

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: New Year Program Celebration
	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, 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.



Importance of Discipline



While uneducated birds and beasts Know how to lead regulated lives, Alas! Man endowed with intelligence Does not lead a disciplined life.

EMBODIMENTS of love! Discipline is vital to every living being. For man it is even more important like the spinal column. Without discipline mankind will be ruined. Discipline means the observance of certain well-defined rules. Without such regulation it is not possible to maintain humanness. Such regulation contributes to the glory of human existence. Discipline cannot be acquired from books. Nor can it be learnt from teachers. It has to be as natural component of one's daily life in the discharge of one's duties. Discipline is essential from the moment of waking to the time of going to sleep.

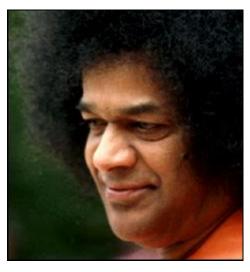
Discipline is essential for every group, for every society and for every political institution. Without discipline there can be no society or Government. No nation can exist without discipline. It is discipline that unites man to man, and one society to another. Hence discipline is one of the basic insignia of social life.

Discipline has to be observed in speech, in sport and in every kind of relationship. For instance, during bhajans, all those singing in chorus have to maintain the same tune. Discordant singing will jar on the ears. Singing in unison in bhajans is a form of discipline.

In games, you have an umpire to enforce the rules of the game. Every player has to observe the rules strictly. Sometimes while playing, in their enthusiasm, the players fall to observe the rules. The umpire, however, sees to it that the rules are enforced and the players have to obey him implicitly. Any player who does not obey will be violating the rules of the game.

Today it is because people do not observe the rules, whether in sports or elsewhere, life has become intolerable. Some persons hold positions of authority in business, in administration or in other institutions. Here also discipline is essential, dust because one holds an office, he cannot behave as he likes. He cannot be free with his tongue. In his words and his writings he should observe restraint. In the use of words, whether in speech or writing, care should be observed regarding their future implications. Your discipline will protect you in whatever you do. Even in a simple matter like walking on the road, many do not observe the rules. They choose to walk on the middle of the road instead of using the pavement. Jaywalking on the road is not only harmful to oneself but is a hindrance to others. Your motto in life should be: Help ever; hurt never.

Discipline must start from the early years, But it is needed not only by students but by elders and all persons in authority. Students should learn the right way of doing things even in ordinary actions like sitting or reading. They should sit erect and keep the spinal column straight.



This enables the *Kundalini shakthi* (coiled energy) to move up from the base of the spine (*Muulaadhaara*) to the top of the head (*Sahasraara*) through the vertebral column. This movement takes place during *the yogic* exercise known as *Praanaayaama* (breath control). This exercise is also useful for improving one's memory and powers of concentration.

One of the important elements of discipline is physical purity. This does not merely mean keeping the body clean by a good bath. Real bodily purity calls for involvement in good actions. Good actions and good thoughts lead to purity of mind and the intellect. Another important aspect of discipline is keeping one's plighted word. If you do not adhere to Truth, you are violating the law." If discipline is observed in this manner, one can experience the Divine directly. The first requisite is purity of the body.

What is it you gain, oh man, From waking to sleeping If you seek only bodily comforts, Forgetting God? (Thelugu poem)

Restraint has to be observed even with regard to eating. Excessive eating is the cause of many ailments. One fourth of the stomach should remain empty. Discipline should govern every action of yours all through the day. Then it becomes *Karma Yoga--the Yoga* of Action. You must be the master of *Karma* and act according to Divine commands. This is the way to make education fruitful.

Be silent yourself; that will induce silence in others. Do not fall into the habit of shouting, talking long and loud. Reduce contacts to the minimum. Carry with you an atmosphere of quiet contemplation, wherever you happen to be.





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

Time	Venue	Contact
07:00 pm to 08:00 pm	Aurora (Shirdi Mandir)	630-655-1718
07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	Hoffman Estates	847-519-1631
08:00 pm to 09:00 pm	Aurora	630-761-2968
08:00 pm to 09:00 pm	Oak Brook	630-655-1718
07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	Hoffman Estates	847-695-7110
03:30 pm to 04:30 pm	Glenview	847-729-2779 / 773-510-5936
06:00 pm to 07:00 pm	Aurora	630-253-6450
02:30 pm to 04:00 pm	Bolingbrook	630-819-9081
07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	Oak Brook	630-655-1718
06:00 pm to 07:00 pm	Burr Ridge	630-788-8505
	07:00 pm to 08:00 pm 07:30 pm to 08:30 pm 08:00 pm to 09:00 pm 08:00 pm to 09:00 pm 07:30 pm to 08:30 pm 03:30 pm to 04:30 pm 06:00 pm to 07:00 pm 02:30 pm to 04:00 pm 07:30 pm to 08:30 pm	07:00 pm to 08:00 pm Aurora (Shirdi Mandir) 07:30 pm to 08:30 pm Hoffman Estates 08:00 pm to 09:00 pm Aurora 08:00 pm to 09:00 pm Oak Brook 07:30 pm to 08:30 pm Hoffman Estates 03:30 pm to 04:30 pm Glenview 06:00 pm to 07:00 pm Aurora 02:30 pm to 04:00 pm Bolingbrook 07:30 pm to 08:30 pm Oak Brook

For more information, please contact any of the Center Officers

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