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THE  
ETERNAL  
COMPANION



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DIVINE  
GLORY &  
MISSION OF  
SRI SATHYA SAI

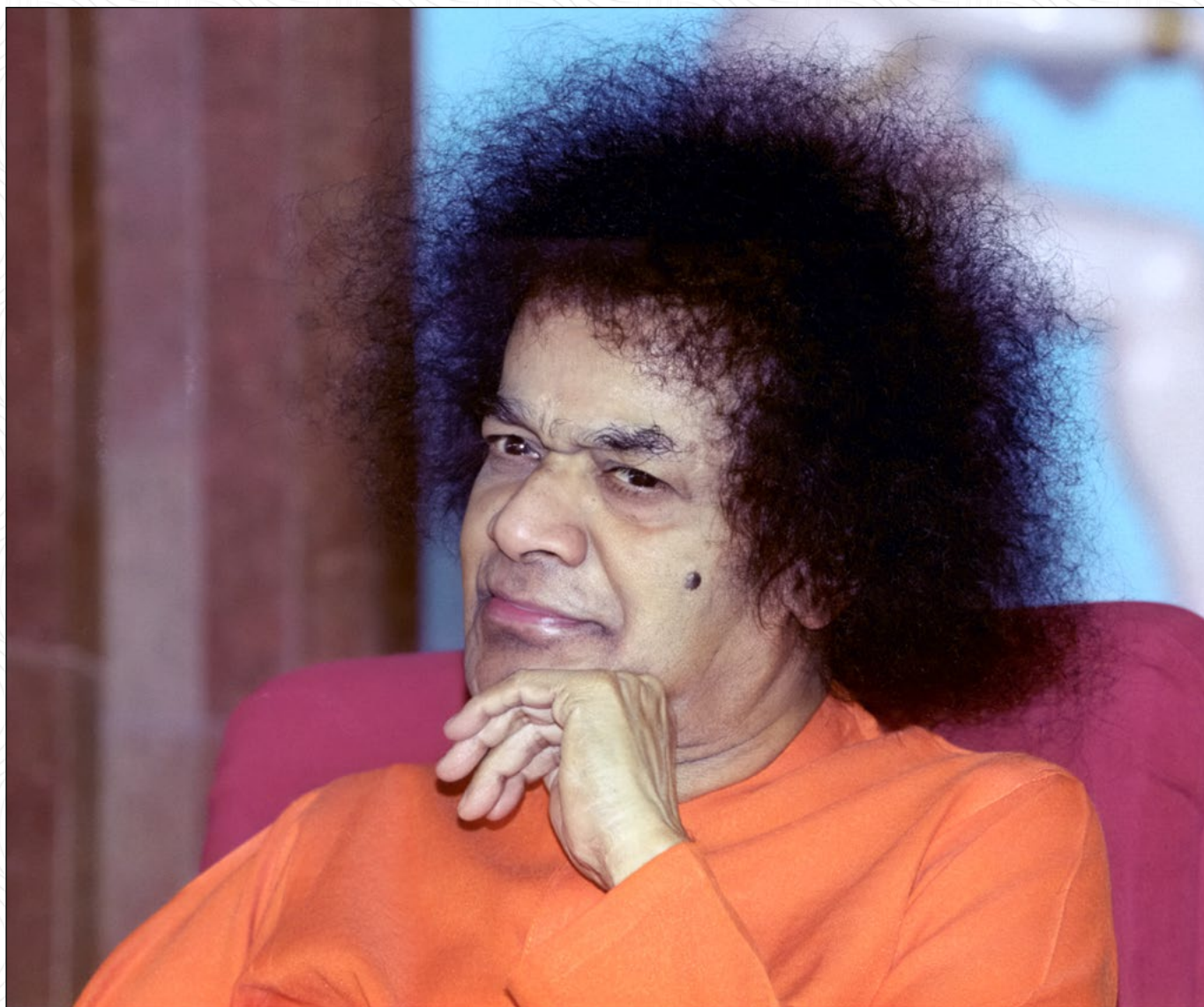




If you wish to enjoy enduring happiness, you have to fill your mind with pure thoughts and entertain noble feelings in your heart. Through good thoughts and good kindly actions, the heart gets pure and holy. In the journey of life, the body is like a cart and the heart is like a horse. Unless you feed the heart well, the journey cannot proceed properly. The heart has to be fed with good fodder in the form of good company, good conduct, and good thoughts. In addition, whatever is done should be an offering to God.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
May 3, 1987





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







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# SRI RUDRAM

## PART 2



Sri Rudram, a sacred hymn from the fourth *kanda* of the *Taittiriya Samhita* of the Krishna Yajurveda, is a powerful invocation to the supreme Lord Rudra. Chanting it purifies the mind, removes negative energies, and fosters spiritual growth. **It possesses the power to cleanse past karma, heal illnesses, and bless one with longevity while invoking protection, prosperity, and universal harmony.** Acknowledging the divinity in all creation, Sri Rudram connects the chanter with the divine and leads to Self-realization. That is why Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba greatly emphasizes everyone should learn this chant.

The first part of this editorial (published in the February 2025 issue) covered how Swami emphasizes the importance of Rudram. It also delved into different aspects like what Rudram is, how its daily practice is an integral yoga, and when to chant it. **When chanted with an understanding of the meaning of**



**The *Rudram* is a practical text to experience divinity in everything and everywhere, which Swami exhorts us to do.**

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the *Namakam* and *Chamakam*, the benefits multiply. While space constraints make it difficult to go into the complete meaning of each *anuvaka* of the *Namakam* and *Chamakam*, here are some highlights.

### Meaning of the *Namakam* *Namakam Anuvaka 1*

The first *anuvaka* of the *Namakam* is a prayer to the Lord to pacify His anger against transgressions of divine commandments and pray for His blessings to help us tread the right path. We pray for forgiveness of our trespasses and seek the Lord's love and grace. Three *mantras* are offered as praise, prayer, and salutation to Rudra as the Sun god who is directly seen by all of us, including animals and trees. The spectacular display of the beauty and glory of the Sun from the time it emerges on the eastern horizon at dawn till it merges with the western horizon at dusk is always a wonderful sight that gives joy to all.

Worshipping the Sun also has many physical and mental health benefits, such as providing Vitamin D and making one cheerful. For spiritual seekers, worship of the Sun god during *sandhyavandana* (daily duty of those initiated into the *Gayatri mantra*), helps take them toward God, sharpens their intellect, and illumines them. That is why, over thousands of years, people of all tribes and faiths worldwide have worshipped the Sun god. This includes





native tribes and people in the continents of North America, South America, Africa, Oceania, and Europe.

At the end of the first *anuvaka*, there is a beautiful and powerful *mantra* that begins, “*Namaste Astu Bhagawan Vishveshwaraya...*” Here, one offers salutations to Rudra as the Lord of the universe, who is self-effulgent, the three-eyed one, the consumer of the fire of the three periods of time, the conqueror of death, and the

**Lord of all bestowing health, auspiciousness, and liberation itself.**

*Anuvakas* 2 through 9 describe the various aspects of Rudra, including how Rudra is the supreme Lord with no leader above Him. Though some references are pertinent to conditions prevalent in Vedic times, the message is relevant for all ages and everyone as it is timeless.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 2***

The second *anuvaka* describes Him as the Lord of all directions, the indweller of all beings, the one who liberates us from worldly ties, the one who strikes fear in wrong-doers, and the one who bestows blessings on the righteous. Rudra is also worshipped as the one who resides in trees with green leaves and the Lord and protector of forests. It shows the importance of revering nature as God, protecting it, and not polluting it. The present environmental initiatives by various governments and organizations, including the SSSIO, are spiritual at their core, thus worshipping Rudra.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 3***

The third *anuvaka* shows how Rudra is all-pervasive in all beings. He is present in those who protect the harvested land, as well as the thieves and cheaters. Rudra is present in those who are sitting, lying down, sleeping, awake, standing, and moving about quickly. He is also present in general and professional assemblies, and is the head of those assemblies. This indicates that we should be aware of Rudra in all our mundane activities, which Rudra Himself pervades.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 4***

The fourth *anuvaka* states that Rudra is present in people with dispassion, as well as those indulging in material pleasures. He is present in chariots and charioteers (a reference to modern automobiles and chauffeurs), carpenters, potters, blacksmiths, people who make weapons (such as weapon manufacturers), fishermen, bird





hunters, dogs and their owners, hunters, etc. This indicates that Rudra is our protector in accidents that might occur due to manufacturing defects or usage of equipment when we think of Him.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 5***

The fifth *anuvaka* describes how Rudra is responsible for creation and dissolution. It states that He has a white complexion with a blue neck caused by the *halahala* poison He swallowed to save the universe. He is in monks with tufted hair and those with clean-shaven heads; He is in both running waters and still waters. We salute Rudra, who is present in dwarfs and giants, as well as children and old people. He is present in all stages of life.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 6***

The sixth *anuvaka* further elaborates on Rudra's all-pervasiveness, stating how He is there in the youngest ones, the oldest ones, the middlings, in heaven and hell, in Vedic prayers and Upanishads, in sound and resound, and in mighty armies. Rudra is also worshipped as being present in humans, forests, creepers, and all that grows in the forests.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 7***

The seventh *anuvaka* states how Rudra manifests in the ambassadors of peace, the ones who fight for the right cause, muddy waters, lakes, rivers, clouds, lightning, thunder, rain, summer winds, autumn breezes, tornadoes, hailstorms, and snow. It ends with salutations to Rudra, who dwells in all objects and places as their ultimate protector.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 8***

The eighth *anuvaka* is considered the most important one. When chanting it, people ring the bell to draw attention to the chant. It offers salutations to Rudra, who, with Goddess Uma by His side, removes all our sorrows. It also salutes Him as the Rudra who gives joy and is the loving protector of

all beings. It extols Rudra as taking the form of the five elements, the Pranava, Om, trees, and the creator of worldly and spiritual treasures. **The mantra 'Om Namah Shivaya,' extolled as the highest, is part of this *anuvaka*.** The *anuvaka* also describes Him as the protector, the one who takes us across the ocean of *samsara* (worldly life), and the one present in foam, running waters, and sand dunes.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 9***

The ninth *anuvaka* states how Rudra manifests as narrow roads, wide highways, stone-ridden roads, huts, mansions, beds, cowsheds, caves, whirlpools, waterfalls, dust particles, dry leaves, green leaves, grasslands, grassless lands, and the very atoms. Apart from showing His all-pervasiveness, these also indicate the benefits of chanting this *mantra*, such as good sleep, freedom from dust allergies, etc., since Rudra pervades everything.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 10***

The tenth *anuvaka* states that Rudra is the supreme physician, curing humans and animals of their physical and mental afflictions while bestowing the greatest prosperity and auspiciousness on our parents, grandparents, children, servants, and other loved ones. Here, Rudra is invoked as the omniscient and omnipotent Lord to show His peaceful and auspicious form. Prayers are made so that He may direct His weapons not on us but on our outer and inner enemies, thereby granting us peace, protection, and happiness.

### ***Namakam Anuvaka 11***

In the eleventh *anuvaka*, we pray for the grace and blessings of various *rudras*, the aspects of the omnipresent and omnipotent Rudra who exist in the earth, skies, netherworlds, and heavens. This is also a prayer for protection while walking on different roads, eating food, from diseases, from all directions, including above and below, and from



negative people and emotions. We surrender to Lord Rudra in thought, word, and deed and pray that people and things we dislike and those that dislike us and cause us sorrow may be destroyed by Him for our peace and happiness.

**The *Namakam* also contains the powerful *Mrityunjaya mantra*:**

*Om tryambakam yajamahe  
sugandhim pushtivardhanam  
Urvaarukamiva bandhanaan-  
mrityormuksheeya maamritaat*

In this *mantra*, the Lord is extolled, adored, and worshipped as the three-eyed one with a sweet and wonderful fragrance who gives us strength and energy while getting rid of all our bondage as easily as a mature cucumber drops off its creeper. The three eyes of Lord Shiva are the Sun on His right side, the Moon on His left side, and fire in the center. The fragrance is of love and beauty. **It is also a prayer for spiritual strength, to take us from death to immortality, to remind us that though the body and mind may disappear, the eternal Atma is always present.**

In the end, the Lord is praised with a prayer to protect us from illness and negativity by the strength of our good deeds and worship. It also contains a beautiful *mantra* that portrays the glory of God that divinizes and blesses everything that comes in contact with it. **It says, “This hand of mine is blessed that it came in contact with God. It can cure all ills – physical, mental, and spiritual.”**

### **Meaning of the *Chamakam***

This contains prayers to the Lord to fulfill desires as per *dharma*. Lord Krishna says that four kinds of devotees seek Him - those who want release from suffering, those who desire wealth, those who are spiritual seekers, and the wise who love God for God's sake. ***Chamakam* allows one to seek everything directly from the Lord.**

### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 1***

In the first *anuvaka*, the prayer is for food, energy, strength to do *yajnas* (which Swami defines as activities undertaken for the good of all beings), physical health, healthy organs, good memory, fluent speech, pure mind, and comfortable life in old age.

### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 2***

In the second *anuvaka*, the prayer is for leadership skills, cooperation of people, righteous anger, good judgment, right mind, discrimination, enjoyment of sports and games, and the ability to do righteous and noble deeds.

### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 3***

This is the most popular *anuvaka* of the *Chamakam*, chanted as an independent prayer. In the third *anuvaka*, the prayer is for worldly happiness, spiritual benefits, performing virtuous deeds during the day, enjoying good sleep at night, earning wealth by righteous means, and good thoughts. It also prays for intellectual honesty, fearlessness, protection from major diseases and minor illnesses, and medicines for good health.

### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 4***

In the fourth *anuvaka*, the prayer is for wholesome food—milk, honey, *ghee* (clarified butter), fruits, juices, pulses, cereals, grams, etc. We also pray that our speech be sweet and pleasant and that our ears hear pleasant words.

### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 5***

In the fifth *anuvaka*, the prayer is for cooperation from nature and yields from the land like iron, gold, lead, silver, wealth obtained by one's efforts, good inheritance, etc. This important prayer to Rudra is also for knowledge, strength, willpower, and other resources for doing daily spiritual practices with purity and joy to attain the goal of life, namely, God-realization.



### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 6***

In the sixth *anuvaka*, the prayer is for blessings from various demigods, who are manifestations of the supreme being with different names and forms like Indra, Sun, Moon, Rain God, Fire God, Goddess of learning, Divine Physicians, Earth, Sky, etc.

### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 7***

In the seventh *anuvaka*, the prayer is for blessings from various planets and galaxies to be cordial, supportive, and beneficial for all our worldly and other-worldly efforts. It also prays for knowledge, resources, and the will to perform spiritual rituals and practices. It is interesting to note that as the *Chamakam* seeks various material benefits from Rudra, it makes it a point to focus on spiritual practices and goals repeatedly.

### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 8***

In the eighth *anuvaka*, the prayer extolls God, who helps us perform the *yajna* as a selfless service to humanity. The prayer is for wood, clarified butter, people to perform the *yajna*, food offerings, venue for the *yajna*, specific *mantras* for the deities, and resources needed to make the *yajna* successful. *Yajna*, as per Swami, is a selfless action to serve all creation and God.

### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 9***

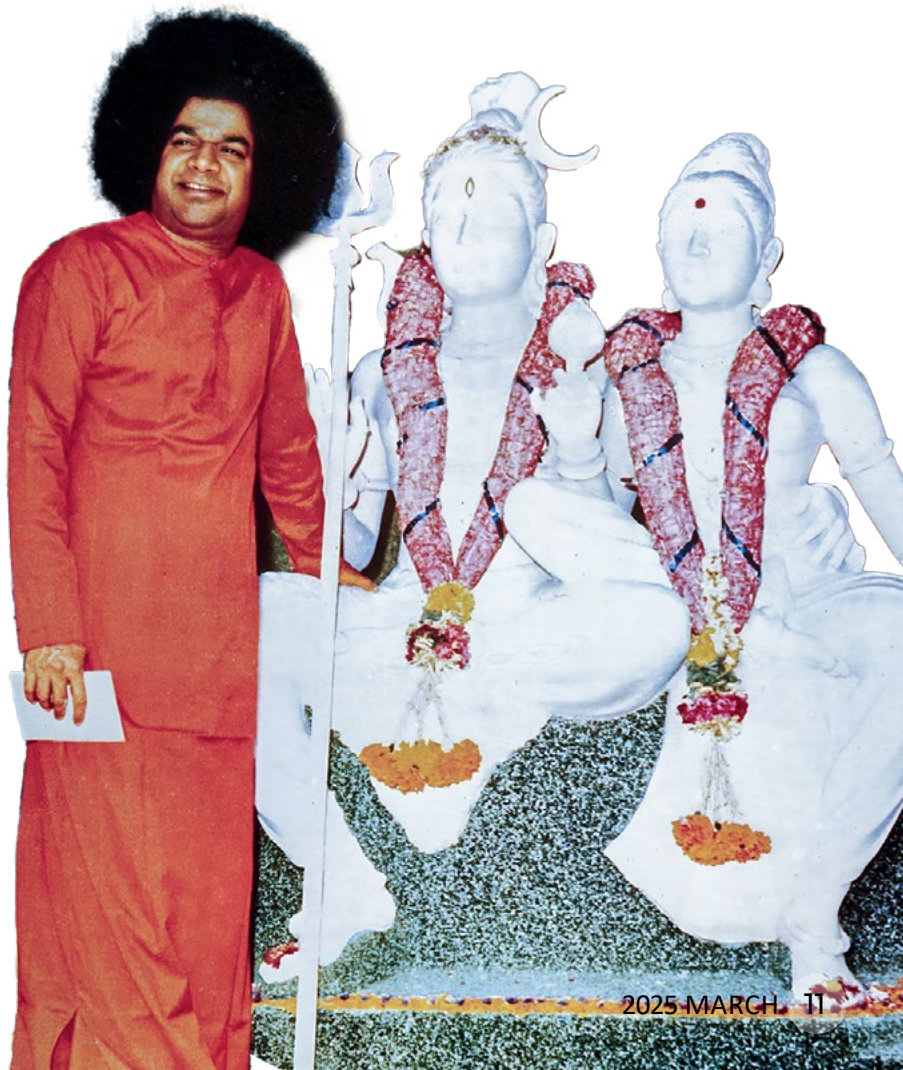
In the ninth *anuvaka*, the prayer is for steadfastness in spiritual practices, discipline, devotion, performing various austerities, and the energy to do selfless activities. There is also a prayer to acquire knowledge of the Vedas, essential *mantras*, and blessings from the deities.

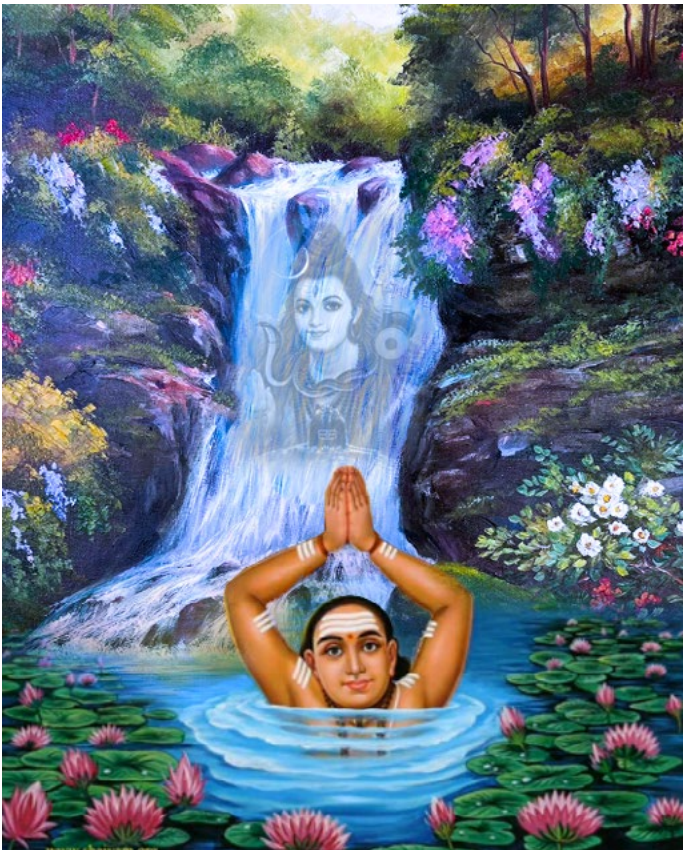
### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 10***

In the tenth *anuvaka*, the prayer is for cattle, which was the primary source of wealth for people in ancient times. In modern times, this would refer to various devices, tools, appliances, and resources needed for one's comfortable living, growth, and career. This is also a prayer for long life, strength, and blessings related to the body, mind, and sensory organs, including eyes and ears, mind, and speech, highlighting the holistic development of an individual.

### ***Chamakam Anuvaka 11***

In the eleventh *anuvaka*, the prayer pertains to various odd numbers—1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, and 33—indicative of divinity and various even numbers—2, 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40, 44, 48—indicative of human existence. Vedic hymns contain many invocations and prayers with coded numbers. Such coded series of numbers give insights into creation and its functioning. The numbers also refer to various aspects of DNA, the biological code of the living world.





The numbers have great relevance in philosophical doctrines, the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this editorial. Finally, one prays for energy to do more good deeds based on good thoughts and words. We can also add to this list all we desire. May those desires be for the well-being of all, including ourselves.

### **Rudram is a Way to Constantly Experience Divinity**

*Sri Rudram*, as evident from Swami's teachings, is not just a chant but a pathway to experiencing the divine within and without. **It is the bridge between the finite and the infinite, guiding humanity toward a life of love, peace, and Self-realization. It is not a bundle of sacred *mantras* alone, but the highest Vedic hymn, encompassing all aspects of human life and integrating all three *Yogas* of Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana.**

The *mantras* contained therein have meanings at three levels—literal (*prati padartham*),

inner (*bhavartha*), and divine (*paramartha*). The third one represents the highest knowledge, which has to be revealed from within or by the grace of an Avatar, like our beloved Bhagawan. It is unique and inspiring for an Avatar to explain the meaning of Vedic aphorisms and scriptures—how blessed we all are!

**The story of the Nayanar saint, Rudra Pashupati Nayanar, is apt for highlighting the impact of *Rudram*.** He is one of the 63 revered Nayanars, Shaivite (worshippers of Shiva) saints known for their unwavering devotion to Lord Shiva. His life is a profound example of steadfast faith and service to the divine. A devout worshipper of Lord Shiva, he would sneak out to the outskirts of the village daily. He would bathe in the chilling waters of a waterfall, chanting the *Rudram* all the while. Based on the meaning of the *Namakam*, He experienced Lord Shiva embracing him in the form of the waterfall and touching and blessing him in the form of the wind. He even saw Lord Shiva in the trees and birds. One day, there was torrential rain, and he had to wade through knee-deep water. He was lost in the throes of bliss, experiencing Lord Shiva holding his feet! On another occasion, when a thief took away his possessions, he was overjoyed and expressed gratitude to Rudra for removing the obstacles in his spiritual path (“...*Taskaranam Pataye Namaha*,” meaning that the Lord is the chief of thieves!). Thus, in his daily life, this great saint experienced Rudra by translating the inner meaning of the *mantras* into all his actions and experiences.

**Thus, the *Rudram* is a practical text to experience divinity in everything and everywhere, which Swami exhorts us to do.** Let us chant the Rudram with love and purity, sanctifying our lives and attaining liberation. Jai Sai Ram.

The text of the *Rudram* can be found at this [link](#). Since 2020, the International Sai Young Adults have organized an [online Veda program](#) to encourage Young Adults to take up Veda chanting and propagate the teachings of the Vedas.





# The *Way* to God

Each human being is a pilgrim on a long journey; starting from the stone, evolving to a vegetable, later to an animal, and finally arriving at the stage of a human being. Every human being still has a long way to go to reach the divine, so one should not slow down. **Every moment is precious; every step must take one further from the world and nearer to the divine.**

Those born in *Bharath* (India) are truly fortunate, for here, millions have traveled along that road, and there are many compassionate guides available who can lead you along the easiest and the shortest paths. They tell you the address of the place where you come from because you have forgotten it, and so you are helpless when asked about it. They also tell you the goal you ought to reach when the toil of travel is over and of the enticing attractions and detractions on the way which you must avoid.

Each one is the synthesis of all feelings, emotions, and reactions that arise in their mind. The mind is the seat of all urges, desires, and thoughts. When the mind is pure, the world cognized by it will also be good. When the mind is agitated and ridden with fear, the world will appear miserable and depressing. **Many people blame the world without knowing that the fault lies in themselves.** Their thinking is crooked; their thoughts are not wholesome; their minds are restless because they are too full of unfulfilled desires. Rich or poor, educated





**The mind has to be trained to develop a taste for the good and the godly, not for money and material gains. Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows.**

or uneducated, high or low, they see the world through the glasses of their own prejudices and predilections, and they condemn or extol it to please themselves!

### **Sow The Seeds Of Love And Harvest Peace**

The proper study of mankind is man, for man is the center of all things. And, in man, the mind has to be studied, controlled, and regulated. His thoughts originate in the mind; they express themselves through words and are manifested through deeds. These three have to be properly coordinated by the intellect, or else life turns into a tragedy. **The mind has to be trained to develop a taste for the good and the godly, not for money and material gains. Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows.** Man, in his ignorance, asserts that he lives for himself only, eats and drinks to appease his hunger and thirst, and looks after his health and comforts only.

Two individuals may be sleeping on the same bed, but each has dreams that meander independently into strange regions of their own. But the truth is quite different! This selfish attitude, which curbs and curtails one's interests to oneself, and their aggrandizement, is really 'death.' Contraction is extinction. Expansion is life. Man has to feel that he is a limb of the society into which he was born and which has fostered him and fed him with ideals and ideas. Spiritual life is not an isolated existence. **Man has to sow the seeds of love in his heart and harvest peace. He should share that peace with all.** "*Bhumaiva sukham*",

say the Vedas (Chandogya Upanishad). This means that there is happiness only in the vast, the limitless, and the huge; not in the little, the small, and the limited. **Love leads to expansion; hatred leads to contraction and death.** This is the fundamental teaching of the scriptures of *Sanathana Dharma* (path of eternal wisdom).

### **Peace Has to Emerge from Within**

But, seeing the advances in science and technology, you have lost balance. Man has learned to walk on the moon, to live in the depths of the ocean, to penetrate the deepest crusts of earth, but, alas, it is a pity that he has not learned how to live on earth and let others live, too. How can man achieve happiness and peace of mind, flying high or swimming deep? He also has to carry his troubles and worries, fears and failings with him to those places. He cannot feel light and loveable unless he rids himself of these burdens. **Peace has to emerge from within; it cannot be obtained from outside.**

Science has its vision directed outward, toward gadgets and machinery providing worldly comforts and convenience. The scientist examines the objective world of matter; he tries to excel in external vision. The Saint examines the soul and develops internal vision. The Scientist plans *yantra* (machines), and the Saint relies on *mantra* (sacred words). **Balance can be restored only by cultivating inner vision.** This has to be done even in schools and colleges. They have neglected this aspect for far too long.

If you examine the nature of the mind, you will find that it is very much akin to the lens of a camera. **The body is the camera, the mind is the lens, the heart is the photographic media, thought is the flash, and intelligence is the switch. Turn the lens toward the source of happiness, not to the**

**seat of anxiety and fear; then, you will be rewarded with a fine picture imprinted on your heart.** It is difficult, nay, well-nigh impossible, to turn the lens in this direction, saints, and seers tell us, for the mind is truly like a monkey! Why, it is even more wayward than a monkey because it jumps from one perch to another that is miles away in space and centuries away in time, in less than a wink! The mind jumps from one desire to another, entangling us in its coils. **Reduce desire, evict the ego, eject anger, and the mind will be your slave instead of being your master.**

### **Love without Duty is Divine**

*Prema* (love) is the master key that can achieve all this. That is why I say,

*Start the day with Love;  
Spend the day with Love,  
Fill the day with Love;  
End the day with Love;  
This is the way to God.*

On this path, you will not be waylaid by anger, lust, or greed. You will only have the company of the good and proper facilities for speedy progress. Do your duty with love, as if you are thereby adoring God. Today, many leaders are clamoring for *sweccha* (freedom). The word *sweccha* is derived from two root words, *swa* (Atma) and *iccha* (desire). So, real freedom is following the Atma. **Real freedom is gained only when you are free of the negative influence of passions like lust, envy, pride, greed, and hate.** *Sweccha* does not mean pursuing any and every desire that arises in your mind. It means the inclination of your true Self toward God. If you are inclined toward God, the passions that enslave you will be rendered powerless. Then, you will do your 'duty' as *swa-iccha*, for you will love it with all your heart.





Duty without love is deplorable; duty with love is desirable; love without duty is divine. *Sweccha* means the best interests of the individual, the purest thought that emerges from within, for his own good. That means all imitation is barred. Follow the dictates of your clear conscience. Do not copy the wishes and resolutions of someone else. This is what the blind man does. Very often, he follows an equally blind man. **God is enshrined in your heart; He is always ready to guide you.** He does not appreciate external pomp and exhibitionistic behavior. He does not calculate the number of hours you did *bhajan* (group devotional singing), or *japam* (repetition of the Lord's name), or the number of miles you walked doing *Nagarasankeerthana* (group devotional singing on the streets). **God examines the purity of your heart, as evident from your words and deeds.**

Do not preach; practice. In politics, in the field of administration, in schools and colleges, and in spiritual institutions everywhere, we have an abundance of preachers but a famine of practitioners. Heroes on platforms prove themselves zeroes when they descend to the ground. Therefore, demonstrate in your own lives how love can

“

**GOD IS  
ENSHRINED IN  
YOUR HEART;  
HE IS ALWAYS  
READY TO GUIDE  
YOU.**

”

confer peace and joy, how all faiths lead to the same goal, and how all men are brothers. The only message, the only lesson I can impart to you today, is to remind you of the great traditions of *Bharath* (India) and ask you to spread love throughout the length and breadth of this great land. Then, India can again be the spiritual leader of humanity and fill the whole world with divine love.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
March 17, 1973





# Swami's Grace


## *Confers Nearness and Dearness to God*

I was born in Torreon, a small city in the north of Mexico. One day, when I was seven years old, I was alone at home, lying on my bed, and waiting for my mother. Suddenly, the bathroom door flung open, and a spiritual being in the form of a man walked out. He came toward me and sat on my bed. He began talking to me, and as He did so, He rubbed my stomach with a circular motion. Though His words were calming and peace emanated from them, I was paralyzed with fear and couldn't move! He sat beside me for a while, talking to me, but the only thing I remember is His parting words, "I have to leave! Take care of your mother." Then He got up from the bed, went back into the bathroom, shut the door, and was gone! The memorable experience was over.

**This changed my life forever.** I shared this experience with my grandfather, who then introduced me to the study of Spiritism (philosophical doctrines that assert the survival of spirits after death). The goal primarily is to communicate with them. I pursued it in my quest for truth until I became a young adult. Then, my



Swami then made a circular movement with His hand, materialized a picture of my master's face, and said, *"Look, he's with me."*



friends and relatives discouraged me from searching for spirits and encouraged me to enjoy my youth instead. Finally, I decided to give up the pursuit of spirits.

I thought I would say goodbye by attending their group meeting one last time. I went to the meeting on a Thursday, and the director told me, "Brother, we will have a conference about Sai Baba. Would you like to participate?" I replied, "All right! Anyway, this will be my last time here."

The conference began with a video of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. When I saw His image for the first time, I felt my chest exploding! There was a tremendous surge of energy emanating from Him in the video and connecting with me directly. **At the same time, I heard a very loud voice in my heart declare, "I want to be like Him!"**

The conference that followed had a big impact on me. I used to think constantly about Swami as if I was in love with Him! Some time passed, and one day, during my daily meditation, I saw Swami, who said, *"Come, come."* Impressed at seeing Him in my meditation, I asked Him, "Sir, what are you doing in my meditation? Please leave..." And Swami left. I thought that perhaps it had been my imagination. The next day, Swami came into my meditation again, saying the same thing, *"Come, come."* I said, "Sir, I don't know how you managed to enter my meditation. Please leave!" Again, He smiled and left.

On the third day, I pondered more deeply on Swami, trying to understand who He is and how He managed to enter my meditation. I sat down to meditate, and Swami appeared again, and again I told Him, "I am sorry, Sir! I don't know how you enter my meditation, but I must ask you to leave." This time, Swami asked, *"Why don't you want to follow me?"* I replied, "...because I don't know you. I follow another master. It is not right for me to change masters just like that!" Swami then made a circular movement with His hand, materialized a picture of my master's face, and said, *"Look, he's with me."* When I saw this, **I felt that the time had come, and with conviction, I said, "Yes, I will follow You."** Then, Swami smilingly took me to the shade of a tree, where we sat together. The meditation was over.

Many years later, Swami came into my dream and embraced me. I noticed He wore the same clothes as the divine being who came to me when I was seven years old! Throughout my life, He has lovingly and carefully shown His divine Love for me, and His plans for me.

### Raising the Hand to Serve God

What a wonder that out of over eight billion people in the world, only a handful can belong to Swami's Organization! Swami says that only those He calls can get the blessed privilege to serve in His Organization! **I thank Him gratefully for letting me be part of His divine mission because it is by His grace,**



“Never leave the Sathya Sai Organization, no matter what happens—even at the cost of your own life!

and His grace alone, that this is possible. He proved this to me by the unique way I joined His Organization.

In 1984, I bought the book ‘Sai Baba: Man of Miracles’ by Howard Murphet. I also had a strong desire to meet Swami and His Organization members. One day, on the way to my office, my assistant informed me that a lady had called requesting me to sing *bhajans* that day. The ceremony was about to start, and so I rushed over there. It was very exciting for me to meet a Sai devotee.

When I arrived, I was invited to enter a room full of pictures of different gods, but the main picture on the altar was of Sathya Sai Baba. Listening to *bhajans* for the first time was wonderful, and I could really feel Sai’s presence. At the end of the ceremony, the lady in charge of the Sai Center announced that she could no longer attend the Sai Center, so someone else would have to take her place as the new Center President. She asked the audience to raise their hand if they were interested in the position. I thought that someone might raise his or her hand, but no one did! The lady added that if nobody was willing to become the president, the Center could no longer continue functioning.

Time was running out, and no one raised their hands. My heartbeat started to increase, and to my great surprise, **I noticed my left hand rising unbeknownst to me, without even thinking about it!** My heart pounded rapidly because I did not know what was happening, while my mind kept screaming, “Oscar! What are you doing? You don’t even know these people! You know nothing about all of this! Put your hand down right now!” But at this point, my hand was fully raised, and I couldn’t put it down even if I tried!

The president turned, looked at me, and asked,

“Sir, do you know anything about what we do here?”

“No!”

“Do you know what the Sai Organization is?”

“No!”

“Do you have any idea of what this role entails?”

“No!”

“Then, why do you even raise your hand?”

“I don’t know... But **I want the center to continue its activities. I am willing to do anything for that.**”



All this happened while my mind was going crazy, asking me what I was doing and telling me I should stop! But nothing like that happened. **Swami had decided that I should become the president of the Sai Center immediately on my very first visit. Thank you, Swami, for raising my hand in Your service and making everything proceed according to Your will, not mine.**

### **Serving in His Holy Organization is a Rare Opportunity**

During my second visit to Prasanthi Nilayam, after morning *darshan* one day, an impromptu conference took place in the *mandir*. It was meant only for foreigners, and there were four translators—from Telugu to English and from English to Italian, French, and Spanish. Swami gave a very special message that day.

**He said that the Organization was like a space rocket. We were the integral parts that formed it, and even the smallest piece was important.** He said when the rocket goes to space, even if one small part fails, the rocket would blow up in flames. He added, ***“Never leave the Sathya Sai Organization, no matter what happens - even at the cost of your own life!”*** Can we even comprehend the importance of this statement? Such is the importance of the Sathya Sai Organization and of doing our best while serving in it. This makes me think how fortunate we are to be chosen by Him to be part of this noble Organization!

Swami was asked by a person about who would lead His Organization when He was no longer around (Swami is always around as we know), and Swami replied, ***“My devotees will!”*** Now that the SSSIO is in our hands and He is guiding us, I think we are truly and uniquely blessed. **It is only by Swami’s grace that we can become aware of His divine presence in our hearts.**

### **Dreams of Swami are Always True**

In 2009, I was very fortunate that Swami came into my dream to tell me that He was going to leave His body, and from that moment onward, our communication would be heart-to-heart. **To this day, my communication with Him is just as good as when I had physical access to Him.** He keeps instructing me about SSSIO operations along with personal matters.

I also had a dream where Swami told me, *“I have some books in Prasanthi Nilayam that I’m going to give you. When you arrive in Prasanthi Nilayam, look for Mr. Venkataraman.”* Then, He asked me to pronounce ‘Venkataraman’ many times till He was satisfied with my pronunciation. The dream ended there. When I arrived at Puttaparthi, I asked around and found out that Dr. Venkataraman was the director of Radio Sai. I went to meet him, accompanied by Mr. John Behner, who was then the Chairman of SSSIO, Zone 2. At the meeting, I shared my dream. **Dr. Venkataraman gave me the books, saying, “You are very lucky that Swami Himself has gifted you these books.** We give them out only to VIPs and dignitaries from different countries of the world.” He added, “I am usually skeptical about people telling me to do things based on their dreams about Swami. But you were not previously aware of the books you mentioned, as Mr. John Behner vouches for you. **So, I agreed to give them to you as your dream is genuine.”**

### **A Christmas Gift and Birthday Gift**

December 25 is a very important day for many of us, and celebrating Christmas in Prasanthi Nilayam is very special. In 2009, my family and I were blessed to attend the Christmas celebrations with Swami. For some reason, I arrived late at the *mandir*,



and there was no room where I used to sit. I stood at the entrance of the veranda, feeling very disappointed. Suddenly, Mr. John Behner, who was also the Chair of the Christmas Committee, came and asked me about the whereabouts of someone we both knew. When I replied that I didn't know where this person was, the children's procession had already begun. Then John asked me, "Would you like to cut a cake with Swami?"

I agreed without knowing what he meant. He took me inside the veranda, seated me next to a large Christmas cake, gave me a knife, and said, "In a moment, Swami will come. You will cut this cake with Him." When Swami came, He asked me, "*When do you leave?*" I answered Him, and right after that, we cut the cake together with my hand in His hand. **It was an incredible moment! My**

**heart was beating very fast as I thought, "What a rare lifetime opportunity to cut a cake holding the hand of the Avatar!"**

At that moment, Swami looked at me and seemed to say, "*It's because of your birthday!*" And then it struck me that my 50th birthday was in November that year. That Christmas, my daughters took part in the Christmas drama performed by the SSE students of Latin America. The eldest one had the honor of playing Jesus, and Swami materialized a gold chain for her. We were delighted with these precious gifts.

Swami is the Truth that I always looked and yearned for. **He was with me in the past, continues to be with me now, and will be forever with me.**

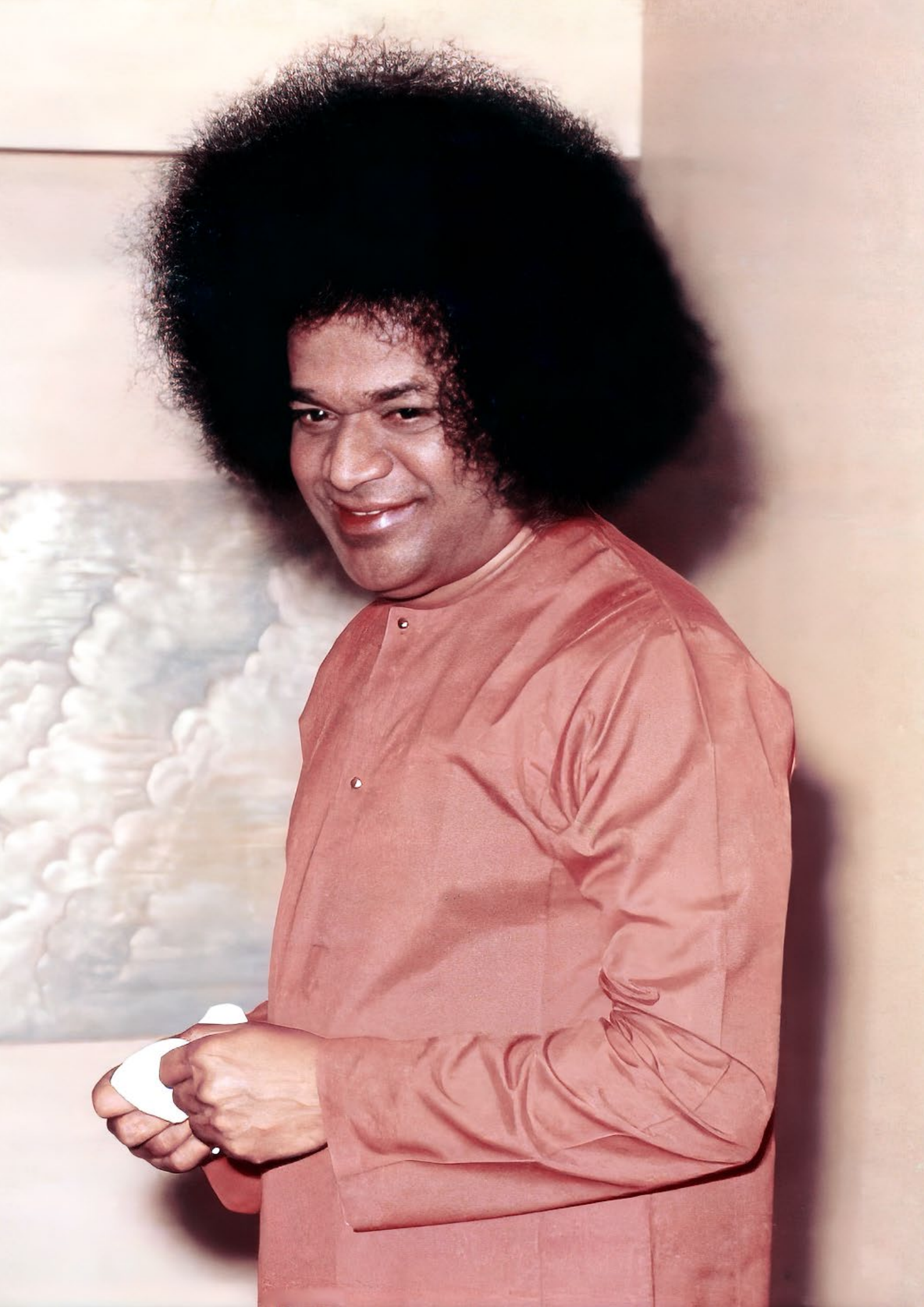
Mr. Oscar Morado   
MEXICO



**Mr. Oscar Morado** hails from Monterrey Nuevo León, México. He has been a devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and served diligently in the Sai Organization since 1984. Oscar serves as the Chairman of SSSIO Zone 2A, which includes Mexico, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guadalupe, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Puerto Rico. He has held many positions in the SSSIO and is a founding member of the Institute of Sathya Sai Education of Mexico.

Mr. Morado holds a degree in Educational Sciences and a master's degree in philosophy and Ethical Values. He is the CEO and founder of a pharmaceutical wholesale distribution business.





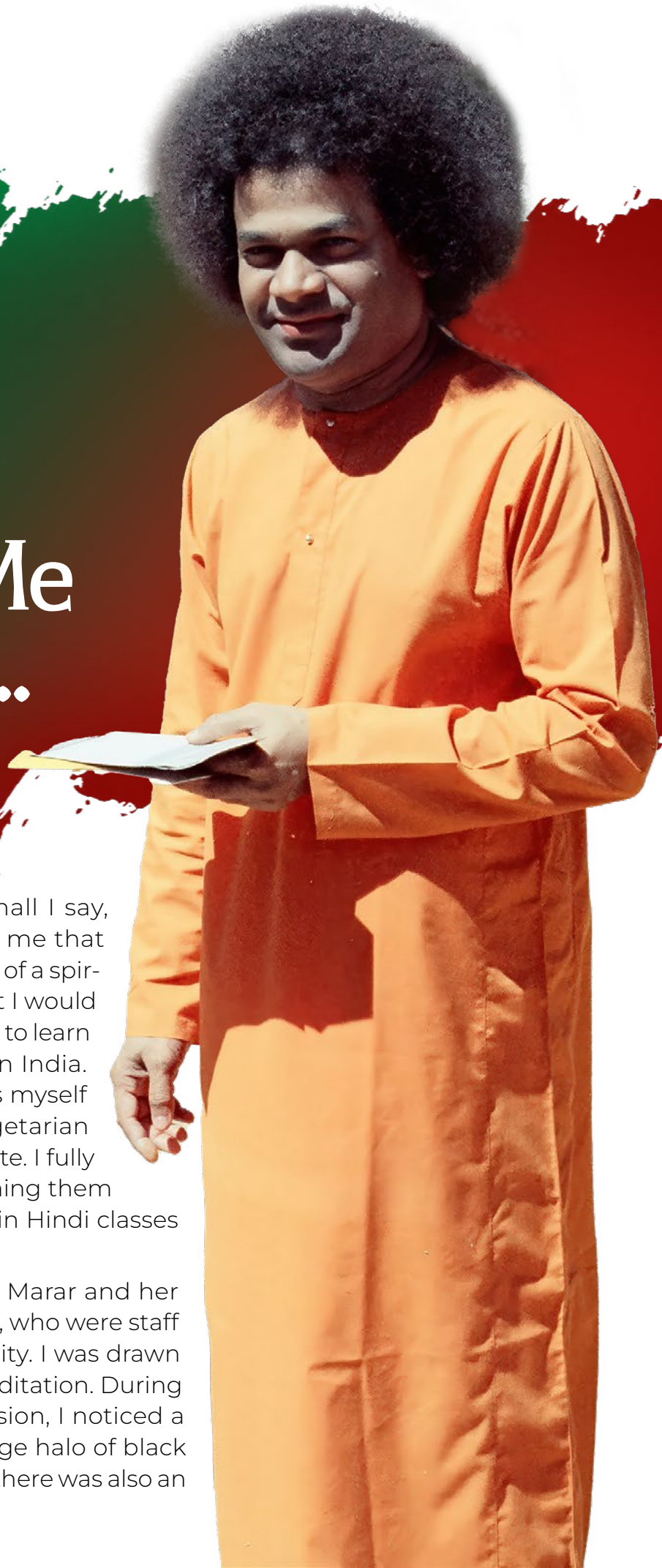




# When SAI Came For Me In Mexico...

I met Swami in 1973, or rather shall I say, Swami chose to reveal Himself to me that year. I was 17 years old and in search of a spiritual teacher. Maybe I intuitively felt I would find one in India because I was keen to learn Hindi, a major language spoken in India. I also wanted to learn how to dress myself in a saree, how to cook Indian vegetarian food, and, of course, how to meditate. I fully immersed myself and started learning them all at once, starting with enrolling in Hindi classes during Easter 1973.

The same year, I met Mrs. Kamala Marar and her husband from Trichur, Kerala, India, who were staff at the Indian Embassy in México City. I was drawn to accept her as my teacher for meditation. During my first ever Light Meditation session, I noticed a being in an orange robe with a large halo of black hair pass behind me! I noticed that there was also an





**During my first ever Light Meditation session, I noticed a being in an orange robe with a large halo of black hair pass behind me! I noticed that there was also an old man along with him...**

old man along with him who wore old and washed-out orange clothes. As I was getting up, **the gentle figure in the bright orange robe greeted me in the middle of the living room. He waved his hand with the palm facing upward while smiling at me.**

"Kamala! Kamala!" I shouted, "Please excuse me because I didn't know you were having visitors. I am meditating in the middle of the room. Come quick. He is right here!"

Kamala rushed into the room, and the figure vanished...

### **My Lord Comes to Me in Mexico**

"I swear I saw Him. He was smiling at me; He wore an orange robe and had black afro hair. Who is He? A relative of yours?" I asked Kamala because nothing else seemed logical.

Kamala rushed into her bedroom and returned with an old Indian ladies' magazine. She quickly flipped through the pages and pointed at a sepia photograph in it.

"Is this the man you saw?"

"Yes, Yes!" I said. "He was standing in the middle of your living room. I swear I saw Him right here moments ago."

My teacher just had a smile on her face. I returned home in a daze without even asking His name or any details. I was still wondering what had happened! Was this a trick that my mind was playing? Such a thing had never happened to me before. Who was this man who smiled at me? What was His name? For a couple of days, His

image was imprinted in my mind and heart. When I met Kamala the next time, I asked for His name.

"Sai Baba. He is Sai Baba," she said, and then she started playing some *bhajans* sung by Him. My heart went crazy hearing His voice as He sang, "*Govinda Krishna Jai.*" This was the first bhajan I heard. Later, Kamala disclosed to me that she was a Sai devotee.

### **I Travel to My Lord in India**

After a few days, I was invited to Kamala's house for tea. She wanted me to meet her friend, Mrs. Gail Muniz, who had just returned from India with her husband, Dr. Luis Muniz. They had met Swami for the first time. The couple wanted to start a group and conduct *bhajans* every Thursday at their place in Colonia Roma. I was happy to join in, and that is how we started the first Thursday Sai *Bhajan* Group in 1973 in Mexico. There were five other members, and we followed the *bhajans* played on the tape recorder. With passion and enthusiasm, we sang *bhajans* regularly.

As the years passed, the group grew beyond what the Muniz home could accommodate. Dr. Luis Muniz, who was now the President of the Sai Center, had to look for a bigger place to hold the *bhajans* and study circles. Many devotees also started traveling to Swami's *ashrams* in Puttaparthi and Bangalore. Dr. Luis Muniz encouraged us to write letters to Swami and send them. So I wrote a personal letter asking Swami to call me to India where I could see Him up close. **And He responded almost instantly!**



I know that Swami is always with me through all the storms of my life, just like He was with me during that storm in Calcutta.

In 1983, I was offered a scholarship from the Government of India to study Hindi and Literature in New Delhi. I was on my way to India... and Swami!

As soon as I landed in New Delhi, I searched for a Sai Center and found one in Greater Kailash II, not far from where I was studying. I became a regular visitor at this Center. Whenever we had a vacation from school, **I rushed to visit the *ashram* to see Swami and enjoyed the bliss of *darshan* and *sparshan* for many days.** I would travel by any means available and at the slightest opportunity. Thus, I celebrated Guru Poornima, Dasara, and Christmas with my divine Master.

I also had the opportunity to participate in the First Conference for Bal Vikas Gurus in December 1983 in the divine presence of Swamiji at Prasanthi Nilayam.

### Swami is Always a Call Away

In 1984, I was asked to help a group of 15 Mexican engineers who were staying in the city of Calcutta (Kolkata today) and working on a drilling project with a prominent busi-

ness in India. The monsoon rains that year turned out to be torrential. "Misery reigns as Calcutta goes underwater and stays submerged for nearly 72 hours," screamed the headlines of a leading newspaper. We were all stuck in the city with absolutely no transportation to leave. After a couple of days of anxious waiting, we were finally scheduled to leave for New Delhi, taking the first available flight after the rains.

At the Calcutta airport, I noticed the clouds were dark and dense, with no daylight in sight! My heart sank. How on earth were we going to leave the city? The monsoon clouds only got thicker and thicker. We boarded the plane and sat in our seats. I was alone with an empty seat next to me, and I decided to ask Swami to be my travel companion. The airplane had hardly taken off when it was jolted violently by the storm. Soon, we all started shaking with the turbulence, being tossed up and down. The overhead compartments started to open, and baggage started falling on us. I started screaming, "**Om Sai Ram, Swamiji, be here. Show me Your presence. Oh! Mighty Lord, be here with me!**"



**Precisely at that moment, the tray table opened, and a wallet landed and opened to reveal a photo of my Swamiji!**

“Om Sai Ram,” I shouted again, and someone replied, “Sai Ram, sister! Please do not move now... Stay where you are right now.”

The voice was coming from about eight rows behind me. “Yes,” I replied, trying to show that I had calmed down.

It took about half an hour for the pilot to regain complete control of the plane. Then, the owner of the wallet came to retrieve it. My hands were trembling as I returned it.

### **Why Fear When Sai is Near?**

“There is nothing to worry or fear, sister. Can I sit next to you?” he asked.

His name was Captain Kumar. He had taken the same flight from Delhi to Kolkata earlier and was also a devotee from the Sai Center of Greater Kailash II in New Delhi, which I had visited. He began to tell me about what happens during take-off

in such stormy scenarios. He also assured me the situation was not as dangerous as it seemed. I had calmed down completely by now. This was how Swamiji responded to my fear of flying through the storm.

Today, **I know that Swami is always with me through all the storms of my life**, just like He was with me during that storm in Calcutta. Though I had many opportunities to interact with Swami, I never got a chance to have a photo taken with Him. Whenever I asked Swami to allow me to take a picture with him, He always asked me, “*When are you returning to Mexico?*” I would answer with the date, which would be weeks away. “*Ah!*” Swamiji would say. “*We still have time!*”

As I wait for that picture with Him, He is firmly enshrined in my heart. **He is my friend and my guide through the ups and downs of life. Focusing on Him clears my mind of all worries and fears. I know that He is always with me as my eternal companion.**

**Dr. Isabel Arline Duque**  
MÉXICO



**Dr. Isabel Arline Duque** hails from Mexico and is the founder and an SSE teacher at the Sai Center in Mexico City. She is a translator for the SSSIO and actively participates in serving the elderly at the Sai Center of Querétaro.

She holds a Ph.D. in History from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAMI) and retired in 2019 after serving 49 years as a History teacher. Dr. Duque worked with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a Hindi-Spanish translator for refugees arriving in Mexico. One of her books has been translated into English by the Cultural Institute of Cultural Relations of India (ICCR): *India-Mexico*. She is honored to be an expert reference for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) of Mexico.

# *An Instrument in the Hands of the Lord*

Prasanthi Nilayam 11-8-65

My dear Charles,

Blessings to you and to all the Sadhaka friends of yours, Bob, Mrs Bob and others. Carry on with steady faith the spiritual discipline; do not hurry or expect too quick results; slow maturing makes the fruit sweeter.

Remember you are but an instrument in the hands of the Lord. But, you are not Jada or inert. You have Intelligence, Discrimination and the power to detach yourself from the world. These three are called Viveka, Vichakshena and Vairagyam. The more you develop these the better instruments you will be. Intelligence must be able to subdue the senses; discrimination must show the path to attain the eternal and the absolute; Vairagyam must attach you only to the higher goals.

When a person walks along the road, his shadow falls on the heaps and hollows, the thorns and dirt that happen to be, by the side of the road; but, he is not affected, by what happens to his shadow. You are the substance, not the shadow. You are the Divine Spark that is encased in the body, not the body.

Imagine a palm tree. Standing on the ground; its shadow stretches along the ground. The shadow is the world; the tree is the Reality. Climb the tree and reach the fruits on top; your shadow too reaches the shadow fruits. That is to say, do Sadhana and attain its goal; you will thereby attain worldly happiness and peace also.

If you lift the hand to serve, to help, to console, to encourage, another man—you are lifting it for God. Because, in every man, there is God. The body is the temple of the individual soul; the world is the temple of the Universal Soul. Use all your talents for serving others; that is the best way of serving yourself. For, they and you are one Entity.

The time is fast approaching when all your yearning will bear fruit. I do not belong to any particular place. I have come for the whole world; all men are mine. The Hospital has my blessings, wherever it is built.

The book will be sent to you with the meanings of non-English words. Also, photos.

With Blessings

*Sri Sathya Sai Baba*



Prasanthi Nilayam 11-8-65

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With Blessings  
Sri Sathya Sai Baba.





## GREECE

### Sarva Dharma Choir Serves and Sings

In 2009, an idea of forming a small ladies' choir for a meeting of the SSSIO in Poland blossomed within a couple of years into an international Sarva Dharma Choir consisting of about 45 members from six European countries and India.

From December 27, 2024, to January 5, 2025, 19 members of the Sarva Dharma Choir, joined by four women from Latvia, Lithuania, Switzerland, and Spain, participated in the "Agri Seva Camp" at Sai Prema in Athens. **The service activities included gardening, cleaning, and renovating the facilities while they prepared for a concert at the venue.** On December 31, they performed the concert, followed by meditation, a *bhajan* session,



and a joyous celebration of the New Year. As the rain abated and the weather improved, the group planted 40 fruit trees, a labor-intensive task requiring special care, and also completed a few cleaning and painting tasks. The participants described their time at Sai Prema as transformative, balancing service with meaningful excursions and building a sense of home and community.



## RUSSIA

### Spreading Joy and Spiritual Education

In early December, members of the SSSIO's Shanti Center in the Siberian region of Russia conducted a class titled "Good Heart" for children and parents. The session encouraged proactive participation with skits, interactive discussions, and creative activities like "The Tree of Kindness." Participants reflected on good deeds, sang songs, and discussed their desire to continue fostering kindness in their lives. Another SSEHV class was held at a Children's Rehabilitation Center. **A creative workshop, "New Year's Bag of Happiness," brought joy to children with disabilities and**



**their families.** Participants crafted decorations using plasticine molding material and decorated pre-prepared New Year bags filled with candies and tangerines. The event spread happiness and love, leaving everyone with hearts full of gratitude for the opportunity to serve and connect.





## PHILIPPINES

### Deliverance from Typhoon Disaster

Between late October and mid-November 2024, the Philippines endured six consecutive tropical cyclones, with Typhoon Kristine (Trami) being the most devastating. It impacted 8.8 million Filipinos, claiming 151 precious lives and severely damaging infrastructure in the Bicol region. Over 37,795 farmers and fishermen lost their basic means of sustenance, while key facilities and roads sustained significant damage.

In response, members of SSSIO in the Philippines partnered with the Missionaries of Charity to deliver aid. **Within a week, volunteers prepared 500 grocery bags with essentials such as rice, blankets, and toiletries. Despite logistical challenges, relief supplies were transported from Manila to Naga, a journey of 11 hours.** On November 15, volunteers



distributed the relief bags across eight barangays (administrative districts) in Camarines Sur. Using jeepneys (jeeps converted into small buses), tricycles, and boats to navigate flooded areas, they delivered much-needed aid directly to affected households, helping families who had lost their homes and livelihoods.

As the people of Bicol begin the long journey of recovery and rebuilding, these acts of kindness and solidarity serve as beacons of hope, inspiring others to contribute to the healing process.



## USA

### Birthday Cheer for Memory Care Patients

Since September 2024, members of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Manhattan in New York, U.S.A. have been spreading joy to patients at Coler Specialty Hospital's Memory Care Unit by celebrating patients' birthdays monthly on the last Saturday of each month. Volunteers collaborate with the unit's recreation therapist to identify patients' birthdays, create personalized cards, bring a cake, and decorate a room with balloons. **Familiar music inspires patients, even those with limited mobility, to dance and connect with others.**

**These celebrations provide much-needed joy and companionship to the residents, particularly those with paralysis or who receive few visitors.** Lizette Jaffri, the center's vice president, described the event as a blessing, while other volunteers highlighted the pleasure of witnessing the patients' joy and



participation. Reese, a recreation therapist at the hospital expressed her sincere appreciation, "On behalf of our residents, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Sai volunteers for their invaluable time and compassion. These precious moments mean the world to our residents who face daily challenges."

# OBEDIENCE & Yearning

When I jog my memory to search for the 'Aha' moment that led me to Sathya Sai Baba, I find none because I was born into a home already devoted to Swami, and we mostly practiced His teachings. He has always been God for me, and hearing His miracles was a daily affair in the family. **I am convinced that I have come to know Him in this lifetime only because of His grace and love.**

## **Swami is Always Watching and Correcting Disobedience**

In the year 2000, my sister and I were SSE teachers in the UK. In December, just before Christmas, a group of SSE teachers, adults, and children from our Sai Center traveled to see Swami at His Brindavan ashram in Bengaluru. Every day, we went for the morning and evening darshans, and since cameras are not allowed, it was my practice to deposit my camera in the cloakroom before darshan. One day, we were pleasantly surprised when the head sevadal (volunteer) approached us after darshan to inform us that Swami had given permission to take a group picture in Ramesh Hall! I ran to fetch my camera and took the picture.



**“Swami is the silent witness in our lives. Always listen to His words and follow His teachings implicitly.”**

Getting a little greedy, I thought of clicking another picture. Swami had clearly informed, “Take a picture.” The camera was uncooperative and seemed to protest because, despite my best efforts, it would not click! I changed the battery and the memory card but to no avail! Eventually, I gave up, and we returned to our accommodation. On a hunch, I tried taking another picture, and the camera worked beautifully! For several years after that, the camera worked like a breeze! This seemingly insignificant episode showed me His omnipresence, the power of His word, and that He is in full control. **Since then, I always reminded myself of His omnipresence before thinking, speaking, or doing anything.**

### **Swami is Always Watching and Blessing Obedience**

In 2007, I was the National Youth Coordinator for the SSSIO of Trinidad & Tobago. We traveled to Prasanthi Nilayam in July for the World Youth Conference. On the conference’s final day, just as everyone was preparing to disperse, we received word that Swami wanted us to gather back in Sai Kulwant Hall. By then, it had been a long day, and everyone was very tired. Many had also made bookings for tours and travels in India immediately after the conference. Thus, many young adults missed this wonderful, blessed gathering.



Those of us who went for darshan wore a saree from the three that Swami had gifted us at the beginning of the conference. We were all seated in the hall, and there was a rumor that Swami would come out and bless us. But nothing happened for quite some time and we were all thinking that maybe it was much ado about nothing.

A few minutes later, we saw the young adult leaders and coordinators walking toward us. They seemed to be carrying orange sarees. But when they came to us and began handing them over, we got goosebumps as we realized they were Swami’s robes, the sacred garbs of God Himself! I am sure that those who went touring had a good time, and those who stayed back in the rooms got a good rest. But, in my opinion, nothing could be grander and more joyful than the experience we had in the hall as we received Swami’s robes. And then came the blessed moment—Swami came out in His chair! He moved around, blessing us, and we were all overwhelmed, shedding tears of joy in gratitude.

As we returned to our rooms, we were swamped by devotees eager to touch the robes we held. I had to hide the divine robe under my saree and run to the room because I was scared that the robe might

get torn or soiled in the excitement of the devotees. I am convinced that this was a reward for our implicit obedience.

### Yearn for Swami and See Him

**Swami is the silent witness in our lives. Always listen to His words and follow His teachings implicitly.** In 2008, the World Education Conference was held. We traveled as a team of 20+ members from our Sai Center (Montrose Sai Center). After the conference, we traveled to Whitefield Ashram in Bengaluru before leaving for our homes. Enjoying a beautiful satsang, we traveled in vans from Puttaparthi. We were at the head of the convoy. At one point, our driver said that none of the other vans were following us. So, he stopped the vehicle, got out, and went to check on the convoy. Suddenly, everyone was quiet in the van, possibly because it dawned on us that we were going away from Swami. Every time I left His presence, it would break my heart.

Sitting in the silence, after a while, I turned around to see if the vehicles had caught up. That was when my gaze turned toward the sky. My jaw dropped! In the skies, I saw a clear picture of Swami's face, smiling down at me! I told the others in the van, "Look up! Swami is here." They looked up and their faces lit up like mine. It was a beautiful darshan we had in the

middle of our journey. What an amazing, blessed miracle!

### Experiencing the Eternal Companion

We often make the mistake of confining Swami to Prasanthi Nilayam or Brindavan. **The lesson I learned that day was that Swami is always with us. It is the greatest ignorance and sin to think that God exists and is confined only to one place or one country.** He is in the sky, and the sky is everywhere, right?

Most importantly, Swami is in our hearts. **He says that He is in us, with us, around us, above us, and below us.** We should remember this always and experience His presence as our eternal companion. Personally, this is very important for me because of the leadership roles that Swami has blessed me with in the SSSIO. Honestly, being a leader in Swami's organization is very tough and demands high standards of character and discipline. But then, it is also very rewarding and fulfilling. The work never ends because He is endlessly working on us. I pray that I serve Him and His divine organization until my last breath.

**Ms. Ashwani Boodram**  
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO



***Ms. Ashwani Boodram** hails from the twin islands of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. By profession, she is an Early Childhood Teacher and works primarily with children 3–5 years of age. Ashwani was introduced to Swami at birth as her family are Sai devotees.*

*Life's journey took her to the UK, where she dove head first into SSSIO activities at Tooting Sai Centre. Her first trip to see Swami was through a pilgrimage as an SSE teacher in 2000.*

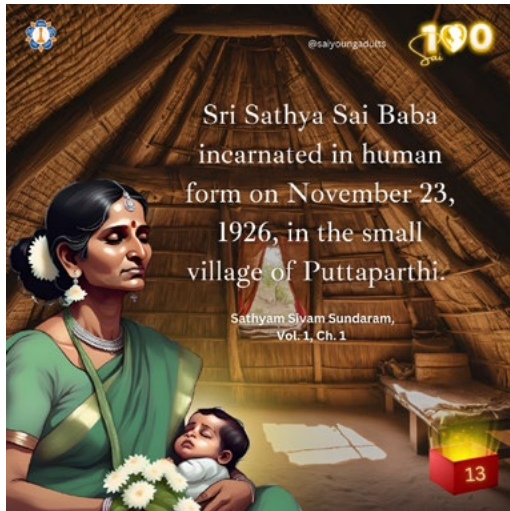
*Ashwani has been proactive in the SSSIO Trinidad and Tobago and served in many capacities. She is the devotional coordinator of the Montrose Sai Center and the liaison between the Ministry of Education and the Sri Sathya Sai Garden of Bloom Early Childhood Care and Education preschool.*







# from the International Sai Young Adults



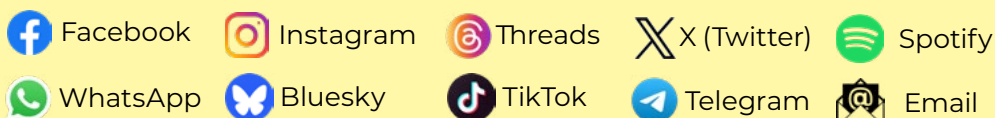
## #Sai100

As part of the 100th Birthday celebrations of our beloved Swami, the International Sai Young Adults Creative Media Team is delighted to present a unique “gift hamper”—a collection of 100 celebratory posts, each crafted to honor the profound life and timeless teachings of Bhagawan Sri

Sathya Sai Baba. Our second offering in this grand hamper is a heartfelt series titled **‘Reliving HIStory,’** based on the inspiring life story of Swami. **There is no better way to learn about Swami than by delving into His glorious life story.** These captivating stories are published every Thursday across all our social media channels. Topics such as how Puttaparthi got its name, the inspiration behind the Sathyabhama temple, the legacy of the Raju family, and much more are explored. ❤️



### Follow Young Adults on Social Media



[yacoordinator@sathyasai.org](mailto:yacoordinator@sathyasai.org) | <https://sathyasai.org/ya>



# AROUND THE WORLD

## A Devotional Day Out Sri Lanka

On October 19, 2024, the Young Adults of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Colombo, Sri Lanka, organized an outing for the elders from the Sai Elders Home in Meegoda, offering them a day filled with spirituality, joy, and cherished companionship.

The day's journey began with a visit to the serene Bellanwila Rajamaha Viharaya, a Buddhist temple, where the elders immersed themselves in reflection and tranquility. This was followed by a prayer session at St. Mary's Church in Dehiwala, where they experienced the beauty of the liturgy and found solace in the sacred atmosphere. The spiritual exploration culminated at the Aishwarya Lakshmi Amman Temple in Wellawatte, a Hindu temple, where heartfelt prayers were offered with full devotion. Upon returning to the Sai Mandir, the elders were welcomed with an engaging interactive session brimming with laughter, warmth, and camaraderie. The day concluded with a sumptuous lunch, bringing smiles of joy and contentment to everyone's faces.

**This meaningful outing seamlessly blended devotion, joy, and fellowship under the banner of love and service, embodying the core values of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization.**



# Serving the Hungry

## Hong Kong

The Sai Young Adults of Hong Kong organized a Food Drive on October 26, 2024, to commemorate the historic Avatar Declaration Day by visiting the Refugee Union Center of Hong Kong. This heartfelt initiative aimed to support a large community of refugees as part of the Refugee Union, Hong Kong's first refugee-led society for asylum seekers. Founded in Octo-

ber 2014, the Refugee Union now with over 3,000 members, includes around 500 children.

### Supporting the Refugee Community:

Essential food items and hot meals were provided to 60 refugees with love and compassion. Members of the Sai Center graciously donated a variety of essential items, including baby milk powder, Basmati rice, cooking oil, and UHT milk. The YAs carefully packed each item for delivery to the Refugee Union Center. In addition to non-perishable food, the YAs coordinated with three local restaurants to provide warm and nutritious meals to the refugees which included vegetable biryani, a hearty and flavorful dish; chilli paneer, adding a spicy option to the meal; and bhujia, a popular snack that complemented the perfect dinner. Additionally, packets of juices were included, as a refreshing beverage to enjoy alongside their hot dinner.

**Spreading Love and Gratitude:** The delivery of these meals and essential items brought immense joy to the refugees. **This food drive for Avatar Declaration Day was not just a distribution of food; it served as a beacon of hope, reminding everyone of the transformative power of love in action. Their heartfelt appreciation for the Hong Kong Sai Young Adults and all the devotees who contributed to this effort highlighted the profound impact of this seva.** From a spiritual perspective, the food drive provides an opportunity to reflect on 'doership'—who is the real doer, and who is the true recipient?





## ***Nature's Embrace:*** **A Satsang of Bliss and Bonding** **Mauritius**

To celebrate the closing of 2024, the Young Adults of the SSSIO Mauritius (SSSIOM) organized a special event. 'A Day with Swami in Nature' was held on December 22, 2024, at the serene Ganesha Spiritual Park in Pointe Lascars. Surrounded by breathtaking ocean views and lush greenery, the park provided the perfect setting for a spiritually uplifting and joyous day. Seventy-five members of the Sai family came together to participate in this special event.

The event started with Vedic chanting, and bhajans invoking Lord Ganesha. Following the bhajans, participants moved under the shade of trees for a deep meditation session. Immersed in the beauty of nature, they attuned themselves to the soothing sounds of the chirping birds, the gentle swishing of the leaves, and the rhythmic sound of waves from the ocean. It was a moment to connect with Swami, experiencing the profound peace that only nature and spirituality can provide. One of the day's highlights was a study circle on the topic—***"Does prayer really work?"*** This interactive session welcomed insights and experiences from children, YAs, and adults alike, making it an enriching discussion. Some of the reflections were:

- "Prayer is really important, but what matters most is being honest and faithful to ourselves while praying. We shouldn't just pray; we should connect with Swami, talk to Him, and trust that He will give us what we truly need."
- "Prayer is everything. I begin and end the day with prayer. It is the foundation of my happiness and survival."



- "Without prayer, life feels incomplete. We should be thankful to Swami throughout the day for each moment and each new opportunity to live."
- "Prayer became my lifeline when my child was in the ICU after birth. It was only through prayer that my child was saved. My faith in Swami deepened through this experience."

The collective reflections resonated with a common understanding: **Swami, the all-knowing *Antaryami* (indweller), provides what we need at the right time.** Trust and patience are integral to the power of prayer. Since the day was out in nature, fun and laughter were also on the agenda. A lively quiz competition followed, covering topics such as general knowledge, the life of Swami and His teachings, and the history of Mauritius. The day's joyous spirit peaked during the game Bhajan Antakshari, where teams sang beautiful bhajans back-to-back using the ending letter of the bhajan for the next. The joy and devotion in the air were palpable. **With no losers in the competition, it reminded everyone that real victory was the divine connection shared with Swami.**

This event was a beautiful way to end the year, leaving everyone inspired and spiritually recharged for the year ahead. The memories created, and the lessons learned will surely linger in the hearts of all spiritual aspirants who participated.



Mr. Shivabalan Nagakumaran  
Canada



## United by Love, Enriched by Diversity

Sri Sathya Sai Baba always emphasized that His mission is not to establish a new religion. Instead, He has sought to guide humanity toward recognizing the universal principles shared by all faiths—fostering the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. Swami's divine advent serves to reaffirm this timeless truth for the upliftment of humanity. **I have had the privilege of experiencing a taste of this timeless wisdom of 'Unity in Diversity' through several transformative experiences.**

In 2013, during the annual Akhanda Bhajans in Toronto, I witnessed this profound truth in action. The interfaith chants from Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism created a symphony of spiritual unity. Years later, at the Zone 1 Sai Young Adults Festival in 2019, I witnessed bhajans sung in multiple languages—English, Spanish, French, and traditional Sanskrit or Hindi. These experiences opened my heart and mind, teaching me to embrace all communities, cultures, religions, languages, and the beauty of diversity. They deepened my appreciation for being part of the SSSIO through both online and in-person events, where I have the opportunity to connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds, communities, cultures, religions, languages, and nationalities, drawing inspiration from each encounter and embracing new dimensions of unity.

On May 5, 2024, the Toronto-York Sai Center, one of the centers in my hometown, inaugurated the Sarva Dharma Stupa—a beautiful symbol of unity and spiritual harmony. This *stupa* is identical in design to the one at Prasanthi Nilayam. Incidentally, the Toronto-York Sai Center was founded on November 23, 1975, the same day that Swami inaugurated the Sarva Dharma Stupa at Prasanthi Nilayam during His 50th Birthday celebrations. **The design of the stupa, thoughtfully envisioned by Swami, conveys a profound meaning. The stupa consists of a tall pillar crowned with a lotus flower, representing purity, with an eternal flame at its center, signifying divine wisdom.** At the base, sacred symbols of the world's religions signify unity across faiths, while connecting rings represent the yogic discipline needed to unfold the 'lotus of the heart.' Just as the lotus thrives in water without being sullied by it, we, too, should keep our hearts pure and untouched by worldly distractions.



At the inaugural function, the Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) students joined in chanting interfaith prayers, bringing back cherished memories of similar ones I had chanted and heard in the past. The congregation gathered in the prayer hall, and the leaders from different faiths expressed their appreciation for being part of this momentous occasion and blessed the gathering. The inauguration of the Sarva Dharma Stupa was marked by a symbolic ribbon-cutting ceremony at the outdoor premises of the center, led by leaders from the indigenous communities of Canada, various faiths, and Sai devotees. The bhajan “*Sarva Dharma Priya Deva*,” extolling all forms of faith as divinity, was sung in the prayer hall.



**One of the most heartwarming moments of the day occurred when the leaders representing Judaism and Islam gave each other a warm embrace near the altar of the prayer hall.** This simple act symbolized the profundity of Swami’s words—“*There is only one religion, the religion of love.*” In a world torn by division and conflict, this embrace was a poignant reminder of the peace and unity Swami envisioned for humanity. The applause that followed was an expression of love steeped in the idealism of Swami’s teachings.

For me, it was a lesson on the importance of peaceful coexistence for a better world. It also served as a reminder of the need for harmony between humans and Mother Earth, emphasizing the importance of climate action and protecting the environment for future generations. We are united as citizens of this beautiful Earth, regardless of our diversity and nationality.

**Reflecting on my experiences at these events, especially on the Sarva Dharma Stupa, I believe it stands as a powerful symbol of Swami’s universal message of unity and our shared commitment to fostering harmony across all faiths and communities.** ‘Unity in Diversity’ may sound catchy at the surface level, but it is a profound concept and one of the greatest strengths of the SSSIO. It inspires me to commit myself to building a more inclusive world, one that is devoid of racism, hatred, and discrimination. After all, this planet is home to over 8 billion of us, united by love and enriched by diversity.

# Thank You, Swami

Swami, your eyes twinkle with kindness each time you shower your blessings on us

Swami, your great acts of love are always adored and remembered

Swami, the world is so much better with you in it

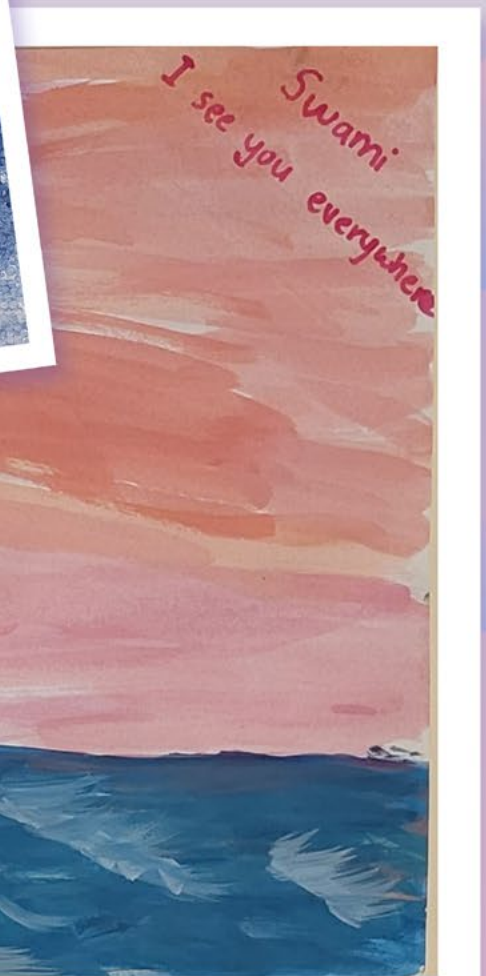
Swami, you have helped many people in need and watch over us, your children,  
everyday Swami, your name is uttered with respect, love, admiration, and devotion

Swami, you give us everlasting peace, comfort, and blissful energy

Swami, thank you for dedicating your life to bring more good deeds, happiness,  
and prosperity to the world

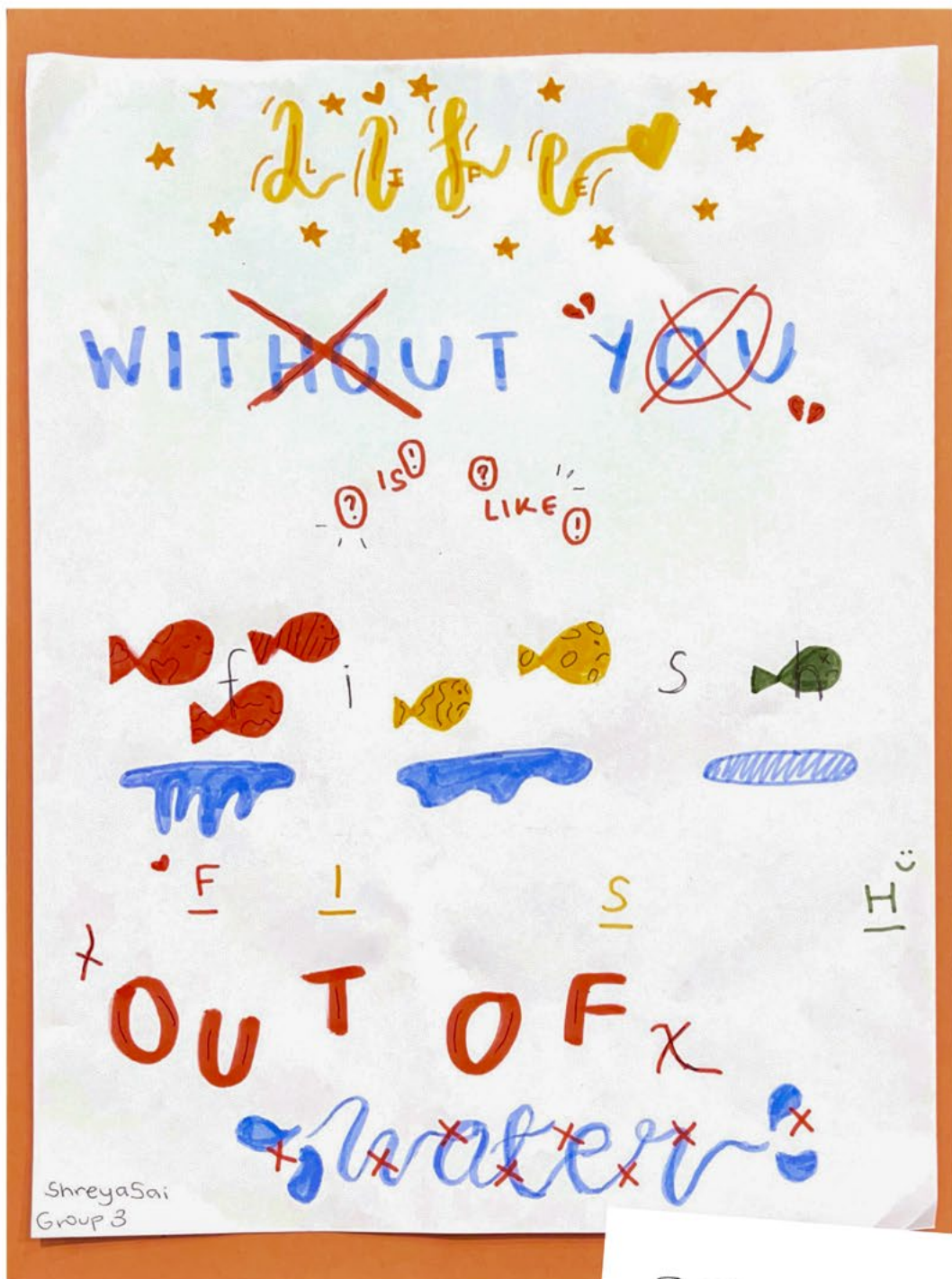
Swami, thank you for all that you do to take care of us

Srinika B | Group 2 | USA



Gayathiry P | Group 2 | Australia





Shreya Sai P | Group 3 | USA



Annam P | Group 3 | Malaysia

# Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
April 12-13, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri
April 24, 2025	Thursday	Aradhana Mahotsavam
May 10, 2025	Saturday	Buddha Poornima
June 14-15, 2025	Saturday-Sunday	Akhanda Gayatri



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



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



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





Love is God, God is Love. Where there is Love, there God is certainly evident. Love more and more people, love them more and more intensely; transform the love into service, transform the service into worship; that is the highest *sadhana*. There is no living being without the spark of love; even a mad man loves something or somebody intensely. You must recognize this love as a reflection of the *Premaswaroop*, (the embodiment of Love) that is your reality, the God who is residing in your heart.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
March 1965



**sathyasai.org**

Love All • Serve All  
Help Ever • Hurt Never

