sai Baba’s *ashram*. As we pulled up to the gates, which were closed, a man standing there told the driver that Sai Baba had just left to go to Puttaparthi! I was devastated and wailed in anguish, “Take me to the bus station.” They said that the bus had left hours earlier and it was too late, but they took me there anyway. When we got to the bus station, the Puttaparthi bus was still waiting there and had one seat left for only 5 Rupees.

I gave the taxi drivers a note for my mom back at the hotel, saying that I was going out to the wilds of India to Sai Baba’s *ashram*, not believing that they would deliver it to her because I did not pay them to drive back to the hotel.

### **Lessons on The Bus**

A photo of Sai Baba was hanging in the front of the bus with a fresh garland on it, which gave me a sense of relief. There were no other Westerners or English-speaking passengers on the bus, just country folks, children, and chickens. At each village over the 7-hour trip, the riders who were crouched in the aisle would get off, replaced temporarily by a stream of beggars. I tried to give money to one of the beggar children, and the young mother on my left slapped my hand to put the money away. It brought to mind the injunction in “*Sadhana*” about not giving money to beggars. She later took my money to buy milk for a sick woman, demonstrating that giving food or sustenance was appropriate.

After a few more hours, my head was drooping forward with sleep and hunger when an orange dropped into my lap. I jerked my head up, looking around in surprise. Some girls with colorful saris and flowers in their hair near the front of the bus had conspired to pass the orange, seat to seat, to the strange American girl who was sitting alone on the bus! To me, it was a gift from Sai Baba. If He could inspire such kindness, perhaps there was some hope that He is really who He says He is—God incarnate. I ate the orange slowly, relishing it.

It was about 3 pm when I reached the *ashram* in Puttaparthi. I was dressed inappropriately for the ashram, so the *Seva Dal* (volunteers) wrapped me in my sheet and took me to the Accommodations Office. I was assigned a room with a mother and a



daughter from New York, which made me think of my own mother, who I thought was unaware of where I was and what I was doing. The ladies lent me a sari, choli, and skirt, wrapping it for me and dressing me up just like an Indian woman.

### **The Sight of God—True *Darshan***

I excitedly went for *darshan*, with my camera swinging from my wrist, still wearing my sandals. There were no lines and few people there—perhaps four or five hundred in total.

Sai Baba came out onto the sandy area in front of the *Mandir*. He slowly came straight toward me, staring like a fierce Shiva all the while. I put my camera up and began to snap photos as he walked closer, oblivious that this was completely forbidden. Entranced by His intense stare, I never put the camera down but received the full force of His eyes through the lens. Time stood still.

I immediately experienced in my heart that He was a divine being, full of light and love. Although His look was intensely fierce, it conveyed a force of loving energy that I had never before experienced, filling me with unearthly bliss. It also conveyed the full aspect of all that I had become. It was

as if I was a brilliant ball of light, covered with a thick layer of black sludge, like coal tar, which was my egotistical desire. I knew instantly that He was God, and yet I was also God underneath the black layer of ego. I felt love beyond anything I could ever imagine. It dwarfed any idea I had about love, bliss, or happiness. It was the highest “high” that I had ever experienced. There was a profound sense of peace, and my desperate quest to get the usual “high” was instantly and completely gone!

After Sai Baba slowly shifted His gaze and walked on, I realized that the whole time, I had held the camera up to my face, and my entire *darshan* had occurred through the lens of the camera. After the initial embarrassment, I immediately thought that had the camera not been there, I might have been “fried” by His intense and stern look. A simplistic thought, but that is how it felt. I discovered later that out of all the pictures I took, only one photo had come out when He was closest to me and giving me the profound *darshan*!

As I sat, stunned, through the rest of the *darshan*, my mind kicked in, and I realized that my questions and doubts had been laid to rest, and the world was now a different place with deep meaning. “Now,



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**“I believe the amount of God’s love we feel inside is directly proportional to the love we feel for God, in whichever name or form He is most treasured in our hearts.”**

what do I do?” was my prevalent thought. I could give up the world that I came from, renounce my life, my mother and dad, and stay at the *ashram*. Or should I go back to the world and try to lead a different lifestyle with my transformed self?

I dazedly wandered out of the *ashram* grounds and found myself on the hill of the wish-fulfilling ‘Kalpavriksha’ tree—a hefty climb up to a vantage point overlooking the *ashram* as the sun was setting. My initial concern was to figure out what Sai Baba expected of me now. Then, the old ego took over, and I thought about the trip I was a part of and my mom, and mostly about the opportunity to model at the Taj Mahal. I decided that I just could not give up the modeling opportunity! That being decided, I went down the hill to find a way back to Bangalore.

Checking at the bus station and finding that no buses were going back to Bangalore that night, I started to get a little worried and frightened. I had about 70 Rupees left, not enough for a cab ride. I knew that the AAS group was to leave Bangalore the very next morning for New Delhi and move on with the rest of the tour. Praying to Sai Baba desperately, I walked back into the *ashram* grounds. Almost immediately, a young man came up to me and said, “Are you ready to go back to Bangalore now? I have an empty cab and am heading back.”

We arrived back at the Hotel at about 11 pm. My mom’s face was contorted from crying, and she hugged me quickly and said, “I was afraid to tell your father that I had lost you in the wilderness of India!”

**She was praying to Jesus to send me back to her and has always looked at my return as a miracle from Jesus.** She had not received my letter from the cab driver. Digging out my stash of drugs, I flushed them down the toilet.

### **Lessons on How to Live as a ‘Sai Devotee’**

We got on the flight to New Delhi the next morning. There, our group boarded two big tour buses for the 4-day “Golden Triangle” experience, Delhi to Jaipur, then to Agra, and back to Delhi. As the first day of travel progressed, I was impressed by a young man who was our “helper” accompanying the driver. At each rest stop, he would graciously help us down the steps and carry bags as needed while constantly wreathed in the biggest smile imaginable. He treated us like royalty. On the second day, I asked him, on a hunch, “Have you ever heard about Sai Baba?” **He went ballistic with joy, chattering about how his cousin had been cured of a club foot, and his uncle had been cured of cancer, and on and on about how wonderful Sai Baba was.** He then said, “But YOU’RE no devotee of Sai Baba! Just LOOK at how inappropriately you are dressed.” I did not quite understand what he meant, but he asked me if I wanted to seriously learn about Sai Baba and how to be a good devotee!

The young man, Pawan, took his job to heart. Each morning, when I came to the bus, he would send me back to the hotel to change my clothes into something more modest. He made me sit near him in the front section of the bus with the driver while he regaled me with passionate



stories about Sai Baba's divine nature, His teachings, and His miracles.

### **Curing Ego with Ego-Prick**

Days later, after checking into a posh hotel in Agra, I took out the fancy new green and gold sari, and I preened and prepared for my big day at the Taj. When we arrived at the beautiful Taj Mahal, we learned from our guide that it was 'Free Day,' which was every Friday at that time in 1980. On 'Free Day,' the locals can come into the beautiful grounds with no entrance fee and picnic or stroll about. The AAS tour photographer and I stayed behind the group and set up our photo session at one of the beautiful reflecting pools. People started to gather to watch, as it must have been an unusual sight. More and more of the dark-eyed men, women, and children watched as I posed and preened, and the photog-

rapher snapped pictures. The crowd started chanting "Lakshmi," the goddess of wealth. More and more people gathered until there was a sea of chanting faces surrounding us!

Looking out at the sea of eyes that seemed to be adoring and worshipping me, I was mortified with shame for defiling the symbol of feminine purity that goddess Lakshmi represented. I had just seen what true purity and divinity were in Sai Baba, and here I was, masquerading as a pseudo-celebrity. All I could think of were the layers of 'ego-tar' that Sai Baba had shown me and how unworthy I was of adulation. After getting into the cool, safe, and exquisite Taj Mahal interior, I started to laugh! Through the miracle of the crowd's adulation, Sai Baba had just cured me of ANY desire I had to ever be a model again! As a perfect closing



zinger, designed to target my ego at its heart, the lesson was unmistakable, as not even a single photo of the Taj Mahal photo shoot came out! It made me laugh in delight over the blessed convolutions of the divine will and humor. It reminded me of the quote of how one can remove a thorn only with another thorn. **God had used my attachment to the ego trip of modeling to remove it from my life for good.**

*"Treading the spiritual path is very essential because the effects of karma have to be removed by karma alone, as a thorn can be removed only by another thorn. You cannot remove a thorn by a knife, or a hammer, or even a sword."*

**—Sathya Sai Baba**  
*Sadhana—The Inward Path*

We boarded the airplane bound for home, where I tried to figure out how to best serve the Lord, who had given me so much. I could not associate with any friends because they were all involved in drugs and alcohol. The vermillion mark on my forehead from India kept them away with one look!

I moved back to my hometown in New Mexico, and embarked on a new life, making amends with my parents for

my earlier bad behavior, and joining the Sathya Sai Baba Organization to serve Him in any way possible. I visited Sai Baba's *Ashram* six more times through the ensuing years, never receiving another intense look, word, or interview. I guess that one was enough!

I try to follow Sai Baba's teachings and live according to the five human values. The ego requires constant vigilance to control. I pray, "Help me see myself and others the way you see, Lord, with the eyes of love." God has blessed me with a wonderful husband and two amazing children, and through His *leelas*, He has continued to bless all of us throughout our lives. I bow in gratitude at the feet of the Father, Mother, Lord God of the universe, who guides us all if we just turn to Him.

I serve in the SSSIO in any way I can, asking each day, "How may I be of service to you?" When feeling lost, alone, or sad, I meditate on the divine love He gave me in that wonderful moment of *darshan*. **I believe the amount of God's love we feel inside is directly proportional to the love we feel for God, in whichever name or form He is most treasured in our hearts.**

**Mrs. Elaine Hausman**   
USA



**Mrs. Elaine Hausman** lives near Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, with her husband of over 40 years, treasuring their shared love for Christ and supporting each other's spiritual paths. They have lovingly raised two adult children. In 1980, Baba inspired her to dedicate her life to serving Him. She has served in the SSSIO since 1981 and currently is the President of Region 9 of the SSSIO, USA.

By profession, Elaine is a bookkeeper and volunteers as an arts education administrator and treasurer of Moving Arts Espanola, which serves children with arts education in many genres and provides free healthy vegetarian meals daily to the needy. Elaine served on the founding board of the Santa Fe Youth Symphony in 1994–2002. She is also the treasurer of the Board of the Bodhi Manda Zen Center, where SSSIO retreats have been held annually since 1983.

# *from the* International Sai Young Adults **SUMMER SHOWERS 2024**

After two enriching sessions focused on 'Plugging into the Source' by Dr. Sunder Iyer and 'Experiencing Equanimity' by psychologists Katarzyna Andersson and Ayushi Rambojun, the third session of the Summer Showers series by the Sri Sathya Sai International Leadership Program (SSSILP) subcommittee was held on October 6, 2024. The theme of the session was 'Unleashing the Power of Love' facilitated by Mr. Neil Bisarya. Neil is a distinguished barrister by profession, and his spiritual journey led him to train under Mrs. Phyllis Krystal, an internationally renowned devotee of Swami, spiritual teacher, and author. He assisted her in writing her last book 'Flight of the Phoenix to Liberation' and continues to share these teachings through his Peace and Joy initiative.

In this session, Neil introduced the YAs to the transformative spiritual practices rooted in the teachings of the renowned Mrs. Phyllis Krystal. With years of direct training under her, Neil brought depth and authenticity as he shared techniques designed to free individuals from the limitations of past conditioning and align them with their higher selves.

Central to the session was the Maypole technique, a visualization exercise that helps individuals detach from external influences. Neil guided attendees through the process, explaining how visualizing ribbons tied to a maypole, each symbolizing different attachments, can empower



participants to 'cut' these ties and reclaim a sense of inner freedom. This method, he noted, is effective in clearing mental clutter and enhancing self-awareness. Another highlight was the Figure of Eight Exercise, aimed at harmonizing conflicting energies. Neil's demonstration of the technique, where participants trace a figure-eight pattern, illustrated its simplicity and effectiveness in cultivating balance and peace, whether within oneself or in relationships.

The session concluded with a dynamic Q&A segment, during which YAs expressed curiosity about how to apply these techniques in various aspects of life, including work, relationships, and personal challenges. Neil addressed these questions with depth and clarity, offering personalized advice and emphasizing the importance of consistency in practice. His approachable style encouraged open dialogue, making the session both interactive and deeply enriching for all attendees.





# **PATHFINDER**

## IGNITING HOPE | EMPOWERING GENERATIONS

**“THE PRIMARY DUTY OF THE YOUTH IS TO RENDER SERVICE TO SOCIETY.”** These words, mentioned in January 2000 by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, have become the guiding principle for the YAs of the SSSIO, Sri Lanka (SSSIO-SL) as they embark on a mission to uplift communities through the ‘Pathfinder’ initiative in 2024. The Pathfinder initiative, a journey of self-discovery and societal upliftment, is a transformative program that seeks to uplift underprivileged families and communities across Sri Lanka through holistic development based on Swami’s Educare (uniting the head, heart, and hands) and Sociocare (service to society) programs. **Rooted in spiritual values and upliftment, the initiative also focuses on improving the overall well-being of adopted villages** by empowering them through education support, mentorship, and consistent follow-ups.

Pathfinder’s impact is evident in its wide reach across the island nation. Between May and August 2024, 12 communities, including Akkarai, Ponnamma, Kepapilavu, and others, have been adopted as part of this initiative. These communities face significant challenges, with 20% of children coming from single-parent households and daily wage earners, while 90% of the men involved have been identified as battling addiction. Tragically, even children are being exposed to drugs at a young age due to negligence. Pathfinder aims to break these cycles rooted in poverty and inspire hope for a brighter future in these communities.

In total, 300 children from grades 4-13 from these adopted communities benefit from the program and are guided and mentored by 56 YAs, along with the support of the adults of SSSIO-SL. The initiative reinforces





young minds through mentorship and guidance, alongside academic support via additional tutoring. The program gets support from the principals of schools, who see the value in the overall development and impact that the initiative can provide to their community. They provide school premises for mentoring after regular school hours. Additionally, these sessions are conducted at institutes and Sai centers as well as temporary structures installed by YAs in different villages. Parenting workshops are also conducted to create awareness in the wider sections of society and to enhance the benefits to the children. In some villages, it is acknowledged that the institute is located about 2 km from the village center, making it impossible for certain students to attend additional tutoring due to difficulties with transportation. This further underscores the fact that community upliftment begins with

an improvement in education and literacy but also must address improvements in social challenges that prevent access to education. To assess the effectiveness of this initiative in the chosen villages, the YAs carry out consistent follow-ups and assessments on the academic reports of these students, and big improvements in their grades are a testament to the effectiveness of this initiative. This initiative will continue until the selected students have completed their education.

As the Pathfinder initiative continues to expand, the program proponents hope to shape these students into compassionate, responsible individuals who will drive the growth and sustainability of their communities. **The YAs of the SSSIO-SL are creating a legacy of hope by embracing the values of service and spiritual growth through this time and labor-intensive initiative.**

*"If you lift the hand to help, to serve, to console, to encourage another man, you are lifting it for God. Because in every man, there is God, use all your talents for serving others; that is the best way of serving yourself."*

**—Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

In a letter to Mr. Charles Penn, *Sathyam Shivam Sundaram II*



# A Handful of Hearts A World of Change



In a world often focused on personal growth and success, the Young Adults (YAs) in Hong Kong are redefining the narrative by fostering joy and kindness within their local communities. Driven by a profound sense of purpose, this small yet dedicated group of YAs has embarked on a series of impactful initiatives, demonstrating how compassion, teamwork, and sincere commitment can transform lives—whether supporting domestic helpers, caring for stray dogs, or protecting the environment.

## Easter Picnic for Domestic Helpers

With spring around the corner, the West Kowloon Art Park was abuzz with joy and laughter on March 24, 2024, as 13 young adults gathered to have an Easter picnic with 32 domestic helpers. With the poignant reminders of revival and life that Easter brings, the purpose of the event was to create a fun and memorable day for the domestic helpers who experience challenges being away from their families for years. They often find themselves isolated, lacking companionship and emotional support that comes from being surrounded by loved ones, leading to loneliness and homesickness.

The YAs organized the day's logistics, setting up the picnic site, preparing sandwiches, and planning out fun-filled games.



When the domestic helpers arrived, they were given bottled water and a beverage and divided into four teams of eight for the games. The 3-legged race got everyone giggling, the easter egg relay and dancing relay games built camaraderie, and the final passing-the-parcel game introduced the participants to the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The picnic ended with



the distribution of takeaway lunch boxes for the guests.

All the domestic helpers thoroughly enjoyed the event and felt grateful to the YAs for giving them a fun-filled morning with lots of smiles, laughter, joy, and new friends. One participant shared her experience, saying, ***“I am immensely grateful to the youth of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre for organizing such a wonderful picnic for us. Despite the hot weather, the event was extremely fun and enjoyable, which is something we don’t get to experience much in our lives as domestic helpers in Hong Kong. Lots of love and blessings to the team.”***

### **Raise Your Paws: Visit to a Dog Shelter**

The spirit of service continued into May 19, 2024, when the YAs visited the Sai Kung Stray Friends Foundation (SKSFF), a registered Non-Government Organization (NGO) that rescues stray, abandoned, sick, and injured dogs and provides them with medical care and rehabilitation. The dog shelter currently houses over 200 stray dogs, all health-checked and vaccinated. As these dogs await adoption into a new home, eight YAs and two Group 4 SSE students visited the shelter for the third time.

At the shelter, the YAs walked and bathed the dogs and cleaned the kennels. By practicing patience and being gentle with the dogs, the YAs helped the canines overcome their anxiety with newcomers and develop a comfortable bond. Much-needed supplies such as towels, dog shampoo, cleaning brushes, sponges, and water buckets were donated to the shelter by the YAs and devotees of the Sai Centre. Despite the heavy showers, the initiative gave a ‘pawsome’ way for the YAs to practice the universal divine teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba: ‘Love All, Serve All’ and ‘Help Ever, Hurt Never.’



### **Reconnect and Rejoice**

On June 9-10, 2024, 27 YAs and 2 SSE Group 4 children took time out to ‘pause and reflect’ with a two-day YA retreat with Sai in nature, the first of its kind. The event was held on the beautiful island of Cheung Chau, and the theme of the retreat was ‘Reconnect and Rejoice.’

The morning of the retreat began with the looming threat of a rainstorm, which caused concern due to the outdoor nature of the event. **However, faith in Swami’s reassuring words—“You do my work, I will do your work”—gave the YAs the strength to proceed confidently.** Their trust in His words was rewarded, as the rains abated and came only during the sleeping hours!

The first day of the retreat began with a heartfelt welcome of Sri Sathya Sai Baba through devotional singing and offering flowers at His lotus feet. This sacred opening set the spiritual tone for the day. It was followed by a lively welcome and icebreaker session, where new and seasoned YAs bonded through fun interactions. Laughter and shared moments of





joy created an immediate sense of unity, starting the retreat on a high note. The next session featured a sunset meditation led by Mr. Dino Hira, an award-winning healer specializing in meditation, reiki, past life regression, and mental health. Mr. Hira guided the group to find peace within themselves, offering valuable tools and practices for spiritual growth amidst life's challenges. This meditation became a retreat highlight, leaving everyone with a sense of calm and purpose. As evening approached, the group participated in a 'Connection to Nature' discussion led by Mr. Jayesh Peswani, a former team lead of the 'Serve the Planet' initiative of the International YA program. Set in the tranquil outdoors, the discussion deepened the group's understanding of the link between nature and Swami's teachings.

While Day 1 ended with an overcast sky, Day 2 began with a brilliant sunrise that illuminated not just the beach but the hearts of the YAs. The vibrant chanting session included Omkar, Suprabhatam, and the Gayatri Mantra in Swami's divine

voice. A silent nature walk followed, providing the perfect opportunity to appreciate the beauty of nature, reflect on the YAs' role in serving it, and contextualize the discussions from the previous evening about the connection between nature and spirituality. It reinforced the message that serving the planet is not just an environmental responsibility but a vital expression of spirituality, devotion, and service to God.

**The YAs then shared insights on their personal spiritual journeys, discussing how the YA program strengthened their connection with Swami.** This reflective session naturally led to brainstorming ideas for contributing to the SAI100 project for the centenary birth anniversary celebrations of Swami, sparking creativity and a sense of purpose among the group. The day continued with a thought-provoking workshop titled SMILE (Something More In Life Exists), led by Ms. Kamni Bharwani, an SSE teacher specializing in mindfulness. The group engaged in a meaningful discussion around the concept of happiness—what it truly means, what prevents us





from experiencing it, and whether happiness is a choice.

To conclude on a creative and contemplative note, the participants composed a jingle summarizing the key lessons learned, set to the tune of the bhajan *Manasa Bhajarey Guru Charanam*—the first *bhajan* taught by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. A common message that echoed in the lyrics was, “Surrender to Him with a smile, even in the face of fear.”

Throughout the retreat, the Young Adults also participated in devotional singing and spontaneous *bhajan* jam sessions, which filled everyone with a sense of joy, bliss, and unity.

One of the YAs who attended the retreat reflected, “As I write this, I’m taking a walk in a park near my home, longing to recapture the serenity and beauty of being in nature that we experienced over the weekend. It’s a testament to how meaningful the retreat was, providing insights and takeaways that will stay with us for a long time, if not forever. When my husband and I held our daughter for the first time after returning, I didn’t feel any guilt for leaving her behind. Instead, **I felt rejuvenated and recharged, ready to be a better parent and a better person.** It felt so ‘right’ to have attended the retreat at this particular moment in my life, as it aligned perfectly with the lessons I needed to learn and the emotions I needed to feel. My deep-

est gratitude to the organizers and all the participants for making this such a memorable experience, and, of course, to Baba for working His divine magic to make everything come together so seamlessly.”

## Inner to Outer Purity: A Nature Cleanup

After a weekend of reflection, it was time for action. Turning their attention to the environment, the YAs organized a nature cleanup at the shores of Starfish Bay on June 29, 2024, in collaboration with Beyond Plastic Hong Kong, a registered NGO that aims to reduce and ultimately end the use of disposable single-use plastic system in our lives. Plastic pollution is a key issue in Hong Kong, and Beyond Plastic has engaged more than 3,000 people in collecting 50,000 kgs of plastic waste.

A total of 7 YAs, 2 SSE children, and four senior devotees participated in the spirit of selfless service to Mother Nature.







Compared to previous beach cleanups, this particular one seemed more challenging as the trash was buried deep in the mangroves and bushes, with little trash visibly present on the beach. Despite this, all kinds of waste, such as plastic bags, aluminum cans, Styrofoam boards, and glass bottles, were collected into ten big bags full of trash. The seva created an awareness among the YAs to compromise on their desires and reflect on their role in the usage of plastics, starting from

their own homes. One of the YAs shared, ***“This cleanup helped increase our awareness and responsibility in protecting our planet which is gifted to us! Live and let live is the key takeaway for me from the seva, and we need to do our best to pass on the planet in the same condition that we received to our future generations if not a better one.”***

### **Bringing Joy to the Elderly**

Eight YAs visited the elderly at the Hong Kong Baptist Rehabilitation and Health-care Home in Shek Kip Mei on July 27, 2024. The October 2024 issue describes this service in detail.

Throughout the year, the YAs of Hong Kong have shown that it's not the size of the group but the quality of their commitment and the intention behind their actions that makes a lasting impact. Through their wholesome service initiatives, they embody the spirit of selfless service, the power of community, and the joy of giving back. After all, a few well-placed strokes can indeed create a masterpiece.





**Ms. Mariel Beltran**  
Germany



## My Summer with Him

This summer with Him was a journey of healing. I surrendered completely, immersing myself in His grace to heal my three greatest maladies: pride, attachment, and lack of faith.

Before my first trip, I was disheartened, feeling out of place in a new country and unable to find work in my field. Was all my experience lost in my efforts to move to a new country? When I finally secured a temporary job, I realized it wasn't about the money but about training my mind to repeat His name during every shift. Baba, in His wisdom, sent me on an unexpected journey to Africa to attend the SSSIO conference in Kenya, where His divine energy continued to cleanse my mind. He knew where it hurt—my pride, and exactly how to heal me.

On the night before my second trip to Greece to attend the SSSIO International YA Leaders Retreat, I faced the fear of losing my father after two emergency heart surgeries. I was to facilitate a session at the retreat on the theme of 'Leading in the Organization.' My mind kept questioning—"How could I speak to other young people about leadership and overcoming challenges in the face of difficulties if I couldn't do my duty as part of the organizing committee?" But, by His grace, my father survived the surgery and relieved my stress of a whole week in the waters of Athens. That week, while supporting others at the retreat, I realized how deeply family bonds—often strained by unconscious promises—can only be healed by Bhagawan's loving hand.

On the third trip for the SSSIO office bearers meeting of Zones 6-8, my heart was clouded with doubts and a sense of fear that I had lost the affection of a dear friend as he and I had a misunderstanding months ago. But, once again, just before leaving, Baba reassured me that my dreams and aspirations were still alive and I could move forward with peace. **When I was willing to listen, He sent me the right message through the experiences of a couple of His devotees.**

Only now, as the summer fades into autumn, do I understand the puzzle of my experiences. Baba was always working within me, breaking my mental barriers and opening my heart. Through my first experience, He taught me that it was never about the money—He provides far more



than any job ever could. One paycheck sustains my material life, and the other nourishes my self-worth. It's not what I do. Instead, it is about what I am capable of doing. He knew my potential more than I ever did. Through the second experience, **He taught me that family is important, but what truly binds us is love, not attachment.** By surrendering to Him for my father's health and being joyful around my fellow sisters and brothers, He made me realize that His mission is more important than my own understanding, and with every step, I'm learning to trust His guidance. My third experience made me realize that I am the one who refuses to feel His love and keeps turning away because of my own prejudices. Baba has been so kind and patient in breaking these mental barriers and opening my heart. **He has taught me to have faith in my dreams, but also that He listens to me and guides me in the best way—He only waits for me to accept it.** I took three trips around the world, but it has led me back to myself and to Him.

As I am starting to build my life from scratch financially, someone remarked to me that any travel this summer would be impossible and asked if I had met a millionaire. I smiled and replied, "I met a millionaire—the Lord of the Universe Himself."

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# Merry Christmas



Hamsini K | Group 2 | USA



Dhaatri K | Group 2 | USA



unity is divinity

Purity is Enlightenment

Somesh B | Group 2 | Thailand



I never got a chance to say goodbye. And now when i think of you all i do is cry. You left a message upon my heart. One with which i shall never apart.



Sai Srinivas | Group 1 | Netherlands

SAI BABA

SAI BABA

S	afe	With all your values we follow
A	lways	we feel Safe and it is also Always,
I	nteresting	Interesting.
B	lessed	We are Blessed with an Awesome,
A	wesome	Brave leader like you. We Appreciate
B	rave	all the love, knowledge and values you
A	ppreciate	have given us.



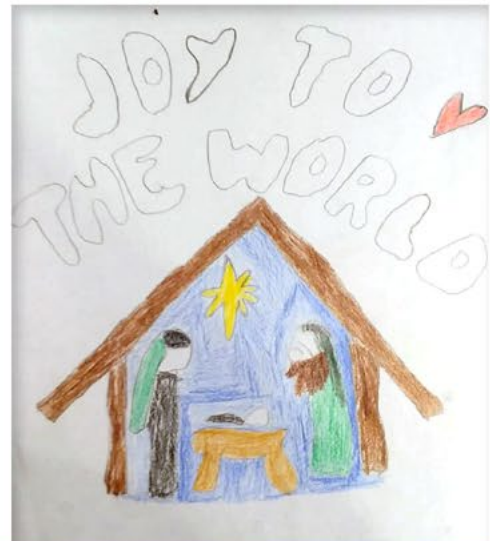


## Positive Words of Affirmation

A	L	C	N	T	K	I	N	D	A	U	C	N	I
U	U	O	E	L	I	R	B	E	L	I	E	V	E
L	F	U	H	A	R	M	O	N	I	O	U	S	N
O	R	R	F	R	V	S	B	R	A	V	E	U	L
A	E	A	V	G	N	O	R	T	S	P	B	C	N
C	W	G	O	P	T	I	M	I	S	T	I	C	O
C	O	E	E	N	I	U	N	E	G	I	A	E	P
O	P	O	E	J	O	Y	F	U	L	N	T	S	P
M	N	U	W	T	H	R	I	V	I	N	G	S	E
P	E	S	F	C	T	S	B	S	B	O	H	F	V
L	G	E	N	E	R	O	U	S	C	V	E	U	O
I	T	S	U	R	T	I	T	B	E	A	P	L	L
S	I	N	L	T	O	K	A	Y	H	T	O	N	E
H	E	C	E	L	E	B	R	A	T	E	H	H	P

GENEROUS  
 BELIEVE  
 OKAY  
 INNOVATE  
 HOPE  
 KIND  
 COURAGEOUS  
 OPTIMISTIC  
 ACCOMPLISH  
 POWERFUL  
 LOVE  
 STRONG  
 SUCCESSFUL  
 TRUST  
 THRIVING  
 HARMONIOUS  
 JOYFUL  
 GENUINE  
 BRAVE  
 CELEBRATE

Lakshman M | Group 2 | Australia



Brielle | Group 2 | USA



Pranav K | Group 2 | USA



I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart.  
 Where? Down in my heart, down in my heart, down in my  
 heart to stay ♡  
 And I'm so happy, so very happy  
 I've got the love of Jesus in my heart  
 And I'm so happy, so very happy  
 I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.  
 Down in my heart to stay.

Eishwarya | Group 3 | Mauritius



Ruthvik M | Group 1 | USA

Dear Swami,  
 Thank you for always guiding  
 me and teaching me always to  
 do right. Thank you for  
 everything! We love you.

Riyana | Group 1 | Panama



Dear Swami,

I offer my humble pranam to your lotus feet. Swami, I am grateful to you for blessing me with a wonderful life with a loving and beautiful family, teachers, and friends. Ever since I have known you and understood that "Love is your form", I have formed a special bond of friendship with you, dear Swami. Praying, listening to your bhajans, thinking about you, and talking to you fills my life with bliss and happiness. I have learned the true meaning of happiness when I realized that I am always associated with you.

Swami, you have always been my best friend, guide, and inspiration in my best and worst times in life. Talking to you makes me forget all my miseries and pain in bad times and makes me contentful in good times. Following your values of "Satya", "Prema", "Shanti", "Ahimsa", and "Dharma", have always led me on the right path which is towards you and I improve myself each day in order to make my life your message.

Swami, I would like to become your messenger and spread your message of love and happiness wherever I go. I will always think about others before myself and help them in your remembrance. Happy birthday dear Swami!!!

Veda | Group 4 | Online SSE



Sai Jnana | Group 1 | Singapore

# Upcoming SSSIO Events

Please visit [sathyasai.org/events](https://sathyasai.org/events) for details on scheduled events, local dates and timings.

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
December 14-15, 2024	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
December 25, 2024	Wednesday	Christmas
January 29, 2025	Wednesday	Chinese New Year
February 15-16, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
February 26, 2025	Wednesday	Maha Shivaratri



Streaming on [sathyasai.org/live](https://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.**



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- Sri Sathya Sai Humanitarian Relief [🔗](#)
- Sri Sathya Sai Young Adults [🔗](#)
- Sri Sathya Sai Education [🔗](#)
- Healthy Living [🔗](#)





Worship means loving others with your full heart. You must live in love and lead a life of selfless service based on love. This is the only right way of celebrating the birth of Christ. God, in fact, has no birth and no death. No change is there in God, who is changeless and permanent. The *Atma* within is but a reflection of God, and it is the same in all beings as an eternal witness. Birth and death pertain only to the body. It is not correct to worship the body. Through form (*sakara*), one has to merge into the formless (*nirakara*), the ultimate Supreme Reality.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

December 25, 1992



**sathyasai.org**

Love All • Serve All  
Help Ever • Hurt Never

