

Feeling the Presence of God – Through Devotional Music

Love

Adoration

Devotion



Aum Sri Sai Ram

Technical Musical Aspects of Bhajans

Dr. Paul Erhard

Sathya Sai Baba Centers
North Central Region (Region 5)

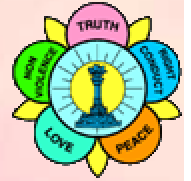
Saturday August 30, 2008

Live in Love

Love is God

God is Love





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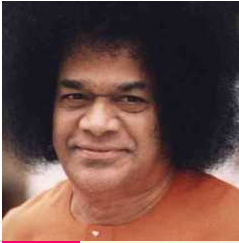


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Begin with a prayer: GANESHA SHARANAM, SHARANAM GANESHA



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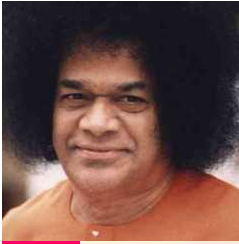


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FEELING THE PRESENCE OF GOD... THROUGH DEVOTIONAL SINGING



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COMMUNING WITH THE INDWELLER OF OUR HEART



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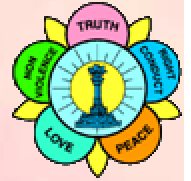
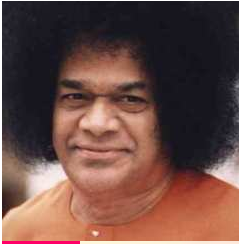
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“Educare concerns itself with one’s inner being. It relates to the Atma. Where is Atma? It is everywhere. It is omnipresent.”

Sathya Sai Baba, August 6, 2008



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“In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true self.”



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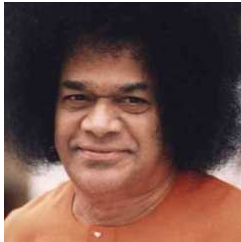


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**Let us not be foolish people. Let us
dedicate ourselves to
knowing and living the
truth of who we really are.**



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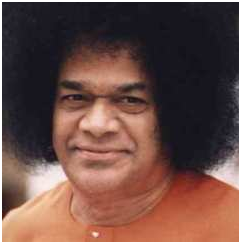


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“A human being is the Embodiment of the Divine Self, verily.” August 6, 2008



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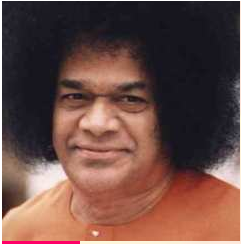


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Sathya Sai Baba instructs us over and over again that the goal of life is to know and experience our true self, to live in Constant Integrated Awareness (CIA) of the truth that



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God is Love

we are the Atma



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We are Embodiments of the Divine Self



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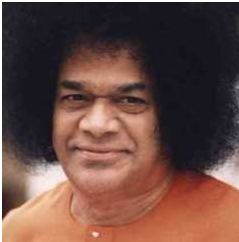


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**we are the essence that pervades and
encompasses everything**



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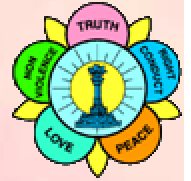


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we are truly “The Peace that passeth all understanding”



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THE GOAL OF THIS RETREAT:
To explore ways of using devotional
music as a means
of helping each one
of us connect with and
experience this
true indweller of our heart
in a more effective way.



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“Bhajana Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi.... Peace and happiness can be attained only by singing the glory of the Divine Name and not by wealth or worldly possessions.”

August 6, 2008



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How can we assess the nature of our singing to determine if we are experiencing the indweller of our heart?



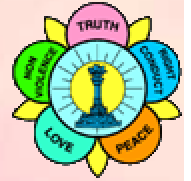
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“Bhajan has to be a thrilling experience, which must leave the participants full of pure energy and elevated enthusiasm.”

Sathya Sai Baba



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**There is a secret formula for ensuring
this thrill:**



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GRACE AND EFFORT



Live in Love



Love is God



God is Love

*“Take one step towards Me,
and I take a hundred steps
towards you!”*



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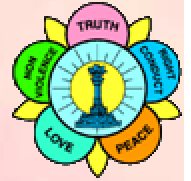
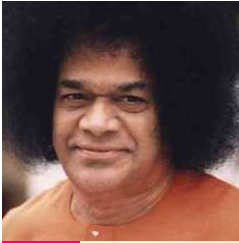
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**Our EFFORT to move closer to God
through singing from
HEARTS FULL OF LOVE
is matched by God's Grace.
God MUST respond with GRACE by
moving closer to us with HIS LOVE.**

We feel our love and His Love.



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God is Love

“God is love. Live in Love!”
**We feel the thrill of connecting
with Him, with Love, with the
true indweller of our heart.**



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**We have to make the effort
to intensely “Live in Love.”**



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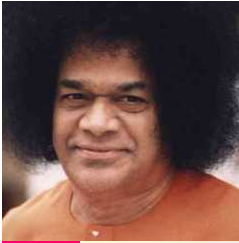


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**The greater the intensity of our effort,
the greater will be the trill.**



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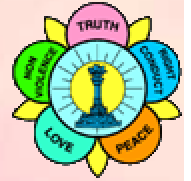
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The experience of being
full of pure energy and
elevated enthusiasm
is so incredible, beyond description.
Overflowing with Divine Love.

This is the reward.



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GRACE AND EFFORT:
It is important for us to believe the
truth of this formula,
just like scientists believe
the formula $E = MC^2$



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What we are really talking about is devotion



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“Bhakti (Devotion) is an ardent prayer emanating from the cave of the heart in all sincerity and flowing in the form of a flooded river toward the Lord in the form of love.”

Sathya Sai Baba, October 8, 1986



Live in Love

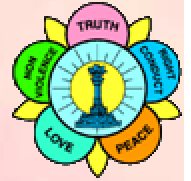


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IS LIVING WITH A HEART FULL OF LOVE WHAT YOU ARE AFTER?



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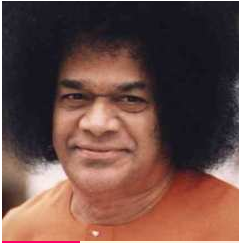


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That complete love of Mirabai, the complete love of Tyagaraja?



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**DO YOU WANT
TO FEEL
THE FLOODED RIVER
OF LOVE
FLOWING TOWARD THE LORD?**



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This weekend I want to share with you some ideas and strategies that are effective in helping me to be more fully involved and engaged in performing music, both in singing devotional songs and in my work as a professional musician playing my instrument, the double bass.



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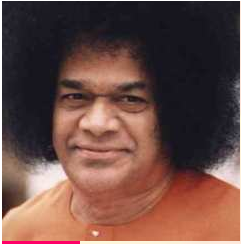


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**I pray that you find
these ideas helpful for
benefiting and intensifying
your experience of singing.**



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Let's begin!



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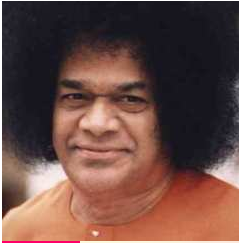


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WHAT IS A DEVOTIONAL SONG?



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**A devotional song is
a sacred poem
set to music.**



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**Sacred poems deal with
the spiritual realm of human existence
vs. secular poems that deal with worldly
concerns
of the physical realm.**



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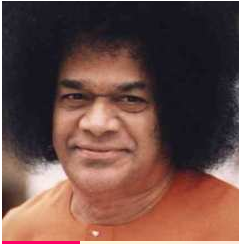
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THREE MAIN COMPONENTS OF A DEVOTIONAL SONG

- 1) WORDS
- 2) MUSIC
- 3) BHAVA (FEELING)



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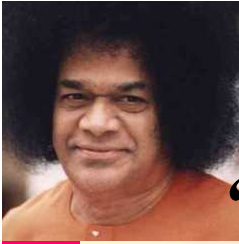


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1) **WORDS** of a song
express some kind of communication
with
the **Divine**



“The most important aspect of devotion

is

attaining love through LOVE.

This love should not be only associated with love towards worldly things, but it must be basically flowing towards a permanent entity that is God.”

Sathya Sai Baba, October 8, 1986

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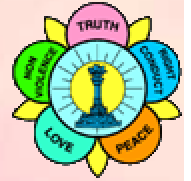


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Words of devotional songs express a variety of devotional sentiments directed towards God:



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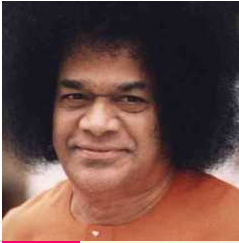


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**Love for God
Praise of God
Adoration for God
Yearning for God
Songs of thanks and gratitude
Extolling aspects of
God which are dear to us.**



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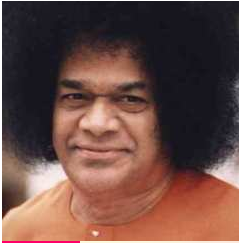


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**THE PURPOSE OF THE WORDS:
To focus our attention inward
to our heart,
the seat of the
spiritual dimension of life.**



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GANESHA SHARANAM, SHARANAM GANESHA

Lord Ganesha, I bow down to thee.

**This is a prayer asking the Lord to
protect us and remove obstacles.**



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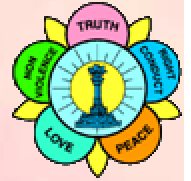
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2) MUSIC

The part of a song that is the aspect of singing.



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**THE PURPOSE OF THE MUSIC:
to amplify the power of the words
and
bring the words to life.**



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**MELODY, the Bhajan tune, is
comprised of
PITCH (Raga: swaras)
and
RHYTHM (Tala: beats)**



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**2.a.) PITCH:
The relative highness and lowness of
the notes
(frequency, or number of vibrations)**



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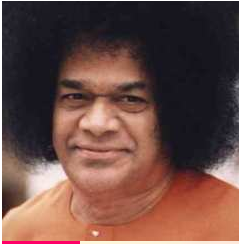
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RAGA:

The notes of a particular Bhajan are derived from one raga (scale).



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GANESHA SHARANAM:

Raga HAMSADHWANI:

sa re2 ga2 pa ni2 sa

sa ni2 pa ga2 re2 sa



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**To sing the swaras properly,
it is necessary
to
orient every pitch to
“sa.”**



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**Sing swaras with the drone.
Good practice: hear the drone,
generate the pitch of a swara in your
head first, then sing it.**



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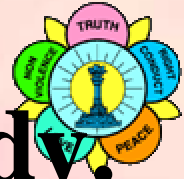
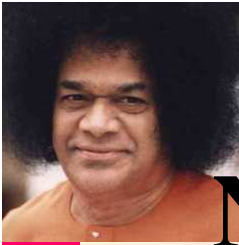
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SWARAS (notes) of the song with equal rhythm:

s' s' n s' s' p g p s' n s' s'
n r' r' n r' r' n r' n p n r' r' s
g' g' g' r' g' g' r' g' r' s' r' g' g'
r' r' r' r' g' r' s' s' s' r' g' r' s' s'



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NOTICE: The shape of the melody!

**It mirrors something about Ganesh:
The shape of the melodic line creates
an image of bowing down.**

**The first phrase also creates the shape
of Ganesh's elephant trunk.**

**The 2nd and 3rd phrase build in
intensity by going successively to
higher notes.**



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s' s' n s' s' p g p s' n s' s'
 n r' r' n r' r' n r' n p n r' r' s
 g' g' g' r' g' g' r' g' r' s' r' g' g'
 r' r' r' r' g' r' s' s' s' r' g' r' s' s'



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2.b.) RHYTHM: Refers to “when” the different syllables of the song are sung in the continuum of time.



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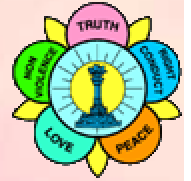
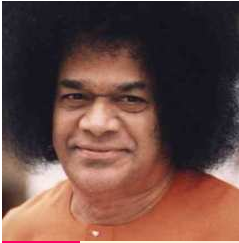


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COUNT and CLAP:
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



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Add the drum, sing and clap



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D D. D D D D. D D D D D. D.
D D. D D D D. D D D D D D D D
, D D D D D D. D D D D D D D.
, D D D D D D D D D D D D D D.



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PITCH AND RHYTHM COMBINED: sing and clap



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s' s'. n s' s' p. g p s' n s'. s'.



n r'. r' n r' r'. n r' n p n r' r' s

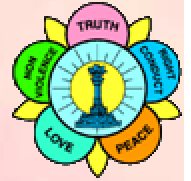
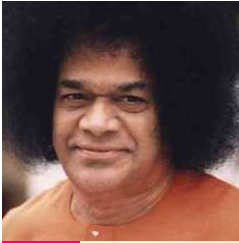
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, g' g' g' r' g' g'. r' g' r' s' r' g' g'.



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, r' r' r' r' g' r' s' s' s' r' g' r' s' s'.



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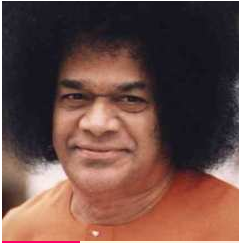


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THE POWER OF DEVOTIONAL SINGING

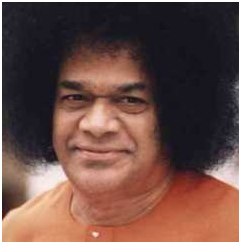


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“When all the participants in a bhajan (session) SING IN UNISON, what sacred vibrations are produced and what Divine energies are released! When these vibrations fill the world, what changes can they not bring about!”



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WHAT RESPONSIBILITY THIS IS!



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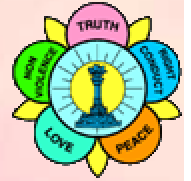


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What does Swami mean by SINGING IN UNISON? Singing together as one voice. The key is knowing when to sing what notes. The WHEN is RHYTHM and the WHAT is PITCH



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In group singing, the most important element is singing what we sing at exactly the same time. This gives power of intention.



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The ABC of excellent group singing is
Always Be Counting the **RHYTHM.**



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This requires in inner counting. This inner counting brings life to the music.



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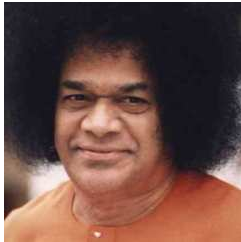


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COUNT and CLAP:
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



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Always Be Counting



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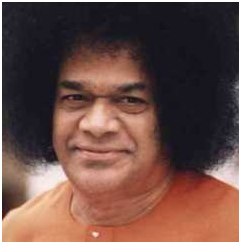


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When everybody is counting (feeling the inner rhythmic pulse) everybody can sing with confidence and power.



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**Everyone can move forward like a
Lion, rather than follow like sheep**



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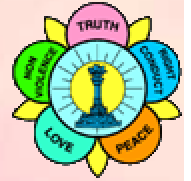
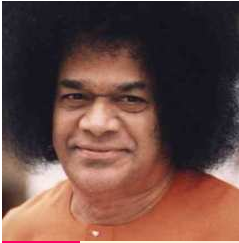


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**The Drum is our focal point toward
which we all must orient.**



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**Always be listening to
the drum to keep track of
the beat of the music.**



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**When we sing with confidence,
the doors of our heart opens
automatically and
we really get into the singing.**



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**Sing Ganesha again: count, clap, sing
with confidence. BE TOGETHER!**



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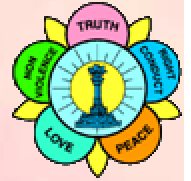


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3) BHAVA: THE EXPERIENCE OF SINGING WITH EMOTIONAL ENERGY



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“Man is also essentially an embodiment of love. Man’s love is becoming polluted because it is diverted towards worldly things. It is not possible to get the reflection of the beautiful divine Lord in a heart which is polluted.”

Sathya Sai Baba, October 8, 1986



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“Bhajans must be a felt experience (not a mechanical experience). Do not sing with one eye on the effect the song makes on the listeners and the other, on the effect it makes on God. Let your heart PANT for God.”



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The Bhava is our feeling of sincerely praying to the Lord to protect us and remove obstacles that stand before us. We have to make a great effort to focus and direct our attention and energy on God, to focus and direct the prayer deep into our heart.



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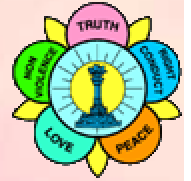


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**Singing with this
intense feeling takes us within so that
real devotion can happen:**



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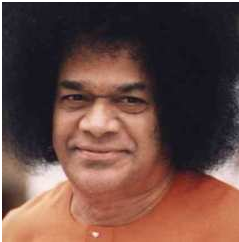
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“Bhakti (Devotion) is an ardent prayer emanating from the cave of the heart in all sincerity and flowing in the form of a flooded river toward the Lord in the form of love.”

Sathya Sai Baba, October 8, 1986



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Intensity Of Love Intensity Of Yearning Intensity Of Adoration



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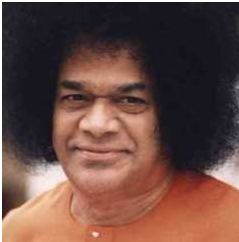


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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: PITCH, RHYTHM, BHAVA



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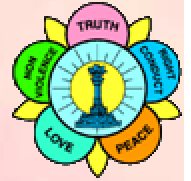
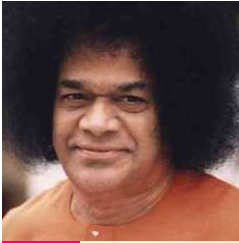


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**Let's open the doors of our heart
and enjoy the *thrilling experience,*
which must leave us full of pure energy
*and elevated enthusiasm.***



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Using our awareness of the aspects of Pitch and Rhythm, let us sing together as a unified spiritual army of love.



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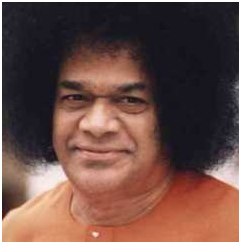


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Thus, while putting in the effort to sing with love, we have to also be sure put in the effort as a group to Always Be Careful (ABC) of Pitch and Rhythm.



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Love is God



God is Love

**Be aware of singing together in Unity
with those around you.**



Live in Love

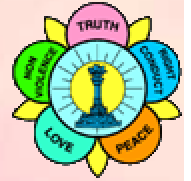


Love is God



God is Love

Remember:
The Drum is the focal point toward which we all must orient our singing, i.e. to keep track of the beat of the music.



Live in Love

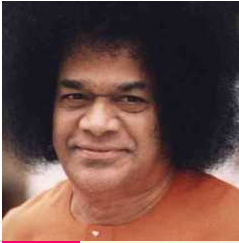


Love is God



God is Love

“Devotion (Bhakti) refers to wholesome and complete love.”



Live in Love

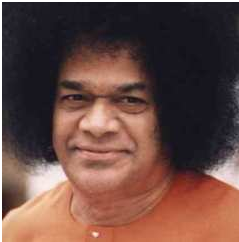


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Devotion and love are inseparable.



Live in Love



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God is Love

They are mutually dependent.”
Sathya Sai Baba, October 8, 1986



Live in Love

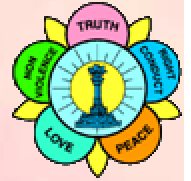


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We have to force ourselves to sing with love, to feel that flow of the love of devotion.



Live in Love



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God is Love

GANESHA SHARANAM, SHARANAM GANESHA

Lord Ganesha, I bow down to thee.



Live in Love



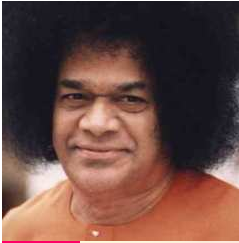
Love is God



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**Our intention must be clear!
We are praying to the
Lord to protect us and remove
obstacles.**

**This is not a selfish prayer.
We are praying to the Lord to
protect all humanity!**



Live in Love



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**SING Ganesha with heartfelt love,
adoration,
and full faith
and...**



Live in Love



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God is Love

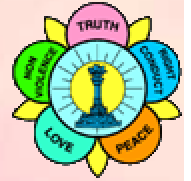
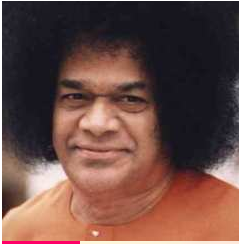
Remember!:

Always Be Careful

(ABC

of

Pitch and Rhythm



Live in Love



Love is God



God is Love

“Bhakti (Devotion) is an ardent prayer emanating from the cave of the heart in all sincerity and flowing in the form of a flooded river toward the Lord in the form of love.”

Sathya Sai Baba, October 8, 1986