

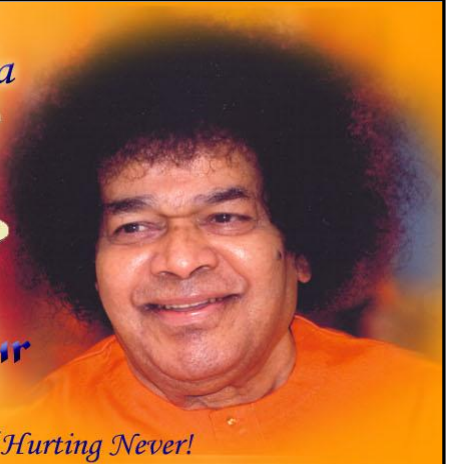
Aum Sri Sai Ram

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!

November 12th Saturday and November 13th Sunday

Global Akhanda Bhajans - 6.00 PM on Saturday to 6.00 PM on Sunday
Venue: Manav Seva Mandir, 101 S Church St, Bensenville IL 60103

November 19th Saturday 86th Birthday Celebration: 4 PM to 6 PM

Guest Speaker - Jeremy Hoffer
Venue: Courtyard by Marriott, 1801 Milwaukee Ave., Glenview IL 60025

November 20th Sunday 86th Birthday Celebration: 10 AM to 5 PM

Guest Speaker - Jeremy Hoffer
Venue: Ramada Inn, 780 North Avenue, Glendale Heights, IL 60139

November 23rd Wednesday 86th Birthday Celebration: 7 PM to 9:30 PM

Guest Speaker – Prof. Hemalatha Burra
Venue: Manav Seva Mandir, 101 S Church St, Bensenville IL 60103



Love All , Serve All

Date	Calendar of Events
11/05 – 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.)
11/06 – Sunday	09:30 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program
11/12 – Saturday	06:00 am – 08:00 am: Breakfast Service at R.E.S.T Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 06:00 pm – 11:59 pm: Global Akhanda Bhajans for 24 hours starting at 6:00 pm
11/13 – Sunday	10:00 am – 11:00 am: Bingo with Residents of Berkley Nursing & Rehab Center in Oak Park 12:00 am – 06:00 pm: Global Akhanda Bhajans for 24 hours ending at 6:00 pm
11/19 – Saturday	04:00 pm – 06:00 pm: 86 th Birthday Celebration with Jeremy Hoffer (Courtyard by Marriott, Glenview) 06:30 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at R.E.S.T Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 06:30 pm – 10:00 pm: Dinner Service Project at Jesus People USA Men’s Shelter (on Kenmore Ave.)
11/20 – Sunday	10:00 am – 05:00 pm: 86 th Birthday Celebration with Jeremy Hoffer (Ramada Inn, Glendale Heights)
11/23 – Wednesday	07:00 pm – 09:30 pm: 86 th Birthday Celebration with Prof. Hemalatha Burra (Manav Seva Mandir)
11/26 – Saturday	06:00 am – 08:00 am: Breakfast Service at R.E.S.T Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.)
11/27 – Sunday	09:30 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program
12/10 – Saturday	06:00 am – 09:00 am: Bread Truck Project
	Sunday Center Schedule: 09:00 am – 09:30 am: Center Setup 09:30 am – 10:25 am: Study Circle 10:30 am – 11:30 am: Devotional Singing Ongoing service projects on Sundays: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.)



Understand The Meaning Of Akhanda Bhajan



We should understand what is meant by Akhanda Bhajan. Bhajan can be of two types - Khandha Bhajan and Akhanda Bhajan. To contemplate on God when we get up in the morning and do Bhajan for certain short periods of time during the day is only Khandha Bhajan. But Akhanda Bhajan is not like that. Sarvada Sarva Kaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintanam (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God). That is to say, Akhanda Bhajan is that wherein we contemplate on God constantly at all times, morning, evening and night, in all the three states - waking, dream and deep sleep.

Akhanda Bhajan is of Immense Spiritual Significance

You see the clock. There are three hands in the clock indicating seconds, minutes and hours. The second hand is the longest, the minute hand is shorter than the second hand while the hour hand is the shortest of all. When the second hand completes sixty places, the minute hand moves forward by one place. Whoever chants any name of God anywhere, his life will become sacred and sanctified. He will be free from sin. Do not bother too much about Raga and Tala (tune and rhythm). There is only one Raga, i.e., Hridaya Raga (Raga of the heart). That is 'Soham, Soham' (That I am), which comes from your heart. Never leave it. Attune your life to this Raga. Once your life is attuned to it, then your success in all your endeavours is ensured. Similarly, when the minute hand crosses sixty places, the hour hand crosses one place. Which of the three is most important? It is the hour hand that is important because an hour has much more importance than a minute or a second. In the same way, doing Bhajan only in the morning and evening and spending rest of the time in food and sleep is like the second hand which has little significance. But constant contemplation of God at all times is like the hour hand which is most important. Every name of God is endowed with power. In order to have this power eternally with us and derive benefit from it, we should do Akhanda Bhajan.

Once Sage Narada approached Lord Narayana and prayed to Him to explain the efficacy of Rama Nama. "Narada! Look, there is a parrot on the tree. Go and ask the parrot to chant Rama Nama once," said Narayana. Obeying His command, Narada went to the parrot and asked it to chant the Name of Rama. The moment the parrot heard the Divine Name of Rama, it dropped down dead from the tree. Narada went back to Narayana and said, "Oh Lord! As per Your command, when I asked the parrot to chant Rama Nama, it breathed its last." Then Narayana said, "Oh Narada! Do not worry about the death of the parrot. Just now, a cow has given birth to a calf. Go and ask the calf to chant the Name of Rama." Narada was afraid lest the calf should also meet the fate of the parrot. However, obeying the command of Narayana, he asked the calf to chant the Divine Name of Rama. As soon as the newborn calf heard the Name of Rama, it also dropped down dead.

When Narada informed the matter to Narayana, He again commanded him to go to the palace of a king who was blessed with a son and ask the prince to chant the Divine Name of Rama. Narada was fear-stricken, but Narayana insisted that Narada should obey His command. Narada went to the palace and asked the newly-born prince to chant Rama Nama once. The prince saluted Sage Narada and informed him that by the mere listening to Rama Nama just once, he was transformed from a parrot to a calf and from a calf to a human being as a prince. He expressed his gratitude to Sage Narada for initiating him into Rama Nama. Thus, Divine Name confers human birth, which is considered a rare gift.

God is present in every atom and every cell in subtle form. Every step you take forward, you should associate with chanting of "Ram Ram Ram". Then every step will take you closer to God.

Some people do not give due importance to chanting of the divine name. This is a great mistake. Only those can realise its value who have experienced it, not all. Do not mistake a stone to be a diamond merely because of its glitter. A diamond is different from a stone. What is the real diamond? 'Die-mind' is the true diamond. Chant the divine name to attain it. Once you attain it, keep it safe and secure with you. You may have to face any number of hardships, troubles and sorrows, but do not bother about them. They will come and go just like the clouds that move about with the pressure of the wind. They do not belong to your true Self which is eternal and everlasting.

Perform all Worldly Tasks with Divine Feelings

Do not follow all that is fleeting and temporary, leaving the changeless and eternal principle of the Self. Unfortunately, man today is leading his life holding on to all that is ephemeral and temporary and is getting deceived. Therefore, do not catch the ephemeral objects. Instead, catch the Divine Lotus Feet firmly and never leave them. Then, God will be with you wherever you go. On the contrary, if you hold on to temporary and fleeting objects, your mind will also become wavering and unsteady. Install the divine name in your heart permanently. Then you will attain blessedness and your life will become worthwhile. This is your true Bhakti, Sakti and Mukti (devotion, power and liberation).

It is for this purpose that Akhanda Bhajan for twenty-four hours has been devised once in a year. Akhanda Bhajan means chanting of the divine name for full 24 hours. But if you keep getting up in between and keep coming and going every now and then, that amounts to Khandha Bhajan only, because the Bhajan will be intermittently cut. It will be difficult to maintain continuity. We should ensure that there is no break in the Bhajan. If you want to go to your house, you may go. But there also you should continue Namasmara. Similarly, when you sit for eating your food, there also you should continue to chant the divine name within you. God does not tell you to leave anything. God says, "Do everything but keep contemplating on Me at all times." That is why Krishna said in the Bhagavadgita, "Maam Anusmara Yuddhyacha" (remember Me and fight the battle). He told Arjuna, "Fight the battle while contemplating on Me. Then it will not amount to fighting a battle; it will be My Smarana only. You perform the duty of fighting. Those who are destined to die, will die; those who are destined to live, will survive." War does not mean shooting arrows and killing each other. There does not lie any greatness in it.

Whoever chants any name of God anywhere, his life will become sacred and sanctified. He will be free from sin. Do not bother too much about Raga and Tala (musical mode and rhythm). There is only one Raga, i.e., Hridaya Raga (Raga of the heart). That is 'Soham, Soham' (That I am), which comes from your heart. Never leave it. Attune your life to this Raga. Once your life is attuned to it, then success in all your endeavours is ensured.

It is your great good fortune that you are getting this opportunity of Namasmara every now and then. Here Bhajans are being conducted everyday both in the morning and evening. This is a great opportunity for you. Do not waste this opportunity. If you make proper use of this opportunity, then your life will become worthwhile. It is for this reason that we hold Akhanda Bhajan every now and then.



Truth And Love Form The Quintessence Of My Message



*Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace
The value of all your education is zero;
Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace
The sanctity of all your acts of charity and kindness is zero;
Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace
The utility of all your positions of power is zero;
Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace
The result of all your good deeds is zero. (Telugu Poem)*

Embodiments of Love!

Human birth is meant to attain peace and not to occupy positions of authority. One may have all types of wealth and comforts, but life has no meaning without peace.

Equality is the Basis of Society There are many people in this world who are fabulously rich, highly educated and occupy positions of great authority. But, in what way is the world benefited by them? They turn away the beggar who comes to their doorstep for alms. They have no time to help the suffering humanity. Nobody seems to bother about the condition of the poor and the downtrodden. Samanatwa (equality) is very essential for Samaja (society). How can society exist without equality? Many people today are engaged in so-called social work. But this, in fact, is show work, and not social work in the real sense of the term. Having been born as a human being, you should strive for the welfare of society. You are a member of society and your welfare depends on the welfare of society. Hence, undertake activities which are beneficial to society. Adhere to the principles of truth and righteousness in life. Only then will your conduct become ideal for others in society.

You should understand the importance of the term Manava in the first instance. What is the goal of a human being? Is it to strive for the fulfilment of one's desires? Is it to amass worldly gains? Is it to enjoy sensual pleasures? Human life is a mixture of happiness and sorrow. It is not possible to experience one to the exclusion of the other. How can you expect to attain happiness and peace if you are not prepared to help your fellow human beings? Everyone has to experience ups and downs in life. Difficulties are a part of life. None can escape from them. Hence, one should treat happiness and sorrow with equanimity. There is pleasure in pain and vice versa. One should not be elated by pleasure nor depressed by pain. We have to develop the spirit of equanimity in order to progress in life. Sukhadukhe Samekruthwa Labhalabhau Jayajayau (one should maintain equipoise in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat). But man, in spite of enjoying all comforts and pleasures, is unable to bear even a small difficulty.

Realize your Innate Divinity

Ask a wealthy person whether he is happy in life. What will he say? He will say, "Sir, I have no dearth of money. My sons are well settled in life. My home is full of all types of comforts and conveniences. I have everything in life except peace of mind." How can one attain peace of mind? Why are we not able to experience peace? Where does the mistake lie? We go on asking others, "Who are you"? But we do not ask ourselves, "Who am I"? There lies the mistake. Once we realize who we really are, we will be free from sorrows and difficulties. Hence, first and foremost we should make efforts to realize our true identity. We should realize our innate divinity. What is the use of knowing everything without knowing the Self? Easwara Sarva Bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings), Isavasyam Idam Sarvam (the entire universe is permeated by God). We must realize that we are born to experience our innate divinity and not merely to enjoy worldly

pleasures. We have to take to the path of spirituality to experience our innate divinity. If we lack spiritual outlook, we do not deserve to be called human beings. In fact, it amounts to betrayal of God. God does not expect you to worship Him. He expects you to lead an ideal and purposeful life. Is it not a futile exercise to sow seeds when there is no rain? Even when there is rain, can you reap a harvest unless you have sown seeds? In the same manner, both self-effort and divine grace are essential to achieve success in your endeavours.

Once Sage Narada asked Lord Vishnu as to what the royal path to immortality was. Then Lord Vishnu replied, "One should realise that God is present in all beings. The spark of divinity is present in all. 395 December 2005 Man is not a mere mortal. He is essentially divine. Jiva (individual soul) is negative and Deva (God) is positive. Both the positive and negative are required for the electric current to flow. Oh Narada! I assume the form of a human in order to move among men and protect the world. I am present in everyone in the form of the Atma. When man constantly contemplates on the principle of the Atma, I manifest Myself." The same divine principle of the Atma is present in all. One who realizes this truth experiences all-pervasive divinity. God is in you, with you, around you, above you and below you. However, you cannot realize this truth unless you give up negative feelings. God is everywhere. You have not to search for Him. Develop firm faith that He is in you. God has no specific form. He transcends all names and forms.

Develop Firm Faith in the Oneness of God

Embodiments of Love!

Do not identify yourself with the body. You are the embodiments of the Atma. The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later, but the indweller has neither birth nor death. The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness. (Telugu Poem)

Can anyone say, "My Atma is dead"? The physical body perishes with the passage of time but the Atma is eternal. So long as there exists in the body the divine principle of the Atma, it remains alive and functional. One can see a reflection when there is an object. For example, one can see the reflection of the sun in a well, in a tank, in a river and also in an ocean. Similarly, the reflection of the same Atma is seen in all human beings. The sun is one, but it appears as though there exists a separate sun for each country. When it is daytime in India, it is night in America and vice versa. The sun may appear at different times in different countries, but it is one and the same. We cannot call it as Indian sun, American sun, so on and so forth. Similarly, God is one. Truth is one. Love is one. Live in love. When you adhere to the twin principles of truth and love, you will experience the manifestation of divinity in everything.

Who is God? In fact, you yourself are God. Hence, everyone should develop the firm conviction, "I am God". But the basis of this firm conviction should not be your ego. Develop firm faith that you are God and your fellow human beings are also the embodiments of divinity. Develop such principle of oneness and equality. When you harm others, you actually harm yourself. Victory and defeat are a part of the game of life. When someone meets with failure in his endeavor, empathize with him. Do not criticize or blame others. Differences occur when you do not identify yourself with others.

**- From Bhagavan's Birthday Message in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium, Prasanthi Nilayam on 23rd November 2005.
(To be continued in next month's newsletter)**



Experiencing God's Grace



Once a devotee started praying to goddess Lakshmi with the desire to become wealthy. He prayed with full dedication for many years to win the grace of the goddess. One day, Lakshmi manifested before him and asked him, "What do you want?" "Mother, I want you only," he replied. "All right, I will come with you with all the jewellery I am putting on. You walk before me; I will follow you to your house. On reaching your house, I will give you all my jewellery. But you should observe one condition. You have to move and look forward only. Do not look back. If you look back, I will stop where I am."

The devotee strode the way to his house with great joy and enthusiasm. He was in a great hurry as to when he would reach home and get all the jewellery of the goddess. After walking some distance, goddess Lakshmi started producing sound with her anklets and bangles. On hearing this, a thought flashed in his mind, "What is wrong if I see the jewellery the goddess is wearing, all of which I would be able to possess on reaching home"? And he looked back to see this. Then, what happened? Goddess Lakshmi stopped then and there. The devotee wept bitterly and repented. What did he get by his reckless haste? Shouldn't have he followed the command of the goddess? He earned the grace of the goddess after undergoing great hardship, but could not experience it.

God's grace is available to man at all times. But it is essential for man to have the earnestness to experience it. He can earn the deservedness only when he develops this earnestness.

Devotional Activities in Chicago and Suburbs

Activity	Time	Venue	Contact
Every Monday – Bhajans	07:00 pm to 08:00 pm	Aurora (Shirdi Mandir)	630-854-2004
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 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
Saturday, November 12 th – Padhuka Puja	02:30 pm to 04:00 pm	Bolingbrook	630-819-9081
Wednesday, November 23 rd – Birthday	07:00 pm to 09:30 pm	Manav Seva Mandir	312-970-0857

For more information, please contact any of the Center Officers

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