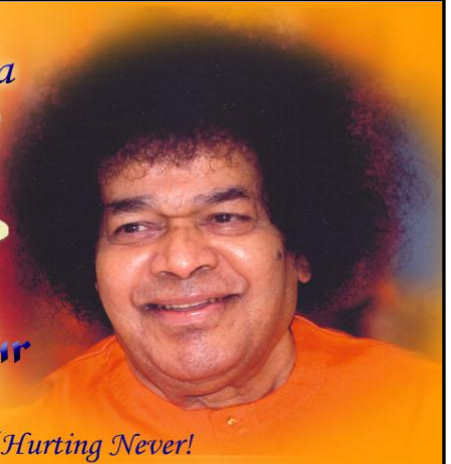


Aum Sri Sai Ram

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!

September 17th Saturday and September 18th Sunday

SSE Teachers Training

Venue: Veteran Quest Ltd, 1322 South 117th Street, West Allis, WI 53214

October 29th Saturday Regional Mini-Retreat – 10 AM to 5 PM

Guest Speaker: Dr.Narendranath Reddy, chairman of the International Medical Committee and Member of Prashanthi Council

Venue: Ramada Inn, 780 North Avenue, Glendale Heights, IL 60139

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



Love All , Serve All

Date	Calendar of Events
09/10 – Saturday	06:00 am – 08:00 am: Breakfast Service at R.E.S.T Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.)
09/11 – Sunday	10:00 am – 11:00 am: Bingo with Residents of Berkley Nursing & Rehab Center in Oak Park 09:30 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program
09/17 – Saturday	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.)
09/18 – Sunday	09:30 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program
09/24 – Saturday	06:00 am – 08:00 am: Breakfast Service at R.E.S.T Men’s Shelter (on Lawrence Ave.) 10:00 am – 12:30 pm: Children's Tutoring, Mentoring Help, and Arts & Crafts Activities based on Human Values at The Mantle House (on S Armitage Ave.)
09/25 – Sunday	09:30 am – 11:30 am: Sunday Center Program
	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grocery collection for the needy families (Delivered at the end of every month)



Vinayaka Principle Is All-Pervasive



The festival of Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated the other day. Our students also had a celebration which was full of beauty, splendor and bliss. All Can Experience Vinayaka Principle

Embodiments of Love - Students!

First of all, you should know who Vinayaka is. Vinayaka is the leader of the universe; there is no leader above him. He is the leader of all and master of all. It will be your misfortune if you forget such a leader and master. He eats only simple food, which is cooked without oil. The food he eats is called Kudumulu which is prepared by grinding various types of food grains, making the mixture soft by mixing it with water and cooking it in steam. He eats only such simple food. This preparation is also called Undrallu. Those who eat such food will not suffer from even a minor illness at any point of time. Vinayaka has two consorts, Buddhi and Siddhi. Being in the constant company of Vinayaka, they have acquired all types of knowledge from him. They also eat simple food like Vinayaka.

Vinayaka is omnipresent. He teaches through silence and conducts himself in an exemplary manner. Some people think that Vinayaka is worshipped only in Bharat. But the Vinayaka principle is all-pervasive and is worshipped by all. People may follow different paths, but all can experience the Vinayaka principle. This Vinayaka principle is present in everyone in the form of breath. It will be sheer foolishness if you limit your worship of Vinayaka to idols made of clay and metals. In fact, Vinayaka is your master, who is in you, with you and around you. By constant contemplation on Vinayaka, all your sins will be destroyed.

Yesterday, our students brought the idols of Vinayaka in decorated chariots and took them out for immersion in a procession. What is the significance of immersion of idols in water? When the idol of Vinayaka is immersed in water, it loses its form. Then Vinayaka principle becomes all-pervasive. If you put sugar in water, it will mix with water, permeating its every molecule. Likewise, the merger of the idol of Vinayaka with water signifies his all pervasiveness. Vinayaka is the divine parent of all and loves all his children. He considers them as his only property. Emulating his example, all parents should consider their children as their property. Similarly, the children should also have utmost regard for their parents. Never forget your mother, never forget your father. Vinayaka is the bestower of Buddhi and Siddhi (intellect and spiritual attainments). If your Buddhi is good, everything will become good for you. Therefore, when you commence your studies or start any new work, you first offer worship to Vinayaka only. The primordial sound 'Om' has no form. It has no beginning, no end. How can there be an end of something which has no beginning? Inhalation and exhalation are the two related processes. Similar are happiness and sorrow, merit and sin. God is beyond all these. One who is born will also die. But God has neither birth nor death. You should never forget this divine principle which signifies the unity of the entire creation. If you ask who is God, the answer to this question is that God is the principle of oneness in the entire diversity of the creation. Even before eating your food, you should pray to Vinayaka. All Bharatiyas pray to Vinayaka before undertaking any new venture. When they construct temples, they usually install the idol of Vinayaka in the front. It is a tradition of the Bharatiyas that whenever they have to start some work, they do it only after offering worship to Vinayaka. When a singer wants to present a concert, he first offers prayer to Vinayaka. Our students also dedicate their first Bhajan to Vinayaka when they start their Bhajan program. Vinayaka is the master of your life. There is no leader other than him.

Vinayaka is the Master of the Universe

Worship of Vinayaka should not be limited to Vinayaka Chaturthi day only. You should worship him at all places and at all times, whether it is Chaturthi, Ashtami, Navami (fourth, eighth, ninth day of new moon) or any other day. Sarvada Sarva Kaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintanam (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God). However, there is a special significance of worshipping Vinayaka on Vinayaka Chaturthi day. As it will be difficult for people to perform this elaborate ritualistic worship regularly on all days, certain number of days has been fixed for the special worship of Vinayaka like three days, five days or ten days. Moreover, it is difficult for people to prepare the Naivedyam (food offerings) to Vinayaka on all days, although the food of Vinayaka is very simple and easy to prepare. His food is cooked only in steam without putting directly on fire. Such food keeps us healthy and free from diseases. Though Vinayaka has a big belly, it does not mean that he eats much. He takes only limited food. When people sing songs in praise of Vinayaka, they describe him as Bojja Ganapati (one with big belly). But he does not eat all that is offered to him. He sanctifies those offerings and confers his blessings. He is ever on the move to bless his devotees. God is like that only. Vinayaka is the leader of all beings. He is the controller and sustainer of the entire creation. If Vinayaka does not sustain and control the creation, there will be total destruction. It is only Vinayaka who protects the creation from Vinasha (destruction). He is present everywhere. Whether you are aware of it or not, he is always with you, in you, around you, above you and below you.

Vinayaka is called Siddhi Vinayaka because he bestows Buddhi and Siddhi. Both of these are very essential for man. Vinayaka has the head of an elephant which has a great significance. Since elephant is considered very auspicious, all big temples keep their own elephants for ceremonial processions. Vinayaka makes the path for all to follow. When people were going from Ayodhya to Mithila for Rama's wedding, the procession was headed by elephants. The elephant is so powerful that when it trumpets, all the barking dogs will be silenced. Without understanding the real significance of the elephant head of Vinayaka, we make an idol with a trunk and take it out in a procession. Not only Vinayaka, but all gods transcend physical forms. There can be no birth and death for the one who transcends physical form. God has no form. If you ask God, "Who are You? He will reply, "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman). Who is Brahman? He signifies inhalation and exhalation which have no form. Nobody can question who begot Brahman? Where is He? Likewise, the primordial sound 'Om' has no form. It has no beginning, no end. How can there be an end of something which has no beginning? Inhalation and exhalation are the two related processes. Similar are happiness and sorrow, merit and sin. God is beyond all these. One who is born will also die. But God has neither birth nor death. You should never forget this divine principle which signifies the unity of the entire creation. If you ask who is God, the answer to this question is that God is the principle of oneness in the entire diversity of the creation. The physical form in which God incarnates has a great significance. God does not assume physical form without any reason. Therefore, you should never forget His physical form. God assumes the physical form to strengthen the moral fabric of the world. Our students understood the real significance of Vinayaka Chaturthi and celebrated it in its true spirit. It is not possible to experience the divine principle without understanding the spirit behind these celebrations. When you understand that Vinayaka is the omnipresent divine principle, then you will be celebrating this festival in its true spirit. In fact, all festivals should be celebrated with the proper understanding of their significance. (Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Vinayaka Vinayaka")

- Excerpt From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 26th August 2009



Celebrating 2009 Eid-UI-Fitr in Prashanthi Nilayam



Eid-UI-Fitr that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting was celebrated in Prashanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence. Prashanthi's unique label of Religious Harmony was on display on the festive 21st evening in Sai Kulwant Hall when the holy occasion was celebrated in a simple yet elegant function in the immediate Divine Presence.

The program commenced at 5.45 p.m. with a speech by Ajit Popat from the United Kingdom. Invoking Bhagawan in typical Islamic fashion, the Islamic call to prayer, Mr. Popat dwelt on the significance of fasting during Ramadan and Navaratri. Fasting at physical level was not enough, but the mind should be trained to perform the fast to attain purity. Narrating an interesting incident during the ongoing Grama Seva, Mr. Popat mentioned that when Prasadam was distributed to a devout Muslim and family, who received the same after performing the Id Namaz in the local mosque, the devout Muslim and his family thanked Bhagawan for His love and expressed that their prayers had been answered by merciful Allah.

This was followed by a speech by Sathya, a class seven boy from Primary School, of Muslim Origin from Iran who spoke on the importance of prayer and fasting during the month of Ramadan. The little speaker stated that it was a great good fortune of all to celebrate the festival of Id in the Divine Presence of Bhagawan. Talking from a personal front, the boy thanked Bhagawan for all the wonderful chances that Bhagawan has been bestowing upon the family during their stay with Him over the years. At the end of his short and sweet speech Bhagawan asked the tiny tot to announce publicly that he has come from Iran and has been in Prashanthi Nilayam for the past five years.

These speeches were followed by an enthralling and elevating program of devotional music, titled "Sai Ke Darbar Mein" by the post graduate students of Sri Sathya Sai University.

For the Muslims in and around Puttaparthi, this was a great occasion as Prashanthi's tag of embracing unity of all religions was yet again on display and thus a special occasion for the minority Muslims who were immensely blessed by the Divine Grace long ago in the year 1978 by His special Divine Grace. Read on for a flashback into the glorious Id festival in 1978 when the Muslims in Puttaparthi had their day in the immediate Divine Presence of Allah Sai.

"Sai Baba found that the Muslims of Puttaparthi had to trek about four miles to Bukkapatnam every time they had to pray in a mosque, since they did not have a place of worship in their own village. He called together the Muslims, mostly poor agricultural laborers and artisans and very graciously consulted them on their needs in this regard. Baba in His infinite compassion built a mosque for them in the village, truly an architectural gem, charming, simple and spacious. The mosque was completed and consecrated in time for the Ramzan festival in August this year.

Baba welcomed the Muslims into the Prashanthi Nilayam area, when they prayed for permission to sing the pre-dawn Ramzan hymns (salaat) before the commencement of the daily fast. Another act of Grace was the visit that Bhagawan paid to the Mosque, on the Id Festival day. A large assemblage of Indian and Foreign devotees and also villagers of all faiths were present to share in the joy that Bhagawan gave to the Muslims that day when He visited the Mosque. Sri. G. Fakhruddin the Convener of the village Mosque committee while paying the homage of welcome said that the Muslims of Puttaparthi feel both humble and happy by the gift of a Mosque from Bhagawan.

Sri. Fakhruddin said that the Light and Love that shone in and through the found-ers of all religions were physically present in Sathya Sai Baba today. He expressed eternal gratitude to Sai Baba for showing the Muslims the Pathway to God and for re-inforcing their belief in the univer-sal aspects of all religions.

Baba, in His Telugu discourse, which was understood by all the Muslims who gathered there, said that Ramzan was the month when the Holy Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It was a divine Com-munication, a Bhagavad Vani, reaching him through waves or Tarangas of Divine Vibrations. The Vedas too were revealed in the same manner by God to the Rishis. The Bible, the Zenda Vesta, and the other great scriptures of other religions also had similar Divine Inspiration as the reason for their validity. Since the Quran originated from God, Baba declared, it cannot be changed or modified, to suit 'changed' conditions. They are all eternal verities. The Quran, according to Baba, contained expositions of the five vital principles or pancha prana of human life: mercy, truth, sacrifice, love and tolerance. These principles, really basic to the good life are emphasized in all religious texts of humanity. If they assimilate the truths declared in the Quran, they can live in full concord with all others. No religion praises violence or falsehood. Baba said that fasting was laid down during the Ramzan, in order to make people experience the benefits of sense-control and in order to cleanse the spirit and the passions of man, so that he may be rendered fit to approach God. Fasting is also referred to as Upavas; Baba said that Upa means 'near' and vas means 'living'. So, Upavas means, living very near God. The Ramzan fast is intended to enable Muslims to set aside all sensory desires and to spend an entire month in the Holy Presence of God. As man gets the cool heartening breeze when he approaches the air-conditioner, or fan, so too when man approaches God, his sorrows will vanish and he will have his good aspects flourish by His Grace. Cultivate during this Month of God all the Godly qualities, charity, unity, love, service, detachment, tolerance. And, see that you practice them, not only at home, but, spread the joy outside your household also.

Fasting entails not merely abstaining from food and drink from sunrise to sun-set, but, the mastery of the more difficult discipline of giving up violence, falsehood, anger, envy, and the maligning of others. One may have to face ridicule and persecution, ob-structions and troubles when he decides to lead the good, holy life. Prophet Muham-mad was persecuted thus and he had to leave Mecca for Medina. Jesus was crucified for the meek and the mute. As the Lord's will assumes the form of a tree—the Kalpavriksha—in order to be a perennial source of sustenance and sweetness to others, great per-sons have suffered voluntarily, for the sake of their beneficent beliefs. In spite of hurdles and handicaps, Prophet Muhammad did not give up his conviction; He declared that there was only One God and that His Name was Allah. He commanded his disciples to serve mankind, and treat all others as fellow -beings, children of the same God. Baba called upon the Muslims to study the Gift of God to man, namely the Quran and holds its teachings as valid for all time, because they are universal and basic.

At the end of His Discourse, Baba created out of His Will (Sankalpa) seven silver lockets, each with the Arabic Inscription, 'Allah' and gave them over to the Convener, to be distributed among the members of the Mosque Committee. Baba was cheered in great devotion by all the villagers, while the Muslims sang Telugu and Urdu poems prais-ing His Love and Compassion towards all mankind. The beautiful evening session dedicated to the Muslim brethren came to a close at 6.30 p.m. with Arati to Bhagawan.

- Excerpt from <http://www.ssbpt.org> September 2009



Spiritual Progress and Family Life



Kabir was a great devotee of Lord Rama. He did all his work himself while chanting the Name of Rama constantly. One day, a spiritual seeker came to him and asked, "Swami! Can one make spiritual progress while leading the life of a householder?" Kabir did not give any direct reply to this question immediately. As he was weaving cloth on the weaver's loom, a thread broke. Instantly, he called his wife and asked her, "Light a lamp and bring it here." It was noon time. There was sufficient light inside the room also. In spite of that, Kabir's wife lighted a lamp and brought it there. After repairing the broken thread in the light of the lamp, Kabir said to his wife, "Take the lamp away." She took the lamp and went inside as instructed by Kabir.

Kabir then looked at the questioner and said, "My dear! Many people think that family life is an obstacle in the spiritual path. This is a big mistake. When you have a wife who knows her Dharma and adheres to it, then she becomes a great help in the spiritual progress of her husband. You have yourself seen that my wife did not question me when I asked her to light a lamp at noon time. When I told her to bring it, she brought it here, and when I asked her to take it away, she did that. If a husband has a wife with such a helping attitude, then his family life furthers his spiritual progress instead of impeding it."

It will be good if we contemplate on this saying of Kabir, "Dil Mein Ram Haath Mein Kaam" (Name of Rama in the heart and work in hand). While your hands are engaged in your work, your heart should enshrine the Name of Rama in it.

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, September 17 – Padhuka Puja	10:30 am to 01:00 pm	Bolingbrook	630-819-9081
Friday, September 23 - Bhajans	08:00 pm to 09:00 pm	Oakbrook	630-655-1718

For more information, please contact any of the Center Officers

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