

## Amma's Sadhana

What Amma is today has been shaped by the place of her birth, her family members, the way she grew up and by thinking of God everyday of her life. She walked on the path shown by the members of her family. Everyone in the family lived for God. Her father molded his life on the principles and teachings of Bhagavad Gita. He kept a daily diary, in which he recorded all his feelings. He would write at the end of the day, "Lord, the days are passing. Take me to Your Lotus feet soon".

Amma's mother had fiery devotion to Krishna. She would cry aloud every day calling her Lord. She passed away when Amma was very young. Amma was brought up by her grandmother who told her the stories of Andal and Meera. Amma was greatly absorbed by the lives of these saints especially Andal. ***She thought "I too will marry Krishna"***. As a child Amma always kept a blue Krishna doll by her side. Seeing this her grandmother would remark, "See, she is just like Meera!"

As a young child, Amma saw her great grandmother paralyzed from a stroke and bedridden. At first Amma was even afraid to go near her. She used to think, "Is this how people are in old age? I must not become old".



If anyone died in their village, Amma would feel very scared hearing the funeral drums. She would lock herself up in her room thinking 'why do people die? How to escape death?' When Amma was a teenager, She would watch films. Seeing the film stars, She thought "the only way to escape old age and to be ever young is to be a cinema star". Later, She heard that her favourite film star became ill and died. This shattered her concept of remaining young like film stars.

How to escape old age, disease and death?

This thought was constantly in her mind. At this time, Amma remembered the story of Markandeya, who conquered death by his devotion to Lord Shiva. Amma prayed with strong conviction, "There is no other way but to catch hold of God. This is the only sure way."

At the age of sixteen, Amma's family wanted her to get married. Amma said, "I will not marry anyone other than Krishna." Amma was brought up like Buddha; She did not know anything about the world. She always thought that when Radha, Andal and Meera could attain Kannha, why can't She? However, She was told that they did not marry Him physically. It is not possible in human life.

Amma married Shri Manoharan in July 1955 and left her childhood dreams behind. She was happy in her new role for about 6 to 7 years. In 1961 at the birth of Amma's third child, She became very ill. She was asked to take bed rest.

***This period was the turning point in Amma's life.***

Amma says, "***I felt it was time to reevaluate and refocus my life.*** I suddenly found myself 21 years old and raising three children. What had happened? What had become of my dream to merge with God like Andal and Mira? Now I was a mother with many duties to perform. How has it happened?"

After some reflection, Amma decided to renew her life's quest to merge with the Lord. ***The search for God began again***

. The fire of devotion to Krishna raged high.

After recovering from the illness, Amma returned to her many household duties. She immediately began a life of sadhana to achieve her goal of attaining God. She was determined to pursue her goal in spite of the difficulties of being a householder. She lived an ideal life, one of sacrifice and self-surrender.

At the age of 21 years, ***Amma took many vows***. She gave up wearing costly saris, and going to cinema. She stopped reading magazines or storybooks but read only spiritual books and

epics. She would daily read Vinobhaji's book on the Bhagavad Gita and Gandhiji's 'My experiments with Truth'. She went in search of Saints and Gurus, to quench her spiritual thirst. She would ask them, "Can you show me God? Will I attain God in this life?"

***Amma's spiritual journey began with her devotion to Lord Krishna*** and it was this love for the blue Lord that guided her on the path. Amma wrote countless letters and poems to Krishna in her notebooks and even on the walls! Amma did not sleep for 15 long years feeling the pangs of separation as the beloved of the Lord.

Krishna responded to her incessant calls and She had Krishna's darshan many times.

***On 8th July 1985, Krishna revealed, "I am in Puttaparthi as Sathya Sai."***



***After this revelation, Amma directed all her devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.*** She would always be absorbed in thoughts of Him. Everyday she would cry for His darshan. Her feelings of devotion, took the form of thousands of letters and poems for Swami. As time went by, the Lord responded to the desperate calls of a yearning heart.

Swami began to speak with Amma, in 1996. In a vision, Bhagavan said, “The seas may flood and immerse the whole world, the sun may rise in another direction, but I won’t allow you to forget Me. I will not leave you on any account. Do not cry. What I say is truth.”

Since this assurance, Amma feels Swami’s presence and nearness to her. She ever seeks Swami’s love and guidance through her conversations with Him in every meditation.

In April 2002, Swami asked Amma to come to Vasishta Cave near Rishikesh. There Swami made Amma as Pure consciousness and caused her to merge with Him. Normally anyone who reaches this state would leave their body and merge with God. Amma though remained in the body, because She thought “Why should this body fall on earth? This body is also His. It should be dedicated to Him”.

Along with this strong thought to dedicate the body, was the feeling that the body was not pure. It had been given in marriage to another and so not worthy of dedication to the Lord. Amma tearfully prayed everyday to purify her physical body and did Sadhana for this. At this time Swami said, “Your body will become full of Amrith. You will merge with me along with the physical body”

This is sharira nivedan (offering of physical body), the new peak of sadhana; the offering of the physical body to God. For Sharira Nivedan, Amma began Ashram life and her Sadhana intensified. Swami showered His grace for Amma’s efforts. He said, “You are the Amrith Kalash. You are going to give amrith to the world. All those who come to you will taste the Amrith of immortality “.

***Amma came to live in the ashram Mukthi Nilayam in the year 2002.*** Her Sadhana continues here. She says it will only end when her body becomes a Jyoti and merges into Swami’s body.

Amma is writing her feelings and experiences in her many books. She writes about her deep yearning for God. Swami has said, “Your feelings will enter those who read Your books. Qualities like sacrifice, devotion, gratitude and wisdom will arise in the minds of the readers.

Your words inspire selfless acts and kindle the flame of devotion to God”.

Swami has blessed Amma with many unique experiences of oneness with Him.

***Finally Swami declared, "It is the Sathya called Sathya Sai that resides in the body cover called Vasantha. You and I are one."***