

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

### **USA Group Pilgrimages 2010**

**Group 1: June 23 to July 2**

**Group 2: July 5 to July 14**



**Please plan to arrive in Prasanthi Nilayam  
the day before the group schedule**

**Devotees, officially sit together as a group from  
June 23 to July 2 morning darshan  
or  
July 5 to 14 morning darshan.**



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## 1. Introduction

With His Divine Grace, all of us in the USA have engaged in the study of Sai Ideal Human Life. We have come to understand through this study that spiritual practice leads us to the realization that we are all divine. If that is the case, then why worship God externally? Swami lovingly explains:

*“Even as you realize you are divine, you have to do certain things as part of your duty. According to the tradition of Bharath, you have to do things to please God, or in other words transform work into worship. When you practice this, it becomes easier to realize God. Everything you learn by practice only. Walking, talking, eating, singing, and serving need practice. Practice service dedicating all activities to God.”* – July 19, 1997, SSS 30:17, ‘Cultivate character: lead an ideal life’

Also, we know from our study that every one of us has to undertake spiritual practices (*sadhana*) at some point in our lives. Our beloved Lord repeatedly explained the need for this. For instance:

### **One of the many reminders from the Lord**

*“The journey of every man is towards the cemetery; every day brings you nearer to the moment of death. So, do not delay the duty you must carry out for your own lasting good. Recognize that you are Shiva (God), before you become a shava (corpse); that will save you from further deaths.”* -- November 23, 1960, SSS 1:33. ‘Foundation for vidhya’

With Swami’s loving guidance and blessings, we earnestly began the Sai Ideal Human Life study and spiritual practices. In order to sustain its momentum and catalyze it with His *darshan* during our physical pilgrimage, let’s reverentially and collectively undertake the following worship toward liberation.

### **Intention / Goal of this Collective “Surrender Sadhana”**

During the period of Memorial Day Retreats until Guru Purnima, all devotees are encouraged to sustain their personal momentum by participating in this “collective surrender *sadhana*”.

- 21 Gayathri and/or Sai-Gayathri recitation (at one sitting, morning and/or evening, or some intervals of sets of three) and/or
- Silent sitting or meditation

Let this collective *surrender sadhana* help us all to Unite in His LOVE and to completely and unconditionally offer ourselves to HIM to experience further His grace and bliss.



### **Right approach and Right Measurements in our spiritual practices**

*“Yearn to fill your heart with Him, not with ‘you’. Your yearning must be warm, so warm that it can be called thapas (heat). Become hot earnest! Now it is only lukewarm longing, a surface activity. Examine yourselves how far you have filled your heart with Him. Measure the heights you have reached with the yardstick of virtue, serenity, fortitude, and equanimity.” July 23, 1971, 11:29, ‘Constant Divine Communion’*

*“You see corpses proceeding one after the other to the graveyard, but you move about unconcerned. You feel you are eternal. In fact, you are. That is the real you, I mean. Just as the water you drink is eliminated as perspiration, the karma that you accumulate is eliminated through karma, gladly borne. So, bear both ‘mirth and moan’ with equal calm. Like the akasa (space) in the pot merging with the akasa outside the pot, silently, fully, with no trace of separation or distinctness, merge with the Universal. That is real saranagathi (surrender, salvation, liberation).” -- February 6, 1963, SSS 3:5, ‘Sweeten and lighten life’*





## 2. Our Pilgrimage

As we travel this journey from ‘i to I’, we must constantly remind ourselves of our overarching goal — *personal transformation* as an expression of our love for Swami. We have embarked on this journey together, traveled the road together, and, as a culmination of that experience, will be gathering as a family in the Abode of Peace! The tests and challenges will continue when we are there. But we must not forget the power of prayer! Let us pray to Swami to guide us so that we may work together in harmony to strengthen the purity, unity and divinity in each one of us.

Let love and patience infuse all of our interactions with each other.  
Above all, let us pray for the strength to surrender to His Will.  
Let the Bounty of His Divine Love and Grace Shower upon us!

Let us remember that His *darshan*, special seating for *darshan*, and the opportunity to present the group’s offerings depend on our UNITED PRAYERS.

### **Here is what Swami says about how to make best use of the ‘Gift of His Darshan’:**

*"Always find a quiet corner after My darshan. My energy goes from Me as I pass you. If you proceed to talk immediately, the energy received by you is dissipated (wasted) and returns to Me, unused. Rest assured that whatever My eyes see become vitalized and transmitted. You are being changed day by day."*

*"Never underestimate what is being accomplished by the act of darshan. My walking among you is a gift, yearned for by the Gods of Highest Heaven, and you are daily receiving this Grace. Be Thankful. But also remember that to whom much is given from him much will be demanded."*

*"Come to me with empty hands. I shall fill them with gifts and grace. If your hands are full, what am I to fill them with? Bring to me all the evil in you and, leaving that here, take from Me what I have, Love. Learn the capacity to see all as moved and motivated by one Supreme God. Why fear when I am here? All your sins are forgiven the moment you get my darshan. I shall carry all your burdens. Take as much bliss as you can from Me and leave here all your sorrows."*



## Precious Moments

*"Use every little experience as a teaching tool. Put out of your mind any belief in chance or accident and know that everything that happens here, down to the smallest thing, is an out-pouring of My limitless Love and tailored especially for you. Notice the line you get, the state of your health and body, the way you feel, wash, eat, and look whom you meet and how. Observe especially your reaction to situations. Just as in school, some will be teaching tools, others test to show you are doing. See if you accept the whole experience with calm equanimity."*

*"Center your attention on Me. See the whole atmosphere as a reflection of your inner being. The mandir is your heart. I dwell in it. The ashram is your worldly desires. In the village you are strongly pulled outwards and away from me. In the ashram you have more of a chance, but still it is very easy to be distracted. In the mandir (your heart), you can actually see Me from time to time, but even there it is easy to be only half present and not realize that I love to give."*

*"By my Grace this outer show gives you the means to strengthen the contact with Me in your own heart. Make use of the time. Concentrate every iota of your attention on Me. Open yourself totally whenever you catch even a glimpse of my gown. Be ready to accept an outpouring of My Grace at anytime. What you want, ask for and I will give. But don't expect. Think always of those more deserving than you and know what you receive is an act of Grace and Love. Be open and free from fantasy and projection. Just be Mine and I will be yours. This way you will find happiness and fulfillment."*

*"Remember that I am not only in the Sai Baba form here, though that is central, but hidden embodied in everyone who is here. Can you find Me in them, or are you distracted by their outer characteristics and habits? Look deeper, with eyes that love, and yearn for Me. My darshan also available. Honor and learn from the devoted. There are many examples here. Accept My Grace from whatever source it comes. Be Loved and Blessed."*

-  
Sri Sathya Sai Baba



### 3. First time Physical Pilgrims

#### Climate

The climate in Puttaparthi can be very hot and humid during the summer months and can range from 30–40 Centigrade (81–108 Fahrenheit).

Here is some additional information on typical weather during June and July:

June: very hot, light rain. 33 (91)

July: hot, sudden heavy rains. 33 (91)

#### Accommodations

Accommodations will be provided for a minimal fee inside the *ashram*. All pilgrims will be responsible for paying their own accommodations fee for the duration of their stay within the *ashram*. Families may stay together in a room. Multiple individuals of the same gender may also stay together. Original Passports have to be presented with proof of US residency to the overseas **Accommodations Office**, prior to allocation of accommodation.

Unmarried couples will **not** be allowed to share a room.

The single rooms or dorms (for multiple individuals) provided in the *ashram* are clean but sparsely furnished, with 2 or more single beds, each with a mattress and pillow. **Bring your own sheets and pillow cases.** There is also usually a metal table and two chairs. Each room has an attached bathroom, with a western toilet, shower, and sink, with cold running water. Because so many devotees are going, there may be 4 people to a room to accommodate everyone

Some rooms have a geyser for hot water. There are specific timings during the day when hot water is available. If required, immersion heaters are available at the shopping center inside the *ashram*. These may be placed in a bucket of cold water to heat water. Some bathrooms have “buckets” and “mugs”. The term “bucket bath” is affectionately used to refer to the process of filling the bucket and pouring water on yourself with the mug.

**Note:** Throughout your stay in India, please take extra precaution when using electrical appliances. More details on accommodations are given in Section 4.



### Code of Conduct

A strict code of conduct is expected while in the *ashram*. Socialization between men and women is strongly discouraged, particularly between unmarried individuals. Visits to each others' rooms for socialization and fraternization is unacceptable. Public displays of affection between men and women are also considered highly inappropriate, whether married or not. The *ashram* is highly segregated, with separate entrances and seating areas for men and women in the darshan hall and in the canteens (cafeterias). The shopping center in the *ashram* is also open at different times for men and women. **Women are required to wear a shawl at all times, especially at darshan or if dressed in a sari, the shoulders and front is expected to be covered by the fall of the sari.**

### Drinking Water

Although the tap water in the rooms is safe for bathing and brushing teeth, it is recommended that it not be used for drinking. You can buy cold bottled water at various stands in the *ashram* for minimal cost. You can refill your own bottle from water-filter stations inside the *ashram*, including the stations available in the 3 canteens (South Indian, North Indian, Western).

### Moving Around Within the Ashram

No autos or rickshaws are available inside the *ashram*, so some walking is inevitable! The *ashram*, a self-contained community, has all the possible amenities you might need during your stay. Swami has created all this to protect us, so that we do not feel the need to leave the *ashram* to roam about in the village!

### Meals within the Ashram

North and South Indian and Western meals are available at respective canteens (cafeterias) within the *ashram*. The food is extremely affordable and hygienic. Further details are provided in the section on canteen and shopping center timings. It is highly recommended to avoid consuming any food outside the *ashram* to reduce the possibility of food-related illnesses.

### Shopping in Puttaparthi

A shopping center inside the *ashram* sells basic items such as clothing, snacks, basic toiletries, *bhajan* CDs, DVDS, cleaning supplies, incense, and photos of Swami.



Further details are included in the subsections on shopping center timings. Books on Swami are available in a separate book store inside the *ashram*. Although there are shops outside in the village, it is highly recommended that you stay within the *ashram*.

### **Making Phone Calls from Parthi**

There is a telephone facility (STD/ISD) within the *ashram*, with multiple telephone booths, where you can make international calls, as well as calls within India. The cost per minute is automatically calculated based on call destination, and payment is expected in cash after your phone call. Although there are phone booths outside the *ashram* where this facility is provided, it is **SIGNIFICANTLY** cheaper to call from within the *ashram*, since this service is available to you at no extra profit-oriented cost!

### **Internet connections**

Take this 10-day opportunity to keep worldly issues away and to focus inwardly. But if you have to, contact someone by email, there are internet stores across the street from the Ganesh gate where you can get on the internet for a reasonable fee.

### **Exchanging Dollars for Rupees**

There is a Western Union outside the *ashram*, across from the Ganesh gate, where you may buy rupees with your US dollars or convert travelers checks. Other banks are within walking distance from the *ashram*. There is an ATM outside the *ashram* in the village, where you can use your ATM card to withdraw rupees directly from your bank account. The conversion rate for that day will apply, and your bank statement will reflect withdrawals in corresponding dollar amounts.



## 4. Accommodations

### Upon Arrival in *Ashram*

The Registration and Accommodations Office for Overseas Devotees is located in **North-8, A-1**. All overseas devotees seeking accommodation in the *ashram* must report here on arrival for registration/allotment of accommodation.

Note: A few members of the Pilgrimage Planning Team will be available at the Accommodations Office to provide assistance and answer questions on **June 20 and 22** during non-darshan hours between **8am – 8pm**.

**Accommodations Office Timings:** 6am to 8pm on all days.

### Registration:

For the registration process, every overseas devotee must produce a completed registration form and their valid passport and visa. A recent passport-size photograph is needed. If you don't have one, a digital photo can be taken in the office, but you will save time by bringing your own.

### Arrival at non-office hours

**You are strongly encouraged** to plan to arrive at the accommodations office during their regular office hours between 8 am – 8 pm.

For devotees who arrive in Prasanthi Nilayam during non-office hours (between 8pm and 6am), temporary accommodations will be provided for a day in the dormitories, as allotted by the *Sevadal* (volunteers) at the *ashram* entrance. These devotees are required to report to the **Accommodations Office** later during office hours and obtain their accommodations receipt in order to extend their stay in the *ashram*.

### If you are arriving before June 21

For devotees who arrive in Prasanthi Nilayam before June 21, the **Accommodations Office** may provide **accommodations** in the dormitories until June 21. You can try requesting accommodations by mentioning that you are from the USA group and that your group date starts from June 22 (or July 5) to July 2 (or July 14). Accommodations before June 21 (July 4) are not guaranteed.



**Checking Out:** Checkout time is **12 noon**.

- You must vacate the room on the day after the last morning *darshan*: group 1 pilgrims on July 3 before 12:00 noon, and group 2 pilgrims on July 15 before noon.
- After locking the room, you must immediately deposit the room key in the **Accommodations Office**. If you are departing during non-office hours, the key may be dropped in the key box on the office door.
- Please ensure that the room is left clean and tidy, with all lights and fans switched off and taps, doors, and windows closed before departure





### General Instructions

- Cooking is not permitted in rooms and dormitories.
- If the room keys are misplaced, it must be immediately brought to the notice of the **Accommodations Office** so they may take necessary action.
- You are responsible for keeping your own room and bathroom clean. Cleaning supplies are available at the shopping center for purchase. You can hire a cleaning woman to sweep the room and wash the floor for a nominal fee. Just ask someone where to find the cleaning woman. The cleaning woman should have an *ashram* Identity Card; don't deal with one that doesn't.
- Please keep all food (cookies, biscuits, milk powder, etc) in tightly sealed containers or zip-lock bags in your room. Ants and other insects are notorious for invading exposed food.
- For any help or guidance, approach the *Sevadal* (volunteers) (wearing blue/yellow scarves) posted in your building.

### Safety Precaution in your rooms

It is important to follow some basic safety precautions while in the *ashram*.

- Do not store valuables in your room
- Keep suitcases locked
- Keep room doors locked when not in room
- Keep windows closed when not in the room, to prevent insects, birds, and monkeys from entering

### Laundry service

- Starting about 7AM, one or two *dhobis* (laundry service men/women) will be present at the building entrance. You may give them your soiled clothes to be washed and ironed. They are usually returned the next morning at the same time. You pay 3 rupees per item (whether a sock, shirt, towel, or sheet). *Dhobis* should have identity cards — don't deal with those that don't have one
- You won't get a receipt with a number on it for your clothes or anything like that. They just get it right!
- Consider hand washing your own personal items and drying them in your room



### Wheelchair Facility

- Devotees in need of wheelchairs may obtain them at North-8, A-10 between 8am and 8pm. The **Accommodations Office** also allots ground floor rooms to such people on request, subject to availability.
- Wheelchairs are not supposed to be taken outside the *ashram* premises and must be returned on the specified date.





## 5. Logistics

### A. Immunization

The choice to immunize yourself and your family members is your decision to make, after consulting your doctor. You may contact the Consulate General of India, or the Centers for Disease Control, or check their websites to obtain information regarding their immunization recommendations.

### B. Flight tickets

You are responsible for booking your own flights to India. Please coordinate with other devotees in your center if you would prefer to fly with others.

### C. Travel

- Please verify your dates of travel with your travel agent and ensure that you have your tickets well in advance of your travel date.
- Please ensure that you travel with valid passports and visas. Since visa regulations have changed very recently, it's **very important** to read these changes.

In December 2009, India introduced a new rule that prevents Tourist visa holders from re-visiting India within 2 months after last leaving. That rule has been updated recently to include the following:

All Tourist visa holders, including 6 Month visa holders, and Non US citizens holding a Tourist visa are impacted by the new rule.

Some exceptions can be made on a case by case basis as decided on by the local Consulates. Exception reasons include sick family members in India.

More details are available here:

[https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/pdf/Tourist\\_Visa\\_FAQ.pdf](https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/pdf/Tourist_Visa_FAQ.pdf)

[http://www.indiacgny.org/php/showHighLightDet.php?h\\_id=109&key=0](http://www.indiacgny.org/php/showHighLightDet.php?h_id=109&key=0)

To apply for a Permit to Reenter India Within 2 Months, please visit our website to start the application process:

<https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/guidelines?id=16>



- Please carry a photocopy of your passport, visa, and two passport size photographs .
- Please bring appropriate clothing for travel.
- Please ensure you have planned for food for yourself and family during travel, and particularly during layovers.
- Please call your airline and ensure your ticket is confirmed and that you have communicated your food choice (vegetarian, Asian vegetarian, etc.) to the airline.

#### D. **Transportation in India**

- Transportation to Puttaparthi is available by bus, train, flight and taxi.
- If a large group needs to arrange a reliable bus, contact the following reliable tourist organization from the USA itself to make sure of the arrangements:

Sri Sathya Sai Tourists (R), SST Chambers, Sri Sathya Sai Circle,  
No.151/17/1, 36th Cross, 9th Main, Opp. Jayanagar Telephone Exchange, 5th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore 560 041, Karnataka, India.

Tel: +91-80-26641140, 26541140, 41210155, Mobile:98457 11192

Email: [ssst@sathyasaitourist.com](mailto:ssst@sathyasaitourist.com), [ssst@vsnl.com](mailto:ssst@vsnl.com)

Website: [www.sathyasaitourist.com](http://www.sathyasaitourist.com)

- Many devotees find it convenient to fly to Bangalore and take a taxi to Puttaparthi. Arrangements can be made by reserving the taxi prior to your arrival in India. The following taxi companies in Bangalore have been used by many devotees. When making your reservation, please mention that you are from the USA group.
  - Suleman Taxi Service (Use below email to confirm – mention NE Group USA)  
Hotel Rama, Lavelle Road, Bangalore, Karnataka 560001  
Ph 09845-020-539 Email: [Sulemantaxis@yahoo.com](mailto:Sulemantaxis@yahoo.com)
  - ABS Travel: Ph # 08555 287014/ cell 09440561668.  
Vijay Sai Phone: +91-988 035 0491  
Email: [abstours@yahoo.com](mailto:abstours@yahoo.com)
  - Sai Darshan Travels, Suresh Chowdary Lekkala, # 02, Sai Shree arcade 1, Opp: new Sai towers hotel, main road, Puttaparthi.



Tel: 0091:9866-730-633 0091:9505-577-909

[saidarshantravels@hotmail.com](mailto:saidarshantravels@hotmail.com), [saidarshantravels@gmail.com](mailto:saidarshantravels@gmail.com)

- o Yousuff Taxi Service, Bangalore. Ph 3336723, cell 0-98450 24181, email [yousufftaxi@yahoo.com](mailto:yousufftaxi@yahoo.com)
- o Shailesh Soni Mobile: +91-9440201554 – Landline: 08555 286292  
[sonishailesh23@yahoo.com](mailto:sonishailesh23@yahoo.com)

For taxi-fares, pl. see the table below:

Sai Darshan Travels			ABS Travel			Suleman Taxi		
Taxi Model	W/o-AC* (Rs)	AC (Rs)	Taxi Model	W/o - A/C (Rs)	AC (Rs)	Taxi Model	w/o-AC (Rs)	AC (Rs)
Tata Indica	1300	1500		1400	1700	2-seater cars	1500	1800
Tata Indigo	1400	1600				4-seater cars Ford Icon/ Lancer/Tata Indigo Marina		2200
Tata Sumo	1800	2000						
Mahindra Scorpio	2200	2400	Scorpio		2500			
Toyota Innova	2300	2500	Toyota Innova		3000	6-seater SUV Toyota Innova		3000

\* Without Air Conditioned

### Coordination and Contact information in India

#### Coordinators

This information will be made available prior to our departure to India.

#### Team Leads



- Team leaders will be assigned to each floor of the each block to assist with coordination and dissemination of information.
- On the first meeting in the *ashram*, you will be informed of who your team leader is. The team leaders will wear a colored badge.
- When in Prasanthi Nilayam, direct all inquiries to your team leader.

**For any urgent matters**, before you reach or after you leave from Puttaparthi, please contact one of the below people:

- Rohan Balasuriya Cell Phone: 986 693 5863

**First Meeting in Prasanthi Nilayam:**

June 22 / July 4, evening 8pm in the lawn in front of North Indian Canteen.

**E. Scarves**

All pilgrims will receive scarves and badges in Prasanthi Nilayam on June 22/July 4. Please be aware that only official pilgrims from the USA will be entitled to scarves.

Family members who will be joining the group in India, who are not from the US, will **NOT** be eligible for scarves or any group privileges.

**F. First Aid**

A team of physicians, nurses and medical personnel from our group will be available to administer first aid, answer medical questions, and coordinate medical care that may be required by pilgrims during their stay in the *ashram*. Details will be announced at the first *ashram* group meeting.

- The members of the first aid team will be introduced at our first pilgrimage meeting on the evening of June 22/July 4.
- If any medical issues require attention in Prasanthi Nilayam, please contact your team lead first. If the team leader is unavailable, directly inform any member of the first aid team.

**G. New Visa guidelines**

Since visa regulations have changed in December 2009, it's **very important** to read these changes.



Indian Embassy in Washington:

<http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/visa.asp>

Guidelines: <https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/guidelines?id=16>

FAQ's: [https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/pdf/Tourist\\_Visa\\_FAQ.pdf](https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/pdf/Tourist_Visa_FAQ.pdf)





## 6. What to Carry

### For Registration

- Passport
- Immigration documents (GC/EAD/Advance Parole/H1/H4/etc.)
- (Accommodations will not be provided without these documents)
- Two passport size pictures of each pilgrim (including newborn babies)
- Completed registration form for Accommodations (sent to you by email prior your trip to India).

### Medication

If you or your family members have any serious medical condition(s) that require special attention or arrangements, (e.g. refrigeration of medications, wheelchairs, etc.) please communicate this to your team leaders **prior** to your arrival in Prasanthi Nilayam so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

If you or your family members have any serious medical condition(s) which may require monitoring (e.g. recent surgery or other invasive medical procedure, or any other illness that requires monitoring), please inform your team lead so that the first aid team can be informed and prepared.

Bring prescription medication or other medical supplies (e.g. syringes) that you may need during your stay in India. Do not assume that these will be available or easily obtained in India.

You may also want to consider taking some of the following items:

- Anti-inflammatory agents/pain killers (e.g. Tylenol, aspirin, Advil)
- Anti-diarrheal preparations (e.g. Immodium, Kaopectate)
- Anti-histamines (e.g. Claritin, Benedryl for allergies, ointments)
- Cough Suppressants, nasal decongestants (e.g. Dimetapp, Robitussin)
- A small first aid kit, including bandaids, cotton, and alcohol swabs
- Electrolyte powders
- Nauzene tablets/syrup for nausea



### Staying Healthy in the Ashram

- Please contact your doctor or Consulate General of India for suggested immunization prior to leaving for India. The Center for Disease Control website is also good resource for official recommendations:  
(<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/indianrg.htm#vaccines>  
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/india.aspx>).
- In light of the heat and humidity expected in Parthi, **please stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids – particularly children and seniors.**
- Use DEET insect repellent; Wear long sleeves and long pants to cover skin.
- Drink only bottled water or water from the fillers on the ashram (check for intact seal).
- Try to eat only inside *ashram*. DO NOT eat from street vendors.
- Peel all fruits. Avoid uncooked vegetables.
- In case of medical emergency, contact your team lead, any member of the first aid team, or XX or YY.

### Essentials While Staying in the Ashram

- Bed sheets (one to cover the bed and one to cover yourself) and pillow cases
- Towels (preferably ones that are relatively thin and will dry quickly)
- Toiletries
- Medication and medical supplies for duration of stay/travel
- Insect/Mosquito repellent (DEET)
- Flashlight for emergencies
- Powder laundry detergent and clothes pins for hanging clothes. *Dhobis* (laundry personnel) are available for washing clothes at a minimal fee, but you might want to consider washing your own personal items.

A combination lock is preferable (so you don't have to carry a key around) to lock your room when you leave. A room key is provided if you have a single room, but it has only one key. Using your own combination lock will allow all roommates to get in when they want.

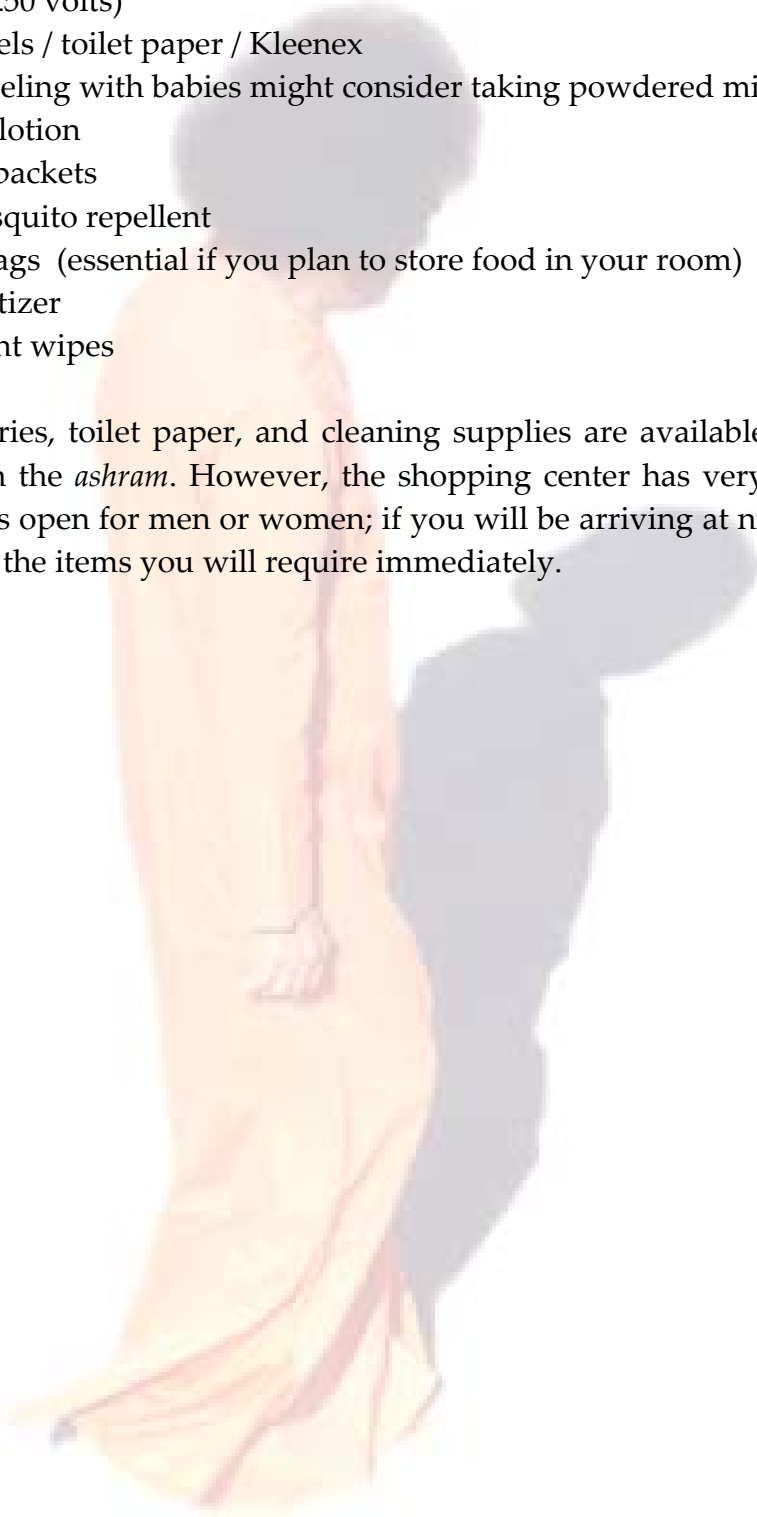
### Optional Items

- Electric tea kettle (Indian voltage: 230-250 volts)
- Teabags, creamer and sugar, instant coffee
- Immersion heater



- Iron (230-250 volts)
- Paper towels / toilet paper / Kleenex
- Those traveling with babies might consider taking powdered milk, etc.
- Sun block lotion
- Gatorade packets
- Insect/mosquito repellent
- Zip lock bags (essential if you plan to store food in your room)
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes

\*\* Basic toiletries, toilet paper, and cleaning supplies are available in the shopping center in the *ashram*. However, the shopping center has very specific timings when it is open for men or women; if you will be arriving at night, you may want to bring the items you will require immediately.





## 7. *Ashram* Guidelines for Discipline, Code of Conduct, and Dress Code

As members of the Sathya Sai Organization, USA and as messengers of Sai, it is of utmost importance that we maintain discipline and conduct ourselves in a dignified manner.

### *Ashram* Discipline and Code of Conduct

- Above all else, *ashram* rules need to be strictly adhered to. Appointed by Swami, the role of volunteers (*sevadals*) is to help keep order, guide visitors, and enforce the rules/code of conduct expected at the *ashram*. It is important to never contest *Sevadals*, who are, after all, performing their duty as per Swami's guidance. Let us respect them by following their instructions to the letter.
- Indian customs and social behavior are commonly observed inside the *ashram* premises. Men and women are expected not to socialize and visit each other's rooms to indulge in idle talk or gossip inside the *ashram* and are expected not to engage in physical contact or public expressions of greetings or affection.
- The consumption or possession of tobacco/tobacco products, alcoholic drinks, and non-vegetarian food (including eggs) is prohibited. Gambling inside the premises is forbidden.
- Kindly observe silence in all aspects
  - When it is necessary to speak, please speak softly.
  - Do not play music loudly. Do not play radios or tape recorders in the residences in a manner that will disturb others.
  - Loud singing of *bhajans* by groups or individuals is not permitted in the open or in residential quarters.
- Devote your time to spiritual activities and your own spiritual disciplines.
- Don't allow any stranger to visit your room/hall, and don't admit others to live there, including the verandah, unless permission has been obtained



from the office. Persons staying outside the ashram are not allowed in rooms/halls without authorization.

- Please keep the room/hall clean. Cooking therein is not permitted.
- Kindly use minimum of electricity and water. Close the taps and switch off lights/fans before leaving.
- Please see that no lighted candle or scented sticks are left inside while locking the room.
- Security of your personal belongings is your responsibility. Bolt the door from inside when sleeping in the room. If you are the last person leaving, always lock the door when you go out.
- Please do not try to open any locked portion of any room.
- When you vacate the room/hall, please leave it clean and do not hand over the key to any other person for staying there. Always return the key to the accommodation office.
- Do not dry clothes in verandah or in other common places.
- Put off all lights by 9:00pm. Please do not move after 'lights-out' time. The ashram gates are also closed at 9:00pm.
- Don't pay attention to those who claim close association with Bhagawan or claim to have inner messages or special blessings of Bhagawan.
- Don't associate with strangers or encourage them to develop friendship with you by exchanging addresses, etc.
- You are not required to pay money to anyone anywhere in the ashram except for services like accommodation and food. Beware of cheats and persons collecting funds.
- Please note that donations by foreigners for any purpose, either in cash or in kind, either to individuals or to Organisations (except to specific authorized bodies, such as the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Sri Sathya Sai Medical Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam), are not permitted under the law of the land.
- Take care to preserve the cleanliness of the ashram.
- Taking photos inside Prasanthi Nilayam is prohibited. Please don't bring cameras, tape recorders, transistors, etc., to the mandir.
- Don't rush forward to fall at Bhagawan's feet, and please don't move around and make noise until darshan is over.
- Please make use of the canteens, where food is prepared hygienically by devotees for devotees.



- Please utilise the services of only the authorised porters, washer people, servants, etc., and pay only the prescribed charges.
- Rooms (flats) in Prasanthi Nilayam are not owned by any individual.
- The office reserves the right to allot/deny accommodation to any visitor or visitors and to ask any occupant of any room/hall to vacate without assigning any reason whatsoever.





## Dress Code

In order to maintain the sanctity and high level of spiritual vibrations in the *ashram*, all visitors are expected adhere to a strict dress code reflecting purity and modesty. The purpose of this is to allow all present in the *ashram* to focus on Swami's Divine Love, without attracting or distracting others in the *ashram*. **Adherence to this code is ultimately a reflection of our love and respect for Swami, and commitment to maintaining the sanctity of the *ashram*.**

### Men

- For purposes of uniformity, all men will be wearing white shirt, white pants.
  - ❖ White shirt with collar, T-shirt or tunic/*kurtha*, with white pants.
  - ❖ If white pants are difficult to obtain, very light pants (khaki) are recommended as a possible substitute.
- The shirt is usually worn outside the pants (not tucked in)
- You can buy shirts and pants in the shopping center inside the *ashram*. You can get them made by a tailor in a few days, inexpensively by western standards.
- Shorts are strictly prohibited

### Women

- For purposes of uniformity, women will be wearing the same color each day during the 10 day stay. Saris will be distributed on June 29 after your arrival in the *ashram*.
- The particular days each color will be worn will be announced in Parthi.
- The following options are **not acceptable**:
  - ❖ Shorts or short skirts exposing the legs
  - ❖ Tight dresses
  - ❖ See-through clothing
  - ❖ Sleeveless clothing
  - ❖ Outfits with exposed midriffs (short tops, or *ghagras*, with stomach/top inadequately covered)
  - ❖ Tight fitting pants



### Children

- All girls and boys under the age of 16 years should wear white clothes to symbolize purity.
- The same rules regarding dress code applies to girls as they do to women. (no exposed midriff, etc)

### Footwear and accessories

- Handbags and purses may be carried in the *ashram*, but are not allowed in *darshan*. It is advisable that ladies carry a very small change purse, which can hold a key and some money, to *darshan*. For security purposes, anything other than these basic items is not allowed inside the *darshan* hall. If you have something larger, you may temporarily store it in the cloak room located right outside the entrance to *darshan* hall.
- Baseball caps and hats of any kind are NOT allowed inside the *darshan* hall
- Regular shoes are not needed. Most people wear inexpensive flip-flops or open sandals all the time. Bring them from the US or buy them in the *ashram*. When you go to *darshan*, into most offices, and into the Western or North Indian canteens, leave your footwear outside.
- During *darshan*, there will be thousands of flip-flops piled outside the *darshan* hall. Consider marking your flip-flops or sandals in some distinctive in some fashion.



## 8. Darshan Timings

*Bhagawan* has laid down the daily schedule to be followed in the *ashram*. Every activity of the *ashram* routine is suffused with deep spiritual significance. See the table below for the *ashram* schedule:

Time	Activity
5:20am.	Aumkar and Suprabhatham
5:40am.	Veda Chanting and Nagar Sankeertan
Around 7:00am.	Morning Darshan, but Swami has been coming out around 9AM lately
9:00am.	Bhajans
9:0am.	Arati
10:00 to 11:00am.	Spiritual Talk
Around 3:00pm.	Evening <i>Darshan</i>
5:00pm.	Bhajans
5:30pm.	Arati
After evening Arati	Meditation for Overseas Devotees
7:45pm.	Video Show

Our group will assemble near the N-1 building by 5:50am and by 1:50pm in the afternoon. Changes will be notified at our first ashram meeting.

After necessary announcements, men and women will form two separate lines. Women will leave for *darshan* first, followed by the men.

The group will leave by 6am for morning *darshan* and 2pm for afternoon *darshan*.

**Wheel-Chair/Chair in Darshan** – We will obtain help from volunteers to transport devotees in wheel chairs to the *darshan* hall.

Although we will request *ashram* officials to accommodate devotees in wheel-chairs along with the group, we will have to obey the rules of the *ashram* regarding this matter.



## 9. Canteen and Shopping Center Timings

All canteens have separate places to serve men and women.

### Western Canteen

The Western Canteen is located between Round Buildings 2 and 3. It caters to the continental palate. Payments are made directly in Indian rupees.

Breakfast	Around 8am or 15 minutes after <i>darshan</i>
Lunch	11:30am to 12:30pm.
Dinner	6:30pm to 7:30pm.
No afternoon tea or snacks are served.	

### South Indian Canteen

The South Indian Canteen is located in front of the Indian Accommodations Office. It offers South Indian cuisine meals, snacks, and beverages. Overseas devotees may find the food served here spicy and may prefer to dine at the Western Canteen. Payment with canteen coupons only. Cash is not accepted. Buy coupons at the counter near West-2, opposite the men's entrance of the canteen.

Breakfast	6:30am to 8:30am.
Lunch	11:00am to 1:00pm.
Afternoon tea & snacks	3:30pm to 4:30pm.
Dinner	6:30pm to 8:00pm.

A bakery counter in the South Indian Canteen is open between 7am and 8am and 3:30pm and 4:30pm.

### North Indian Canteen

The North Indian Canteen is located near the North Block buildings. It serves north Indian cuisine for lunch and dinner only. Payment is in Indian Rupees.

Lunch	11:30am to 1:00pm.
Dinner	6:30pm to 8:15pm.
No breakfast and afternoon snacks are served.	



### **Shopping Center**

The shopping center inside the *ashram* is open to the public only at certain times during the day. Most essential items (toiletries, clothing, CDs, DVDs, photos of Swami, cleaning supplies, utensils, snacks, and food supplies) are available.

The shopping center is open at different times of the day for men and women.

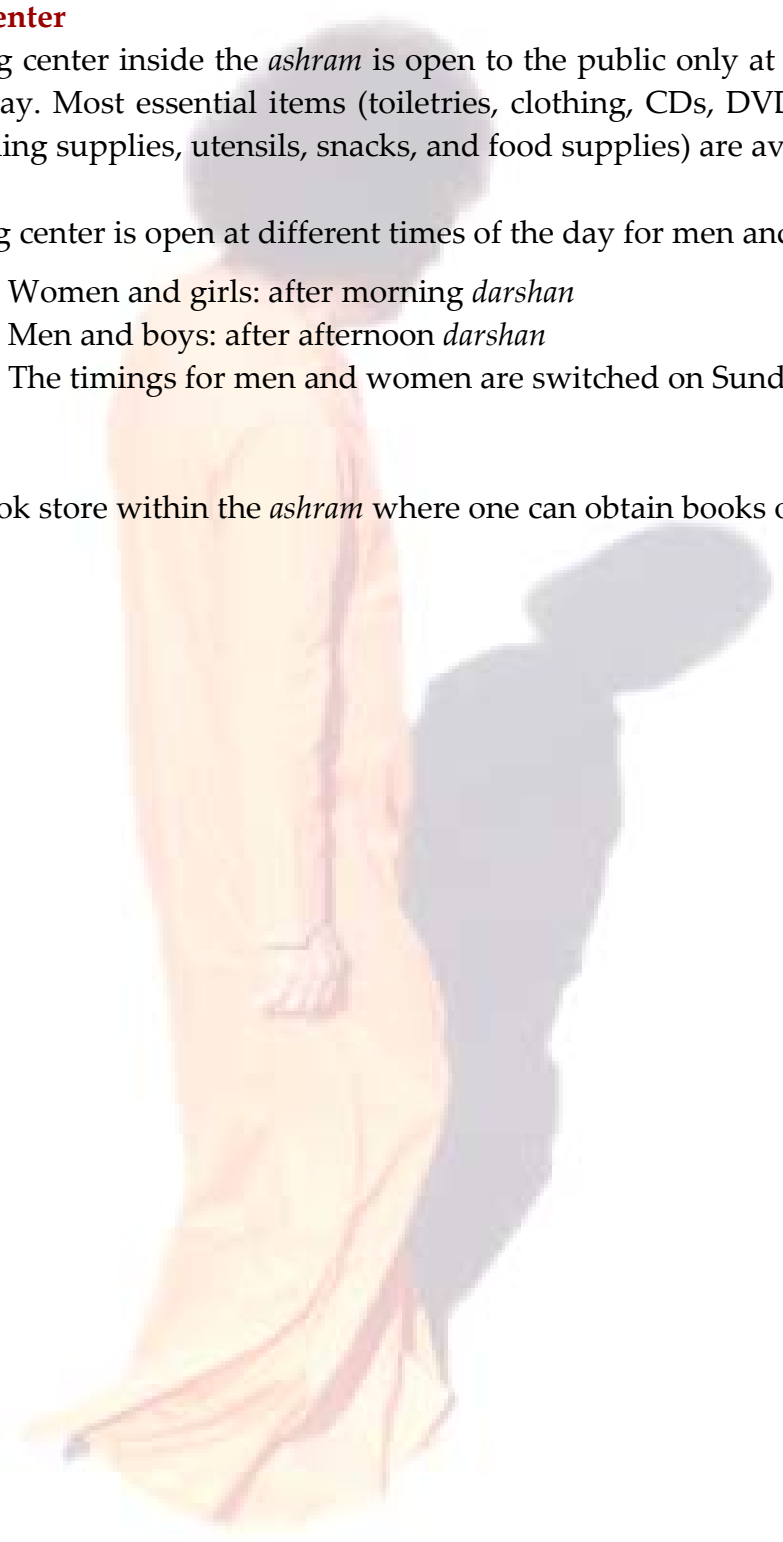
Women and girls: after morning *darshan*

Men and boys: after afternoon *darshan*

The timings for men and women are switched on Sundays

### **Book Store**

There is a book store within the *ashram* where one can obtain books on Swami.





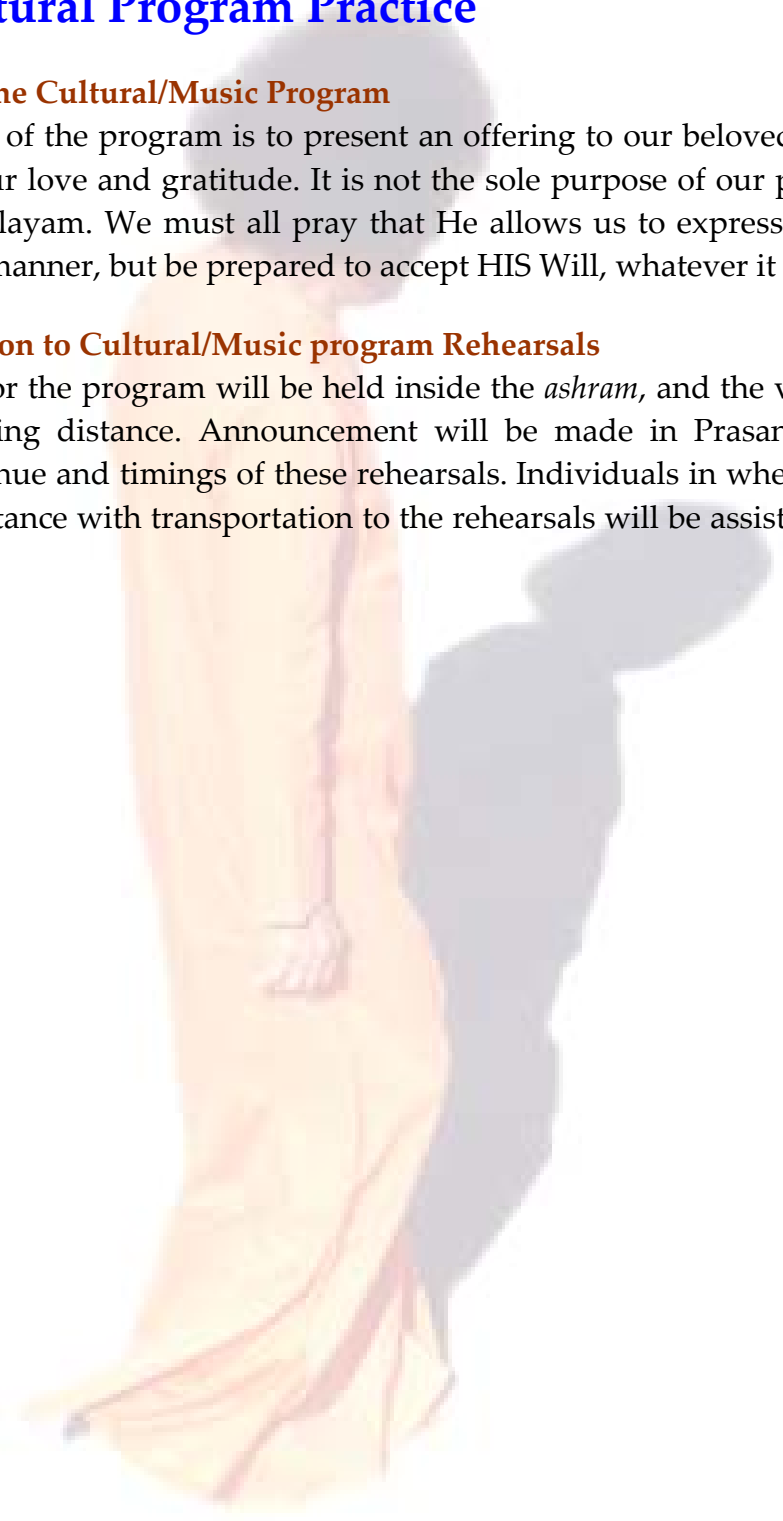
## 10. Cultural Program Practice

### **Purpose of the Cultural/Music Program**

The purpose of the program is to present an offering to our beloved Swami as a symbol of our love and gratitude. It is not the sole purpose of our pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam. We must all pray that He allows us to express our love for Him in this manner, but be prepared to accept HIS Will, whatever it is!

### **Transportation to Cultural/Music program Rehearsals**

Rehearsals for the program will be held inside the *ashram*, and the venue will be within walking distance. Announcement will be made in Prasanthi Nilayam about the venue and timings of these rehearsals. Individuals in wheelchairs who require assistance with transportation to the rehearsals will be assisted by volunteers.





## 11. Dos and Don'ts

### Dos

- DO follow the rules and guidelines regarding dress code and code of conduct.
- DO attend EVERY *darshan*.
- DO be on time for meetings, practices and *darshan*.
- DO attend all program practice sessions.
- DO avoid (or at least minimize) leaving the *ashram*.
- DO MAKE THE BEST OF THIS SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE.

### Do NOTs

- Do not leave the *darshan* hall while Swami is present.
- Do not stand up or call out to Swami while He is present.
- Do not dress inappropriately.
- Do not engage in public displays of affection.
- Do not socialize with members of the opposite sex or visit their rooms.
- Do not “hang around” the *ashram*, socializing or “people watching”.
- Do not “hang around” OUTSIDE the *ashram*, socializing, or “people watching”.

For information, visit <http://www.sathyasai.org/ashrams/prashanthi.htm> and <http://www.srisathyasai.org.in/Pages/AshramInfo/Ashram.htm>.



## 12. A Final Note

The time is fast approaching, dear devotees, when we will finally be at our Dear Swami's Lotus Feet!

Let us derive benefit from every moment in His Divine Presence.

Let us continue to intensify our spiritual practices, transform ourselves, and strengthen our one-to-one relationship with Him.

Let nothing get in the way of this noble goal!

See you all there on 22 June or July 4 ☺



Jai Sairam  
Logistics, Accommodations & Travel Committee