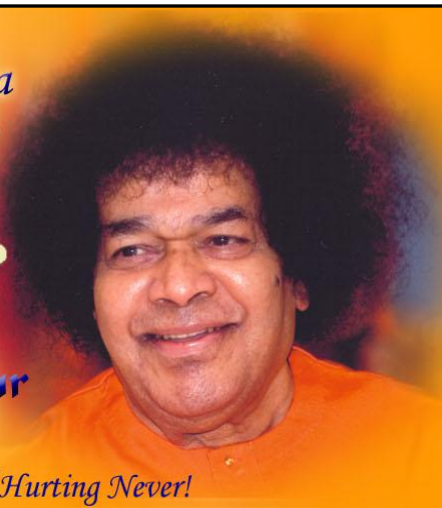


*Aum Sri Sai Ram*

*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!*

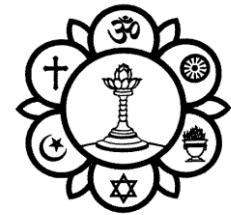
**Sathya Sai Baba Center of Metropolitan Chicago**

**January 2009**

**Announcements:**

**Officers Selection Process for the Term 2009 – 2011: Sunday, February 1st**  
At the Longfellow Center after the Devotional Singing Session

**First National Youth Conference in Chicago: from May 29th to 31st, 2009.**  
YMCA Camp Duncan. 32405 North Hwy. 12. Ingleside, IL 60041



**Date**

**Calendar of Events**

01/01 – Thursday	10:30 am – 01:00 pm: <b>New Year Program Celebration</b> Manav Seva Mandir (basement hall), 101 S Church St., Bensenville, IL 60106
01/03 – Saturday	07:00 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at R.E.S.T Men's Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 08:00 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at R.E.S.T Women's Shelter (on Wilson Ave.)
01/04 – Sunday	09:30 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program
01/10 – Saturday	06:00 am – 08:00 am: Breakfast Service at R.E.S.T Men's Shelter by Young Adults (on Lawrence Ave.) 06:00 am – 08:00 am: Breakfast Service at R.E.S.T Warming Center (on Kenmore Ave.)
01/11 – Sunday	09:30 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program 10:00 am – 11:00 am: Service at the Woodbine Nursing Home
01/17 – Saturday	07:00 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at R.E.S.T Men's Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 07:15 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at R.E.S.T Warming Center (on Kenmore Ave.)
01/18 – Sunday	09:30 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program
01/24 – Saturday	06:00 am – 08:00 am: Breakfast Service at R.E.S.T Men's Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.)
01/25 – Sunday	09:30 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program 11:30 am – 12:30 pm: Shiva Stotrams Practice Session for Maha Shivarathri

**Sunday Center Schedule:**

- 09:00 am – 09:30 am: Center Setup
- 09:30 am – 10:15 am: Study Circle
- 10:00 am – 11:30 am Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) classes for children
- 10:30 am – 11:30 am: Devotional Singing

**Ongoing service projects on Sundays:**

- Grocery collection for the needy families (Delivered at the end of every month)
- Sandwich preparation and delivery for the residents of R.E.S.T Men's Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.)



## The Real Almanac



KASTHURI has just now read from the Panchaangam (almanac) for the New Year, Plava, the predictions of the astrologers about rainfall, the condition of the crops, the prices of articles in the markets, the rise and fall in the rates of gold and silver, the prospects of internal and external peace, the occurrence of natural calamities like floods, droughts, earthquakes, etc. But reading all this only increases your worries, your restlessness. Take things as and when they come. Do not try to peep too far into the future with the help of astrologers. They are mostly wrong, and the data you supply them are mostly unreliable.

Take care of the Panchaangams (the five-limbed almanacs) within you; that is more vital. The Panchaangams within you are the five senses; educate the mind to hold them in check---then you can have peace of mind, whatever the rise in the market rates or the quantity of rain. Do not get panicky over what the almanac says about the combination of many planets, the Ashtagraha koota. They exaggerate the consequences; nothing much will happen; the pralaya (destruction of the Universe) is more in the frightened mind than in external nature. If you earn the anugraha (blessing) of the Lord, no graha (planet) or combination of grahas can harm you. If you learn how to secure that anugraha, you need not worry about the Panchaangam.

Today, you are celebrating the arrival of a New Year with a new name, a name that you will use for the twelve coming months. But remember, it is not the year alone that is new once in 365 days. Every day is new, every hour and minute, every second is new. Do not celebrate only the New Year Day in joy; celebrate every second in joy.

### Every step towards Godhead is to be cherished

Every step towards Godhead is to be cherished Start from today, not that today is a New Year---there are so many New Years celebrated as such by one or the other community that every day is a new year to some one set of people---but because it is today and the matter brooks no delay, start from today a new chapter in your life, the chapter of Japam (recitation of holy name) and Dhyaanam (meditation), Japa-sahitha dhyaanam (recitation-oriented meditation) or Dhyaana-sahitha japam (meditation-oriented recitation). In the Thretha Yuga, the Name was eethaaraama; in the Dwaapara Yuga, it was Raadheshyaama; in this Kali Yuga, it is Sarvanaama, that is to say, all Names of the Lord; you can select any one that appeals to you.

Life is like a flight of steps towards the Godhead. You have your foot on the first step when you are born; each day is a step that must be climbed; so be steady, watchful and earnest. Do not count the steps ahead or exult over the steps behind. One step at a time and that well climbed, that is enough success to be satisfied with and to give you encouragement for the next one. Do not slide from the step you have got up on. Every step is a victory to be cherished; every day wasted is a defeat to be ashamed of.

Slow and steady---let that be your maxim! Adhere to a regular routine, a time-robie. Just as the doctor prescribes a certain fixed measure or weight of the drug and warns you that anything less is ineffective and anything more is harmful, so too, have some limit for your spiritual exercises. Do not overdo them or do them casually and without care. The doctors tell you also about the hour of the day and the number of times the drug has to be repeated, for, the action of the quantity taken must be reinforced before it becomes weak. So also, you have to repeat the japam and dhyaanam at regular intervals.

### Do not move very fast with the world

Millionaires who always go about in cars and aeroplanes and people of sedentary habits are advised by doctors to take a long walk every morning. The walk is called a 'constitutional', because it helps to build up the constitution. Similarly, to get over the mental ills consequent on too-long brooding over worldly affairs, the guru will advise you to have a long spell of dhyaanam and japam. Do not move so fast with the world; the cure for moving fast is to sit quiet. Do not get entangled in the vain hubbub of the world; the treatment for those who suffer from the after- effects of that is silence and meditation.

You will have observed that when your train is stationary, another train moving along another line gives you the feeling that it is your train that moves. If you watch your coach, fix your attention on your train, you know the truth. Similarly, as long as your attention is turned on "the other" "the outer" your knowledge is based on illusion. Once you divert the attention to yourself, you can discover the truth, viz., though the world moves, you are still.

In the Panchaangam, as Kasthuri quoted now, it is also predicted that in the year that is born today, the number of people who deride God and who laugh at Him and hate Him will increase. Let Me ask, how can that happen, for that number has reached the maximum already! The cynical spirit of derision and ridicule is the bane of this Age; but there is no reason for the godly to be down-hearted. At least the coming Ashtagrahakoota (conjunction of eight planets) will put some fear into people's minds and they will call on God to save them and they will do various acts to propitiate the Divine Beneficence in order to overcome the maleficence of the planets. Therefore, the prediction might prove incorrect, after all. Be assured that the Lord has come to save the world from calamity. Your duty is to keep calm, to pray for the happiness and prosperity of all. Do not pray for your own exclusive happiness and say, "Let the rest of the world go to pieces." You cannot be happy when the rest of mankind is unhappy. You are an organic part of the human community. Share your prosperity with others; strive to alleviate the sufferings of others. That is your duty.

The New Year is called, Plava or Boat. Make it a boat to cross the Sea of Samsaara (worldly life). That is My Blessing to you this day.





# God, Is That You?



A young man once went to an evening Bible study class. In the course of the meeting, the pastor spoke at length about listening to God and obeying the Lord's voice. The young man could not help but wonder, "Does God still speak to people?" Now that was an interesting proposition. And when the young man went out with his friends for coffee and snacks after the Study, they discussed the pastor's message. Some of his friends even shared amazing experiences of how God had guided them at different stages in their lives.

It was about ten o'clock when the young man started driving home, full of wonder whether God might speak to him. Was it possible? Sitting in his car, he began to pray, "God, if you still speak to people, speak to me. I will listen. I will do my best to obey." He said this prayer earnestly and repeated it over and over. As he drove down the main street of his town, he had the strangest thought to stop and buy a gallon of milk. He stopped his car and said out loud, "God is that You?" No response. "Weird," he said, shrugging his shoulders and resumed his journey homewards. Hardly had he driven a few yards than the thought 'Buy a gallon of milk' filled his mind once more. This time, the thought was overpowering. "Okay, God, in case that is You, I will buy the milk." It didn't seem like too hard a test of obedience. He could always use the milk. So the young man stopped his car, purchased a one-gallon can of milk and started off towards home.

As he passed by a street, the seventh in a row of streets, he felt the urge, 'Turn down that street.' "This is crazy," he thought, and drove on past the intersection. But then again, he felt the compelling impulse to turn down Seventh Street. "Okay, God, I will," he said aloud, half-jokingly. At the next intersection, he veered his car, back to Seventh Street. He drove past several blocks when, suddenly, he felt that he should stop. So the young man pulled his car up to the curb and looked around. He was in a semi-urbanized area of the town. It wasn't the best of neighborhoods, but it wasn't the worst of them either. The shops were closed, and in most of the houses, the lights had been put out for the day.

Again, he sensed a voice that said, "Go and give the milk to the people in the house across the street." The young man looked at the house. It was dark and it looked as if the inmates of the house were either out, or were already asleep. The young man started to open the door of the car, but slumped back in his seat. "Lord, this is insane. Those people are asleep and if I wake them up, they are going to be mad at me, and I will look stupid." But the feeling to deliver the can of milk would not go away. "Okay God," the young man said finally, "If this is You, I will go to that house and hand over this can of milk. If You want me to look like a dingbat, it is Your wish. I want to be obedient. I guess that will count for something. But if they don't answer right away, I'm outta here."

He walked across the street and rang the doorbell. He could hear the shuffling of feet within. A man bellowed from inside, "Who is it? What do you want?" Sensing the unfriendliness in the voice, the young man turned around to leave, but the door had opened. A man was standing there in a rumpled t-shirt and jeans. He looked like he had just got out of bed, and not too happy to have some stranger standing at his doorstep. "What is it?" the man asked testily. The young man thrust out the can of milk, "Here, I brought this for you." The man took the milk and rushed down a hallway calling out, "Hey honey, look at this!" Immediately, a woman came out, carrying the milk and a baby. The little one was crying. The man followed his wife out to where the young man stood. Tears streaming down his face, the man began half-speaking and half-crying, "We were just praying. We had some big bills this month and we ran out of money. We didn't have any milk even for our baby. We were just calling out to Him and asking God to show us a way." The lady of the house continued, her voice choked with gratitude, "I asked Him to send an angel with some milk. Are you an angel?". The young man reached into his wallet, pulled out all the money he had with him, and put in the man's hand. Then, he turned and walked back toward his car, tears streaming down his face. He knew that God still answers prayers. And he knew that obeying God's voice had the most beautiful results – beyond all imagination.

Sometimes it's the simplest things that God asks us to do. If we pay heed to His call, we can actually hear His voice clearer than ever. God is always speaking to us. But to listen to Him clearly, we need to shut out the sounds of the world, put our egos aside and make ourselves pure of heart. For, as Bhagavan Baba puts it – "It is in the depths of silence that the voice of God can be heard."

–Taken from Radiosai.org

## Devotional Activities in Chicago and Suburbs

Activity	Time	Venue	Contact
Every Monday – Bhajans	07:00 pm to 08:00 pm	Aurora (Shirdi Mandir)	630-655-1718
Every Wednesday – Bhajans	07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	Hoffman Estates	847-519-1631
Every Thursday – Bhajans	08:00 pm to 09:00 pm	Aurora	630-761-2968
Every Friday – Bhajans	08:00 pm to 09:00 pm	Oak Brook	630-655-1718
1st Thursday of the Month – Bhajans	07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	Hoffman Estates	847-695-7110
1st Saturday of the Month – Bhajans	03:30 pm to 04:30 pm	Glenview	847-729-2779 / 773-510-5936
Sunday, January 4 – Bhajans	06:00 pm to 07:00 pm	Aurora	630-253-6450
Saturday, January 17 – Padhuka Puja	02:30 pm to 04:00 pm	Bolingbrook	630-819-9081
Friday, January 23 – 23rd Bhajans	07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	Oak Brook	630-655-1718
Saturday, January 24 – Bhajans	06:00 pm to 07:00 pm	Burr Ridge	630-788-8505

### For more information, please contact any of the Center Officers

Role	Name	Phone	e-mail
President:	Ganesh Jayaraman	847-863-5299	gjayaraman@edgilent.com
Vice-President:	Jaime Villegas	708-386-9557	jaime108@gmail.com
Devotion Coordinator:	Muralidhara Kaje	847-722-5477	mkaje@yahoo.com
Education Coordinator:	Vasanth Govindarajan	847-537-7574	sainara9@gmail.com
Service Coordinator:	Veera Kovelakuntla	847-490-8271	k_veera@yahoo.com
Bookstore & Library Coordinator:	Ratna Bijlani	847-891-0005	ckbijlani@att.net
Study Circle Coordinator:	Nalini Bidani	773-643-4191	n.bidani@att.net