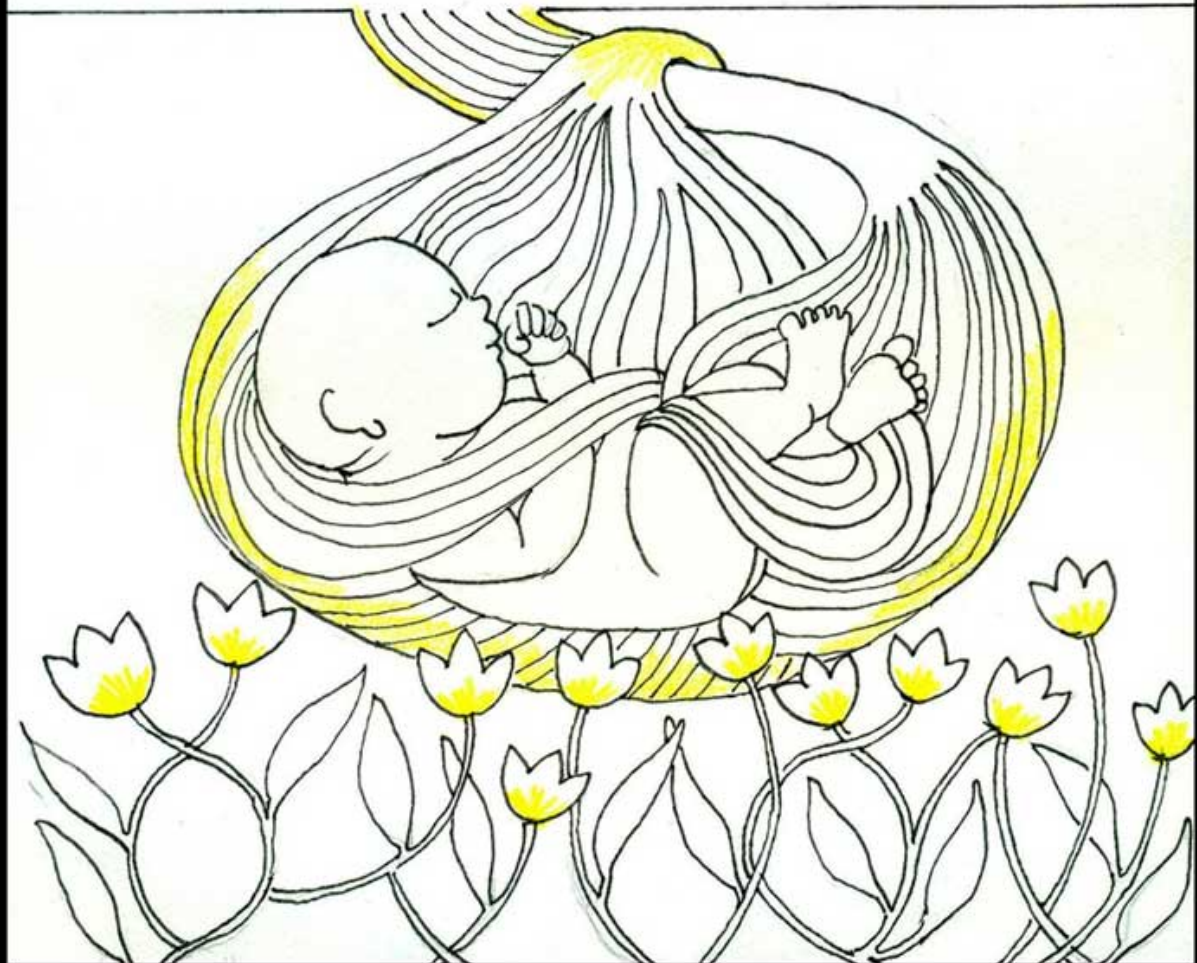


CHAPTER 1
THE BIRTH



The story of the Lord's birth begins with a significant incident occurring in a remote village called Puttaparthi. Water had to be fetched from wells as the village did not have any modern conveniences. Easwamma had gone to fetch water when a brilliant 'blue' ball of light burst through the sky and entered her womb. She fell in a dead faint but recouped after a while and returned home. Shortly, the family came to know that she had conceived.



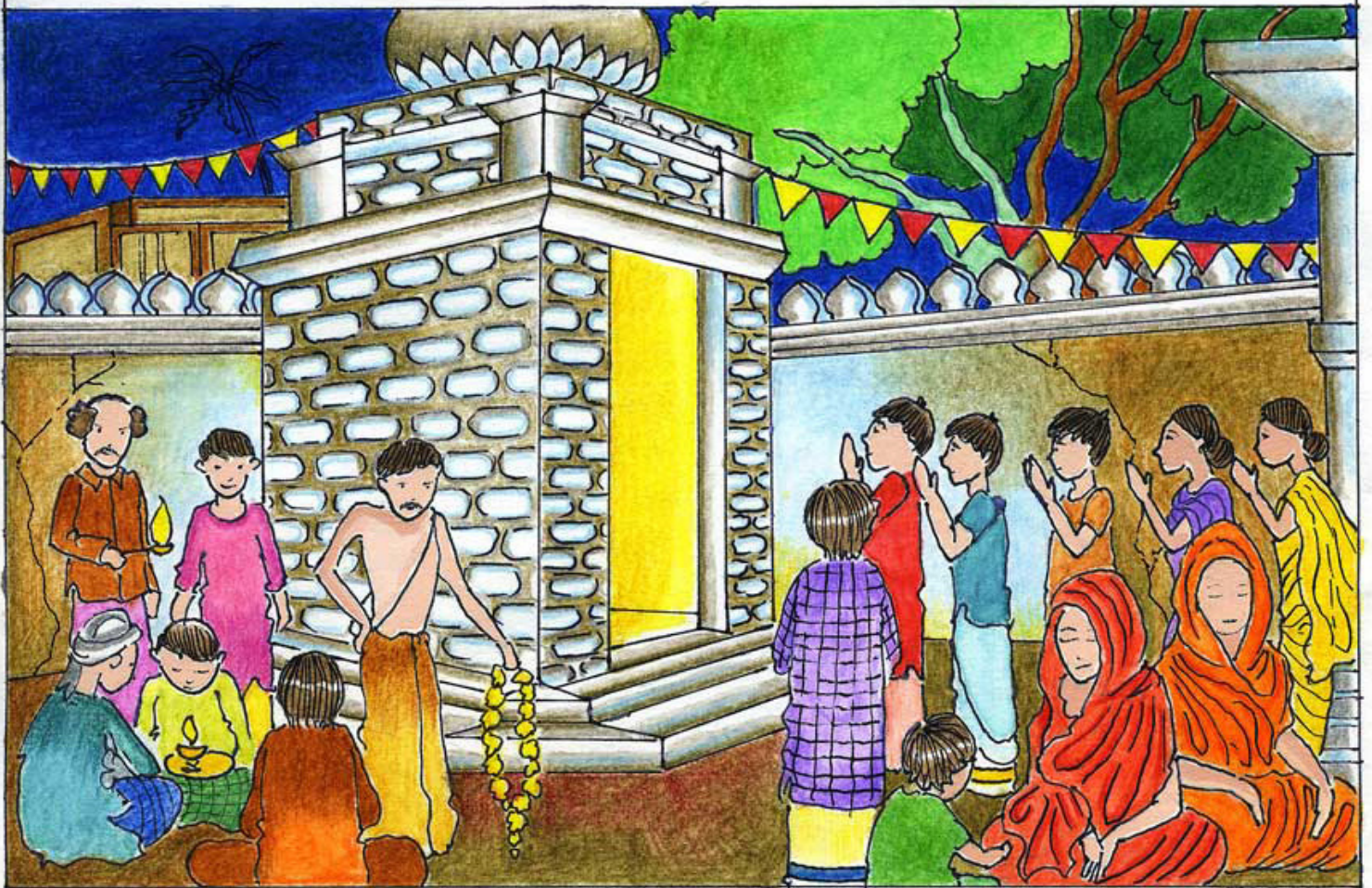
Swami's family was known for their talents in music and drama, so they had many musical instruments in the house. One day, when Easwamma was pregnant, the instruments began to play on their own.



The members of the family were surprised and even scared. The father, Pedda Venkamma Raju even went to an astrologer in the nearby town to seek advice about the mysterious happening. He was told that the child to be born would be special and divine...



These strange incidents occurred every now and then until 23rd November 1926 arrived. It was a Karthika Somavaram (Monday of the holy month of Karthika), dedicated to the worship of lord Shiva. Certain features such as the ascendant star being Arudra made it all the more auspicious and rare. The whole village of Puttaparthi was chanting the name of the lord and singing His glory in the temples. No one knew that the Lord Himself was going to be born that day.



During the pregnancy, Easwamma performed the Sathya Narayana Vrata with her mother-in-law, Lakshamma. While the pooja was being performed Easwamma began to suffer from labour pains. Lakshamma got the news that her daughter-in-law was in labour.



She continued the pooja without interrupting it as she was convinced that the child would be born only after the completion of the pooja. After completing the pooja, she rushed to Easwamma with the prasadam.



She took the prasadam and immediately delivered the baby. The year is Akshaya, the time is Brahma muhurtham and the day is karthika Somawaram.



After the ceremonial bath, the child was placed on a cloth spread on the floor. He had already started displaying unusual signs for He had not cried at all during birth. When Easwamma pinched Him gently to see He was fine, He flashed a smile.



When all were admiring the charm and beauty of the child, they realised that the child was moving up and down, as though something was moving under it. They immediately lifted the child up. They were stunned to see a cobra there, which was causing the undulation. They thanked god for saving the child from harm without realizing that 'Adi Sesa' had come to cradle the Lord.

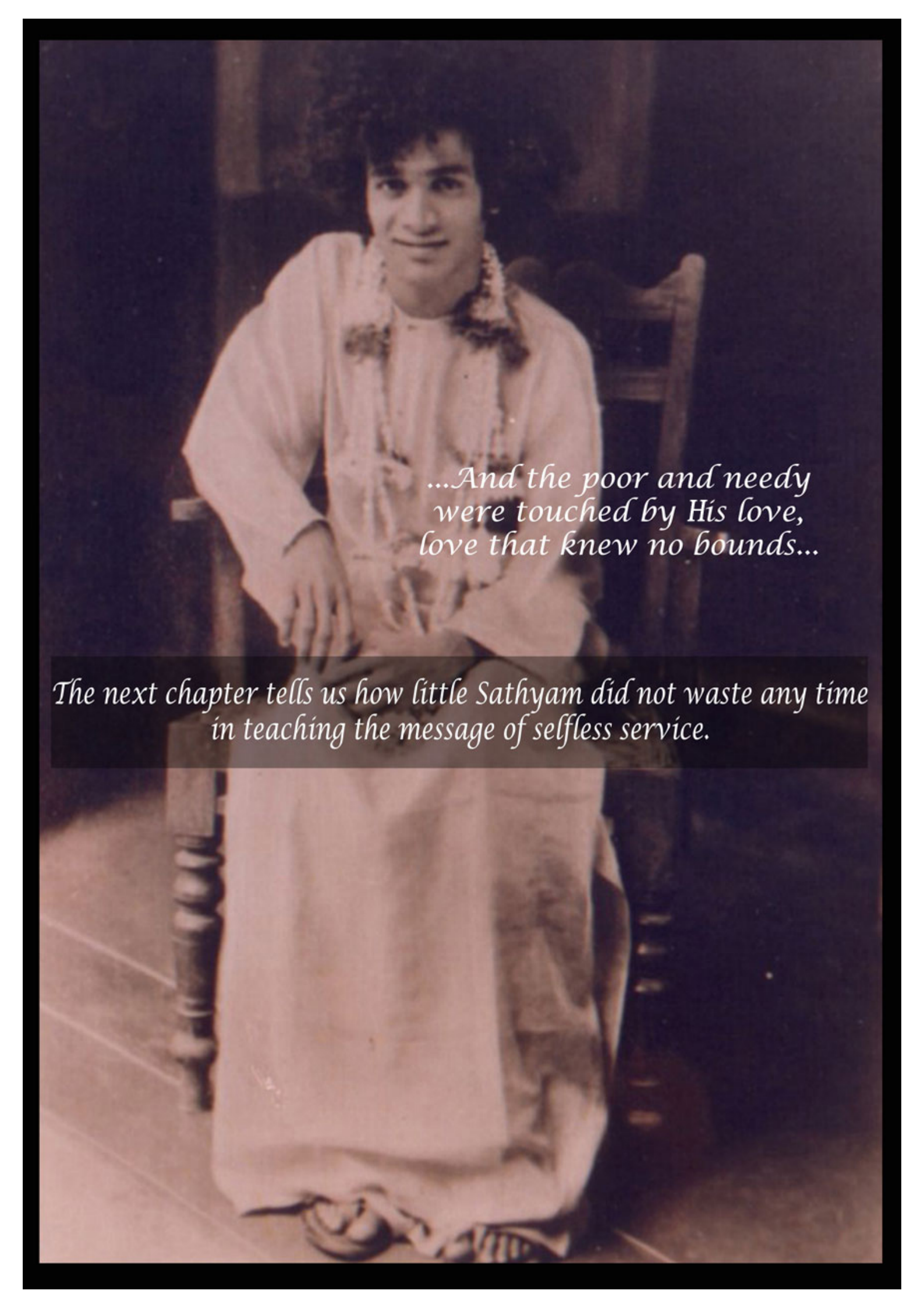


As He grew up He remained unusually calm. He was 'Mithabhashi' (one of few words) and Mithahari (moderate in the in-take of food). He never showed any signs of curiosity near food.

He never entered the houses of those who prepared Non-Vegetarian meals. This was a very strong characteristic of His since birth.



Swami's mother and His elder sister Venkamma looked after Him in the most loving manner. They sang the glory of the lord around Him at all times. And Swami enjoyed the Bhajans as much as His mother and sister enjoyed singing them. Like this the divine child grew up in a Sacred environment.



*...And the poor and needy
were touched by His love,
love that knew no bounds...*

*The next chapter tells us how little Sathyam did not waste any time
in teaching the message of selfless service.*