

SRI SATHYA SAI CENTRAL COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA
National Spiritual Wing

R9 – BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA’S BIRTHDAY

1. Name of religious event / Observance / Celebration:

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Birthday
Sathya Sai Jayanti

2. Picture:

2.1 Picture or symbol pertaining to the particular observance/celebration



2.2 The date/period of the religious event
“November 23rd”

3. About the festival:

On 23rd of November, we celebrate the anniversary of the Advent of our Lord Sai (incarnation of Lord Shri Maha Vishnu) amongst us. It is an opportunity for mankind to pay homage to this embodiment of selfless love. Millions of devotees from all over the world throng to Prasanthi Nilayam on this day to catch a glimpse of the Divine and listen to His illuminating Divine message. Bhagawan is welcomed by a ceremonial procession consisting students chanting Vedam and the Brass Bands of the various campuses of Bhagawan’s educational institutions. The day’s programme consists of talks by various eminent devotees followed by cultural programmes by renowned artistes from all over the world.

http://www.srisathyasai.org.in/Pages/AshramInfo/Bhagawan_Birthday.htm

Swami does not rejoice in the celebration of birthdays. Since all of you have come for this celebration, I am obliged to give you satisfaction. I have no wants. Whatever I do is for your sake. Recognize this truth. I have no dislike for anyone and no one dislikes me. All are mine and I belong to all. My benediction is "May all be happy". Everyone should adhere to the path of righteousness. All should manifest their spiritual essence and experience spiritual bliss. Till you realize that spiritual oneness, you have to perform devotional acts like Bhajans, repetition of the name of God, and prayers”

Divine Discourse: 23 November 1997

November 23, 1926, is a red-lettered day in the history of mankind. On that day was born in the (then) obscure village of Puttaparthi, a charming baby boy in the Ratnakara family. None realised then and indeed for a long time thereafter that Divinity had incarnated in human form as Ratnakara

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Venkata Satyanarayana Raju, grandson of Mr. Kondama Raju, and son of Pedda Venkama Raju and Easwaramma.

Easwaramma's prayers:

In the Sathya Sai Incarnation, the Lord chose the Ratnakara family on account of the purity, piety, and the devotion of its members. Prior to the incarnation, Pedda Venkama Raju and Easwaramma had been blessed with one son and two daughters, Seshama Raju, Venkamma, and Parvathamma, in that order.

Some years after giving birth to Seshama Raju, and two daughters, Venkamma and Parvathamma, Easwaramma longed for another son. Easwaramma prayed to the village gods and observed *Satyanarayana Puja*, a special vow to win the favor of the Lord, in the Name and Form of *Satyanarayana*, and she faithfully kept a number of other rigorous vows which required vigil and abstentions from food.

Miraculous consumption:

Sometime prior to the birth of Swami, Lakshamma, the mother-in-law was engaged in the worship of Lord Sathyanarayana. The Lord then appeared in Lakshamma's dream and blessed her, indicating that He would be born in her family. Promptly, Lakshamma alerted Easwaramma that the latter might have strange experiences but ought not to worry about them. Shortly thereafter, Easwaramma had precisely one such experience.

One day as she was drawing water from the well, Easwaramma was startled by the sight of a big blue ball of light. The ball came directly towards her and entered her; Easwaramma fainted and fell. The Lord had entered her womb for the mandatory stay prior to physical birth as Sathyanarayana Raju. Thus the Lord was not begotten but immaculately conceived, even as His Son had been, two thousand years ago.

Mysterious intimations:

The birth of a son for whom Sri Easwaramma prayed, announced itself as imminent. The household was awakened at midnight and sometimes early in the morning by the *tambura* twanging melodiously and rhythmically and the *maddala* softly beating, as though they were in expert hands! When Pedda Venkappa Raju approached a Sastri, he was told that it was an auspicious occurrence; the unbidden music meant the presence of a beneficent power, conferring harmony, melody, order, symmetry, spiritual elevation, and joy.

Though they all gave strong hints of His Divinity, few realised until much later that Sathya was the Lord Himself. But all unfailingly recognised that Sathya was most unusual, extra-ordinarily intelligent, precocious, and above all, always full of Love and compassion.

The steadfast faith of Lakshamma:

Lakshamma was a pious old lady of the house of Rajus. On a particular day, Lakshamma was performing the prayers for Sathyanarayana in a priest's house. On the same day while Eswaramma was doing her Sathyanarayana vratam she got birth pangs. When a word was sent to Lakshamma she was not perturbed and continued with the prayers for the lord. When she returned she gave the flowers that adorned the Lord and the sacred water with which the idol was washed. After partaking the Prasad Easwaramma gave birth to the baby.

The star month and year of birth:

The day on which Sathya Sai Baba incarnated was a Monday of the Holy Month of Karthika devoted to the worship of *Siva*. That day was even more auspicious because the ascendant star was *Ardra*, and on such rare occasions when the month, the day, and the star coincide, special worship is performed in the temples of the Lord. The year was *Akshaya*, the "Never declining, the Ever-full!"

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After birth:

The baby was charming beyond description. Little wonder, for even in the cradle He had all the *Yogic* spiritual powers which Sage Patanjali, author of Sanskrit *Yogic* Scriptures, says come with rare souls and accompany the birth of an Avatara, a Divine Incarnation.

The baby was named *Satyanarayana* since the relationship between the worship of God in that Form and the realization of the mother's cherished desire for a son seemed very important to her. When the rite was performed and the name was whispered in the bud-like ear, it seems the baby smiled, for was it not He Himself who must have unobtrusively suggested that name be given. The child became the pet of the entire village of Puttaparthi, and the farmers and cowherds vied with each other in fondling and feeding the infant and playing with his lovely silken curls. His charming smile attracted everyone.

Avatar's mission:

Every *Avatar* has a Mission. In 1958, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba revealed that His Mission would unfold itself in stages. The first sixteen years would be dominated by contact with individuals. Following this, attention would be given to groups. In the next phase, spiritual exhortation would be the dominant feature, after which service to humanity at large would become the principal focus.

Blessed Puttaparthi:

Puttaparthi was doubly blessed that November morn, for the Lord had chosen that happy village not only for His Birth but also for His Habitation.

Quotes on Divine incarnation:

"The man who dies prays to Me to receive him. The relations who lament the loss pray to Me to prolong his life! I know both sides of the picture, the past and present, the crime and the punishment, the achievement and the reward. And so I am just, modifying the sentence now and then with Grace. I am not affected in the least by the birth of this one or the death of the other. My nature is unalloyed Bliss."

"Everyone of you is an Avatâr. You are the Divine, encased like Me in human flesh and bone! Only you are unaware of it! You have come into this prison of incarnation through the errors of many lives. But I have put on this mortal body out of My own free Will. You are bound to the body with the ropes of the three Gunas, I am free, untouched by them, for the Gunas are but My playthings. I am not bound by them; I use them to bind you. You are moved this way and that by desire. I have no desire except the one to make you desireless."

4. Suggested programme or method of observing the event:

Today, thousands of people have gathered here. What has brought them together here? Love is the main cause

Discourse: 23 November 1996

*Embodiments of Love! You have all come here at great expense and trouble. Make the utmost effort to understand the spiritual basis of the "I" principle. Swami does not rejoice in the celebration of birthdays. Since all of you have come for this celebration, I am obliged to give you satisfaction. I have no wants. Whatever I do is for your sake. Recognize this truth. I have no dislike for anyone and no one dislikes me. All are mine and I belong to all. **My benediction is "May all be happy". Everyone should adhere to the path of righteousness. All should manifest their spiritual essence and experience spiritual bliss.** Till you realize that spiritual oneness, you have to perform devotional acts like Bhajans, repetition of the name of God, and prayers*

Divine Discourse: 23 November 1997

Genuine spiritual aspirants should be particularly careful in eschewing bad company. They should create an environment conducive to their spiritual progress and mental peace. That is the only thing Swami wants. Having come to Prasanthi Nilayam, all of you must become exemplary devotees. Outsiders must feel spontaneously how exemplary the behavior of Sai students and Sai devotees is. That reaction will do you more good than satisfying me.

*I do not relish the celebration of my birthday or pompous decorations for the purpose. Such ostentation is not good for anyone. Adopt a practical attitude toward spiritual life. **With holy thoughts in you on this auspicious day, you must go out into the world and spread your sacred feelings among others.** Don't confine your feelings to yourselves or retain them only during your stay here. Spread them wherever you go.*

http://www.srisathyasai.org.in/Pages/AshramInfo/Bhagawan_Birthday.htm

Suggestion/Guide for South Africa at centre level:

- Duration: A programme of between 2 – 4 hours
- Programme could include:
 - Vedam Chanting – Ganapati Prathna, Rudram, etc
 - Singing: Sai Chalisa /108 Names / Sai Gayatri, etc
 - Bhajans (devotional singing)
 - Choir
 - Drama/Sketch/Plays: on Lord Vishnu and His avatars (Hari Katha)
 - Talks: SSE/EHV children and/or senior devotees
 - Aarathi
- **THEME: “Happiness”**

Swami wanted us to do only one thing - **to be happy always**
If at all I am sad, it is because I lack faith. It means one thing that either:

 - 1) My lord is not strong enough to protect me or,
 - 2) My lord is strong but does not love me.

*If you know that your Lord is powerful and loves you, then everything happening to you is His will. So, if everything in your life is God's gift to you, why are we sad? Swami says that people are ready to suffer for God, undergo pain and deprivation for god. But are people ready to be happy for God? Swami always wanted us to be happy for His sake because He said that bliss was our nature. **AFTER ALL, WE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SEEN GOD! WE HAVE TO BE JOYOUS!***
- Recommended display at venue: “representations” of different faiths & photo of Bhagawan
- It is common for Seva (Service) to be organised before/after/on the day

5. Verbal dedication / prayer / chant / other - with meanings:

1. Could sing “Sai Chalisa”
2. Sai Gayatri: **Aum** (*Name and audible form of God*), **Saayeeshvaraya Vidhmahe** (*We know this Sai as supreme divinity incarnate*), **Sathya-Dhevaaya Dheemahi** (*We meditate on this God of Truth*), **Thannah-Sarvah Prachodayaath** (*May this Almighty All-in-all Personality lead us on the path of total liberation*)
3. 108 Names of Sai

6. Any personal offering / sacrifice / practice

1. *May all be happy*
2. *Adhere to the path of righteousness*
3. *Bhajans, repetition of the name of God, and prayers*
4. *Eschew bad company*
5. *Become exemplary devotees*
6. *Holy thoughts on this auspicious day*

7. Other material for preparation / discussion:

- 7.1 Any other recommended material that could be used for additional information / preparation, such as VCDs, DVDS, books, charts, etc

8. Bibliography / Reference Section for all references used

1. http://www.srisathyasai.org.in/Pages/AshramInfo/Bhagawan_Birthday.htm
2. *From Sathyam, sivam, sundaram by prof.N.Kasturi available as online e-book in <http://www.vahini.org/sss/i/wonderm.html>*
3. <http://www.saibaba.ws/avatar/sathyasaistory.htm>
4. *Divine Discourse: 23 November 1997*
5. *Discourse: 23 November 1996*
6. <http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/1968/d681123.htm>
7. <http://media.radiosai.org/Journals/Portal/declaration.htm>
8. <http://media.radiosai.org/Journals/Portal/Sai-story.htm>

9. Divine Discourse or other:

Divine Discourse on November 23rd 1968 on the occasion of Forty third birthday:

For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of evil-doers and for establishing righteousness on a firm footing, I incarnate from age to age. Whenever disharmony (*asanthi*) overwhelms the world, the Lord will incarnate in human form to establish the modes of earning peace (*prasanthi*) and to re-educate the human community in the paths of peace. At the present time, strife and discord have robbed peace and unity from the family, the school, the society, the religions, the cities, and the state.

The arrival of the Lord is also anxiously awaited by saints and sages. Spiritual aspirants (*sadhus*) prayed and I have come. My main tasks are fostering of the *Vedas* (Hindu scriptures) and fostering of the devotees. Your virtue, your self-control, your detachment, your faith, your steadfastness: these are the signs by which people read of my glory. You can lay claim to be a devotee only when you have placed yourself in my hands fully and completely with no trace of ego. You can enjoy the bliss through the experience the *Avathar* confers. The *Avathar* behaves in a human way so that mankind can feel kinship, but rises into his superhuman heights so that mankind can aspire to reach the heights, and through that aspiration actually reach him. Realizing the Lord within you as the motivator is the task for which he comes in human form.

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Avathars like [Rama](#) and [Krishna](#) had to kill one or more individuals who could be identified as enemies of the righteous (*dharmic*) way of life, and thus restore the practice of virtue. But now there is no one fully good, so who deserves the protection of God? All are tainted by wickedness, so who will survive if the *Avathar* decides to uproot? Therefore, I have come to correct the intelligence (*buddhi*), by various means. I have to counsel, help, command, condemn and stand by as a friend and well-wisher to all, so that they may give up evil propensities and, recognizing the straight mark, tread it and reach the goal. I have to reveal to the people the worth of the [Vedas](#), the [Sastras](#) and the spiritual texts which lay down the norms. If you will accept me and say "Yes," I too will respond and say, "Yes, yes, yes." If you deny and say "No," I also echo "No." Come, examine, experience, have faith. This is the method of utilizing me.

I do not mention Sai Baba in any of my discourses, but I bear the name as *Avathar* of Sai Baba. I do not appreciate in the least the distinction between the various appearances of God: Sai, Rama, Krishna, etc. I do not proclaim that this is more important or that is less important. Continue your worship of your chosen God along lines already familiar to you, and then you will find that you are coming nearer to me. For all names are mine, and all forms are mine. There is no need to change your chosen God and adopt a new one when you have seen me and heard me.

Every step in the career of the *Avathar* is predetermined. [Rama](#) came to feed the roots truth (*sathya*) and righteousness *dharma*. [Krishna](#) came to foster peace *shanti*, and love *prema*. Now all these four are in danger of being dried up. That is why the present *Avathar* has come. The righteousness that has fled to the forests has to be brought back into the villages and towns. The anti-righteousness that is ruining the villages and towns must be driven back into the jungle.

I have come to give you the key of the treasure of bliss *ananda*, to teach you how to tap that spring, for you have forgotten the way to blessedness. If you waste this time of saving yourselves, it is just your fate. You have come to get from me tinsel and trash, the petty little cures and promotions, worldly joys and comforts. Very few of you desire to get from me the thing that I have come to give you: namely, liberation itself. Even among these few, those who stick to the path of spiritual practice (*sadhana*) and succeed are a handful.

Your worldly intelligence cannot fathom the ways of God. He cannot be recognized by mere cleverness of intelligence. You may benefit from God, but you cannot explain him. Your explanations are merely guesses, attempts to cloak your ignorance in pompous expressions. Bring something into your daily practice as evidence of your having known the secret of the higher life from me. Show that you have greater brotherliness. Speak with more sweetness and self-control. Bear defeat as well as victory with calm resignation, I am always aware of the future and the past as well as the present of every one of you, so I am not so moved by mercy. Since I know the past, the background, the reaction is different. It is your consequence of evil deliberately done in the previous birth, so I allow your suffering to continue, often modified by some little compensation. I do not cause either joy or grief. You are the designer of both these chains that bind you. I am the embodiment of bliss (*Anandaswarupa*). Come, take bliss (*ananda*) from me, dwell on that bliss, and be full of peace (*shanti*).

My acts are the foundations on which I am building my work, the task for which I have come. All the miraculous acts which you observe are to be interpreted so. The foundation for a dam requires a variety of materials. Without these it will not last and hold back the waters. An incarnation of the Lord has to be used in various ways by man for his uplift.

The Lord has no intention to publicize himself. I do not need publicity, nor does any other *Avathar* of the Lord. What are you daring to publicize? Me? What do you know about me? You speak one thing about me today and another tomorrow. Your faith has not become unshakable. You praise me

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when things go well and blame me when things go wrong. When you start publicity you descend to the level of those who compete in collecting plenty by decrying others and extolling themselves. Where money is calculated, garnered or exhibited to demonstrate one's achievements, I will not be present. I come only where sincerity and faith and surrender are valued. Only inferior minds will revel in publicity and self-aggrandizement. These have no relevance in the case of *Avathars*. *Avathars* need no advertizement.

The establishment of righteousness (*dharmā*): that is my aim. The teaching of *dharmā*, the spread of *dharmā*: that is my object. These miracles, as you call them, are just a means toward that end. Some of you remark that Ramakrishna Paramahansa (an Indian saint) said that yogic powers (*siddhis*) are obstructions in the path of the spiritual aspirant (*sadhaka*) Yes, yogic powers may lead the spiritual aspirant astray. Without being involved in them he has to keep straight on. His ego will bring him down if he yields to the temptation of demonstrating his yogic powers. That is the correct advice which every aspirant should heed. But the mistake lies in equating me with a *sadhaka*, like the one whom Ramakrishna wanted to help, guide and warn. These yogic powers are just in the nature of the *Avathar* -- the creation of things with intent to protect and give joy is spontaneous and lasting. Creation, preservation, and dissolution can be accomplished only by the Almighty ... no one else can.

Cynics carp without knowledge. If they learn the *Sastras* or scriptures, or if they cultivate direct experience, they can understand me. Your innate laziness prevents you from the spiritual exercises necessary to discover the nature of God. This laziness should go. It has to be driven out of man's nature in whatever shape it appears. That is my mission. My task is not merely to cure and console and remove individual misery but is something far more important. The removal of misery and distress is incidental to my mission. My main task is the reestablishment of the *Vedas* and *Sastras* (spiritual scriptures), and revealing the knowledge about them to all people. This task will succeed. It will not be limited. It will not be slowed down. When the Lord decides and wills, His divine will cannot be hindered.

You must have heard people say that mine is all magic. But the manifestation of divine power must not be interpreted in terms of magic. Magicians play their tricks for earning their maintenance, worldly fame, and wealth. They are based on falsehood and they thrive on deceit, but this body could never stoop to such a low level. This body has come through the Lord's resolve to come. That resolve is intended to uphold truth (*sathya*). Divine resolve is always true resolve. Remember there is nothing that divine power cannot accomplish. It can transmute earth into sky and sky into earth. To doubt this is to prove that you are too weak to grasp great things, the grandeur of the universe. I have come to instruct all in the essence of the *Vedas*, to shower on all this precious gift, to protect the ancient wisdom (*sanathana dharmā*) and preserve it. My mission is to spread happiness, so I am always ready to come among you not once, but twice or thrice -- as often as you want me. Many of you probably think that since people from all parts of India, and even foreign countries outside India, come to Puttaparthi, they must be pouring their contributions into the coffers of the Nilayam (Prasanthi Nilayam: name of Sai Baba's ashram). But let me declare the truth. I do not take anything from anyone except their love and devotion. This has been my consistent practice for the last many years. People who come here are giving me just the wealth of faith, devotion, and love. That is all. Many of you come to me with problems of health and mental worry of one sort or another. They are mere baits by which you have been brought here. But the main purpose is that you may have grace and strengthen your faith in the divine. Problems and worries are really to be welcomed, as they teach you the lessons of humility and reverence. Running after external things produces all this discontent. That type of desire has no end. Once you have become a slave to the senses, they will not leave hold until you are dead. It is an unquenchable thirst. But I call you to me and even grant worldly boons so that you may turn God-ward. No *Avathar* has done like this before, going among

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the masses, counseling them, guiding them, consoling them, uplifting them, and directing them along the path of truth, righteousness, peace and love (*sathya, dharma, santhi* and *prema*).

My activities and movements will never be altered, whoever may pass whatever opinion on them. I shall not modify my plans for the establishment of righteousness (*dharmasthapana*), my discourses, or my movements. I have stuck to this determination for many years and I am engaged in the task for which I have come: that is, to inculcate faith in the path of the highest spiritual peace (*prasanthi*). I shall not stop or retract a step.

Not even the biggest scientist can understand me by means of his laboratory knowledge. I am always full of bliss. Whatever may happen, nothing can come in the way of my smile. That is why I am able to impart joy to you and make your burden lighter. I never exult when I am extolled, nor shrink when I am reviled. Few have realized my purpose and significance, but I am not worried. When things that are not in me are attributed to me, why should I worry? When things that are in me are mentioned, why should I exult? For me it is always, "Yes, yes, yes." If you give all and surrender to the Lord, he will guard and guide you. The Lord has come for just this task. He is declaring that he will do so, and that it is the very task that has brought him here. I know the agitations of your heart and its aspirations, but you do not know my heart. I react to the pain that you undergo and to the joy that you feel, for I am in your heart. I am the dweller in the temple of every heart. Do not lose contact and company, for it is only when the coal is in contact with the live embers that it can also become live ember.

Cultivate nearness with me in the heart and it will be rewarded. Then you too will acquire a fraction of that supreme love. This is a great chance. Be confident that you will all be liberated. Know that you are saved. Many hesitate to believe that things will improve, that life will be happy for all and full of joy, and that the golden age will recur. Let me assure you that this divine body (*dharmaswarupa*) has not come in vain. It will succeed in averting the crisis that has come upon humanity.