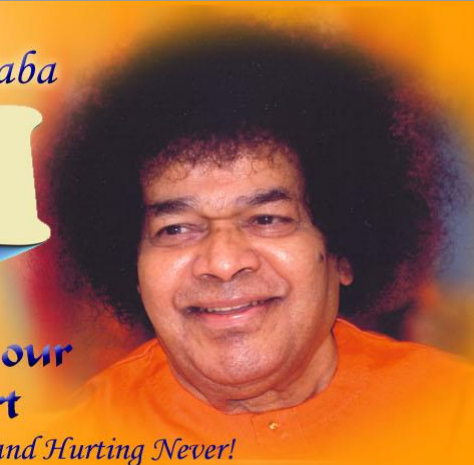


Aum Sri Sai Ram

Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Chicago Sai **WATCH**



Dear Swami, please help us to watch and control our Words, Actions, Thoughts, Character and Heart

So that we realize our inherent Divinity by Loving All, Serving All, Helping Ever, and Hurting Never!

Upcoming Events!

Tuesday, February 13th, Maha Shivarathri Celebrations

Time: 7:30 PM – 10:30 PM **Venue:** Sant Nirankari Mission, 1S750 IL-59, W Chicago, IL



Love All , Serve All

Date	Calendar of Events
02/03 – Saturday	06:00 PM – 08:00 PM: Dinner Service Project at Sarah’s Circle Women’s Shelter (on N. Sheridan Road)
02/10 – Saturday	06:00 AM – 08:00 AM: YA Breakfast Service at Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 05:00 PM – 08:00 PM: Dinner Service Project at Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.)
02/11 – Sunday	10:00AM – 11:00AM: Bingo with Nursing Home Residents (on North Ave., Oak Park)
02/17 – Saturday	06:00 PM – 09:00 PM: Dinner Service Project at Jesus People USA Men’s Shelter (on Kenmore Ave.)
02/24 – Saturday	06:00 AM – 08:00 AM: Breakfast Service at Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.)
	<p>Sunday Center Schedule: 09:00 AM – 09:30 AM: Center Setup 09:30 AM – 10:15 AM: Vedam/Bhajan practice 10:15 AM – 10:50 AM: Meditation and Study circle 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM: Devotional Singing and Concluding Prayers 12:00 Noon – 12:30 PM: Cleanup</p> <p>Ongoing service projects on Sundays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwich preparation & delivery for residents of Northside Housing Men’s Shelter (Lawrence Ave)



Promote the Welfare of All Beings



The meditator (dhyani) considers the realisation of Atmic bliss as important, but the promotion of the welfare of the world is also an equally important aim. For carrying out that aim, one must bring certain physical, verbal, and mental tendencies under control. These are usually known as the tenfold sins: the three physical, the four verbal, and the three mental. The physical tendencies are: injury to life, adulterous desire, and theft. The verbal sins are: false alarms, cruel speech, jealous talk, and lies. The mental attitudes are: greed, envy, and denial of God.

Eschew the tenfold “sins”

The person intent on following the path of meditation must take every care that these ten enemies do not even approach. They have to be eschewed completely. The person needs tendencies that will help progress and not those that drag back. One must speak and act only good (subha), for good alone is auspicious (mangala) and the auspicious alone is Siva. This is what the scriptures (sastras) also say. The good is the auspicious. The auspicious is the spiritually helpful. The good is the instrument for merging in Siva. Through the good, the meditator can achieve this world and the other; the meditator can promote their own welfare as well as the welfare of others. Welfare is the fruit of knowledge; illfare is the fruit of ignorance. Through welfare alone can peace, joy, and progress be attained? One's very basic duty is the welfare of all beings! Promoting it and contributing to it is the right task. Living out one's span of life in discharging this task is the ordained path.

Be unaffected by illusion

The intellect (buddhi) in us is the witness of all things in this objective world. These worldly things limit and colour the intellect; they affect it and mould it into consciousness (chaithanya). Illusion (maya) is only the intellect as affected by everything, as warped and twisted by the impressions of everything. Therefore, the spiritual consciousness that is unaffected by illusion —i.e. upon which the world has failed to produce any impression— is the Lord (Iswara). Therefore, the person who is striving to reach the stage of the Lord must be unaffected by illusion, unimpressed by the world! How can one remain so unaffected? Through analysis, ratiocination, fearless inquiry, and pure reason. To acquire this analytical reason (viveka), sharing in the task of promoting the welfare of every being in nature is essential.

Therefore, everyone must now strengthen the mind and make it be aware of the happy moment of bliss. Otherwise, there is a likelihood of the mind discarding all effort to reach what is now dismissed as “empty” and “useless”. But once the mind is convinced that the moment of attunement with divine consciousness (chaithanya) is a moment of complete power, suffused with divine power (sakthi), then the effort will not be slackened; the spiritual aspirant can reach the Atmic realisation without further interruption.

The placid, calm, unruffled character wins out

When this mind matures and attains fruition, it easily becomes free of all qualities: placid, calm, and pure. It easily merges in the one Atma without a second. Each person has the unique chance to taste the inner peace that such a mind can grant, but, unfortunately, most are strangers to the unshakable joy and equanimity that is their birthright. Meditation is the only island of refuge in the ocean of life for all beings tossed on the waves of desire, doubt, dread, and despair. This Vedantic truth must be present in the mind even while the world of objects (vishaya) is being attended to!

Consider the condition of this world hundreds of thousands of years ago. At that time, this globe was the scene of only two things. On one side was the fiery lava, which poured forth from the volcanoes and crevices that scarred the surface of the earth. The flood of destruction descended on all sides and spread fear and death in the regions around, as if the end of everything had come. On another side, the scarcely noticeable molecules of living matter, the microscopic amoeba, floated on the waters or clung to the crevices among the rocks, keeping the spark of life safe and well protected.

Upon which of these two—one boisterous and bright, the other quiet and secluded— would you have built your trust? At that time, surely no one would have believed that the future was with the amoeba or the animalcule! Who could have foreseen that these minute specks of life could hold out against the gigantic onslaught of molten lava and earth-shaking upheaval? Nevertheless, that speck of life-consciousness (chaithanya) won through. Unheralded by fire and dust, by swooping gale or swallowing floods, the amoeba, in the process of time and by the sheer force of the life-principle it embodied, blossomed into goodness and strength of character, into art and music, into song and dance, into scholarship and spiritual discipline and martyrdom, into sainthood and even Avatars of Godhead! In all these, the history of the world is found summarised.

In the confusion of overpowering events, we see people sometimes placing faith in loud and noisy men who are enslaved by their own passions. But this is a passing phase; it will not last. When things are placid, calm, and unruffled, people can merge themselves in the atmosphere of delusionless consciousness, which is the highest they can reach. The peace (santhi) they taste there is subtler than the subtlest. They must ascend to it through effort guided by reason, through meditation. When the enjoyment is full and complete, it is no other than the divine status, the coveted goal of life. People do not generally strive for it, because they know nothing of its supreme attraction. Meditation gives them the first inkling of that bliss.

Meditation is the basis of spiritual experience

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With this as the ideal, carry on meditation and mental repetition of the divine name from now on. The step immediately after meditation (dhyana) is total absorption (samadhi). Meditation is the seventh of the eight-fold yoga. Do not give up this royal road that leads you on to that sacred goal. Meditation is the very basis of all spiritual practice (sadhana).



Avatar Vani (Shivarathri message)



Truth is all pervading. It is present everywhere. Wherever we see, truth is present there. In fact, all our Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan (vision, touch and conversation) are suffused with truth only!

Eradicate Violence by Developing Love

Truth has no form. Whatever we see is truth! (Swami materialized a ring and held it in His hand, showing it to all) This is truth. From where has it come? It has come from truth and it will merge in truth. (The ring disappeared from Swami's hand before the eyes of the entire gathering) Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma (verily all this is Brahman). Truth is the manifestation of Brahman. Truth is one; Not two. But one has to make a lot of effort to realize truth. Truth is not limited merely to our speech. It has many forms. Similarly, Brahman assumes infinite number of forms. Yet, Brahman is one only. That is the reason why it is said, Brahma Sathyam Jagan-mithya (Brahman alone is real, the world is a mistaken perception). Everything else is the reflection of Brahman, nothing else. Truth is one, yet it is called by different names and assumes many different forms. Everything in this universe is born out of truth. Dharma (righteousness) has emerged out of Sathya (truth). sathyannasti Paro Dharma (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). When truth and righteousness unite, peace is the result. From peace comes love. This love envelopes one and all. There is no place in this world where love is not present. Similarly, there is no place in this world where truth is not present. Thus, from truth and righteousness emerges peace and from peace, love; and from love emerges bliss. Where love takes roots, hatred is rooted out from there. It is at such a place that non-violence grows. Hence, if you want non-violence to prevail in the world today, you should develop love more and more. If only there is love, all will become one. The Bhagavadgita says, Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhuta Sanathana (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). The import of this declaration is: "All are My Amsa (part). You are not different from Me. You are My own reflections! You are Me and I am you." Names and forms may be different but the Atma present in everyone is the same. Each body bears a different name. These names are given for the purpose of identification; they do not signify your true Self. It is the same Atma that is present in all. Hence, love that Atma. This, in fact, amounts to loving yourself.

Love assumes different names and forms in the world. The love between a husband and his wife is termed as Anuraga. Similarly, the love of a mother towards her children is referred to as Vatsalya. One's feelings determine the form of love! However, the love that permeates all individuals is only one. With the expansion of love, all can be united. Then, there will be no scope at all for differences. There will be no duality. Where there is no duality, there all are one! A man with dual mind is half blind. We are not blind. We have two eyes; together, they see one object only. Similarly, we should see unity everywhere. When we promote the feeling of Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man, all differences, unrest, agitation and fighting will disappear from the world. All are the children of one father, God! We have to foster such noble feelings today. Only then will humanity become one. How do you refer to yourself? You say, "I am a human being." Who is a Manava (human being)? Is Manava a person full of Kama (desire) and Krodha (anger)? No, no. Such a person cannot be called Manava. Manava is one who leads his life without observing any differences whatsoever. In fact, we should not entertain any differences at all. We are all the embodiments of one Atma; the children of one father, verily! The names and forms appear to be different. We should not develop differences on the basis of these names and forms. Wherever we go, we must remain united. Is it not a fact that the hand is one, though the fingers are different from each another?

The Same Atma is Present in all

We have taken birth as human beings. Every individual is endowed with certain powers. Though the powers of individuals are different, the Atma in all of them is one only. You see many electric bulbs shining here. Though the bulbs are of different wattage, the current flowing in them is only one. I feel happy to manifest this principle of oneness. But I have received lakhs of letters recently urging Me to restrain Myself from drawing out the Linga from My body. The Linga will be in liquid form in the bloodstream. For it to solidify, a lot of energy is required. To bring the Linga out also calls for great physical strength. Moreover, each Linga has much weight. A lot of energy is required to draw out those Lingas. Doctors are also advising against it. The devotees prayed, "Swami! You are making the Linga emerge out of Your body to make man realise the truth of divinity. Let those who have faith in Your Divinity live with faith; have no concern with those who have no faith. But do not strain Your physical body under any circumstances. Your body is very important for us. We come here because of Your physical presence. It will cause us great anxiety if You make Your physical body weak in this manner. Therefore, please conserve Your energy. Do not use it just to make the people happy or to satisfy them." God by His Will can do anything. He can change earth into sky and sky into earth. It is very easy for Him. But, of what use is it? What will happen to the Sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) in such a situation? This body is already 81 years old. This will last for a few more years. I have to maintain this body to provide joy to all of you in several ways. Very soon, I will provide you infinite bliss. For those who experience happiness to see My physical body, the body is important and necessary. Hence, it is My duty to take good care of My body. Devotion occupies a very important place in the culture of Bharat. People call it a country of Hindu culture. The five letters in the word 'Hindu' signify Panchabhutas (five elements), Pancha Pranas (five life-breaths) and Pancha Koshas (five life-sheaths). Then, what is the inner meaning of this word Hindu? The letter 'H' stands for humility, 'I' for individuality; 'N' for nationality; 'D' for divinity and 'U' for unity. It is only when you attain unity, you can achieve divinity. Similarly, it is only when you develop divinity, you can achieve peace and happiness. We have to safeguard the national feeling. We have to develop faith in the unity of the nation. If we lose the national feeling, it amounts to losing our very existence. What is it that protects nationality? It is the individuality which protects nationality and ultimately humanity.

The body is given to you to bear difficulties. Welcome sorrows and difficulties. You cannot realize the value of happiness without experiencing sorrows and difficulties. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. In fact, we derive happiness out of pain only. Even difficulties are only for a short period; they do not last long.

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– From Bhagavan's Sivarathri Message in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the evening of 16th February 2007.



Seek the point of view of God



Four friends once started dealing in cotton. They had a go-down (warehouse) for the storage of the bales; finding that the cottonseeds attracted rats to the go-down, a cat was introduced by them to scare the rodent throng. They tied jingles to her feet and since they loved it much, the jingles were gold! Once, when the cat jumped from the top of the bales, it started limping on one foot. So, they applied some balm and tied a long strip of bandage round the injured foot. The bandage got loose. And the cat, unaware of the long narrow cloth that was trailing behind her, sat near the fireplace, and when the cloth began to burn, she ran helter-skelter and fled into the go-down itself, where the entire stock of cotton was reduced to ashes in a trice. The four friends had assigned to themselves each, one of the feet of joint cat and the injured foot belonged to one of them; so the other three charged him with the damages, which they claimed from him.

The matter went to the court and after hearing arguments on both sides, the judge said: "The injured leg has no responsibility, for it was taken into the go-down with the trail of fire by the three healthy feet. So, damages have to be paid by the owners of the healthy feet to the owner of the limping foot". What may thus appear correct at first sight might prove wrong on second thoughts. There is a correctness from the worldly point of view and a correctness from God's. Find out what the point of view of God would be, by association with godly men; they can give you proper advice. You must seek and not avoid good men.

Devotional Activities in Chicago and Suburbs

Activity	Time	Venue	Contact
Every Monday – Bhajans	07:00 pm to 08:00 pm	Aurora (Shirdi Mandir)	630-587-3031
Every Wednesday – Bhajans	07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	Hoffman Estates	847-519-1631
Every Friday – Bhajans	08:00 pm to 09:00 pm	Oak Brook	630-655-1718
1st Saturday of the Month – Bhajans	03:30 pm to 04:30 pm	Glenview	847-729-2779 / 773-510-5936
Friday, Feb 23 rd – Monthly 23 rd Bhajans	7:00 pm to 8:00 pm	Glenview, IL	847-983-0416

Role

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