

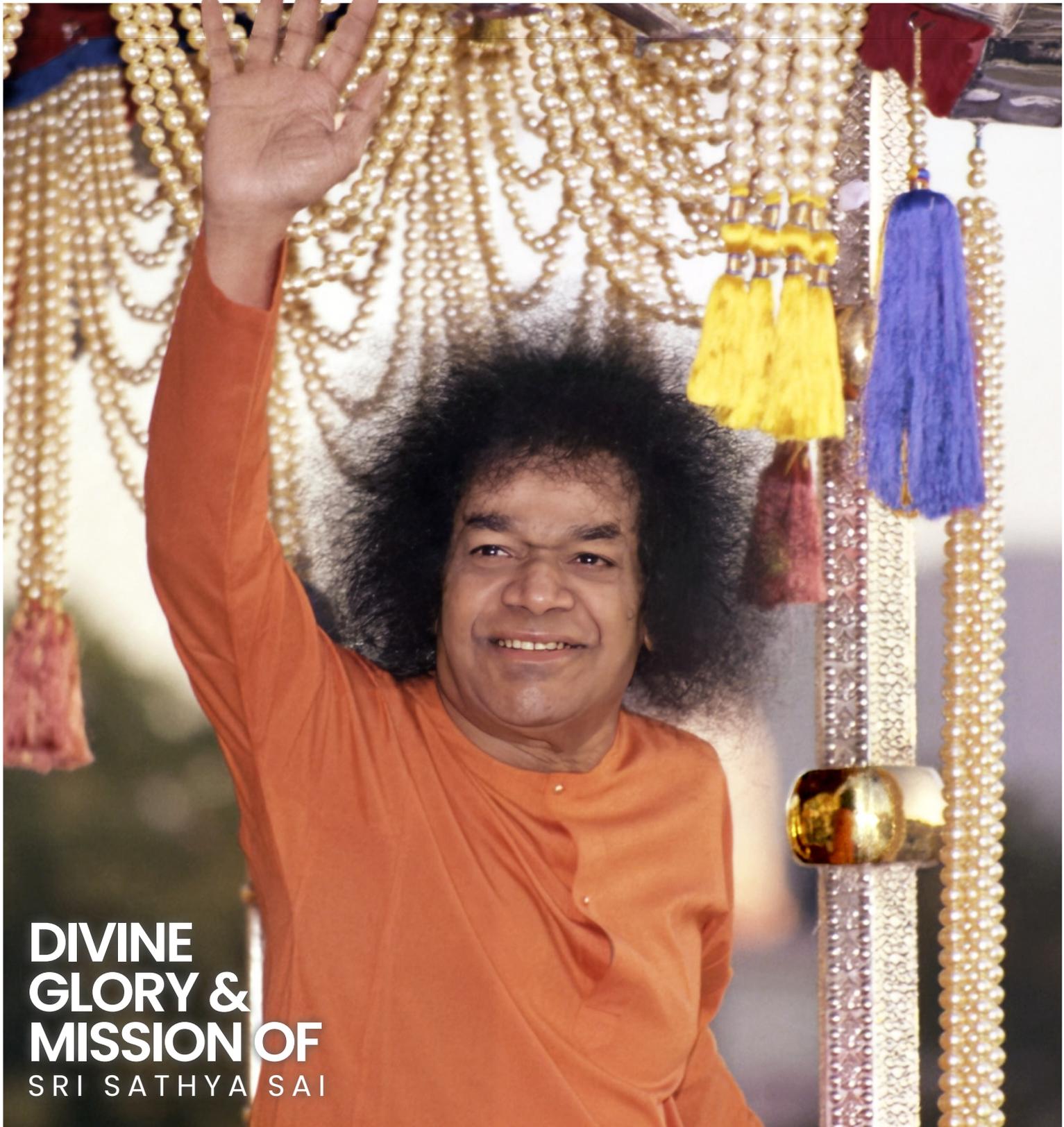
SATHYA SAI

THE ETERNAL

COMPANION



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1
JANUARY 2023



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



Everything is in Love. So, we must experience this principle of Love and begin the New Year with Love:

Start the day with Love

Fill the day with Love

Spend the day with Love

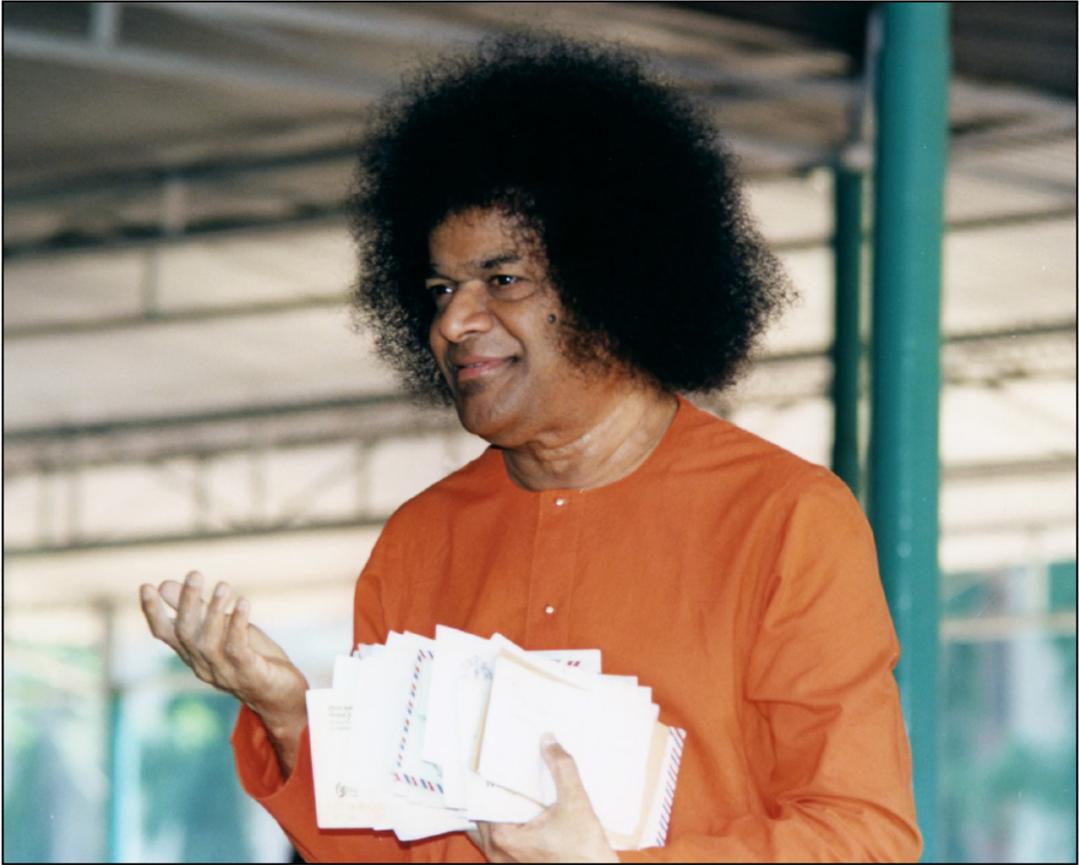
End the day with Love

This is the way to God

On this day, we should start with love in all aspects. The country will prosper with this love. There should be no difference in nationality, caste, creed, and religion. "May all the worlds be happy." When all are living happily, we will be happy.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

January 1, 1994



DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA





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Editor: Dr. Narendranath Reddy
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WAY TO LIBERATION

We wish everyone a happy and holy New Year filled with love, peace, and bliss. Marking the transition to a new year is a tradition but Swami reminds us that every moment is new, and every second is new. Since New Year's Day is an occasion to celebrate and sing His glories, thinking about Him every moment is the best way to welcome the New Year. **Swami says that the day spent singing His glories, remembering Him, and telling His stories is the 'real day,'** a day well spent; all other days are wasted ones.

We are the most blessed and fortunate in the history of mankind because we enjoyed and continue to enjoy the wonderful *Darshan* of God. In prior *Yugas*, people had to practice great austerities for long years for a momentary glimpse of God. Dhruva did penance for so many years for a glimpse of Vishnu. Shabari waited decades for a glimpse of Sri Rama. But we enjoyed so many *Darshans* of Swami and continue to receive His blessings through many photos and videos that He has gifted us, which no other Avatar left behind.

Just viewing His picture itself is having His *Darshan*. We are really blessed to have heard His name and to have seen Him. Most of all, we are fortunate to have heard His universal and eternal message because **every word of Swami is the essence of sacred scriptures.** He is the source of all knowledge. He is everything. We are mere

puppets playing our roles according to the strings He pulls.

He assured us, *Mee intane ventane jantane kantane untanu*—I will be resident of your home, accompanying you and be your eyes guiding you. Further, He promised, “I am there with you, inside you, beside you, above you, below you.” He is omnipresent. More and more people around the world are experiencing His glory and love in various ways since He left His body.

In order to experience Him and express our gratitude, we should practice His teachings. Swami implores, **“If you really love Me, practice My teachings.”**

Let us dive deep into a song that Swami Himself wrote, *Sathya dharmamu shanthi premalatho, nee nithya jeevana yatra saginchu* (Proceed with your daily pilgrimage of life, abiding by the principles of truth, right action, peace, and love). Swami not only composed it but also sang the song which consists of **nine stanzas**. This is a very appropriate song to begin the New Year with because it describes how we should lead our lives based on human values. **In this beautiful song, Swami gives us the quintessence of Vedanta and how to reach the goal of life namely, liberation itself.** Everybody makes resolutions on New Year's Day. Let us make ours based on the fundamental principles espoused in this song. [▶ Click here to listen to the song](#)

Stanza 1

Sathya Dharmamu Shanthi

Premalatho

Nee Nithya Jeevana Yatra Saginchu

(Jeeva...)

O Jeeva (Embodied Soul)!

Carry on your daily life's pilgrimage with *Sathya* (Truth), *Dharma* (Right action), *Shanthi* (Peace) and *Prema* (Love) as your companions/guides.

Yathna Prayathnamul Maanava

Dharmamu

Jayapajayamulu Daivaadheenamu

(Sathya Dharmamu...)

Man's duty is to put forth effort after effort. Success or failure depends on God's will.

This stanza encapsulates the essence of the song. Swami says that our life is a pilgrimage that we should complete by practicing the values of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthi*, and *Prema*. He says very beautifully, *Yathna Prayathnamul Maanava Dharmamu*—**Our duty is only to put forth the effort, and sincere effort.**

In His writings in *Prema Vahini*, Swami notes that there are three types of people that can be recognized among those who seek to do good deeds and tread the path of self-realization.

1. Those who are too frightened by troubles, losses, and difficulties to begin the endeavor. They are of the lowest type.
2. Those who, after having undertaken the journey and gone some distance, are depressed and defeated by obstacles and disappointments and give up in the middle. They are of the middling type.
3. Those who steadfastly adhere to the path with calmness and courage, whatever the nature of the travail, however hard the road; these are, of course, of the highest type. This steadfastness, this

faith, and constancy is the characteristic of the devotee (*bhakta*).

That is why Swami says, "Effort and sincere effort is our duty." But we must remember, *Jayapajayamulu Daivaadheenamu*—success and failure are in His hands. Some people think incorrectly that surrender means Swami will take care of the effort too. Swami did not say that we should surrender our effort. He only said to surrender the results of our effort. **We must make a sincere effort and surrender the results to Him.**

That is why Jesus also said, "Ask and it shall be given." Let us go on asking. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We should go on knocking till He opens. He is so kind. But we need to have intense faith. He wants to see how sincere we are and how earnest our prayers are. **That is why we should continue our efforts with determination.**

Stanza 2

Bhakthithoda Bhagavanthuni

Dalachuchu

Nithya Dharmamulu Nirvarthinchina

Atti Janakunaku Rajayogamuna

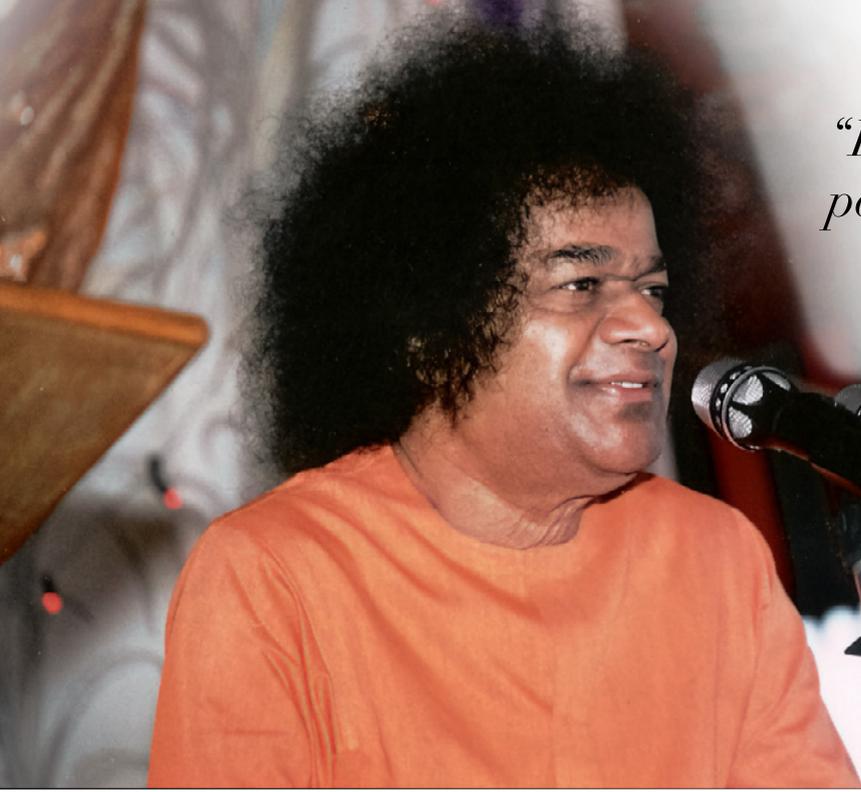
Andaraani Mokshambu Andene

(Sathya Dharmamu...)

King Janaka attained the unattainable *Moksha* (liberation) by carrying out his royal duties, duly contemplating on God with devotion.

In this stanza, He gives the example of King Janaka, the father of Mother Sita. Janaka is also called *Videha*, the one who does not have body consciousness. Swami says he attained the highest goal—*Moksha*, liberation, by discharging his daily duties, while always remembering God with devotion.

This is the simplest path to our liberation. Bhagawan Baba says the mind should be saturated with thoughts of God while the hands should do God's work—**head in forest, hands in society.** If we do that, He says, the results are assured.



“*Karunakai kaachi pondandee*” — “I will never leave you but you have to patiently wait for my Grace.” He will accomplish the task in His own time.

Every work must be done to perfection. Swami did not say to do your best only for big things. Even a small act must be done to the best of our ability. Swami Vivekananda said a cobbler who makes the best pair of shoes is as great as the king who rules the kingdom. Whatever work we do, Swami expects us to do our best.

Swami assures us, “Constantly remembering God, do your work to the best of your ability and you will get *Moksha* (Liberation).”

Stanzas 3-4

*Hridaya Bhoomulu Saagu-cheyandi
Mee Manasu Madakaga Gunamule
Yeddul
Vivekamanu Chalakolanu Theesi
Vishaalamagu Mee Hrudayamu
Dunnudu (Sathya Dharmamu...)*

Cultivate the land of your hearts. With your mind as the plow, good qualities as the bullocks, discrimination as the whip, plough the extensive land of your hearts.

*Manava dhairyame Manchi Yeruvuga
Premadharale Panta-vittuluga
Bhakthe
Varshamu Bhaavame Kalupulu*

*Brahmaanandame Pandedi Panta
(Sathya Dharmamu...)*

Man’s courage is good manure. The streams of love are the seeds to be sown; devotion is the rain. Remove the weeds of unwanted ideas and emotions, and reap the rich harvest of *Brahmananda* (Divine Bliss).

In the previous stanza, Swami describes how we can attain *Moksha*. In stanzas 3 and 4, He discusses *Brahmananda*, Supreme Bliss. We all want little pleasures (*Vishayananda*). But *Brahmananda* is the highest bliss. **According to Taittiriya Upanishad, *Brahmananda* is quintillion times (10^{18}) greater than ordinary *Ananda***, referred to as *manushyananda*, which is the happiness experienced by a person who is youthful, physically strong, handsome, intellectual, scholarly, very wealthy, extremely powerful, famous, and endowed with noble character. How do we get *Brahmananda*? Swami gives us a beautiful metaphor. The heart is like a field. The plow is our mind. The good virtues we develop are bullocks. The whip controlling the bullocks is discrimination. Swami wants us to possess fundamental discrimination. Whatever we do, we must ask ourselves,

“Is this good; is it for the highest good of society and for everybody?” That is fundamental discrimination. **We need to follow fundamental discrimination for our ultimate good and the good of all.**

What is the manure? It is courage. Sometimes we get discouraged by obstacles and troubles. We should have the courage that we will achieve our goal with divine grace. And what are the seeds? Swami says love is the seed. Rain is devotion. If we want a good harvest, we must have all these ingredients. **The entire harvest is Brahmananda. If we want Brahmananda, we need to cultivate our heart with the help of the mind and good virtues using the whip of fundamental discrimination, the manure of courage, and the seeds of love.** The rain of devotion will make the seeds sprout and produce the harvest of *Brahmananda* (Eternal bliss).

Stanza 5

*Prakruti Dharmamu Pattu Vidakandi
Karma-yogame Janma Dharmambu
Smarane Maanava Janma-rahasyamu
Saadhane Bhakthula Saara-
lakshanamu (Sathya Dharmamu...)*

Don't lose hold of *Prakriti Dharma* (natural duty). *Karma yoga* sanctifies your life. The secret of human birth is *Smarana* (constant remembrance of God). *Sadhana* (spiritual practice) is the hallmark of devotees.

In this stanza, Swami is reiterating that we should do our *Prakriti Dharma*, which is our natural *Dharma*. We all have duties as a householder, a husband, a wife, etc.; or, in the workplace as a boss or an employee; or in the organization as an officer or a devotee. Whatever is our *Dharma*, we must do our duty with utmost sincerity.

Swami says, *Karmayogame janma dharmambu*, i.e., we must do our *Karma* or actions as our obligation. From the time we are born till our very last breath, we

must continue to discharge our duties. That is why even Bhagawan Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* (3:22), “*Na me partha asthi karthavyam trishu lokeshu kinchana; Na anavaaptam avaaptavyam vartha eva cha karmaani.*” **“In these three worlds, I don't have any work to do but to set an example I do work.”** Swami was the best example of this advice. He spent every minute of His time for the welfare of humanity; serving, guiding, and protecting everyone. I remember the time when He had a hip fracture, and we were there with Swami. He had a bundle of letters, and despite his painful condition, He still read them, answered them, and showered His blessings in His responses. **He set an example for us, showing us how to do work as *nishkama karma* (selfless service).**

Swami says *Smarane Manava Janma rahasyamu*—remembrance of God is the secret of life. Like Prahlada, we also should constantly remember God. Another great example is Hanuman who exemplified the devotional aspect of servitude toward Sri Rama. Even though he was always doing Lord's work, every hair of his body was constantly repeating *Rama, Rama, Rama*. That is real *Sadhana* (spiritual practice). **Remembering Him always and doing His work is real *Sadhana*.**

Stanza 6

*Kashta-sukhamulu Karmalanakandi
Mana Ishta-lopame Kashtamaunandi
Pattuvidaka Aa Paadamu Kolichina
Gattu-gerchuta Tana Paniyenu
(Sathya Dharmamu...)*

Don't say that difficulties and pleasures are our *Karma* (fate). When our desires are not fulfilled, we call it suffering. If you worship His lotus feet with dedication and determination, it is His duty to take us to the other shore of the river of *Samsara* (worldly life).

We all go through *Kashtalu* and *sukhamulu*—difficulties and pleasures in life. Swami says we should not blame *Karma* for this. **Our likes and dislikes are responsible for our pains or pleasures.** The objects by themselves are neither good nor bad. It is our attitude towards them that makes the difference. What is good at one time may not be good at another time. That is why Baba says that we should not blame *Karma*.

Hence we need to go beyond likes and dislikes. The best way to go above all this is by “*Pattu-vidaka aa padamu kolichina Gattu-cherrchuta Tana Paniyenu*—steadfastly, hold onto His feet and worship Him, then He will take you across the ocean of Samsara.” Swami’s first message was the bhajan “*Manasa Bhajare.*” **“Worship the Guru’s Feet in your heart and He will take you across the ocean of Samsara.”** So we should never leave His feet.

Stanza 7

*Yedanu Vidadu Yedabaayaledu
Mimmeluchundu Ye Velanu Sai
Karunaye Athadu Athade Karunani
Karunakai Kaachi Pondandee
(Sathya Dharmamu...)*

Sai will not leave your heart. He will never desert you. He will take care of you at all times. Sai is Compassion. Compassion itself is Sai. Seek and wait for His compassion.

If we remember this stanza, we will never be unhappy, despondent or depressed.

Swami says once we are His, even though we may want to leave Him, He will not let us go. He is also assuring us of this promise forcefully: Sai will protect you at all times, whether you are in the sky or on earth, whether you are in a forest or in a town or in a village. **Let us always remember this assurance of Swami.**

He declared that Sai is compassion and compassion itself is Sai. But there is a

condition “*Karunakai kaachi pondandee*”—“I will never leave you but you have to patiently wait for my Grace.” He will accomplish the task in His own time. **His delays are not denials**, although we get impatient with Him. As an example, in June, Swami told the parents of a girl that she would get married in December. The family, friends, and all others got ready in December. They were well prepared for the event with jewelry and other arrangements. But December came and went. There was no marriage. Next December came and went, again there was no marriage. Obviously, they were all disappointed, including the girl. Then the girl came to America and after a long wait of 18 years, she did get married in December. Swami kept His word, but she had to wait for 18 years. Most people do not have patience and do not want to wait. **Swami’s great Mantra often heard during darshan was, “Wait. Wait. Wait.”** We need to wait patiently in order to receive His grace and blessings.

Stanza 8

*Ashtasiddula Saadhanendulaku
Adi Vatti Brahmaltho Kattiveyunuga
Dattamaina Ee Jeevitaatavilo
Vatti Naamame Pattapagalau
(Sathya Dharmamu...)*

Why do you hanker after *Ashta Siddhis* (the power of eight-fold miracles)? It only binds you with illusory ambitions. In the dense jungle of this life, only God’s name is the bright daylight.

In this stanza, Swami is describing the best and simplest *Sadhana* (spiritual practice). People resort to *Hatha yoga, Kriya yoga, and other practices to get Siddhis* (special powers). Swami says that these powers will bind you in delusion. **Just remembering His name and repeating “Sai, Sai” will take us to the goal.** If we cry out for Him with sincerity, if we ask for Him sincerely, He will come. Swami says, “*Votti naamame.*” Just

repeating His name will take us across the ocean of life. *In the dense jungle of this life, only God's name is the bright daylight.* In one of His letters to students and teachers, Swami wrote that **those who have the name of Sai always on their lips will become "Jeevanmuktas" (liberated while alive.)**

Stanza 9

*Modati Pattunu Vidavabokandi
Aadipattulone Bhakthi Pattandi
Yenni Bhadhala Pondina Bhagavat
Chintana Maatramu Vidakandi
(Sathya Dharmamu...)*

Don't give up your first hold. Hold on fast to your initial attitude of devotion. Don't give up the thought of God even though you are afflicted by ever so many difficulties or sufferings.

This last stanza is very important. Baba advises us to be steadfast in devotion from the very beginning and not let go of our hold.

Life is not easy, but **the travails, sorrows, and tests are temporary, and they are meant for our spiritual progress.** Swami gives the tests, but He also takes care of us. We should remember Him always and pray to Him in earnest. He listens to every prayer, but He will answer at the right time. **In the words of Shirdi Sai Baba, we need to have faith and patience (*shraddha and saburi*).**

We must put God first. **SAI: Swami first, All others next, I last.** His very name **SAI** conveys this important message. We should always give the highest importance to Swami and His name, His glory, and His message.



When we call out His name, "Sai Baba" we need to remember that Swami is our mother and father. To attain **SAI** we need to do three things. "**S**" for service. "**A**" for adoration. "**I**" for illumination. These three paths also stand for *Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana*. We should perform selfless service and sing His glory remembering His wonderful *Leelas* (divine play). We should also do self-inquiry. **Then we will realize SAI—that Sai And I are One.**

Let us pray to Swami to bless us so that we can welcome the New Year with dedication and determination to remember Him and do His work.

Jai Sai Ram.

[!\[\]\(94480c799e843c3a4dcfaf8c99e6db79_img.jpg\) Click here to listen to the song](#)



Cultivate Forgiveness and Love

Embodiments of love! There is no better ornament than charity for the hand, Truth is the ornament for the tongue, and the scriptures are the ornaments for the ears. There are no ornaments better than these.

*Prema rupambu brahmambu premamayamu
Prema premano sandhimpam neemamagunu
Kaana premano gattigaa kaligiyunna
Adviteeyamu pondanga arhudagunu*

(Telugu Poem)

Love is the form of Brahman.

Brahman is permeated by LOVE.

Only Love can match love.

Therefore, when one is firmly established in Love one becomes eligible to attain the non-dual state.

“*To achieve unity, we must cultivate and improve humanness by declaring, ‘I am not an animal, I am not a demon, I am a human being.’*”

The essential aim of love is sacrifice. Under no circumstance, love gives room for hatred. It is love that brings even a person far away closer and more intimate to you. *Prema* (Love) is the *Prana* (Life Force) of man, and the *Prana* itself is *Prema*. Living without love is like being a corpse. Love is shown only to persons who are alive. Love and life are, therefore, interrelated and intimately connected. It is love that drives away the feeling of separateness and promotes the feeling of Oneness.

Divine Love has No Selfish Motives and Self-interest

In this worldly life, love manifests in several forms, such as the love between mother and son, between husband and wife, and relatives. This love, based on physical relationships arises out of selfish motives and self-interest. But the love for the Divine is devoid of any traces of self-interest. It is love for the sake of love alone. This is called *Bhakti* (devotion) by the ancients. **This love has three aspects in the form of a triangle.**

- One (characteristic) aspect of this love is to give and not to receive.
- Second, love knows no fear.
- And third, pure Love is only for love's sake without any selfish motive.

All these three angles of love jointly indicate surrender (*Prapatthi*). When one revels in this attitude of surrender (*Prapatthi*), one experiences the bliss of the Divine and experiences the principle of the Spirit (*Atma*). For this, the prime requisite is *Kshama* (forbearance).

Forbearance Grows in Times of Difficulties

Only a person who has this attitude of forbearance (*Kshama*) can be considered to be endowed with sacred love. This cannot be learned from textbooks. Nor can it be acquired from preceptors or from anyone else. **It is to be cultivated by oneself in times of difficulties, trials, and tribulations. Only when we face problems and difficulties that cause grief and misery this quality of forbearance and forgiveness has the scope for taking root and grow.** When you are confronted with problems and difficulties, you should not get upset and become a victim of depression which is a sign of weakness. In such a situation, you should bring tolerance and an attitude of forgiveness into play and should not get agitated giving rise to anger, hatred, and revenge. You are embodiments of strength and not weakness. Therefore, in times of despair, you should be filled with the feeling of forbearance and be ready to forgive and forget. This quality of *Kshama* is the greatest power for a human being. **There is no power in the world that is greater than *Kshama*.**

Kshama is Sathyam, Truth
Kshama is Dharma, Right Action
Kshama is Ahimsa, Non-Violence
Kshama is Yajna, Sacrifice
Kshama is Santhoshamu, Happiness
Kshama is Daya, Compassion
Kshama is everything in all the worlds.

Human Beings Should Shine with Quality of Forbearance (*Kshama*)

The moment one gives up this great quality of forbearance, the evil qualities of anger,

hatred, and jealousy creep in, making him lose his human nature itself, driving him to indulge in wicked deeds of demonic nature and even to descend to animal nature. Human beings should shine with human qualities. Today we find jealousy and hatred dancing like devils all over the world. People with jealousy and hatred are pursuing the wicked path and bringing ruin to themselves. The best example of this is the Kauravas in the Mahabharata. The brothers Duryodhana and Dusshasana were the embodiments of the twin evils of hatred and jealousy. Krishna told Dharmaja, the eldest of the Pandavas, that the Kauravas who were replete with these evil qualities could never become better and imbibe human qualities. Karna, who was an embodiment of ego, joined their company with Shakuni as the evil adviser adding fuel to the fire. Though Duryodhana and Dusshaasana were born into a notable royal family, they gave up human qualities due to jealousy and hatred and brought ruin to the family and death to the clan. **Krishna added that jealousy is a dangerous canker that eats at the root of the tree of life, while hatred is the pest that attacks the trunk of the tree.** Thus, the tree of life is completely destroyed by both these pests. The Kauravas were victims of these twin pests and sought their own ruin.

Mind is the Reason for Sorrow and Bliss

One may raise the question as to how to get over these dangerous pests of jealousy and hatred. This is possible when you make all the sense organs act in unison. When this happens, forbearance (*Kshama*) improves, and one can overcome jealousy and hatred. When there is forbearance, all organs coordinate harmoniously and work in unison.

In Shakespeare's drama, one character (King Richard) is always jealous of others. This led to his ruin and eventual death.

Bhasmasura, the notorious demon, did great penance and secured Lord Shiva's grace. He prayed for the boon that on whose head he keeps his hand will be burned to ashes. What happened to him? In a divine enacted play, ultimately, he was led to touch his own head and burn himself to ashes.

Anger begets anger. Jealousy begets jealousy. There is no other way out of these. Unity is the right medicine for these. **To achieve unity, we must cultivate and improve humanness by declaring, 'I am not an animal, I am not a demon, I am a human being.'** When we contemplate on this human aspect and divinity, the demonic qualities can be distanced. We need to take some time to make an effort for this.

Once Buddha was traveling. One demoness brandished a sword against Lord Buddha. The demoness threatened, "O Buddha, in a trice, I will end your life and eat you." The demoness said I am jealous of your greatness and your growing popularity. Buddha smiled in response and said, "O jealous demoness, I love you too." Listening to this, the demoness felt ashamed. "Does Buddha love me too," she wondered. The demoness felt the large-heartedness of Buddha. The demoness felt ashamed and changed into a dove, conveying His message of peace. This is the power of forbearance. We should forgive those that have hatred toward us. **We should forgive those that hurt us. This quality of forbearance becomes armor for us.**

In this world, good or bad is not because of time. The New Year will not bring comfort and happiness. The cycle of sunset and sunrise results in days. The days turn to months, and the months to years. They follow this order. So, time is not the reason for pleasure or sorrow. You are wondering what kind of pleasant experiences the New Year will bring. This kind of thinking

“...when you sit near God, what will happen?
Your bad qualities and bad thoughts will become
distant. We acquire God’s good qualities and
sacred thoughts.

is a sign of weakness. **For all our difficulties, pleasant experiences, sorrow, and our blissful experiences, our mind is the reason. It is not the time that is responsible. If our mind is good, everything good will take place.**

Surrender Only to God

Time is merely a witness. Time is in the form of God. God is the form of *Chith* (Constant Integrated Awareness). Is it not foolishness that one would experience sorrow through this principle of God? God is like a mirror. In this mirror, you see a reflection of your own actions but not of God. Devotees pray to God through nine types of devotion. The nine types of devotion are *Shravanam* (listening to the glory of the Lord), *Keerthanam* (singing the glory of the Lord), *Vishnusmaranam* (remembering the name of the Lord), *Padasevanam* (worshipping the lotus feet of the Lord), *Vandanam* (saluting), *Archanam* (worshipping), *Daasyam* (obedient service), *Sneham* (friendship) and *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender). **God is accepting the prayers and services rendered through these nine ways. God in return, confers them the sacred fruits of these prayers.** People remember what they offered to God but do not remember what they received from God. If God does not give, then there will be no life. Everything is God’s gift. The Lord has said,

*Sarva Dharmaan Parithyajya,
Mam Ekam Sharanam Vraja*

Renouncing all other *Dharmas*
(duties and beliefs), surrender to Me
alone

As a student has said, each type of these *dharmas* (in this case, duties and beliefs) is like a paise in a rupee. There are one hundred paise in one rupee. In one hundred rupees, there are 10,000 paise. If these 10,000 paise are to be gathered in a cloth, tied together, and carried, it would be heavy to carry. In addition, safeguarding these 10,000 paise would be difficult as well. So, God says, “O madcap! Why are you carrying such a heavy weight, and why are you worried about safeguarding these?” God says, “give me those 10,000 paise. I will give you the equivalent of a one hundred rupees currency note (bill).” Not knowing the equivalency of the 10,000 paise and the one hundred rupees bill, the foolish person thinks, taking 10,000 paise, God gives one small paper of one hundred rupees bill? The person wonders, “is this all God gives us?” However, the person does not realize that the 10,000 paise and the one hundred rupees bill are the same. There is no difference. **God provides security to devotees with such an attitude of surrender.**

Treat Pleasure and Pain as the Same

So, whatever happens, consider it as God’s Grace. Without difficulties, there is no pleasure. We should consider both pleasure and pain with equanimity. Some people think, “God gives us pleasure for some time and pain for some time. Why should there be this change?” If we receive pleasure for all 24 hours, we will not know the value of pleasure. If we eat at 10 AM, would we eat again at 11 AM or 12 PM? We cannot. We will wait and eat at 4 PM. Why do we take this

“*Being a human, you should make others happy. This is the principle of love. Where is this love? Your heart is full of love.*”

much time to eat? This is because what we eat needs to be digested. Only after food is digested can we eat again. For the food to be digested, we are giving some gaps in between.

In whichever way you offer worship, God responds in the same way. Man conveniently forgets what he gets. Without God's Grace living itself will be impossible for humankind. Even the troubles you may experience are the gifts of the Divine. **When you surrender all your actions, you will surely receive His Grace. This is the purport of the Gita Sloka “Sarvadharmān Parithyajya Mamekam Sharanam Vraja.”**

Take Whatever is Given by God as Good for You

The mother gets the pleasure of seeing her baby after going through severe labor pains. If you sit in an air-conditioned room 24 hours of a day, you cannot enjoy the pleasure of it. Only after being away in the hot Sun will you appreciate and enjoy the coolness of the room. After the Mahabharata war was over, Krishna asked Kunthi, the mother of Pandavas, what boon she wanted. She requested that she should be blessed with troubles always, for, then alone she would constantly remember God as the Pandavas did during the exile of 12 years in the forest. She said she was not thinking of God when she was enjoying the palace life as a queen earlier. “While experiencing the comforts of the palace, I did not contemplate on you. When my sons were experiencing difficulties for 12 years, I contemplated on you, Krishna, Krishna, every moment and prayed to you.

So, to contemplate and chant your name, please bestow difficulties on me,” Kunthi prayed. **The sweetness in chanting and contemplating on God during difficulties is not experienced when one is enjoying comforts.**

Joy and Sorrow Go Together

Life is a mixture of sorrow and joy, just as day and night. Some people may wonder why there should be night. Why not just daytime all the while? Because, people who toil during the day can rest during the nighttime. If there is only daylight all the time, one cannot take the well-deserved rest after a hard day's toil, and there will not be value to one's life. Pleasure is an interval between two pains; we should accept this. There is sweet juice inside the orange fruit. But it is covered by the bitter outer rind. It is the bitter rind that protects the juice inside. **So too, we should face difficulties and losses with forbearance and accept them as a gift from God. Life is a challenge, meet it.** We should face these challenges using all available means. We need forbearance to face these difficulties and losses. Man is the embodiment of the quality of forbearance (*Kshama*). There is nothing in this world that you cannot achieve with this quality.

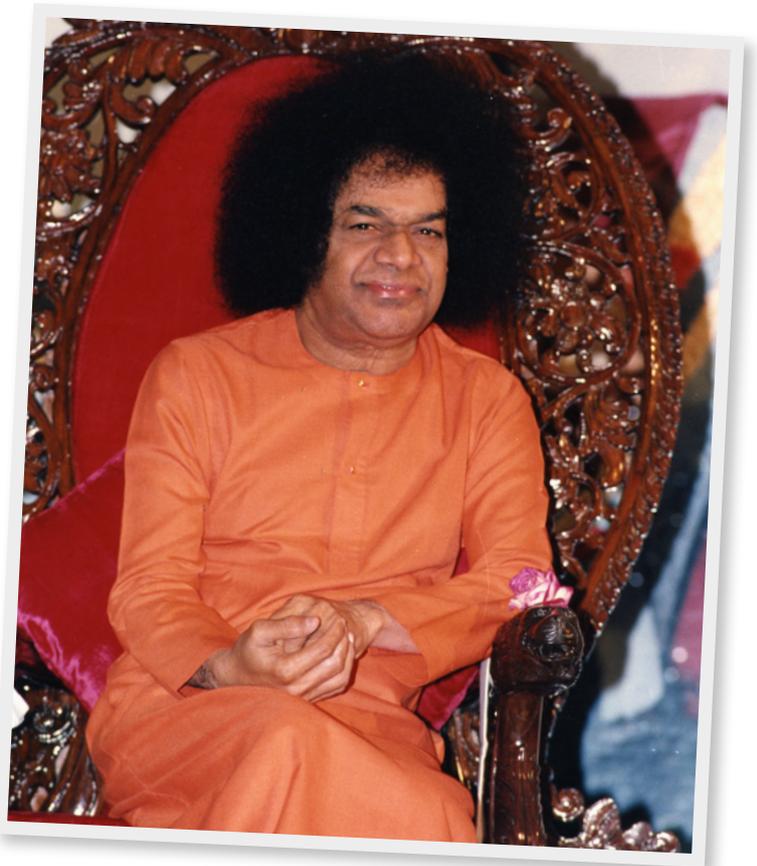
God's Proximity Bestows Good Results

We are now bidding farewell to 1993 and welcoming the New Year, 1994. There is an intimate relationship between the two years. We give a send-off to one while welcoming the new one. **In the same way, we should bid farewell to bad qualities and welcome good divine qualities.**

One should offer all bad qualities to God and receive good qualities from Him. One should improve sacred qualities in oneself. There is nothing wrong in offering bad qualities to God. In reality, what we have to offer to God are our bad qualities. It is only God who can accept and bear them. For example, if you have a hundred-rupee currency note which is soiled, dirty, with streaks of oil, does not look pleasing, and cannot even be touched; no one will accept it. But, if the banknote number is intact, the Reserve Bank will accept it and give a new note of the same value in return. Only Reserve Bank will accept and no one else. Similarly, shortcomings, bad thoughts, and bad feelings will not be accepted and hailed by anyone. Only God will readily accept them and will confer blissful results.

True Significance of Upavasa and Upasana

If people offer all the bad qualities to God, God bestows good in return. This is also called *Upavasa* (living in proximity) and *Upasana* (sitting near God) in our customs. People generally believe that *Upavasa* means only curtailing usual food and taking some light snack items other than staple food. This is not the proper interpretation of *Upavasa*. The true *Upavasa* means being in the proximity of God or sitting near God. What is the result of such proximity? You get away from worldly suffering and enjoy the coolness of sitting near an air-conditioner. **Likewise, when you sit near God, what will happen? Your bad qualities and bad thoughts will become distant. We acquire God's good qualities and sacred thoughts.** This is the true significance of *Upasana*, which



improves the intimate relationship with God. Unfortunately, people interpret it with distorted meanings.

The year 1993 was really an eventful one with a lot of dreadful happenings all over the world in various areas, including moral, spiritual, worldly, and scientific spheres. Many people are thinking about how the upcoming year will be. It is neither 1993 nor 1994 that confer good or bad results. Cultivate good qualities and good thoughts and give up jealousy and hatred. "May All the Worlds Be Happy," and everyone will have a comfortable life. One should not think that others are giving us sorrow. **It is one's own bad qualities that bring sorrow, and one's good qualities confer comfort.**

Time is also an essential part of this. We do not have to be afraid of the year. We should feel blissful by observing the transformation of the Heart. There should be a sacred transformation of the Heart.

Keep God as Your Guide and Savior

One moon is reflected in hundreds of thousands of pots. There are no hundreds of thousands of moons. The pots that reflect

the moon are different, but the moon is one. “*Ekoham Bahushyaam*” (the One that became many) and “*Ekam Eva advith-eeyam*” (There is only One *Brahman*, not two); there is no second. If you place a zero next to one, it becomes ten, with two zeroes next to one making it one hundred, three zeroes will make it 1,000, and so on, it will become millions and millions. If we take out the one, everything becomes zero. All the millions are unified in one. The world is zero, Sun is Zero, and Moon is Zero. They are all round and shaped like zero only. All these get value because of the one God behind them. **God is the only Hero, and all else are zeroes.**

Keeping God as your guide and savior, whatever work you may do will yield sure success and comfort. God is your only true, eternal, and real friend. All other friends may be with you as long as you have wealth, but the moment you lose everything, the friends will desert you. God is the only friend who will ever be with you. He is always with you, in you, and besides you. He will not leave you at any time. So we must develop friendship with God. That is true friendship (*mythri*). Therefore, the only way for the prosperity of the nation is to develop a friendship with the Lord.

**As Love Continues to be Shared,
the World will be Filled with Love**

Being a human, you should make others happy. This is the principle of love. Where is this love? Your heart is full of love. Having a heart filled with love, why is this love not being shared with two or three people each day, and why is it becoming rotten without getting shared? When you have some edible dish, either you eat it or serve it to others. Otherwise, it will get spoiled. Your heart is full of love. You must share your love with at least five people each day. **If each one shares this love with five people a day, the world will be filled with love.**

We should have full faith in the omnipresence of God, practice it, experience it, and share it with people.

*Adaviyandunna Akaasamuna-nunna
Pattanamuna-nunna palle-nunna
Gutta-meeda nunna Natteta
padiyunna*

Dikkuleni-variki devude dikku

(Telugu Poem)

*Even if we are in the forest
or in the sky*

In the city or in a village

On the top of a hillock

or in the middle of a river

God is the only savior for the forlorn.

Wherever you are, God will look after you. Having faith in this principle, we should practice it. Having practiced, we should experience it. Having experienced the Bliss, we should share it with others. That is the true spiritual principle. Everything is in Love. So, we must experience this principle of Love and begin the New Year with Love:

Start the day with Love

Fill the day with Love

Spend the day with Love

End the day with Love

This is the way to God

On this day, we should start with love in all aspects. The country will prosper with this love. There should be no difference in nationality, caste, creed, and religion. **“May all the worlds be happy.”** When all are living happily, we will be happy. If we desire the comfort of all and cultivate the principle of Love, the country will prosper, the world will prosper, and the country will be filled with Love.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

January 1, 1994



Journey to Self-Realization

Part 3

In this third of a series of three articles, a USA devotee describes his journey to Sai Baba and, ultimately, to Self-realization. The first and second parts appeared in the previous issues (Volume 1, Issues 9 & 10) of Sathya Sai – The Eternal Companion.

A Personal Invitation

When I told my wife Rose about the appearance of the ash, she said, “Well, that’s nice. If Sai Baba sends us a personal invitation, then maybe we should go to India to visit him.” The chance of someone on the opposite side of the world sending a personal invitation to someone they had never met before seemed remote to me. We had been to India in 1973 when we were in college, but we did not know about Sathya Sai Baba then. **We were soon to learn that no obstacles could come in the way of divine will.**

When all of this was happening, in the late fall of 1978, my mother began planning to take a tour group to India to visit Sai Baba’s Ashram at Prasanthi Nilayam. My mother soon put together a nicely typeset invitational flyer to mail to prospects for her travel group. We received our copy shortly after the second manifestation of holy ash. On the top of the flyer’s front page, it was written in bold, “This is your **personal invitation** to visit Sathya Sai Baba in India!”

But, at that time, we had other challenges in planning such a trip. We were both relatively young, just 25, and had neither the time nor the money for the trip to India. However, a commercial real estate deal suddenly came my way at the real estate office where I worked. It was a transaction to purchase 110 acres of commer-

I instantly felt as though my field of vision had widened. I felt light and bright, and time stood still.

cial land for my employer's client. When the transaction closed escrow, I received a check for \$10,500.00. That was a princely sum in 1978 and was more than enough for a trip to India. Just as I received the check, my real estate broker delivered the shocking message, saying, "You are fired!" Apparently, he thought he could get my attention this way and motivate me. I felt, instead, now I have both the time and money to pursue the trip to India!

By the end of January 1979, Rose and I climbed aboard a Boeing 747 bound for India to the garden city of Bangalore en route to the little village of Puttaparthi, a remote hamlet in Andhra Pradesh state.

Interview and Practice

Rose and I soon reached Puttaparthi, located about 114 miles north of Bangalore. We were allotted a small room in the West Prasanthi housing block. Near the end of our visit, in mid-March 1979, we were called into the *mandir* (temple) for an interview with Sai Baba. We were in a group of about 15 to 20 people of different nationalities. During that interview, we had the opportunity to ask a few spiritual questions.

I asked Sai Baba if the Self-realization experience that I had when I was 18 years old in college was the genuine state of spiritual consciousness that I was striving for. He answered, "Yes." Although I knew in my heart that it was the goal I was seeking, I still wanted Him to confirm it. Before leaving the *Ashram* several days later, Sai Baba came out for *darshan* and stood directly in front of me, granting me the opportunity for *padanamaskar* (saluting the Divine Feet)

before leaving. That first of many trips to Swami lasted for six weeks and confirmed our hopes and beliefs in what we found.

On returning to Tucson, Arizona, I involved myself intensively with the activities of the local Sai Baba Center, participating in service activities that I understood to be key to attaining my ultimate goal. **My original Self-realization experience had arrived concurrently with the resolution to do service.** But, in the excitement and bliss of that initial experience, I had focused on the result and had forgotten the causal part service played in bringing about that state.

Soon after that first trip to India, I began serving as an officer of the Sai Baba Center, which started to meet at my home soon after. In the spring of 1979, we held the first Arizona Sai Baba retreat. In 1980, I started a writing project to provide study circle material on Sathya Sai Baba's teachings which later became the first volume of *Pathways to God*, completed in 1984 and published in 1991.

During that time, I attempted to apply myself diligently to understand Sai Baba's message and implement it in my life. I worked with intensity in the hope of regaining the Self-realization that I experienced so briefly in 1971. I was convinced of Sathya Sai Baba's divinity and was confident that His path would lead me to that goal. **I applied myself fully and intensely to serve the Sathya Sai Organization and work toward Self-transformation.** I was not trying specifically to do "service"; I was only trying to meet the needs of the devotees and the organization in any way I could.

My center of consciousness also suddenly shifted from the head to the heart. In a flash, all thoughts and desires disappeared.

Realization of the Goal

On January 30, 1987, Rose and I stayed in Bangalore at the Taj Hotel on Mahatma Gandhi Road. We drove back and forth from the *ashram* in Whitefield for *darshan* twice a day, morning and evening. After visiting Whitefield for *darshan* that day, we returned to the hotel. Shortly after dinner, I purchased a book in the hotel bookstore titled '*Be as You Are: The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi*' by David Godman.

I read a statement in the book that suddenly struck me. And I experienced that change of consciousness that I had experienced only once before. I again felt the rush of bliss and light I had experienced as an 18-year-old college student.

More than 15 years had passed since that original experience, but the sensations were unmistakably the same. I instantly felt as though my field of vision had widened. I felt light and bright, and time stood still. Again, it was as though I were seeing objects around me for the first time. Suddenly, my entire mental focus changed in several respects. **At once, I felt that my consciousness had shifted from being directed toward external objects to being focused within.** I could not imagine that I needed anything outside of myself.

My center of consciousness also suddenly shifted from the head to the heart. In a flash, all thoughts and desires disappeared. The observer, the act of observing, and the objects of perception became one. Furthermore, after almost constantly yearning for this liberating experience for

more than 15 years, that desire too suddenly vanished! I felt connected and whole as I had never felt before. The experience was such a sudden and abrupt change of consciousness that it took my breath away.

Having briefly experienced that altered state earlier, I tried to avoid analyzing the experience too much. I did not want to relinquish the experience quickly, as I had done before. I was initially concerned that the experience would not last, but as minutes turned into hours, and hours turned into days, and days into weeks, I became stronger and more confident that the delusion had gone. **I experienced tremendous relief and peace upon attaining what I had long sought.** Delusion would not return. After more than 35 years until this day, the expanded consciousness of that state has remained with me always.

Sathya Sai Baba fulfilled my Heart's desire on that day.

Thus began a new exploration of consciousness that continues day by day. Also, the shift in consciousness to the heart opened up a new way of looking at things. Although the path of wisdom took me to the brink of my goal, the final destination was beyond its borders. **It is the heart that is our true guide and source of strength. But the opening of the heart only seemed to start in earnest at the time of spiritual awakening.** After that time, the opening of the heart was noticeably accelerated.

Several times, I have been asked how I have changed since that day in January 1987.

I am less and less prone to react to negative external situations. I experience a **greater sense of surrender to the divine will.**

Although little has changed externally in my life, everything has changed internally. I continue to experience progressively less agitation as time goes by. I am less and less prone to react to negative external situations. **I experience a greater sense of surrender to the divine will.** I also seem to act more and more from the heart than the head. I have also become better able to distinguish between the *Atma* and the body-mind-intellect, or *Anatma*.

It is, of course, easier to quietly enjoy the bliss of the inner Self without attracting

attention to oneself. But, if one has truly learned what Sai Baba has come to teach, one must know that we are all One. I would have wanted others to share their experiences of Self-realization with me when I was so desperate to know. How could this individual not share with others in a similar situation? Hence, I offer this account of my spiritual journey to Sri Sathya Sai Baba and all the fellow spiritual pilgrims on the path to Self-Realization. The results belong to Him.

Mr. Jonathan Roof
USA



Mr. Jonathan Roof is currently retired and living in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. Jonathan first visited Sathya Sai Baba in India in 1979. As a result of his interactions with Sai Baba, he wrote the three volumes of Pathways to God. The first volume came out in 1991 and the third volume in 2004. Jonathan served as an SSSIO officer in many capacities for 33 years. In 2011 he led the USA pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam. Mr. Roof was President of the Sathya Sai Baba Central Council USA from 2001 until 2011. He has spoken extensively at Sai conferences throughout the USA and Canada.

Be as Happy as Ever Whatever Happens

My dear Hislop,

Accept my blessings. Your letter and the circular sent for the direction of devotees reached me. I am very happy that things are progressing well. I am glad you are healthy and active.

Hislop! It is not advisable to publicise defects by mentioning them specifically. These are subjects that can be dealt with indirectly, rather than directly. We must encourage people to correct themselves by highlighting the good points; for the very goodness will shame the others into giving up their vices. When others develop their faith in the right path, those who are in the wrong will also try to fall in line. When we write about a certain defect in character and draw attention to it, undue importance is thereby given to the individuals. We are also likely to be misunderstood and maligned as prejudiced. Let us lay stress more on positive virtues and positive ideas among devotees in our Organisation - like love, service, brotherhood. Let these be the distinctive marks of our Organisation, making it distinct from the rest. Let us keep away from the undesirable and ignore it, steadily and silently. Discussing it and publicly condemning it will only soil us. Maintain the atmosphere of purity and divinity; there, evil cannot sprout or thrive.

I am happy that even at this old age you are so earnest and active in serving the Organisation. You are unique in this respect; no other has done so much. The Organisation in America is your responsibility. In order to help you in carrying the burden of work, Goldstein has been named in the World Council, that is all. Sai devotees have to give support to each other and share the labour. They must infuse into their groups love, courage, confidence, and a sense of sacrifice so that the Message can transform more and more into seekers and sadhaks of the Truth.

continued on page 23...



Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

TELE NO. 30
BRINDAVAN
WHITEFIELD-560 067
TELE NO. 36
PRASANTHINILAYAM P. O.
ANANTAPUR DT. 515134

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Dear Hislop ! I bless that you carry on your programme of directing and developing the Organisation with success. I am highly satisfied with what you have done and are doing in this respect. Of course, such success always attracts obstacles, opposition and even vilification. But, do not pay them any attention. The diamond becomes brighter with the cutting of more facets. One's duty is to continue along one's chosen path and fulfil the task, with undiminished enthusiasm. Truth cannot fail to be valued and appreciated,



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one day or other. Be as happy as ever, whatever happens.

My blessings to your wife. Convey my love and
blessings to Goldstein, Chrystal, Sandweiss and others.
Also to the Centres.

*With love and Blessings
Sri Sathya Sai Baba
(Baba)*

...continued from page 20

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With Love and Blessings
Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Baba

LOVE IN ACTION



ARGENTINA On Children's Day, What Goes Around Comes Around

On August 13, 2022, SSSIIO volunteers joined community members to celebrate Children's Day by serving food and delivering gifts to 70 children in need. The volunteers reminisced that, as children, they had experienced the same service with love in the same dining room and were happy to give back to the community. **Each year for the past 20 years**, the Sai Baba Foundation in Argentina has assisted the local soup kitchen with purchasing food, medicines, and toys for children.



AUSTRALIA Service Around the Nation

It has been service, service, and more service in Australia as SSSIIO volunteers helped fulfill local needs. They continued to serve their communities during the new wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

SSSIO members provided flood relief in multiple affected cities and contributed to women's hygiene items. A unique and innovative service involved **mothering orphaned baby possums**. The volunteers created boxes and pouches to imitate the possums' mothers' pouches.



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



KENYA

Distribution of Food to Drought-Stricken Families

Kenya is facing one of the most prolonged droughts in the last 40 years, lasting over three years. With the last rainfall in 2018, there has been no rain for over four years. Over **three million animals have perished and millions of people are starving**, without food and livelihood. To help alleviate the suffering, SSSIO volunteers from the Sai Centre, Kenya, undertook a massive food distribution during November 24-25, 2022, in honor of Swami's Birthday. Traveling over a distance of 480 km, they distributed 500 hampers of food in the Sosoma and Nuu regions of Mwingi – one to each needy family. Each hamper contained Unga, beans, rice, and salt and weighed 24 kg, enough to feed a family of seven for a month.

[Click here to view the video](#)



PARAGUAY

1,000 Cataract Surgeries

As an offering of love for the 100th anniversary of the advent of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the SSSIO of Paraguay set out to perform 1,000 cataract surgeries for needy and underserved people. The first 500 surgeries were completed on November 5, 2022.

To express gratitude to God for reaching this milestone, a Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption in Asuncion on November 6, 2022.

Many patients expressed their gratitude and love to the volunteers. An elderly patient remarked that she was unable to read the bible before. But **she was overjoyed that she could now read the Bible after the surgery.**

[Click here to view the video](#)



SSSIO ZONE 6



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA • CROATIA • FRANCE • GREECE • IRELAND • ISRAEL
ITALY • MACEDONIA • ROMANIA • SERBIA • SLOVENIA • SPAIN • SWITZERLAND • UK

ISRAEL



1990

Swami called an Israeli devotee for an interview in Kodaikanal.

With His blessings, the first group of Sai devotees began meeting in Tel Aviv.

1992

Israeli devotees visited Prasanthi Nilayam for the first time and started a Sai Center at Ein Hod.

1998

Israel participated in an interfaith rally of floats during Swami's 73rd Birthday Celebrations at Puttaparthi.

2001

In an interview, Swami directed devotees to start EHV (Education in Human Values) in Israel. Teachers received training in SSEHV.





2005

Israel participated in the 8th World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations.

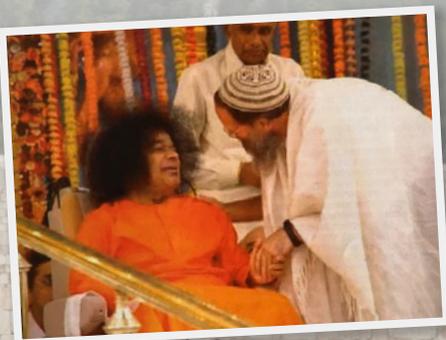
Israeli Rabbi, David Zeller, represented Judaism at the World Multi-Faith Conference at Puttaparthi.

2017

Interfaith meeting called “Many Cultures, One Soul” was organized by SSSIO Israel at a synagogue in Tel Aviv.

2019

Pre-World Conference on “Unity of Creation, Nature, and Man.”



Divine Mother Sai & Motherhood

“Past, present, or future, for all time, women are the backbone of progress, the heart of the nation, the very breath. They play the chief role in the dharma of life here below, a key role that is charged with holiness. The woman’s mission is to lay down the canons of righteousness and morality. She must provide children with moral and spiritual training. When the mother is imbued with dharma, the children get the benefit and get similarly saturated. When she is skilled in morals, the children learn to be moral. Therefore, the level of education among women decides whether a country is to prosper or decline. Her acts and conduct are crucial factors.”

–Sri Sai Sathya Sai Baba, Dharma Vahini

“Ana María,” Swami called out to my mother as we sat in the interview room. She was shocked and delighted at the same time to find that Sathya Sai Baba knew her name! As she expressed her wonder and joy through the eloquence of silence, Swami continued, *“You are very worried about your daughter; she comes and goes from here to there.”* As a 9-year-old child in 1986, I was a handful and kept moving about here and there in the Prasanthi Nilayam *ashram*. I kept making friends with other children and played all day until I collapsed in bed at night. To make matters worse, I did not understand English and could not make out anything the volunteers told me in the *ashram*. My mother replied, *“Yes, Swami, I am worried...”* That was when Sai, with the love of a thousand mothers, tenderly reassured her in a whisper, *“Do not worry about anything; your daughter is a good girl...good girl.”* **Those words were enough for my mother to calm down and trust that Swami is watching over us constantly!**

Love at First Sight

I was blessed with the grace of “knowing” Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba through my mother when I was just six. I was immediately convinced that Sai was much more than just a “*Guru*” (a spiritual master)— He was omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. I felt close to Him, as a mother, as a father, as a friend, and as a confidante, despite not having seen Him physically.

We lived in Argentina, far away from India. However, we had the chance to travel to Puttaparthi and be in His Divine Presence for the first time in 1986. I was only nine years old, but by then, I had attended the Sai Centre in my city, Buenos Aires, for three years. I learned His teachings through books, speeches, workshops, and talks on human values. I also heard about devotees’ experiences with Him that transformed their lives permanently.

During that visit, Sai Baba welcomed us, along with several other devotees, in His interview room. He ensured that all of us felt comfortable and, as the Divine Mother, showered His love on us, attending to every detail. He turned the fans on when it was hot, distributed presents and sweets, and lovingly spoke with each of us. At that time, He reassured my mother about me, as I mentioned earlier. There was no turning back for me ever since. **He was installed in my heart, and will always be there.**

Mother of Mothers

I had the blessed opportunity to travel to India with the rest of my family on many other occasions. I even lived there for three years. I divided my time between Prasanthi Nilayam and the Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values in the city of Mumbai, first as a student and later as a faculty member. During those three years in India, Swami guided me as a Divine Mother, and I took every step, trusting Him. I can share thousands of anecdotes and miracles about His omnipresence, omniscience, and love, but I would like to focus on one in particular.

One day, my mother phoned me and said that after much hard work, she had saved enough money to visit me. In those days, traveling to India was expensive, and I was overjoyed at the prospect of seeing my mother again after a long time. She arrived in Prasanthi Nilayam in December 2007 to spend the holidays with me. Due to our Christian upbringing, celebrating Jesus’ birthday was always very important for our family, as it was a deeply emotional connection. On the night of December 24, I was thrilled to learn that I would give a speech the next day along with another young man. We were told to share our experiences with Sathya Sai and how He transformed our lives and guided us. Furthermore, we were going to speak in Swami’s presence and before a packed Christmas



audience of more than 15,000 people! Thus, on the afternoon of December 25, 2007, the birthday of our beloved Jesus Christ, I spoke in the presence of Divine Mother Sai. My earthly mother, Ana María, was also seated in the front row, crying with joy.

At the end of my speech, Swami beckoned me to come toward Him. As I knelt before Him, He waved His hand, materialized a gold chain with a locket, and lovingly placed it around my neck. I thanked Him for everything. Although I was in utter disbelief and joy, I somehow managed to say, “Swami, thank you for bringing my mother here.” Swami laughed and asked, “Where is she?” Puzzled, I replied, “Over there, in the front, Swami, wearing a red sari.” He smiled even more at me. I learned a lesson from that confident and loving glance. **I understood that “Sai” is my “mother,” the “Divine Mother,” the “Mother of my mother Ana María,” the “Divine Mother of all Creation.” He is always willing to give us love, protection, and guidance and is always ready to meet our needs!**

Walking the Path of Motherhood

I had entertained thoughts of living in India because I felt it was my *dharma* to stay at the Institute in Mumbai. One day, the Director of the Institute, who was fully devoted to serving Sai, told me, “It is time for you to go back to your country to share the knowledge and experience you have acquired here and, most importantly, to start a family.”

Having faith that Sai would always guide me like a mother, I obediently returned to Argentina. I got married and started a family as I understood that **my primary *sadhana* (spiritual practice) was to be a wife and, most importantly, a mother! My role as a mother was more important than any other role.**

Today, 35 years after my first journey to India, I live happily with my beloved husband, Carlos. We are both immensely grateful for being the parents of 7-year-old Santino and 3-year-old Jazmín. Is it easy to be a mother? I would be lying if I said yes. It is a challenging, 24-hour job but very enriching, noble, and fulfilling. As our children grow up, we as mothers grow in our sacred role under the guidance of our Divine Master. God is present in our children's hugs, their glances, their imitation of us, and their actions. They inspire us to use our judgment and love and to correct them if necessary. I believe the 5 D's, "Discipline, Discrimination, Dedication, Determination, and Devotion," taught by Sathya Sai, are essential for children's upbringing. As Sai has said, we must give our children "moral and spiritual training." They receive and follow the message when we think, talk, and act virtuously. Family is a gift of God, where we remind each other about the way back to the source, the essence, which is our innate divinity.

Being a mother is a divine gift. For the women who do not have children, if you are willing to become a mother, God provides you with millions of opportunities to perform the role of a mother through nephews, godchildren, etc., or "students." Swami told a teacher who did not have children that He would give her thousands of students to guide them as a mother would.

Sai, our Divine Mother, unconditionally devotes Herself, day and night, to loving, protecting, caring for, educating, nourishing, and guiding Her children. Sai's earthly mother, "Easwaramma," did this also and was an exemplary mother. As a mother, I need to follow their example. Thank you, thank you, thank you! In a personal interview, **Sai told me and my father, Horacio, "Be happy! Be happy! Be happy!" and I need to practice His Divine command.**

With infinite love and gratitude,

Ms. Inés Redini Latrónico
Argentina



Ms. Inés Redini Latrónico lives in Argentina, holds a graduate degree in Ontological Coaching, and is licentiate in Commercialisation and Television Production. She has an Advanced Diploma in Education in Human Values from the ISSE in India, where she is also a faculty member. As a team member of the Sathya Sai Mahatma Gandhi School in Argentina, she loves to work especially with the student's families.



from the International Sai Young Adults

IN COMMEMORATION OF SRI SATHYA SAI BABA'S 97TH BIRTHDAY, the Sai Young Adults presented an online session, "The Gift of Love." Moderated by Dr. Suresh Govind (Chair, SSSIO Scriptural Studies Committee), the session included speakers, Mr. Satyajit Salian and Mr. Aravind Balasubramanya, who shared experiences of their beautiful journeys with Swami.

The session included wonderful stories of divine lessons learned in the proximity of the Lord, and an uplifting panel discussion on practical spirituality and serving in the divine mission. Dr. Govind presented the inspiring SAI 100 Program in preparation for Swami's 100th Birthday celebrations. Around 330 participants from across the world joined the session. [▶ Click here to view the video](#)



- 1 One who has the name of Sai on the tip of the tongue will be liberated while alive (*jeevanmukta*)
- 2 One can meditate on the beautiful form of Swami or His formless aspect as love and light.
- 3 In His Shirdi Avatar, Baba assured us that just by contemplating His leelas, we will realize the goal of life.
- 4 Swami says wherever His name is sung, He manifests Himself there.
- 5 He assured us that those who serve selflessly with love will be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.
- 6 Swami has assured us that following His teachings immediately, implicitly, and completely will grant us the highest good of life – Self-Realization.

six spiritual steps

match the description on the left with the spiritual practice on the right

answers on page 35



- a Practice meditation.
- b Sing His glories – bhajans.
- c Service, participating in the Divine mission – doing His work.
- d Repeat the Divine name, Om Sri Sai Ram.
- e Dwell on His leelas – Divine sports.
- f Diving deep into the teachings of Bhagawan and practicing them in our daily lives.



IN RECENT YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN AN EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING Young Adults' quality of life. Looking after one's mental health is just as important as taking care of one's physical well-being; the two are intrinsically linked. Establishing a routine is important to staying healthy. Let us use this opportunity of the start of a new year to share some helpful tips collated by the Sri Sathya Sai International Young Adults Well-Being subcommittee. The tips will help one lead a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

- **Eat well.** As remote work increases, it has become easier to do more snacking. Try and be aware of this, and as far as you can, maintain a healthy diet.
- **Stay hydrated.** Use your refillable water bottle to drink at least as much water as you normally would at the office.
- **Move.** Add movement to your day and get some fresh air. If you can't make it to the gym, check out exercise classes that offer options for workouts you can do at home. At a minimum, get up and walk around/stretch regularly for at least ten minutes every hour.

Let us make 2023 a year of good spiritual, mental, and physical health!

This information is NOT intended to replace professional help and is meant to only be a guide and resource. For ANY mental health concerns, a mental health professional should be consulted for evaluation and management.

GOD'S DELAYS ARE NOT HIS DENIALS

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A GIRL WITH DREAMS. Ever since I remember, I have wanted to be a pilot and fly the skies. But then, when my grandfather died of cancer and my cousin sister was diagnosed with blood cancer, I felt the urge to do something about it. It was 2016, and I decided to become a doctor.

Sri Lanka has no private medical universities, and the only way to become a doctor is to score a high rank in the Government A-Level examinations. I took the tests in 2019, and the results shattered my aspirations. I did not qualify for medical studies. I was despondent and felt worthless but saved from utter dejection only by Swami's grace that enveloped me.

Sathya Sai Youth Camps Prepare us for Life

When the results were published, I was attending the Youth Sadhana Camp at the Sai Center in Pedro Point, Jaffna, where I met the National Youth Coordinator, Sister Priyah, and the National Council President, Brother Manoharan. Their humility and love in trying to help the youth touched me and lit the lamp of hope in my heart.

Brother Mano was an endless reservoir of love and faith in Swami. Manoharan asked me about my test results when we were travelling by boat to another venue at the camp. I described my situation to him, "I am a simple-minded girl and have prayed to Swami to write the exams for me. When God writes the exams, the results are bound to be good, right?" He replied, "If you are truly convinced God wrote your examination, you should be thrilled with the results you get because Swami will give you what is good for you." I felt filled with Swami's love hearing those words.



Ms. Sumiththa Puvaneswaran hails from Jaffna, Sri Lanka. She is a Young Adult who participates in the activities of the Point Pedro Sai Center. She came to Sri Sathya Sai Baba in 2005 at the age of five. She is a medical student at the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

However, I was still upset with my results and began to blame Swami for not holding my hand through what I felt was the most crucial test of my life. That was when Swami stepped in again.

Sadhana Camps are Doors

I received a flurry of messages, calls, and visits from many people to support and cheer me. Our Sai Center President called and told me not to lose heart. Mano called me and filled me with the strength to bear the pain. Priyah provided unconditional support and solace. She sent many relevant discourses of Swami that inspired me to surrender to Him in true spirit. Seeing these busy and important people spend so much time on me, I was very moved. **I got a taste of Swami's love through them.** I began to study with renewed vigor.

At this time, I also got hooked on the inspiring talks on Swami by brother Aravind Balasubramanya on YouTube. Such was the impact of those videos that I stopped watching movies altogether, and whenever I felt a bit tired studying, **I watched videos on Swami. I would also begin my day with**

Sai bhajans. My parents encouraged me, saying, "See, if you become a doctor, you will become an important resource for Pedro Point Sai Centre because the center does not have any doctors yet." That changed my mindset. I was now determined to become a Sai doctor and serve Him to the fullest of my abilities.

The Sweet Fruits of Patience

The examinations to be held in September 2021 got postponed to February 2022, due to COVID pandemic. When the results came out in August 2022, I was again in a Sadhana Camp of the Jaffna Centre, held at a famous Murugan Temple. This time, I passed the examination with a good rank and could pursue my dreams of becoming a doctor and serving my beloved Swami.

I received many congratulatory messages from my Sai family, and I expressed my gratitude to Swami in each one of my responses. I do not think it was a mere coincidence that the same day I also saw brother Aravind's video, "God's Delays Are Not His Denials."

Ms. Sumiththa Puvaneswaran
Sri Lanka



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Sai Young Adults

<https://sathyasai.org/ya>

yacoordinator@sathyasai.org

Answers to Six Spiritual Steps: 1-D, 2-A, 3-E, 4-B, 5-C, 6-F

THANK YOU SO MUCH

TO: BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

Dear Swami,

Blessed I am... I know this to be true,
It is a complete feeling I never knew.

Deep within my heart where pain once sat,
You gave me strength and held me close,
In the mornings we chat.

It's the kind of LOVE that makes you whole,
Your LOVE forever... never takes a toll.

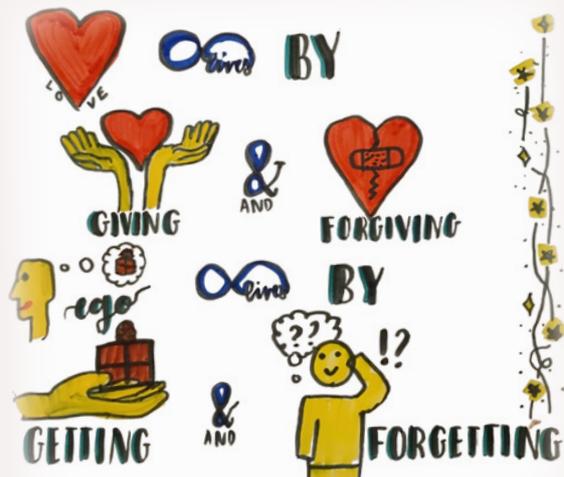
But your LOVE always circles around,
Even when I was flat on the ground.

There are no riches, in the sky above,
Just knowledge, strength and all YOUR LOVE.

With love,
Sai Hridayaviharine M. | Group 3 | USA



Saisri | Group 1 | Germany



Divya B. | Group 3 | Canada

To My Loving Swami

Thank you for being the one that is always there for me,
Thank you for always answering my prayers,
Thank you for listening to my cries,
Thank you for giving me a wonderful family,
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to study in school,
Thank you for giving me a healthy and happy life,
Thank you for giving me freedom in my country,
Thank you for giving me 3 meals a day,
Thank you for giving me experiences in life to learn
and grow,
Thank you for keeping me safe,
Thank you for giving me a lovely house to live in,
Thank you for letting me experience the world
through sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing,
Thank you for giving me the chance to travel and
make memories,
Thank you for giving me energy and positivity on long days,
Thank you for giving me discipline to get things done,
Thank you for opening a new world of opportunities for
me, through the internet and technology,
Thank you for giving me a soft, warm bed to sleep in
every night,
Thank you for giving me a world of
beauty and nature to live in,
Thank you for giving me the ability to
enjoy music,
Thank you for inspiring me to be a
better person,
Thank you, Swami!

Samriddhi G. | Group 3 | USA



Karthika M. | Group 2 | USA

Upcoming SSSIO Online Events

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

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

| Date of Online Event | Day(s) | Festival/Event |
|----------------------|------------------|---|
| January 14, 2023 | Saturday, Sunday | Zone 9 Presentation <i>Ubuntu - I Am Because You Are</i> |
| February 4, 2023 | Saturday | Chinese New Year |
| February 11-12, 2023 | Saturday-Sunday | Akhanda Gayatri |
| February 18, 2023 | Saturday | Maha Shivaratri |



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



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



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



Today is called *Sankranthi*, the day when the Sun starts on its northward journey by entering the *Makara* sign of the Zodiac. *Samyak Kranthi ithi Sankranthi* (change for the good is Sankranthi). We must transform ourselves completely. *Sankranthi* reveals not only the beauty of Nature but the resplendent beauty of the Divine. The Divine will not consider your status or position, your pomp and show. It is beyond the reach of knowledge and intelligence. It can be secured only by *Prema* (pure love)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

January 13, 1984



sathyasai.org

Love All • Serve All
Help Ever • Hurt Never