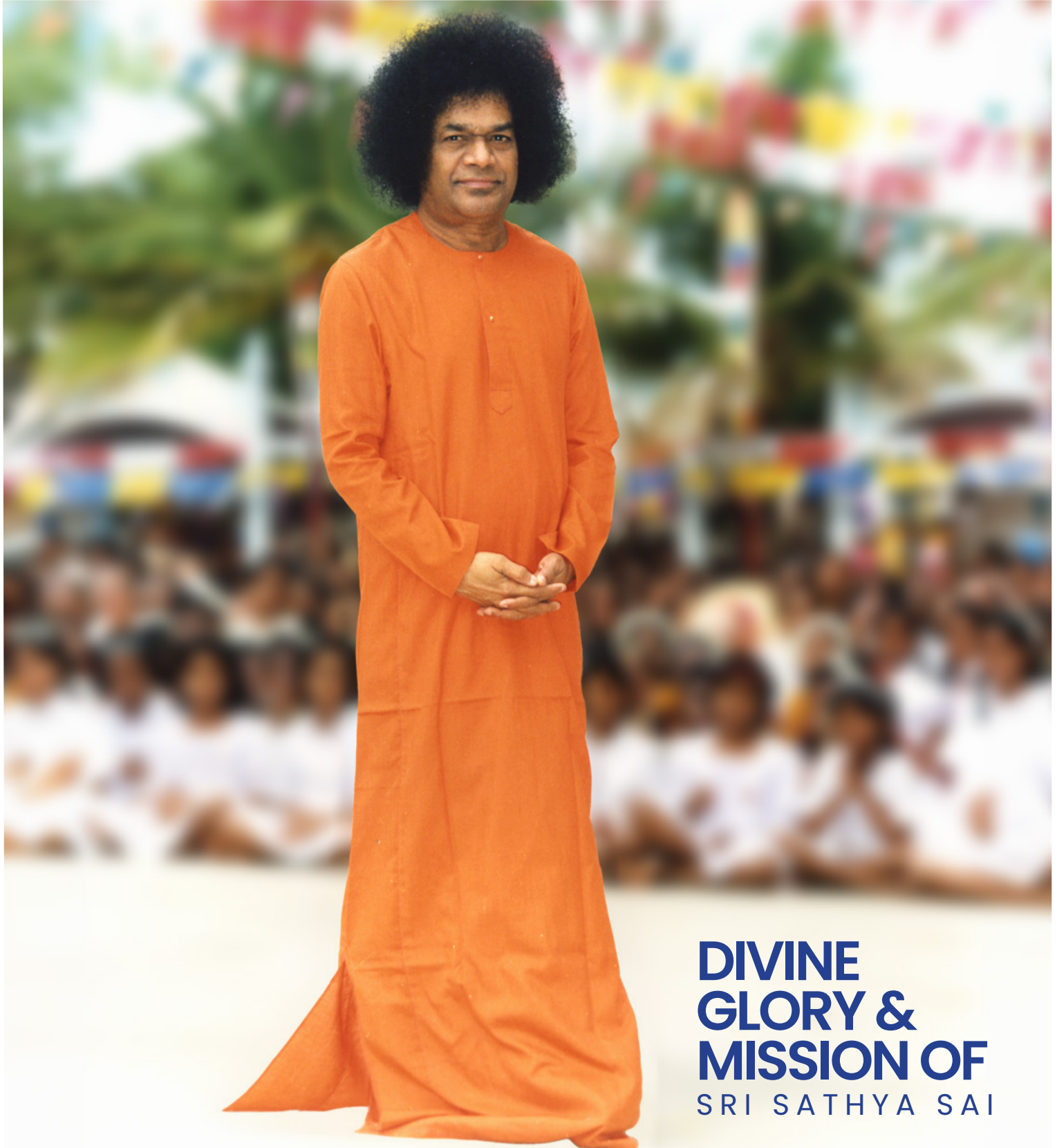


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THE
ETERNAL
COMPANION



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



God is the source of all love. Love God, love the world as the vesture of God, no more, no less. Through love, you can merge in the ocean of love. Love cures pettiness, hate, and grief. Love loosens bonds; it saves man from the torment of birth and death. Love binds all hearts in a soft, silken symphony. Seen through the eyes of love, all beings are beautiful, all deeds are dedicated, all thoughts are innocent.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
July 7, 1968



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume 5 • Issue 6

June 2026

6 Editorial

Bhriagu Valli–The Journey to Realization of Brahman
Part 1 of 2

14 Divine Discourse

Happiness and Sorrow are the Making of One's Own Mind,
Dasara, 1976

20 Experiences of Devotees

How April 24, 2011 Energized Me by Mr. Lakshman Mantha
Why Fear When Sai is Here by Sri M. Vidya Shankeran

32 Humanitarian Service

Love in Action–Australia, Brazil, Russia, and Thailand

34 Glory of Womanhood

Delivery and Deliverance by Ms. Anushka Nainani

38 Ideal Sai Young Adults

Afternoon Tea with Seniors in New Zealand
Hike to the Bamboo Cathedral, Trinidad & Tobago
A Second Chance at Youth by Ms. Mariel Beltrán
Sadhana is Simple by Mr. Brian Jaramillo

44 Sathya Sai Education

With contributions from Aditi, Lakshminaraina, Luckshan, Ram,
Shradha, and Sreya

46 SSSIO Events and Websites

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BHRIGU VALLI

THE JOURNEY TO REALIZATION OF BRAHMAN

Part 1 of 2

While the preparation for *Brahma Vidya* was covered in the *Shiksha Valli*, and the understanding of the nature of *Brahman* was given in the *Brahmananda Valli*, the realization of *Brahman* is discussed in the *Bhrigu Valli*. *Bhrigu Valli* represents a journey from inquiry into *Brahman* to the illumination and realization of *Brahman*. We covered in detail the *Shiksha Valli* and the *Brahmananda Valli*. Now we will focus on the *Bhrigu Valli*, completing the three important sections in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, one of the profound texts of the Krishna Yajur Veda.

Overview of the Taittiriya Upanishad

We recapitulate, for the sake of continuity, because everything in the scriptures is interconnected. **The first section is the *Shiksha Valli*, which prepares the student through discipline, right conduct, recitation of sacred scriptures and mantras, reverence for the teacher, and moral injunctions.** This is where the teacher emphasizes the

foundational and moral injunctions: always speak the truth, conduct oneself according to *dharma*, study the scriptures, and treat mother, father, teacher, and guest as God. It also teaches how to do selfless service, advising that one should give generously and give with sincerity, humility, and without expectation. Thus, this section prepares the student for the spiritual journey.

Then, the **second section, the *Brahmananda Valli*, reveals the nature of *Brahman* as *Satyam, Jnanam, and Anantam*—Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity.** It also expounds on the doctrine of the five sheaths: food sheath, vital air sheath, mental sheath, intellectual sheath, and bliss sheath. A chapter called *Ananda Mimamsa* discusses in detail the different ascending stages of bliss, culminating in the bliss of *Brahman*, as discussed in the previous editorial.

Now we come to the ***Bhrigu Valli*, where the third and final section turns this teaching into direct experience.** If the *Brahmananda*

Three sections of Taittiriya Upanishad



Valli teaches the doctrine, the *Bhrigu Valli* demonstrates the process by which a seeker realizes it through *tapas* (penance).

Another way to understand this construct is that the *Shiksha Valli* corresponds to *shravana* (listening), where you learn the scriptural injunctions and practice them to develop spiritual credentials. Then the *Brahmananda Valli* is *manana* (contemplation), where you contemplate on the nature of *Brahman*. Finally, the *Bhrigu Valli* is *nididhyasana* (putting it into practice), whereby you directly experience and realize *Brahman*. **Thus, true knowledge, Self-knowledge, must be discovered and experienced, not merely given.**

***Brahma Jijnasa* Inquiry into Brahman**

The *Bhrigu Valli* begins with a simple but profound scene. *Bhrigu*, the son of *Varuna*, approaches his father, who is a great sage and teacher, and asks: “*Adhihi bhagavo Brahmeti*”–“**Teach me about *Brahman* (the ultimate reality).**”

We should remember that *Brahman* is not merely a deity among many deities, nor is it an object located somewhere in the heavens. *Brahman* is the source, sustainer, and ultimate basis of all existence.

The sage *Varuna* does not give a long lecture. He gives him a way to understand what is *Brahman*. **He says, “That from which all beings are born, by which they live, and into which they enter at death—know that as *Brahman*.”** Having defined *Brahman*, he now instructs *Bhrigu* regarding the method.

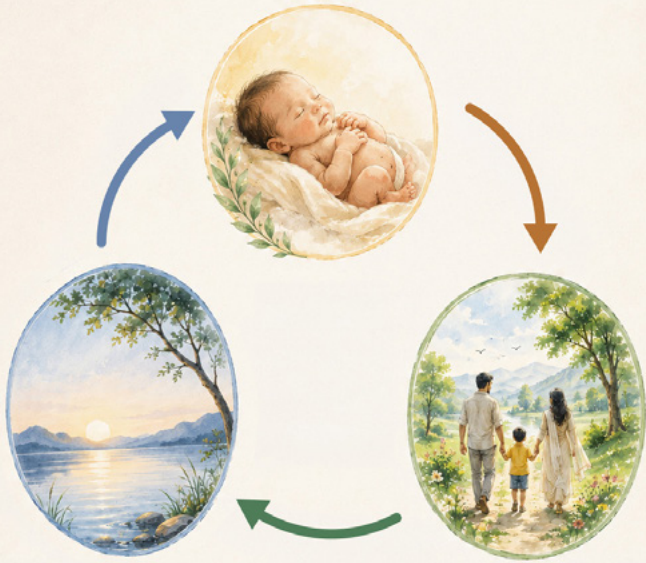
Tapas

The Method of Realization

He says: “*Tapasa Brahma Vijijnasasva*”–realize *Brahman* through *tapas*. This instruction becomes the heart of the entire *Bhrigu Valli*. The Upanishad shows that this truth can be realized through the practice of *tapas*. The text repeatedly says, “Seek to know *Brahman* through *tapas*.”

But this *tapas* is often misunderstood by many as bodily austerity, fasting, physical mortification, or extreme penance. In reality, Lord Buddha, through His own practice, understood that the highest Truth cannot be achieved either by self-indulgence or self-mortification. The real meaning of *tapas* here is concentrated spiritual effort—purification, contemplation, discrimination, and inward search. **Real *tapas* is the ‘heat’ generated by sincere inquiry. It involves turning the mind away from the external world toward the source of existence itself.**

That from which all beings are **born**, by which they **live**, and into which they enter at **death**



know that as
Brahman

Regarding *tapas*, great teachers offer different perspectives for our understanding. **Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says real *tapas* is the practice of harmony in thought, word, and deed.** Another explanation is given by Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, who states that one must go to the source of everything by inquiry: **“Who am I? From where these thoughts arise?”** That itself is *tapas*.

Lord Krishna, in Chapter 17 of the *Bhagavad Gita (Shraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga)*, explains *tapas* at three levels: **body, speech, and mind.** This is described clearly in Shlokas 14, 15, and 16.

*Devadwija guruprajna puja-
nam shaucham arjavam
brahmacharyam ahimsa cha
shariram tapa uchyate*

When worship of the Supreme Lord, the Brahmins, the spiritual master, the wise, and the elders is done with cleanliness, purity,

simplicity, celibacy, and non-violence, then this worship becomes **austerity (*tapas*) of the body.**

*anudvega-karam vakyam
sathyam priya-hitam cha yat
svadhyayabhyasanam chaiva
van-mayam tapa uchyate*

Words that do not cause distress, are truthful, pleasant, and beneficial, as well as regular recitation of the scriptures—these are declared as **austerity of speech.**

*manah-prasadah saumyatvam
maunam atma-vinigraha
bhava-sanshuddhir ity etat
tapo manasam uchyate*

Serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control, and purity of purpose—all these are declared as **austerity of the mind.**

Thus, Bhrigu’s journey begins with *tapas*. It is essential to note that the instruction regarding *tapas* is repeated multiple times in the *Bhrigu Valli* because Bhrigu realizes *Brahman* in different stages on his way to reaching the ultimate goal.

***Brahma Nirupana* The Five Stages of Realization**

Bhrigu’s journey proceeds through five stages of realization, each corresponding to one of the five *koshas* described in *Brahmananda Valli*. At each stage, he performs *tapas*, arrives at a realization, returns to his father, and is sent back to do deeper inquiry and more *tapas* until he reaches the goal, the final truth. He finds each stage to be sacred, yet incomplete. Each is a doorway, but not the final destination.

***Annam Brahma* Food as Brahman**

After his first period of *tapas*, Bhrigu realizes that food is Brahman (*Annam Brahma*) because from food all beings are born, by food they live, and ultimately return into food. At first glance, this may seem like

The act of eating is no longer mere indulgence; it becomes a *yajna*, a sacrifice. The stomach becomes the altar, the digestive fire becomes *Vaishvanara*, the food becomes an offering, and the one eating the food is reminded that the true enjoyer is God.



a materialistic conclusion. However, it starts with what is most immediate and undeniable: **the body is born of food and sustained by food. This corresponds to the *Annamaya Kosha*, the food sheath, described in the *Brahmananda Valli*.**

The physical body should not be neglected. It is a sacred instrument, and Baba repeatedly emphasized that the body is the temple of God. We also encounter this topic in the last part of the *Bhrigu Valli* called *Anna Brahma Upasana*, where food itself is worshipped as *Brahman*.

Baba's teaching on offering food to God directly aligns with this vision. In the *Brahmarpanam* prayer, the food, the offering, the fire, and the act of offering are all seen as *Brahman*. This teaching transforms eating into worship. The act of eating is no longer mere indulgence; it becomes a *yajna*, a sacrifice. The stomach becomes the altar, the digestive fire becomes *Vaishvanara*, the food becomes an offering, and the one eating the food is reminded that the true enjoyer is God.

The extension of this truth is that when food is recognized as *Brahman*, every act of feeding the hungry becomes the recognition of the divine in all being and not just charity.

After realizing that food is *Brahman*, *Bhrigu* returns to his teacher and father *Varuna*. *Varuna* tells him to continue his *tapas*. ***Bhrigu* realizes that food is not the ultimate Truth, *Brahman*, because food itself**

changes and decays. Therefore, he continues his *tapas*.

Prano Brahma Prana as Brahman

Next, *Bhrigu* realizes that *prana* is *Brahman* (*Prano Brahmeti Vyajanaat*). Without *prana*, the body is inert. ***Prana* is the life force, the animating power, the subtle energy by which one lives, moves, digests, circulates the blood, breathes, and functions. This corresponds to the *Pranamaya Kosha*, the vital air sheath, in the *Brahmananda Valli*.**

In the *Brahmananda Valli*, we explained how the vital air sheath is subtler than the food sheath. This stage is important because spiritual life often begins with the body, but the seeker must discover the living force within. Breath is the bridge between the body and the mind. That is why many traditions use breath regulation and exercises to purify *pranic* (life) energy. Swami addresses this in the *Upanishad Vahini*:

"The vital-air sheath is the first instrument in order to progress with the Brahmic outlook—that you are Brahman and not the body, etc. It is subtle, separate, and different from the body. It is activated by and saturated with the God of Wind (Vayu). It pervades and subsumes the entire food sheath. You can say that the vital-air sheath is the soul of the food sheath, for it makes it function from head to foot.

It cannot survive without the vital air (prana). It is the motive force; it has five varieties: breath, downward breath, diffused breath, rising breath, and digestive air (prana, apana, vyana, udana, and samana). By contemplating that the vital-air sheath is the Atma of the food sheath, the notion that the body is the Self will disappear. You rise from the gross to the subtle. Breath (prana) is like the molten metal in the crucible. By effort, the vital-air sheath can be experienced."

In the *Yoga Shastras*, Patanjali describes the *Ashtanga Yoga*, the eightfold path, where *pranayama*, the regulation of breath, is emphasized to still the mind and ultimately attain *samadhi*. This is the fourth stage of the eightfold path.

But finally, Bhrigu realizes, after returning to his teacher, that *prana*, too, is not the final Self, because *prana* fluctuates. Breathing changes; energy rises and falls. Therefore, *prana* cannot be the ultimate reality. So he continues his *tapas*.

Mano Brahma Mind as Brahman

Through further *tapas*, Bhrigu realizes that the mind is *Brahman* (*Mano Brahmeti Vyajanaat*). This corresponds to the *Manomaya Kosha*, the mental sheath described in the *Brahmananda Valli*.

The mind is more subtle than *prana*. It is the mental realm of *sankalpa* and *vikalpa*—thoughts, doubts, imaginations, likes, dislikes, anxiety, hope, fear, and attachment. The mind can lead us to bondage or liberation. The mind takes on the color of what it dwells upon, just as a cloth takes the color of the dye. If the mind dwells on the world, it becomes worldly. If it dwells on God, it becomes divine. Therefore, the mind must be purified and turned toward *Brahman*.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings repeatedly emphasize the purity of thought,

word, and deed. Baba says that the mind is restless, and He compares it to a monkey—not just any monkey, but a mad monkey, intoxicated, and stung by a scorpion. As a result, it jumps all over the place. Similarly, the minds of most people are restless and jump around as they are entangled in the world. This stage of purity and control of the mind is especially important for spiritual seekers. Many people mistake devotional sentiments for realization. These may be helpful, but they belong to the realm of the mind. The Upanishads prod us to go deeper.

Upon returning to his father, Bhrigu also recognizes that the mind constantly changes and cannot be the ultimate Truth. It is active in the waking and dream states, but is absent during deep sleep, and is illumined by consciousness. Therefore, Varuna advises him to continue *tapas*.

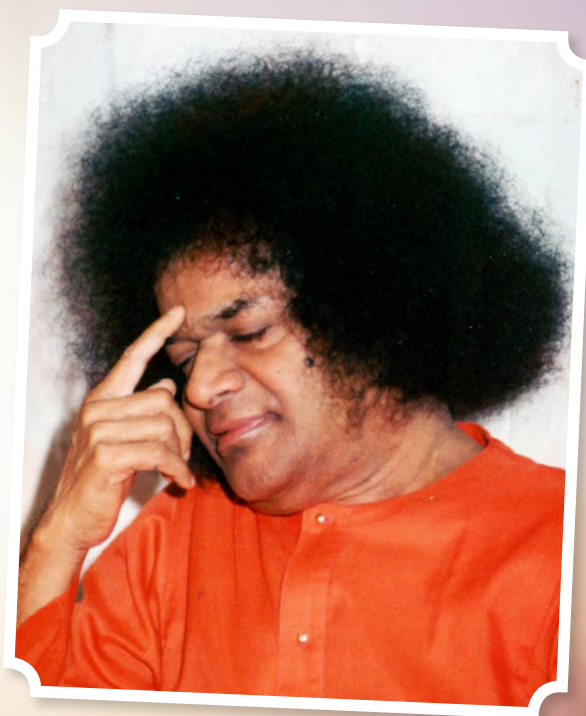
Vijnanam Brahma Wisdom as Brahman

Then comes the next stage, where wisdom is recognized as *Brahman* (*Vijnanam Brahmeti Vyajanaat*). After further *tapas*, Bhrigu realizes that *vijnana* is *Brahman*. This corresponds to the *Vijnanamaya Kosha*, the intellectual or wisdom sheath, described in the *Brahmananda Valli*. However, *vijnana* is not just mere information. People often confuse it with bookish knowledge. Swami clearly delineates different types of knowledge, such as bookish knowledge and scriptural knowledge, but emphasizes experiential knowledge.

Baba refers to the Mundaka Upanishad, where knowledge is divided into two types: *Para Vidya* and *Apara Vidya*. *Apara Vidya* includes most material sciences, arts, music, and worldly learning. These are good and valuable, but they do not lead to liberation. *Para Vidya* is the higher knowledge which ultimately leads to liberation.

***Advaita Vedanta* strongly emphasizes this discriminative process, where the spiritual**

Swami often taught that true happiness is union with God, and that worldly happiness is temporary because it is only “an interval between two pains.”



seeker asks: “Who am I? Am I this body? Am I the breath? Am I the mind? Am I the intellect? Or am I the witness of all these?” The seeker then negates identification with the non-Self by the process of “*Neti, Neti*” (not this, not this) until the eternal witness, or consciousness, is recognized as one’s true nature.

Interestingly, Bhrigu does not dismiss food, *prana*, mind, or intellect as useless. Instead, he sees each as sacred yet inconclusive. Each is a doorway, but not the final destination. **These are all connected. Food impacts *prana*. *Prana* influences the mind. The mind affects discrimination. Discrimination opens the way to bliss.** As a sincere spiritual seeker, having gained all the credentials to seek *Brahman*, he traces existence back to its source. First, he sees the physical source, then the vital source, then the mental source, and finally the wisdom principle. Here, the intellect refers more to discriminatory knowledge, emphasized for spiritual seekers, where one discriminates

between the real and the unreal, the eternal and transient, the good and pleasant. These are the fundamental prerequisites described in *Viveka* of the *Sadhana Chatushtaya* of the *Brahma Sutras*. Yet even *vijnana* is not the final Truth, *Brahman*. The intellect can discriminate and direct, but *Brahman* is beyond both the knower and the known.

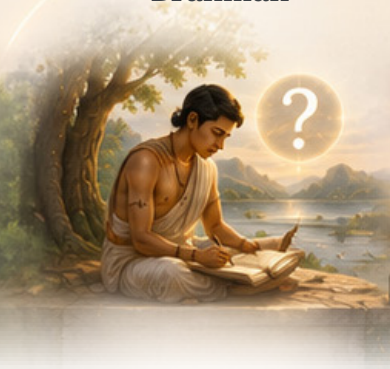
***Anando Brahma* Bliss as Brahman**

Then Bhrigu continues his *tapas* and finally realizes that bliss is *Brahman* (*Anando Brahmeti Vyajanaat*). This is the climax of the *Bhrigu Valli*. It corresponds to the *Anandamaya Kosha* of *Brahmananda Valli*, illustrating that *Brahman* is the source of all bliss and that every finite joy is merely a fragment of the bliss of *Brahman*.

We explored the different levels of bliss in detail in the previous editorial. However, the bliss discussed here is not ordinary pleasure. It is not emotional happiness or sensory enjoyment. It is the fulfilment of being itself. It is the peace of non-duality. **Swami often**

From Inquiry to Realization

BRAHMA JIJNASA
Inquiry into
Brahman



TAPAS
The Method of
Realization



BRAHMA NIRUPANA
The Five Stages of
Realization



ANNAM BRAHMA
Food as
Brahman



taught that true happiness is union with God, and that worldly happiness is temporary because it is only “an interval between two pains.” This *ananda* described in the *Bhriḡu Valli* is not something that can be learnt; it is something to be experienced. It is the very nature of the Self. Spiritual practices merely remove the layers that obscure it. This also clarifies the concept of the five sheaths (*pancha kosha*). The seeker does not physically travel from one sheath to another. Instead, he withdraws the false identifications through inquiry. Then, “I am the body” gives way to “I am the life force”; then to “I am the mind”; then to “I am the intellect.” Finally, even the subtlest individuality dissolves in the realization of *Brahman* as *Ananda*.

Here, the inquiry reaches its pinnacle. The Upanishad stops; **Varuna does not send Bhriḡu back again. The seeker has arrived at the goal.** Bhagawan Baba describes this realization as one’s true nature. Swami says,

“Bliss is your nature. You are the embodiment of bliss—*Ananda Swarupa*. You do not need to acquire it. You are *Ananda*; you only need to remove what obscures it.” This directly echoes the Upanishadic insight that *ananda* does not come and go but is changeless, eternal, and the very substance of being. Ramana Maharshi also expressed this by saying that the Self is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*: existence, consciousness, bliss. It is important to note that Adi Shankaracharya carefully clarified in his commentary that the *Anandamaya Kosha* is still a sheath—the subtlest and closest to the Self, but a sheath, nonetheless. The bliss beyond even the final sheath is *Brahman* itself—bliss without any supporting condition (*Nirupadhika Ananda*). **The Upanishad’s ‘Anando Brahmeti’ refers to this transcendental bliss, of which the *Anandamaya Kosha* is only the innermost reflection. So, one finally realizes that *Brahman* is beyond even the bliss sheath itself.**



PRANO BRAHMA
Prana as
Brahman

MANO BRAHMA
Mind as
Brahman

VIJNANAM BRAHMA
Wisdom as
Brahman

ANANDO BRAHMA
Bliss as
Brahman

BRAHMAN
Beyond all the
Sheaths

Thus, the *Bhrigu Valli* guides the seeker from the gross to the subtle—from food, life-force, mind, and intellect to bliss itself—revealing through *tapas* that *Brahman* is the innermost reality behind every layer of existence. Yet the Upanishad does not stop even with the realization of *Ananda*. **In the next part, we shall explore the deeper insights arising from Bhrigu’s inquiry, the sacred worship**

of food as *Brahman*, the profound teachings on selfless service and purity of life, and finally the ecstatic culmination of *Brahmananda Anubhava*, where the realized sage sees all existence as *Brahman*, one divine reality, and bursts into the song of liberation.

Jai Sai Ram.



Happiness and Sorrow are the Making of One's Own Mind

*Those who have succumbed to inner enemies,
How can they conquer the external enemy?
One who has realized the ultimate Truth
is blessed in this world.*

This is the plain truth that is being revealed.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Divine *Atma*! All things that rise must eventually fall. All that is accumulated shall perish. Separation (*viyoga*) is inevitable after union (*samyoga*). And death is the consequence of birth. A human being awaits the dawn to start his daily duties. He also waits for the sunset, so that he may cool his senses and have a restful sleep and enjoy peace. However, in his innocence, he is unable to realize the truth that the very sunrise and sunset for which he yearns are causing him sorrow by consuming his life span day by day. **He is unable to recognize the truth that where there is happiness, there is sorrow as well. He is also unable to understand the truth that sorrow and happiness are, after all, the creations of one's own mind.**

Man prays to have good things in life. He wishes to experience good times, wants to attain a good position, and lead a good life. But he is not aspiring to cultivate good thoughts. How is it possible to get good results by fostering bad thoughts? With bad thoughts and desires, how can one have a good reputation? It is not possible. **Only through good thoughts, good conduct, and good speech does one get the right to receive what is good.** Even though the medicine is bitter, the patient must swallow it to get better. Similarly, if someone is our adversary, we have to accept him as our friend if he has good qualities.



It is the nature of a lion to prey upon a cow. However, history bears witness to a remarkable incident. Once, when King Dilipa went to the forest for recreation, he saw a ferocious lion ready to pounce upon a gentle and virtuous (*satvic*) cow. Considering the action to be unjust, King Dilipa pleaded with the lion to spare the cow and eat him instead. This incident has an underlying meaning. King Dilipa was a *Kshatriya* (warrior caste). By steadfastly fulfilling his *dharma* (right conduct) and duty, King Dilipa earned divine grace. Consequently, even the ferocious lion relented, sparing both the King and the cow. **That is why it is proclaimed, “*Dharmo rakshathi rakshithah,*” which means *dharma* protects one who protects *dharma*.** Unfortunately, today, man is not able to recognize his *dharma*. Hence, he is resorting to actions that weaken and annihilate *dharma*. Instead of striving to protect *dharma*, he is resorting to several methods by which he hopes to attain liberation.

The true meaning of *mukti* or *moksha* is ‘release’ or ‘liberation’ (release from bondage). Every living being wishes to be released from a particular thought or

object to hold on to another. Therefore, in a broad sense, it may be said that every living being is a seeker of liberation. Every living being can be considered to be aspiring for liberation (*mumukshu*) in a way, since everyone wishes to get rid of a particular thought or object and hanker after or try to hold on to another.

At times, one may discard a specific object, or relinquish a particular sentiment, only to grasp at a second one, long for it desperately, or try to experience its fruits. From birth until the very moment of death, a human being embodies a multitude of feelings, thoughts, desires, paths, and aspirations.

Here is a small example to illustrate this point. A child is hungry. When his mother gives him food, he is relieved of hunger and feels happy. The relief from hunger is a kind of temporary liberation.

Here is another example. When someone indulges in overeating, they suffer from indigestion. To get relief from this state of suffering called indigestion, and to reach the state of happiness called health, one needs a doctor. By virtue of the treatment given by the doctor, one is cured of the



Shaswatha Mukti

PERMANENT LIBERATION

Permanent liberation is the state of complete fulfillment where no further desire remains, for one experiences supreme peace, joy, and oneness with the Divine Self.

ailment and becomes happy. This is also a sort of liberation (*mukti*), which is again temporary, and the doctor is responsible for it.

In the two examples above, both the mother and the doctor have provided only temporary liberation, but not permanent liberation. Thus, throughout human life, giving up one thing and getting or accepting another happens in countless ways. But these cannot truly be called liberation. They are all temporary liberations, and we experience them millions of times in our lives. **“Permanent liberation (*shaswatha mukti*) is the state having experienced which, we do not desire anything else; having seen which we do not wish to see anything else; having consumed which we do not wish to eat anything else; and having enjoyed which we do not wish to enjoy anything else.”**

Man today believes that joy, sorrow, and difficulties are caused by someone else. This is nothing but one’s own delusion. Suffering, joy, or pleasure are not things

that others cause. They are the manifestation of one’s own state of mind. For our mental satisfaction, we shift the blame to others. By doing so, we derive temporary satisfaction. In fact, this type of delusion is an aberration of the mind.

Here is an example to illustrate this point. Suppose a person died at home. The relatives, friends, and neighbors visit the family and try to console them, enquiring, “Sir, what happened? How did this person lose his life? What was the disease? Did a doctor see the individual? Did the doctor give any medicine?” The members of the family feel comforted by such consoling words and think that these people really care for them as they are enquiring about their welfare in the hour of calamity. On the other hand, if someone who has realized the truth behind birth and death visits the family and tries to reason, saying, “Those who are born must die one day or the other, and this gentleman was born, lived a full life, and ultimately died,” they feel sad and disgusted at his response. They may

think, "What sort of a person is this man! How stone-hearted! Instead of enquiring about our welfare and trying to console us in this hour of calamity, he is callously declaring that those who are born must die"! It is but natural that they feel sad at this man's reaction and behavior. **Truth is always bitter. Those who are accustomed to temporary satisfaction and paltry things in life believe in only untruth. They lead a life of delusion.**

The body that performs actions (*karma*) is temporary. When the body itself is temporary, how can the actions performed by such a body ever be permanent? When the actions are temporary, can the results of those actions be permanent? Not realizing this truth, man today is craving for the fruit of even the smallest good action or a good thought, or a good behavior. The fruit of such mundane *karma* will only confer temporary joy, but not eternal bliss. Life itself is momentary. The body is like a water bubble. Our life remains only for a short time. In such impermanent life, we are struggling to obtain lasting results. This is nothing but delusion.

When we wish to experience the eternal principles of truth (*Sathyam*), auspiciousness (*Shivam*), and beauty (*Sundaram*), and when we desire and resolve to reach such a sacred state, we must also be prepared to make appropriate sacrifices. **Without Truth, there can be no beauty. Without beauty, there can be no auspiciousness.** The first stage in *sadhana* (spiritual practice) is contemplating the principle "Truth is God." This truth itself became auspiciousness, which means, Truth itself was declared to be the Supreme Being. Later, it was said, "Beauty is God," as it arises through this Truth.

Though *Sathyam*, *Shivam*, and *Sundaram* appear to be three different words with three different meanings, they are interrelated. Just as there can be no words with-

out meaning, and vice versa, so too there is an inseparable relationship between these three words. One cannot exist without the other.

Once, a princess of Greece took a vow that she would marry only the person who defeated her in a running race. She was highly renowned for her running skills. She competed with several great princes and defeated them by reaching the finish line first. Unable to bear the humiliation of being defeated, the princes used to run away. Those who suffered defeat often felt intense anger, which itself is a great weakness.

Then a few such defeated princes came together and resolved to humiliate this princess by any means. They kept thinking of the ways and means by which the princess could be defeated and her pride subdued. They decided that only great sages (*rishis*) who had realized the Truth, conquered the senses, and renounced all attachments could show the right path. So, they went to one such great sage who suggested a clever strategy. He told them, "Look! My dear princes! You seem to possess several valuable ornaments. Take them one by one and drop them on the way while competing with the princess in the race. Follow this method exactly as I tell you. I am sure that the princess will be distracted and fall behind, and you will win the race."

As suggested by the sage, one prince went and challenged the princess to a running race. He took many grand ornaments with him. While both were running, he started dropping one ornament after another on the ground along the path. Tempted by the valuable and glittering ornaments, the princess stopped at each place they were dropped, picked them up, and started running again. As a consequence, she could not reach her destination in time. Meanwhile, the prince reached the goal

and won the race. The princess was defeated, and as per the condition set by herself, she married the prince who won the race.

It was only when the prince was willing to sacrifice his valuable ornaments that he was able to win the princess. The story narrated above reveals the truth that in order to achieve something of great value, we must be ready to sacrifice something that is equally precious. In this allegory, the King represents the Supreme Lord (*Paramatma*), and the Prince represents the devotee (*bhakta*). When such a prince desires to be blessed by the 'Royal fortune of the Kingdom' (*samrajya lakshmi*), he must be willing to sacrifice his ornaments. **In the same way, when a devotee wants to be blessed by 'Royal fortune of the Kingdom of liberation' (*moksha samrajya lakshmi*), they must offer the inner ornaments of good qualities (virtues).** Good qualities are the valuable ornaments within us. In fact, good and bad are both the products of the mind.

The mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation (*Manayeva manushyanam karanam bandha mokshayoh*), as well as good and bad. When the mind follows *satvic* qualities, it develops good qualities. On the other hand, when it follows *rajasic* and *tamasic* qualities (such as desire, restlessness, and laziness), it develops bad qualities. For example, when a piece of iron is kept in the soil, it will rust and lose its strength in many ways. The same piece of iron, when put in fire, changes even its color to bright red and becomes soft, shedding off the accumulated dust and rust. It then becomes ready to be formed into an ornament or a tool. In both situations, the piece of iron is one and the same. But the place where it is kept is different. **Similarly, the mind is one. When it is in a pious**

Remove the threads of desire, and the cloth of the mind vanishes.



(*satvic*) environment, it will cultivate good qualities. When it is in a passionate (*rajasic*) or inactive (*tamasic*) environment, it will develop bad qualities.

Unless one gets rid of sloth and slumber (tamas)

One cannot realize the truth.

Unless one is free from passionate activity (rajas),

One cannot attain devotion.

It is only through calm serenity (satva guna),

One can attain devotion.

This is the truth being revealed.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Divine *Atma*! It is better to realize that the duty of a spiritual seeker is to make an effort to channelize the mind toward sacred and beneficial activities, thereby sanctifying his life. Liberation (*moksha*) does not mean merely giving up temporary feelings or temporary desires. We must believe that **the right and easy path to attain *moksha* is to have faith in the eternal principle, give up impermanent desires, and thereby attain pure, unwavering, and selfless love.** One should not think that *moksha* is simply getting detached or leaving behind something.

Even insects, worms, and other creatures constantly abandon one thing and move on toward another. Therefore, in that sense, all beings are seekers of liberation. Even worms and insects are seekers of liberation. However, they are not yet free (*muktas*). The true meaning of *moksha* (liberation) lies in directing and guiding the mind along the proper path, thereby realizing the true mystery of the mind itself.

I have reiterated this point to many people on numerous occasions. However, since many newcomers join us, I must repeat what has already been shared. Here is a piece of cloth. The basis for this cloth is the threads woven into the warp and the woof. These threads come together and become cloth. Without these threads, there can be no cloth at all. Similarly, the threads of our desires come together to make the cloth of our mind. The threads and cloth are not different. In the same way, our mind and our thoughts are not different. Suppose we take out one thread after the other. Then, there is no cloth left at all! Similarly, when one desire after the other is given up, the mind does not exist at all! **Hence, if you wish to know the mysteries of the mind, know that the mind is a bundle of desires. When the desires are completely removed, that state itself is liberation (*mukti*).**

Once, a disciple went to his teacher and asked, “Swami! I do not have any desire to be fulfilled in this world. I have only one

desire. I want freedom or liberation.” The teacher then replied, “The fact that you do not have any desires is itself *mukti*.” Then, how can we reduce our desires? In fact, you need not try to reduce your desires. The best and easiest way is to divert all your desires toward God. **If we recognize the truth that whatever we desire, whatever we do, and whatever we see are all for the sake of pleasing the divine, that alone is enough. This is a simple and easy path to God.**

We also have to realize the truth that the same divine *Atma* permeates every living being, and all are embodiments of the divine *Atma*. If we want to achieve something, but do not put in conscious effort or practice, we will never be able to achieve it. Effort is very necessary, both in worldly matters and in spiritual matters. For example, when a tiny ant makes an effort to walk, it can travel even several miles. But if it has no desire to fly, even an eagle cannot move forward an inch. That is why it has been said that anything can be achieved in this world by *sadhana*. It is only when we undertake *sadhana* deliberately and diligently shall we be entitled to receive the fruit of our *sadhana*.

Embodiments of Divine *Atma*! Your *sadhana* will become fruitful if you make an effort to calm down your emotions and agitations as far as possible and divert your mind in the right direction.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Dasara 1976





SRI SATYA SAI VIDYA VIHAR
VISAKHAPATNAM

Experiences of
Devotees

HOW APRIL 24, 2011 ENERGIZED ME

MY JOURNEY WITH BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA DID NOT START WITH A PROFOUND REALIZATION.

It took root quietly, organically, in everyday life, and evolved through subtle experiences that gradually reshaped my understanding of life and the divine. The moment that transformed me the most was Swami's *Mahasamadhi* on April 24, 2011, the end of His earthly sojourn.

I first came to know of Swami during my early years as a student at the Sathya Sai School in Visakhapatnam, where I studied from kindergarten through 10th grade. Interestingly, my parents were not Sai devotees, and at home, Swami was not discussed in a spiritual or devotional context. The decision to enroll me in the school was mainly influenced by its reputation for discipline

and values-based education. As a result, while I was immersed in an environment of *bhajans*, moral instructions, and spiritual ideals every day, my engagement with them remained largely external. I participated, observed, and absorbed, but I did not internalize the lessons.

There were moments during those years that, in hindsight, seem significant. On one occasion, as part of our school group, we had prepared for presenting *Shiva Tandavam* (cosmic dance of Lord Shiva as Nataraja) in Prasanthi Nilayam. We rehearsed diligently and looked forward to the opportunity to perform in front of Swami. However, that opportunity never materialized. Other groups returned with stories to share, but we did not. I remember feeling quietly disappointed—not devastated but puzzled. My

When one takes a sincere step forward in serving others, the divine amplifies the effort in ways beyond our understanding. That was the first foundation of Self-confidence.

teachers kept assuring us, “Keep praying, your turn will come.” But I could not understand. We had come all the way. Why not just let us perform? I did not have an answer then, and in some ways, I still do not. But years later, I found myself back in Prasanthi Nilayam, on the same stage, in a way I could never have imagined.

Sai Centers are Centers of Love

A more conscious and aware phase of my journey started years later, in 2008, in the United States, after relocating to the San Francisco Bay Area. I did not even know that a Sathya Sai organization existed outside India. A cousin who knew about my school days took me to a local Sai center, and that changed everything. What began as a casual visit gradually evolved into something meaningful, but not because of any spiritual awakening on my part. It stemmed from a sense of familiarity and curiosity. The very first *bhajans* I heard at the center carried melodies I recognized from my school days, which was comforting. What I encountered was not a system of beliefs to be accepted, but a community that expressed warmth, inclusiveness, and genuine care.

My involvement deepened through the people around me. A fellow Young Adult took it upon himself to bring me to every event. At *bhajans*, someone would sit beside me and help me sing. I had never sung before. At study circles, concepts like



Participating at the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Festival

the *Atma* and divine love were discussed—ideas that felt completely foreign. I did not enjoy those discussions, and I did not fully understand them. But I kept going, because these people genuinely cared for me. **My continued presence was less a reflection of understanding the program and more a response to the sincerity and kindness of those around me. In hindsight, I recognize that this was an early lesson: spiritual connection is often nurtured through love long before it is understood intellectually.**

Even so, a sense of hesitation persisted. I remember being asked to help lead an activity during a retreat. Overcome by apprehension, I simply did not show up, without telling anyone. I can now look back and realize that it was a reluctance on my part to step forward, even when the door was wide open. Yet, my journey did not stall. Not because I believed in myself, but because others believed in me more than I believed in myself.

What I once thought I lacked in closeness, I found through love—not by reaching out to something external, but by recognizing something within.

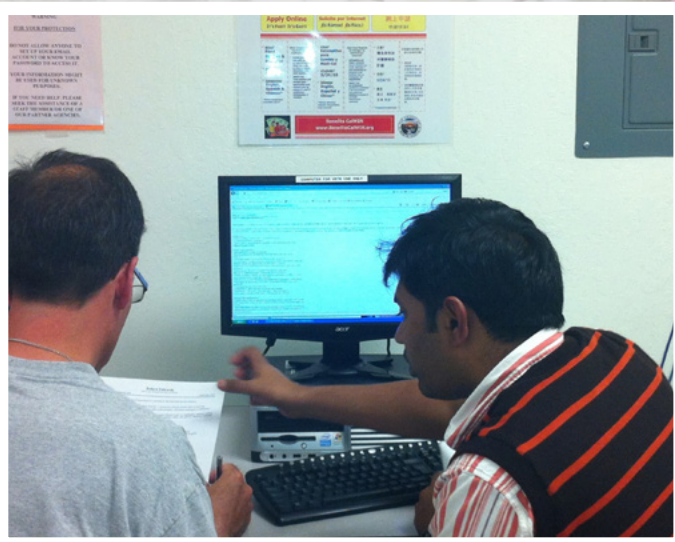
***Mahasamadhi*—The Equalizer**

A pivotal moment occurred in 2011, during Swami's *Mahasamadhi*. For many devotees, this period was marked by profound grief at the loss of His physical presence. For me, the experience was different, and I must be honest about the reason for it.

Until then, my understanding of Swami was mainly based on His physical presence and the experiences of those who had been in His direct presence—blessed with *darshan*, interviews, and moments of personal connection. I had none of that. I came to the Sai Organization late and struggled to connect with experiences that seemed to be personal to others but felt distant to me. There was always a gap I could not bridge. With the *Mahasamadhi*, that gap dissolved. **Once Swami was no longer confined to the physical form, the distinction between those who had experienced proximity and those who had not seemed to disappear. All our journeys going forward would converge.** Rather than a sense of loss, I felt something closer to relief and a new clarity. It marked the beginning of a more personal, inward journey, one that was no longer dependent on external, physical proximity to Swami.

When I Experienced Swami Firsthand

In fact, the seeds of this new chapter had been planted even before *Mahasamadhi*.



In December 2010, as part of the Sai Young Adults group in the Bay Area, we had decided to serve the needy beyond just providing food and clothing. We wrote a letter to Swami expressing this intention. Swami accepted it and blessed it. In April 2011, the project started. The sequence of events remains very special to me—we sought His blessings, He gave them, and then the journey unfolded right as He transitioned to the infinite and the formless.

We partnered with the Emergency Housing Consortium (EHC), a homeless shelter in San Jose, to help individuals who had been incarcerated for over 15 years successfully reintegrate into society. **Many of them did not know computers existed, nor could they operate a mouse; yet a simple job application for any position required an online submission.** We were engineers, lawyers, and teachers. So we did not fully know what we were doing, as these people were applying for jobs in warehouses and kitchens, a world unfamiliar to us. But we just started. Every Wednesday evening, a few of us would go to the shelter and sit down with each participant on a one-on-one basis to teach computer skills and job-readiness. We set a very specific goal: by November 23rd, Swami's Birthday, at least one person in the cohort should secure employment.



And then something remarkable happened. An 86-year-old gentleman who had spent decades working with previously incarcerated individuals offered to help with his resources, guiding us on how to approach employers about hiring people with felony records—something none of us knew how to navigate. To me, he was proof of Swami’s omnipresence, jumping in to help us precisely when we needed it. In October 2011, weeks before Swami’s Birthday, the first person in the group secured a job. The momentum continued, the program ran for two more years, and we went on to serve at a women’s shelter and other locations in the years that followed.

This experience provided a profound and deep insight. The effort we made, though sincere, was limited in scope. Yet the results were far greater than what we could have achieved on our own. **It reinforced a principle often emphasized by Swami: when one takes a sincere step forward in serving others, the divine amplifies the effort in ways beyond our understanding. That was the first foundation of Self-confidence.**

The joy I found in this service was unlike anything else. The more I invested in the program and the organization, the more I gained from it. This may appear to be selfish, but that is honestly what happened. **It transformed my understanding of service**

from being an obligation, or activity, to a source of inner satisfaction, inspiration, and purpose.

Do Sai’s Work, and Sai Will Do Your Work

As my responsibilities increased, I gradually moved into leadership roles at both regional and national levels of the organization. These roles presented new challenges, especially in balancing professional duties, family life, and commitments. At the regional level, most meetings took place during family time, and I struggled to participate in them. I genuinely wanted to continue serving, and I prayed for the opportunity, but I could not find a way to balance everything. Just as I was contemplating stepping down, I was offered a national role. Henceforth, the meetings ended early enough so that I had my evenings back—my prayer was answered by Swami most unexpectedly. Swami is *Kalateeta*, beyond time, and He literally rearranged life events to create time for me. But it went further than that. The work itself helped me prioritize and manage time more effectively. **When Swami says, “You do My work, and I will do your work,” perhaps this is what He means—not that life becomes easier, but that serving Him builds capacities we never had before.**

One of those gifts was developing my ‘listening ability.’ During periods of organizational change, many Young Adults had questions and concerns. It was during one such time that I had my first dream of Swami, where I was pushing His chair through three bumpy doorways into a building. To me, these bumps reflected the major organizational shifts I would witness as a leader, but the message was clear: keep moving forward. I learned that effective leadership is not about providing immediate answers. It is about creating space for dialogue and understanding. This skill became very useful



The author at Sai Prema Nilayam, 2023.

when I was promoted to a management position at work, leading a cross-geography team. It helped me greatly, especially during the COVID pandemic, when listening across a screen was all we had.

SSSIO is a Development Laboratory

For me, the SSSIO, especially the Sai Young Adults program, is like a laboratory. One 'Yes' leads to the next opportunity, such as video editing, graphic design, playing tabla, public speaking, IT, *bhajan* singing, understanding study circles, and working with SSE children. What began with one step into service expanded into all three wings of the Sai Organization. These experiences had a broader impact on my personal and professional life. The skills developed along the way

translated seamlessly into every other area. **Later, when I pursued an MBA at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, I found that many of the competencies emphasized there had already been developed through years of involvement in the SSSIO.**

Reflecting on my journey, the moments of 'full-circle' stand out the most. For example, the dance I never got to perform as a disappointed schoolboy came full circle years later. At the 2016 World Youth Festival, I found myself on a stage in Prasanthi Nilayam, hosting a game show on Swami's life. What had seemed like a missed opportunity was simply part of a larger, unseen design orchestrated by the divine.

Ultimately, what Swami's *Mahasamadhi* gave me was not just a shift in understanding. It was the beginning of a journey of faith and courage.

One Step at a Time

The EHC project was my first step into the unknown - an immigrant who could barely navigate local small talk, sitting across from someone who had spent 20 years in prison, trying to teach him how to use a computer. I had no idea what I was doing. But I took the first step, and the results followed. Those results gave me the confidence to take the next step, and the next.

That is how it has worked for me. Each act of courage builds on the previous one: serving in the YA national team when I had not grown up here or fully understood the local context; at Wharton, having the courage to be fully present in social settings and the courage to say no despite the fear of missing out; quitting a comfortable, high-paying job and a career of 18 years to start my

own venture because growth sometimes involves leaving what is familiar to embrace what is possible; going to a Marine Corps leadership intensive training at Quantico as one of the oldest trainees among 80 people, crawling through mud, getting yelled at—because a leader must be a good follower first, and Swami taught me that long before any drill sergeant did.

None of these steps would have happened without the first one.

What I once thought I lacked in closeness, I found through love—not by reaching out to something external, but by recognizing something within. That recognition did not come through thinking. It came through doing. I took the first step. Then the next. The confidence that comes from action is not ordinary. It is the slow realization that I am capable of far more than I believed. And that, I believe, is the beginning of recognizing the divine within.

Mr. Lakshman Mantha
USA 



Mr. Lakshman Mantha attended the Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar School in Visakhapatnam, India. After moving to the USA, he served the SSSIO from 2008, and credits Swami and the Young Adults program for his transformational journey. A 2016 graduate of the Sathya Sai International Youth Leadership Programme, he served as the Young Adult (YA) Coordinator for Region 7, and later as the national YA Coordinator for the SSSIO USA. He has led many innovative programs and initiatives in SSSIO.

Professionally, Lakshman holds an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and an MS in Computer Science. He is the founder of an AI-native startup initiative, serving the nonprofit sector. An avid runner, he has completed the San Francisco Marathon for 18 consecutive years and mentored over 100 first-time runners. He serves as president of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Tri-Valley in Northern California.

Why Fear When **Sai is Here**

Though more than 25 years have passed since the episode I am about to describe, I find myself unable to fully understand the magnitude of what happened on that day. I can narrate the sequence of events clearly, and I can recall each moment vividly, but the **unseen grace that guided and protected me continues to remain beyond my intellectual grasp. Perhaps it is not meant to be understood, but only to be experienced, remembered, and revered.**

A Day That Began Like Any Other

It was November 23, 2000, Bhagawan's Birthday. At that time, I was working in Nigeria as

a financial controller for a polyester staple manufacturing company. Our home was located on the company campus in Ikorodu, a suburb of Lagos. Life was orderly, structured, and predictable. My responsibilities were demanding but familiar, and my days followed a routine that had settled into a certain rhythm.

My wife, Girija, was a senior mathematics teacher at the Indian Language School in Lagos, which was affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum in India. Her day started much earlier than mine. The school transport would arrive

“Another man, carrying a rifle, came to my side and opened the door. With a firm gesture, he instructed me to step out.

What remains most vivid and striking in my memory, however, is not the violence of the situation, but the state of mind I was in.”

at 5:30 a.m., carrying both teachers and children, so they could reach the school well before the peak hours of morning traffic. Despite the early hours and the demands of her profession, Girija carried within her a quiet devotion that expressed itself in simple yet profound ways.

On that particular morning, as she had done in previous years, **she prepared a small cake, reverently placed it before Swami’s photograph, and softly whispered, “Happy Birthday, Swami.”**

At that point in my life, I must admit, I wasn’t deeply devoted or committed to Swami. I had been raised in a traditional Tamil Iyer family, where reverence for the Divine was part of the cultural fabric, but my own connection to Swami had not yet matured into personal conviction. I respected Girija’s devotion and never questioned it, but I remained, in many ways, a distant observer.

The rest of the morning went as usual. Girija prepared breakfast and lunch before leaving for school. Since our residence was on the office campus, I would return home during my lunch break, warm the food she had made, have my lunch, and then go back to work. There was nothing unusual, nothing foreboding, and nothing to suggest that this day would mark a turning point in my life.

A Journey Rudely Interrupted

That afternoon, I had a scheduled meeting with a senior official of a bank located on Victoria Island, which was approximately 30–35 kilometers away from our office. After informing my Executive Director, I left

around 2:00 p.m. in the company-provided car, a blue Daewoo Cielo, accompanied by my driver.

The initial stretch of the journey was uneventful, but after a few miles, we saw something that was both strange and unsettling. Several vehicles ahead of us had stopped, and people were getting out of their cars and running into the nearby fields. The suddenness of their actions and the lack of any clear explanation created an atmosphere of confusion.

I asked my driver if he knew what was going on, but he did not. Given the occasional reports of unrest in certain areas, I sensed it would be wise not to proceed further. I immediately instructed him to turn the car around and head back toward the office.

As we turned, a white Mercedes Benz sped past us at high speed, narrowly missing collision with our vehicle. Almost immediately afterward, another car followed closely behind. Before we could understand what was happening, we saw that the occupants of the second car were leaning out of the windows, holding firearms.

What followed unfolded with terrifying speed.

Moments of Extreme Danger

The men in the car behind us opened fire. The distance between our vehicles was just 20 to 30 feet. The sound of gunfire shattered the stillness and calm of the afternoon. Bullets struck our car in rapid succession, breaking the windows and piercing the metal frame.



November 23, 2000 Evening

The suddenness and intensity of the attack left no time for conscious thought.

I instinctively crouched down, lowering myself between the front and rear seats, searching for any available cover. My driver reacted with urgency, attempting to reverse the car and move away from the line of fire. For a brief moment, the car responded, but then it came to an abrupt stop. He tried repeatedly to restart the engine, but it would not start. Even the anti-hijack mechanism in the vehicle failed to engage.

Within seconds, armed men surrounded our vehicle.

One of them approached the driver's side and spoke to him in Yoruba (local language). Later, the driver explained that they demanded to know whether we were carrying cash and threatened to kill both of us if we did not comply. The driver, visibly shaken, stepped out of the car. The attackers attempted to start the vehicle themselves, but their efforts were unsuccessful.

Another man, carrying a rifle, came to my side and opened the door. With a firm gesture, he instructed me to step out. I complied without resistance. He searched my pockets and took the money I had, and my wristwatch was also taken. They threw the files I had been carrying for the meeting onto the road without a second thought.

What remains most vivid and striking in my memory, however, is not the violence of the situation, but the state of mind I was in.

An Unexplainable Calm

In circumstances that would normally provoke intense fear, I experienced none.

There was no sense of panic, no trembling, no desperate attempt to resist or escape. **Instead, there was a calmness that I can only describe as profound and complete. It was not something I created within myself, nor was it the result of any deliberate effort. It simply existed, steady and unwavering, even as the situation around me remained volatile.**

At one point, I told them that if they wanted money, I could take it out and give it to them. The words came naturally, without anxiety or hesitation. However, they did not respond. Having taken what they wanted, they left the scene as abruptly as they had arrived.

During the entire incident, no one else was present on that stretch of road. And yet, despite the dangerous situation nearby, neither my driver nor I was physically harmed.

The Hidden Protection

Once the attackers left, people started to come out from the surrounding areas. Within minutes, a crowd gathered around us. The smell of gunpowder lingered in the air, and my ears continued to ring from the intense gunfire. People felt that God had saved me and I was invited to come to their church to express gratitude to the divine.

Later, when the car was brought back and examined, it was found to have 19 visible bullet holes. Each one could have led to a very serious outcome.

Upon closer inspection, it was discovered that one of the bullets had punctured the vehicle's fuel supply line. This was the reason the car had stalled and could not be restarted. At that time, it had seemed like a critical failure that had left us vulnerable. In retrospect, it became clear that this very failure had prevented the attackers from driving the car away.

Had the car remained operational, the situation might have escalated into something far more serious, possibly even a kidnapping. **What appeared at that moment to be a misfortune later turned out to be a blessing in disguise.**

A Subtle Transformation

I got home. Girija was deeply distressed with the happenings. She had seen the damaged vehicle earlier and had been unable to get a

clear explanation from the driver, who was still in shock.

As I recounted the incident to her, I could sense that something inside me had shifted. It was not a dramatic transformation, nor was it accompanied by any outward declaration. It was a quiet, internal change—a recognition that there was a dimension to life that I had not previously acknowledged. At her suggestion, we decided that during our next visit to India, we would go to Puttaparthi to visit Bhagawan.

Looking back, I realize that Swami **draws us through lived experience, through moments that leave an indelible impression on the heart.**

An Omnipresent Glimpse

There was another aspect of this incident that deepened my understanding.

At the exact moment this event was unfolding in Lagos, my brother-in-law, Mr. Krishna Srinivasan, was in Prasanthi Nilayam. He later told me that around 6:30 p.m. Indian time, Swami had looked at him intently for a prolonged period. When we later compared the timings, we realized that they matched exactly. The incident in Lagos occurred at approximately 2:00 p.m., which is 6:30 p.m. in India.

The two events, experienced at different places, in different time zones, but at the same time, seemed connected and left a lasting impression on me. It suggested omnipresence that transcended physical boundaries.

Answers That Arrived Unasked

In 2002, I had the opportunity to visit Puttaparthi. For someone new to the *ashram* environment, everything felt different. The discipline, silence, and collective devotion created an atmosphere that was both unfamiliar and deeply moving.

During *darshan* (sacred sight of the divine), Swami stood facing our side, just a few rows



away. His presence was radiant, and His gaze seemed to penetrate the surface. I noticed that the person sitting next to me was in tears, with his hands folded in reverence. At that time, I could not fully understand the reason for his emotions. Over time, I came to recognize that such reactions arise from an inner connection that is beyond words.

Girija, on that same day, had an experience that left a lasting impression on both of us. She had been harboring some questions in her mind, seeking guidance, but never expressed them outwardly.

After *darshan*, Girija approached a lady who had just had an interview with Swami and asked if she would be willing to share what had transpired. The lady agreed and told her during the conversation that Swami advised them not to ask for small material things, such as a house, but instead to seek Him, and He would give Himself fully. She also said that Swami had explained that He appeared in dreams at His will when devotees truly needed Him.

These statements were the exact answers to the questions that Girija had. **There had been no direct interaction, no expressed request, and yet she received the answer with remarkable clarity and precision.**

Grace in Everyday Life

Another incident in the same year 2002 further reinforced our growing faith.

During a visit to Chennai for a family wedding, I lost a bag containing a significant amount of money, including foreign currency, in an autorickshaw. At that time, there were no mobile phones, and I had not noted the vehicle's license plate number. My attempts to locate the vehicle proved unsuccessful, and even the police were unable to assist.

We prayed—because there was nothing else we could do.

After an extended search that yielded no results, I received a phone call from a friend, Mr. Venkatesh. The auto driver had found the bag and had managed to contact

Venkatesh. Through a chain of events that seemed incredible, but perfectly orchestrated, I went to meet the auto driver and he returned the bag to me.

The auto driver had found the bag, but he was unable to read, so he sought assistance from a passenger. When the passenger opened my digital diary, the last phone number and address appeared, which happened to belong to Venkatesh! That single connection enabled him to reach me.

Such incidents, when viewed individually, may seem coincidental. However, when seen in the context of a larger pattern, they reveal a consistent thread of divine protection.

***Sai Abhayahasta* (Blessing of Fearlessness)**

When I reflect upon these experiences, I recognize a pattern that I couldn't see

at that time. There was protection during moments of danger, guidance in times of uncertainty, and help when other avenues were apparently closed.

On that day in Nigeria, when bullets surrounded me, and the imminent threat of losing my life was very real, I experienced a state of complete fearlessness. **That fearlessness did not come from my own strength or courage. It was the result of Sai's *Abhayahasta* (protective hand) that I could not see but could unmistakably feel.**

Today, I no longer try to analyze or explain these events. I accept them with gratitude and hold on to the quiet, yet powerful assurance: Why fear when Sai is here.

Jai Sai Ram.

Sri M. Vidya Shankeran

INDIA



Sri M. Vidya Shankeran lives in India and is a fellow member of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. He has worked in Asia and Africa in many diverse industries and is the owner of a company that provides services in the areas of finance and operational strategy. Sri Shankeran is a devout follower of Swami and is involved in the management of the Sai Premanjali Charitable Trust, which provides healthcare services, clothes, and school supplies for children to the rural needy population in and around the city of Madurai, India.

LOVE IN ACTION



AUSTRALIA Clean-Up Australia Day 2026

On March 1, 2026, SSSIO members from Victoria and New South Wales participated in Clean Up Australia Day, embodying the spirit of selfless service and spirituality in action. In New South Wales, about 45 participants gathered at the Blaxland Riverside Park, located within the Sydney Olympic Park, as well as the North Rocks Park in Carlingford. These volunteers, including Young Adults and children from the Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) program, cleaned up the litter, including plastics, glass, paper, and general debris. The participants then enjoyed basketball, cricket, and face painting activities, along with morning tea.



In Victoria, ten volunteers restored the Bellbird Picnic Area in the Yarra Bend Park, collecting litter ranging from plastic wrappers to abandoned car parts. **The day concluded with a reminder that service to nature is service to the divine, and that even simple acts of cleanup become sacred when done with love.**



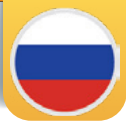
BRAZIL Health Education at Sathya Sai School

On April 18, 2026, the Sathya Sai School of Vila Isabel in Rio de Janeiro opened its doors to a medical camp, bringing professional expertise in the service of children and their families. Thirteen members of SSSIO Brazil, including six healthcare professionals from specialties including nutrition, psychology, dentistry, pediatrics, and social work, and three non-member volunteers cared for 31 students and 29 parents and guardians.

Consultations were complemented by a discussion circle where parents gathered to explore topics such as healthy eating, sleep, and its impact on learning, along with practical guidance for daily family life, creating



a space for genuine listening and shared experience. Organized by the Southeast Region II Coordinator and the Sai Young Adults group of Vila Isabel, with support from the Sai Foundation of Brazil, **this initiative embodied Swami's vision of integral, loving service, tending to each person's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.**



RUSSIA

Feeding the Needy Across Russia

In March 2026, 177 members from 32 SSSIO Centers across seven regions of Russia, joined by 22 members of the public, came together to serve those in need in their communities. **The volunteers prepared a variety of nutritious meals, including porridges, cutlets, pastries, and herbal teas, and distributed over 500 servings.** In addition, 57 packages filled with groceries and essential items were delivered to ailing individuals, large families, and the needy at temples. Clothing, shoes, and food for animals were also given with love and compassion.



In the Volga-Ural region alone, 188 hot meals and 14 packages were distributed to the needy in temples, parks, and streets. Carried out weekly across nearly all regions, this service was offered in an atmosphere of harmony, unity, and joy. Devotees prayed to Swami before each service, grateful for His grace.



THAILAND

When Essentials Became Gifts of Love

Members of SSSIO Thailand brought hearts full of love and devotion to an adopted community in Bangkok, serving 70 families on March 14, 2026. As the volunteers arrived, young and old residents eagerly greeted them and helped unload the supplies. The service began with the chanting of three *Oms*, the Gayatri Mantra, and the food prayer, filling the atmosphere with devotion and a sense of Oneness. Each family accepted their package with gratitude, saying “*Sairam*” as they received the gifts. **Essential items,**



including rice, cooking oil, soya sauce, infant milk powder, soap, and mosquito repellents, were distributed to every household, meeting their daily needs. Swami’s pure love flowed through each volunteer into the hearts of every recipient, leaving the community nourished not only in body but in spirit.

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

Delivery & Deliverance



THE FIRST TIME I VISITED A SATHYA SAI CENTER, I WAS 18 YEARS OLD.

A friend had invited me to attend a youth class. I went a few times, listened to what was being said, observed, and then quietly returned to my normal life. At that age, one is curious, but not always ready. I do not think I understood then what divine grace is, nor how patiently it waits for us. My true relationship with Swami started only after I was married into a Sai family. My mother-in-law often spoke of Him. **What moved me was not just the stories she shared, but the devotion that shone on her face whenever she uttered His name.** There was tenderness, certainty, and joy in her expression. One cannot witness such love and remain unaffected. Slowly, I became curious. I began attending *bhajans* more regularly and visited Puttaparthi a few times. Without my noticing it, a bond had begun to develop.

The Child I Was Told I Would Lose

Over the years, I have come to see Swami not as a distant spiritual figure in my life. **He is my closest companion, my guide, my protector, and in the simplest sense, my best friend.** I speak to Him as I would to someone who knows me thoroughly. I complain, I pray, I question, I laugh, and sometimes I even scold Him. Yet again and again, He answers, though not always in words.

One of the earliest and most unforgettable experiences happened when I was pregnant with my second child in 2000. I was about eight weeks into my pregnancy when the doctor reviewed my blood test results and clearly told me that I would most likely have a miscarriage. My HCG levels were around 4,000 and too low, he said. Ideally, they should be above 32,000. I was devastated, and because it was my second

**“If I were to summarize my journey in one sentence, it would be this:
Hold on to Him as tight as you can.”**

child, the pain was sharp. But after the initial shock passed, I told myself, “If this is what Swami wills, then I must accept it.” Still, I sought a second opinion, and the second doctor said exactly the same thing.

Why Fear When Sai is Here

It was nearing Swami’s Birthday. I remember sitting in the front during *bhajans* at the Sai Center in Hong Kong, praying quietly. I told Him, “I am trying to accept this, but I am frightened. If this pregnancy is not meant to continue, then please let everything happen smoothly. Please take care of me.” That day, my name was unexpectedly chosen to offer Arati during the Birthday program. To many, it may seem insignificant, but to me, it was His reassurance. It was as if **He was saying, “Do not worry.”**

A week later, I went back to the doctor, expecting to undergo a medically advised procedure due to the possibility of a miscarriage. Instead, another blood test was taken, and the results of the second blood test were shared with me. My HCG level had risen from 4,000 to 40,000. The doctor stared at the report in disbelief. He said, “This is impossible. This cannot be the same person.” He performed an ultrasound, then simply shook his head. Finally, he said, “Perhaps the laboratory had mixed up your blood tests with those of another patient.” But I knew otherwise. The pregnancy continued normally. My child was safe.

That night, I had a dream unlike any ordinary dream. It felt more like a vision. I was sitting in Puttaparthi in the front row, heavy with my pregnancy. **Swami came near me and said with great clarity, “Do not forget, I gave you this child.”** Those words stayed with me, etched deep in my heart. Years later, when I experienced a miscarriage before my third pregnancy could progress, I understood those words even more profoundly. Some children come to us for a season, some for a lifetime, and some as grace itself. That second child was His gift.

Swami Never Forgets

Many years later, He reminded me once again that the divine does not forget.

When my oldest daughter was about to leave for the university, she expressed a strong wish to have Swami’s *darshan* before leaving. We were able to take her for His *darshan* in 2016. Two years later, circumstances aligned perfectly, and my second child also received the same blessing before going to the university. We just happened to be in Whitefield for a wedding just months before she was due to leave, but I saw His quiet hand in making it happen.

Then came my son’s turn. He is 17, and last year, in 2025, I began thinking, “How will this happen? He, too, should have the same blessing before joining the university, but we rarely travel to Puttaparthi now.” I looked at Swami’s

picture and half-jokingly said, “Perhaps You have forgotten him. Never mind—I will make some plans myself.”

A few months later, a friend called unexpectedly. Her daughter’s wedding would take place in August, and she insisted we come as a family to celebrate. The dates were astonishingly perfect—just before my son was due to start school in the United States. I looked again at Swami’s photograph and smiled. **“You did not forget,” I said. Even seven years later, He had remembered what mattered to a mother’s heart.**

Sai’s Instant Responses

There have also been moments when He answered me almost immediately. In January 2025, I faced a tough challenge. I stood before His picture at home in Hong Kong and prayed, “I know You are here. Then, why am I doubting? I know You are taking care of everything, but I am anxious. Please give me a little *vibhuti* as a sign from You.”

Within two hours, a friend with whom I don’t speak regularly called me. She said the *vibhuti* materialized on Swami’s photograph had arrived in Hong Kong from Sai devotees in London along with turmeric and other blessed items. She had six packets of *vibhuti*, and she went to Swami’s altar to ask whom she should give them to. Over and over again, my name kept coming to her mind! So, she called me. What explanation is there for such things? To me, there is only one: **the divine always responds to the devotee when called from the heart.**

Service Can Be Rendered Anywhere, Anytime

Another beautiful lesson unfolded during our 25th wedding anniversary in Florence, Italy. On special occasions,

my husband and I usually start the day with the distribution of food and other essential items to those in need. That morning, I told Swami, “I feel incomplete here. How can I do *seva* in Florence?” Later, we entered a small shop because my husband wanted to buy something. When it was time to pay, I opened my wallet, which also contained Swami’s photograph. The Italian shopkeeper pointed to it immediately and said, “Sathya Sai Baba.” I was astonished. He explained that his wife believed in Swami, though she had never been to India. I gave him some *vibhuti* I was carrying, and he was overjoyed. I realized then that *seva* is not always grand or planned. If one sincerely wishes to serve, He arranges the opportunity.

Perhaps one of the greatest blessings in my life has been the opportunity to serve the refugees in Hong Kong. There is a large refugee community here facing many hardships. Some years ago, we started making small efforts—weekly food distribution for families, helping refugee women earn a living through home-cooked meals sold at school fairs, yoga classes, and a homework help-line for children who need guidance with schoolwork, interviews, or simply encouragement. During the COVID pandemic, we organized large-scale food drives and deliveries.

People often think of *seva* as helping others. But I have found the opposite is also true: *Seva* heals the one who serves. I have seen young people distribute food and then come back transformed. They tell me the happiness they felt was unlike any ordinary pleasure. **That joy is Swami’s presence. When we serve another human being with sincer-**

ity, something in us becomes lighter, cleaner, and freer.

Four Lessons for Life from Swami

Looking back on these experiences, I often ask myself what Swami has really taught me.

1. First, that He is always there. Life will include hurdles, losses, confusion, joy, celebration, and uncertainty. Faith does not mean life becomes easy. It means one never walks alone.
2. Second, that love and desire must be purified. I once reflected on the teaching from the Gita: if we focus solely on the divine and place our trust in that, everything else falls into place. The more we cling to worldly desires, the more restless we become. The more we long for only Him, the more peaceful life becomes.
3. Third, that relationship with God is everything. People often ask what they should do spiritually. **My answer is simple: build a relationship with Him. Talk to Him. Include Him. Lean on Him. Trust Him.** Friendship grows through remembrance and association.

4. And finally, start with small acts of goodness. Swami made spirituality practical: *Love All, Serve All*. My daughters live in the United States now, and I always tell them that even if they cannot attend *bhajans* or study circles, they can still serve. If they see a homeless person, buy that person a cup of coffee. Ask what is needed. Offer kindness. No act is too small when done with love.

If I were to summarize my journey in one sentence, it would be this: Hold on to Him as tight as you can.

I came to the Sai Center as a curious young girl of 18. Today, I am a woman who has experienced enough of life to know what is real. Friendships in the world may change. Circumstances may be different. Children grow up and leave home. Health, plans, and so-called certainties come and go. **But there is one friend who has never failed me, never forgotten me, never arrived late, and never loved me less.**

Swami is my best and dearest friend. He is my *Eternal Companion*.

Ms. Anushka Nainani
HONG KONG



Ms. Anushka Nainani was born and raised in Hong Kong, where she continues to live with her husband. She is a member of the SSSIO Hong Kong. Their three children—two daughters and one son—live in the United States. She has a deep commitment to education and runs a tutorial center where she works with students across a range of age groups, helping them build confidence and make steady academic progress.

from the
International Sai Young Adults



Afternoon Tea
WITH THE SENIORS

On March 22, 2026, members of Sai groups in Auckland, New Zealand, hosted 30 senior Sai devotees for a warm and enjoyable afternoon tea at the Fickling Center in the Three Kings Reserve.

Fourteen Young Adults brought their enthusiasm and energy to create an engaging and meaningful experience for all participants. The Ladies Wing lovingly prepared a delicious afternoon tea and beautifully arranged the setting, adding a special touch of warmth to the occasion. The Service Wing set up the venue and served the seniors with respect and devotion.

The afternoon included three enjoyable sessions, designed to suit the comfort and interests of the senior members. The day began with a gentle activity focused on Pilates, led by a center member for approximately twenty minutes, at a slow and mindful pace. This was followed by an energetic bingo game that brought laughter and delight, with winners joyfully receiving prizes.

Rounding off the afternoon, a health talk led by a qualified dietitian focused on healthy and nutritious food choices for seniors, offering practical guidance for well-being.

The gathering was filled with love and gratitude, bringing smiles to all those who attended.



Hike

to the Bamboo Cathedral



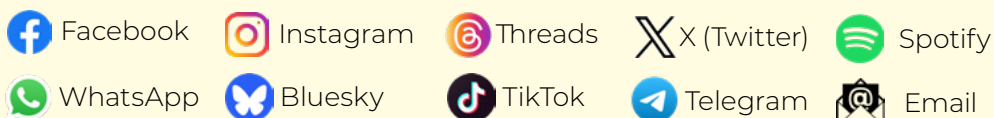
On March 14, 2026, the Sai Young Adults of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organization of Trinidad and Tobago (SSSIOTT) organized a hike to the Bamboo Cathedral in Tucker Valley, Chaguaramas, located on the west coast of Trinidad. The Bamboo Cathedral is a paved trail that winds through lush greenery, culminating in a stunning natural bamboo canopy that forms a cathedral-like archway leading to an old tracking station, creating a truly breathtaking scene.

The hike was organized to foster an appreciation for nature as a manifestation of the divine, while nurturing unity and brotherhood among Sai Young Adults. The event also evolved

into a public outreach effort, drawing a total of 78 participants, including 35 Young Adults and 14 members of the public. The morning began with a prayer, warm-up exercises, and an address by the President of the SSSIOTT, Ms. Kaloutie Sumairsingh.

On the trail, the participants supported and encouraged each other, embodying a spirit of love and a strong sense of camaraderie, reaching the summit together. The event proved to be a beautiful and effective blend of physical activity and spiritual enrichment, forging new friendships and strengthening existing ones.

Follow Young Adults on Social Media



yacoordinator@sathyasai.org | <https://sathyasai.org/ya>



A Second Chance at Youth

A few years ago, after a deep and difficult spiritual journey I chose to undertake alone, I finally realized that **Sai Baba is the One, the Supreme, to whom I could surrender myself completely.** Following this revelation, I was fortunate enough to share my talent and play the flute at Prasanthi Nilayam on Ladies Day in 2019.

When I returned to my hometown, my entire life changed completely. As I entered this new, radiant reality of devotion and learned more about His Organization, I discovered the Sai Young Adults Program. I was 34 at the time, with my 35th birthday just weeks away. A quiet sadness settled over me as I realized I would only be able to offer Him my youth for only a little while longer. With all my heart, I prayed: “Oh, Baba, if I had known before, if I had understood the true meaning of being Your young devotee, I would have dedicated my entire youth to You.”

I want to believe that Swami heard me because just a week after that prayer, an email appeared in my inbox announcing that the age limit for Young Adults had been extended to 40! I felt very happy as though the change was made just for me!

I made a promise to truly spend my time as His Young Adult. I participated in every event, course, and meeting, and I did so

wholeheartedly. If someone needed a video recording, I was there. If someone asked for help and I could offer it, I did. Even when I felt I couldn't, He gave me the ability to serve. The media records from that time reflect that I was present at almost every online event! In my heart, I always knew this was a temporary blessing, a second chance, a grace that allowed me to be part of His plan.

I never expected to grow within the Organization or take on zonal roles across Latin America and Europe. Nor did I imagine that I would lean on this international family to carry me through loneliness while pursuing my professional goals far from home. What I found instead was love and care—the kind a daughter finds within a large and compassionate family.

As my 40th birthday approached, I prayed with all my heart, “Swami, You will organize my party.” And so, He did.

At that time, I was finishing my master's thesis in Germany with very limited resources, as is the reality for many students. Then an opportunity arose—a tree-planting retreat for Young Adults, scheduled for the very same week as my birthday. What a celebration He had planned. He knew exactly who would love

“What I know now and believe deeply is that the years of youth I offered Him were multiplied because, in giving them without expectation, I discovered who I truly am.”

and appreciate me enough to share such a sacred moment.

As we walked through the forest searching for a place to plant the young tree, I learnt later that it was the last one remaining, and I had the honor of planting it. I planted it for myself, as a symbol that I had fulfilled my promise to dedicate my youth to Him. In that moment, I felt a quiet inner confirmation: yes, it feels right. And truly, it marked the end of that chapter.

Though I am now here to support my fellow Young Adults as they step into new roles, I know I will always be young at heart. This journey is my personal proof that He is always listening, guiding, transforming destinies, and perhaps even reshaping the destiny of a country, or, why not, the world, through pure intentions.

I would not be so bold as to say He changed the world for me, but He certainly changed my world.

Now that my official role as a Young Adult in the Organization has come to a close, I find myself looking at the younger ones with a full heart. They are so fortunate to have many years ahead to grow in this loving environment. My hope is that they do not lose time as I once did, getting distracted by other spiritual paths, believ-



ing they might bring greater joy, satisfaction, or fulfillment.

In moments of new beginnings and quiet uncertainty, I am reminded of Swami's words, and I hold onto them as my dictum:

“Never give up on the Organization. Regard it as the breath of your life. This is the real penance. Having this firm resolve, become exemplary leaders. This is My sole desire. Swami's love will accompany you everywhere.”

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 24, 1990

What I know now and believe deeply is that the years of youth I offered Him were multiplied because, in giving them without expectation, I discovered who I truly am. My role and my life within the organization are still unfolding, and I carry with me the uncertainties and quiet anxieties of new beginnings. But nothing could ever compare to the sweetness and innocence of those five precious years I spent as His Young Adult.

Ms. Mariel Beltrán
GERMANY 



Mr. Brian Jaramillo
ECUADOR



***Sadhana* is Simple**

Swami says, “All kinds of *sadhana* (spiritual practices) are meant only to attain purity. The moment you attain purity of the heart, the omnipresent God will manifest right in front of you.”

For Swami’s 100th Birthday, the International Sai Young Adults launched the ‘Rise with Sai’ collective *sadhana* initiative. Comprising 20 different *sadhana* options, Young Adults were invited to choose one that resonated with them and practice it consistently each day in the lead-up to this sacred milestone.

One of the participants, Mr. Brian Jaramillo from Ecuador, shares his reflection on practicing one such *sadhana*:

“For the past four years, I have committed myself to daily *sadhana*, including morning prayers, Gayatri Mantra, and Sai Gayatri Mantra chanting. When I heard about the ‘Rise with Sai’ initiative, I knew with complete certainty that I wanted to be part of it. The idea of a collective *sadhana* offering alongside my fellow Young Adults, in celebration of Swami’s centennial, felt like something altogether more exciting and meaningful.

The *sadhana* I chose was chanting of the Gayatri Mantra. I made a commitment to Swami to chant it 54 times daily with a *japa mala* (rosary beads)—27 times in the morning and 27 times before bed. Whenever possible, whether traveling, during the SSSIO Akhanda Gayatri sessions, on weekends, or simply whenever I felt called to connect with God, I would chant it 108 times.

My mind is often restless, but I have learned to anchor it with the mantra by holding the form of Goddess Gayatri in my heart. **With consistent practice, the mantra became woven into the fabric of my daily life. Now, whenever a thought of Swami arises, I offer my gratitude and chant the Gayatri a few times. It has become my personal space, a refuge for connecting with Him.** This initiative has given my practice a renewed sense of momentum and purpose.”



GURU POORNIMA SUBMISSIONS

SUBMIT YOUR CREATIVE offerings

Sai Ram Dear Children,

With love and joy, you are invited to share your creative offerings for this special Guru Poornima edition of Sai Shine.

Theme

LISTENING TO MY INNER GUIDE

LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION:

6th JULY 2026



We invite you to express your thoughts and experiences through an

ARTICLE

POEM

STORY

ARTWORK

SHORT VIDEO

Submit to: www.sathyasai.org/education/sai-shine/submit

If you have any questions, please email us at: sse@sathyasai.org

With Love,
SAI SHINE TEAM

Practicing Love



A mother's love is calm and kind
A steady hand through life we find
She helps us through both joy and pain
And lifts us up again and again
For all the care she gives each day
We're thankful in every way

Luckshan R | Group 3 | USA



Good Deeds

Hello everyone. My name is Ram Siddarth Rooban. I'm 10 years old. I study at SJK(T) Chettiars. Today I'm going to talk about good deeds. Doing good deeds are great in our life.

In 2023, my neighbour uncle was an old man. He asked me to help him to plant. I voluntarily helped him to plant, I planted and learned how to plant, using soil. Besides that I watered the plant. My neighbour was happy and I was happy indeed.

Not only being helpful at home. I also helped the teacher carry books at school. The books were heavy! I felt happy helping my teacher.

These are the good deeds that I have done. I wish to help people in the future. Thank you.

Ram S | Group 2 | Malaysia



Swami, You make my life Full and bright,
You Fill my day with Your love and light.

Your words are my comfort whenever I'm
in pain, but Your love lifts me up through
every test, and every game.

Each moment I feel You near, because
everyone's breath is Your voice I hear.
You teach the world with silence and grace,
along with a big smile painted onto Your Face.

Through all our joy, sorrows, loss, and gain,
no matter what, it is You who always
remains.

Please guide us towards You, in all that we
think, and all that we do.

With Love,

Aditi A | Group 4 | Online SSE



Swami, Your love is so divine,
So pure, so sweet, and forever mine.
It fills my heart and lights my way,
Guiding me everyday.
Through pain and tears, I think of You.
Your strength cures my blues.
Every test I pass undeterred,
Holding on to Your every word.
You are the song within my soul,
Always making me feel whole.
Swami, I belong to You.
Your love, Your truth, forever true.

Shradha N | Group 4 | Online SSE



Sai Ram I am Lakshminaraina, 10 years old and studying in a Chinese medium primary school in Perak, Malaysia.

My story is about Tommy, a very naughty and angry boy in my class, he is always bullying his friends and me.

A few weeks ago during a basketball match I had accidentally stepped upon a pair of glasses lying on the floor. I became frightened when Tommy shouted "You stepped on my glasses purposely, you better pay for it"

After school I was called to the principal's office where Tommy's mom and grandmother were waiting. They refused my mama's payment for a new pair of glasses for Tommy.

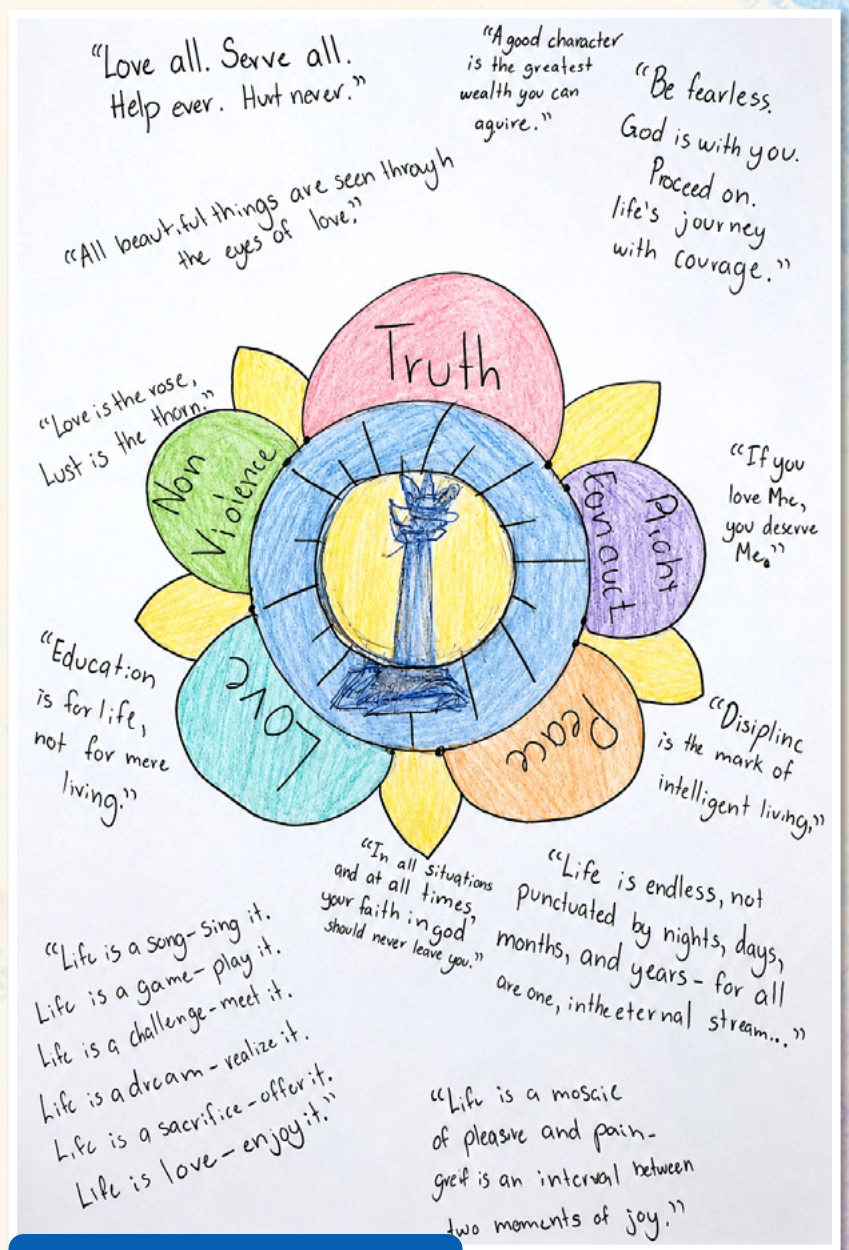
In the next few days I avoided Tommy. The following Wednesday, my mama brought my lunch to school. Tommy sat next to me but was not eating his meal. I offered him a papadam and he took it, gave me a broad smile and said thank you, it really surprised me. He told my mama he was not eating because he did not bring money to buy lunch. I gave him 5 ringgit so that he could buy lunch.

During recess the next day he asked me "K.T. are you angry with me and hate me, you upset teacher put me in your team?"

I told him no! and hate is a bad word. I was surprised he said sorry. Few days later it was parents day in school and Tommy's mom was talking to my mom for a long time. On our way home mama told me Tommy was not as lucky as me. He has a very sad background. It made me very sad listening to mama.

I asked mama if she could buy Tommy a battery operated spiderman toothbrush like mine. Mama immediately agreed and I paid for it with the money from my piggy bank. When I gave it to him the next day he said thank you so many times and told me to thank my mama, too. There was a big smile on his face. He asked me to continue to play basketball with him. He told me he won't bully me anymore. He also asked me, when your mom brings you lunch will she bring me some papadams too? I told him of course she will. He seemed so cheerful.

The lesson this incident taught me was though Tommy bullied me, I continued to be kind to him. I practiced "love and kindness" he is not only kind to me now but he also treats other classmates better. Like Swami said "Where there is Faith, there is Love; Where there is Love, there is Peace; Where there is Peace, there is God."



Sreya V | Group 2 | Online SSE

Upcoming SSSIO Events

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

Date of Event	Day(s)	Festival/Event
June 13-14, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri
July 29, 2026	Wednesday	Guru Poornima
August 15-16, 2026	Saturday-Sunday	Worldwide Akhanda Gayatri



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



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- [Sri Sathya Sai Young Adults](#)
- [Sri Sathya Sai Education](#)



Beyond the biological parents, there are permanent parents whom you should revere. They are Truth and Love. Though the body may go, Truth remains as the permanent father. Likewise, Love is the eternal mother. It grows with the passage of time and never diminishes. By regarding Truth and Love as your parents, as essential for your existence as your eyes, or as the two wings for a bird, or the two wheels for a cart, lead worthy lives. On this sacred day of remembrance, firmly enshrine in your hearts reverence for Truth and Love, and make your lives sublime by rendering dedicated service to your fellow men and women.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

May 6, 1985



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never

