

SATHYA SAI

THE ETERNAL

COMPANION

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*100th Birthday
Special Issue*

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





What I will, must take place; what I plan must succeed. I am the Truth, and Truth has no need to hesitate, or fear, or bend. 'Willing' is superfluous for Me. For, My Grace is ever available to devotees who have steady love and faith. Since I move freely among them, talking and singing, even intellectuals are unable to grasp My Truth, My Power, My Glory, or My real Task as Avatar. I can solve any problem, however knotty. I am beyond the reach of the most intensive inquiry and the most meticulous measurement. Only those who have recognized My Love and experienced that Love can assert that they have glimpsed My Reality. For, the path of love is the royal road that leads mankind to Me.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
June 19, 1974



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 100TH YEAR
OF THE ADVENT OF THE AVATAR





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SATHYA SAI

His Advent, His Glory, and His *Leelas*

Sai devotees around the world are now celebrating the 100th year of the advent of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the *Paripoorna Avatar* (complete manifestation of God), the very incarnation of love itself.

Swami's glory is truly unfathomable. Yet, as an expression of gratitude and love, devotees everywhere try to reminisce and recollect His life, message, mission, and legacy. His glory is unparalleled in human history. As the Taittiriya Upanishad says, "*Yatho Vacho Nivartanthe Aprapya Manasa Saha*," a phenomenon that words cannot describe and the mind cannot fathom. It can only be experienced.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself, during the First World Conference on May 17, 1968, said that even if the whole of humanity were to come together and perform penance and austerity for thousands of years, it still would not be able to comprehend the glory of Sathya Sai Baba or understand Him. That is why He advised us never to try to understand Him, but only to experience His love.

The same truth is beautifully echoed in the Bible, Gospel of John (21:25), "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, not even this world, I believe, could contain the books that would be written."

Similarly, in the Shiva Mahima Stotram (Verse 32), it is described poetically:

"If the oceans were turned into ink, and Mother Saraswati herself took a pen made from a celestial tree to write the glories of the Lord, upon the earth as her paper, even then, the glories of the Lord would never end. They are infinite and eternal."

God, as described in the scriptures, is beyond name, form, attributes, time, space, and causation. Yet, out of His infinite love and compassion, He descends from age to age as an Avatar, an incarnation of the divine, for the redemption and transformation of humanity.

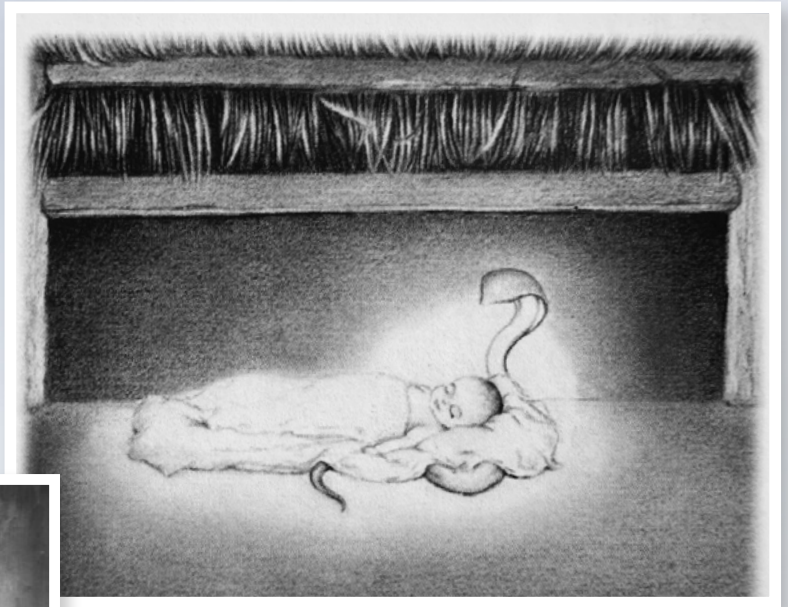
In this age, we are truly blessed and fortunate that Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has come as the embodiment of love—love walking on two legs. He has clearly proclaimed that the purpose of His advent is to make humanity realize its innate divinity—that each one is the embodiment of divine love, divine *Atma*, and divine bliss.

He says that the best way to experience Him is through love, just as one can see the moon only by the light of the moon itself.

His Advent

Just as with Lord Jesus and Lord Krishna, many auspicious signs heralded Swami's birth. From the very day that Mother Easwaramma conceived, miraculous sounds

This is a human form in which every divine entity, every divine principle—that is to say, all the names and forms ascribed by man to God—are manifest.



of musical instruments like the tambura and drums kept in their home were heard. The instruments began playing on their own during the night, without being touched by anyone.

This was one of the earliest signs announcing the arrival of the divine. Later, as Mother Easwaramma revealed, she had witnessed a brilliant, blue ball of light enter her womb as she drew water from a well. Thus, the divine advent was a *Pravesha* (entry of the divine) and not a *Prasava* (ordinary conception). It was a divine, blessed conception. Divinity chose Mother Easwaramma for this sacred birth.

It is said that Mother Easwaramma had conceived after she performed the sacred *Sathyanarayana Puja*. Hence, the child was first named Sathyanarayana Raju, before He declared His Avatarhood at the age of 14.

According to His biographical accounts, sacred signs of Lord Vishnu were seen on

the newborn child's body. There was also a mysterious incident of a serpent that appeared under the infant's bed, held its hood over the baby, only to vanish soon after, foretelling that the child was none other than Lord Vishnu Himself, reclining on Adishesha, the celestial serpent.



His Glory

He is all names and all forms—and beyond them all. Swami often began His divine discourses by singing the following verse, revealing His true reality:

*Sarva roopa dharam shantam
Sarva nama dharam shivam.
Satchitananda roopam advaitam
Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram*

(He is all manifested forms and the embodiment of peace. He is all names and auspiciousness itself. He is existence, knowledge, and bliss—Satchidananda. He is non-dual, One without a second. And finally, He is truth, goodness, and beauty—Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.)

This profound revelation that Baba made about Himself is comparable to Lord Krishna's own declaration in the Bhagavad Gita (BG 10.20) about His Avatar:

"I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings. I am the Atma seated in the hearts of all creatures."

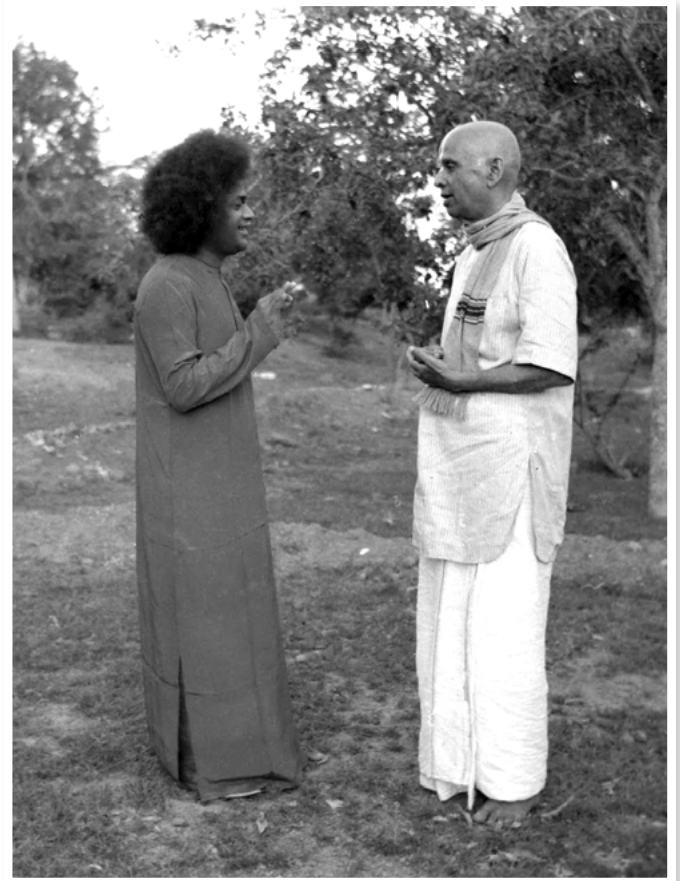
That is why we say that Swami is One in All, All in One, All in All, and beyond All.

In the discourse given at the First World Conference on May 17, 1968, Swami declared:

"This is a human form in which every divine entity, every divine principle—that is to say, all the names and forms ascribed by man to God—are manifest. Do not allow doubt to distract you. If you only install in the altar of your heart a steady faith in My divinity, you can win the vision of My reality."

Swami has shown through countless instances that He is all names and forms. Out of His infinite love and compassion, He has granted divine visions of their chosen deities to numerous devotees over the years.

In the early days, He blessed the Raja of Venkatagiri with the vision of Lord Sri Rama. The Raja, his entire family, and his royal



Dhoopati Thirumalacharya with Swami

household all became devoted followers of Bhagawan. Swami also gave a vision of Lord Rama to His own mother, Mother Easwaramma, who innocently thought that He was merely her son. Before her passing, Swami granted her the divine vision of Rama, which filled her with bliss and wonder, as narrated by her to Smt. Pedda Bottu, a renowned devotee who was a contemporary of Shirdi Sai Baba. Swami also granted the vision of Lord Rama during a visit to Ayodhya to a devotee named Sri Dhoopati Thirumalacharya, the author of the *Sathya Sai Suprabhatam*, who hailed from the Venkatagiri *Samsthanam*, a princely state. He was overwhelmed with divine ecstasy. Another beautiful incident concerns the Hanuman Temple in Puttaparthi. Once, young Sathya and His classmates were circumambulating the Hanuman idol. Suddenly, Swami stopped and couldn't move further. When asked why, He smiled

and revealed that Hanuman, himself, was holding His feet, saying, “Lord, you cannot go around me, for I am the devotee, and You are my beloved Rama.” It was a profound divine revelation that Swami is indeed Lord Rama Himself.

He gave the vision of Lord Krishna to Dr. John Hislop during a car journey—an incident recorded in his book. My father, Dr. Adivi Reddy, too, during his stay in Prasanthi Nilayam, once saw Swami as Lord Krishna, a vision that Swami Himself lovingly confirmed the following day on the *verandah* of the Prasanthi *mandir*. Another saintly soul, Swami Vidya Prakashananda Giri, who devoted his life to propagating the message of the Bhagavad Gita throughout Andhra Pradesh, once came for Swami’s *darshan*. Swami appreciated his service to Lord Krishna and, in response to his prayer, gave him the vision of Lord Krishna, which filled him with divine bliss.

Swami gave the vision of Lord Vishnu to Sri Dhoopati Thirumalacharya. One early morning, Swami appeared to him as Lord Vishnu, blessing him, after curing his daughter, who was seriously ill several hundred miles away. Swami had remotely performed a divine operation on her, removing a tumor—an event later medically confirmed.

Swami also granted the vision of Lord Vishnu to Sri Burgula Ramakrishna Rao, a great devotee and statesman who served as Governor of Kerala, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, and as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. He accompanied Swami to many pilgrimage centers like Badrinath and made all arrangements for these divine journeys.

During His school days at Uravakonda, Swami, as young Sathya, was invited for a vacation to Hampi, a historical heritage site located in the adjoining state of Karnataka, India. During this visit with his family to the Virupaksha Temple in Hampi, young Sathya remained outside while the

rest entered for *darshan*. To his brother, Seshama Raju’s astonishment, He was seen simultaneously in the inner sanctum of the temple receiving *arati* as Lord Virupaksha (Shiva), and also sitting under a tree outside the temple! Raju’s elder brother was angered at first and bewildered later, but **the Municipal Chairman in the entourage remarked, “Raju is Virupaksha and Virupaksha is Raju,” indicating Sathya and the deity are identical.**

To Sri Seshagiri Rao, an orthodox Brahmin who served as the priest for many years in the *Paata Mandiram* in Puttaparthi, Swami appeared as Lord Shiva. After this vision, he remained in a state of bliss for three days and decided to stay permanently with Swami as His priest, never returning to his family.

When the renowned Vedic scholar Sri Gandikota Subramanya Shastry, through whom emerged the sacred *Sai Gayatri* mantra that devotees all over the world now chant, asked Swami who He really was, Swami materialized a picture showing Himself as Shiva, Sai Baba, and the *Linga*—all one, declaring that He is Lord Shiva verily.

Similarly, during a medical conference at Prasanthi Nilayam, Dr. Venkat Sadanand, a neurosurgeon from the USA, earnestly prayed, “Swami, please tell us who You are.” Swami materialized a gold chain with the pendant of a small crystal *linga*, saying, “*This is who I am—Lord Shiva.*”

Swami also revealed Himself as the Divine Mother. At one time, the great singer Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, who received national distinction with the title of Bharat Ratna, the highest Indian civilian award of distinction, was going through a family crisis. When she sought advice from His Holiness Kanchi Paramacharya, the revered sage of Kanchi, he recommended her to visit Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, as He is the walking and talking Divine Mother, Herself. From then on,



At the age of fourteen,
He threw jasmine flowers on the
ground, which formed the name
“Sai Baba,” in Telugu letters, thus
confirming His declaration.



ardent devotee of Mother Sai.

Swami Himself revealed in 1963 that He is *Shiva-Shakti Swarupa*, the embodiment of both Lord Shiva and Goddess Shakti. Swami proclaimed this during Guru Poornima after He miraculously cured Himself of paralysis, sprinkling a few drops of water on His affected limbs, as described in *Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*, *Sanathana Sarathi*, and *Sathya Sai—The Eternal Companion*. There are many instances of devotees experiencing this profound truth. Among those blessed with such divine vision were Dr. Alreja, superintendent of the General Hospital in Prasanthi Nilayam, and Professor Anil Kumar, Swami's translator and ardent devotee—both of whom had direct experience of Swami as the embodiment of Shiva-Shakti.

Swami also revealed that He is part of the Triune Avatar, a divine phenomenon never before seen in human history. He explained that the first in this series is Shirdi Sai Baba, the second is Sathya Sai Baba, and the third will be Prema Sai Baba. **In fact, at the age of fourteen, He threw jasmine flowers on the ground, which formed the name “Sai Baba,” in Telugu letters, thus confirming His declaration.**

profound experiences affirming that Sathya Sai was the same Baba, come again. One such devotee, Dixit, who had lived during Shirdi Baba's time, later served as a gate-keeper at Swami's Brindavan Ashram. Swami also materialized many idols and images of Shirdi Sai for devotees.

Swami has said that Shirdi Sai is the Avatar of Lord Shiva. Eight years after leaving His body in 1918, Sathya Sai, the embodiment of Shiva and Shakti, was born in 1926. Prema Sai, the third avatar, yet to descend, will embody the aspect of the Divine Mother-Shakti.

Thus, He is the embodiment of Shiva and Shakti, the union of the cosmic masculine and feminine principles.

Swami gave devotees visions according to their own spiritual inclinations and chosen deities. For example, Swami Amruthananda, who had performed a 40-day *Ganapathi Homa* as a seven-year-old child, was blessed by Swami with the vision of a golden Ganesha when he was 85. Swami said this was the fruit of performing the *Ganapathi Homa* for 40 days meticulously, faithfully, and with devotion, as per scriptural injunctions. The saint remained in bliss for three days without food or water.

When Swami visited Rishikesh, a sacred pilgrimage place, He met Swami Purushottamananda, a revered monk of the Ramakrishna Order in the nearby Vasishtha cave, where Sage Vashista had meditated in the days of yore. Since Swami Purushottamananda worshipped God as Anantha Padmanabhaswami, the form of Lord Vishnu reclining on the serpent, Adi Sesa, Bhagawan gave him that very vision, fulfilling his lifelong spiritual yearning.

Swami also blessed Colonel Jogarao, a great devotee and engineer who contributed immensely to Swami's mission and projects—building hospitals, university buildings, and residences for devotees. When he once prayed, “Swami, please reveal Your real Self to me,” Swami allowed a Polaroid picture to be taken, which miraculously revealed Lord Dattatreya, the embodiment of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara. Through this miracle, Swami revealed Himself as the Trinity—the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Dissolver of the universe. Indeed, Sri Shirdi Sai Baba is regarded as one of the Avatars of Lord Dattatreya, representing the Trinity.

When Swami Abhedananda, a disciple of Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi and a sincere spiritual seeker, came for Swami's *darshan*, Bhagawan granted him the ultimate experience of the supreme Parabrahman—the nameless, formless, attributeless Absolute. **He later shared his joy with Professor Kasturi, declaring that “Swami is not merely an Avatar; He is the Supreme Brahman, the source of all Avatars.”**

Swami is not only all names and forms; He is also Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss—*Satchidananda*. He is Advaita, the Non-dual Reality, the all-pervading Brahman. **He is also truth, goodness, and beauty—*sathyam*, *shivam*, *sundaram*—for His message is *sathyam* (truth), His path is *shivam* (auspiciousness), and His form is *sundaram* (beauty beyond compare).**

The great devotee, Smt. Pedda Bottu realized that Sathya Sai was the same as Shirdi Sai Baba. Living in Prasanthi Nilayam, she composed many poems extolling His glory. In one poem, she described Swami as *Sarva Devata Swarupa*—the embodiment of all divine forms and names. But the next day, she noticed that the word in the poem in her manuscript had mysteriously changed to “*Sarva Devata Ateeta Swarupa*” from “*Sarva Devata Swarupa*.” The added word “*Ateeta*” signifies that He is “beyond” all names and forms—the Supreme Parabrahman that transcends time, space, and causation.

Once, in Kodaikanal, in April 1998, Swami asked the students, “Who am I?” Each replied with their own understanding—Shiva-Shakti, Rama, Krishna, and so on. Finally, Swami said, “*None of you is correct. I am I.*”

Swami allowed a Polaroid picture to be taken, which miraculously revealed Lord Dattatreya, the embodiment of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara. Through this miracle, Swami revealed Himself as the Trinity—the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Dissolver of the universe.





That is the ultimate truth—He is everything, everywhere, forever.

This is why, for the celebration of the 100th year of the advent of the Avatar, a beautiful logo was developed by the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization, by His grace. This logo is unique in that it shows both the *nirguna* (formless) and *saguna* (with form) aspects of God—that God is both with name, form, and attributes, as well as beyond name, form, and attributes. God is both finite and infinite.

The logo shows a beautiful silhouette of Baba, which makes people think about His beautiful form, His sweet divine name, and His amazing *leelas*. While His form represents artistically the ‘1’ of the number ‘100,’ the ‘00’ is depicted by the infinity symbol. This indicates that He is also formless, symbolized by infinity, beyond comprehension. He remains the eternal companion: omniscient, omnipresent, and beyond, transcending all barriers of thought, word, and deed. **This particular logo, inspired by Swami’s grace, not only marks the 100th Birthday of Bhagawan but will endure beyond, because it encompasses all the divine aspects of the Lord.**

His Miracles and Divine Sports

The unparalleled miracles of Bhagawan Baba are mind-boggling, awesome, and inspiring. Miracles are spontaneous acts of love and compassion by Avatars. For ordinary spiritual seekers, miraculous powers (*siddhis*) acquired during penance become obstacles to spiritual progress. But for an

Avatar, these miracle powers are innate to their nature and guide humanity toward the spiritual goal.

All the great Masters, Lord Krishna, Lord Jesus, Shirdi Sai, and Sathya Sai, performed countless miracles throughout their lives. Scriptures like the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the Bible, and the *Shirdi Satcharita* are replete with such stories of how the Avatars uplifted devotees through divine acts of grace and mercy.

Swami performed innumerable miracles for the benefit of human beings—making the blind see, the lame walk, and the mute speak. He cured individuals from terminal cancers, saying, “*Cancer is cancelled*,” and He even raised the dead to life. **Such resurrections have been recorded in the cases of Mr. Walter Cowan from the USA, Brigadier S.K. Bose and Sri Kuppam Radhakrishna, from India. Swami also revived Smt. Karnam Subamma**, who was like a second mother to Him, like Mother Yashoda was to Lord Krishna. Smt. Subamma had passed away and was about to be cremated. As promised, Baba came and put holy water into her mouth, saying, “Wake up.” She opened her eyes and drank the holy *tirtha* before finally merging in peace. The descriptions of these episodes can be found in previous issues of our publication, *Sathya Sai—The Eternal Companion*.

Another unique aspect of Swami is that He appeared simultaneously in many places. There are recorded instances of such incidents. Mr. James Sinclair in Connecticut,

USA, saw Swami appear in his bedroom; a doctor in Abu Dhabi saw Him in her room; and in Venezuela, a lady saw Swami appear in flesh and blood while she was meditating. The Sanathana Sarathi records how, in March 1983, in Manama, Bahrain, Mrs. Pankajam Sundaram opened her door at 9:30 PM to find Swami standing there, holding an apple and speaking in Tamil. He applied *vibhuti* on her forehead and vanished—just hours before her relatives returned and found her visibly shaken from the astounding experience.

Not only could He appear in His own form in multiple places, but He could also multiply Himself into different forms. One such instance occurred in the late 1950s with a military officer in Bhopal who was about to commit suicide. At that very moment, in distant Kodaikanal, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba left His body exclaiming, “Stop! Don’t shoot!” He appeared in multiple forms—as the officer’s friend, his friend’s wife, and even the railway porter—in Bhopal, to stop him from committing suicide. The gun disappeared instantly, and later the officer received a telegram, “The instrument is with Me—Baba.” This divine intervention saved his life and transformed his faith forever.

This reminds us of the incident in *Shirdi Sai Satcharita*, where Baba helped Nana Saheb Chandorkar’s daughter go through a difficult pregnancy and labor. Baba sent *vibhuti* and blessings through one devotee, Ramgir Bua, who was received at the train station and taken to Nanasaheb’s house by a horse carriage. Baba thus appeared as a coach driver, as the horses, and even as an accompanying friend, and after reaching the home of Nanasaheb, all forms vanished. This shows how the One can become many (*Ekoham Bahusyam*), revealing His omnipotence and omnipresence.

These are a few of the many ways Swami transformed people’s lives and healed their illnesses. **In addition, He demonstrated control over the five elements**—for example, Swami controlled rain many times. In one

such instance, recorded in *Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*, during a large gathering attending Swami’s discourse, when it was about to pour, Swami looked up, and the rain immediately stopped. Once the program concluded, torrential rain ensued! This shows His mastery over the five elements. I have had the blessed privilege of personally witnessing such occurrences.

Once, my father, Dr. Adivi Reddy, asked Swami, “Swami, You eat so little. How do You sustain Yourself? Do You derive energy from the five elements, as yogis do?” Swami smiled and said, “*The five elements derive their sustenance from Me,*” showing His absolute command over them.

In His younger days, Swami would pluck a variety of fruits from a tamarind tree, fulfilling the devotees’ wish; the sacred tree was later known as the *Kalpavriksha* (wish-fulfilling tree). Whatever people desired—apples, strawberries, mangoes—He would pluck from it, showing His power to transmute and transform. Beyond that,



any tree became wish-fulfilling by His will. Once, during a visit to Kodaikanal in 1994 (an event I witnessed), Swami plucked ripe plums from a bougainvillea vine! This is yet another display of His divine *mahimas*.

In another instance, Swami showed a geologist a stone and asked what it was made of. True to his training, the geologist replied, “Silica and other minerals.” Swami then asked him, “*Look again.*” To everyone’s amazement, the same stone was transformed into a beautiful, sweet idol of Lord Krishna—made of sugar candy! This illustrates that what we perceive as inert matter is imbued with divinity and sweetness, if only one has divine vision and love. Even in Swami’s physical absence, His miracles continue. In homes and Sai centers around the world, sacred *vibhuti*, turmeric, *kumkum*, saffron, and *amrit* (nectar) manifest on His pictures and altars—making devotees feel His eternal presence.

During special festivals, Swami would perform *vibhuti abhishekam* to the Shirdi Baba idol, especially on Maha Shivaratri. A large empty vessel would be held above the idol. Swami would put His hand in and swirl continuously, and copious amounts of *vibhuti* would flow out! The moment He pulled His hand out of the vessel, the flow ceased, showing that there was no secret source of the *vibhuti*, only divine will.

Another great phenomenon is the *Lingodbhava*, where Swami brings out the *linga*, the representation of the formless aspect of Lord Shiva. Sometimes, He would manifest and bring out many *lingas* that simultaneously emerged from His body during Maha Shivaratri. Later, He also materialized *lingas* and gifted them to devotees for daily worship.

Swami has explained the *linga*’s significance. *Liyate gamyate iti linga*: everything with name and form finally merges into the *linga*, the symbol of the formless Lord. He materialized various special *lingas*, such as the *Hiranyagarbha Linga*, and others made



of different metals and celestial substances, each reminiscent of Lord Sai Mahadeva.

In the early days, Swami used to take devotees to the sandy shores of the Chitravati River. With small groups, He would materialize many objects from the sands, such as idols of Lord Krishna, Mother Durga, or even fresh hot sweets! Not a single grain of sand would stick to them as they were



He cautioned that one should not get stuck at the first stage of merely enjoying miracles and *leelas*. In spiritual life, one must always move forward, as it is said, “Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.”

brought out. He would also bring forth vessels filled with nectar, ethereal and heavenly, for everyone to taste, which many observers have described in detail.

These amazing miracles are endless, beyond enumeration—because the Divine, who is all-powerful, can do anything, anywhere, and at any time. Swami beautifully summarizes the purpose of all these miracles and divine *leelas* in a fourfold formula for the stages of our spiritual evolution:

- *Chamatkar*—witnessing and experiencing miracles.
- *Samskar*—bringing transformation of the heart.
- *Paropakar*—leading to do selfless service to others.
- *Sakshatkar*—ultimately realizing one’s true divine nature.

He cautioned that one should not get stuck at the first stage of merely enjoying miracles and *leelas*. In spiritual life, one must always move forward, as it is said, “Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.” The goal is Self-realization.

In the beginning, miracles inspire faith and devotion. But eventually, they should lead to the transformation of the heart, which Swami said is His greatest miracle. The book, *Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*, Swami’s biography, records how Kalpagiri, a murderer

who disguised himself as a monk, wandered for years seeking peace. At Puttaparthi, Baba confronted his falsity, gave him white clothes, *vibhuti*, and ordered him to confess. Kalpagiri did so; his death sentence was commuted, and he began dedicating his life to service under Baba’s grace. There are countless such recorded instances of atheists, criminals, and addicts being transformed—prisoners becoming reformed citizens, drunkards and drug addicts giving up their vices, and the wealthy turning from selfishness to selflessness, using their wealth for providing free education, healthcare, and social services.

Many of Baba’s projects—educational institutions, hospitals, feeding programs, and water projects—have been made possible through the generosity of such souls with transformed hearts. Though Baba could accomplish anything by His divine will, He chose to uplift humanity through these means. Thus, they sacrificed their wealth for the welfare of humankind, and in turn, Baba gave them what they lacked, namely, peace and happiness.

The next editorial will dwell on the universal teachings and sacred, unparalleled divine mission of our Lord Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Jai Sai Ram.



Fill the World with LOVE

Part 1 of 2

*Nasti lobha samo vyadhi
Nasti krodha samo ripuhi
Nasti dukkha daridryavat
Nasti jnana param sukham*

(Sanskrit Verse)

*There is no disease equal to greed
There is no enemy equal to anger
There is no sorrow matching poverty
There is no joy greater than divine
knowledge*

There is no disease comparable to greed (*Nasti lobha samo vyadhi*). Amongst all the chronic diseases in this world, greed has grown to a greater magnitude. **There is no disease worse than greed.** It weakens man and makes him forget his human nature, and turns him demonic.

There is no enemy greater than anger (*Nasti krodha samo ripuhi*). **The second great disease is anger, for there is no greater enemy than this.** External enemies can be controlled to some extent, but the inner enemy of anger is far harder to

control. It destroys human life and makes one forget one's very human nature. It is humanity's great enemy.

There is no sorrow equal to poverty (*Nasti dukkha daridryavat*). What is the cause of sorrow? It is poverty. This is not just the poverty of wealth, but also the poverty of mind and the poverty of spiritual or divine knowledge (*jnana*). **It is the poverty of spiritual knowledge that leads one into suffering. Greed, anger, and the poverty of spiritual knowledge—these three lead to humanity's downfall.**

There is no happiness greater than knowledge (*Nasti jnana param sukham*). It is not just worldly knowledge that brings happiness; nothing brings greater happiness than spiritual knowledge (*jnana*). There are various kinds of knowledge: bookish knowledge, superficial knowledge, general knowledge, discriminatory knowledge, and practical knowledge. Among these,

practical knowledge is the most essential today, for it serves as humanity's 'third eye,' guiding one toward true happiness. **Therefore, every human being must develop the right knowledge to drive out the disease called greed, the enemy called anger, and the poverty called ignorance that are present within.** It is for this very purpose of preventing these three (greed, anger, and ignorance) that we have gathered here at this conference.

Understand the Purpose of Life

We need to understand, at least to some extent, what life is truly about and its purpose.

*Your day is consumed
by worldly chores.*

*Your life is spent in trivial pursuits.
Is this what you consider life to be?*

*Do you think that you are living
a worthy life because you spend
time in search of worldly pleasures,
eating three meals a day, sleeping
comfortably, recuperating from
fatigue, or having meaningless
conversations?*

*Is this the reason God has granted
you a human birth? Is this the reason
why you are born as a human being?*
(Telugu Poem)

Even though human beings possess the necessary intelligence, they are not utilizing it to discover the secrets and the goal of human life. Today, instead of using intellect to inquire into the goal and purpose of human life, we are using it to pursue pleasures, earn money, and seek positions of power. This is not the proper use of your intellect. **Your intelligence is truly valuable when you use it to realize the purpose and goal of human existence.** However, we are not acquiring such intelligence with today's education. The intelligence

The word 'SAI' holds profound inner significance. In the word SAI, 'S' stands for Service, 'A' for Adoration, and 'I' for Illumination. These three letters represent selfless service (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), and illumination or spiritual knowledge (*jnana*).

acquired from today's education is mainly for worldly and material purposes, limited to making a living.

Main Problems in the World Today

Today's world is in chaos, without peace, and agitated like a raging fire. Due to the unchecked and rapid growth of civilization, we are forgetting our humanity, totally neglecting moral principles, and losing sight of divinity. In all fields, we have completely forgotten morality and ethics. We prioritize physical and worldly duties, giving them importance, and we sacrifice our lives for them. Selfishness and self-interest are rampant everywhere.

Whatever object we desire, it is not just for the sake of the object, but for our self-interest. Whatever work we undertake, we are not interested in the success of that task, but only in our self-interest. Even in the spiritual field, one aspires to fulfil self-interest but does not contribute to the growth

and success of the organization or the well-being of society.

People only chase after name and fame. They lack the broad-mindedness to see how they could improve society or get involved in social service. We must, at least to some extent, understand the sacredness of human birth and its value. Even animals and birds eat, roam around, sleep, and enjoy worldly pleasures. Is this the reason we get an education? Is this the purpose of human birth? Is this what truly human birth is for? We must inquire into the goal, ideals, and sanctity of human birth, as well as the divinity present within it.

Purpose of the Sathya Sai Organization

Everyone gathered here today believes that they are working for the Organization. Why did we even start this Organization? **The main goal of establishing the Organization is to uplift humanity, eliminate animality, and to realize our innate divinity.**

Today, life feels very strange. People seem unaware of their true nature and reality, unable to recognize their true Selves. How can such individuals uplift others? One must uplift oneself before helping others ascend spiritually. The Bhagavad Gita emphasizes this principle of self-upliftment (*uddhared atmanatmanam*). One must have the determination to first improve oneself and then help others reach a higher spiritual level. **For someone who is in a deep slumber of ignorance, intoxicated by illusion, forgetting**

their divinity while living a mundane life of self-interest, the Upanishads (scriptures) exhort, “Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached” (*uttisthata, jagrata, prapya varannibodhata*).

O man! This is not the time to get intoxicated or sleep. You are intoxicated with pride and fail to realize the true nature of this cosmos. Instead of being intoxicated (confused or frenzied), you need to become fully absorbed in divinity (*tanmayatva*). *Tanmayatva* means being completely absorbed in the divine principle. Recognize the truth that human birth is the most distinguished, sacred, and unique. **That is why the scriptures declare that among all beings, human birth is the rarest and hardest to obtain.**

Those who spend their lives eating, drinking, sleeping, and seeking worldly pleasures have no right to claim that human birth is precious and difficult to obtain. That is why it is said, among all beings, human birth is rare, extremely rare. When does it become truly rare? When you shape yourself into an ideal human being. You are born a human, but you should become the best human being. Only then will your humanity truly excel.

We need to participate in selfless service (*seva*) activities. What is selfless service? Many think it simply means helping someone in need, but that is not true selfless service (*seva*). **True selfless service involves letting go of attachment and ego and engaging in service to soci-**



**True
selfless service
involves letting
go of attachment
and ego and
engaging in
service to society
with compassion
and love.**

“
The Sathya Sai Organizations
were established to spread and
nurture divinity through this
principle of love, not to count
heads or gather large numbers
of people.



ety with compassion and love. Do not think that you are serving for the sake of helping others or alleviating their pain. You are serving to improve yourself and cultivate goodness within. That is the ultimate benefit of selfless service. What a sacred pursuit this selfless service is!

*Na thapansi na theerthanam
Na sastrana japanahi
Samsara sagarittare
Sajjanam sevanam vina*

(Sanskrit Verse)

*No penance, no pilgrimage, no
scripture, and no repetition of the
divine name can save one from the
turbulent ocean of life without selfless
service to noble people.*

Great sages (*maharishis*) are doing penance. What is this penance? The inner meaning of penance is to awaken the divinity within by forgetting the world. When does it awaken? It awakens when the three attributes (*gunas*) within us become one; the *tamas* (mental dullness or ignorance) transforms to *tapas* (penance). What are the three attributes? They are *sattva*—purity, harmony, knowledge; *rajas*—passion, activity, and desire; *tamas*—darkness, inertia, and ignorance. Then, what else do we have within us? We

have the mind (thought), speech (word), and body (deed). The one who achieves the unity of these three is a true human being. The proper study of mankind is man. **The unity of thought, word, and deed is true penance.** This is what we consider as human value; EHV stands for Education in Human Values. But My view is that it is not EHV but 3HV. The 3 Hs are Head, Heart, and Hand. We must achieve unity among these three to realize the true spirit of work in selfless service, which will purify us..

What does SAI stand for?

The word 'SAI' holds profound inner significance. In the word SAI, S stands for Service, A for Adoration, and I for Illumination. These three letters represent selfless service (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), and Illumination or spiritual knowledge (*jnana*). First comes Service—S; second is A—Adoration, meaning devotion and the spirit of love; and lastly I—Illumination refers to the result of inquiry, which is wisdom or spiritual knowledge. These three paths represent the main teachings of Sai. In 'SAI,' even if one letter is missing, it cannot be considered as SAI. Therefore, the spiritual paths represented by the three letters are all very important. SAI is the embodiment

and the unity of selfless action (*karma*), devotion (*upasana*), and spiritual knowledge (*jnana*).

Just as the sacred syllable Om (ॐ) is spelled as AUM, selfless action (*karma*), devotional worship (*upasana*), and spiritual knowledge (*jnana*) are represented by the letters of SAI. SAI does not simply stand for a name; it is the symbolic representation of these three spiritual paths - selfless action, devotion, and spiritual knowledge. Therefore, in Sai Organizations, it is essential to sincerely cultivate and wholeheartedly strengthen all three.

Fundamental Discrimination over Individual Discrimination

Today, humanity has made advances both in physical and material sciences. Yet there is a decline in the morals and ethics of humanity. What is the reason for this decline? Although we may attribute this to the tendencies (*vasanas*) carried over from past lives, this is not true. The root cause is the inherent flaws arising from one's own desires. We must clearly recognize what we should desire and what we should renounce. Our discrimination must be proper and truthful. Today, humanity discriminates, but it is selfish and individual discrimination. This is not true discrimination in the proper sense.

Fundamental discrimination is what is needed. Through fundamental discrimination, one can receive a divine response that grants equal consideration to you and to everyone else. You practice discrimination by asking whether a particular object is needed or not. You may not need something, but just because you don't need it doesn't mean you should discard it. Someone else might need it. Hence, this is not true discrimination. Discrimination must be universal and beneficial to all. What is it that everyone cherishes and that no one hates? It is love. **Love is the one principle that transcends all differences and is**

sought by everyone. When we share that love with everyone, that becomes true selfless service (*seva*).

Nurture and Fill the World with Love

Instead of just loving oneself, we should share this love with fellow human beings, spread it throughout society, and ultimately immerse the whole world in love. Love is not something that is sold in a shop, or received as a gift from others, or supplied by a company. Love exists within oneself. One should manifest this love from within. Yet today we have taken this love in the wrong direction, misunderstanding its true meaning. It is easy to say, 'I love you,' but what does love really mean?

You may just say 'I love you' and call it love, but that is not the true meaning of love—it is only attachment. **Love is another name for the Supreme (*Paramatma*), for God Himself is love. Love is God, Live in Love. God is known as the embodiment of love. Therefore, we should regard love as divine.** The worldly forms of love, toward a spouse, children, wealth, food, or relatives, are all impermanent. Therefore, such impermanent love cannot truly be called love; it is only attachment. True love emanates naturally from the heart. That is divine love.

Every human being should kindle divine love within themselves. Yet today, such love is rarely seen. For a while, people work in organizations. Later, they divert their love toward the world, and then they become entangled in it. As a result, true love fades, while worldly love grows. To regard this transitory love, which grows and declines as real love, is foolishness and ignorance. We must correctly understand the principle of love within us and share it with society. People often think, 'I am very intelligent, highly educated, and skilled with many knacks.' We consider this type of cleverness as real and believe it makes us highly educated. But this is not true intelligence.

Real intelligence lies in the effort to recognize the truth. **Therefore, we must hold on only to what is worth holding, achieve only what is worth achieving, and enjoy only what is worth enjoying,** experiencing true eternal bliss. How long do these worldly things last? These are all passing clouds. We should not mistake them for what is true and eternal.

Worldly comforts are like mirages that appear as water in a desert, where none exists. We desperately scramble for this water that is not there, traveling far and wide, chasing an unreal reflection. Similarly, man runs after worldly pleasures in search of happiness, but this too is a mirage, something that can never be captured, no matter how far one chases. Yet true love is very near, within reach, closer than one's own mother. However, man forgets this essence of love. Therefore, nurture this love, foster it within yourself, and share it with the entire humanity.

How to See God, Who is Everywhere?

God is not distant. People often ask, **'Where is God?'. In their ignorance, they fail to see that God is everywhere. Wherever we look, there He is. Love is God. Truth is God. Sacrifice is God. You are the embodiment of truth, peace, and love.** To still ask, 'Where is God?' is sheer foolishness. Many approached a renowned saint, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and asked, 'Have you seen God?' Ramakrishna, who was immersed in complete divine love, would forget body consciousness at the mere mention of Lord Krishna's name.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa replied, 'Yes, I have seen God.' A person then asked, 'How and where did you see Him?' Ramakrishna responded, 'I see God just as clearly as I see you.' Another question followed: 'Can I also see Him?' Such





doubts often arise in modern students. Is God an object in the marketplace, something to be revealed simply by opening a door? God is not an external object to be shown. He is present wherever we look. It is only the lack of proper inquiry that prevents us from seeing Him. Then Ramakrishna replied, “Sir, you worry so much about your wife. You are concerned for the well-being of your children. You constantly think and brood over wealth and possessions. You are entangled in three powerful attachments: desire for wealth, desire for spouse, and desire for children. For someone caught in these three powerful attachments, how can divine love ever be attained? **Just as you long for your family, redirect that same longing toward God.**”

If you crave for the world instead of thinking about God and yearning for Him, how can you expect to see God? When the mind is filled with negatives and negativity, how can you experience the positive and positivity that is God? Consider the electric bulb; it will not give light, no matter how long you hold it, if it is not connected to electricity. The bulb lights up only when

the negative is connected with the positive and electricity flows. **In the same way, our worldly desires, which are negative in nature, must be transformed into positive ones by turning them toward God. Such transformation is true devotion.**

Realize your True Identity

Just as it has been said, ‘the proper study of mankind is man’, in the same way, ‘work can be transformed into worship.’ Whatever work you do, firmly believe the truth that it is all God’s work, and it is the very form of God. By dividing work into office work and the Sai Organization’s work, you are becoming a businessman. True spirituality is not a commercial business. This ‘business’ of spirituality is related to the *atma* (Self). **You must dedicate your heart and soul to God and experience bliss. The Sathya Sai Organizations were established to spread and nurture divinity through this principle of love, not to count heads or gather large numbers of people.**

You must realize the divinity within you. That is Self-realization. What is the Self? There are two kinds: the single letter ‘I,’ representing the *atma* (true Self), and the

other is the three-letter 'eye,' symbolizing the body. People often identify with the body, saying 'I, I am,' without inquiring whether this 'I' refers to the true Self (*atma*) or the body. This is the real search for Truth. 'I' is not the body. We refer to this body with the word 'my' and say 'my body, my mind, my hand, my face'—then reflect on, 'who am I' truly? When we say 'my face,' it shows that there is someone distinct from the face. When we say, 'this is my handkerchief' or 'this is my flower,' it means the handkerchief and the flower are separate from me. **But who am I? So, one must inquire in this manner. This is true discrimination.** It must arise from the wholehearted feeling of the Self. Only then can we truly witness the real 'I.'

Quality over Quantity in the Organization

The purpose of forming Sri Sathya Sai centers and organizations is not to increase membership in numbers. We need quality, not quantity. Our international and All-India presidents have said that many centers and organizations have developed and expanded. But the real question is—has equal-mindedness and harmony

increased? Organizations may have grown, but equality has not. Instead, differences continue to increase. **For me, the increase in the number of centers and organizations reflects quantity, while the growth of equal-mindedness and harmony reflects quality. What I want is quality, not quantity.** What use are barrels of useless donkey's milk? A single teaspoon of quality cow milk is far better. That is what I desire—quality over quantity.

Equal-mindedness and harmony within the organization must be strengthened. Although titles like president, coordinator, and member exist to organize work, these roles do not make a difference to God, the Supreme Soul (*Paramatma*). *Paramatma* is equally present in every person, whether they are a member, coordinator, chairman, or secretary. We should recognize the presence of the *Paramatma* and the oneness that transcends titles, names, and forms. We need to foster this unity to eliminate hatred, jealousy, and unrest. Where there is such unity, we do not experience any suffering.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 18, 1995

To be concluded in Part 2, in which Swami shares how we should make our lives His message, experiencing bliss and divinity through unity.



Revelation OF Consciousness

An Interview with Robert Baskin, Esq.



Robert Baskin, Esq. first met Swami in 1978. He came to India for an intended one or two-month stay for the 1978 Summer Course and stayed at the Ashram with Swami's encouragement for two years. He and his wife, Diana, returned to Prasanthi Nilayam to be with Swami more than 50 times. Their experiences are memorialized in her published books *Divine Memories* and *Divine Lessons*. He is a sincere seeker of spiritual truth and Self-realization and is devoted to Swami and His divine mission.

In 1983, after he returned to California, Swami appointed him as a director of the Sathya Sai Society of America (SSSA). As its longest-serving member, he has served as an officer and director and has provided legal counsel for four decades to the SSSA, SSSIO–USA, and the SSSIO at the international level. He was a regional director of the SSSIO–USA and served in various roles for many years. He is currently a director of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, which focuses on policy issues and legal matters of the SSSIO.

Aravind: I am grateful to Swami for this opportunity to speak with a very distinguished longtime devotee—the only one whom Swami called “My lawyer!” Robert, knowing that you have a treasure trove of experiences from your long association and proximity with our beloved Swami, I want to make the best use of our time together.

Robert: Let's begin with a quote, one that feels especially timely as we approach Swami's 100th Birthday celebrations. It comes from the great Indian sage Sri Aurobindo in the early 20th century. As you know, Swami was born on November 23, 1926, and Sri Aurobindo wrote this the very next morning:

“24th November 1926 was the descent of Krishna into the physical. A power infallible shall lead the thought. In earthly hearts kindle the Immortal's fire. Even the multitude shall hear the voice.”

When he says, “a power infallible shall lead the thought,” it refers to Swami's transformative power to influence our minds, guiding us toward divinity and

truth. *"In earthly hearts kindle the Immortal's fire"* points to Swami's unique ability to awaken divine yearning within us. And *"even the multitude shall hear the voice"* reminds us that in the decades to come, tens of millions from India and around the world will receive Swami's darshan.

Almost one hundred years later, Sri Aurobindo's words remain a beautiful and accurate description of Swami's life and work.

Aravind: Beautiful indeed! This Swami of ours truly inspires awe! Please tell me, how did you first come to Swami? Did you go searching for Him, or did He come searching for you?

Robert: He came searching for me long before I started looking for Him. That's a story in itself.

In the early 1970s, I was a law student in Washington, D.C. Between my second and third years of law school, I decided to spend the summer traveling through the Yucatán and Guatemala, exploring ancient Aztec and Mayan ruins. I have always been fascinated by archaeology and anthropology. So, I bought a van, converted it into a camper, and set off.

Driving south through Tennessee, I stopped for the night at what looked like an old rock quarry. Alone in the van, I noticed something strange: every time the refrigerator cycled on, the ceiling lights turned on; when it cycled off, the lights went out. I realized I had an electrical problem that needed to be fixed before I crossed into Mexico.

The following morning, I pulled into a small gas station near Nashville that had a mechanic's shop. The mechanic, an older man, greeted me. I said, "I have a problem," but before I could explain, he replied, "I know—you have a phantom circuit." I was stunned. How could he know before I even described it?

Without me saying a word, He spoke of my past—things no one in India could have ever known: my education, my background, family experiences, even my interests. He also told me about my future.

He explained the problem, told me exactly which parts I needed, and directed me to a nearby store. "Come back and fix it yourself," he said, "I'll guide you." So, I did, spending the day rewiring under his direction.

As night fell, he invited me to his farm, which also housed a small meditation center. I accepted, and what was meant to be one night turned into almost a week. That's when I learned his remarkable story.

He told me that for lifetimes, he had been the keeper of an ancient mystical doctrine. Before he met someone from his past, he would first hear celestial music, which would reveal details about that person's life and the reason for their meeting. That, he said, was how he knew my problem before I spoke.

As a teacher, he drew on the works of Roy Eugene Davis, a disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda, a renowned saint and author of the book *Autobiography of a Yogi*. One of Davis's books was a small volume about Sathya Sai Baba, based on his visit to India. That was the first time I heard Swami's name.

At that time, I didn't pursue it any further. I have always been a seeker of truth, especially metaphysical truth, but my path had not yet led me directly to Him. I graduated, became a lawyer, and began practicing in San Francisco. **Yet, as before, I found that worldly success did not bring the deeper**



fulfillment I was seeking. I was still searching for the higher truth.

Aravind: That's fantastic and phenomenal. You must have been in your twenties then?

Robert: Yes, I was 27.

Aravind: At 27, most people are chasing careers and worldly pleasures. But you seemed to feel that the world had nothing more to offer. Was it because you had already seen enough of life's luxuries? Or was there something deeper that nudged you toward this path? And why study law, for example, if this inner quest was always part of you?

Robert: The man I met in Tennessee—who could see my past lives—told me I had been a lawyer or judge many times before. I do not doubt it, because I decided I wanted to be a lawyer when I was only five years old. From that point on, I never wavered.

Even as a child, though, I had a deep interest in the unseen mysteries of life. I always sought the motive behind the act, the truth behind the teaching. That's why I majored in philosophy in college, travelled through

Europe, explored ancient civilizations, and looked eastward toward India for truths I could not find in Western philosophy or religion.

Five years after that encounter with the mechanic, while practicing with a firm in San Francisco, I had what some would call an epiphany. One morning, as I drove across the Golden Gate Bridge into the city, a thought arose: *"What would I do if I had only one year to live?"*

I didn't know what I would do—but I knew very clearly what I would not do. And that was virtually everything I was doing at the time. **The realization led me to quit my job and resolve to go to India in search of a teacher.**

At that stage, I wasn't looking for a religious or spiritual master. I was looking for a principle—a 'truth-force'—that could guide my life. Around that time, I remembered having first read about Sai Baba in the book by Roy Eugene Davis. But it didn't leave any lasting impression on me. **But just a few days after my epiphany, a friend handed me a book she had received but not yet read—*Sai Baba: Man of Miracles* by Howard Murphet. That was my first real introduction to Swami.**

Aravind: Just like that? You gave up your career and simply went to India?

Robert: Yes, but I took the long way to get there. I spent a year traveling through the South Pacific and Southeast Asia—immersing myself in primitive cultures, staying in Buddhist monasteries in Thailand and Burma, and slowly making my way toward India.

Aravind: That's incredibly brave. No bookings, no fixed plans—you just travelled?

Robert: Just travelled. By the time I reached southern India, I had already come across another book on Swami—this one written



by V.K. Gokak, a distinguished educationist who later became the first Vice Chancellor of Swami's university. **What struck me most in his book was his observation that one did not have to come to Sai Baba as a believer—you could come, see, experience, and discover the truth for yourself. That greatly appealed to me.**

So, with that mindset, I first walked into Brindavan Ashram in Whitefield, near Bengaluru, in March 1978. I had never met a devotee of Swami before. But I had read a few books about Him. I was a sincere seeker of truth, but I was still a doubting Thomas—trained to question everything, searching for the motive behind the act, the truth behind the teaching.

I had corresponded with Professor Kasturi, asking him if it was possible to attend the 1978 Summer Course, which began in May. Kasturi replied that only Swami could invite someone, but he welcomed me to come and meet him. So, I arrived on a Saturday afternoon, knocked on his door, and he kindly received me. He explained my timing was unfortunate—Swami was leaving that very afternoon for a two-week trip to North India. But he suggested I go to Puttaparthi, where I could await Swami's return, and introduced

me to a gentleman from Brindavan Press who would accompany me there the next morning.

That afternoon, I had a choice. For six months, I had been receiving mail at the Kadugodi Post Office near Whitefield. I hadn't collected it. I could either collect my long-accumulated mail or go for *darshan* to see Swami for the very first time.

I made the right choice. I went for *darshan*. I wasn't used to sitting on a hard cement floor, but I waited. After some time, I noticed a Western man leaning comfortably against the wall. I went over and introduced myself. His name was Don Heath, president of the Sai Center in San Francisco.

"What a coincidence," I said. "I lived in San Francisco."

He asked for my name. When I told him, he laughed and said, "You've just solved my dilemma. I've been looking for you for two weeks."

Puzzled, I asked why. He reached into his bush coat pocket, pulled out a packet of about twenty letters, and explained: "When I arrived, the Kadugodi postmaster handed me your mail. He asked me to find you before



“
You are not human,
You are divine.
You are a divine
being having a
human experience.”

he sent it all back.” Then he handed me the letters.

“What a coincidence,” I repeated.

To which he dryly replied, “If you’re around here for a while, you may learn to call it something else.”

Aravind: Wow! So, you got to have your very first *darshan*, and the mail from the post office as well!

Robert: Yes. Swami came out for *darshan*. Everyone thought it would only be a ‘car *darshan*,’ on His way to the airport, but instead, He stepped out and walked through the lines of seated devotees. He didn’t say anything to me or come very close physically, but He looked directly in my direction with the most piercing gaze imaginable. I had never experienced anything like it. **In that instant, I felt He saw right through me—into my very soul. That was my first *darshan* of Swami, and also the first time I met a Sai devotee.**

After that, I traveled to Puttaparthi when Swami was away in North India for about ten days. The *ashram* was almost empty—it was March, the dry and hot season when most people stayed away. But for me, those days were filled with quiet contemplation, meditation, and reading Swami’s books.

Every night, from the moment I fell asleep until I woke up, I felt a constant sense of Swami’s presence. He appeared in my dreams. He was there, watching—though not speaking. That silent, watchful presence was incredibly transformative.

Aravind: So, by the time you came to Puttaparthi itself, you had accepted Him as the Supreme Being due to His one piercing look?

Robert: Oh no, not at all. I was still the same doubting Thomas, full of questions, but a sincere seeker of truth and Self-realization. When I learned Swami had returned to Whitefield, I went back there. **What I thought might be a one- or two-month stay turned into two years, through the end of 1979.**

Aravind: So, you got to attend the 1978 Summer Course. But tell me—at what point did you say, “If there is a God on earth, this is Him”?

Robert: It didn’t take long. Within a week or two of returning to Whitefield, Swami started calling me for interviews. **Without me saying a word, He spoke of my past—things no one in India could have ever known: my education, my background, family experiences, even my interests. He also told me about my future.**

He said I would return to the U.S. after my stay in India. I would first work in government service, which turned out to be two years as an administrative law judge in the federal government, then enter private practice, serve His organization in various legal roles, marry, and have two children.

During one interview, He asked me, “Do you know Ojai?” I misheard it as “Ohio,” but He laughed, spelled out O-J-A-I, and moved on.

At that time, I had never heard of Ojai. The following year, I discovered that Diana—the woman Swami had chosen for me, whom He Himself introduced, and later married us—was from Ojai, California. After returning to the USA, I settled there, where we lived together until she passed away 11 years ago.

It was during my second interview that He materialized a ring and placed it on my finger, a five-metal *panchaloha* ring with a Krishna in relief and an “OM” on it. It glowed with an ethereal brightness.

Within minutes of leaving the room, I entered a higher state of consciousness that persisted for almost two days. It was pure bliss.

From my first meeting with Swami, I made it a practice to record every word Swami spoke to me or to others in my presence. If you would like, I can read to you what I wrote in my journal at the time. My late wife later included it in her book *Divine Lessons*.

Aravind: Yes, please.

Robert: This is from my entry dated April 7, 1978:

“Since my second interview on April 5th, I have been filled with unimaginable bliss. The energy that Baba infused into me has eradicated every thought or desire other than a steadfast wish for union with God. Love has entered my every thought and profoundly colored my perceptions. People have remarked that they could hardly believe they were speaking with the same person.

The entire experience was a revelation of our true consciousness and a demonstration of His unconditional love and forgiving grace.

My meditation sessions these past two days have been sublimely calm, with an absence of mental activity. I find love and beauty everywhere. I have felt as if released from all past *karma*. Toward all, without exception, I felt peace, forgiveness, and compassion.

Yesterday morning at *darshan*, Swami stood in front of me, inscribed something in the air with His finger, and I felt a stirring in my heart. That evening, He stood on my foot for several seconds, and the elevated state

began to subside.

The entire experience was a revelation of our true consciousness and a demonstration of His unconditional love and forgiving grace. I don’t know why I was the fortunate recipient of such grace—but I know it has transformed me forever.”

Aravind: Wow!

Robert: I think those words that I wrote at the time of the experience say it better than anything I can say now.

Aravind: You know, this is the second time I’m hearing about an experience like this.

One of my teachers also described something similar—Swami patted his head, and he went into a superconscious state. Two days later, Swami patted him again and brought him back to what he called “abnormal” state—what we think of as ‘normal’.

Robert: It doesn’t even take physical contact. I had an even more intense experience seven years later in the *ashram*, in the Poor-nachandra Hall. It was at the end of a festival. My wife Diana and I were there. It was our last *darshan* before returning to the U.S. After I first left India in 1979, we continued to return every year for the next 35 years—at least once a year, often twice, and sometimes even three times when Swami invited us.

On that particular occasion, I was about 10 or 15 feet away from Him when He looked at me and said, “Have a son.” With Swami, you never know whether His words are symbolic or literal. In His parlance, “son” represents truth and “daughter” represents peace.

As soon as He spoke, I felt an overwhelming state of bliss—so intense I couldn’t even function. It lasted for 12 hours. Normally, when we travel, I go into my “organization mode”—handling passports, tickets, airport counters, taxi drivers, luggage, and all the logistics. But this time, I was so absorbed in blissful consciousness that Diana literally had to

take me by the hand and lead me through the airport to the plane.

By the time we landed in Los Angeles, the experience had faded. But that—and the 1978 experience—revealed something profound to me. Swami always tells us: ***“You are not human, you are divine. You are a divine being having a human experience.”*** He even goes so far as to say to us, ***“You are God. You are not separate from God. Low thinking is a crime. Think of yourself as divine.”***

Those two experiences gave me a direct taste of that truth—the realization that our normal waking consciousness is not our ultimate reality. Higher consciousness is our true nature. ***When we leave this body and the human experience, we return to that divine state of bliss. These moments have profoundly shaped my life and are perhaps the greatest lessons He has taught me.***

Aravind: So beautiful. And it’s easy to see how, after that first experience in 1978, you would have felt that your search had led you to the goal—that this was it. Am I right?

Robert: Yes, absolutely. From that experience onward, I knew Swami was divine. I did not fully understand what that divinity was—I have only been given a small glimpse of it—but it left me with complete certainty. In my mind, since then, He is the Avatar He proclaimed Himself to be.

To Be Continued...



Living in the ‘Prasad Zone’



THE VERY FIRST TIME I HEARD OF SAI BABA WAS FROM A FRIEND OF MINE.

In those days, I was still working in the aerospace industry in Los Angeles. Out of the blue, I received a postcard from him—just an ordinary penny postcard, written in pencil, all the way from India.

He started with, “Dear Jack, I’m sitting on the porch of Sai Baba, who is God. I’m spending as much time with Him as I can at His *ashram*. You should get a book about Him that was written by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss.”

That was my introduction.

I wasted no time. He gave me the address of the Hollywood Sathya Sai Baba Center, where I could find the book. My wife, Louise, and I were living down at the beach at that time. I jumped into my car, drove straight to Hollywood, and knocked on the door. A kind lady answered, and sure enough, she had the book, “*Sai Baba—The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist*” by Samuel Sandweiss, M.D. I bought it, got back into the car, and drove home.

About 45 minutes to an hour later, I entered my home, holding the book in my hand. Louise looked at it and gasped, “Oh my God!”

I asked, “What is it?”

She said, “That’s the man I had a dream about two weeks ago. It was such a powerful dream, but I didn’t know who He was, so I never mentioned it to you.”

That was the beginning of our journey.

Our Journey Begins

We started attending Sai meetings, mostly in Orange County. If we were driving down to San Diego, we would make sure to stop by the Sai Center, spend a few hours singing bhajans, and listen to others speak about Him. Incidentally, San Diego is the hometown of Dr. Sandweiss, the author of the book. The Orange County devotees also held monthly meetings where people shared their experiences with Swami. **For us, those meetings were a lifeline and very inspirational.**

We did this for three or four years. Our children were still in school, so traveling to India wasn’t possible for us yet. Then, around 1978, the desire to see Swami grew too strong. Louise encouraged me to go, although she herself couldn’t go at that time, as she was busy with the children at home. By then, my consulting business had picked up, and I could afford the trip.

Still, I was skeptical. Coming from Los Angeles, where every fifth person seems to be a guru of some kind, skepticism was only natural. I thought, ‘If Sai Baba turns out to be a phony, at least I can combine the trip with business and not be disappointed.’ So I planned an extended trip—Los Angeles to Hawaii, then to Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Nepal, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, and finally England, where Louise and I would meet and vacation together.

But my true goal was India—seeing Sai Baba in person.

Power of Darshan

By the time I reached Bangalore, I had been on the road for three weeks. I was worn down, suffering from traveler’s illness, and

When I finally stepped through the small gate into the ashram, something magical happened. The sickness left me; I felt fine, strong, and clear.

staying in a small hotel. I heard Swami was in Whitefield, but I had no idea where or what Whitefield was. Despite feeling miserable, I decided to take a taxi there the very next morning.

Twice on the way, I almost tapped the driver’s shoulder to tell him to turn back—I felt that ill. But I pressed on. **When I finally stepped through the small gate into the ashram, something magical happened. The sickness left me; I felt fine, strong, and clear.**

I sat quietly and observed everything. Swami came out for *darshan*, although I didn’t know what *darshan* meant at that time. I watched the monkeys running along the walls and the people sitting in expectant silence. Watching people was part of my professional skill as a consultant, so I found it fascinating. I didn’t know yet what to make of it all, but I felt something unusual, something magnetic.

That evening, as I left the gate and headed back to the hotel, my sickness returned in full force! I had a miserable night. Yet the next morning, I tried the same routine again, and the same thing happened: as soon as I stepped through the little gate, my illness vanished. I began to think, ‘Wait a minute... something extraordinary is happening here.’

Within two days, my illness vanished completely. Swami took care of it.

I stayed in Whitefield for about two weeks, soaking in the atmosphere, still the ‘skeptical Jack,’ but no longer untouched by what I was experiencing. The rest of my round-

“I AM WITHIN YOU. WHATEVER YOU HEAR OR WRITE WILL BE ME SPEAKING.”

the-world trip went smoothly, but I knew the real purpose of my journey had already been fulfilled.

When Louise and I reunited in England, we spent time along the English Channel, and I shared my experiences with her. She could see profound changes in me.

Mother's Love & Father's Discipline

That first trip set the course of our lives. For the next 36 years, we returned to India every year, spending extended periods at the *ashram*, basking in Swami's glory.

At the end of the first trip, something amusing happened that carried a profound message. Swami had given us a brief interview as part of a group, and as we were leaving, He asked us, “*You're not going to stay for my birthday?*”

We felt uneasy hearing that. Was He asking us to stay? Was it a direction? We weren't sure. I was also a bit upset during that trip for not getting the coveted personal interview. I often argued with Him in my mind, calling Him “Mr. Raju” instead of “Swami” or “Bhagawan,” especially because I felt He wasn't paying attention to me. Our plans were already set to do some sightseeing before returning home, so we continued with the trip, as planned.

We travelled north to Gulmarg, a hill station in North India. There was no snow at the time, but the scenery was beautiful, and Louise, being a horsewoman, was delighted at the chance to ride. We rented horses. Louise had

a strong horse, while mine was a skinny little thing. She laughed at my poor mount, but I thought I could manage.

The horse, however, had a mind of its own. Every so often, it would stretch its front legs out farther and farther until there was nothing left for me to hold on to, and I would topple right off! Three times I fell, each time feeling embarrassed, and each time, I climbed back on the horse. By the time we got back to the stable, I was frustrated. I asked the stableman, “What's this horse's name?”

He replied, “Oh, that horse? That's Mr. Raju.”

At that moment, I laughed. Swami had found a way to address my unspoken anger. And here, hundreds of miles away from the *ashram*, I was given a horse by that very name—a horse that humbled me three times. **It was Swami's way of saying, “*I know your thoughts. I'm still with you. And perhaps, you should have stayed for My birthday.*”**

That experience sank into me deeply. It was a playful yet hard lesson.

During my second trip, I had my first interview with Swami, and it left a permanent mark on me. It answered my question about Mr. Raju's anger and deeply engraved Swami's love into my heart. We were in the small interview room with perhaps eight or ten others, sitting around Swami's feet. In my first interview, without warning, He suddenly slapped me across the face—hard! Everyone gasped. Louise was startled. The others looked frightened.

And then Swami said gently, “*I love you.*”

The others were bewildered, but I started giggling. Somehow, I wasn’t offended or hurt. It felt like an expression of His deep affection, a way of jolting me to awaken me. Even now, whenever I recall that moment, I smile. **For me, that slap was not punishment but love—love that bypassed logic and touched something very deep inside.**

Living with Swami

Over the years, Swami guided me in countless ways. He gradually drew Louise and me closer, until our lives were entirely focused on Him. We spent 26 years going back and forth to India, living with and for Swami. Over time, all my skepticism faded away.

Through His blessings, something remarkable happened to me: fear disappeared. Completely. People often asked me, “Jack, what is so important about being with Sai Baba?” For a long time, I didn’t know how to put it into words. Then one day, I found the words.

I told them, “There is no fear left in me.”

Not fear of dying. Not fear of losing a loved one. Not fear of losing everything I had. Not even fear of nuclear war, which in those days weighed heavily on the minds of many. Truly, there was no fear left in me.

And when people heard this, they would look at me with disbelief. Some thought I must have stumbled upon some strange, magical potion! But it wasn’t that. **It was Swami. By His grace, fear simply vanished.**

That is how Swami transformed us. Louise and I, two ordinary people from Los Angeles, found our lives turned upside down—or rather, right side up—the moment we encountered Him due to our great, good fortune.

During those years, Louise and I were still very much like students at Swami’s feet. However, I was teaching MBA students at the university and conducting meetings, but I still saw myself primarily as a learner, not a

lecturer. Once, Dr. Adivi Reddy, Dr. Narendranath Reddy’s late father, who gave spiritual talks to foreigners at the *ashram* based on Swami’s teachings, asked me if I would give talks to foreigners. I told him, “No, I’m still a student here. I would rather remain a student and learn than presume to teach.” I added that when I was ready to give talks, I’d let him know.

Our neighbor at that time was Veronica, a woman from Ojai, California. Once, we were traveling to Kodaikanal following Swami in a taxi and got stuck in heavy traffic. Veronica was seated in the passenger seat on the left side when, suddenly, the side mirror was knocked off by a vehicle coming from the opposite direction. Louise and I were shocked, but Veronica turned to us calmly and said, “Never look back.” She explained that this was life’s way of teaching her not to dwell on the past—just to discard it. I never forgot that lesson.

Wherever Swami Puts Us

On another occasion, when we told her we had no idea where we were headed, she responded in her Hungarian-American accent, **“Oh, wherever Swami puts!” And indeed, that phrase became a guiding principle for us. Wherever Swami puts us, that is where we belong!**

By then, our children had grown up and left the nest, and Louise was free to accompany me everywhere. I adjusted my business to remain president of the company, but only do as much consulting as necessary to maintain it. The rest of the time, for nearly 20 years, we traveled around the world—giving workshops, seminars, and doing service for Swami.

We never knew where we’d end up, but it was always “Swami puts.” We never worried and just went with His flow. For example, once we flew into Rio de Janeiro after a long journey. It was 5 am, the airport was dimly lit, and no food outlets were open. Hungry and tired, we wandered past a closed restaurant.



Its red rope blocked the entrance, but the night crew had forgotten to clear the tables. I unhooked the rope, bowed theatrically to Louise, and said, “Please enter, madam.” We sat down at one of the tables and ate leftover bread in that fancy restaurant. That, too, was “Swami puts.”

Dharmic Management and Bhagavad Gita

During this period, my business took a spiritual turn. I also began writing. My first book, *Dharmic Management*, grew directly out of Swami’s inspiration. When I told Him the title, He was delighted, “*Dharmic management, yes, yes.*” Once, when introducing me to a group of German visitors, He said, “*This man is writing a management book. What is the name of the book?*” I answered, “Dharmic Management, Swami.” He repeated it with joy.

He told me, “*I am within you. Whatever you hear or write will be Me speaking.*” Those words gave me courage.

Dharmic Management was published in the early 1990s and quickly became a best-seller—an unusual achievement for a book blending spirituality and business.

Then came my second major project, the *Bhagavad Gita: A Walkthrough for Westerners*. For a long time, I resisted writing it. Swami’s inner voice would urge me, “*Do the Gita.*” I argued, “No, Swami, I’m not an Indian. I am a Westerner. I don’t know the subject well enough.” However, the urging persisted until finally I surrendered.

Later, Swami called Louise and me for an interview. He said, “***It is not your inner voice—it is Me. You have everything within you to write this book. And if you lack anything, I will provide it.***” Those words removed my final doubts.

And so, with Swami guiding each step, the *Gita Walkthrough* was born.

A Turning Point in My Life

Another time, something very important happened—something that changed everything for us. I was sitting on the veranda, about halfway back, about 21 feet from Swami’s door, for 21 years. From that spot, I watched, listened, absorbed, and learned.

One morning, Swami came out and looked into my eyes. That look lasted a full eight seconds, and eight seconds of Swami’s

gaze feels like eternity. It was powerful, overwhelming, and deeply transformative.

When Swami's eyes met mine, there was no fear, no confusion—only a deep sense of wonder and belonging. It was a turning point in our lives. Everything changed from that moment.

Around that time, my book *"The Bhagavad Gita: A Walkthrough for Westerners"* was completed. I presented it to Swami for His blessings. He looked at it with great joy and said, "Yes, yes...for Westerners."

Living in the 'Prasad Zone'

Then in 1998, something else shifted. Louise, my dear wife, fell seriously ill. She had a stroke.

When Louise collapsed, I rushed her to the Super Specialty Hospital. In those early days, she drifted in and out of consciousness. I sat by her bed, worried and uncertain. At one point, when she regained some clarity, I said to her, "Louise, we must see this as a blessing. There's a gift hidden in this for us." Immediately, she replied, "Yes." That moment was transformative.

Something shifted in my mind. A calm confidence washed over me. I knew that whatever happened—whether Louise recovered fully, partially, or not at all—it would be as it was meant to be. That realization lifted my fear. I began calling it the **"Prasad Zone."**

Prasad, after all, means a divine gift, a blessing from God. Later, I learned it also means quietness, clarity, peace, and joy. That's exactly what I felt. And to my amaze-

ment, Louise was in the very same frame of mind—calm, accepting, and filled with a quiet understanding. We both entered the 'Prasad Zone' together, and it has stayed with us ever since.

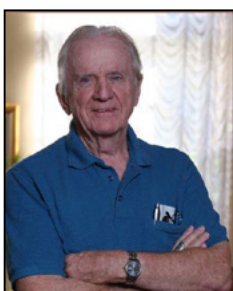
During those years, I wrote other books, *"The Essential Wisdom of the Gita"* and *"Roadmaps to Self-Realization."* The latter is a very practical book, based on the ancient practice of *Atma Vichara*, Self-inquiry. It's filled with 65 self-assessment worksheets, one for each section of the Gita, helping seekers evaluate where they are on their spiritual path, where they're strong, and where they need focus. That book is now available online for free.

When Swami left His body in 2011, people asked me, "Jack, how do you feel? Are you devastated?" I told them honestly, **"I am filled with gratitude. Nothing but gratitude." For all He had given us, for all He had guided us through, there could be no other feeling.**

By then, I had started to see Swami as the "Orange Door." His divine form was the gateway—warm, welcoming, radiant. But He wanted us to go beyond the door, into the boundless reality of God without form. That was His final teaching to us.

So even though we stopped traveling to India and Prasanthi Nilayam, we never stopped being with Swami. **He is with us every minute, in every breath.** We are living in the 'Prasad Zone'—calm, clear, grateful, and always with Him.

Dr. Jack Hawley 
USA



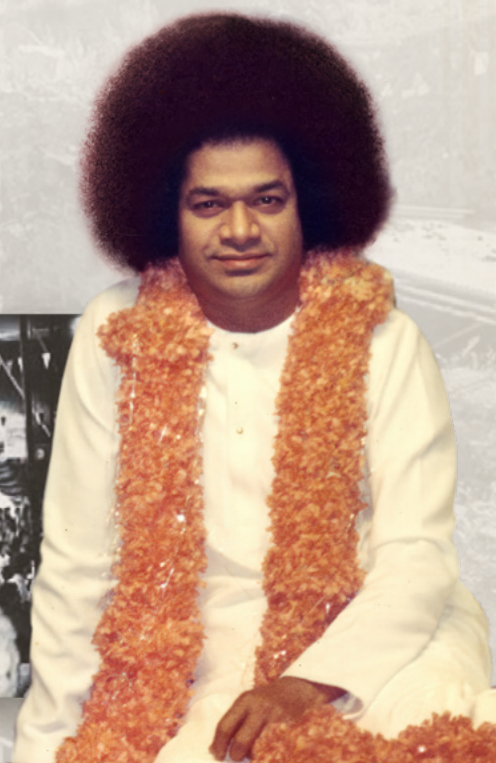
Dr. Jack Hawley lives in Palm Springs, California, USA. He was a consultant and writer as well as a lecturer on various spiritual and management topics. In the early 1970s, he founded Team Climate Associates, a consortium of consultants who specialized in the re-spiriting of organizational leadership and team effectiveness. Since the 1970s, Dr. Hawley and his late wife, Louise, spent six months every year at Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's ashram for 32 years. He had several interactions with Swami and worked tirelessly to bring Bhagawan's message to business organizations around the world. He is the author of several well-known books on management and human values, which were blessed by Swami Himself.

Rome Symposium

The first World Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) held outside India took place in Rome on October 30-31, 1983. Rome is a city that is of great historical significance. It is a city that is the center of the Christian religion, and a city that was the capital of the ancient Roman Empire. It was Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who selected both the theme and the venue for the conference. The theme was, 'Unity is Divinity. Purity is Enlightenment.' Regarding the venue, Baba told Mr. Antonio Craxi, who headed the organizational committee from Italy, "Hold it in Rome. All roads lead to Rome!"

Over 1,200 delegates from Italy and 800 from 34 countries as far away as Argentina and Chile, Australia, and New Zealand took part in the symposium. Additionally, 3,000 interested visitors from all parts of Italy benefited from attending as observers.

On the eve of the 11th SSSIO World Conference in November 2025 at Sai Prema Nilayam in Riverside, California, the second one to be held outside India, we are reminded of the special message with which Swami blessed the first symposium in Rome. This is especially relevant because the theme of the 11th SSSIO World Conference is also very much the same: 'Purity is Enlightenment.'



Embodiments of the divine Spirit!

The ancient saying, "All roads lead to Rome," has been vindicated today. It is not without great significance that people from many countries have gathered in this historic city. You have to realize that you have come here to learn things which you have never heard before, and to derive inspiration from new ideals about the human adventure.

This conference is not concerned with any one religion, nation, race, caste, or individual. It is intended to reveal the essential Truth that underlies all scriptures and to strive for the peace and welfare of all people through the establishment of Truth and Righteousness.

The whole of mankind belongs to one religion—the religion of man. For all men, God is the Father. As the children of one God, all men are brothers. This conference is therefore a family gathering. It is not a meeting of nationalities and religions. It is a meeting of minds. It does not relate to any one culture or philosophy. It is concerned with the divine way of life that is implicit in the teachings of all religions. Its purpose is to see unity in divinity.

The basic Truth in all religions, irrespective of country or race, is one and the same. The philosophical ideas or the practices and methods of approach may vary but the final objective and goal is only one. All religions proclaim the unity of divinity and preach the cultivation of universal love without regard to caste, creed, country, or color. Those who are ignorant of this basic Truth develop pride and ego because of their own religion. Such people are creating great confusion and chaos by fragmenting divinity. To confine and divide the infinite divine into such narrow compartments is treason to the divine. The basis for a spiritual, God-based life is the indwelling Spirit—the Atman. The body is the home of the Spirit.



Life in society should also conform to this spiritual basis. Man, however, bases his life on the belief that the body alone is real. It is to rid him of this error that he has to be taught about the Spirit. Mankind has to realize that both the individual and the society are manifestations of the divine will and that the divine permeates the universe. Only by recognizing this Truth can man give up his ego and lead a life of devotion and duty. Society should not become a cockpit of selfish individuals, but a community of divinely guided individuals.

With the progress of science, man imagines that he is the lord of the universe, and he tends to forget the divine. Although man today has gone to the moon and is exploring outer space, if he were to consider the innumerable mysteries and wonders in creation yet to be known, he would realize that these are far beyond the limited capacity of his mind and intelligence. The more man discovers the secrets and mysteries of the cosmos, the more he will realize that God is the creator and motivator of all creation. All religions agree upon this Truth. All that man can do is to strive through his limited intelligence and knowledge to understand the invisible and infinite divine and learn to worship and adore Him.

Instead of realizing his innate divinity, man is caught up in the prison of his own material achievements. Greater than all his scientific and technological progress is man himself as a being endowed with divine consciousness. By choosing to regard only the material world as real, it may be possible to bring about the prosperity of a scientific, technological, and materialistic society for a time. But if, in the process, selfishness, greed, and hatred develop, as they usually do, society will destroy itself. If, on the contrary, the essential divinity of man is realized, mankind can build up a great society based on unity and adherence to the divine principle of love. This profound change must begin in the minds of individuals. When individuals change, society will change. And when society changes, the whole world will change. Unity is the secret of social progress, and service to society is the means to promote it. Everyone, therefore, should devote himself to such service in a spirit of dedication.

It should be realized that material comfort is not the sole aim of living. A society in which individuals are concerned only about material welfare will not be able to achieve harmony and peace. Even if it is achieved, it will only be a patched-up harmony, for, in such a society, the strong will oppress the weak. Nor will an equal distribution of the bounties of

nature ensure anything but nominal equality. How will the equal distribution of material goods achieve equality with reference to desires and abilities? Desires have, therefore, to be controlled by developing a spiritual approach and diverting the mind from material objects to the divine seated in each one's heart. Once the Truth of the indwelling spirit is recognized, there dawns the awareness that the world is one family. One is then filled with divine love, which becomes the driving force for all of one's actions. Man turns away from the pursuit of endless desires to the search for peace and equanimity. By converting the love for material things into love of God, one experiences the divine. This experience is not something beyond man. It is, in fact, a part of the inherent nature of man. It is the secret of his humanness and his divinity.

Whatever one's religion may be everyone should cultivate respect for other faiths. One who does not have such an attitude of tolerance and respect for other religions is not a true follower of his own religion. It is not enough merely to adhere strictly to the practices of one's own religion. One should also try to see the essential unity of all religions. Only then will man be able to experience the oneness of divinity. There should be no coercion or compulsion in the sphere of religion. Religious matters should be discussed calmly and dispassionately. Do not entertain the feeling that one's religion is superior and another's inferior. Conflicts on the basis of religion should be totally eliminated. To divide men on the grounds of religion is a crime against humanity.

Man today imagines that he knows everything about nature and the universe. But of what use is all this knowledge if man does not know himself? It is only when he understands himself that he will be able to know the truth about the external world. Man's inner reality cannot be known by exploring the world outside. When he turns his vision inward and realizes his essential divinity, he will acquire equal-mindedness toward all beings. Out of that feeling of oneness, he will experience the bliss that passeth understanding.

*Divine Message for
the Rome Symposium*

100TH
BIRTHDAY
OFFERINGS



One Hundred Years of

LOVE, SERVICE, AND HUMAN VALUES

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's life exemplifies boundless love, tireless service, and the constant reminder that divinity resides in everyone. As the world approaches the centenary of His advent in 2025, the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) launched a historic worldwide movement, the SAI-100 initiative, to honor His legacy through dedicated projects in more than 100 countries.

Besides being a commemoration, SAI-100 is a testament to Swami's message, "*Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray.*" It

is about ordinary people inspired by extraordinary love, coming together to make the world kinder, healthier, more peaceful, and sustainable.

A Vision Rooted in Love

The SAI-100 initiative aims to enhance what Sai devotees have practiced for decades: *selfless service rooted in human values*. From food distribution in vulnerable areas, to medical outreach in rural villages, to education for children of underserved communities, to environmental preservation, each initiative is a flower of love placed at His divine feet.

But beyond numbers and milestones, service is about self-transformation. However, the transformation of the one who serves automatically inspires transformation in the one who is served as well.

Swami says, "*The best way to love God is to love all and serve all.*" This initiative embodies that vision by uniting people across boundaries, irrespective of race, religion, nationality, or culture, through acts of compassion that heal and uplift.



Stories of Service: Love in Action

Healthcare with a Compassionate Heart

In rural areas and places where hospitals are scarce, SSSIO members have organized medical camps that bring doctors, medicines, and hope to thousands. Pediatric clinics bring smiles back to children. Unaffordable but necessary surgeries are offered free of charge. Mobile health units reach deep into inaccessible areas, treating those long forgotten. The SSSIO runs 16 permanent health clinics around the world. From the United States (Ashland, Colorado, and Texas) to Latin America (Mexico, Venezuela, Paraguay, Argentina, and Colombia), these centers extend compassionate service through general medicine, dentistry, pediatrics, vision, and even cataract and minor surgeries. Furthermore, clinics in Sri Lanka, Kenya, Madagascar, Botswana, and Fiji continue the same mission on either a monthly or weekly basis. For example, the Ashland free clinic in California, USA, has served over 20,000 patients. Similarly, the Viseisei Sai Health Center in Fiji has provided critical care to thousands of people. **These services are silent miracles of love, where healing comes as much from the loving human touch as from medicines.** Staffed entirely by volunteers, each clinic transforms medical service into spiritual practice, where every patient is treated not just for illness, but with reverence as a living embodiment of God—fulfilling Bhagawan's vision of 'Love All, Serve All.'

In addition, the SSSIO conducts numerous short-term, focused medical camps around the world. These camps provide loving healthcare to those who need it most, offering high-quality free medical care to underserved communities while fostering unity, spiritual upliftment, and transformation. **In a shining example of love and selfless service,**



Medical camps across Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania

from March 31 to April 9, 2024, 64 international healthcare professionals and volunteers conducted medical camps across Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, serving 5,605 patients with over 12,000 consultations. Supported by local doctors and trainees, the multidisciplinary team provided services in cardiology, pediatrics, surgery, ophthalmology, dentistry, and other specialties ensuring holistic treatment to the underserved at six locations in eight days.

Similarly, from April 21 to 25, 2025, SSSIO doctors offering expertise across 14 specialties served more than 6,600 patients in Antananarivo, Madagascar.

Another example is a five-day medical camp in Fiji that brought together 120 health professionals and volunteers from Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia to serve remote communities. **The medical camp treated 2,535 patients** in Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. In addition to these large camps, SSSIO doctors and volunteers organize routine

medical camps to serve those in need within their local communities. More information is available in the Healthcare section of the SSSIO's 2024 Annual Report.

To honor the 100th Year of the advent of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Asunción in Paraguay launched a mission to perform 1,000 free cataract surgeries for the needy. By November 2022, when the first 500 of these surgeries were completed, a Thanksgiving Mass was held by the Cardinal at the Metropolitan Cathe-



Medical Camps at
Antananarivo, Madagascar



Medical Camps at Fiji



Cataract Surgeries in Paraguay



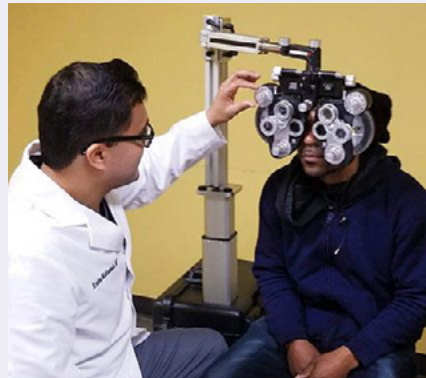
Sri Sathya Sai Suva Sevana Cancer Hospice in Hanwella, Sri Lanka



Medical Camps in Sri Lanka



Cardiac Surgeries for children in Trinidad & Tobago



Health Screening Camp in USA



E.A.S.E Workshop at a Public High School in Benin

dral, attended by patients, families, and staff. Grateful beneficiaries expressed heartfelt thanks for regaining their sight, seeing it as God's grace through loving service. "Thanks to all of you, I will be able to read my Bible tonight," said a grateful lady. In November 2025, the center completed more than 1,000 cataract surgeries as an offering to Bhagawan Baba.

In Sri Lanka, the Sri Sathya Sai Suva Sevana Cancer Hospice has been providing loving palliative care to terminally ill cancer patients for over 20 years. **This unique facility has garnered recognition from the national government and the College of Palliative Medicine, Sri Lanka, for its remarkable contributions to palliative care** and its commitment to the quality and accessibility of compassionate service to patients and their families.

Mental health is also a crucial aspect of the health services provided by the SSSIO. Through workshops and community outreach events under the **EASE** program (**E**– Eat Responsibly, **A**–Attitude of Positivity, **S**–Sleep Deeply, **E**–Exercise Regularly), the SSSIO has reached thousands of people around the world, providing valuable insights into self-empowerment and well-being. Workshops have been conducted across five continents in schools, YMCAs, other venues, and also for healthcare professionals.

Feeding the Hungry, Nourishing the Soul

In 2020, even as the Covid-19 pandemic crippled economies and infrastructure, Africa faced severe food shortages due to a protracted drought. In response, the SSSIO launched the **HEP Africa Relief (HEAR)**



Kenya



Belgium



China



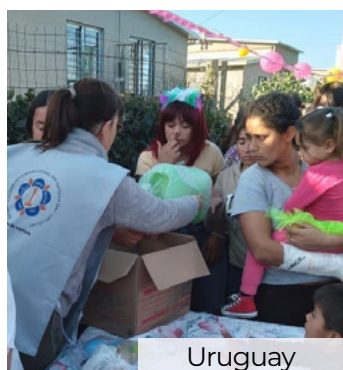
El Salvador



Argentina



Russia



Uruguay

initiative across 12 countries, including Madagascar, Kenya, and Uganda. Several 20-ton containers of food were sent to the distressed areas, each feeding around 1,300 families for a month. Local SSSIO teams in Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa also distributed food hampers—a humanitarian effort that continues.

As Swami once declared, “*Service to man is service to God*,” and many projects ensure that no one goes hungry in cities and towns around the world. From food drives in the Americas, Eastern Europe, and Australia to community kitchens in Africa and Asia, Sai devotees prepare and serve meals with love and respect, seeing in every recipient the living presence of God. SSSIO members also lovingly prepare hampers of monthly provisions and distribute them tirelessly.

Educare: Building the Future on Human Values

Education has always been at the heart of Swami's mission. SAI-100 expands this vision through schools, institutes, tutoring programs, after-school initiatives, and human values workshops for children worldwide. Sathya Sai Schools and Institutes of Sathya Sai Education (ISSEs) integrate educare with traditional curriculum, providing both academic excellence and values-based education. As of 2025, there are **28 ISSEs, 39 Sathya Sai Schools, and 20 Partner Schools around the world supported by the SSSIO**. ISSEs train adults in the community in Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV).

All these schools and institutes have been recognized at various levels—the community, society, and the nation. For instance, on August 26, 2022, at a Special Session in the nation's capital, **the Federal Senate of the National Congress in Brazil honored the contribution of the ISSE of Brazil for its tireless work over 22 years in developing**

values-based education in Brazil. In Canada, the Fraser Institute, an independent Canadian research and educational organization, **has ranked the Sathya Sai School of Canada as one of the top 37 elementary schools in Ontario** for many years.

In areas where formal schooling is inaccessible, volunteers step in to build confidence and nurture character. These are not just lessons in academic subjects; they are lessons in compassion, honesty, and respect. **For instance, during the Covid-19 crisis, the SSSIO-USA launched the National S.A.I. Tutoring Project to support underserved schoolchildren struggling with online learning.** Initially focused on grades 3–5, volunteers provide teleconference tutoring in math, science, language, arts, and help with homework. A national virtual summit in September 2021 united 120 Sai volunteers to share experiences and strengthen this initiative for disadvantaged communities. It has grown in strength ever since, encompassing more than 1,000 students (ranging from grade 3 all the way through college) from 16 schools and four community programs, including those serving refugees, community centers, and faith-based organizations. The program's Refugee Support Initiatives reach Afghan, Somali, and Ukrainian families in cities including Atlanta, Seattle, Chicago, Houston, Austin, and Dallas in the USA.

Environment: Serving Mother Earth

In today's age of climate concern, SSSIO members are directing love towards the planet itself. Projects ranging from tree-planting drives in South America to plastic-free campaigns in Asia, including water conservation projects in Africa to urban gardening initiatives in Europe, SAI-100 reminds us that to serve creation is to serve the Creator.



Federal Senate of Brazil honoring ISSE



Australia



Russia



Thailand



USA



Panama



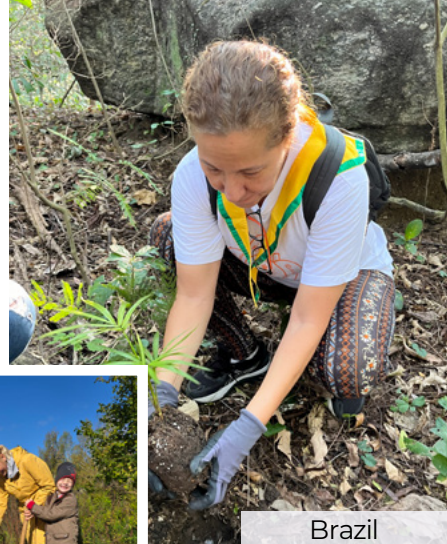
Mauritius



USA



Trinidad & Tobago



Brazil



Barbados



Australia



Belarus



Hong Kong



Germany

Under the SAI-100 initiative, the SSSIO launched a global 'One Million Trees' project to celebrate Sri Sathya Sai Baba's birth centenary. As part of this effort, over 600,000 trees have been planted across Africa, including significant numbers in Kenya, Uganda, and Mauritius, along with more than 250,000 trees in other countries. These tree-planting drives not only combat climate change but also bring communities—youth, adults, and children—together in acts of love for Mother Earth, embodying Swami's teaching of service to creation.

Efforts to nurture the environment are ongoing at various levels—individual, community, state, and national. These initiatives include the cleanup of beaches and riverbanks, forest conservation, oil spill removals, and recycling projects in many countries. **In 2020, SSSIO-USA adopted Missouri's World Bird Sanctuary, supporting birds and their habitat, and was honored with the prestigious Marlin Perkins Award for outstanding**

environmental stewardship and community service.

The Sathya Sai Young Adults actively participate in regular meetings and activities. For instance, in Mexico, YAs led a reforestation project after wildfires, and a promise to protect, nurture, and restore balance in Nature. Volunteers serve animals by providing food and medical care in Hong Kong, Trinidad & Tobago, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Austria, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Venezuela.

Disaster Relief: Hope Amidst Despair

When calamity strikes, such as earthquakes, fires, hurricanes, tsunamis, volcanoes, floods, or pandemics, SSSIO volunteers enthusiastically respond, not only to provide immediate relief and care, but also to assist the community as it recovers to normalcy. Relief materials, medical aid, and emotional support are offered to people afflicted by devastation. For those who have lost everything, the kindness of Swami's love becomes the light that rekindles faith. This relief extends beyond

material aid, offering comfort, rehabilitation, and emotional support to affected communities.

Within days of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010, the SSSIO began providing medical relief at three locations. Thousands of people received loving care and essential medical supplies. Critical services continued for eight months, as teams of doctors, pharmacists, and Young Adults cared for the sick and wounded. **Fifteen years later, the SSSIO continues to serve the community in Haiti with an ongoing educational project in the capital city of Port-au-Prince, providing education to over 600 students.**

On July 14, 2021, western Germany faced devastating floods as the Ahr and the Erft rivers overflowed, killing at least 180 people and damaging villages, homes, and essential services. The SSSIO Germany quickly organized relief efforts, distributing food, water, tools, and household items to affected villages, including Antweiler, Insul, and Altenburg, and providing shelter and equipment for recovery.

Since the conflict in Ukraine started in March 2022, the SSSIO in North Europe (Zone 7), supported by members worldwide, has been

providing humanitarian aid to displaced people. SSSIO members in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Hungary, and the Czech Republic offered food, shelter, medical care, and essential supplies to refugees. **Aid deliveries, including truckloads of food and medical supplies, reached cities across Ukraine, with volunteers supporting the elderly, the disabled, and orphanages.**

Since 2023, the SSSIO (mainly from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and the USA) has provided extensive humanitarian support across 10 Ukrainian cities, assisted by 150–200 volunteers from Europe and the USA. They supported three orphanages (Poltava, Sumy, Odessa), housing nearly 100 children each, supplying essentials, installing showers and ventilation systems, and offering festive gifts. Volunteers distributed school supplies for 200 children in 20 family orphanages, 12 generators, and diapers for 150 indigent families with disabled children. The SSSIO also supplied medication to 150 elders, assisted 1,000 refugee families and 500 residents of Cherson, helped 25 tuberculosis patients, fed stray animals, and dispatched 50 busloads (2,500–3,000 boxes) of relief materials from other countries.



Along the same lines, the SSSIO in Australia has actively responded to disasters such as floods and bushfires by offering food, hot meals, and essentials to displaced families. Volunteers provided medical aid, winter packs for Aboriginal communities, and even built pouches and boxes for wildlife affected by fires and floods. Partnering with groups like Foodbank NSW & ACT, they expanded their reach to remote areas.

1 Million Steps to Swami

The 1 Million Steps to Swami (1MSTS) initiative began modestly in Australia & Papua New Guinea on April 24, 2023, inspiring devotees to walk conscious steps of *sadhana* and service dedicated to Bhagawan. What started locally soon spread worldwide, engaging Sai devotees in many countries. **Many SSSIO members have, by themselves, walked over a million steps, with a worldwide collective offering of billions of steps and countless service projects, embodying Swami's timeless message of love and service.**

Adoption of Communities

The SSSIO launched the global '100 Communities' initiative as a heartfelt offering for Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 100th Birthday. Modeled after the 95 Communities initiative for the 95th Birthday of Bhagawan, the project exceeded expectations, with 156 communities adopted in 33 countries, reflecting a focus on loving, need-based service. **In Russia and Sri Lanka alone, SSSIO members have adopted 62 (31 in Russia, and 31 in Sri Lanka) communities, providing sustainable support and addressing each community's unique needs with love and dedication.**



Thailand



Ghana



Thailand



South Africa

The services address a wide range of humanitarian needs:

- Livelihood assistance and vocational training.
- Educational support for children through tuition and financial aid.
- Construction of homes, wells, and water purification plants.
- Medical camps, vision and cataract care, and supply of medicines.
- Regular food and clothing distribution.
- Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) classes for children and parents.
- Disaster relief during floods, pandemics, and crises.
- Care for the elderly and terminally ill.

Among the many lives touched, Ms. *Rima's story from Russia* stands out as a beautiful example of Swami's grace in action. Once homeless and suffering from severe varicose veins and ulcers, Ms. Rima had lost all hope. The Sai Center welcomed her, offering food, shelter, legal help, and loving care. Encouraged to pray and use *vibhuti*, she experienced a miraculous healing—her wounds disappeared, her addictions ended, and she regained her home, self-esteem and life. Two years later, she was working, happy, and newly married—a life completely transformed by love in action.

In **Sri Lanka**, over **80 homes** have been built for the needy, and **five water purification plants** were installed in areas with unsafe

groundwater. The SSSIO has also provided **7,500 cataract lenses**, restoring sight and dignity to many.

In **Selvapuram**, a resettled post-war village of 310 families near Jaffna, SSSIO volunteers rebuilt not just homes, but hearts. They:

- Renovated the community center for SSEHV and parent classes.
- Repaired borewells and damaged homes.
- Organized regular *bhajans*, youth sports, and cultural programs.
- Supported underprivileged students with tuition assistance.
- Built a drama stage and playground, nurturing creativity and confidence.

Complementing these efforts, two homes were built for the elderly in Meegoda and Vavuniya.

The results have been remarkable—cleaner surroundings, flourishing vegetable gardens, improved school attendance, stronger family bonds, and youth-led festivals that unite the community.



Water purification project, Sri Lanka



House Construction, Sri Lanka





Sai Young Adults Retreat, Hungary



Beach Clean-up, Trinidad & Tobago



Spiritual Nature Retreat, Indonesia



Sai Young Adults Leaders Retreat, Greece

Worldwide Family United in Service

One of the most inspiring aspects of SAI-100 is its universality. Today, SSSIIO members in more than 100 countries are taking part, each offering projects rooted in the needs of their local communities. A food service program in Indonesia may look different from a healthcare camp in Tanzania, or an environmental drive in Mexico, yet the heart-beat is the same: **Love All, Serve All.**

This mosaic of services demonstrates how Swami's message transcends barriers. He is as present in the streets of Nairobi as in the villages of Sri Lanka, as active in the hearts of the youth in California as in the devotion of the elders in Malaysia. These service projects are not just an offering to mark a centenary—it is a reminder that Swami belongs to all humanity.

Human Values at the Core

What sets the SSSIIO initiative apart from other philanthropies is the foundation on which it rests: human values. Service is not simply about charity. It is about nurturing the eternal values of truth, righteousness,

peace, love, and nonviolence. Every project becomes a classroom where these values are practiced and lived.

A child who learns honesty in a values workshop may grow into a leader of integrity. A youth who serves in a food program learns humility and empathy. A doctor who volunteers in a free medical camp discovers the joy of giving without expectation. These ripples of transformation spread silently, changing families, communities, and societies. The SAI-100 initiative is not measured in statistics, but in tears wiped, smiles restored, and hearts awakened.

Youth: The Torchbearers of Love

Swami often expressed immense faith in young people, calling them the leaders of tomorrow. SSSIIO has become a platform where young people step forward to take responsibility. They organize blood drives, lead value based-education sessions, conduct digital awareness campaigns, and bring fresh creativity into service.

The SSSIIO International Sai Young Adults Leaders Retreat, themed 'Roar Your Role,'



18th Zonal Youth Festival, Russia



Young Adults Retreat, Malaysia



Serving Elderly, Hong Kong



Young Adults Retreat, Hong Kong



National Sports Carnival, Malaysia

was held in the summer of 2024, in Athens, Greece, bringing together 55 Sai Young Adult leaders from 26 countries. **This historic gathering marked the first time YA leaders united to collectively reflect, strategize, and envision the future of the International Sai Young Adults Program.** The Young Adults explored leading as Sai's instruments, addressing personal and organizational challenges, and reimagining leadership grounded in authenticity, relevance, and collaboration. The retreat was a heartfelt reminder that inspired leadership thrives when it is rooted in unity, mentorship, and shared learning.

In Malaysia, recognizing that Sai Young Adults are the heartbeat of every Sai center, a personalized mentorship model was introduced to revive YA participation and leadership. Using a 'heatmap,' 'red zone' centers needing support were identified and paired with mentors from thriving 'green zone' centers for one-on-one outreach and guidance. **The results were immediate—a YA-led sports carnival drew over 200 participants, sparking the growth of a commit-**

ted team of 20 YAs. A structured calendar of service, spiritual, and *sadhana* activities, supported by ongoing mentorship, helped these YAs evolve into confident leaders. This approach showed that leadership flourishes when nurtured personally—a model that can inspire Sai centers worldwide.

In Sri Lanka, 'Pathfinder' is a village empowerment initiative launched by the Sai Young Adults, rooted in Swami's Educare and Sociocare principles. Focused on holistic development, the program uplifts 300 children in 12 adopted villages through educational support, mentorship, and consistent follow-ups. With more than 50 dedicated Young Adults as mentors and the support of school principals and parents, Pathfinder nurtures young minds and hearts through workshops, fostering growth with training in human values and academic success. Beyond education, the initiative addresses social barriers that hinder access to learning, ensuring no child is left behind. Rooted in service and spiritual values, Pathfinder embodies Swami's vision to serve all as embodiments of the divine.

Toward the Centenary: An Offering of Love

The SAI-100 initiative goes beyond the devotees of Sai. It is an invitation to anyone, anywhere, who feels the touch of love and compassion. That is why over 100 public meetings on Swami's eternal teachings of love and service have been conducted across 26 countries. Whether it is through volunteering, contributing skills, or simply living with greater kindness each day, everyone can join in this celebration of love and service.

The SSSIIO's Media Team has conducted workshops and the Media Academy program, training more than 140 enthusiastic volunteers in photography, videography, writing, and interviewing skills to capture and share the inspiration from SSSIIO activities. **The SSSIIO Archival Committee has compiled an offering of '100 Pearls'—stories of love and transformation from more than 100 Sai devotees around the world who have been touched by Swami's pure, unconditional and transforming love.**

As the offering for Swami's Centenary year of 2025 draws nearer, the SAI-100 initiative continues to gain momentum and grow. What began as a vision has become a world-wide wave of service. And yet, the deeper significance lies not in the projects themselves, but in the inner awakening they kindle

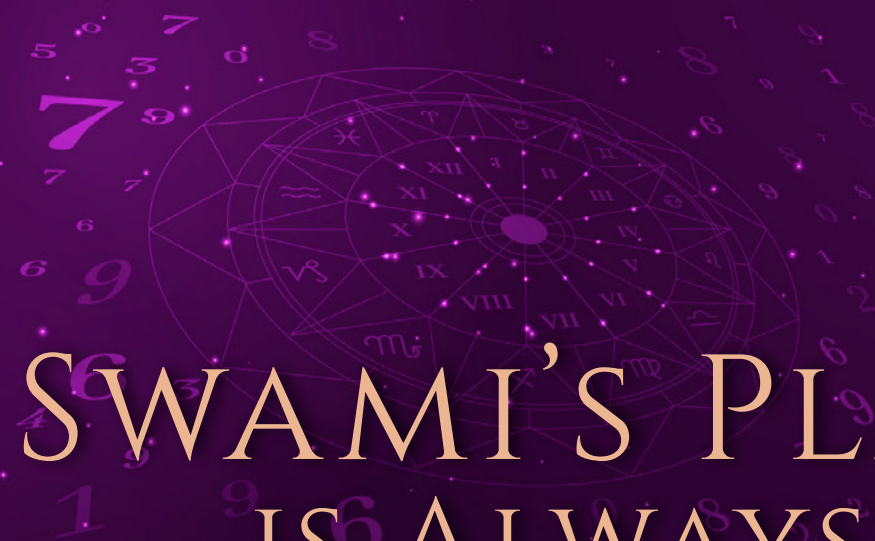
Our dear Lord says, *"Love is My form, Truth is My breath, Bliss is My food."* His devotees and followers around the world, are learning to live those words—not just in temples, churches, mosques, synagogues, or in prayers, but in kitchens, classrooms, hospitals, and streets.

This is the true celebration of His 100 years: not merely looking back at a century of His advent but also looking forward to a future where His message of love and service continues to transform humanity. May this Centenary offering be not just a chapter in history, but the dawn of a future where love and service define the destiny of humanity.

Jai Sai Ram.







SWAMI'S PLAN IS ALWAYS THE MASTER PLAN

I WAS 22 YEARS OLD WHEN MY LIFE TOOK AN UNEXPECTED TURN, one I never could have imagined. I was raised in a very loving family, but as an atheist. I really had no experience of a personal relationship with God—let alone one that would later define the very rhythm of my heart. Yet in 1972, Sathya Sai Baba called me. He orchestrated the events in my life, gave me an experience of His great love, and I felt an unmistakable pull that led me to His presence. Just a year later, in 1973, I found myself sitting at His divine feet in India, completely immersed in His teachings and launched into a new life.

Moving from an atheist to a Sai devotee, almost overnight, was a radical transformation. But it also felt like coming home. I said “yes” to Swami, and that “yes” has shaped the course of my entire adult life. His love, His teachings, and His presence have been my compass ever since. I know that this life has always been His plan.

What I will always remember and never forget is that everything happens for my highest good. And sure enough, that faith was vindicated by the course my life took.

Trusting the Divine Plan

Swami often said that our faith should give us total confidence in Him. He promises to take care of us, guide us, and protect us. Swami says, *“Just as you lean against the wall knowing that it will not collapse, lean on me and depend upon me entirely.”* And I do—I lean on Him.

In my twenties and thirties, I was absorbed in His teachings—on love, service, *dharma*, and the workings of the mind. He taught me to live with integrity, to align thought, word, and deed, and to understand my true identity as *Atma*, the indweller. “SAI,” He said, *“means to See Always Inside!”* His wisdom shaped my character. **I had the precious blessing of outer interactions with Him through Darshan and interviews, but it was the inner connection that always anchored me. The outer views and interviews were always a confirmation of the “Innerview!”**

Divine Instructions and Motherhood

Each interview that Swami blessed me with dramatically changed the trajectory of my life. In 1979, He told my first husband and me to have two children. *“Have two sons,”* He said, with unmistakable clarity and definiteness. I sensed He had already chosen those souls for us. He gave us the sacred task of raising them in His love and values.

He asked us to bring the first son back the next year, and true to His word, He called us in again and gave our son ‘Sathya’ as his spiritual name. **It was an affirmation not only of His presence in our lives but also of the divine orchestration that governed everything. Our sons have grown into loving men who still walk the path of SAI today.**

‘Sathya’ has become our family name, so to speak, and that is an interesting story I will relate.

How ‘Sathya’ Became Our Family Name

For years, our younger son Iggy would say with quiet certainty, “Swami will give me my spiritual name.” He never wavered. Even when I gently suggested that perhaps he could choose a name himself (he adored Hanuman), he would shake his head and repeat confidently, “Swami will name me.” Only children and saints are capable of such unwavering faith.

Years earlier, as I stated before, Swami had lovingly given our older son Evan the spiritual middle name Sathya. But Iggy was not born until 5 years later, and over the next 23 years, I did not have any personal interviews. Still, Iggy waited patiently and with full confidence!

Two decades later, in 2003, Swami called my now-husband, Bruce, and me in for a beautiful, joy-filled interview. Swami began asking about the boys by name.



Since He brought up the topic Himself, I gathered the courage to say, “Swami, you gave a spiritual name to our older son, but not the younger one.”

Swami immediately smiled and said, “*Give him Sathya.*”

“Same name, Swami?” I asked, surprised.

“*Oh yes, best name!*” He beamed.

We all laughed. Swami radiated joy, and His gentle laughter echoed throughout the room.

Iggy, true to his love for Swami, later legally added Sathya to his name, just as Swami had advised. And Evan’s son, too, now bears the name ‘Owen Sathya.’

That’s how Sathya, verily Truth, became our family name. A name gifted not just once but passed down lovingly through generations by the grace of the very embodiment of Truth.

The ‘Lifequake’ that Changed Everything

But the spiritual path is never without challenges! Let me go back to the late 1990s, when I experienced a major upheaval: what I now call a ‘Lifequake.’ A divorce left me confused, afraid, and angry. Yet even in this chaos, I turned to Swami. I had asked Him many times in

my prayers, “Swami, if I’m going in the wrong direction, throw up a wall to stop me, and if I don’t listen, it is OK to hit me with a ‘two-by-four’ (a construction wooden plank of cross-section 2X4 inch, a metaphor for a strong wake-up call). Well, that ‘two-by-four’ hit me metaphorically, and it was painful, but essential for my inner growth.

Swami has always said that challenges are not punishments; they are gifts of grace. This setback helped me to shed my old patterns and fears, encouraging me to live His teachings, in His love. It taught me the meaning of when He said, “*Your heart is the lock, your mind is the key. Turn it left toward the world, and you get locked in bondage. Turn it right toward God, and you get liberation.*” I had to learn to turn the mind toward the ‘right’ direction—inward, toward the light, and not the world and its shadows.

Every time fear tried to take over, I turned to *namasmarana*—chanting His name and the Gayatri. Slowly and gradually, I discovered a sacred rhythm: turn the key left, and the heart contracts; turn it right, toward *namasmarana*, toward love, and it opens and expands. Swami once asked me and Bruce in person, “*Where is peace?*” Then He answered it, pointing at

By divine grace, we both ended up ‘just by chance’ in the front row for darshan. Swami called us for an interview and, without any discussion, married us right there in the interview room!



His own heart, He said, “*Peace is inside—outside is pieces!*” That pretty much says it all!

What I will always remember and never forget is that everything happens for my highest good. And sure enough, that faith was vindicated by the course my life took. The experiences of those years prepared me well for my work now as a hypnotherapist and readied me for a whole new adventure in my journey toward Swami!

A New Chapter of Love

In 2002, Swami led me into a new chapter of life. He sent Bruce to me, who later became my husband. He was a fellow Sai devotee I had first met decades earlier at the old Hollywood Sai Center. Both of us had been through long first marriages and never imagined this union would happen—but Swami clearly did make it happen.

We travelled to the *ashram* in 2003 simply to have His *darshan* and to offer our gratitude. By divine grace, we both ended up ‘just by chance’ in the front row for *darshan*. Swami called us for an interview and, without any discussion, married us right there in the interview room! It

was tender, joyous, full of love, and totally unexpected—a divine seal of approval of our bond. As I said earlier, each interview changed the trajectory of my life! Swami gifted us not just a partnership but a shared path of devotion and service. He launched us once again into a new life—another beautiful unfolding of His plan.

There was a second interview, too, during that trip.

During the second interview in 2003, Bruce and I were sitting alone with Swami. He had His eyes closed, His hands raised. I noticed a tiny speck of white lint in His hair and, for a brief moment, I thought, “I’d love to remove that lint from Swami’s hair.”

To my amazement, Swami opened His eyes, looked at Bruce, and said humorously, “*She’s thinking about My hair.*” Turning to me, He gazed deeply into my eyes, and leaning forward slowly, graciously, He said, “*Take.*” I reached forward and took the tiny bit of lint. His hair felt like gossamer. That small, sweet moment—so intimate—so simple—carried a profound and deep message. **This is what He does. He offers Himself to us. He offers His love, His grace, His guidance. But we must choose it and take it.**

Having Him in our lives is a blessing beyond words—a gift of infinite grace.

The Car Crash that Didn't Happen

Swami's protection has also been ever-present. In 2007, while driving on a busy Los Angeles freeway, I had a terrifying moment trying to avoid being hit by another car. Cars were zooming past on all sides at 70 mph, and in an instant, my vehicle was spinning out of control.

In the chaos that ensued, my conscious mind went completely blank—but my heart did not. I kept calling, "Swami, Swami, Swami." When the car finally stopped, it had smashed into a divider, facing the wrong way, but not a single other car had been touched. No one was harmed, and I didn't have a scratch. My car was totaled (total loss due to irreparable damage), but I was fine.

Swami had protected me. **That moment reaffirmed what I have always known—the inner relationship is real. My heart knew to call Him, and He answered.**

Guidance from a Road Sign

In 2008, after Bruce had undergone exhausting cancer treatments, we were driving to a follow-up appointment through the winding mountain roads from Ojai to Santa Barbara (two charming towns in Southern California). We were emotionally and physically spent, at our wits' end, wondering aloud how we could possibly keep going.

As we waited at a construction stop, a pilot car backed up right in front of our car. Mounted on the back was a huge,



bright orange sign, and on it, in big bold letters, were the words: **Follow Me.**

We burst out laughing. It was Swami again, speaking through an ordinary but unmistakable sign. **"I am here. I am guiding you. Follow me."** And He made it impossible for us to miss! His humor, timing, and love were all evident, wrapped up in that simple moment.

The Calling Card on My Cushion

Some years ago, after Swami's Mahasamadhi, I was at the Ojai Sai Center. I was struggling inwardly with self-doubt that day. During *bhajans*, I was silently praying, "Swami, am I doing enough? Am I being the instrument that You want me to be?"

We all stood up for *Arati*, and when I was preparing to sit back down, I looked down at my cushion. There, in the middle of the cushion, was a small packet of *vibhuti* labeled, **"Your life is my message—Sri Sathya Sai Baba."** I asked everyone around, but no one had seen it appear. And it hadn't been there before. No one had ever seen a packet like that. It was His answer to my prayer, and it touched my heart so deeply. My self-doubt dissolved. The inner relationship is real—very real.

Serving Through His Work

About 20 years ago, Bruce and I got involved with a small non-profit organization started by Sai devotees. Its mission was to support children orphaned by a massive cyclone in India. Over time, through what I can only describe as divine orchestration, we ended up on the board of the organization. Some years later, we were guided to build a school based on Swami's teachings of the five fundamental human values.

At every step, we faced seemingly impossible challenges. At every step, Swami paved the way. **We would simply remind ourselves, "This is His project, not ours. If He wills it, it will happen. It is all in His hands."** We have had the grace to serve Him, and we have watched in awe as the dream has become reality—beautifully, miraculously, and with great love.

Conclusion: Just Say Yes

Swami always said, *"Take one step toward me and I shall take a hundred toward you."* That has been my experience for over five decades. The latest instance was when, in early July, I casually mentioned to Bruce that I'd like to go to Sai Prema Nilayam in Riverside, California, for Guru Poornima. Then, I simply

forgot about it. A day later, I got a call from Mr. Eric Wing (President, Region 8 of SSSIO-USA, serving Southern California and Nevada) requesting me to speak about Swami during Guru Poornima at Sai Prema Nilayam! A perfect example of how Swami guides me—His plan, always His plan.

His love is ever steady, His guidance is unmistakable, and His presence is always within. Even through great loss, illness, fear, and doubt, His light in our lives has never dimmed. He is the very fabric of our lives.

Yes, my story is only one. But multiply it by the millions of hearts He has touched, and we begin to sense the enormous scale of His divine mission. **Having Him in our lives is a blessing beyond words—a gift of infinite grace.**

The flower always provides nectar, but the hummingbird must choose to take in the sweetness that the flower offers. The question is: Will we take what He has come to give?

My answer, always, is yes.

Jai Sai Ram.

Ms. Leslie Bouche
USA



Ms. Leslie Bouche had her first darshan of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in March 1973. Swami has been the center of her life and her family since then. She first attended the Hollywood Sai Center in 1972 and subsequently hosted the Thousand Oaks Sai Center in her home for several years. Leslie was a Sai Spiritual Education teacher, and her sons came up through the SSE program. She is a member of the Ojai Sai Group. In 2003, Baba married Leslie and her husband Bruce at Prasanti Nilayam. She has made many trips to India over the past 52 years, spending time at the ashram and working closely with a Sathya Sai School in India.

Leslie is a certified hypnotherapist with active practice. She is involved in many service activities and is the president of the non-profit World Family Foundation and a member of the Rotary Club of Ojai.



from the
International Sai Young Adults

Connecting Hearts

*across
generations*



THE YOUNG ADULTS OF THE SRI SATHYA SAI CENTER OF CENTRAL SAN JOSE, USA, HOSTED THEIR ANNUAL SENIORS AND GRANDPARENTS DAY on April 13, 2025. This cherished event was designed to honor and celebrate the wisdom, devotion, and lifelong service of the elders in the Sai Center. **It also provided an opportunity for meaningful intergenerational connections, creating a space where both seniors and younger members could share and inspire one another.**

The program started with *bhajans* by the Young Adults (YAs), which created a peaceful and devotional atmosphere. Following this, a series of interactive games brought laughter and joy to the gathering. Activities such as completing Swami's quotes

encouraged enthusiastic participation from the seniors, sparking delightful memories and moments of shared happiness.

A particularly enriching part of the day was the small group sessions where seniors shared their personal spiritual journeys with Swami. The Young Adults listened attentively, gaining invaluable insights into how devotion and service shaped the lives of their elders. One young parent asked for advice on nurturing spirituality in children. **A senior responded with wisdom, explaining how her own children initially connected more through service activities than rituals, which eventually deepened their understanding of Swami's teachings.**

Lunch was lovingly prepared and served by the YAs with special attention to the dietary needs of the elderly. This gesture of care and respect touched the hearts of the seniors and reflected the spirit of *seva* (selfless service), which is central to Sai teachings. In addition, the media team set up a video booth to capture the elders' cherished memories and reflections, preserving them as a treasure for future generations. Each senior also received a thoughtful keepsake—a refrigerator magnet featuring Swami's picture and a message of gratitude from the YA group.

Participants shared heartfelt reflections on the significance of the event. One volunteer remarked, **"What makes this event unique is that we serve members of our own center. Elders share their experiences, while younger devotees bring their energy and enthusiasm. It becomes a special moment to connect, rejoice, and truly learn from one another, because ultimately, we are all walking this spiritual path together."** Another YA added, **"It was truly heartwarming to hear the stories and experiences of the elders. I feel blessed to have been part of something so special."**

Seniors and Grandparents Day 2025 beautifully highlighted the power of love, unity, and mutual learning across generations. It strengthened the bonds within the Sai Center community and served as an inspiring reminder that devotion and service transcend age, guiding everyone along the same spiritual path.





Rally on Ceiling on Desires

LESS
is
MORE



ON JULY 19, 2025, THE SAI YOUNG ADULTS OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC gathered at Mirador Norte National Park in Santo Domingo for a very special ‘Ceiling on Desires’ rally. Surrounded by nature, the event aimed to convey one of Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s nine points in the Code of Conduct for Sai devotees to practice. **This principle encourages us to consciously reduce wasting time, money, food, and energy, and to redirect the resulting savings toward service to humanity.**

From the early hours, participants were joyfully welcomed at the park’s picnic area. The day began with a universal prayer, welcoming words, and a short presentation on the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO). This was followed by an introduction to the ‘Ceiling on Desires’ program, especially designed for those unfamiliar with Swami’s mission and teachings. With this background, each team received instructions and set off on a journey filled with challenges, reflection, and fun.

The rally consisted of five thematic stations: **Money, Food, Time, Energy**, and the central station, **Ceiling on Desires**. At each stop, two-member teams engaged in riddles, questions, and activities that not only tested their skills but also encouraged deep introspection on how desires shape daily life. There were 37 participants, including 11 members of the coordination team. Notably, about 15 teenagers who were new to Sai also joined, **carrying Swami’s message beyond the Sai centers and planting the seeds of transformation in their hearts.**

This rally served as a practical example, showing that, by simplifying our desires, we can enjoy true joy, peace, and selfless service. The day concluded with a vegetarian lunch, followed by the presentation of certificates, medals, and piggy banks to the top three teams. The atmosphere was filled with gratitude, camaraderie, and a renewed commitment to living the principle of ‘Ceiling on Desires’ in everyday life.



THE SSSIO OF AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW) REGION HOSTED A CREATIVE AND HEARTFELT GURU POORNIMA CELEBRATION on July 12, 2025. Guided by the theme *In Sai Love*, the event showcased how divine love can be expressed in thought, word, and deed by following Baba's teachings.

Over 60 YAs collaborated to design and present an innovative program that captured the essence of the theme. The celebration was structured as a show featuring a scripted live play presented in episodes with 'ad breaks,' adding variety to the offerings. These included musical performances, a graceful dance presentation, an inspiring talk, a video segment, and devotional singing. While the YAs took the lead both on-stage and behind the scenes, they worked closely with the seniors and the SSE (Sai Spiritual Education) children to create a unified and vibrant program. A highlight of the evening was the presentation of certificates to graduating SSE teachers, honoring their dedication to nurturing the next generation in Sai values.

The theme *In Sai Love* was inspired by a quote from Sri Sathya Sai Baba, in a divine discourse delivered in August 1971: ***"See with the eyes of love. Hear with the ears of love. Work with the hands of love. Think thoughts of love. Feel love in every nerve."*** This profound message not only shaped the Guru Poornima program but also influenced a series of pre-event initiatives and service activities.

The journey toward Guru Poornima 2025 started with a pre-event program called ***Reflect in Sai Love, held on June 28, 2025, that focused on the first few lines of the quote that encourage all to see and hear with love.*** Around 30 YAs, SSE children, and teachers participated in an afternoon of creative expression, preparing artwork and musical compositions inspired by Baba's message of love. Four art stations were set up, each representing Swami's love as a mother, father, teacher, and inner Self. These pieces were later displayed at the main Guru Poornima event, adding a personal and devotional touch to the celebrations. The musical component allowed

singers and instrumentalists to compose and perform melodies that brought the spirit of the quote to life.

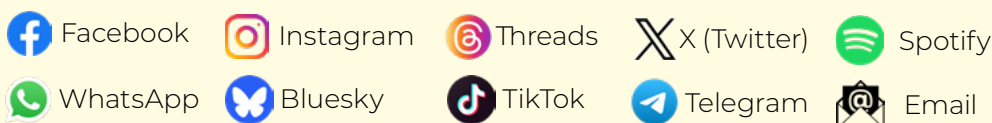
The NSW YAs launched ***Connect in Sai Love***, a series of service activities inspired by the final lines of the quote that exhorts us to work, think, and feel love. SSSIO members of all ages participated in three impactful initiatives. The first one was support for Hope in a Suitcase, a Non-Government Organization (NGO) that provides essential items for children in and out of foster care. Over 13 fully packed suitcases, along with blankets, toys, baby supplies, books, and activities, were lovingly donated. The second initiative was weekly tutoring and homework assistance for children through the program, TRACK (Tamil Resettlement and Community Konnect), where six volunteers committed to long-term service to help children improve their English skills. The third activity, a ***Liquid Love Blood Donation Drive***, encouraged

members to donate blood as an act of selfless giving, with five YAs contributing blood during the Guru Poornima period and many others continuing through their regular blood donation schedules.

The celebrations of Guru Poornima 2025 in the NSW Region were marked by devotion, creativity, and community service. **The theme *In Sai Love* was beautifully and seamlessly integrated throughout the program, from artistic expressions and heartfelt performances to the acts of service that embodied the message of living in love.** The event not only strengthened bonds among members of the Sai community but also inspired participants to carry the vibrations of love and unity into their daily lives. Fond memories and experiences from the occasion continue to resonate within the YA group, sustaining the energy and spirit of Guru Poornima long after the day itself.



Follow Young Adults on Social Media





PURITY IS ENLIGHTENMENT

Sri Sathya Sai International Organization
lovingly invites you

**100TH BIRTHDAY OF SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
& 11TH WORLD CONFERENCE**

NOV 19

Ladies Day

NOV 20-22

**World
Conference**

NOV 23

**100th
Birthday
Celebrations**

JOIN US!

Scan QR code
to register



19-23 November 2025

**Sai Prema Nilayam
Riverside, California**



**SRI SATHYA SAI
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION**

SATHYASAI100.ORG

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Swami

Sathya Sai
Education



Yeshwant M | Group 1 | Malaysia



Varshita M | Group 2 | Malaysia



A letter to my dearest Swami

Dear Swami,

My humble Pranaams at your lotus feet.

My sincere thanks to you for being my guide and helping me in my life. Thank you for being my inspiration. I enjoy learning new bhajans and singing them for you.

Thank you for giving me a loving family. I could not have asked for a kinder family. Thank you for helping me to feel the pain of others. Thank you for helping me to understand that Love is God and God is Love and that Love resides in our heart.

Once again I thank you Dear Swami for being there for all of us.

Nivaan R | Group 2 | Online SSE

Jiya, Danesh, Shivaany, Sai Hamsiny, Yevan Sai, Thivyan, Charmika, Sophie, Shreyaa, Mavviness, Dharwinash, Sharwinash

Group 2 | Malaysia



Dear Swami,

You have been there for me so much throughout these years. In this letter, I would like to show gratitude for all the things you have done for me.

Thank you for always protecting me and my family. Thank you for guiding me through everything and showing me the right path to follow. Thank you for showing me all the right decisions and choices to make. Thank you for helping me overcome challenges, such as a difficult question on a test, by reminding me of what to do. Thank you for teaching me how to be patient, so I won't rush through things and mess up. Thank you for helping me believe I can do things even if they seem impossible, because I know that you will always be with me.

Happy 100th Birthday, Swami.

Thank you for everything you have ever done for me and please always be my guiding light in my life.

Jayveen S | Group 2 | Canada

A HUNDRED YEARS OF PURE LOVE

Swami, You are the values of the divine,
You show the world how love can shine.
Guide and protect, we look up to you,
Your love, so sweet, we know it's true.

Prema, Sathya, Love and Truth,
You teach us bhajans that calm and soothe.
Ahimsa, Dharma, and Shanthi,
A path that leads us to be free.

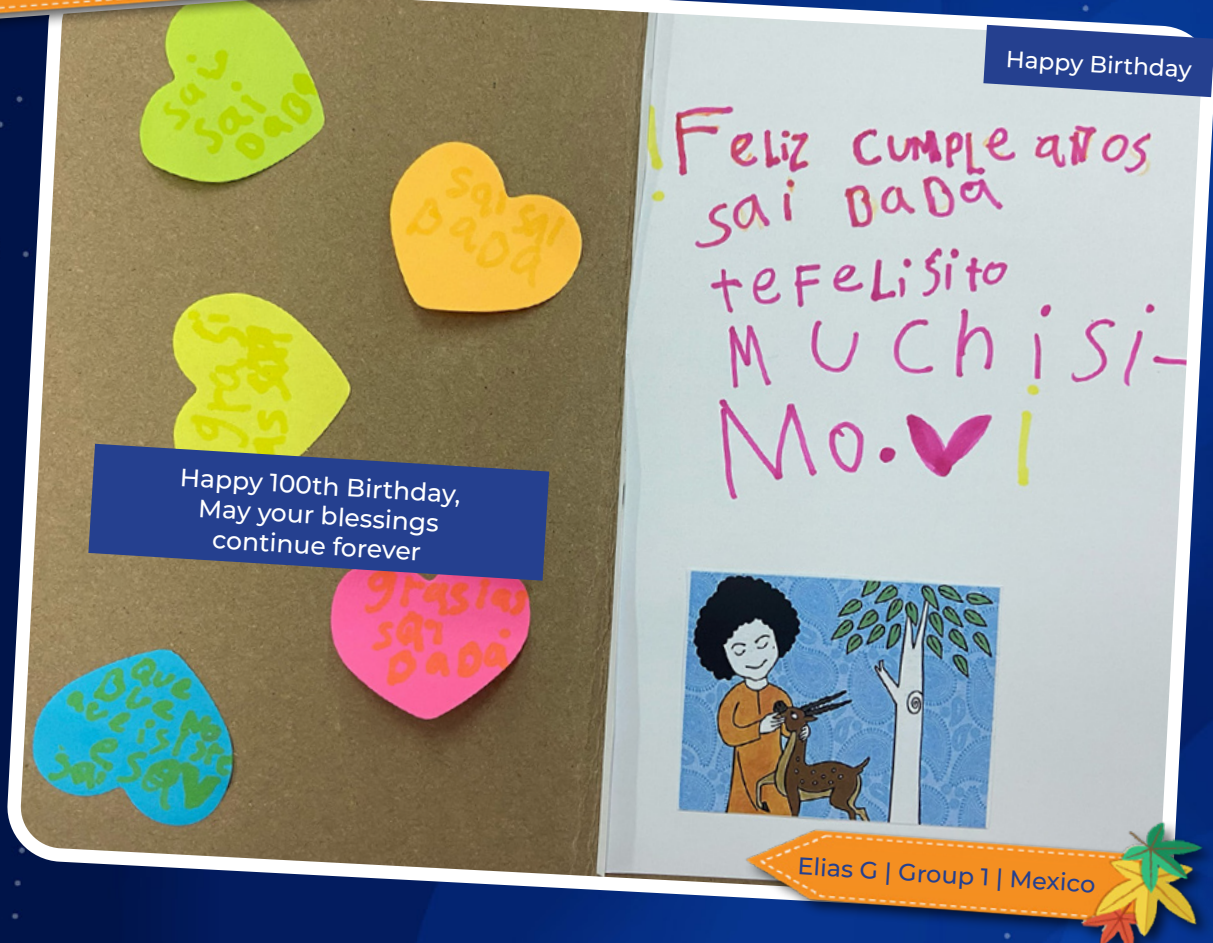
Help Ever, Hurt Never,
Your four words have so much power.
Love all, Serve All,
No matter race or religion, you answer their call.

You clear the distractions so we see clearly,
Oh dear Swami, you raise up humanity.
You've built a foundation for the world to build on,
So people can grow and flourish like a swan.

Thank you for always keeping us safe,
And showing us how to live with grace.
A hundred years since you came down to us,
A hundred years of love, devotion, and faith.

Kaveesh S | Group 3 | Canada





Through his teachings,
He taught us values to feel love in this world
To see peace in all views
And to be honest with truths

Speak only when we are in need of
For the betterment of unity
Display appropriate behaviour in all times,
For it will lead us to the right conduct

He left us with book of principles,
Whereby the generations shall pass it down
As a journal for blissfulness,
Valuable which can't be bought with money

I offer my most humble and loving pranaams at
your divine lotus feet.

"Oh lord! I am born now from the womb of Sleep.
I determined to carry out all tasks this day as offerings
to thee, with thee ever present before my mind's eye.

Make my words, thoughts, and deeds Sacred and pure, let me not inflict pain on anyone; let no one inflict pain on me. Direct me guide me forever.

72 THE ETERNAL COMPANION



Nirbhay | Group 2 | Botswana

MY SAI AND I...

As my sight sank into a shadow
I found myself in a beautiful meadow.
A sudden emptiness filled me all over
And, in that state, I felt a presence that
drove me closer.

Out in the blue, stood my SAI
HE slowly came to stand by my side
HE felt so far, but yet so near
Why should I fear when HE is here?

My mind flooded with thoughts
Drowning me slowly
I felt a hand on my shoulder
That brought me back to reality

In that moment I knew what to do
I sang my heart out with GRATITUDE

When pain surrounds me,
I turn to seek HIS grace.

Maybe not clear,
but I feel HIS embrace.

When choices confuse me,
and paths seem unclear

HIS words guide me,
and make me feel like HE's right here

With HIM by my side,
everything feels right.

No matter where,
HE surrounds me with HIS light

And as I finished,
HE looked at me with a smile

Oh! how I wish this could last forever
Or, at least a little while longer?

And slowly, light streamed in and the
dream ended

Now I have my answer...

"No matter what, it will ALWAYS be my
SAI and I"

And that... I can never deny.



Lakshveer B | Group 3 | Mauritius

Khyati S | Group 3 | Canada

Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
November 8-9, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Bhajans
November 19, 2025	Wednesday	30th Anniversary of Ladies' Day
November 20-22, 2025	Thursday-Saturday	11th World Conference, SSSIO
November 23, 2025	Sunday	100th Birthday of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
December 13-14, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri
December 25, 2025	Thursday	Christmas Day



Streaming on sathyasai.org/live and YouTube



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



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Instagram



WhatsApp



X (Twitter)



YouTube



Spotify



Telegram



Threads



Google Books



Email



Eternal Companion email list



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



This Sai has come to achieve the supreme task of uniting the entire mankind, as one family through the bond of brotherhood. He does this by affirming and illumining the *Atmic* reality of each being to reveal the divine, which is the very basis on which the entire cosmos rests. He does this by also instructing all to recognize the common divine heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal and rise into the divine, which is his goal. I am the embodiment of Love. Love is My instrument.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

June 19, 1974



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

