

Om Sai Ram



**SRI SATHYA SAI CENTER OF SOUTH BETHESDA, MARYLAND
REGION 2 – MID-ATLANTIC, ZONE 1 – UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**INTRODUCTION TO SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
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Welcome to the Sri Sathya Sai Center of South Bethesda (SSSBC). This booklet will provide a brief introduction to Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Life and Teachings. As you peruse this booklet and wish to find out more about Sri Sathya Sai Baba or have questions answered about the South Bethesda Center, please contact one of the current Office Bearers or the Welcome Desk. We will be happy to help in any way possible since we are your fellow spiritual travelers and we too have journeyed the same path.

Who is Sathya Sai Baba?

Sathya Sai Baba is one of the most revered spiritual teachers in the world today. He is quietly transforming the world by reestablishing the eternal values of Truth (*Sathya*), Right Conduct (*Dharma*), Peace (*Shanthi*), Love (*Prema*) and Nonviolence (*Ahimsa*) in everyday living.

Sathya Sai Baba's followers regard Him as an incarnation of God in human form (*Avatar*). He is the ideal of goodness: One who manifests all human virtues in their purity and perfection; One who shows power, wisdom and knowledge beyond the comprehension of humans; and One in whom immense powers lie at His will.

Advent of Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Baba was born on November 23, 1926, in Puttaparthi, a remote village in the state of Andhra Pradesh in Southern India. At the age of fourteen, He announced that His name was Sathya Sai Baba and proclaimed His mission: to bring about the spiritual regeneration of humanity by demonstrating and teaching the highest principles of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Nonviolence. With that announcement, He left His childhood home and began His mission.

From an early age, Sathya Sai Baba began demonstrating extraordinary powers. He quickly became known for the miracles that He performed such as materializing objects, especially a holy ash called *vibhuti*, assisting people in distress, and letting those who came to Him for advice know that He was aware of even the most intimate details of their lives. Yet, He has always maintained that His miracles are to be treated only as His calling cards. They are for the purpose of inspiring and encouraging people to begin their own spiritual journey of personal transformation.

Since 1950, His residence has been 'Prashanti Nilayam' (Abode of Peace) near the village of His birth in Southern India. Today, this *ashram* can accommodate and feed many thousands of devotees who come to see and hear Sathya Sai Baba. Under His care and guidance, Puttaparthi has evolved to have high quality schools, an accredited university, a spiritual museum, a well-equipped modern hospital, and a jet airport. Sathya Sai Baba left His physical body on April 24th, 2011. All activities in India and abroad pertaining to His mission are continuing with the awareness of His Omnipresence.

Sathya Sai Baba's Mission

Sathya Sai Baba has come to this world at this time to offer moral and spiritual sustenance and to lead us from the darkness. His mission is best described in His own words:

"I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause; nor have I come to collect

followers for any doctrine. I have come to tell you of this universal unitary faith, this path of Love. Believe that all hearts are motivated by the One and Only God, that all names in all languages, and all forms man can conceive, denote the one and only God. Cultivate the attitude of oneness between people of all creeds, all countries, and all continents. This is the message of Love I bring."

Sai Baba is not seeking to establish a new religion or to direct people to a particular creed or religion. He proclaims:

"Let the different faiths exist and let the glory of God be sung in all languages and tunes. That should be the ideal. Respect the differences between the faiths and recognize them as valid as long as they do not extinguish the flames of unity. If each person lives the ideals propounded by the founders of their religion, unaffected by greed or hate, then the world will be a happy and peaceful habitation for mankind."

Sathya Sai Baba says that He has come for all mankind and not for any particular community, religion, country, or interest. His teachings are universal and not sectarian, attracting devotees and seekers of all faiths and nationalities.

Sathya Sai Baba's Teachings

All Sai's teachings are directed towards making the life of man meaningful and purposeful, not only for the individual but also for the family, society and for the whole of mankind. These teachings are given to us as holy instructions by Sathya Sai Baba, so that we may put them into practice in our day-to-day life.

Realize the Atma (Divinity) Within

Sathya Sai Baba has come to establish the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and to unite the entire mankind as one family. He teaches that man is essentially divine and His aim is the establishment of Dharma (Righteousness).

Unity of Faiths

Sathya Sai Baba emphasizes the unity of all faiths. He has not come to establish a new religion, neither has He come to convert people to Hinduism or ask them to accept His Teachings. He invites people to go to Him, to experience Him and having done so to return to their own religious community and be a better Christian, Hindu, Jew, Muslim or Buddhist. He says one should not change one's religion. He says, *"Let the different faiths exist, let them flourish; let the glory of God be sung in all languages and in a variety of tunes. That should be the ideal."*

Practice Human Values

Truth (*Sathya*), Righteousness (*Dharma*), Peace (*Shanthi*), Love (*Prema*) and Nonviolence (*Ahimsa*) are the human values which will enable us to coordinate thought, word and deed and allow a transformation takes to place in us. Education in human values will implant elevating ideals and kindle the lamp of wisdom. *"The end of education is character."*

Serve Man - Serve God

Selfless service to mankind is the highest spiritual discipline. Baba Himself exemplifies this ideal. Sathya Sai Baba says, *"Love All, Serve All"*, and in serving, his devotees should not look for rewards but undertake service as service to God. He says, *"Human life is given for service."* It is important to understand that we are not separate from society and whatever we do for society we are doing for ourselves.

Live the Life of Love

Sathya Sai Baba says, *"I have come to light the lamp of Love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster. I have not come to speak on behalf of any exclusive religion. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause, nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples into My fold, or any fold. I have come to tell you of this unitary faith, this spiritual principle, this path of love, this virtue of love, this duty of love, this obligation to love."*

Baba says that with Love, man is drawn to truth, seeks righteous living and attains peace. *"Love as thought is Truth, Love as action is Dharma, Love as feeling is Peace, Love as understanding is Ahimsa."*

Practice Spirituality in Day to Day Life

Sathya Sai Baba has defined spirituality as *"Living in God, living for God, living with God and finally living in communion with God, so that we shine in God's glory. All Sadhana or spiritual practice is directed towards the purification of the mind and the heart."* The object of Sadhana is to enlarge the vision, enhance experience, enthuse the Jivatma (individual consciousness) to merge with the Paramatma (Universal Consciousness). Thus Sadhana is an attempt to become one with God. Spirituality is the resolute pursuit of cosmic consciousness. Spirituality aims at enabling man to manifest in all its fullness the divine cosmic consciousness that is present within and outside him. It means getting rid of the animal nature and developing divine tendencies.

Practice Ceiling on Desires

Life is a limited company. Desires cannot expand indefinitely. There have to be restraints and limits set for all desires. The areas of limiting one's desires are: Food, Money, Time and Energy.

Seek the Dissolution of the Ego

Love is expressed in the life of man only when he has dissolved his ego. The spiritual path is a journey from "I" to "We" - from selfishness to selflessness. The ego thrives when fed by desires and attachment to things of the world. Baba says, *"Be in the world, but not of it."*

Knowledge of the Self

Sathya Sai Baba says, *"Higher than all knowledge that can be acquired in the world, is the knowledge of the self. There is nothing equal to the bliss that comes from self-realization. It is attained only when the ego sense is destroyed and there is prayerful submission to the Divine. Prayers must issue not from the lips but from the heart. Prayers from the heart are like a person-to person call: they go straight to God."* path.