



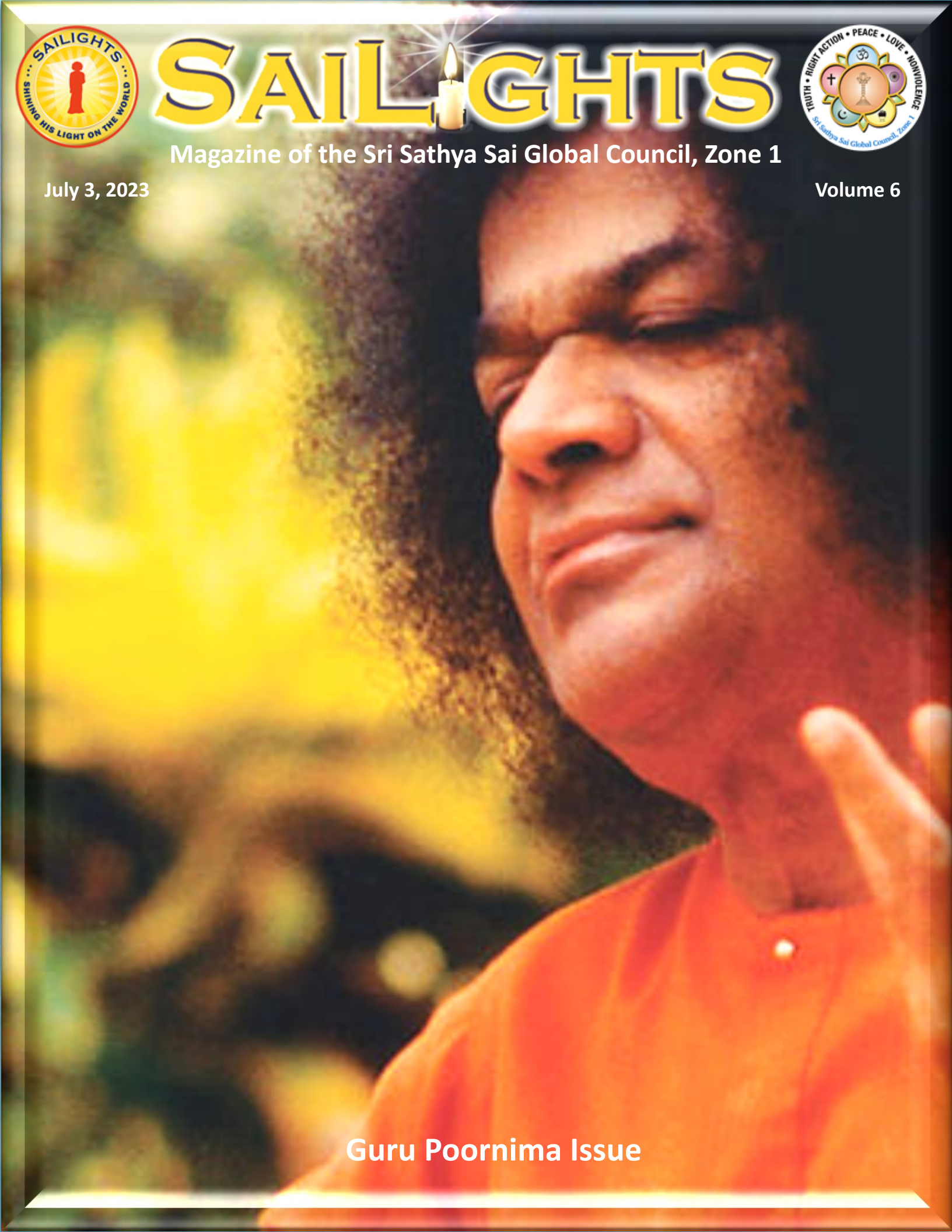
SAILLIGHTS



Magazine of the Sri Sathya Sai Global Council, Zone 1

July 3, 2023

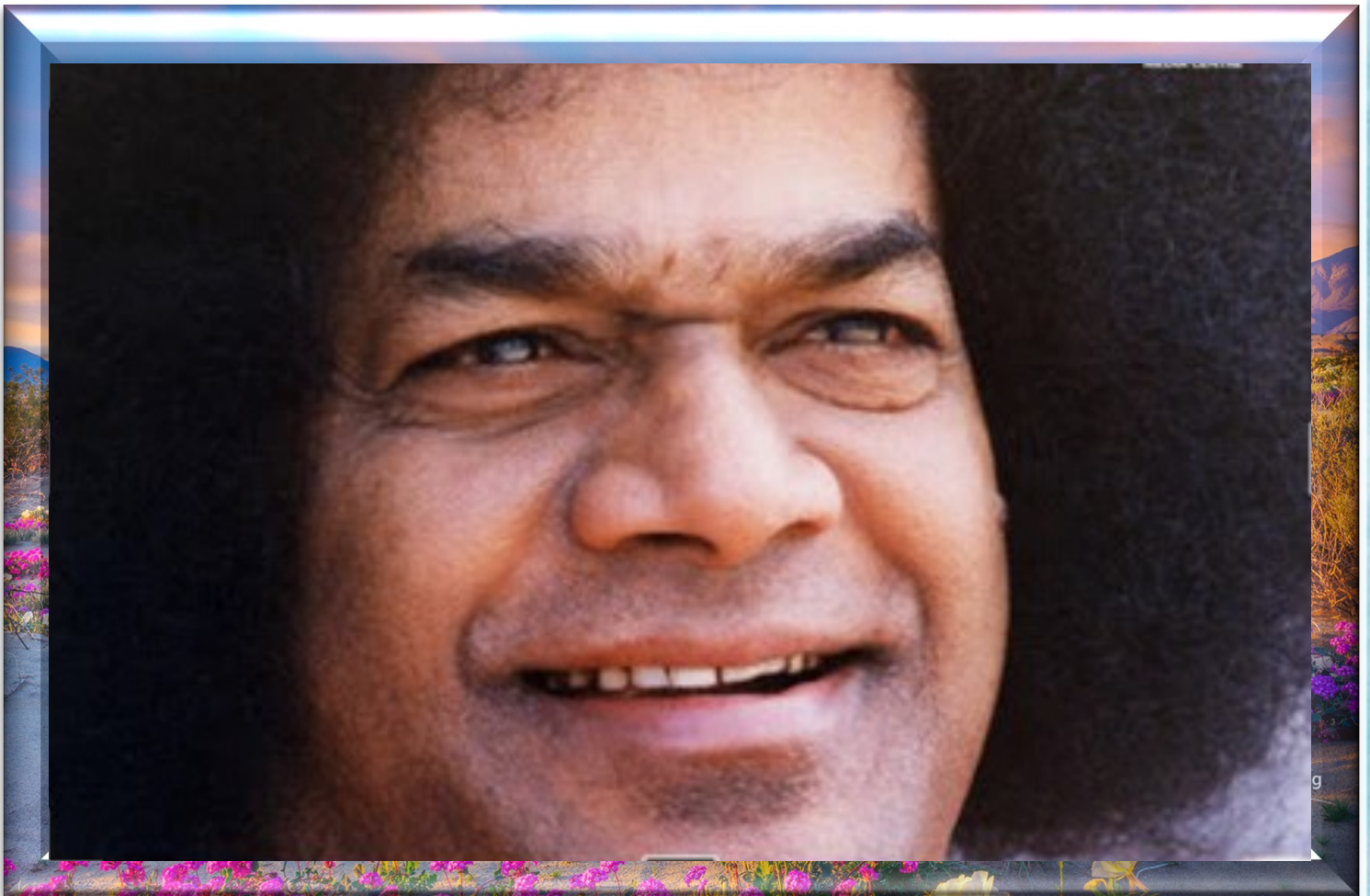
Volume 6



Guru Poornima Issue

SAILLIGHTS

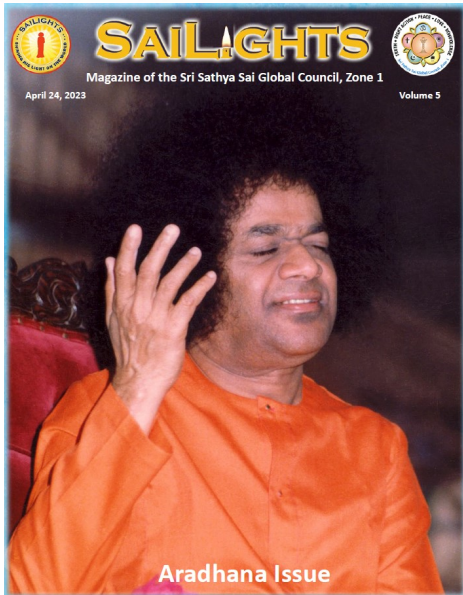
Offered with Love and Reverence at the Lotus Feet of our Dear Lord
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
on the Occasion of Guru Pournima



“Guru is one who illumines the path to divinity.”

Sathya Sai Speaks Vol 35,Ch 13, Jul 24, 2002

Note from SaiLights Team



Volume 5 Offered at the Divine Lotus Feet
on April 24, 2023

Dear Sai Brothers and Sisters,

Guru Poornima is here, and along with it, the *Guru Poornima* issue of *SaiLights*! With Swami's Blessing, we hope to offer Volume 6 of Zone 1's magazine to our Beloved Lord on July 3, 2023.

- ♥ **Want to catch up on all the current happenings across Zone 1 in one quick glance?** Turn to page 5, featuring the Message of Axay Kalathia, Zone 1 Chair.
- ♥ **What's special about May 6?** Turn to page 23, which features Centers' celebrations of Easwaramma Day, a day when children honor the mother of the Sathya Sai Avatar with a host of loving and thoughtful (not to mention colorful!) offerings ranging from Veda chants and Bhajans to message-packed plays and videos. (We have focused Volume 6 Center reports on Easwaramma Day, but will return to reporting on all four wings of Centers in the next issue.)

- ♥ **A special treat in the form of Poems by Swami** is on page 39, in the Sai Pearls section. These are truly Sai's pearls which allow us a glimpse into the Avatar's reflections and poetic expression, rich with both beauty and meaning. Also for the poets among us, don't miss Swami's important teachings on...Poetry!!
- ♥ **Don't miss the beautiful pictures of the Lord's Lotus Feet** throughout this issue, as we pay homage to Swami's "*Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam, Dustara Bhava Sagara Tharanam*" - the bhajan that urges us to hold on to the Feet of the Guru, which will take us across the ocean of life.
- ♥ **What's your favorite Sai quote?** See if you find your favorite in this group starting on p. 49.

As always, we pray to Swami to accept our humble offering at His Divine Lotus Feet.

Loving Sairams from
The *SaiLights* Team

SAILLIGHTS

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Message from Zone 1 Chair



Om Sai Ram!

"Your virtue, self-control, detachment, faith, steadfastness — these are the signs by which people read of My glory."

Divine discourse, January 25, 1963

The legacy of Bhagawan will be carried forward by our thoughts, words and deeds. As we transform ourselves to manifest more and more of our inherent qualities of virtue, self-control, and detachment with faith and steadfastness, we will in turn transform our communities and our world.

It is heartening to see the Sri Sathya Sai Global Council family throughout our Zone continuing to work diligently through devotional, educational and service activities on an ongoing basis. Highlights follow:



- ◆ **New officers.** Many new officers assumed their roles to serve Bhagawan's Organization starting with the new year.
- ◆ **Virtual Zone-wide conference.** A Zone-wide conference for all was held via Zoom on February 4, 2023: *"The Way Forward: Unity, Purity, Divinity"*. Important administrative discipline and protocols as emphasized by Swami were reviewed by all. Each of the national wing representatives from all zonal countries presented highlights of their activities. Our Zonal committees reviewed their past activities and plans for the upcoming year. Our new Zonal website was launched with a live demonstration of features.
- ◆ **New support for members.** Our Media team added further opportunities for our members and community such as a *Smule* channel, providing online bhajan learning training, and a *LinkedIn* Channel for our Zone was successfully launched. Special issues were released, including, "Seeing Rama through Sai Ram" and "Significance of Jesus' Resurrection - Easter".
- ◆ **YA Leadership program.** Many of our young adults joined the Leadership Program for Self-Transformation with those from around the world. This online course of seven modules consisting of 14 sessions culminates with a residential program at the end of June in Prasanthi Nilayam.
- ◆ **Center Leaders Conference.** Center, regional, and national officers have been preparing for the Center Leaders Conference and Networking Event from July 4-7 in Prasanthi Nilayam by conducting pre-conference study circles and workshop preparation. Many individuals have taken on vital roles in organizing the various aspects of the conference.
- ◆ **Region 2 Pilgrimage.** Region 2 has been organizing a National Pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam that will be offered in July. Teams have been very busy planning YA, SSSE, and musical offerings. As with our zonal pilgrimage last year, more tours, talks, service activities will be available, along with special seating in Sai Kulwant Hall for daily *darshan*, *Veda* chanting and programs.
- ◆ **Support for Turkey Earthquake.** Humanitarian Relief was provided by several centers across our zone for victims of the Earthquake in Turkey and Syria.
- ◆ **Ladies Retreat.** A Virtual Ladies Retreat was offered on April 15-16 with multiple, practical spiritual workshops and a panel discussion on the topic, "The Power of Forbearance", along with inspiring talks and devotional sessions.

Message from Zone 1 Chair



- ◆ **Human Values course.** The Sri Sathya Sai Human Values course, the second offering by the Educational Program committee with collaboration from the SSSPAVE team, was completed in March. They will be offering their third course this coming fall.
- ◆ **Earth contest.** The Green Team held a "Wanna Be an Earth Champ?" entry for poems, essays, artwork, and photos with awards for outstanding entries.
- ◆ **Yagna in Canada.** A most auspicious Sri Sathya Sai *Vedic Yagna* was performed by Sri Vedanarayanan April 28-29 in Toronto, Canada, with over 1000 participants over the weekend.
- ◆ **California Retreat.** The California Sai Center had an inspiring retreat May 13-14 with Sri Vedanarayanan from Prasanthi Nilayam, along with USA National President Dr. Balu Karanam and a special musical program offered by the "Whistle Wizard", Mr. Siva Prasad.
- ◆ **Region 1 Satsang.** Region 1 had a Satsang with Brother Amey Deshpande - "Connect with SAI" on May 21.
- ◆ **Region 2, 3 Retreats.** Region 2 had their annual retreat May 26-29 in the beautiful natural setting of Green Lane, PA, and Region 3 had their annual retreat in the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains of Tennessee. Both retreats had over 1100 registered attendees who took part in inspiring talks, workshops, *Veda* chanting, SSSE and YA plays and programs, service activities, nature walks, meditation and self-reflection.

We offer our gratitude to our Dear Bhagawan for these opportunities to serve Him and His organization and we pray that we continually transform ourselves to be worthy of representing His name and carrying on His Legacy.

Dr. Axay Shanti Kalathia
Zone 1 Chair
Sri Sathya Sai Global Council



Guru Poornima



MANASA BHAJARE GURU CHARANAM

"That day when I came out publicly as Sai Baba,...I called on all those suffering in the endless round of birth and death to worship the Feet of the *Guru* (spiritual preceptor), the *Guru* that was announcing Himself, who had come again for taking upon Himself the burden of those who find refuge in Him."

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 1, October 17, 1953

Guru Poornima -Divine Discourse



“God as Guide”: Swami's First Guru Poornima Discourse



On August 1, 1956, at a young 30 years of age, Swami gave His first Guru Poornima Discourse. Labeled "God as Guide", it appears in Chapter 3 of Vol 1, *Sathya Sai Speaks*. The speech highlights the importance of adhering to **Dharma** (righteousness) and cultivating **Faith** in the Lord, and elaborates on the **role of the Guru** on the road to enlightenment.

"God is Supreme Energy (*Mahasakthi*) and the individual being is deluding power (*mayasakthi*); He is the genuine, the individual being is but the shadow, the appearance, the delusion. Even I have to put on deluding power to come into your midst, like the policeman who is compelled to wear the dress of the thief so that he can get entry into the gang of thieves to apprehend them and bring them to book!

The Lord cannot come down with His Supreme Energy unimpaired; He has to come with diminished splendor and limited effulgence, so that He can become the object of devotion and dedicated service. In this world, which is impermanent and ever transforming, the Immanent Power of the Lord is the only permanent and fixed entity. In order to realize the eternal and the true, one has perforce to attach oneself to that Source and Sustenance. There is no escape from this path. It is the destiny of one and all, irrespective of age or scholarship, clime or caste, sex or status. While proceeding along the road, you can watch your shadow falling on mud or dirt, hollow or mound, thorn or sand, wet or dry patches of land. You are unaffected by the fate of your shadow, is it not? Nor is the shadow made dirty thereby. It does not worry in the least where it falls or what it wades through. We know that the shadow and its experiences are not eternal or true. Similarly, you must get convinced that “you” are but the shadow of the Absolute; you are essentially not this “you” but the absolute itself. That is the remedy for sorrow, travail, and pain.

The First Step In Spiritual Discipline

Of course, it is only at the end of a long and systematic process of spiritual practice that you will get fixed in the truth; until then, you are apt to identify yourself with this body and forget that the body, which casts a shadow, is itself a shadow. **The first step in spiritual practice is adherence to dharma (righteousness) in every individual and social act.** The *dharma* that is followed in relation to the objective world will automatically lead on to *dharma* in the spiritual field also; only you must stick to it through thick and thin. When *Aswathama* in the blindness of his fury slaughtered the children of the *Pandavas*, Arjuna, who caught him prisoner, threatened to cut off his head; but Droupadi, the bereaved mother, interceded to save him! She said it was not *dharma* to return murder for murder, to slay the son of one’s own guru. Such steadfastness is needed in the path of *dharma*; that alone is the sign of true surrender: “Let the Will of the Lord prevail; one’s duty is but to connect oneself with the current of His Grace.” While in jail, the prisoner cannot call even his clothes his own; so too, while in this jail serving your term, what can you call your own? He gives you food and clothing. He lets you go when the sentence ends, or perhaps sooner if He is pleased by your behavior while in prison.

Guru Poornima -Divine Discourse



Keep The Faith In The Lord Undiminished

he greatest obstacle on the path of surrender is egoism and mine-ness or possessiveness. It is something that has been inherent in your personality since ages, sending its tentacles deeper and deeper with the experience of every succeeding life. It can be removed only by the twin detergents of discrimination and renunciation. Devotion is the water to wash away this dirt of ages and the soap of repetition of God's name, meditation, and communion (yoga) will help to remove it quicker and more effectively. The slow and the steady will surely win this race; walking is the safest method of travel, though it may be condemned as slow. Quicker means of travel mean disaster; the quicker the means, the greater the risk of disaster. You should eat only as much as you feel hunger, for more will cause disorder. So proceed step by step in spiritual effort; making sure of one step before you take another. Do not slide back two paces when you go one pace forward.

But even the first step will be unsteady if you have no faith. So cultivate faith. Satyabhama once asked Krishna, "Why are you, doing things like ordinary men? Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas is the best of the brothers, but you hobnob always with Arjuna, whose reputation is not above board." Her faith was not steady! What do people know of the motives that prompt the Lord and His actions? Some found fault with Narada for repeating the name of the Lord, always, without intermission. But until merging in the Absolute occurs, the name has to be used. The idea of separation will end only with mergence, not before that. Do not waver or doubt when once you are convinced. Seek to understand and satisfy yourself. After that, do not be misled. When the sun is over your head there will be no shadow; similarly when faith is steady in your head it should not cast any shadow of doubt. When man loses his way and strays into the wilderness, believing that he is the body or the qualities or the object, then the Avatar comes to warn and guide. Keep the faith in the Lord undiminished; you can then safely move about in the world. No harm can come to you! Be like the village women with pots over their heads, one over the other, keeping balance even while talking and walking along the winding lane. They do not forget or ignore the burden or the goal. They are vigilant, conscious of the hardships on the way, the stones and the pits; it is inner concentration that pays dividends.

One Should Depart The World With A Smile

Everyone has to make their exit someday. That moment should not be a moment of anguish; one should depart gracefully, with a smile and a bow. In order to do that, a lot of preparation is necessary. To depart, leaving all that has been accumulated during a long lifetime, is a hard task; so prepare for it by discarding attachment to one thing after another from now on. You see many things in dreams, and many things are acquired by you during dreams: power, pelf, status, reputation. But when you awake, you do not weep over the loss, even though for the duration of the dream all that was very real and gave you real satisfaction and joy. That was a "dream", you tell yourself; what prevents you from treating with similar nonchalance the possessions gathered during the waking stage of your life? Cultivate that attitude, and you can depart with a smile whenever the curtain falls on this dreamland stage.



Salutations to

**The Supreme Guru
Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

Guru Poornima -Divine Discourse



Pray To The Lord To Show You The Way

In order to bring conviction to you in all this, it is best you approach a guru (spiritual preceptor) who knows the truth by experience and whose daily activities, words, and thoughts reflect this realization. **The guru is called so because the letter GU signifies *gunatheetha* - one who has transcended the three *gunas* (qualities), the *thamasic*, the *rajasic*, and even the *sathwic* (ignorant, passionate, and virtuous) - and the letter RU signifies one who is *rupa varjitha* (one who has grasped the formless aspect of God-head).** Of course, one could come to that stage only through the sublimation of the lower into the higher qualities and the steady and conscious ignoring of the part played by mere name and form.

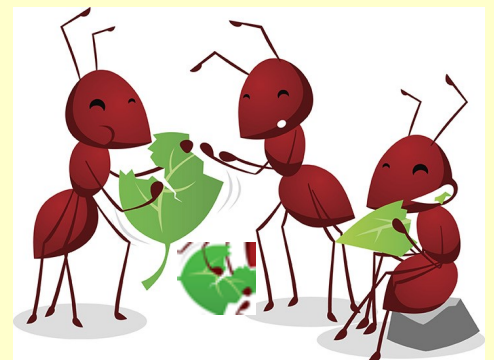
In the preliminary stages of spiritual discipline, name, form, and quality all have their part to play in the molding of the spirit. The guru destroys the illusion and sheds light; his presence is cool and comforting. That is why this day, a full-moon day, is allotted for paying due honor to the guru. Moreover, the moon is the presiding deity of the mind, and the full-moon day is the day on which the mind has become fully beneficent. Of course, you must know what you have lost, so that you may start on the search to recover it! The guru has very often to tell you that you have forgotten your real name or that you have lost the most precious part of yourself and yet are unaware of the loss. The guru is the physician for the illness that brings about the suffering of alternate birth and death. He is an adept at the treatment needed for the cure. If you do not get such a guru, pray to the Lord Himself to show you the way and He will surely come to your rescue.

The mind must become the servant of the intellect, not the slave of the senses. It must discriminate and detach itself from the body. Like the ripe tamarind fruit, which becomes loose inside the shell, it must be unattached to this shell, this casement called body. Strike a green tamarind fruit with a stone and you cause harm to the pulp inside, but strike the ripe fruit and see what happens. It is the dry rind that falls off; nothing affects the pulp or the seed. The ripe aspirant does not feel the blows of fate or fortune; it is the unripe man who is wounded by every blow.

– Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sharing

'When an ant spots a lump of sugar, it does not hide the fact and seek to consume it all alone. Instead, it moves around to collect its friends and kinsmen, for it loves to share with others the feast it has come across. The crow, the bird that is despised and is often an outcast, when it discovers a little heap of food, caws repeatedly until its kith and kin gather at the place. What is shared is tastier; what is held back is bitter.'



- Sathya Sai Speaks Vol 13, Chap 30, 1975-77

Guru Poornima

- The Holy Day of Guru Poornima

The Holy Day of Guru Poornima

Guru Poornima is one of the holiest days in the Sai calendar, falling on July 3 in 2023. As we see below, Swami says the best way to celebrate this auspicious occasion is to understand the meaning of "Guru" and "Guru Poornima", and imbibe the many messages that Swami has given us in speeches delivered on that day or at other times. Below, we share with you several of these profound messages, which all aim at dispelling our ignorance so that we may realize who we really are, namely, God.

Significance of *Guru Poornima*

"The moon is the presiding deity for the mind. Today, it is Poornima (Full Moon day). What does Poornima signify? It means the completion of the full circle by returning to the starting point. One half of the circle is represented by worldly life. It is like the letter "C". This is equated with science, which is incomplete knowledge. The full circle represented by the moon represents the state of the mind when it is filled with Love. *Guru Poornima* is observed today. *Guru* means Big. *Guru* has also another meaning: *Gu* means darkness and *Ru* means dispelling. *Guru* means one who dispels darkness (the preceptor who dispels the darkness of ignorance). *Guru Poornima* is the day on which one celebrates the dispersal of the darkness of ignorance from the mind. Hence, people should fill their minds with the all-embracing Love Principle. To experience the fullness of Love, you have to fill your hearts completely with Love. That will be the result of total devotion."

--Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 27, Ch 12, 1994 - "Experience the fullness of love"

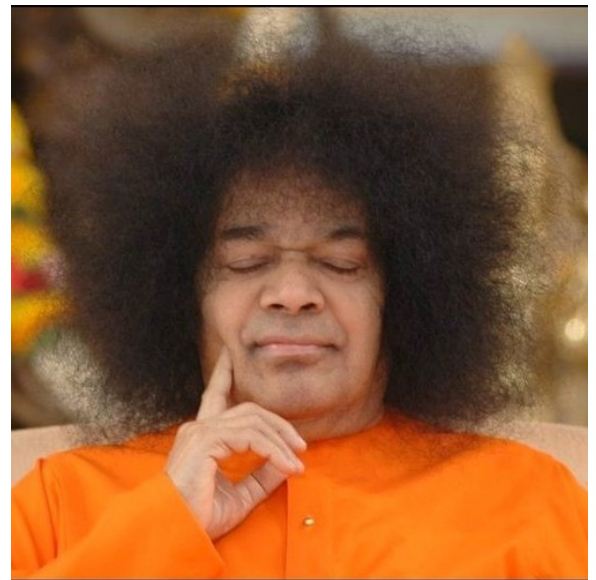
"*Poornima* refers to the full moon with all his 16 aspects being illumined by the sun. In man there are 16 black spots: the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, and envy), the two *Gunas* (*Rajas* and *Tamas*), and the eight types of *mada* (conceit) based on lineage and scholarship, wealth, youth, beauty, position, and penance. It is only when man gets rid of these 16 evil traits that he will be able to realize his oneness with the *Poornatvar* (Divine). Who is the one who enables man to achieve this state of *Poornatvar* (fullness)? It is the *Guru*. *Guru* refers to one who has transcended the *gunas* and has no form."

-- Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 23, Ch 25, 1990 - "The Guru within"

Who is a true *Guru*?

"The true *Guru* is one who has no ego or selfishness, and who can raise the *shishya* (pupil) to his own level. Donning the saffron robe, mouthing a few *manthras* (sacred formulas) and expounding some texts are the signs of many *Gurus* these days. The signs of a true *Guru* are large-heartedness, absolute selflessness, purity in living, freedom from acquisitiveness, absence of envy, and equal mindedness in his conduct towards everyone. Freedom from envy is an essential quality in a *Guru* or *shishya*, because envy is the root cause of many evils. The *Guru's* role is to lead the *shishya* on the Godward path. He must teach the *shishya* the true purpose for which each of his sense organs is to be used - his eyes, his tongue, and his limbs. All the senses are to be used for discovering and experiencing the Divine."

-- Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 17, Ch 14, 1984 - "The Triple Promise"



Guru Poornima

- The Holy Day of Guru Poornima



“Even when the Divine appears in human form, moves freely amongst men, and is near in various ways to people, few are able to recognize Divinity in the physical form. It is not easy to recognize the nature of the Divine through the corporeal form alone. A true *Guru* (spiritual preceptor) is required to reveal the real nature of Divinity. Such a *Guru* has been equated with the Trinity of *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva*. The devotee who regards God Himself as his *Guru* will not have any difficulties. Today many who are looked upon as *Gurus* utter the *manthras* (sacred formulas) in the ear and stretch their palms for money. For everything they do, they expect money. Such *Gurus* are “*baadha*” (harmful) *Gurus* and not “*bodha*” (enlightening) *Gurus*. The true *Guru* is like an ophthalmic surgeon. The latter removes the film in the patient's eye and restores his natural vision. The *Guru* also should remove the veil of ignorance and attachment that blurs the vision of the disciple and restore his natural spiritual vision.”

--Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 16, Ch 17, 1983 - “Let God be your Guru”

How to worship the *Guru* on *Guru Poornima* Day?

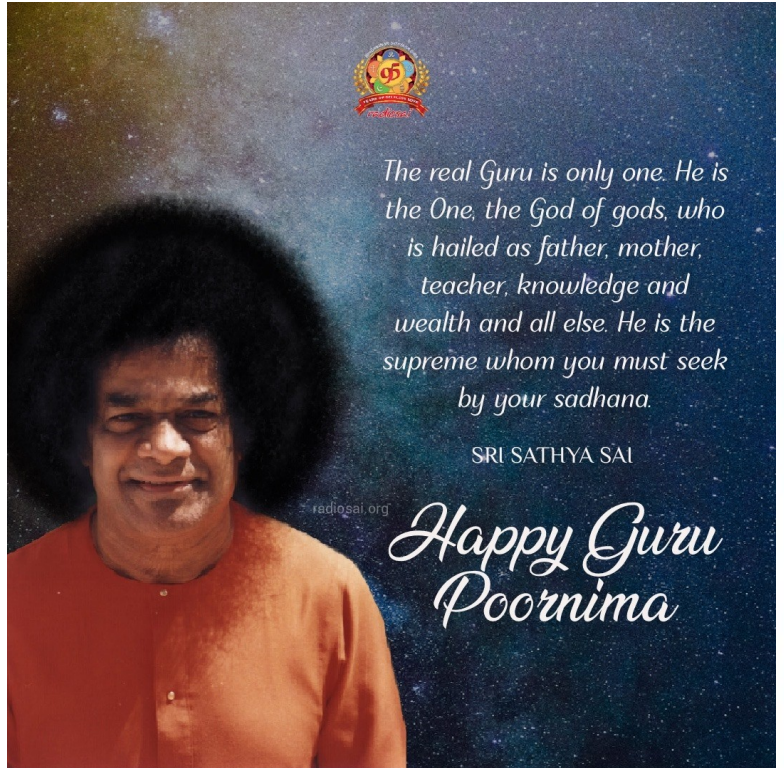
“What is the recompense one should make to such a *guru*? On *Guru Poornima* day, it is the practice for disciples to offer *Paadha* Puja (offering worship to the holy feet) to the *Guru* and give *Dakshina* (thanksgiving offering). The significance of the Full Moon should be understood. It is a day on which the Moon shines in all his fullness, without any blemish. It is a day of purity. The Moon sheds his cool rays on the earth. The Moon is the deity controlling the mind. Only the day when the mind is rid of the darkness of ignorance and achieves fullness of illumination is the true *Guru Poornima* day for man. Looking merely at the full moon in the sky and calling it *Guru Poornima* is only worshipping the external, while internally there is a *sunna* (void). It is only when you have cleansed your heart by getting rid of ignorance, sorrow, worry, greed, and envy that you can celebrate your *Guru Poornima* and realize the Fullness of your Reality.”

--Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 16, Ch 17, 1983 - “Let God be your Guru”

Keep the heart cool, pure, and soft as the moonlight

“Each religion emphasizes one Name and one Form of God. Some even insist that God has no other Name or Form. But the Reality is beyond name and form, *Akshara* (the indestructible, eternal) as the characteristic and *Om* as the Form. You reach the *Akshara* stage---the stage of attribute-less unity---in three steps of *Sadhana*: (i) I am Thine, (ii) Thou art mine, and (iii) Thou art myself. Through *Sadhana*, one must transcend the duality of I and You. I is only the reflection of You in this body. The consummation is reached when duality is superseded. That is why it has been declared that “It is good to be born in a church; but it is not good to die in it.” That is to say, before life ends one must go beyond the limits set by institutionalized religion and reach the vast limitless expanse of the *Atman*, which pervades all.”

--Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 15, Ch 15, 1969 - “The Acharya as God”



Guru Poornima

- The Holy Day of Guru Poornima



It is a sin to ignore one's duties

"When everyone performs his duties, the nation will prosper. Perform your duties, without regard to what others say or do. Engage yourselves in service activity. Consider social service as service to God. To earn the love of God, this is the easiest way. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Your entire life will be sanctified thereby. A large number of people are coming to Prasanthi Nilayam regularly. No one should remain idle here. Each one should render whatever service he or she can. This is not a place for mere eating and sleeping. Those who are not active in service have no place here. From this *Guru Poornima*, you have to dedicate yourselves to service. There is so much to be done by way of service to the people. It is only through service that life can be made meaningful. The nation is in the doldrums today because men who have not learnt how to serve are in the seats of power. Only through service can one qualify oneself for leadership."

-- *Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 22, Ch 23, 1989 - "Love all, Serve all"*

Never underestimate the power of love

"It is only love that encompasses and permeates the entire world. None can exist without love even for a moment, be it human beings or animals or birds or insects. This love is the very form of God. But today, man is misusing this sacred love by diverting it toward the ephemeral world. Never underestimate the power of love. Our ancient *Rishis*, leading a life of solitude in dense forests, could live in harmony even with wild animals only because of the power of their love. There is nothing that love cannot achieve in this world. It can even melt the hardest of rocks. When the principle of love in every human being is unified, it becomes cosmic love (*viswa prema*). Do you want to quench your thirst for love? Yearn for His grace and worship Him. To experience bliss, develop love more and more. The more you develop love, the more you will experience bliss. Bliss (*Ananda*) cannot be attained without love. In fact, it is love that takes the form of bliss."

--*Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 32, Ch 17, 1999 - "Power of love"*

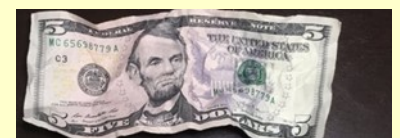
Swami cured Himself from a paralyzed left leg and hand by sprinkling water Himself from His right hand and explained why it happened. He cured Himself on a Guru Purnima Day. This is narrated by Professor N. Kasturi in his book, "*Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*" Volume 2 – Chapter 5.

<https://www.sssgc-usa.org/1008sadhana/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/sathyam-sivam-sundaram-volume-2-1.pdf>

The above article has been prepared by Kasi Sridharan, SaiLights contributor.

Spiritual Reserve Bank

"There is a soiled and tattered currency note with you. No one is prepared to accept it from you. But when it is tendered to the Reserve Bank that issued it, the Reserve Bank is bound to accept it and issue a new note in return. Likewise, who is competent to accept one's bad thoughts, perverted feelings, and evil intentions? Only the Almighty, who is a spiritual Reserve Bank that will accept the soiled notes of your mind and give in return good currency in the form of good thoughts.



--*Sathya Sai Speaks Vol 25, Ch 15, 1992 - "Rise from Animality to Divinity"*

Zonal and Regional Highlights



MANASA BHAJARE GURU CHARANAM

"The best Guru is the Divinity in you; yearn to hear His voice, His *Upadesh* (instruction)".

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 18, December 9, 1985

Zonal and Regional Highlights

Congratulations from Zone 1's Green Team!

For their Earth Day (April 22, 2023) contest, the GREEN TEAM received more than 50 individual submissions and some team submissions. We will recognize the teams that, as a Center, put forward a joint effort in *Go Green* activities. Since each of the individual submissions was thought-provoking, original and innovative, the GREEN TEAM will confer all submissions with an EARTH CHAMP certificate. In addition, in the different categories (art, poems, movie), we have conferred EARTH SUPER CHAMP awards to a few submissions that were reviewed by the team. We hope this will spur others to join in this noble effort to restore MOTHER EARTH in all her glory.



Individual certificates will be sent to each one of the submissions. Some teams also submitted their earth day activities, we will do a separate group felicitation for each team submission.

HAPPY MOTHER 's DAY to all the mothers! Congratulations to all EARTH SUPER CHAMPS on the joyous occasion of Mother's Day. Keep up the good work!

LIST OF EARTH SUPER CHAMPS 2023

The five elements — ether, air, fire, water, and earth — are the vesture of God, as well as of man. Use them moderately and with wisdom, with fear and humility. *Sathya Sai Speaks Vol 6, 27, 125.*

5Rs Activities:

Akul Sai Group 2 Jacksonville - Eco-friendly Wagon
Sai Varenya – Group 2- Jacksonville – Pista Shells Cup Holder

Poems

Dhruva Gadiparthi – Group 3- Jacksonville-Poem-Earth's Torment
Anvi Kaushik – Group 2 – Alpharetta – Poem – Earth Day Poem
Isha Bala – Group 3-Jacksonville-Poem- Earth Poem
Abhinav Mortha- Group 3- Indianapolis-Poem-Living Green for a Greener World
Shruthi Chevala-Group 3- Jacksonville-Poem-Farmer

Zonal and Regional Highlights



Artwork

Aruna Iyer Group 2 Dallas – Save the Earth Artwork
Karthik Guna-Group 2- Charlotte – Art on Samastha LoKaha Sukhino Bhavanthu
Lohith Mohan – Group 1- Houston – Art on Values and Sai Garden
Manvitha Madali – Group 1- Jacksonville- Art on Getting our city Go Green
Sai Sameeksha- Group 2- Gwinnet, MA- Art work on Stop Pollution
Soham Gautam-Group 1-Houston – Artwork on Human Values and Sai

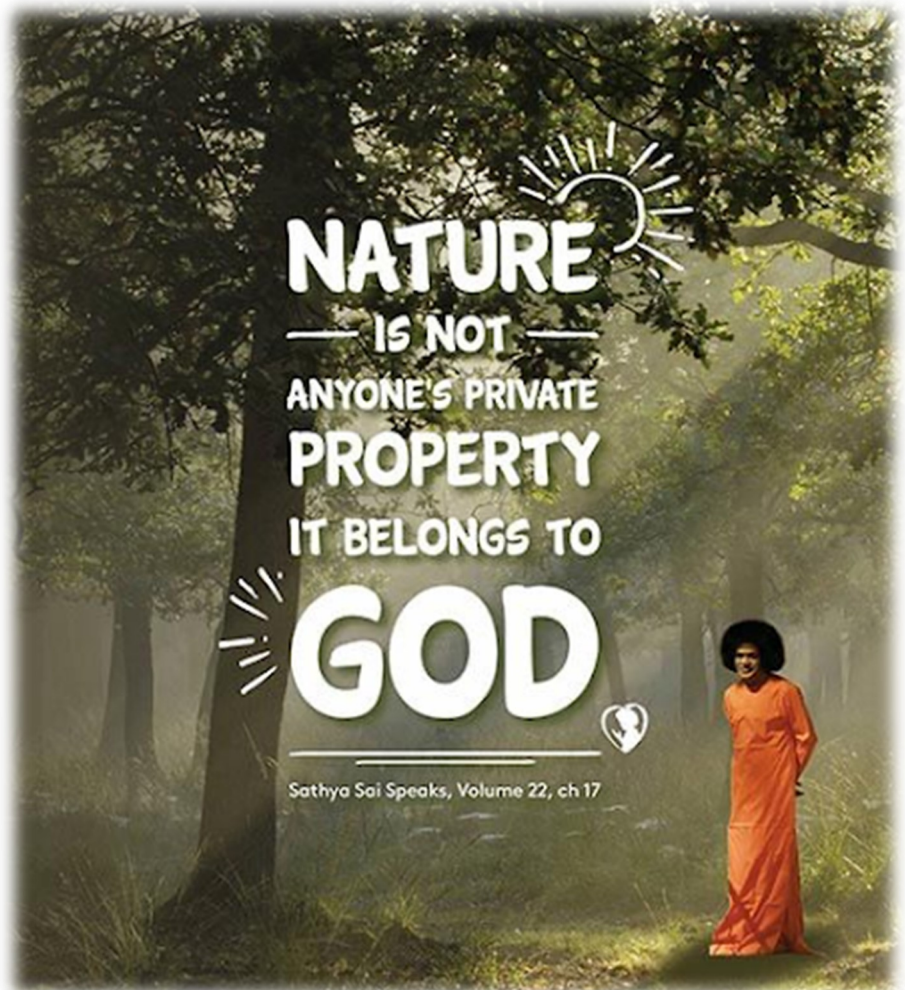
Movie

Arokya Annamaneni-Group 2- Sacramento – Movie on Clean Earth

Let us Help the Environment and Act with Love.

THE GREEN TEAM

<https://www.sssgc-zone1.org/green-team-1/>
sssgc-enviro@gmail.com



Zonal and Regional Highlights

4-30-2023



Zonal and Regional Highlights



Living Green for a Greener World

The place we were born
The air we inhale
All being torn
This must not prevail

Pollution may not seem so bad
As its effects are not yet big
But if time continues on like this
Our planet will snap like a twig

Let us simply be
Like Payeng and Thunberg
Who fight for a better world
Without any melting icebergs

Our actions really matter
From driving to dumping
So let's stop these harmful acts
So Earth keeps on pumping

It may be hard
To change our way of life
But we can find alternatives
Like recycling a knife!

Please, let's be kind
And save our home
It's the only one we have
It has no clone

It will take effort
But think about those who will come
Let us prepare the world for them
So anything, they can become!

Mother Earth has always been kind
By letting us reside here
Let us not harm her
And make her shed a tear

Now is the time, let us save our planet today
For today is just one of many Earth Days!

Abhinav Mortha, Group 3

Earth Day Poem

By Anvi Koushik

She's the one who gives us life
She's the one who gives us birth
She's the one who gives us what we need
Yes! She's Mother Earth.

Out of all the places that there were,
Burning Venus, Cold Neptune... BRR!!!!
She's the one who took us in,
Let's hear it for Mother Earth!

She gives air,
And water, too.
We giggle and dance.
On beautiful green and blue.

Yet still, like all of us
She faces troubles. Thus,
Her soil isn't that fertile.
Now that pesticides last a while.

Her air isn't that clean,
Deserts bring the scorching heat.
Let's make her proud, and help it be.
The Mother Earth that brings us glee.

So again, let's sing aloud.
The joy she gives makes us proud.
Let's remember how much she's worth.
Yes! She's Mother Earth!



Zonal and Regional Highlights

Isha Bala

The one with the biggest heart
waits patiently for our warmth
She holds us up with pride
While we refrain her life

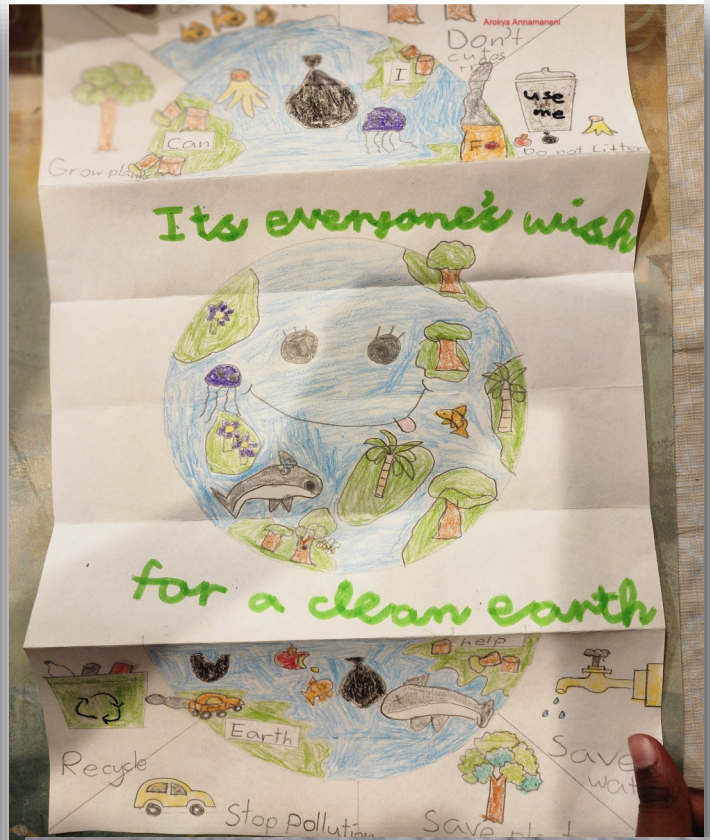
We have given her nothing
though she has given us her everything
she has quenched our thirsts
as we destroy her homes

The air we breath
Provided for by her trees

Though her beauty is unparalleled
she rots with no quell

Give Mother earth a helping hand
all you have to do is plant
Once the seed sprouts
you will have no doubt

This is why we exist, we must be fearless
sow a seed and plant a tree
our bond with earth was meant to be



Sai Varenja



Karthik Guna



Zonal and Regional Highlights

HAPPY EARTH DAY A FARMER

Shruthi Chevala, Jacksonville, Group 3

Shine, rain, corn, or grain
Farmers always give us something to gain

They wake up at dawn
And Work till they're worn

They live with the hope that the seed they sow
will reap

Our love and respect is all for them to keep

May Sai bless the seed that the farmer lets fall
Because he is the person that feeds us all



EARTH'S TORMENT

By Dhruva Gadiparthi,| Group 3.

We live on a planet full of life

Yet we put it in turmoil and strife

All the green vegetation helps us breath

We could just plant a few more seeds

The cows in the farms give us milk

And the worms from the east give us silk

We set our abode ablaze

Why? This is our space

All the trees give us wood

And its fruit give us food

All the bees give us honey

Yet we trash the earth with our money



Zonal and Regional Highlights



Cultural Integration Committee

Karen Pasternak, Andrew DeMil & Girish Jandhyala

Explore commonalities and differences with Eastern vs Western cultures with regards to speech, customs, rituals and norms so that each can understand the other better to further enhance quality of interactions and communication at center events, community service events, and any other community wide interactions.

In the last edition, we brought to your attention the effort being made to reach out to experts on the subject (Cultural Integration) as suggested by some members of our Zone. We are happy to share the progress made on that front.

In the past few months, the committee members reached out to many subject matter experts on “Culture” to understand in depth the much-needed change we are intending to create within our organization when it comes to integrating the best of west and the east.

We have created an e-learning/study video with elders and expert guests from different walks of lives from our Zone who sat with us to do a candid conversation on the topic exploring the subject and discussing the nuances deeper.

In the coming weeks, we are planning to make this available to all the members to watch and brainstorm around this discourse and possibly use it as guided study circle material.

We look forward to updating SaiLights readers on the progress being made, in the next issue.

Unity

"All of you should imbibe the spirit of unity. Whomsoever you come across, say, “He is my brother, she is my sister.” In this way, consider all as your brothers and sisters and conduct yourself with unity. All are children of God. Therefore, if at any time feelings of hatred develop between you and others, remind yourself that you are not separate from them. Consider that all are one, attain unity, and experience its bliss. **Seeing unity in diversity is divinity and true spirituality...** Recognizing the unity of the Atmic principle is true spirituality. When you realize this unity, you will earn divine grace.”

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 41, May 31, 2008



Zonal and Regional Highlights



Podiatry Camp

Saturday, June 3, 2023

The Podiatry Camp was held at the St. Petersburg Free Clinic, located at 5501 4th St. N. St. Petersburg, Florida 33703, on Saturday, June 3rd, 2023. The services were provided by 6 Podiatrists, 9 Nurses, and 30 volunteers in conjunction with the clinic volunteers. A total of 54 patients received medical care.

After the patients were registered, they received foot washing by the volunteers who then guided them to the nurses to take blood pressure and blood sugar readings. Then, they received a bagged breakfast consisting of a bagel, nutrition bar, and banana. Our volunteers served the patients coffee. Once evaluated by the Podiatrist, the patients were able to pick up their prescriptions from the on-site pharmacy and then had their medical records scanned.

After scanning, the patients were given new socks and fitted for new shoes. Exit interviews were provided.

The camp was sponsored by Sri Sathya Sai Global Council in conjunction with the St. Petersburg Free Clinic.

We thank Swami for giving us this wonderful opportunity to serve.





Zonal and Regional Highlights

Zone 1 Ladies Virtual Retreat:

Faith and Forbearance

Inaugural event of the Zone 1 Ladies Wing

Our beloved Lord teaches us that “Among human beings, it is a privilege to be born as a woman” [Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 28, Ch 33, 1995]. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba places great importance on the incredible and unique qualities of women which make them the very foundation of family, community, society and indeed, the entire world. He established the Mahila Vibhag or Ladies Wing in India in 1968; a full 55 years later, in January 2023, the Ladies Wing in Zone 1 of the Sri Sathya Sai Global Council was officially launched.

With Swami’s abundant grace, the inaugural event of the Ladies Wing, the Zone 1 Ladies Retreat, was held on April 15-16, 2023 with the theme “Faith and Forbearance”. The Retreat was a truly wonderful opportunity to discuss and celebrate Swami’s precious teachings for women and enjoy Sai sisterhood! It was convened by the Zone 1 Ladies Wing Committee (ZLWC) who worked tirelessly, unitedly and joyfully over several months to bring together sisters from Canada, USA, and West Indies. To make this first event easily accessible to all women across the Zone, the Retreat was held virtually--with the tremendous and essential support of the Zone 1 Media Team. The ZLWC made a concerted and loving effort to involve Young Adult (YA) and adult women of all ages from all parts of the Zone. Our loving Lord always responds to work done with sincerity and unity in His name, and the Retreat was no different - Swami’s guidance was palpable at every step.

Opening Keynote: Lessons learned from working with Swami, by Dr Neeta Khanna. The Retreat began with beautiful *Veda* chanting by our sisters from Canada and multi-faith prayers recorded by YAs in New Jersey, followed by bhajans. After a short welcome address by the ZLWC Chair, the marquee event on the morning

of April 15 was an electrifying address by Dr. Neeta Khanna from Shimla, India. Eloquent and direct, Sister Neeta beautifully conveyed many lessons learned directly from Swami over decades of working in many organizational roles, including the importance of involving ourselves productively and enthusiastically in the amazing Organization which He has gifted us; the imperative of following His word strictly; and the absolute need for individual *sadhana*, to inform and sanctify the work done in His name. In an incredible “Sai-incidence”, April 15 was discovered to be a very special day for sister Neeta and the entire Sai organization in Himachal Pradesh, as it was on that very day, in 2010, that Swami had blessed them with His physical presence when He visited Shimla.



Other Saturday morning highlights: Food, Faith, and Swami. The opening address was followed by a sweet skit on the importance of healthy eating and the impact of food on the mind which was the lead-in to a quick virtual tour of our online recipe book. This delicious offering consisted of recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks contributed by ladies across the Zone--and will be housed on the ZLWC website for easy reference. The Retreat schedule on both days was interspersed with 1-minute videos contributed by 10 women answering two questions: “What does faith mean to you?” and “Which of Swami’s teachings on women has impacted you the most and why?” These women provided touching and heartfelt responses which managed to be models of brevity and profundity at the same time!



Zonal and Regional Highlights

Next: Workshops Galore! Saturday afternoon was a veritable feast of Swami’s teachings in action! A total of 10 workshops were held in two sessions, with 5 workshops running concurrently in each session. The ZWLC chose topics that would be of great interest to women focused on the practice of Swami’s teachings in daily life. These workshops were a true labor of love on the parts of the women who led them and lovingly prepared the material, all those who helped facilitate the breakout room discussions, and the incredible Zone 1 Media Team who supported every single aspect of each workshop, which were applauded by all who attended and benefited. The soul-filling day ended with beautiful bhajans.

with a panel discussion on “The Power of Forbearance” featuring Mrs. Geetha Mohanram, Mrs. Rashmi Tandon, and Ms. Sayeeshruthi Manickam, and moderated by Dr. Vini Raman. The discussion powerfully highlighted the meaning of forbearance (and what it is not!), its life application and the quiet but incredible spiritual strength that forbearance represents and confers on all who cultivate this highest of virtues.



A Workshop Fest!

- * Journey to the Core of Divinity
- * Boardroom to Family Room - Balancing Career and Family
- * Living Swami's teachings in all aspects of life
- * Spiritual Sadhana in the Family
- * Practicing the Presence of God
- * Swami, the Divine Feminist!
- * Are You Listening? Communication Among Generations
- * Creative Seva (Service)
- * Managing Stress Through Spirituality
- * Spirituality Through Poetry

Thank you Swami! The uplifting and spiritually-charged weekend Retreat ended with energetic bhajans and *namasmarana* (chanting of the Name of God) in praise of our Lord of Lords, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, at whose Lotus Feet the entire effort and all results were offered with deep gratitude.

Ramya Gopinath Rao
Chair, ZLWC

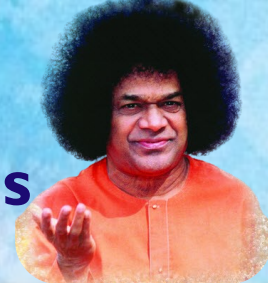
Sunday: Unity of Faiths, Panel on Forbearance. The Retreat's second day began again with melodious bhajans followed by a delightful feature celebrating the Unity of Faiths. Five women were requested to highlight one aspect or festival of their particular faith and trace its relationship to Swami’s teachings – each in just 5 minutes! This segment turned out to be one of the most moving of the entire Retreat as these talented women shared sacred aspects of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, the Bahai faith, and Buddhism, and beautifully elucidated the echoes of their faith’s teachings in Swami’s words. The Retreat wrapped up

The Ladies Wing Committee

Chair: Ramya Rao
Members: Laxmi Maddala, Sumana Madhav, Geetha Mohanram, Geeta Reid, Devi Sagramsingh, Sumathy Sathiamoorthy.

Center Highlights

- Easwaramma Day Celebrations



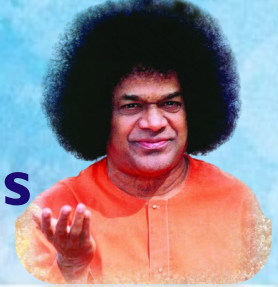
MANASA BHAJARE GURU CHARANAM

"Once you have secured a Guru, leave everything to Him, even the desire to achieve liberation. He knows you more than you yourself ever can...Your duty is only to obey and to smother the tendency to drift away from Him."

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 4, July 24, 1964

Center Highlights

- Easwaramma Day Celebrations



Easwaramma Day: Centers at their Loving Best!

SaiLights Magazine is happy to share with our readers a glimpse of how several Centers across Zone 1, Sri Sathya Sai Global Council (SSSGC), marked Easwaramma Day, the day that the mother of the Sathya Sai Avatar attained Swami's Divine Lotus Feet.

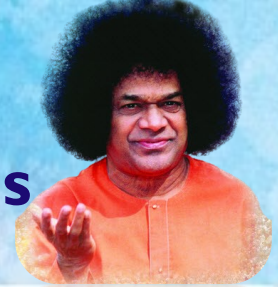
Easwaramma Day is that day in the Sai Calendar, that special day when children in the Sri Sathya Sai Educare (SSSE) program honor the Divine Mother and offer their love to Swami in the form of plays, songs, bhajans, dances, debates, study circles, art - or anything else their creative minds can think of.

Although dedicated to the children, the day brings together the entire Center in a spirit of great joy and unity, as parents, SSSE Gurus, other Center members and helping hands, who have been a part of the 3-month long preparatory efforts, all come together in love and harmony to support the children.



Center Highlights

- Easwamma Day Celebrations



Easwamma Day: Centers at their Loving Best!

Highlights from Selected Centers



If there is one soul whom the Lord Himself hailed as a beacon for all of mankind, who has become synonymous with the grand Sathya Sai missions of mass upliftment be it educare, healthcare, or sociocare, the very mention of whose name brought tears to the divine eyes, it is Mother Easwamma.

Source: RadioSai Facebook

Sri Sathya Sai Center of Baltimore (MD)

On Saturday, May 6, we celebrated Easwamma Day. It was truly a blissful program and we are thankful to Swami that we could celebrate this day in person after three long years. The program consisted of drama, debate, dance, classical music, and musical offerings followed by one hour of bhajans and prasadam.

Our program started with a drama titled **“Mother Easwamma”** by SSSE Group 2 students. The drama presented the virtues and good qualities of Mother Easwamma such as love, compassion, forbearance, patience, perseverance, simplicity, sincerity and selfless service.

Next, our SSSE Group 3 students presented a drama and debate titled **“Mothers of Ramayana”** and extracted from the *“Rama Katha Rasa Vahini”*, a book written by our beloved Swami. Group 3 students have been reading this book for the last five months as SSSE weekly lessons and life applications. The drama and debate highlighted the compassionate and loving nature of the mothers as well as the example of Lord Rama as an ideal son who demonstrated how to respect one’s parents.

After this, SSSE Group 1 students presented a skit of **“Lord Hanuman and the Pearl Necklace”** which demonstrated the *faith* of Lord Hanuman and his love for Lord Rama, followed by a dance by Group 1 boys on Lord Rama.

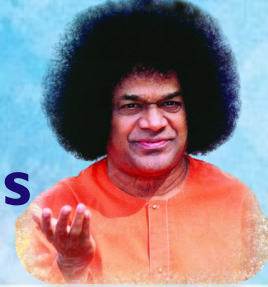
Our SSSE Group 4 students offered a **“Sai Keerthana”** classical musical program where students offered *Sai Pancharatna Kriti, Pranamaami Sayeesha*. During the musical offering, the presentation slides prepared by Students included lyrics, meanings and visual representation of Swami by photos along with sketches drawn by students.

Our Young Adults offered a **musical program** which included three songs and Swami’s quotes on Mother Easwamma and our Divine Mother Sai.

We concluded the program with one-hour bhajans, *Aarthi* and *prasadam*. We are grateful to all members who put so much work into the preparation of the cultural programs, food, hall setup and cleanup. Looking forward to many more celebrations this year!

Center Highlights

- Easwamma Day Celebrations



Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center of Concord (CA)

Highlights of SSSE Graduation 2023:

SSSE Children, Teachers, Parents and in general all center members participated in the graduation program at the Sai Center.

SSSE Children gave graduation speeches on what they learnt this year in SSSE classes. They shared some significant ideals from the life of Sri Rama, Lord Jesus, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and Mother Easwamma, which have motivated them to practice such lessons in their daily life. For example: Being loving to siblings (as taught by Rama and Bharatha), caring for less fortunate people (as taught by Baba and Mother Easwamma), and seeing good in all (as taught by Jesus).

The children also chanted daily prayers and sang bhajans, and assembled brown bag lunches for homeless shelters, and expressed their gratitude to Swami.

Sri Sathya Sai Center of Loudoun (VA)

Our SSSE Students practiced for months and with Swami's Grace offered a wonderful set of cultural programs at Swami's Lotus Feet. All center members felt Swami's presence by looking at the flawless offering by our SSE Students in the form of Sloka Chanting, Bhajans, Dance, Drama, and even engaging the audience and coordinating the whole program. All Center Members felt the sincere dedication our students exhibited in offering a variety of activities to their Swami.

Sathya Sai Center of Norwalk (CT)

The Sri Sathya Sai Center of Norwalk, Region 1, celebrated Mother Easwamma Day. It was a beautiful celebration with Bhajans followed by a Balvikas (SSSE) program. The Balvikas children sang bhajans in unison and under the direction of their SSSE teacher, also presented a play narrating Swami's words and quotations. It was heartwarming to see the children read and explain quotes from Swami's teachings.

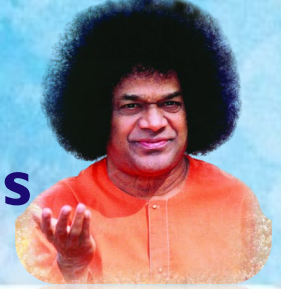
Sathya Sai Center of Phoenix (AZ)

The SSSGC Center of Phoenix celebrated Easwamma Day on May 7th at our usual Sunday Sai Center location to observe Easwamma Day from 9AM – 12 noon. The Parents, Students and all the Sai Center members came together in mind and spirit to celebrate the day. A total of 55 people were in attendance. We have 21 SSSE students: 13 in Group 1, 4 in Group 2, and 4 in Group 3.

Prayers and songs. The program commenced with opening prayers followed by an all-student mixed Choir who sang 11 American Classical/Patriotic songs including "This Little Light of Mine", "Let There be Peace on Earth", "God Bless America", "We Are One in The Spirit"-- a few of students' favorites. Students had learnt these songs earlier in the year, when they performed at a Senior Living facility close to the Sai Center, to bring cheer to the residents. Our students participate in such events a couple of times a year; they also make handmade cards and distribute them at the facility. The seniors at the facility love to see our students come and sing for them, and cherish these memories year after year. Some of the Seniors even remember the children's faces from prior events and become emotional seeing them return with the same excitement.

Center Highlights

- Easwamma Day Celebrations



Children's speeches. The students' short speeches are the highlight of the celebrations. Group 1 Students were asked to speak about what they liked about SSSE, and Group 2 and 3 students, about "Life as a SSSE Student". The students shared how much they loved SSSE classes, their teachers, and the positive impact they experienced from learning Swami's teachings. It was a feast to see the students express their feelings and thoughts with so much clarity. On one occasion, everyone burst into laughter when a Group 1 Student shared how boring school was, when compared to *Balvikas*.

Certificates and Gifts distribution. The day's Bhajans were led entirely by the students, and Certificate and gift distribution followed the Bhajans. All students received an attendance certificate--an acrylic desk photo of Swami and a glossy key chain with Swami's photo on one side and the text of the Sai Gayathri on the other side. The celebration was concluded by Group 3 Students doing the *Mangala Harathi* for Swami and the closing prayers, followed by *Vibhuthi* and *Prasad* distribution.

Raleigh Sai Center (NC)

The Five Mothers. This year's Easwamma Day was celebrated in our Center on Saturday, May 6. The focus of the day's events was "The Five Mothers": Mother Earth (*Bhu-mata*), *Desha Mata* (Motherland), *Veda Mata* (Vedic knowledge as the Mother), *Go-Mata* (Cow as the Mother), and *Deha Mata* (Mother of the Avatar's Body).

Vedas, Drama, Dance, SSSE Graduation. Some of the main programs were *Vedam* chanting, a Drama and Dance based on the theme of the Five mothers, a musical symphony where students participated in displaying their skills across instruments, and the Sai Choir featuring talented singers. A Graduation ceremony was also conducted, and a number of students received their awards and made inspiring graduation speeches.

Go Green Workshops. In addition this year, a new segment focused on *Go-Green workshops* was introduced. There was good hands-on participation in these workshops that covered various aspects of environmental awareness. Do-It-Yourself (DIY) workshops were organized to learn about:

- ◆ home-cleaning products for affordable and eco-friendly substitutes
- ◆ planting of delicious microgreens in to-go boxes to learn more about how to take care of our soil
- ◆ making of beeswax wrappers as a natural, reusable, washable, environmentally friendly and degradable alternative to plastic wrap
- ◆ creative recycled art: Group 1 students learnt to build an amazing race car with a propulsion system using cardboard and other recyclable materials; Group 2 students made a new dog toy using old t-shirts and donated this to dog shelters; and Group 3 learnt step by step to make composting at home.

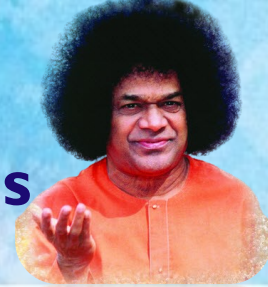
Shelton Sai Center (CT)

The theme of the Easwamma Day program was "A Mother's Sacrifices and Devotion".

Gratitude towards mother is not a one-time thing. In today's world, when you ask a person how they celebrate Mothers' Day, many will say they may make breakfast for her, maybe relay a message of appreciation through a card and flowers, help her around the house, or even go out to enjoy a meal together as a family, as a way to give her a break. These are fine ways to appreciate one's mother -- but could be considered to be *first steps* in displaying gratitude. Gratitude should be shown in every action and at all times, with an understanding of how important a mother's role is in one's life. This was a lesson we re-learned from the SSSE students at our center.

Center Highlights

- Easwamma Day Celebrations



A mother's sacrifice and devotion. On May 14, 2023, the Shelton Sai Center came together to celebrate Mother Easwamma and all mothers. The SSSE children prepared a wonderful program with the help and coordination of the SSSE teachers and other elders in the center. By Swami's Will, each group focused on highlighting two main characteristics of a mother: sacrifice and devotion to her child.

1. **Group 1** beautifully presented the mothers of two famous figures in history, *Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj* and *Thomas Alva Edison*. Both mothers were prime examples of "*Mother is the first Guru.*" One mother imparted moral values and ideals to her son, leading him to become an important figure in Indian history; the other sacrificed her time to support her child to reach great heights, even when society deemed that her child was not capable.
2. **Group 2** highlighted the role of their mothers in their lives, sharing how they devoted themselves to helping their children build good character, by engaging in good company in a safe environment, like the Sai Center.
3. **Group 3** added a twist to the program, showcasing the hidden talents that each mother in the center had and reminding us that they too had a life full of hobbies and achievements well before they entered motherhood, thus highlighting the sacrifices that mothers make to support their children and family.
4. **Group 4** presented a beautiful documentary of interviews with SSSE children and teachers. Conversations touched on the fondest memory of their mother, something their mother does that they couldn't live without, plans to do something special for their mother from now on and into the future, and pondering the meaning of Swami's quote "Mother is the First Guru".

The presentations were wrapped up with a wonderful session of mothers and children leading the center in bhajans, followed by a beautiful offering of fresh flower bouquets coordinated by the center members, and a lunch date with all center families at a neighboring Indian restaurant. Thanks to Swami's grace and the precious efforts of the SSSE students, teachers, and center members, Easwamma Day was a heartwarming and educational experience for all. To all mothers everywhere: Jai Sai Ram!

Sri Sathya Sai Center of South Bethesda (MD)

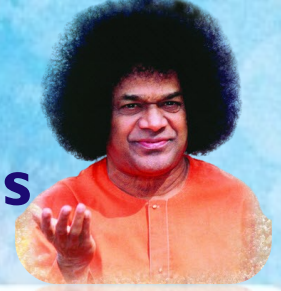
The SSSE children of the Sri Sathya Sai South Bethesda Center wholeheartedly celebrated Easwamma Day on Sunday, May 7, 2023. This was the first in-person Easwamma Day after the pandemic and everyone was excited to be part of a program that was live and in person! The Young Adults of the Center were the Emcees of the program and actively worked with the Gurus and Education Coordinator to stitch together the event.

Vedic chants. Our program opened with Vedic chants from each group, as follows: *Gayathri Mantra*, three times (Group 1); *Sai Gayathri*, three times (Group 2); *Gananaam Twa* (Group 3 girls); *Sahana Vavatu* (Group 3 boys); *Svasti Prajabhyah Paripala Yantaam* (Group 4 girls); and The Lord's Prayer (Group 4 boys).

Five Mothers. The program opened with Group 1 children, who presented a skit on "the Five Mothers." They highlighted the importance of *Deha Mata* – the physical mother, *Gomata* – the sacred cow, *Bhumata* – mother earth, *Deshmata* – homage to our country, and *Vedamata* – the goddess of all learning.

Center Highlights

- Easwamma Day Celebrations



Young Sathya. Following this beautiful play by the youngest of all the children, Group 2 presented two skits from Swami's life. The first skit was the story of Sathya's visit to the Hanuman Temple, with His friends, when a Monkey (Lord Hanuman) does not allow Sathya to circumambulate the temple. In the second skit, when Sathya, His older brother, sister-in-law, and a government official visit the temple in Hampi, Sathya stays outside--but is also seen *inside* the temple. The children concluded their program with a musical offering titled "Once a long, long time ago..."

The Divine Mother. Before the next group started, we watched a beautiful video about Mother Easwamma.

President Lincoln. The video was followed by a skit by the Group 3 boys titled "Abraham Lincoln, A Man of Values". This play highlighted his greatness and the values by which he lived. The skit underscored the importance of self-confidence, a value which his mother instilled in him. The boys also enacted the Lincoln-Douglass debates, heated exchanges about the merits of abolishing slavery.

Swami, true friend. Following the boys' powerful performance, the Group 3 girls enacted a play, which they wrote themselves, about Swami as their true friend. A new girl in school faces criticism and relies on her relationship with Swami to get through the day. The girls showcased Swami's message that He is always our true friend.

After the group 3 Girls program, we were very blessed to be addressed by Uncle Viswanathan as he shared a personal story from Swami! What an incredible treat!

Sri Rama on "Netflicks". The next performance was by the Group 4 boys, who drew on the *Rama Katha Rasa Vahini*, which they have been studying, for their play. Their creativity and imagination brought Sri Rama and His brothers and their Guru Valmiki to life through a "Netflicks" drama that was watched and analyzed by another group of boys.

Musical Tribute to mothers. The final performance was by the Group 4 girls who offered a musical tribute to all mothers. Their voices were pure and melodious.

The SSSE children finished the program by offering Aarthi to Swami.

This concluded a memorable Easwamma Day celebration at the Sri Sathya Sai South Bethesda Center.

Sathya Sai Center of Syracuse (NY)

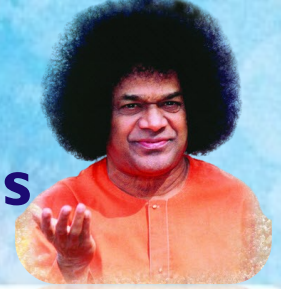
On May 7, 2023, the Syracuse Sai Center offered some bhajans to the Divine Mother, conducted a Study Circle dedicated to Mother Easwamma, and screened two videos.

A Video on Mother Easwamma. In the first video, Baba shared how Mother Easwamma was the embodiment of love and caring. He said that, though uneducated, her advice was priceless. One day she mentioned to Swami that the children had to walk a long distance to Bukkapatnam, to go to school there, and that she would like a school built in Parthi. Swami told her He had no money; without hesitation, she removed her gold necklace and asked Him to sell it! Swami told her not to be hasty, saying He was just testing her. The next day the basement of the proposed school was completed and one week later, the school was opened. Then, Swami asked Easwamma, was she happy?

She didn't say she was happy, but said she was somewhat satisfied. "But there is more, Swami" she said. She explained once again, that the children have to go to Bukkapatnam for medical treatment; and asked Swami to

Center Highlights

- Easwamma Day Celebrations



build a hospital. After the hospital was completed, she then said that other villages should also have similar facilities. Swami said that her thoughts were always about others and how to help them. Mother Easwamma was the benefactor of all who came to her, no matter how big or small their problems were. Each benefited by being in her presence.

A video on the Divine Mother's Love for Swami. The second video was an interview of Dr. Krishna Kishor. He relates a story: around midnight there was a knock on his door, and opening the door he was shocked to see Mother Easwamma standing there. She came in and said she was concerned about Swami's health, with Him being in contact with so many people. She wanted Swami to be medically examined and asked Dr. Kishor to do so, and also promise that he would look after Swami's health in the future. After He agreed, Mother Easwamma left.

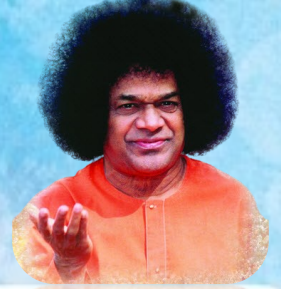
Mother Easwamma was the mother of Swami and of all of us as she embraced all with her love!

Prasadam was offered at the conclusion of the meeting.

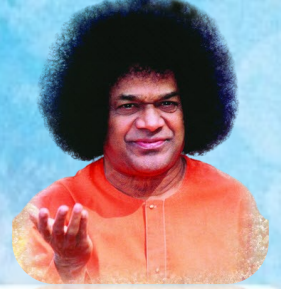


Did you know? The first Easwamma Day celebrations were held at Prasanthi Nilayam on May 6, 1977. Nearly 2000 Bal Vikas students from Anantapur District were fortunate to participate in the program. Children from Smt. Easwamma High School also joined. Swami blessed the children and later distributed sweets and notebooks containing the picture of Mother Easwamma. He gave valuable advice to parents in His Discourse, and stayed till 8:30 pm to witness the Bal Vikas children's cultural program.

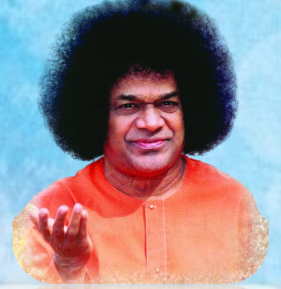
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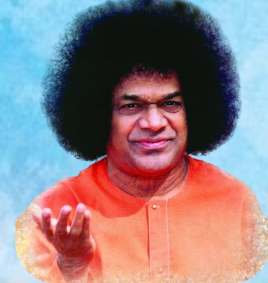
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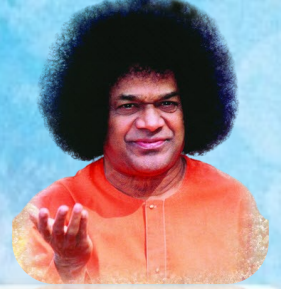
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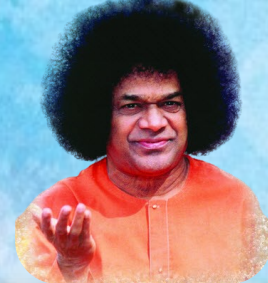
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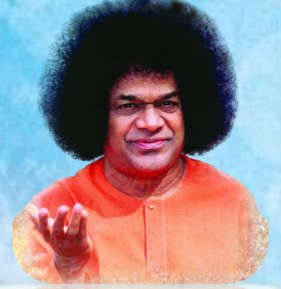
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Center Highlights



Center Highlights



Lord Buddha: The Doctrine of Impermanence



MANASA BHAJARE GURU CHARANAM

"*Maanasa Bhajare* - Worship in the mind! I do not need your flower garlands and fruits, things that you get for an *anna* (penny) or two; they are not genuinely yours. Give me something that is clean and fragrant with the perfume of virtue and innocence, and washed in the tears of repentance!"

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 1, October 17, 1953

Lord Buddha: The Doctrine of Impermanence

Story of Kisa Gotami

One of the essential doctrines of Buddhism is impermanence (*Anicca or Anitya*). Everything changes and nothing lasts forever. Everything, from our emotions to our thoughts and feelings, and from the cells in our bodies to the plants around us, is changing and decaying continuously.

The following story is taken from Buddhist scriptures to explain this doctrine.

During Lord Buddha's time there lived in India a wealthy socialite lady by the name of **Kisa Gotami** who possessed every material thing that she wanted. She enjoyed all worldly pleasures. After getting married to a rich merchant, she gave birth to a son whom she adored. However, this child, who had brought so much joy to her life, suddenly fell sick and died when he was one year old.

Kisa Gotami could not accept his death. She believed that there was someone in this world who could bring him back to life. She carried the child from city to city looking for a person who could revive her son.

A wise person then directed her to Lord Buddha, who was resting at Jetevanarama, with his fellow devotees. Kisa Gotami, who was distraught and tired, and had been wearily carrying the child in her arms for a long distance, placed the child at the feet of the Buddha.

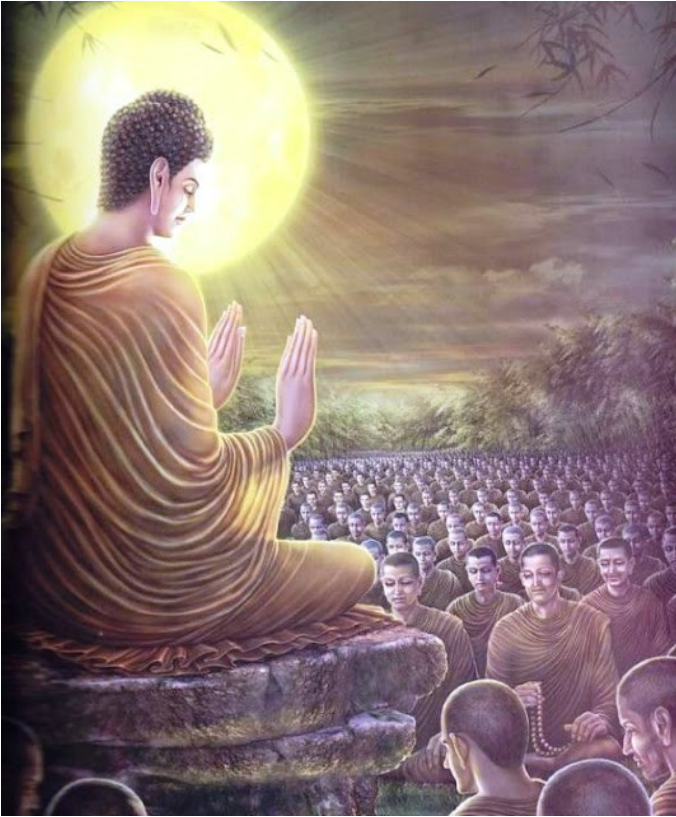


“Oh Lord! This child of mine, life of my life, was but yesterday making me happy playing with me, smiling, and clapping his hands. He slept comfortably. Yet, Oh Lord! This son of mine does not speak to me now. My husband says the child is dead. It can't be. Even yesterday evening he played with me joyfully. How can he die in one night? I have been to great physicians like Jeevaka. They too say that my son is dead. Lord! You know everything. My son is not dead. Make him well. He is not dead. My life is my son's life. Oh Lord! Give medicine to my son and make him well. Give me back my son” prayed Kisa Gotami.

The Buddha looked at the child placed at his feet. There was no doubt that the child was dead. He looked at Kisa Gotami with compassion.

The Buddha, the greatest psychiatrist and teacher who had ever lived on this earth, understood that Kisa Gotami would not accept her son's death if he just told her that death was one of the realities of life and comes to everyone. So he came up with the most intelligent and far-sighted way of calming down the distraught Kisa Gotami.

Lord Buddha: The Doctrine of Impermanence



He told her that he could revive the child if she brought him some mustard seed from a household where no one had died. Kisa Gotami became greatly relieved and was full of hope and expectation. Accordingly, she started to look for some mustard seed.

She saw some children playing outside the first house she came upon. She walked across and asked the mother of the children if she could get some mustard seed to be given as medicine. The mother quickly went inside and brought some mustard and gave it to Kisa Gotami. But then she remembered that the mustard seed should be from a household where nobody had ever died.

She asked the mother if anyone had died in her household. The mother sadly said that her husband had died not too long ago. The second, third, and all other houses that she visited told her the same story. Someone had died in their homes.

After visiting many such houses, Kisa Gotami gradually came to realize that death comes to all. She understood

the reality that *"if you are born you have to die"*. She slowly went back to the Buddha and stood before him.

"Sister, have you brought some mustard seed from a house where there has been no death?" asked the Buddha.

"Lord, I have subdued my grief by my own effort. I have come after depositing my dead son in the burial ground. Lord! I could not find a house where none had died. I have realized that death is the heritage of all that are born. I now know the nature of existence," said Kisa Gotami.

"Sister, if you do not mourn for the dead child, go to your living husband and live with him in comfort," said the Buddha.

"No Lord, I now have no attachment in me to anybody. I have no liking for a household life. If grief for one child is such, it would be much greater if I get more children. Hereafter I have no desire or attachment to lay life. I give up all worldly pleasures. Lord! I have learnt that desire is the root cause of all sorrow. Lord! Give me ordination," implored Kisa Gotami.

"Sister, you are most suitable for ordination. Wait until my disciples come to this city. I approve of your ordination" said the Buddha

Source: This version of the Story is taken from Therigatha or (Verses of the Elder Nuns) in the Pali Canon.

This article was prepared by Sena Basnayake, South Bethesda Center

Sai Pearls



MANASA BHAJARE GURU CHARANAM

Everyone should be prompted by reverence to the Guru, which means not worshipping His photograph but acting according to His orders, His commands.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 4, December 17, 1964

Sai Pearls

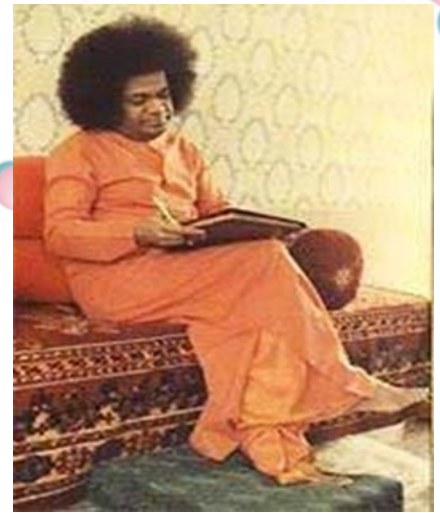
Sai's Pearls: Treasures from the Ocean of Bliss

Swami loved poetry. In His *Avataric* lifetime, he opened every single one--yes every single one!--of His discourses with a seemingly light but ever profound verse in Telugu. Scholars of Telugu Literature have commented that Swami's poems are veritable gems, poetry of very high quality. Hardly a surprise!

Swami also wrote many beautiful poems in English. We share a sampling of them below. But before we do, on this auspicious occasion of Guru Poornima, we would like to share with you Swami's *Teachings* on Poetry. Genuine Sai Pearls from the Source--what a treat!!

Swami's Teachings on Poetry

- ♥ Real poetry emanates from the call of the Divine *within*
- ♥ A poet must therefore discover God first; only then can he disseminate that bliss
- ♥ The poet thus becomes the Guru for spiritual aspirants
- ♥ Recognizing this high status, the poet must prepare for this important role
- ♥ How? By filling himself with Love; then, the words coming from the heart will be full of vitality and power
- ♥ *Bhaava* (substance of the Divine message) is the real thing; *Bhaasha* (language) is of superficial interest



Swami to poets: "The Poet is the Guru"

"I want you to imbibe the *bhaava* [from Sai]; I want the poets to inculcate pure *bhaava*, not pretty *bhaasha*."

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 12, April 1, 1974

Poems by Swami

DON'T MISS ME, I'VE NOT GONE AWAY
A poem given by Swami to a devotee in 2007

Don't miss me, I've not gone away,
I live inside your heart,
With faith and love you must believe
Of Me you are a part.

Do tell how one can part the
endless ocean from a wave,
Or distance My devotees,
When their blissful love I crave.

I'm here as I have always been,
I've merely changed my form,
I've taken on my cosmic self,
The body--tired and worn...

Was left a gift to mother earth,
To rest upon her bosom,
And for those pilgrims near and far,
Whose fate too late were chosen.

Just call my name and I'll be there,
To wipe away your tears,
To hold you in my loving arms,
To cast away your fears.

Don't miss me I've not gone away,
There is no place to go,
Just look inside your peaceful heart--
My Presence you will know.

Sai Pearls

Children of Immortality

A Poem written by Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Children of Immortality!
Remember that you are created
In my image and likeness.
Perfect!

Live up to this image, in every way, in all planes.
Live like Masters!

Walk this earth with your heads held high,
Your spirits soaring...
Your hearts open to Love...
And believe in yourself and God within you.
Then all will go well.

Earth is but a manifestation of My Being.
Made out of My Life!

Wherever you look, I am there.
Wherever you walk, I am there.
Whomsoever you contact, I am that person.
I am in each, in all My Splendor.

See Me everywhere,
Talk to Me and love Me,
Who am in each.

Then from each, I will respond
And bring you into Glory.
You cannot see Me in one place and not in another,
For I fill all space.

You cannot escape Me
Or do anything in secret,
For there are no secrets with Me.

Live... Live... Live... in perfect accord
With My laws, and wonders will ensue.

Think now. Does error clog the free flowing
Essence of My Being through you?
Ask Me this moment to reveal to you your errors

In the silence of your meditation
Let old memories well up in you,
From My subconscious in you...
Old patterns...
Old forgotten feelings and thoughts.

Now plunge them into the Ocean of Light,
Burn them from the consciousness
So that you may be true emblems of My Being.

Right now,
Visualize My burning flame
Rising higher and higher
As it burns through you.

It is a flame that is cooling,
Cleansing and healing,
That soothes the hidden sorrow...
And leaves you calmed and quiet.

Rest in my Love.
Let all that you have been through
In your many lives up to this day,
Melt away in My redeeming Light.

Children of My Being!
Dissolve your sorrows and fears in Me.
Let me efface
All your karma.

Come back into My Consciousness, which is
Your own true Consciousness.
Let your petty human self fade away, right now,
As you come to Me, who am your Inner Self.

You are now My radiant glorious Self...
No longer separate from Me.
Melt with Me... Merge with Me...!
Become Me!

Awakening: A Poem by Kanaga Ranganathan



THANKS, DEAR SAI, FOR AWAKENING ME FROM MY SLUMBER

Kanaga Ranganathan, Sri Sathya Sai South Bethesda Center, MD

For aeons of time, more than thousands of births or more,
Have I slumbered thorough varied incarnations, countless,
From rocks and stones, shrubs and trees, birds and beasts,
Evolved to a human birth, equipped to think, yet slumbered,
Never did I find the divine spark, the energy that is the base,
The entire cosmos from the galaxies to the worm in the grass,
Held in Thy grip, activated by Thy grace, I knew not in my folly.
Until Thou woke me from my slumber to find Thee in Thy glory.

In this human birth, in my early thirties, I heard Thy call afar,
My spouse and children all agog to hear Thy voice, so sweet,
Beckoning us to Thy Presence, to Thy abode of eternal peace,
Awakened from our slumber that held us in thrall for so long,
A celestial spirit surged within, freed from the earthly bounds,
We felt the spark of light deep down, knew falsehood of form,
Knew what was hidden so long, a spark of divinity we all are,
Wading through darkness, lost as we were, Thy Grace woke us.

Thy powerful call came through, we came running fast to Thee,
We came, we saw Thy glory, Thy Divine light dimmed the sun,
Thou taught us the eternal truth, --forget not your true essence,
You are not the shell that hides the divine spark deep within,
You are divine, part of the supreme energy that pervades all,
Thou taught us divine principles, love all, serve all, hurt none,
We gloried in Thy teachings, we shed our outer shells of form,
Thou woke us from our slumber as we lay in bliss at Thy feet.



Sai Snippets



MANASA BHAJARE GURU CHARANAM

"Man is consumed by Time. God is the Master of time. So take refuge in God. Let God be your *Guru*, your path, your Lord."

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 18, July 2, 1985



Spiritual GPS

Good Practices for Sadhana

Spiritual GPS: All About Love - Ten Injunctions from Swami

Drawn from a Discourse delivered by Swami on Guru Poornima 1969

1. Fill every word of yours with Love. Fill every act of yours with Love; then alone will the act be fit to be offered to God, and pure enough to win His Grace.
2. Let the word that emerges from your tongue not wound like the arrow or hit like the hammer; let it be a soft path of blossoms, let it shower peace and joy.
3. Love for Love's sake; do not manifest it for the sake of material objects or fulfillment of worldly desires.
4. Treat everyone - whoever he may be - with the all-inclusive compassion of Love. This constructive sympathy has to become the spontaneous reaction of all mankind.
5. Preserve Love from being poisoned by the evils of envy, malice, hate, and discrimination based on caste, creed, or religion; endeavor to cultivate feelings that are devoid of hatred and prejudice.
6. Bear no ill-will towards the entire world of living beings, as in all beings and even things, there is moving and revolving an active illumining Principle, the Divine, the *Atma*.
7. Saturate the breath - while you inhale and exhale - in Love; saturate each moment in Love
8. When you place offerings before the Lord, instead of transitory materials, let your offering be Love. Love is the only comprehensive Code of Conduct.
9. Let Love flow clear from the heart; let it not emanate from the head, nor from the tongue. Let it emerge, full and free, from the heart. This is the highest duty, the noblest Godliness.
10. Start the day with Love. Live 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.

Faith

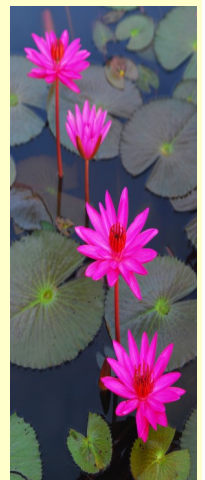
"Shankara, the great teacher, had four chief pupils, namely *Thotaka, Hasthaamalaka, Sureshwara and Padhmapaadha*. Of these four, Padhmapaadha was intent only on service to the Guru; he could not pay attention to the lessons. The others used to sneer at him for his backwardness in studies. But his deep reverence for the Guru made up for it.

One day he washed the clothes of his Guru and dried them on a rock in the middle of the river. Even as he was folding them, the river rose fast in a swirling flood, and his foothold on the top of the rock became unsteady.

It was getting late; the Guru would need the washed clothes soon, so Padhmapaadha resolved to walk across the raging waters. He knew that the blessing of his Guru would save him — and it did. Wherever his foot was placed, a sturdy lotus bloomed and bore his weight on the petals. That is why he came to be called "Lotus-footed", or *Padhmapaadha*!

The grace of the Guru enabled him to master all knowledge and shine as a brilliant exponent of ancient wisdom."

Sathya Sai Speaks Vol 7, p 27



Asked...and Answered by Swami

Asked ... and Answered by Swami

Prayer

The following is a series of questions on Prayer, posed by Dr. John Hislop and answered by Swami, as recorded in his famous book, *Conversations with God*.

Hislop: Is not praying to God the same as begging?

SAI: To beg from an equal puts you down and him up. But to ask God, you rise up to His level. You must ask God. To ask God is perfectly all right. It is not begging.

Hislop: But I had thought that since God knows each problem, and if it was appropriate to remedy the trouble, God would do so without being asked.

SAI: Important answer! No. It is your duty to ask God. Words must be spoken, and the words must correspond to the thought.

The thought must be put into sincere speech. It is correct that Divinity is Omniscient. But He requires that sincere words be spoken. The mother may know the child requires food to maintain life, but milk is given when the child asks for it.

Hislop: It is not clear when one should ask God and when one should not. For example, there is a headache that doctors seem unable to cure. I do not ask Swami to cure the headache; I do not pray for a cure. However, in a letter, Swami wrote; 'How is your health? Do not worry about that. Your God is always with you, in you, around you'.

SAI: That is right. What Baba said is enough. For you, body identification is weakening. You have a headache today, a stomach pain tomorrow. Let it go. Don't worry about it. You are not the body. Once Baba has told you not to worry, there is no need to ask Him about it. Don't identify.

Hislop: Does Swami mean that for those persons still fully identified with the body, a continuous headache might be a proper subject for prayer?

SAI: Yes, but why bother Swami about a mere headache. You may tell others the same.

Hislop: Then, is it really all right to ask God?

SAI: God should be asked for help when there is a real need . A child asks his parents for a peppermint sweet, and the parents oblige. When older, the child asks for property from the parents, and it receives this. It is by right that the child asks, and it is by right that it receives.



Asked....and Answered by Swami



A child may ask a stranger for a peppermint once or twice and expect to get one. But if he asks for property from a stranger he will not expect to receive anything. But God is not bothered by a multitude of small requests, and He will certainly give property (things of great value). Therefore, one should always ask God to meet one's needs. It is the individual's right to ask. There is no question of begging.

Hislop: Swami said that in praying to God, the petitioner raises himself to the level of God. In order to make such a prayer, in what state or condition should one first put himself?

SAI: It is not necessary to put oneself into any particular state of meditation.

Hislop: Usually, the idea is that one should go to a quiet place and be in a quiet mood when one wishes to pray.

SAI: Whenever and wherever you put yourself in touch with God that is the state of meditation. You may feel that 1 p.m. in California is not a good time to call Me, for I may be asleep in India and that I should not be disturbed. I know you have felt like that once or twice. But, I am omnipresent; I have no such limitations. I never sleep. At the middle of the night, I turn off the light and rest in bed, because if the light is on, devotees will gather. I have no need of sleep. But you need at least 4 hours of sleep.

Hislop: If I am walking in the street, with people around, and my mind is engaged with things I must do, is that a good time for prayer?

SAI: At the beginning, one might need some special set of circumstances for clearing the mind for concentration on God. But in a little time, if one finds that God is omnipresent and becomes aware of Him, and one's thoughts are centered on God, then no matter where you are, it is the same. The prayers may be addressed to God and will reach Him.

Hislop: Swami says that God is omnipresent. What meaning does Swami give to the word, 'omnipresent'?

SAI: Omnipresent means everywhere at the same time, all the time.

Source: [conversations-with-sai1.pdf - Google Drive](#) pp 44-46.

Life is a Game: Play it!



Guru Poornima Bhajan Quiz-2023

Guru Seva Bina Nirvana Nahi!

Let's do Namasamarana on the auspicious occasion of Gurupurnima,
Find the missing link in the following Guru bhajans to connect to Him.

1. Guruvayoor Pura Sri Hari Krishna _____ Gopal
2. Guru Mahima Gaavo x3, Sadguru Sai Nanda Guru, _____ Nanda Guru
3. Guru Baba Guru Baba, Charana _____ Guru Baba
4. Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu, Guru Deva _____
5. Dattha Guru Dattha Guru Datthathreya Guru
Sai Naathha, _____ Naathha, Brahma Roopa Guru
6. Guru Baba Guru Baba Charana _____ Guru Baba, Sai Baba Baala Baba
7. Guru Deva Guru Govinda Mangala Giridhara, Shirdi _____, Jaya Partheeshwara Sai Shiva
8. Guru Deva Sad Guru Deva Dayaa Karo Bhagawaan
Shanti Do, Shanti Do, Shanti Do, Mujhe _____ Dhana
Ananda Chanda _____ Ananda Ananda Sai
9. Guru Vara Naam Paavana Naam, Sath Guru Naam Guru _____ Naam
Guru Vara Naam Paavana Naam
10. Maanasa Bhajorey Guru Charanam Dusthara Bhava _____ Tharanam
11. Namana Karoo Mey Guru Charanam, Guru Charanam Sadguru Charanam
Pranavaananda _____ Chanda
12. Sad Guru Brahma Sanathana Hey Parama _____ Paavana Hey
Janmaja Dukha _____ Hey
13. Sathya Guru Dev Raaha Dikhaavo _____, Raaha Dikhaavo Sai Deva

Devotee Experiences

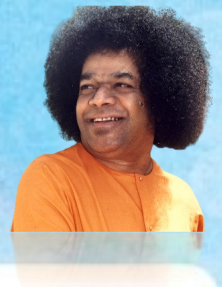


MANASA BHAJARE GURU CHARANAM

"Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Maheshwara. Consider Guru as your everything. In this world, everything is a manifestation of Divinity."

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 34, July 5, 2001

What is your favorite quote?



Devotees write about their favorite quotations of Swami!

"Life is a game, play it!"

This reminds us that there will be challenges and successes in life and that our duty is to play the game of life well knowing that God will take care.

-- Jayanti, Sai, Sri Sathya Sai Center of Concord, CA



"Love as thought is Truth..."

"Love as thought is Truth,
Love as action is Righteous Conduct,
Love as feeling is Peace,
Love as understanding is Non-violence."

Humble *Pranams* at Swami's Lotus Feet.

This quote covers all Five Human Values in one quote and shows how Love is the undercurrent for all other four human values, and how love in our thought, word, deed will help us exhibit all human values in our daily life. Jai Sai Ram.

-- Raghavendran Srinivasan, Sri Sathya Sai Center of Loudoun, VA



"Love All, Serve All"

I think of all Swami's quotes, my favorite is "Love all Serve all". Often, we say this very loosely as it is probably one of the quotes that is quoted most often! If we ponder on this quote for a bit, what does "love all" mean? Love is one of the most powerful tools that one has been born with inherently. Swami says, there is no power greater than love in this world because it is selfless and pure! He says love helps you see GOD in everyone.

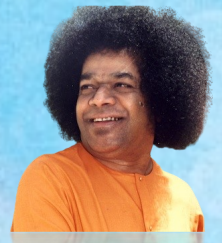
Something as simple as a smile or a comforting word can mean so much to someone who is having a bad day or an illness, or dealing with something stressful. In His discourses, Swami keeps emphasizing the need to be kind, loving and compassionate to all those we meet. When we encounter someone who is not too pleasant, if we are behave lovingly towards them, the person's attitude changes very quickly. When we loving, moreover, it makes us more peaceful and happy.

When serving those in need we need to remember that we are serving God. When God has blessed us with the ability to serve those in need, we in turn have the responsibility of rendering the service with no expectation and glory. Just a smile and look of contentment in the eyes of the person receiving the service makes our heart full! Swami often tells us that selfless service is the most important spiritual discipline for a devotee and the direct path to Self-realization.

-- Deepa Srikumar, Sri Sathya Sai South Bethesda Center, MD

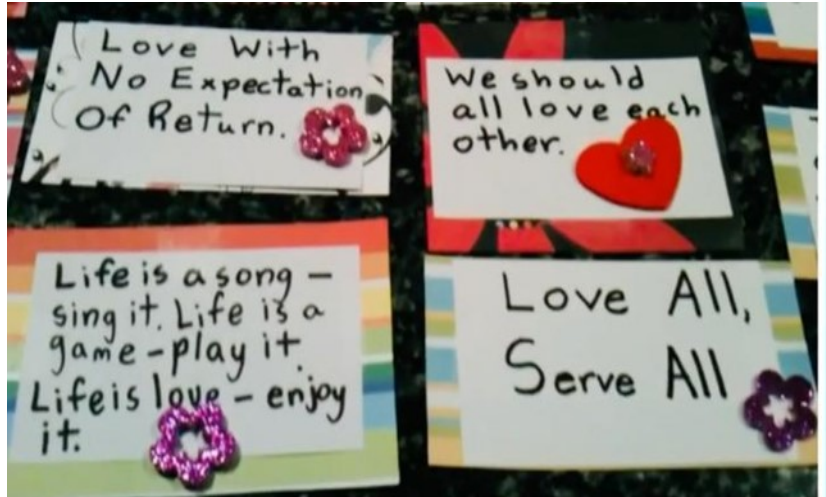


What is your favorite quote?



"Love All Serve All; Help Ever Hurt Never"

One of Swami's beautiful quotes we learned early on from our very first teachers in life, our parents, was *Love All, Serve All; Help Ever, Hurt Never*. As twins, when we were tiny tots, we would have fun with one of us reciting "Love All, Serve All," and the other enthusiastically echoing with, "Help Ever, Hurt Never." Similar to finishing each other's sentences, we would finish each other's quotes! This divine dictum was lovingly taught to us by our wonderful Sri Sathya Sai Education teachers, and the supreme Guru Himself! It is absolutely

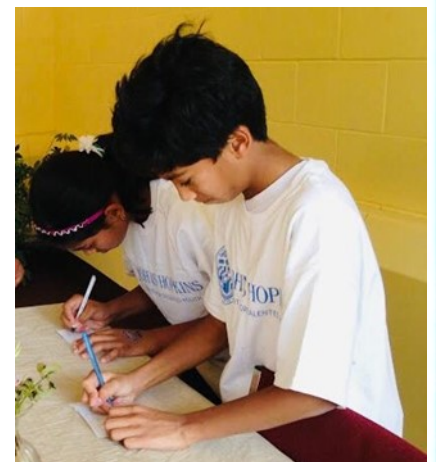


incredible how Swami's treasure trove of teachings can be perfectly captured in "Love All, Serve All and Help Ever, Hurt Never," a simple, yet brilliantly profound message that has become deeply ingrained in our hearts.

We fondly recall how, as young SSE students, we participated in a variety of service activities that demonstrated to us the principle of "Love All, Serve All; Help Ever Hurt Never" in action! For instance, we would enthusiastically create cards with universal messages of love for vulnerable populations, children suffering from cancer, veterans, and elderly residents at nursing homes. We desperately wished that these handwritten, personal notes would brighten up their day and provide them with a new sense of hope and joy. We felt immensely connected to Dear Swami as we witnessed the joyous Sai smiles and loving expressions in those that we served.

Now, embarking on our journey as Sai Young Adults, this cherished and inspiring quote, "Love All, Serve All; Help Ever, Hurt Never" has become our mainstay "go-to" guide for self-development. It is time to spread the expansive wings of love and service! Our Beloved Swami was delightfully transforming our young hearts, to understand that *Prema* (Love) and *Seva* (Service) should be a way of life.

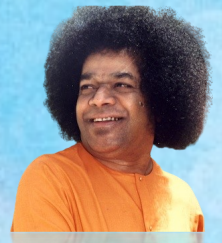
With Swami's blessings, we have had the blessed opportunity to participate in many heartwarming service projects as YAs, which exemplify the magnitude of Swami's ever-expanding love. It began with our keen interest in music and desire to see how our love for music could serve as a conduit to connect and reach out to the greater community. This led to us sharing our musical passions of flute, tabla, and harmonium with the elderly residents at nursing homes and assisted living centers.



To us, the most meaningful part of the musical interaction was distributing *maracas*, bells, shakers, tambourines, and a unique array of instruments to all the residents so that everyone could collectively play together in unity.

In addition, we have been fortunate to help serve in Sai Medical Camps, *Gramma* (village) Seva, and blanket/clothes distribution projects held within several rural villages in Southern India. It is in these unforgettable moments that we realize how the Divine power of Swami unifies individuals from all walks of life and brings us together irrespective of our differences. Swami lovingly says, "Transform love into service; transform service into worship—that is the highest *sadhana*."

What is your favorite quote?



Throughout these service activities, we wholeheartedly felt the spark of Swami's love and were able to see SAI in all. Participating in these service activities, our devotion and pining love for Swami intensified as we recognized that same principle of *Prema* in everyone around us. "Love All, Serve All; Help Ever, Hurt Never," a short yet quintessential encapsulation of Swami's life message, now takes on a newfound significance in our lives. Seeing this motto every time we visit Swami's *Sannidhi* (divine resting place) in Kulwant Hall bestows upon us such Sai strength and reminds us to make Swami the complete center of our lives. We have learned that service is more than the action of helping; it is about cultivating selflessness, suffusing love and compassion into our thoughts, words, and actions, and carrying out every single task in our daily lives as a sincere, dedicated offering to Swami.

Our Dearest Swami, our Guru, and Teacher of all Teachers, presents us with sublime opportunities so that when we serve the broader community, we serve ourselves with the higher purpose of self-transformation. Jai Sai Ram!

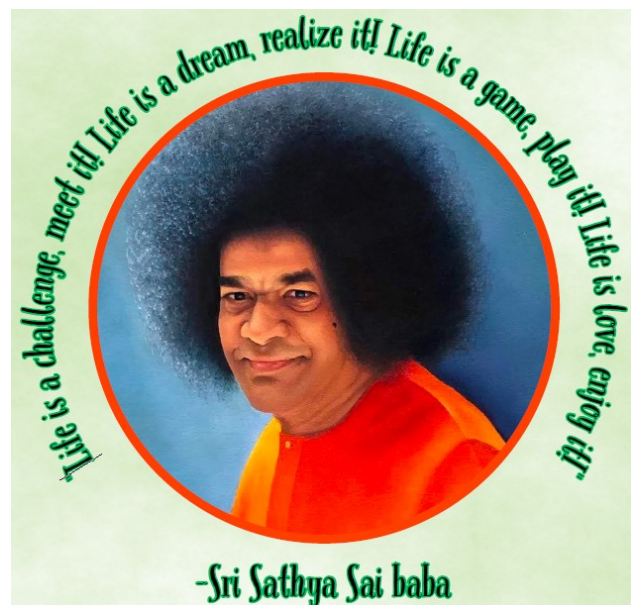
Nikhila Sri Rao and Nilesh Sai Rao, SSSGC YAs of Rochester Sai Center, NY



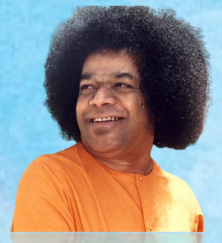
"Life is a game, play it

*"Life is a game, play it
Life is love, enjoy it
Life is a challenge, meet it
Life is a dream, realize it!"*

-- Maanasa Raghavendran, Sri Sathya Sai Center of Loudoun, VA



What is your favorite quote?



"Love all beings; that is enough."

This is my favorite Swami quote because it is vintage Swami: in six words He has said it all.

The quotation is something of a teaser. Swami says "that is enough" as in "that is all you need to do". Yet we know, and He knows better than we do, that if we indeed manage to achieve this goal, we have found the Holy Grail and attained spiritual peaks far beyond our imagination.

So, is loving all beings a simple task, or is it not?

It certainly *seems* simple! The quotation appears almost a reassurance that we need not undertake great austerities, feats of sacrifice, elaborate rituals, or even prayer, to reach our goal. We need not recite scriptures every day, need not imbibe every last Vahini, need not immerse ourselves in hours of meditation, need not sign up for every service opportunity that comes along.

It also seems simple, and *is* simple, insofar as we all know what it means to love and be loving. It is not a new body of knowledge. Extend a helping hand. Be kind, considerate, understanding. Think of every-one as your brother or sister. Do not hate. Do not hold a grudge. Speak softly and sweetly. Put others first, not yourself. Empathize. Forgive. Smile! We all get the picture. And it is all *so* within our grasp!

But...is it? We know what it means to love. *But are we loving all beings all the time?*

Do we not readily help some people more than others? Feel compassion toward some more than others? Regularly find fault with some more than others? Forgive some more easily than others?

Daily, if not hourly, we find ourselves--if we are honest--guilty of bias, prejudice, dislike, jealousy, snobbery, selfishness, thoughtlessness, indifference, and more, towards our fellow human beings. Negative, uncharitable tendencies of one kind or another that seem to come more naturally to us than Love! And which interfere or *come in the way* of our love.

"*Love all beings*" is Swami's way of underscoring the most important goal of all our self-transformation efforts, the endpoint of all of our *Sadhana*: becoming loving towards all. Breaking down all barriers between you and your fellow human beings such that you see yourself in others and them in you.

The quotation is thus a call for introspection and a challenge. We know how to be loving; can we not try harder to make this our "default" behavior, in other words, make it our nature? Or to be more spiritually correct, can we not try harder to lose our negative tendencies and allow our true divine nature--which is Love--to prevail?

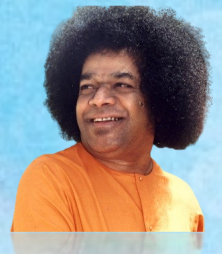
A pilot *trains* to become an ace pilot. An athlete *trains* to become a star athlete. Only through repeated, sustained effort does one right one's wrongs and achieve excellence. Swami says the key to progress is "*Abhyasa*", or constant and sustained practice. How many times have we not heard Him say: "*Start the day with Love, spend the day with Love, fill the day with Love, end the day with Love: that is the way to God*"?

We know what to do; we just have to do it, and keep doing it--until it eventually does become simple!

Manorama Gotur, Sri Sathya Sai South Bethesda Center, MD



What is your favorite quote?



"Illusion (*maya*) envelops the good..."

"Illusion (*maya*) envelops the good with the blemish of the bad. It makes evil glitter with the shine of the good. Discriminate to the best of your capacity and develop your capacity to discriminate. Struggle to win, that is the best that you can do. Your conscience knows well the source of joy and happiness. It will prod you towards the right path. You must take it as your guide and not disobey it, every time it contradicts your whim or fancy. There is no need for you to retire into a forest or a cave to know your inner Truth and to conquer your lower nature. As a matter of fact, you have no choice to exercise your vices there, so the victory achieved there may not be genuine or lasting. Be in the world, yet away from its tentacles. This is the victory for which you deserve congratulations."

- Divine Discourse, Sep 3, 1958.

"Your Conscience knows well the source of Joy and happiness. It will prod you towards the right path. You must take it as your guide and not disobey it every time it contradicts your whim or fancy."

I always look at this quote as a prescription for enjoying Self as the only source of joy. It raises an important question whether one examines the source of joy and dispels the wrong belief indirectly that satisfying the fancy of human mind will bring a lasting happiness. When scriptures talk of happiness through objects (*Vishaya sukham*), it is made amply clear that the individual starts looking inward after completing the act of acquisition of object or fulfilling a desire and that 'inward look' by the mind is the source of happiness, albeit evanescent.

The second point of importance is the art of heeding to conscience and not succumbing to mind as a constant practice. The former is an act with harmony of thought, word and action which provides joy to all without any residual conflict. Swami stresses that such a spiritual practice is not a choice but a mandate for attaining everlasting joy.

Vedapurisan Viswanathan, Sri Sathya Sai South Bethesda Center, MD



"Love lives by giving and forgiving"

We, the Anantapur students, went to Parthi to see our loving Mother Sai who pretended to be angry with us. It was like a big test for all of us. After *darshan*, we went back to Anantapur in tears. We determined very strongly to please Him. So, we stopped talking unnecessarily and spoke words that were soft, meaningful, and brief. We maintained perfect discipline, had Swami's Name at all times on our tongue and his Form in our hearts. We sacrificed our comforts by not wearing sandals. It was like penance for us.

One day, our staff decided to leave for Parthi for Swami's *darshan*. Then all 500 of us wrote letters to Swami narrating our pangs of hunger to see Him and asking Him to speak to us. We gave our letters to the staff to be given to Swami. We decided to do a special bhajan right at the time when Swami would come out for *darshan*. We gathered in the prayer hall in tears and sang "*Aanaahee paDegaa Baba, Aanaahee paDegaa.*" We did bhajans pouring out all our love and feelings for Swami.

Our staff returned from Parthi the next day. Jayamma madam announced, "Dear children, do you want to know what happened at Parthi yesterday? Swami took all your letters, not missing even one. He was very happy." Swami said, "*I know, my children are doing special bhajan now in the Anantapur hostel.*" We cried out in glee and excitement, some felt Him right there, and some hearts were so full with no words to express. We thanked the omniscient Lord from the bottom of our hearts. How could we stay at Anantapur when the Lord was thinking about us? We all started off to Parthi to see our Sai Maa speak to us and comfort us. Swami seemed to be our usual Sai Maa. As soon as He saw us, he came to us and spoke well and took letters from us. He is Love; hence He gives and forgives.

Sharmila Sanka, Indianapolis Sai Center



What is your favorite quote?



“Hands that Serve are Holier than Lips that Pray “

My Favorite Quote of Bhagawan's is "Hands that Serve are Holier than Lips that Pray". Sounds very simple, doesn't it? Yes, it is straightforward to understand and talk about, but the real issues arise when one tries to practice this every day, in every situation, in every moment of one's life. Because that's when one encounters situations when one is unable to decide "to do or not to do". Service is Prayer in Action and Prayer is Communion with God.

One starts his spiritual life with an objective to see the external God in simple ways, at a primary level. Later on one tries to see God as Hrudayavasi, the Indweller, And further one sees God as pervading all, or omnipresence. At that stage one sees God in man. That is when service to man becomes service to God.

Swami says, "The fruit cannot exist without the root underneath. It is the root that finds its fulfillment in the fruit. This root will supply all that spirit of humility, respect, reverence needed for fruition in the form of service. Prayer is the foundation that inculcates or supplies the spirit, the required background, reverence, and respect which is needed for the service.

Humility is the Basis of Service, Service is not a duty, service is an opportunity. Service is a blessing; service is a benediction. Service to fellowmen is service unto me. If you serve rich people, you are serving Lakshmi Narayana Seva; if you serve equals, you are serving Ashwatha Narayana Seva; if you serve poor people, it is Daridhra Narayana Seva. Narayana is common in all three.

"If you don't pray and if you merely serve it is karma, mechanical. If you serve with prayer, that is spiritual, karma yoga. Service and prayer should go hand in hand".

"Na sankalpantho samasthamu chadinchagalanu Itivari oka prameyamu akharaledu, Aiyana apadiki mee shakthi nimithami, mee bhakthi nimithamai, Nee mukthi nimithamai seva bhagyam andhithunanu. Annaru Swami"

Meaning- Swami says: "with my mere will, I can accomplish everything. But I give you this opportunity to serve for your own welfare, your liberation, your devotion."

For your *mukthi* (liberation), for your *keerthi* (reputation), service is an opportunity. Service is very important & becomes sweet when the sugar of divinity, namasmarana, is added to it. **"Man mey ram Hath mey kam" – "Lord in the mind, work with the hand", that is what Bhagavan says.**

I remember these words of my mom always,

Open your eyes and see Swami!

Open your mind and observe!

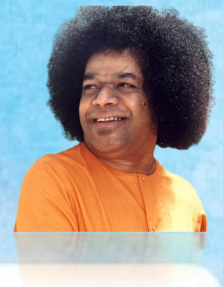
Open your heart and feel!

Pray with all your heart, serve with all your heart. God bless us.

Prasanthi Babu, Sri Sathya Sai Center of Loudoun, VA



What is your favorite quote?



“Live in the Present”

Living life always in the fast lane, seldom do we pause to reflect and relish the simple joys of life – about appreciating the glory of God through a fantastic sunrise, or seeing God in action as He works within us incessantly beating our heart non-stop or digesting our food silently every time we put something in our mouth, or witnessing the numerous manifestations of God through the smile of a innocent child, the serving nature of a saintly soul or the unconditional love of a poor mother towards her little one.

We immerse ourselves completely with our plans for our 'grand future' almost as if we are never going to die and finally we die as though we have never lived.

What we forget is how much ever we may plan, what will pan out in our life in the end is what He has designed. The more we accept and be grateful, the better the things are going to be in the days ahead. Therefore Baba says, *“Future is uncertain... Do not live in the past, do not live in the future. Live in the present; indeed this present is omnipresent.”*

Now, how do we live in the present? How to do we make the most of this present? Baba guides us. He says: *“Your primary duty is to make right use of Time. For this purpose, there is no need for you to wait for the beginning of a new year. Every moment is a manifestation of Time. From seconds to minutes, from minutes to hours, from hours to days and months, and from months to a year - this is the endless procession of Time. The second is the basis for the year. Hence every second should be filled with purposeful action. What is the meaning of a life in which from waking in the morning to sleeping at night one is concerned only about their belly and has no thought of God? What is the result of all this hectic activity? Has it given a single moment of real joy? Purposeful living can come only by contemplation of God. People talk about service. Whom are you serving? When you render service, you are really serving yourself. You have to perform all actions in a spirit of dedication, only to please the Divine.”*

Kishore Nadella, Sri Sathya Sai Center of Loudoun, VA



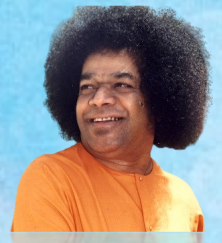
Universe as Guru

“You need not wander in search of a guru. Learn lessons from every living being, everything that you find around. Learn faithfulness and gratitude from a dog, patience and fortitude from a donkey, perseverance from a spider, farsightedness from an ant and monogamy from an owl. Birds are content with the food they get for the day, tell us not to worry about the morrow. Trees give shelter to all, irrespective of caste and creed, and proclaim that all men are equal. Mountains, by bearing heat and cold, wind and rain alike, teach man not to care too much for the body.”



Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 15, July 17, 1981

What is your favorite quote?



Quite a Quote: “You are Three Persons in One...”

Swami, over the years, has given us numerous quotes, each composed in His signature style, each an appeal to our better selves, each an exhortation to better ourselves. Some quotes play with words, such as the one about God, “God is now here” instead of “God is nowhere”, and the one about money, “Man made money, and money made man mad”, which, if recast as an aphorism on money and character, would give us, “Man may make money, but money cannot make a man”.

The most thought provoking quote of Swami, arguably, is the one about the three selves. “*You are three persons in one, the one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are.*” The quote is pregnant with meaning but requires some explaining.

The question “Who am I” or “What am I”, if posed to oneself, elicits a long answer that begins with one’s name. Pointing to the torso, one may say, “this is my body, my physical being” and pointing to the head, “here is my mind, the seat of my consciousness”. A rambling speech on family, occupation, traits, beliefs, likes, dislikes and life experiences would likely follow, but the tidbits would reveal little that is not ancillary to the actual self.

Clearly, the question “Who am I?” is not easy to answer. Nor is the question “Who are you?”, for perceptions dwell in the mind of the seer just as beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. This world is a hall of distorted mirrors in which each person stands wearing a disguise, and the myriad reflections on the wall are not the true images of the inner person but the many faces of an inner chameleon.

Who, then, am I really? My self-awareness is self-evident, but a deeper elucidation of my selfhood proves elusive. My self is lodged in my body, but no organ in the body can be considered the seat of my selfhood, with the possible exception of the brain. But if Rob the rap artist were to receive the brain of Tom the tap dancer, would the recipient give up rap for tap after the operation?

The self is not a physical organ in the body but an immaterial presence in the body-mind complex. When embodied, the self is the life of the body, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, and the mind of the mind. When it leaves, so do all its powers, leaving the body supine in the dark stupor of death.

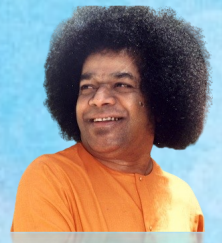
*sharīram yad-avāpnoti yac-cha-apy-utkrāmati-īśvaraḥ
grhītvai’tāni samyāti vāyu-r-gandhān iva-āśayāt
(bhagavad-gīta 15.8)*

**When the Lord (self) assumes a body, or when He rises to leave,
He carries these (faculties) along like an odor-bearing breeze.**

Pradeep Kamath, Sri Sathya Sai South Bethesda Center, MD



What is your favorite quote?



“For the bird in mid-ocean...”

“For the bird in mid-ocean flying over the dark deep blue waters, the only resting place is the mast of a ship that is sailing across. In the same way, the Lord is the only refuge for a man who is swept by storms over a restless sea. However far the bird may fly, it knows where it can rest; that knowledge gives it confidence. It has the picture of that mast steady in its mind; its form is fixed in the eye. The Name of the Lord is the mast for you; remember it ever. Associate it with the Form and have that Form fixed in your mind’s eye. It is a lamp shedding light in the recesses of your heart. Have the Name on your tongue and it will drive away the inner, as well as the outer, darkness.” (Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 2, p.181)

Swami has taught us in so many ways the crucial importance of reciting the name of the Lord for spiritual progress and divine protection. I especially like this quote because of the parallel it draws between the bird and man, each navigating stormy waters with the confidence that they have something to cling to—the mast of a tall ship for the bird and the powerful Name of the Lord for man. I am also drawn by the beautiful picture Swami paints of this little bird flying precariously yet peacefully on high to illustrate his point! Swami, in His characteristically simple way, reminds us here that focusing on the Lord’s Name and Form will give us the confidence needed to go forth in life.

Recite the Name with “awe and wonder, humility and reverence” (Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 4, p.165) says Swami. He has also said that, remarkably in the Kali Yuga, it is all that is needed to achieve liberation, affording man the results of every type of spiritual sadhana! Moreover, Swami has underscored how easy it is to do *Namasmarana*, as it can be done anytime, anywhere, by anyone, without any expense, any materials, any requirement of scholarship...one gets His point!

It is interesting that Swami has used the imagery of the sea other times too to drive home this message— notably in the very first teaching He gave mankind with “*Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam...*” when He announced His divinity, and again, when He said that “*the Name of God...is the raft which will take him across this stormy sea darkened by hate and fear, churned by anxiety and terror*” (Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 6, p.163).

So, I hope the next time I see a bird in the sky or a ship on the sea, stormy or otherwise, it will remind me to do *Namasmarana*!

Padma Gotur, Sri Sathya Sai South Bethesda Center, MD



Life is a Game: Play it! - Answers

Guru Poornima Bhajan Quiz-2023

Guru Seva Bina Nirvana Nahi!

Let's do Namasamarana on the auspicious occasion of Gurupurnima,
Find the missing link in the following Guru bhajans to connect to Him.

1. Guruvayoor Pura Sri Hari Krishna **Narayana** Gopal
2. Guru Mahima Gaavo x3, Sadguru Sai Nanda Guru, **Brahmananda** Nanda Guru
3. Guru Baba Guru Baba, Charana **Namosthuth**e Guru Baba
4. Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu, Guru Deva_ **Maheshwara**
5. Dattha Guru Dattha Guru Datthathreya Guru
Sai Naathha, **Deena** Naathha, Brahma Roopa Guru
6. Guru Baba Guru Baba Charana **Namosthuth**e *Guru Baba, Sai Baba Baala Baba*
7. Guru Deva Guru Govinda Mangala Giridhara, Shirdi **Pureeshwara**, Jaya Partheeshwara Sai Shiva
8. Guru Deva Sad Guru Deva Dayaa Karo Bhagawaan
Shanti Do, Shanti Do, Shanti Do, Mujhe **Dayaa** Dhana
Ananda Chanda **Satchidaananda** Ananda Ananda Sai
9. Guru Vara Naam Paavana Naam, Sath Guru Naam Guru **Naanak** Naam
Guru Vara Naam Paavana Naam
10. Maanasa Bhajorey Guru Charanam Dusthara Bhava **Saagara** Tharanam
11. Namana Karoo Mey Guru Charanam, Guru Charanam Sadguru Charanam
Pranavaananda **Aananda** Chanda
12. Sad Guru Brahma Sanathana Hey Parama **Dayaagana** Paavana Hey
Janmaja Dukha **Vinaashaka** Hey
13. Sathya Guru Dev Raaha Dikhaavo **Prabhu** , Raaha Dikhaavo Sai Deva

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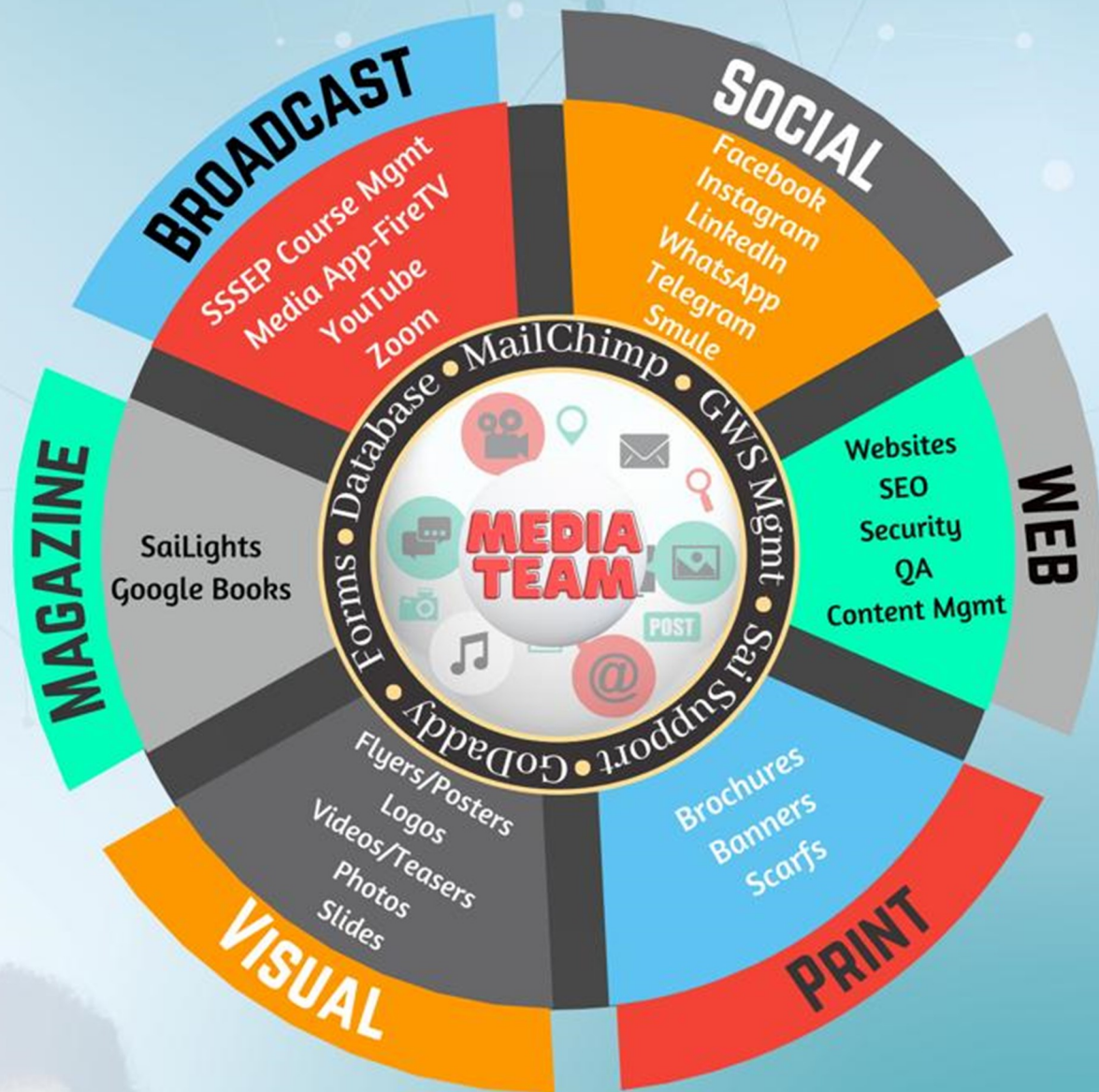
MANASA BHAJARE GURU CHARANAM

One who cultivates the crop of Love, in the field of one's heart, is a true Christian, a true Sikh, a true Hindu, and a true Muslim. In fact, he is a true human being and a true *Guru*.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 34, July 5, 2001

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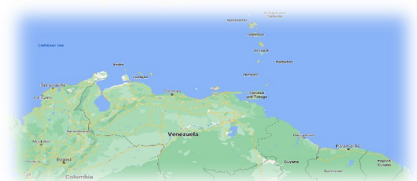
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