



HIS MESSAGE-LOVE



HIS MESSAGE – LOVE



**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
SRI SATHYA SAI
WORLD YOUTH CONFERENCE 2007**

© 2008 Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission.

First Printing: March 2008

ISBN-10: 0-9791426-2-8

ISBN-13: 978-0-9791426-2-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008901260

Printed by:

P.M. Offset Printers

30, J.C. Industrial Estate

Yelachenahalli, Kanakapura Road

Bangalore 560 062

India



Dedicated With Love and Reverence at the Divine Lotus Feet of
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Contents

Bhagavan's Divine Discourses

| | |
|---|---|
| Inaugural Discourse: Only Love for God Is True Love | 1 |
| Valedictory Discourse: Always Be Happy and Peaceful | 3 |

Inaugural Function

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Youth – Our Greatest Treasure | |
| Dr. Michael Goldstein | 8 |
| Sai Youth of the Golden Age | |
| Mr. Shitu Chudasama | 12 |

Valedictory Function

| | |
|--|----|
| Love Is the Source, the Path and the Goal | |
| Dr. Narendranath Reddy | 16 |
| Purpose of Being | |
| Dr. Michael Goldstein | 20 |

Workshop Sessions

Workshop Session 1

| | |
|--|----|
| How to Build Character That Lasts | |
| Mrs. Mallika Srinivasan | 23 |
| Living Up to His Message | |
| Sri Sanjay Sahani | 27 |
| Question & Answer Session | 30 |

Workshop Session 2

| | |
|---|----|
| Remember Swami | |
| Dr. Samuel Sandweiss | 34 |
| Realise Your True Nature with His Love and Grace | |
| Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy | 38 |
| Question & Answer Session | 43 |

Workshop Session 3

| | |
|--|----|
| The Divine Touch | |
| Mr. Leonardo Gutter | 46 |
| Role of Youth in Sai Mission | |
| Sri G.S. Srirangarajan | 50 |
| What It Means to Be a Messenger of Sai Love | |
| Mrs. Phyllis Krystal | 53 |
| How to Be a Messenger of Sai Love | |
| Mrs. Phyllis Krystal | 56 |
| Question & Answer Session | 58 |

Workshop Session 4

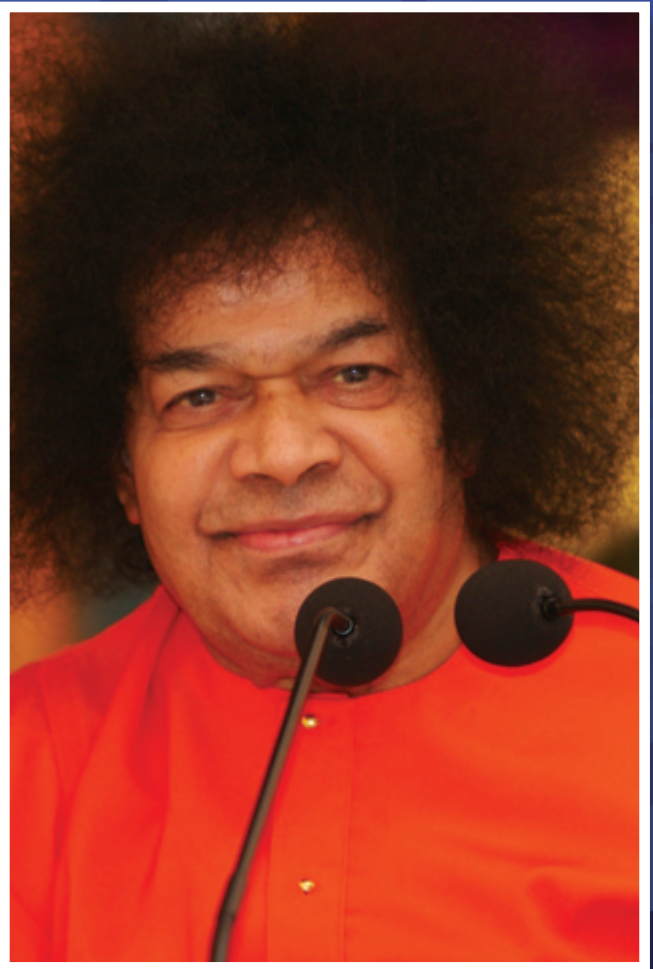
| | |
|--|----|
| Loving God and Being Happy! | |
| Dr. William Harvey | 60 |
| Sai Inspiration for Youth: Role in the Organisation | |
| Sri Anil Kumar Kamaraju | 63 |
| His Life Is His Message | |
| Dr. Geeta Reddy | 65 |
| Question & Answer Session | 68 |
| Summary of the Workshops | 70 |

Youth Speakers

| | |
|---|----|
| Head, Heart, Hands: A Practical Spiritual Path | |
| Mr. Jeremy Hoffer | 72 |
| Love God with All Thy Heart | |
| Miss Alma Berra | 75 |
| Let Us Respond to the Clarion Call | |
| Mr. Shashank Shah | 77 |
| Why Fear When I Am Here? | |
| Mrs. Rita Chudasama | 82 |
| Swami's Infinite Love | |
| Dr. Shaun Prasanth Setty | 84 |
| Purity Leads to Divinity | |
| Mrs. Chethana Raju | 87 |
| Live in His Presence Always | |
| Mr. Dimitry Udovokin | 90 |
| Think Wisely, Feel Compassionately, Act Constructively | |
| Mr. Sanjay Mahalingam | 92 |
| Surrender to God | |
| Mr. Ivan Bavcevic | 97 |

Highlights of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference

| | |
|---|-----|
| World Youth Rally | 102 |
| Peace through Basketball: Friendly Match | 104 |
| Music Programme | 105 |
| Love in Action – Karnataka Youth | |
| Mr. Vinay Kumar | 106 |
| Sadhana: A Step-by-Step Journey – A Pictorial Exhibition | |
| Mrs. Sangeeta Lekhi | 108 |





BHAGAVAN'S INAUGURAL DISCOURSE SRI SATHYA SAI WORLD YOUTH CONFERENCE

Only Love for God Is True Love

We see a large number of living beings in this world. But none of them has the greatness, wisdom and discrimination of man. That is why it is said, *Janthunaam nara janma durlabham* (of all living beings, human birth is the rarest).

Develop the Power of Discrimination

Everything in this world is constituted by five elements. These five elements are present not only in man but in animals, birds, insects and trees also. But what is the use if he does not make proper use of these five elements? Today man is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge. How vast is his knowledge? It is as vast as an ocean. Similarly, man makes efforts to develop common sense. His common sense touches the height of the Himalayan mountains. In spite of all his knowledge and common sense, man's discrimination power is zero. What is good and what is bad? What should be done and what should not be done? This power of thinking is zero in man today. That is why humanness has suffered a great decline. **The value of humanness depends only on discrimination power.** Man may possess anything and everything, but what is the use if he has no discrimination? People keep on comparing themselves on their own with others in many ways. But nobody is making efforts to know if his discrimination power is more or less. Today man is engaged in amassing money. But he does not use his knowledge of discrimination to know whether he needs that much money or not. Wherever we see today, we find people hankering after money.

The mind of man is very powerful. But man today has filled it with delusion. (Bhagavan showing His handkerchief) What is this? This is cloth. How does it take the form of cloth? It becomes cloth by weaving thread. But where does this thread come from? It comes

from cotton. So, first cotton, second thread and third cloth. In the same way, you are not one person but three: the one you think you are, the one others think you are, the one you really are. The thread and cloth come only from cotton. Similarly, man is constituted by five elements. Krishna declared in the *Bhagavad Gita: Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of My Being). It means that we all are parts of the Divine. All of you are in search of God. **But there is no need to search for God because you yourself are God.** When you have light in your own house, where is the need to go to the houses of others in search of light?

Body Attachment Is the Cause of All Delusions

You develop the feelings of I and mine due to the delusion caused by body attachment. Body is, in fact, the cause of all attachments. But, how long does this body last? It is wanted till there is life in it. When life principle goes out of it, the body is mercilessly put on fire. Then, whom does this body belong to? Therefore, you are not the body. You say, "This is my body, this is my hand, this is my leg, this is my mind, this is my *buddhi* (intellect)." Everything is my, my, my. Then, who is that 'my?' When you say 'my leg,' you are separate from your leg. Then you are you. In this way, man today is deluded by his attachment to his body and senses. But you are not the body, you are not the senses, you are not the intellect, you are you. **You should realise, "I am I." That universal 'I' principle is only one.** *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). The individual 'I' represents ego. When you cut this 'I,' it becomes the cross which is worshipped by the Christians. It means, when you give up your ego, you become your true self.

You are not an ordinary person; you are God yourself. There is no need to search for God. Wherever you see, God is there. This cloth is God, this flower is God, this table is God, everything is God. It is only due to your ignorance that you give scope to differences like 'I' and 'you'. You are not a separate entity. I am I. I am not Sathya Sai Baba. Sathya Sai Baba is the Name given to this body. I don't have any particular Name. Your body is the gift of your parents. This body is endowed with *Pancha Bhuthas* (five elements), *Panchendriyas* (five senses) and *Pancha Pranas* (five life principles). These *Pancha Pranas* are *Prana*, *Apana*, *Vyana*, *Udana* and *Samana*. They are the same in everyone. Therefore, you are not different from others. Those who are unaware of this spiritual principle become victims of ignorance and are subjected to delusion.

Everything in this world is reaction, reflection and resound. Where does the resound come from? Here I am speaking. Where do My words come from? They come from My heart. You think, you hear with your ears. But it is not so. All your senses are, in fact, like decorations to your body; they cannot function on their own without the life principle within you. There is no need to search for God. Have faith that God is within you. When you have faith in God, you develop love. From love emerges peace; peace gives rise to truth. This truth is God. Truth does not exist separately. There is no need to search for truth. Truth has no form. Truth is truth. Who has created peace? Peace is peace. It also has no form. Love is love. It is not anybody's creation.

Educare Manifests Your Innate Values

What are the human values? They are *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthi*, *Prema* and *Ahimsa* (Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence). They have no form. These formless principles are imprinted on your heart. All that we read and write corresponds to physical and worldly education. It cannot be called education in the true sense of the term. What is true is Educare. Educare means to bring out our latent values. They are immanent in our heart, but we cannot see them. They have to be manifested through self-enquiry. **True sadhana lies in recognising and manifesting peace, truth and sacrifice that are present in our heart.** You undertake various spiritual practices like meditation and *japa*. What do you understand by *japa*? You think *japa* means counting the beads of a rosary. But it is not so. All these spiritual practices are merely our imagination. They are all artificial, not real. Science teaches many things. It gives only that knowledge which we acquire through our senses. There can be no science without senses. We are leading artificial and mechanical life by acquiring this knowledge. It is not true life.

True Love Originates from God

First and foremost, you must have faith. You can recognise your true form only when you have faith. From faith comes peace. Truth emerges from peace. This truth is God. God does not have any separate form. God manifests from the truth within you. You undertake many spiritual practices. In spite of all practices, you are unable to experience truth. Do not waste your time in unnecessary pursuits. *Time waste is life waste*. First of all, you should understand that truth is your goal. You will have no obstacles when truth is on your side. Your senses and mind are very strong when you are young. Your intellect is also very sharp. Having been endowed with such great power, why should you feel weak and helpless?

Love is not your individual property. It is universal and belongs to all. Love is in everyone. Love is there in you, Me and everyone. We attribute various names to this love and try to experience it. You should not think otherwise. Today even school children develop a tendency for artificial love. But this is not correct. This artificial love makes man weak. This weakness can cause many diseases. Do not have such love which gives rise to diseases.

The principle of love is the principle of Divinity, nothing else. Accept that love which comes from God. Do not accept that love which comes from others. **Your love for God is true love.** Whomsoever you love other than that, it cannot be called true love. Man develops attachment to many people, but he is unable to experience true love. True love originates only from God. God is the embodiment of Love. *Love is God. Live in Love.* You should experience only Divine Love, not worldly love. I will explain to you this principle of love in detail later. We have already exceeded the time limit. Therefore, I don't want to cause inconvenience to you.

It is very easy to attain God. If you ask which is the easiest thing to attain in this world, it is only God. You can attain God in no time without undergoing any strain. It is very easy to experience love. **Love is very powerful.** There is nothing in this world which can surpass it. When you look at it, the word love appears to be very small. But love is as deep as an ocean and as high as a mountain. It is inexhaustible and infinite. **You should realise this principle of love.** Nobody can describe the principle of love because of man's limitations of circumstances and experiences.

.....
From Bhagavan's Inaugural Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 26th July 2007 on the occasion of Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference.



BHAGAVAN'S VALEDICTORY DISCOURSE SRI SATHYA SAI WORLD YOUTH CONFERENCE

Always Be Happy and Peaceful

Every living being in this world, be it an animal, bird or even a small insect, has emerged from truth. Those who realise this truth are real *Yogis*. There can be no activity in this world without truth. And that *Sathyam* (truth) is embodied in only one person, that is in this Sathyam (Swami) (Here Bhagavan materialised a *Hiranyagarbha Linga* – showing it to the entire congregation). Look at this pure and unsullied principle. Who else can manifest such pure consciousness?

Always Contemplate on Truth

Truth is present everywhere. It can manifest in you also when you think of it and contemplate on it. Therefore, you should always contemplate on truth. Why has this body been named Sathya Sai? It has assumed this Name because *Sathya* (truth) has emerged from it. *Sathyam* manifests in the heart of one who keeps contemplating on truth. Therefore, never forget truth. *Dharma* is the reaction, reflection and resound of *Sathya*. *Sathyannasthi Paro Dharma* (there is no *Dharma* greater than adherence to truth). Today we impart many types of worldly knowledge to students. But this is not true education. **True education is related to the truth that emerges from the heart.** Truth has no name and form. What can be the form of truth? What is the form of *Dharma*? What is the form of *Shanthi*? *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthi*, *Prema* and *Ahimsa* have no form. These values which are enshrined in the heart of man have to be manifested. The powers that are not present in man are not to be found in any living being or even in a celestial being. Hence, consider man as God. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God is in the form of a human being). You consider man as a mere human being. That is why you commit so many mistakes. You are not a human being; you are God. Think that

you are God and God you become. ***Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavathi* (as are the feelings, so is the result)**. When you think of something bad, you will have only bad thoughts.

Day before yesterday, I told you that everyone in this world has love. But love is of many kinds. A student loves a student; a woman loves a woman. God is present in both. Both are the embodiments of God. Divinity that is enshrined in each body is one only. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). We should love everybody since God is present in all. *Love All, Serve All*. God is present everywhere; there is no place where God is not present. He is present in the sky and in water, in sound and light. Therefore, everything in this universe is suffused with Divinity. Forgetting this Omnipresent Divinity, we worship the idols in temples. There is no mistake in worshipping the idols. But one must realise that the same God that is present in these idols is also present in every human being. I do not say that it is wrong to worship idols, but the fact is that you yourself are God. **Therefore, first consider yourself as God and then recognise the same God in everyone.** Then there will be no mistake. In fact, your body itself is a temple which is invested with Divine energy. One should exercise discrimination while making use of this energy. We should enquire whether this energy is God or this body is God. In fact, this body is also Divine since it is suffused with Divine energy.

Never Forget God

God is present in every particle, every atom of the universe. There is no place where God is not present. Hence, do not forget God. And do not forget yourself. If you forget yourself, it amounts to forgetting God. It is for this reason that you are advised, ***Always Be***

Careful. This is the A B C of life. **Be careful never to forget God.** Every moment of your life you should enquire, “Am I forgetting God?” Always remind yourself, “I am I.” You should be firmly established in this truth. If you do so, evil thoughts against others will have no scope to enter you. Only ignoramuses and those lacking in knowledge will think otherwise. God is present in all human beings. The heads of all human beings are, in fact, God’s heads. That is why God is called *Virataswarupa* (Cosmic Being). The creation is the manifestation of His Cosmic Form. Individual forms appear to be different from each other, but the same Divinity is present in all forms. Krishna said, *Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhutha Sanathana* (the eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of My Being). So, I alone am present in each one of you. **I am not different from you; you are not different from Me. I am you; you are I.** Therefore, do not entertain any kind of differences. The only thing that you have to do is to strengthen your love. When the fruit of love becomes fully ripe in your heart, you should share its juice with one and all. Therefore, first and foremost bring the love in your heart to fruition. When your heart is saturated with love, then all others will also be suffused with love. We should not hate or hurt anybody. Today wherever we see, there is hatred and hatred only. We do have differences of opinion between one another, but from the spiritual viewpoint all are one. In fact, all the people in the world are merely zeros; only God is the hero. God is like the digit 1, because of which all zeros get value. Any number of zeros added to 1 will get value. When you take out 1, then all are reduced to zeros only. **Therefore, give prime importance to God in your life.**

Purify Your Mind by Namasmarana

There is one cause of all your sorrows as well as your joy and happiness. That is your mind. Many people have an adverse view of the mind; they call it monkey mind. But it is not monkey mind; it is mankind. It is a source of kindness and joy. If only we keep our mind in proper state, nothing bad can happen to us. Consider the mind Divine. Then you will always be happy.

Whether you call *Atma* or mind or consciousness, all are one. We ascribe different names to the same principle just for the sake of identification, not to describe its true nature. For example, this body has been given the Name Sathya. But this Name relates to the body and not to Me. I am not the body; I am not the mind; I am not the intellect, I am not the *Chittha* (memory and will power), I am not imagination. Bhagavan is Bhagavan. Develop this firm faith. Changes occur in the minds of some people due to the effect of their food and habits as well as due to the effect of their company. **Tell me your company, I shall tell you what**

you are. Whatever is the type of your company, you will develop the same kind of thinking. Therefore, join only good company.

*Satsangatwe Nissangatwam,
Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam,
Nirmohatwe Nischalatatwam,
Nischalatatwe Jivanmukti.*

(Sanskrit Sloka)

(Good company leads to detachment; detachment makes one free from delusion; freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind; steadiness of mind confers liberation.)

Liberation can be attained by anyone. But, when? When your faith in the truth, “I am the *Atma*” becomes firm, you will attain liberation in a moment. “Swami is in me; I am in Swami,” think like that. But thinking about this truth with a wavering mind is of no use. Think with stable mind, “I am Swami, I am God, I am God.” When your conviction becomes firm, you will attain the Divine who is *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Nikethanam, Nithya, Shuddha, Buddha, Muktha, Nirmala Swarupinam* (God is attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). However, if the filth of impurity enters your mind, everything will become bad. When your mind gets polluted, it will require proper treatment. What is that? That is the Name of God. Similarly, our body is also afflicted with diseases by drinking polluted water and eating improper food. It is necessary to protect the body. Why has God given you this body? It has been given to you to realise yourself. But you forget this real purpose and concentrate your mind merely on the body. After all, what is there in the body? Body is impermanent and short-lived like a water bubble. If you understand this, your life will be blessed.

Do not be carried away by what others say. Purity of mind results in the fruition of knowledge. When your mind becomes pure, you will attain true knowledge. Purity of mind is therefore very necessary. **Keep your mind always in a state of purity.** Whenever evil thoughts enter your mind, remind yourself, “This is not good; this is not mine.” **Drive away those evil thoughts,** telling yourself, “This is not my property. My property is good thoughts, good ideas, love, love, love!” *Love is God. Live in Love.* When you are firmly established in this principle, everything will turn out to be good for you.

Make Your Mind Steady for Eleven Seconds

You are afflicted by many delusions. Your mind is no doubt pure and there are only pure thoughts in it. But from time to time, some pollutants enter your mind. See to it that they do not enter it. That is the

sadhana you have to undertake. What is *sadhana*? Is sitting in meditation and doing *japa* (recitation of God's Name) *sadhana*? No, this is not *sadhana*. What is meditation and what is its meaning? Is sitting in a posture and reciting any Name of God meditation? No, no. What you have to do is to contemplate on the sacred feelings of your heart. You should contemplate on your truth. If you really wish to know the essence of *sadhana*, it can be explained in a simple way. Just make your mind steady for eleven seconds. **Even this much practice will surely lead you to self-realisation!** If your mind keeps oscillating like the pendulum of a clock, it cannot be called meditation. It is enough if you can make your mind steady for eleven seconds. But you are not able to do even that much. Your mind travels to eleven *Lokas* (worlds) in eleven seconds. Much can be achieved even in this short period of eleven seconds. There is no need for you to expose yourself to too much strain in the name of *sadhana*.

You strain your body too much and also waste your time. *Time waste is life waste*. Not only time, you waste money also. Money waste is evil. **Therefore, do not waste money and time. Time is God, God is time. Therefore, whatever time you get, contemplate on Swami. Then you will surely have My Darshan.** Not only *Darshan*, you will get the opportunity of *sambhashan* (conversation) also. Many letters come to Me from devotees, stating, "Yesterday, Swami came and talked to me." You should also develop such unflinching faith in Swami and do *sadhana* like them. Then you will surely attain success. All those who come here call themselves devotees. They do have some devotion, but they are not aware of the attributes of devotion. They should first of all understand the true meaning of devotion. First and foremost, one should develop faith.

*Where there is faith, there is love;
Where there is love, there is truth;
Where there is truth, there is God.*

Truth is God. Consider truth as nothing but God. There is no need for you to make any special efforts to know truth. Contemplation on truth for eleven seconds is enough. Fix your mind on truth just for eleven seconds and you will have *Darshan* of the Lord. You are unnecessarily straining your body hard by sitting for hours, and thereby suffering from pain in the feet, legs and back. Do not give room to such joint pains. Many doctors may diagnose these as rheumatic pains. But these are not rheumatic pains at all; these are the pains caused by your misguided *sadhana*. You will have no pains whatsoever if you stick to the time schedule of eleven seconds.

Develop Good Food Habits

Moreover, you should have timely food in a regulated manner. There are some subtle considerations with regard to food. Do not eat meat or fish. But foreigners are too much addicted to non-vegetarian food. Diseases like cancer are caused by eating non-vegetarian food. Therefore, give up eating non-vegetarian food completely. Not only that, people of foreign countries like cheese very much. The more you eat cheese, the more you become weak. Do not drink too much milk also. Too much milk is also harmful. Observe certain limits with regard to drinking milk. Dilute milk by adding an equal quantity of water in it. The same rule should be observed with regard to curd. It should not be very thick; it should be made thin by mixing water in it. In this way, you should control your food habits. Prayer to God before eating food is also very necessary. If you observe this discipline regarding your food, you will surely have *Darshan* of the Lord instantly. There is no need for prolonged *sadhana* for months and years.

You can always remain in a state of bliss. God is the embodiment of bliss only. *Nithyanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetham, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nithyam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutham, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam* (God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the *Mahavakya Tatthwamasi*, one without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three attributes of *Sathwa, Rajas* and *Tamas*).

People say, "I want bliss." Where does this bliss come from? Is it possible to purchase it from a shop in the market? Or, is it something that you can eat in a hotel? No. **Bliss comes from within.** In fact, you yourself are the embodiment of bliss. Man is full of bliss at the time of his birth. Later on, when he develops attachment to worldly desires, he suffers and starts crying. Hence, reduce your attachment to the world. *Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure.* Therefore, give up all unnecessary attachments. When you develop attachments you are drowned in worries and you suffer from physical weakness also. Worries are bad for your health. **Hurry, worry and curry weaken the heart of man.** Therefore, give up hurry, worry and curry. When you are faced with difficulties, you should think: "They will go as they have come. I have nothing to do with them." Whatever has come is bound to go some time or the other. Same is the case with your body also. Therefore, you should have attachment to the body only to the extent necessary. You should observe certain limits, otherwise this

undue attachment will affect your body adversely. You should always be cautious.

Love Is the Most Powerful Medicine

Those who are doing *sadhana* and aspire to see God and converse with Him, they should act upon My advice. Then they will surely see God and converse with Him. *Bhakti* is not limited to the performance of *puja*, *vratha* and *japa* (worship, rituals and recitation). **True devotion is unwavering and unflinching love for God.** Develop such love for God. There is nothing greater than this. You may give up your body but you should never give up this love. Love is eternal, imperishable and infinite. Preserve love carefully. Then you will surely attain Divinity.

Because of man's attachment with the world, he is developing a demoniac nature. Lust and anger are man's worst enemies. **You should always be full of love with a smile on your face.** When you are cheerful, love will come to you on its own. But some people always put on a 'castor-oil' (morose) face. Always have a smiling face. God always has a smiling face. He does not have any trace of worry or misery even for a moment.

I always keep smiling. I have no suffering at all. I was hurt because of the mistake committed by a boy. My hip bone developed four cracks. Doctors came and wanted to put so many bandages. I said 'no' to them. I came walking and gave *Darshan* to the devotees from the balcony. Many doctors came and examined Me. Dr. Pillay and his son also came from Singapore. Many specialists also came from America and various other places. They said, "Swami! Just give us five minutes." I told them, "For spiritual matters, I can give you five hours, but not even five minutes for this body." When boys hold My hand, I always tell them not to hold. Right from that day, I never had even a trace of pain

and suffering. I have no nervous weakness. Whatever was My weight earlier, it is the same today. Now also My weight is 110 pounds. Earlier also it was the same. It has not increased or decreased even by half a pound. I am always healthy. There is no need for you to worry about My health. I always remain hale and hearty. When you look at Me, it may appear to you that Swami has some pain. No pain! Your love alone is the cure for My pain. I am filled with bliss on seeing you all. If ever I have pain, it will go only because of your love and not because of doctors. So many of you have come from various parts of the world. What is the meaning of this? The very thought of it that so many of you love Me, fills Me with immense bliss. Be happy not only here, but wherever you are. I am always happy. I am very happy to see all of you. This is your great good fortune. All those who have come here are full of love and devotion. This fills Me with great enthusiasm. I feel like walking and giving *Darshan* to you. There is no cure greater than love. Your love is My cure. This is the most powerful medicine. Similarly, My Love is the most powerful medicine for you. May you always be happy and peaceful! Live happily and unitedly like the members of the same family. Not merely that, do not allow small problems to overpower you. Do not give room to any worries. Do not become anxious if your child or wife suffers from illness. Have faith that everything will become all right. **Go back to your places and lead a happy and peaceful life.** (Bhagavan showing the *Linga* materialised by Him earlier) Have all of you seen it? It is quite heavy. A *Linga* bigger than this will emerge from My body on *Sivarathri* day.

.....
From Bhagavan's Valedictory Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 28th July 2007 on the occasion of Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference.





Inaugural Function





Youth – Our Greatest Treasure

Dr. Michael Goldstein

Distinguished guests, brothers and sisters, delegates to the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference from the three campuses of the Sri Sathya Sai University – Prasanthi Nilayam, Anantapur and Brindavan, Sai Youth from the State of Karnataka, India, and Sai Youth from 86 countries representing all of the inhabited continents of the world.

Welcome to the Inaugural Function of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference: Ideal Sai Youth – Messengers of Sai Love. We welcome you all with love.

Dearest young people, you are our greatest treasure. Swami has said that you are the leaders of tomorrow. If you would be the leaders of tomorrow, then I exhort you to be the wholehearted, committed, active participants of today.

Today, we inaugurate the Conference: Ideal Sai Youth – Messengers of Sai Love.

Ideal Sai Youth, Messengers of Sai Love,
How can you be Ideal?

Ideal is perfection. Only God is Ideal.

You must become Divine!!!

In past ages, sometimes it was necessary for spiritual aspirants to go through an ordeal in order to become Ideal. But now the human Ideal is immanent in each and every one of us, ready to emerge. In fact, the emergence of the Ideal is called Educare. When the mind and the body are subservient to the spiritual heart, we realise our Divine heritage. Then the human values of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthi*, *Prema*, *Ahimsa* – Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love, and Non-violence blossom in our being and are manifested in the world.

When mind and body are subservient to our spiritual hearts, our egos and desires, our thoughts and emotions are under control.

In this day and age, we do not have to engage in years of austerities, *thapas*, for the emergence of the human ideal. We have merely to acknowledge the Divinity who sits before us and within us. Take Him seriously, imbibe His Love, study His Message, emulate His examples, and follow His teachings.

Ideal Sai Youth, Messengers of Sai Love, how can you become Messengers of His Love? We do not send messages of Sai Love by computer mail or posted letter. We become Messengers of Sai Love by our examples in the world. **We are Messengers of Sai Love when we become exemplars of Swami’s fundamental commandment: Love All, Serve All!**

Actually all of us, not only the youth, but all of us are Messengers of Sai Love. We are the *Gopis* of this day and age. We scurry about to have a glimpse of our Beloved Sai Krishna and we are filled with bliss.

Ideal Sai Youth, Messengers of Sai Love, how can you be Ideal Sai Youth? You are Sai Youth. We are all Sai. Sai is God and we are all inherently Divine.

This conference is convened so that we might learn to play our roles properly on the stage of humanity. It is not only the youth that will benefit from deeply exploring the teachings of Bhagavan Baba. We will all enjoy the spiritual legacy of this momentous event.

What is the proper role for us on the stage of humanity? Swami has said, “In the midst of the world replete with fear, distrust and mutual recrimination, you have to prove yourself to be the Messengers of the Divine and embodiments of Love, Peace and Truth. Declare your reality as Divine to the world at large and make them realise the Divinity in everyone.”

The Divine Presence of Swami deems this conference a fortuitous event in our lives. His Divine Presence enables us to make a quantum leap forward on the spiritual path which we have chosen. It is an innovative and inspiring conference.

Swami has provided us with ultimate access! Access to human excellence personified by the group of distinguished speakers who will enlighten you. Access to Divine perfection personified by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself, the *Kali Yuga Avatar*, God on earth.

In the Divine Presence, all things are uplifted toward the realisation of their full essence and excellence. All is possible. Our Lord is here with us!

We are in a heart-to-heart interaction. The Greeks had Socrates. He was the centre of a temple of deep philosophic truth. **We have the embodiment of Divinity in the form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He is the centre of our temple of Spiritual Truth and Divine Love.**

Speakers

The senior speakers that have assembled for this conference to address the youth have had the good fortune to be in the physical proximity of our Lord Bhagavan Baba for decades. Collectively, they represent literally centuries of time in the illuminating, inspiring, and loving Presence of our Beloved Swami.

Any one of these illustrious senior speakers could give a learned talk that would be extremely informative and the information imparted would not be ordinary information. It would be transformational information. Such is the nature of their experience and performance over the years. They will quell your doubts and fill you with hope and energy to persevere on your spiritual journey.

Therefore, there will be no didactic display of rhetoric from the speakers. Instead, there will be a sharing and loving orientation offered by those who have been grounded in Swami's instruction and love and who have been tried and found to be true.

In this process of interactivity with the illuminating speakers, the benefits will accrue to the exuberant youth of the Sri Sathya Sai Universities and Organisations all over the world.

Themes

Such is the nature of the Divine teachings that any aspect, if expounded upon deeply from the heart and understood and experienced in the heart, can reveal the total wisdom of Divine truth.

Thus, the spiritual topics of this conference are really a spiritual continuum.

A continuum because any one of the primary themes can result in total understanding. The continuum, our agenda, might simply be described as everything that really matters here and now.

What really matters? God matters. How we find Him within ourselves matters. How you use the attributes and advantages of youth to apply yourselves to spiritual pursuits matter. How to contribute to and derive spiritual benefit from the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation matters. The continuum of this conference is everything that really matters here and now.

We begin with the Omnipresence of the Lord, who sits before us, our Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We proceed to the universal goal of all men and women, spiritual transformation – to realise Him within ourselves. Then we consider the attributes of youth, the strengths and the weaknesses in the context

of spirituality, that may help or could hinder you in your spiritual journey. Finally, we consider the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, to which you belong and which is here as a spiritual resource and a recourse for all people everywhere. The continuum is actually everything that really matters in life: God, God realisation, and how to spend the time of our lives.

The First Theme:

The Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba during Our Lifetime

The Lord God, our Beloved Swami, is here. Out of the millions of people on earth He has beckoned to us through our conscience to come and behold Him.

He advises us to recognise and realise who and what we truly are and to acknowledge that salvation, that is, our spiritual transformation is at hand.

We emanate from Him, we merge into Him, yet for this brief incredible time, we are apart from Him in this world and we have the opportunity to behold Him and even to contribute to His Glory among the people of our respective societies. Our purpose is to recognise that we are, in fact, one with Him and to act accordingly.

Bhagavan Baba, our Beloved Swami, the Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent Lord of the Universe and beyond is with us and within us. We are His creation in this world. We are part and parcel of Him. To know this, to experience this truth, and to love Him, is to fulfill our lives.

What is Love for God? Love for God is Love for Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and all of the Divine Incarnations. It is selfless love for your brothers and sisters. It is love for that which your heart tells you is right and good. It is love for the precious wise thoughts and sweet, selfless feelings that emanate from your spiritual heart. It is love for the truth. All of these things are love for God.

The Second Theme:

Spiritual Transformation

As a result of our acknowledgement of Divine Presence we realise that the goal of our lives is spiritual transformation.

We experience bliss when we have shed the encumbrance of these confining human identities that are the results of our genetic heritage and our learning experiences in the world. These identities that we need to function in a worldly manner, confine us and confound us in a spiritual manner.

In order to have an inner view of the Divinity who resides in our hearts, we must conduct an interview with the mind that we possess or that possesses us. This is worthwhile introspection.

Thousands of years ago it was recorded in the scriptures of the Old Testament that the Lord God

spoke to man. He said, “I am that I am.” Now, the Lord has again proclaimed His identity. Our Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said, “I am I.” We begin to understand the meaning of “I” as it applies to Swami. He is the Infinite, Universal “I.”

Most if not all of us, are the small, individual “I” associated with a human identity. **We are here to traverse the distance between individual “I” of human identity to infinite “I” of Divine Consciousness.** From individual “I” for ego and desires to infinite “I” for selfless love. This is spiritual transformation.

In practical terms how can we apply ourselves toward the achievement of spiritual transformation? We should follow the dictates of our conscience. We should engage in practices that ensure discipline of mind and body so that they become the servants of our spiritual heart, which is Divinity within us. This is spiritual transformation.

Divinity is in the world as our Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He is in our hearts. We should love Him, follow His instruction and guidance, and He will enable us to see all of Him. We will see Him in the world and we will see Him in our own hearts. This is spiritual transformation.

While it is very, very helpful spiritually to be in the Divine Presence of our Beloved Swami, it is He who will deign to bestow the prize of self-realisation with His Grace. It is He who will determine the time and the place. It might be after decades, even lifetimes of service, or, it might be suddenly in an instant. The time and manner in which the epiphany is conferred is determined by Him. This is spiritual transformation.

The Next Themes:

Attributes of Youth and the Participation of Youth in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation

Regarding the attributes of youth, acknowledge your time in life, your needs, and your capacities. Share your positive resources with your brothers and sisters. Uplift the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation with your presence and participation.

You sweet delegates are young. Your minds are keen. They have not been torn asunder by the worldly idiosyncrasies of this day and age. However, you must consider that those of us who have been in the world longer than you may have learned something from our experience that will be helpful to you. Experience in the world, if we so choose and dedicate ourselves thereto, is a veritable classroom of spirituality provided by the Lord for our transformation. Listen and learn. Evaluate and emulate. Listen to what the elders say and learn from their knowledge and experience. Evaluate what the elders say and do and emulate that which is noble and spiritually uplifting.

We want you to contribute to and derive from the spiritual wealth of the organisation that bears the Divine Name, the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation.

We are asking all of you young adults to help us with the programmes of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation so that they are conducive to your spiritual growth. The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, inspired by Divine Will, is a place where we mature and realise that self-realisation is our true goal, the only source of lasting happiness, and what we really want. It is a place where we learn helpful spiritual practices and enjoy the company of like-minded, noble-minded people who also have embarked on the ultimate quest in our lives.

The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is a spiritual organisation bearing His Divine Name. **It behooves us to first remove our doubts, and then to uplift humanity by our own selfless, loving examples within our respective societies.**

The occasion of this conference is a time to contemplate these things in His Divine Presence by listening to your elders, asking questions, and, most importantly, communing with Bhagavan Baba within your own hearts.

Youth is a very important time of life. Time itself is very important. Swami has said, “Time is the Body of God.” In light of Swami’s pronouncement we should be careful and judicious in deciding how to use the precious time of our lives.

Time is forever, it goes on. New replaces old and it becomes old and it is replaced by new. Thus, we all become aged and the young emerge and take charge, and they become aged, and are replaced by the new young and so on. Bhagavan Baba creates, oversees, and perpetuates this cycle of time. It pleases Him to do so.

Spirituality is becoming aware of your role in time, observing your role as does the Creator, who is beyond old and young, beyond the cycle of time.

In this conference, we are celebrating and exploring an aspect of this perpetual process of past, present, and future. That aspect is youth, the vitality, exuberance, resilience, and wonder of youth.

In this cycle of time there is a procession of life. In this procession of all living things, flowers and trees, ants and elephants, all living things, the young come and the old go. With the procession of humanity also the young come and the old go. With all living things, there is a natural and graceful flow of life and the actions, appearances, and responsibilities that are associated with the different stages of life.

Civilisation is the perennial procession of the men and women of humanity. At the present time, mankind is mostly a population of individual “I’s”, Ego Eyes, not infinite “I’s”, Divine Eyes. This gives origin to the grief and calamities associated with human irresponsibility that we are experiencing now in the world. Whereas,



mankind as a population of infinite “I’s”, Divine Eyes, would be Heaven on Earth.

With mankind, sometimes there is a problem in this procession of life. The young come and the old go. But often the young are not ready and the old are not willing.

The Lord has given us the capacity to recognise our Divine origin, to live as Divinity itself, to uplift the quality of life for all men, women, and other life by virtue of Divine Love. The purpose of this conference and our spiritual endeavours is to facilitate and dignify the procession of humanity in its movement Godward. Nevertheless, we find that sometimes the young are not ready and the old are not willing.

The young are not ready because they are attracted and preoccupied with worldly glitter, which, in the end turns out to be litter. It is said, “All that glitters is not gold.” The youth want to obtain. The old are not ready because they are attached to their accumulations. Accumulations of wealth, of material possessions, of status and positions in society and the institutions of society. The old want to maintain and retain.

Swami has said, “Ready is a state of inner being.” Being able to accomplish a task is not the meaning of being ready. Being ready means spiritually prepared, not physically prepared. The old are not willing. Willing is a function of will. Will is a function of ego. Not willing implies attachments to the outside world to the neglect and even denial of the inner spiritual world.

The purpose of this conference is to contribute to the dignity of the procession of humanity toward its Divine destination characterised by young who are ready and old who are willing.

Let those who have responsibility recognise that the greatest, and most difficult duty is to effectively pass on the responsibility of your office to those who

are more capable. It takes humility and selflessness. You have to be dedicated to God and not to your own aggrandisement. Let us all have that Grace.

And, let the youth put aside their impetuous notions and presumptuous misconceptions. Let them rise up to the sobering responsibility of selfless service and leadership.

In the organisation we need the infusion of your vigour and your energy. We look forward to your assumption of leadership as you grow and learn.

We are confident that you will carry forward our successes and

preclude replication of our failures. **The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation must reflect love, express love, elicit love.**

In these last few days, reflected in the faces of all of you young adults assembled here, I have seen such joy and love. It is clear to me that you are ready in the deepest spiritual sense beyond any shadow of a doubt. As a member of the old contingent in the procession of humanity, I pray to Bhagavan Baba that He will enable me to demonstrate graceful willingness comparable to your superb readiness.

We pray that in this conference Swami will enable us to do what we must, understand what we must, experience what we must, and, ultimately, become what we must.

May all of us who have assembled here rejoice and celebrate our good fortune to recognise Divinity who resides on earth during our interlude in the great cycle of time.

In conclusion, I pray to Swami, let us all become good men and women in the world. Let us all become illumined men and women within ourselves.

Jai Sai Ram.

.....
Dr. Michael Goldstein received his doctorate in medicine from George Washington University Medical School, USA. A practising physician for over 35 years, he has been serving in various capacities in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation for more than 30 years. He is currently Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, which is the governing body for the Sathya Sai International Organisation. He is also Chairman of the Prasanthi Council and is responsible for the administration of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations in all countries outside of India.



Sai Youth of the Golden Age

Mr. Shitu Chudasama

My most loving *Pranams* at the Lotus Feet of our Beloved Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Beloved Swami, revered elders, Sai Youth of the world! Jai Sai Ram!

There are millions of youth in the world today, but you, our Sai Youth, are the fortunate few who have been given this golden opportunity of attending this Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference in the Presence of Divinity. We should make the best use of this wonderful opportunity and share this joy with everyone.

Know Thyself

Today, youth are making great efforts to know all that is happening in the world through the medium of computers, television and newspapers, but they are not making any effort to ask the fundamental questions of human life: “Who am I?” “Where have I come from?” and “Where am I going?” **Rather than investigating the world, we must make efforts to understand our own true nature.** By such diligent, self-inquiry, we will transcend the mundane world and ascend to the heights of Divinity.

Look to Bhagavan’s Example to Be an Ideal Sai Youth

Throughout the ages we have examples of ideal youth. Young Markendeya epitomised discipline and devotion when he was able to outwit Lord Yama, the God of Death. Then we have Shravan Kumar, who was the personification of duty towards one’s parents. There is a lot we can learn from young Prahlada, the very embodiment of *namasmarana*, who went through trials and tribulations at the hands of his evil father Hiranyakashipu. Dhruva’s ideal of duty and determination is also worthy of study.

However, the life of our very own Bhagavan is worthy of emulation by one and all. The adolescent years of Swami or “Sathya,” as He was lovingly known, are the most inspiring and alluring for all Sai Youth. How Swami lovingly cared for His parents, how He walked for miles everyday to fetch water for His family and how He was the very embodiment of exemplary

character and leadership are worthy of our attention. Though young in age, Sathya was verily the ocean of compassion; no one ever went hungry, nor was anyone unhappy when He was there to grant them their heart’s desire. Young Sathya’s life was a lesson in modesty and humility. He was an ideal role model for His peers, engaging them in service activities throughout the village, helping to alleviate their suffering and turning their attention Godward. **Let us all draw inspiration from Bhagavan’s life as a youth, and resolve to follow His Divine example.**

Sri Sathya Sai Organisation: A Vehicle for Transformation

Participation in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation offers us excellent opportunities to transform ourselves into Ideal Sai Youth. As Swami says: “The youth wing can be compared to the energy body of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation.” Our Sai Youth must make efforts to bring their energy, enthusiasm and imagination to the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in their respective countries. By doing so, we further our own spiritual transformation.

But Sai Youth must also respect the elders of our organisation. The elders are excellent examples of selfless love, profound wisdom and extensive spiritual knowledge from whom the youth can benefit. They deserve our respect, and we should make every effort to win their trust and confidence. By embracing such a feeling, our own transformation will be accelerated, and the future of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation will be secured.

All of us must remember that Swami pays little attention to one’s age. Once, Swami pointed to an elderly man and said, “He is a youth.” What does this mean in the organisation where we have a defined age limit for youth? When Swami speaks of youth, He is really referring to certain qualities. These qualities are purity, sacredness and courage. Anyone who has these qualities is worthy of being called a Sai Youth.

What does youth involvement in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation mean? What should it mean? It should mean deepening of our devotion to Swami. It should mean always striving to be aware of our own innate Divinity. And it should mean working in total unity and harmony with the elders in the organisation.

In the Service of Others

Today, the world is haunted by suffering, unrest and disorder. As Ideal Sai Youth, we are capable of overcoming this restlessness in society. **The prosperity and well-being of the world depends upon our conduct and character.** Swami has said that character is the basis for all of our behaviour. None of us can be perfect, but we can make every effort to develop excellent character. If character is maintained, all future generations of youth will be prosperous. As Bhagavan says:

*If wealth is lost, nothing is lost,
If health is lost, something is lost,
If character is lost, everything is lost.*

Therefore, as Ideal Sai Youth, we must protect our character by leading purposeful lives in the service of others. We should always keep in mind the welfare of society and the nation at large.

Over the years, Swami has declared that the imagination, ideals, and energies of our Sai Youth are the greatest assets for the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. As Benjamin Disraeli, the British Prime Minister, once said, "The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity." Mahatma Gandhi later reiterated the same point: **"If we are to reach real peace in this world, we shall have to begin with the youth."**

Youth Sadhana

The Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference is not merely a conference; it is actually a journey, a pilgrimage of self-discovery, self-transformation and self-purification. For the International Sai Youth, this journey began six months ago. Sai Youth from all over the world, irrespective of whether or not they were planning to attend the World Youth Conference, embarked upon an important Sadhana Programme to assist with their spiritual transformation. This Sadhana Programme consisted of nine spiritual disciplines or "stepping stones." These were:

1. The constant practising of *namasmarana* – chanting of the sacred name
2. The regular study of Sai literature and conducting regular study circles
3. Engaging in selfless service
4. Practice of dietary discipline
5. Speaking sweetly, softly and observing silence
6. Taking active part and supporting the Sai Centre
7. Respecting one's parents

8. The practice of placing a Ceiling on Desires
9. Daily meditation and prayer

This Sadhana Programme not only helped the youth to focus their attention on Swami but it also assisted them with their spiritual and personal transformation. As their *sadhana* intensified, Swami showed His Presence to many of the youth around the world in many beautiful and wonderful ways. Many youth started having dreams of Swami, some began to receive guidance and solutions to difficult and complex personal problems, whilst many began to feel His Presence in their daily lives. Our Sai Youth must be careful not to abandon this *sadhana* that they have begun with so much zeal and enthusiasm. As Swami says: *"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached!"*

Furthermore, over the past six months Sai Youth organised Pre-World Youth Conferences throughout the world, from the Americas to Australia, from Russia to South Africa. Sai Youth gathered from all corners of their respective countries to discuss and find answers to important questions such as, "Who am I?" and "How do we find God in our hearts?" Additionally, youth explored topics including spiritual transformation, control of the senses, and encouraging active youth participation in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation.

The Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference is but one facet of the many wonderful things to happen within the International Youth Programme during the coming years. The primary goal of this conference is to assist Sai Youth to look within and find God in their hearts.

On behalf of the many millions of Sai Youth from around the world and the youth delegates assembled here today, we would like to thank Bhagavan from the bottom of our hearts for His loving support and guiding Hand during the preparations of this conference. Swami has been involved in every aspect of the conference, right down to the smallest detail, from enquiring about the daily arrival of the delegates, their accommodation and well-being, to arranging the decorations and providing free food for all delegates during the conference. Swami also went as far as providing sarees for the girls and organised their distribution. Only a Loving Mother, such as our Bhagavan, would take so much care of Her children. There is a message in this for us: God comes down in Human Form and works at our level of understanding so that we can learn perfection. What is perfection? Perfection is true spirituality, and the goal of spirituality is human excellence.

We should always remember that Swami is our nearest and dearest. He is our best friend. Throughout my life, from the age of nine years I had made Swami my best friend. In fact in my very first meeting with Swami at the age of 16 years, Swami asked me, "Who

is your best friend?” I replied, “Only You Bhagavan, I have none other than You.” We should all look to God as a faithful friend, one’s only true friend in life.

Finally, I would like to place a humble prayer at Bhagavan’s Lotus Feet on behalf of all the delegates and devotees assembled here today:

Beloved Swami, for many of us you are our Mother, our Father, our Friend. You are everything. Bhagavan, please bless us today with Your Divine Discourse and instructions to the Sai Youth on this most auspicious day of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference.

*Beloved Bhagavan,
for all the youth around the world,
Life without You is a hopeless end,
But life with You is an endless hope.*

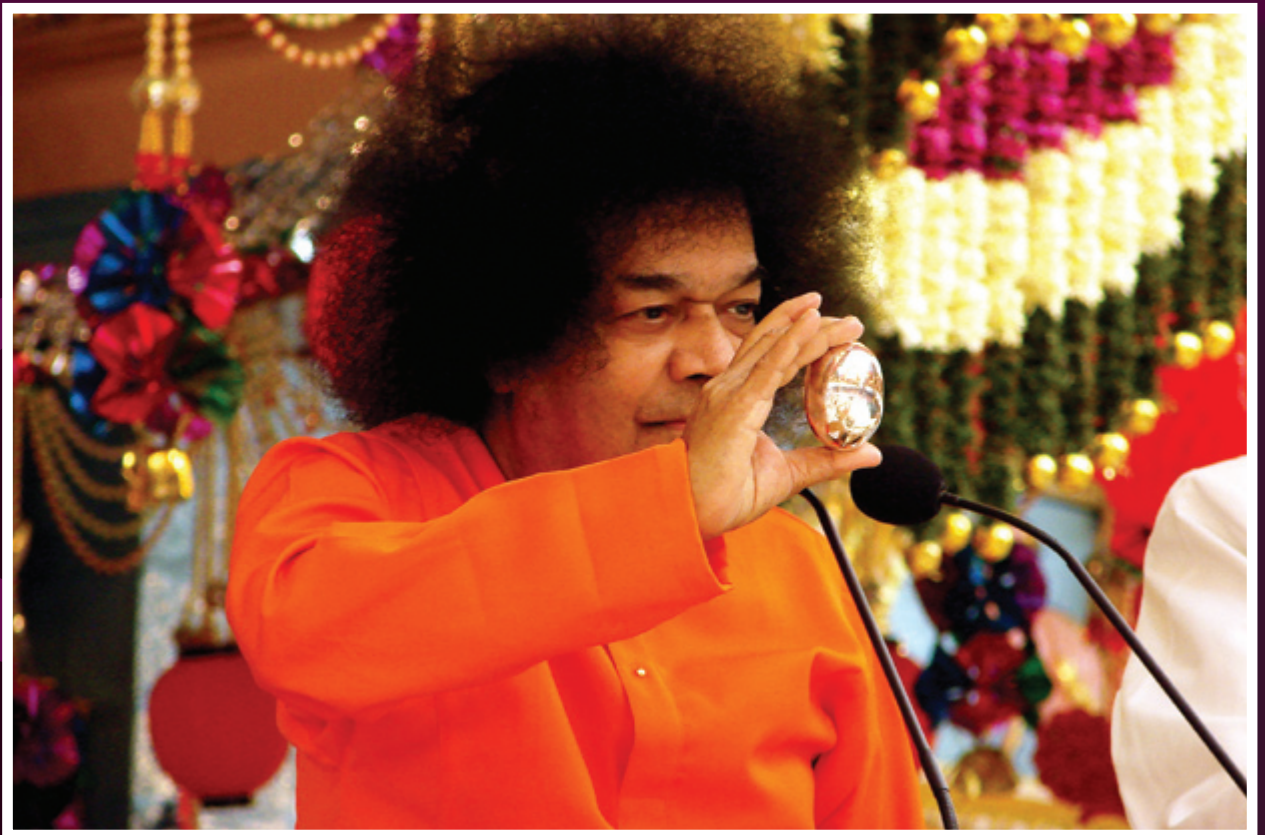
Jai Sai Ram!



.....
Mr. Shitu Chudasama is Head of Information Management for HSBC. He currently holds the office of National Vice Chair of the UK Sathya Sai Organisation, and in 2007 was appointed International Youth Coordinator. In 2006, he and his wife were invited to Buckingham Palace for the Queen’s Garden Party where the Sathya Sai Organisation of UK received a certificate of appreciation for work undertaken in relation to youth initiative in the country. Shitu received the prestigious Frank Denning Scholarship from the London Borough of Croydon to undertake research into Sathya Sai Education in Swami’s Institute.



Valedictory Function





Love Is the Source, the Path and the Goal

Dr. Narendranath Reddy

*Sarva rupa dharam shantham
Sarva nama dharam shivam
Satchidanandam advaitam
Sathyam Shivam Sundaram*

With love, humility, reverence and gratitude I offer myself at the Divine Lotus Feet of our dearest, sweetest, loving and most beautiful Lord Sai.

Beloved Bhagawan, respected elders, dear sisters and brothers, blessed and fortunate delegates of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference! Greetings of loving Sai Ram to all of you on this auspicious and special occasion! This Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference is unique. This is a conference of the youth, by the youth and for the youth, blessed by Bhagawan. There are delegates from all parts of the world. This conference is unique because for the first time the international youth, the youth from India and the youth from Sri Sathya Sai University all have worked in unity, harmony and love to share the Message of Swami and Love of Swami. This is the Blessing of the Lord.

A Unique Conference – Divine Benediction

I was fortunate to witness the Love of Swami for the youth. From the beginning Swami has shown a lot of interest in the conference and showered His unconditional Love on all the youth around the world. Swami looked at the list of the planning committee members who were chosen from different parts of the world, blessed them and sent them His Blessings. Swami has also provided the delicious *prasadam* free of cost for all the delegates on all the three days – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Swami ensured that there were Western, North Indian and South Indian cuisines to accommodate the youth of different backgrounds. He inquired about the meals and looked at the items on the menu. When Swami was looking at the menu He saw only one sweet and asked, “Why only one sweet?” He then instructed us to provide the participants with two sweets. Swami was attending to every minute detail and we are very grateful for that.

Love of Mother Sai

I went and tasted the food myself. It was nectarine, because of Swami’s Blessings and the love of the Karnataka youth who have been serving selflessly.

Swami’s Love is infinite and that of thousands of mothers. He was looking at every minute detail of this conference. He even looked at the delegate badges. He commented on the colours of the badges and instructed us to give the blue badges to the men and pink badges to the women. This shows His attention to even the smallest detail. Swami’s kindness and Love is unfathomable.

Also, the students and faculty of Sri Sathya Sai University helped with the programme and the arrangements of the youth conference. Their inspiring thoughts and their interaction with the entire international youth have been very elevating to all of us.

This is a unique opportunity where all the youth could work together in unity and harmony. Swami wants us to see this unity in diversity. As I mentioned earlier, you are the blessed and fortunate ones. Jesus said, “Many are called but a few are chosen.” You are the blessed and fortunate ones who are chosen.

Divine Grace

Adi Shankara in his *Viveka Chudamani* (The Crest Jewel of Discrimination) says, “*manushyathvam mumukshathvam mahaapurusha samsrayam* (human birth, the desire for liberation, and the company of great souls),” – these are three things that are impossible to get by human effort alone. One can get them only by Divine Grace. First is *manushyathvam* – **being born as a human being.** Swami says “*Janthunaam nara janma durlabham* (man is the crest jewel of all creation).” Of the 8.4 million species, the pinnacle of creation is human birth because only through human birth one can attain enlightenment or know the Truth. That is why the *Bhagavad Gita* says, “*ksheenae punyae Martyayalokam vishanthi* (even the angels and denizens of heaven have to come down as human beings to attain enlightenment).” So we are all blessed to be born as humans.

The second blessing is *mumukshathvam*, **the desire for liberation**. There are 6.5 billion people and of them very few want to know the Truth and the purpose of life. When we know the Truth it leads to Divine Bliss. Most of us are happy eating, drinking and making merry. Only by the Grace of God one knows Him and has love for Him.

The third important sign of Grace is *mahapurusha samsrayam*, **the company of great souls**. When we desire to have enlightenment we need a *Guru* and a guide. Even for learning mundane things like physics, chemistry, bicycling, and swimming we always need a teacher. For spirituality, which is the *summum bonum* of life, we definitely need a *Guru*. But Swami says there are two kinds of *Gurus* – *badha Gurus* and *bodha Gurus*. *Badha Gurus* are the ones who cause you pain and *bodha Gurus* are true teachers. There are many *Gurus* who cause you pain. They are like the blind leading the blind. Swami says, “*chevilo mantram chethilo dabbu* (these fake *Gurus* collect money in the hand while whispering in the ear).” In the West, particularly in Europe and America, spirituality has become commercialised. For a meditation course they will charge \$500 or \$1,000. Thus, it has become a business. So, to get a good *Guru* like Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi or Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa we need special Divine Grace. However, to our good fortune we have more than a good *Guru*, we have *Purushothama* (the Lord Supreme) Himself as our *Guru*. The teacher of teachers, universal teacher, the Supreme Lord Himself is our *Guru*.

Sai Parabrahman – The True Guru

How blessed and fortunate we are that the *Adi Guru* (First Teacher), the *Parama Guru* (Supreme Teacher), the Lord Himself is guiding us. There was a great saint by the name of Swami Abhedananda who was a disciple of Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi. He was a sincere seeker on the spiritual path. But even after many years of severe austerity and sincere inquiry he could not attain enlightenment. He felt discouraged. He read the book ‘*Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*’, the biography written by late Professor Kasturi about Swami. Thinking that Swami was his last hope to attain his goal, Swami Abhedananda came to Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami loves sincere spiritual seekers. He called Swami Abhedananda soon after his arrival for an interview and blessed him. After this Swami Abhedananda was in bliss. When he came out of the interview room Professor Kasturi enquired how the interview was. Swami Abhedananda replied, “To say that Swami is an *Avatar* is only a partial truth and is an understatement. Swami is not just an *Avatar*. **He is the Source of all Avatars.**”

Swami Abhedananda continued saying, “He is Supreme *Parabrahman*, *nirguna nirakara parabrahman*

(attributeless, formless, Divine Supreme). That is my experience.” That is why day before yesterday Swami in His Inaugural Discourse said, “I am not Sai Baba.” That means we should not restrict Swami to this body and Name. Swami says to restrict God to a Name, a form, and a place is ignorance. Swami says that He is all names and all forms. Bhagawan Krishna says in the *Gita*, “*Avajananthi mam mudha manushim tanumasritham; Parambhavam ajanantho mama bhutha mahesvaram* (the ignorant insults Me by saying that I am this embodied being as they do not understand My all-pervading reality).” Swami is one in all, all in one, all in all and beyond all. He is the Supreme Reality.

In His infinite kindness and Love, on May 17, 1968, Swami revealed glimpses of His Divinity during the First World Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Swami said, “**In truth, you cannot understand the nature of My Reality either today, or even after a thousand years of steady austerity or ardent inquiry even if all mankind joins in that effort.**” So, we should never try to understand or analyse our Bhagawan, but we should experience His Love, enjoy His Love, and spread His Love.

Swami also mentioned in that same Discourse that we should realise that we are blessed and fortunate to know of Him. He said, “Your good fortune which provided you this chance is greater than what was available for anchorites, monks, sages, saints and even personalities embodying facets of Divine Glory.” In that landmark Discourse, Swami said, “**This is a Human Form in which every Divine Entity, every Divine Principle, that is to say, all the Names and Forms ascribed by man to God, are manifest. Never let any doubt distract you from this Truth.**” So we should be grateful for our good fortune. In the *Bhagavatha Purana* the angels and gods were jealous of the cowherd girls and cowherd boys of Brindavan. They thought how lucky were these cowherd girls and boys who had the good fortune of playing with Sri Krishna, the Supreme *Parabrahman* (Lord Supreme) manifested in Human Form. Similarly, the future generations will be thinking how blessed and fortunate we are to have this time with our sweet Lord Sai.

Follow His Command Implicitly

How to make best use of this great opportunity and blessing Swami has given us? Swami has given the answer to this also in the same Discourse of May 17, 1968. He said that to follow His instructions and commands is enough. **Swami says that following His instructions and commands is greater than all the spiritual practices and austerities we can do.** He said that mergence with the Divine is achieved by following His commands. What are His instructions and com-

mands? In His Inaugural Discourse of the youth conference, Swami said that youth is the time when the mind and senses are very powerful. That is why when Arjuna says, “*chanchalam hi manah Krishna pramaathi balavadh dridham* (the mind and senses are very turbulent and powerful; I am not able to control them),” then Lord Krishna replies, “*asamshayam mahaabaaho mano durnigraham chalam* (no doubt Arjuna, it is very difficult to control the unsteady mind).” But He gives a solution to the problem. How? “*Abhyaasena tu kaunteya vairagyena cha grihyate* (**by constant practice and detachment one controls the mind**).” Detachment is attachment to God. When one is attached to God, the mind is easily controlled. That is the secret.

Swami also talked about discrimination. Whenever we do something Swami says we should discriminate, “Is it good? Is it bad?” **Swami says that there are two types of discrimination** – individual discrimination and fundamental discrimination. Individual discrimination focuses only on personal interests and welfare, “Is this good for me?” Whereas, fundamental discrimination keeps in view the highest good of all. So when we follow this fundamental discrimination we ask ourselves: will it take us to the right path and goal?

The *Kathopanishad* says that there are two paths – *shreyo marg* (the good path) and *preyo marg* (the path of pleasure). When we are youth, the mind and senses direct us to the *preyo marg*, which is the pleasing path. Swami says we should always stick to the *shreyo marg*, the good path which is the Godward path. Swami emphasises that one should follow *shreyo marg* from one’s youth.

Avoid Bad Company

In this Godward path, a lot of importance is given to one’s company. On many occasions, Swami has said **ABC** – “**Always Be Cheerful,**” “**Always Be Content,**” “**Always Be Calm,**” “**Always Be Careful,**” and also “**Avoid Bad Company.**” Swami says that the company we keep is very important because our mind gets easily influenced by our company. Swami gives an example. Dust in the company of air goes up, but it doesn’t have any wings. Dust in the company of water goes down, but it doesn’t have any legs. The company the dust keeps makes the difference. Similarly, Swami gives a simple example. You wrap some jasmine flowers in a paper. You take the flowers out and the paper still smells of jasmine. If you wrap some food such as *pakodas* in the paper it will smell of *pakodas*. Swami often says, “Tell me your company and I will tell you what you are.” Once, Swami was going to Kodaikanal and in His infinite Love Swami moved from His car to the bus with the students to make them happy. As the cars passed, people were throwing flowers on Swami’s

car rather than the bus because people thought that Swami was in the car and not in the bus. Then Swami told the students how by His association even the car gets adoration and worship. That is the influence of one’s company. So we should be very careful about the company we keep.

Work Is Worship

Another important teaching of Bhagawan is that we should not separate and compartmentalise the secular from the sacred. He wants us to spiritualise and divinise all work. We try to compartmentalise – this is Swami’s work, this is housework, and this is office work. Swami says beautifully in Telugu, “*unnadhi okkate karma, ade bhagavath karma* (there is only one work and that is God’s work).” Everything depends upon the attitude we have. Twenty years ago, my wife who is a physician had to balance her career in medicine with taking care of household chores and bringing up our small children. When we were with Swami one day she asked Him, “Swami, I am not able to do my spiritual practices like meditation, *japa*, and reading scriptures because of my busy medical practice and my household duties. Please guide me.” Swami replied, “**As long as you think something is secular and something is sacred, as long as you see the difference, you will never have peace of mind.**” He advised her to try to find spirituality in everything. He gave a beautiful and simple example. That is the beauty of Swami. He simplifies the most complicated *Vedantic* truths. He said, “When you are cutting the vegetables think you are cutting the ego. When you are vacuuming or sweeping the floor and getting rid of the dirt, think that you are getting rid of the evil qualities and making your heart pure. When you are making *chapathi* (Indian bread), when you are making it broad, think you are broadening your heart and filling it with love.” All spiritual practices are summarised in this simple, but practical, example. Getting rid of the ego, getting rid of the evil qualities and filling the heart with love is all the *sadhana* one needs to practice. That is how we can spiritualise everything. Brother Lawrence, a French mystic, said, “I could be in communion with my Lord as much when I was serving the monks in the kitchen as when I am kneeling at the altar of the church.”

Swami wants us to experience Divinity in everything, everywhere, ever. Day before yesterday Swami mentioned, “This table is God, this flower is God, this microphone is God.” We should have conviction that everything is God. There is nothing but God that exists. That is why Prahlada says, “*Harimayamu kaani dravyamu paramaanuvu ledu vamshapaayanavinte* (nothing exists other than God, not even an atom).” Swami also says, “*anuvuvu, kana kanamu, kshana*

kshanamu Swame (every atom, every cell and every moment is permeated by God).” We should have that kind of experience. The *Narayana Suktam* says, “*Antarbahischa tathsarvam vyapya naraayana stithaha* (what all exists is Divinity, both inside and outside).”

What Is the Easiest and Best Path?

How do we experience Divinity? Swami has given us the answer. Swami says that *Prema Yoga* is the way. Swami mentions that of all the *yogas* – *Kriya Yoga*, *Hatha Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, and *Prema Yoga* – the easiest and the best path is *Prema Yoga*. The first book in the *Vahini* series written by Swami was *Prema Vahini*. When Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment, He replied that the first and greatest commandment is to “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength and love thy neighbour as thy self.” St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians said that if you have faith to command a mountain to move, you can move it. But if you have no love it is of no benefit. You may give everything, whatever you have to charities, but if you do not have love it is of no use. You may know all the scriptures in the world and be able to prophecise, but if you have no love it is of no value. So faith, love and hope are great. Of them, St. Paul said, love is the greatest.

Swami says, “Start the day with Love, fill the day with Love and end the day with Love.” Swami, His Life, His Message, His Ideals and His Humanitarian Works, all can be enshrined in just one word: Love, Love, Love. Swami is Love and Love is Swami. That is why the other day Swami said, “God is Love, Love is God, live in Love.” Sai is Love, Love is Sai. Let us redeem and sanctify our lives by realising and experiencing this love, sharing this love with all, and finally realising

we are love. On one occasion I asked Swami, “When I cannot delve into the mystery of the Divine, how can I give public speeches on Divinity?” Swami said, “*Prema nu panchuko, panchuko* (the Love you experienced from Me you should share with all and thus expand and increase Love).” He said that the Love we have experienced is for all creation to share. When you share Love, it expands. May we follow the Divine clarion call “*uthistatha Jagratha, prapyavaraan ni bhodhita* (**Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached!**),” the goal supreme being Divine Love. The Love Divine is eternal, pure and unsullied. Now I pray to Swami to bless us all with this pure Divine Love. I also pray to Swami to bless us with His Divine Message which I know all of you are eagerly waiting for.

Jai Sai Ram.

.....
Dr. Narendranath Reddy graduated with distinction from SV Medical College, Tirupati. He received his training in internal medicine at the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry and did his sub-specialisation in Endocrinology and Metabolism at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York. He has been a practising internist-endocrinologist in Southern California for over 25 years. He is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians and the American College of Endocrinologists and is on the faculty at the Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California. Dr. Reddy presented papers at the American Federation of Clinical Research in Boston. He is Chairman of the International Medical Committee of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation and a member of the Prasanthi Council. He serves as a Director of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation which is the governing body of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organisation.





Purpose of Being

Dr. Michael Goldstein

With humility and love, I offer my *Pranams* at Bhagavan Baba's Divine Lotus Feet. Distinguished guests, brothers and sisters, youth delegates, dear students, Sai Ram to all of you!

It is essential that we inquire!

What is the purpose of being here in His Divine Presence?

What is the purpose of being?

Is human life nature's accident or is it God's Plan?

From time to time, age to age, when mankind is bent on self-destruction, the Lord comes! He comes as an *Avatar*. He is here now as the *Kali Yuga Avatar*, our Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba!

He is the embodiment of Divine Love and Divine Truth. The same Divine Love and Truth that is ever-present and always accessible deep in the sacred spiritual heart of every man and woman, every single one of us. It is always there, waiting for our acknowledgement, our embrace. Waiting for the realisation of our true being.

What is the purpose of being here in the Divine Presence?

What is the purpose of being?

By being here, here in His Presence, we accelerate our movement toward the realisation of our Divine nature. **By being, by being embodiments of Divine Love and Truth, we glorify and please Him. We fulfill the purpose of human life.**

Sometimes we encounter obstacles. We entertain doubts. Weeks, months, and years go by. Yet we do not even try to truly see and really be who we are. Sometimes it just seems so far. And we choose to remain embroiled in worldly woes and ensnared by imaginary foes.

But Swami has taught us that the joy of selfless love is ever so close.

Actually, it is imminent in everything, everyone, everywhere. It can come to us after many years of discipline and sacrifice. Or, it can come to us in a flash,

for no apparent reason. We have seen examples of these in the lives of the saints and sages.

Spiritual Inquiry

Today is an auspicious time. We are here to be close to Him, Our Lord, our origin, our essence, and our destination. It is a good time to engage in spiritual inquiry.

We are here to be with Him so that we can remember from whence we have come, who we are, where we are going. We seek knowledge of our origin, our identity, and our destination. From Him we have come. Of Him we are. To Him we shall return.

When consciously we strive to be who we really are, we become spiritual aspirants. Swami has said, "*Spirituality is the resolute pursuit of cosmic consciousness. It enables us to manifest in all its fullness the Divine cosmic consciousness that is present both within and outside yourself. It means getting rid of one's animal nature and developing the Divine tendency within oneself.*"

We have learned from Swami that humanity has no life without consciousness, that consciousness is the Omnipresent Divinity, that consciousness is Divine Love, Selfless Love. This consciousness resides within the heart of every man and woman and gives life to the mind and the body. This consciousness is appreciated and realised by each of us through our conscience.

Then what is the culmination of this resolute pursuit of cosmic consciousness to which Swami has referred? We transcend worldly woes and dismiss imaginary foes. We eliminate the disparity between our convictions and our actions. We eliminate the divergence between our desires and our Divine purpose. We achieve convergence of thought, word, and deed. We follow our conscience.

Follow Our Conscience

One day, many years ago, I had the good fortune to sit at Swami's Feet with another devotee. Swami

looked at me, pointed to the other devotee, and He said, "This man is a very good devotee. He follows his conscience in all things at all times. In all situations, he asks himself, "Is it good or is it bad? Is it right or is it wrong? What should I do?"

"This man looks deeply within himself, he receives the answer from his conscience, and he acts without delay. Sometimes the answer does not come immediately. He perseveres. He continues to seek the answer within himself, from his conscience. Then the answer comes and he acts without procrastination. He is a very good devotee."

Swami used this man's good example to teach what is right and good. If only all of us would but follow this clear path that lies before us.

Many years ago we prayed to Swami to give us a *mantra* on His Birthday. **Swami graciously gave us the following *mantra*: Swami declared: "God Is!" That was the *mantra*. God Is!**

God Is! God Is!

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Is!

Swami teaches us that we are all Divine.

If God Is, then man also Is! Is What?

Swami teaches us that we are consciousness which is eternal and whose essence is selfless love.

In these human lives that He has so graciously allotted to us, Swami teaches us to distinguish that which is real and lasting, from that which is fake and ephemeral. He teaches us to distinguish that which is Divine from that which is illusion.

We are all essentially Divine. We are Divine Love. We are consciousness. But, at the same time, we are players on the stage of everything that is not. We are players on the stage of this world. Why are we players on this surrealistic and unrealistic worldly stage?

We are players so that we might learn to distinguish what is from what is not. We are players so that we might learn that selfless love is our true essence. We are players so that we might learn that the curtain falling on our worldly drama is not the end of who we are. It is the end of being who we are not and the beginning of being solely and purely Divinity.

We follow our conscience in all things, we love and serve selflessly, finding God always in everyone, everywhere. We distinguish real from unreal. That is the culmination of our spiritual pursuit.

Today, we conclude this conference, Ideal Sai Youth–Messengers of Sai Love. Our Beloved Swami has loved us, uplifted us, inspired us, and motivated us to move forward on our spiritual journey.

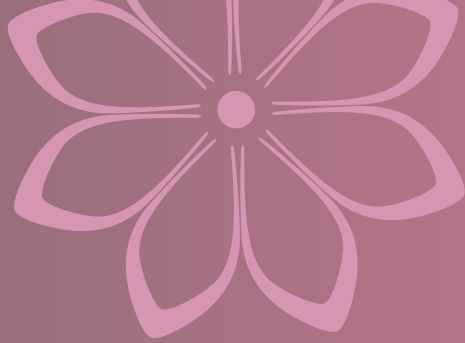
How can we ever demonstrate our gratitude to Him?

We can receive His Message with reverence and apply His Message to these human lives with diligence.

We have experienced great joy. Let us take this to heart so that our lives become His Message.

Jai Sai Ram!





Workshop Session 1



How to Build Character That Lasts

Mrs. Mallika Srinivasan

I offer my most loving and humble *Pranams* at the Lotus Feet of our Beloved Bhagavan. Respected elders, Sai Youth, brothers and sisters, Sai Ram to all of you.

“Watch, Observe, Learn, Obey, and Apply”

Each one of us gathered here today is truly blessed, enjoying and basking as we do in Bhagavan’s Protection, Grace and Love. To my family, as to all of you, Swami has been the very centre of existence – Mother, Father, *Guru* and God. All of you as Sai Youth are exceptionally privileged.

For unlike people like myself, who went through a process that began with magnetic attraction, led to intellectual curiosity, and perhaps a degree of scepticism before the spark of devotion could be lit, leading to faith and finally to total surrender, you have been brought into Swami’s fold at a time when your heart is open to receive His Love instantly. Youth take to Swami like fish to water.

It is the determination of Swami to sow in the minds of young people, which are like rays of the rising sun, the seeds of desire for acquiring spiritual knowledge. These seeds have already been sown in the Sai Youth gathered here today. The distinguishing feature of Sai Youth is that material gains are not the sole goal of your lives. You seek to lead holistic lives, yearn to achieve a larger purpose and strive to be better human beings.

Living in the Presence of Bhagavan offers us the very best opportunity to achieve this. Swami teaches us in a variety of ways through His compassion, through disciplining, through His interactions, through the formal teaching like we had this morning, and at times through direct advice: “Watch, observe, learn, obey and apply.” Then, we will begin to comprehend the essence of what is required for a successful life, i.e., the building of character. **Devotion, Duty, Discipline, Determination and Discrimination are the pillars on which the robust house of character is built.** These are the few things I would like to touch upon today.

The Charismatic Charioteer

Devotion to God is fundamental to leading a virtuous life. Swami, through His Divine Love and in His own inimitable way, evokes in each of our hearts, this devotion and builds our faith. I would like to share with you one such instance, when Swami through a simple and appealing example captured the heart of a young boy in an instant, making him a devotee for life!

During an interview, Swami asked our young son to ask Him a question.

The boy said, “Swami, which is your favourite car?”

My heart sank and I thought to myself, “Is this the question to ask Swami? Time with Swami is so precious!”

Swami gave a lovely smile and answered, “Morris Minor” and went on to tell stories of how He used to drive to Madras and how He obtained a license.

“You used to drive it yourself Swami?” exclaimed the boy, stars in his eyes!

Swami had woven a bit of magic and our son looked at Swami transfixed.

Swami went on to say, “I will give you a big car. Will you take it? You mustn’t say no!”

And the boy, a bit overawed by now, said, “OK!”

Swami then asked, “Will you give me your car?”

Prompt came the answer, “Sure, Swami!”

“Shall I drive it?”

And the boy again said, “Sure, Swami.”

Swami then smilingly placed His Hand on our son’s heart and said, “Your heart is the car and I am the driver.”

One of the most profound lessons in devotion had been taught by Swami in the simplest possible manner! Swami says, “Have faith in Me” and “Be free from fear, anxiety and agitation. **Surrender to God; His Grace can save you. His wisdom can enlighten you. His power can overcome all obstacles. Faith and surrender are the manifestations of devotion.**”

The Right Attitude

Duty without expectation of reward is the essence of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Let us cast a glimpse of what is actually happening around us in the world today, especially in the lives of younger people. There is, if you permit me to say, an obsession with being remunerated; with obtaining greater and greater power and authority. There is a constant measurement of work versus reward and a continuous comparison with other family members, friends, colleagues and peers. Opportunities and temptations abound in a growing economy and this is fuelling these trends.

Frequency of job change has reached new heights and as the search continues for something elusive, our inner peace is destroyed. If, on the other hand, we enjoy doing what we are doing, do our very best, excel at it, going beyond what is commonly termed “the call of duty,” do our tasks with devotion and love, without fear of failure, leaving the rewards to Swami, not only will we achieve inner peace, but we will exceed our own expectations of performance.

Surrender, the Best Strategy!

In our professional lives, we may have the illusion that we control outcomes. That it is only an illusion becomes quite clear, when we are faced with a personal crisis.

For example, let us take the illness of a loved one. My mother, a very healthy person, was recently diagnosed with having an ailment, for which the prognosis was indeed poor. Only God could save her. It is in situations like this, that faith and surrender make us witness Swami’s magic. **His Grace fills us with a sense of calm. He directs and guides us to do our duty taking appropriate decisions and leaving the rest to Him.**

It was raining heavily and the hospital room began to leak. A fungus infection would be disastrous for my mother. The hospital administration and doctors out of concern were urging me to move her immediately to another hospital where the care would not be of the same order, but the room would not leak. We seemed to be moving her for all the wrong reasons. Couldn’t we move her to the smaller room or to the intensive care? A quiet prayer was made to Swami seeking His guidance and the answer was clear. “Do not move her.”

It is Bhagavan’s infinite Grace that she is today completely well, truly Swami’s walking miracle. Faith enables us to carry out our duties calmly, even under extraordinarily extenuating circumstances, surrendering the problem at His Feet. Our duty, however, extends beyond our jobs and serving our families to serving humanity at large.

Inspiring Examples

Speaking at the Harvard Commencement in June 2007, Bill Gates said, “When you consider what those of us here have been given in talent, privilege and opportunity, there is almost no limit to what the world has a right to expect from us.” We who have gathered here today are even more privileged than those at Harvard. For, we have in our midst, Bhagavan, to teach and guide us as we strive to give back to society, what society has given to us! “We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give,” said Winston Churchill.

While our ancient texts have laid down the way wealth should be distributed – a quarter for personal use, a quarter for charitable purposes, a quarter on other living beings, and a quarter in support of state – even in this materialistic world, there are a handful of the richest of men, who have set outstanding examples of giving back to serve the larger cause of humanity. Many of you would probably have read Warren Buffett’s recent announcement that he would donate 85 percent of his 44 billion dollar empire to charity to serve communities across the world and most importantly, without heed to religion, caste or community.

Inspired by such examples, Sai Youth, having imbibed Swami’s teachings of “**Service to man is service to God**” can play a prominent role in the establishment of a new world order. Participating actively in Swami’s Seva Organisation and programmes, be they providing water, food or medical care, gives Sai Youth a unique opportunity to serve with love under Divine guidance.

How Can ‘I’ Start Service?

Opportunities to serve are everywhere; one does not have to search for them. They are in your neighbourhood and in your workplace. As Swami says, you may not get a chance to participate in some gigantic scheme of service through which millions may be benefited, but you can lift a lame lamb over the side, or lead a blind child across a busy road. That too, is an act of worship. If you look around you with love, service to others will come spontaneously and become an intrinsic part of our daily lives.

In the words of Bhagavan, **the real value of seva and its most visible result is that it transforms and reshapes you.** Devotion must be directed along the lines of duty and tested in the crucible of discipline, says Bhagavan.

Discipline – Indispensable for Success

“Why do we need discipline?” Swami’s analogy of comparing life to a football game, gives us the answer. If any player can do anything with the ball, and there is neither foul nor out, neither offside nor goal, neither

throw nor penalty, then it is a meaningless game incapable of giving joy. It is these rules and restrictions that give charm to the game of life. It is disciplined societies that emerge victorious.

Japan was decimated during World War II and Korea sank into poverty after the Korean War. It is determination and discipline that were key to the resurgence of both Japan and South Korea, and enabled them to become economic powerhouses of the world. Discipline pervades every aspect of life in their society, their daily routine, work habits, their interactions with each other. Everything is done in a planned way, at a particular time, and with no deviations. In Japan, even the tea ceremony is a much disciplined affair. Quality, efficiency and excellence in everything they do are the hallmarks of these societies. It is individual discipline that translates into this kind of societal discipline and ensures success.

While discipline is a prerequisite in every endeavour, be it social, economic or material, it is even more vital for Sai Youth aspiring to pursue the spiritual path. Swami expects the highest levels of discipline from His students and the youth, for it is this discipline that builds credibility, the foundation stone for leadership.

When a new employee joins a firm, both his seniors and his subordinates are watching him closely. Does he come to work on time? Does he do what he says he will? Does he deliver his assigned tasks on schedule? Is there unison in what he thinks, says and does? Is he willing to shoulder additional responsibilities? No one can succeed in his or her mission alone, and success depends upon the support we are able to garner from others and this support is garnered only through credibility established by the practice of personal discipline. People may not believe what you say. But they will surely believe what they see you do. Emerson, the American author had this to say. "What you are shouts so loudly in my ears I cannot hear what you say." **It is character that communicates most eloquently.**

Discrimination - The Most Vital Tenet

All of you gathered here are aspiring to be leaders in your own respective spheres of life. Besides demonstration by personal example, two key differentiators

between leaders and others are determination and what Swami referred to this morning in His Inaugural Address as "The Power of Discrimination."

Determination is widely acclaimed as the king of faculties and as the one that succeeds when everything else fails. Nothing can take the place of persistence. Talent will not. Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with great talent. Genius will not. Nothing is more common than unrewarded genius! It is now almost like a proverb. Education will not. The world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.



A distinction, however, may be made between determination and obstinacy. An obstinate man is not open to suggestions and course corrections become impossible. In sharp contrast, a determined man has a flexible approach, keeps his eye on the goal post and freely takes inputs that help to further progress towards the goal. Obstinate people are filled with ego. Determination without a trace of ego or self-interest empowers the individual with a sharper sense of discrimination.

Discrimination is the ability to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong, and take the correct decision, given a specific set of circumstances. What is right in one situation may not be right in another, and leaders are often faced with difficult choices. **But in every situation, discrimination implies applying the principle of Dharma, the righteousness that upholds the universe.**

Here are a couple of examples. Each one of us has different roles that we play in life. The father at home is many times the boss at work, be it a small, medium, or large business. The factors that he takes when taking a decision vis-à-vis his son in his role as a father will be distinctively different from those that he uses when taking decisions at the workplace. At the workplace, he cannot take decisions based only on his son's individual interest. For, these affect the larger good of the organisation. Therefore, necessarily, it has to be above self-interest. He needs to give up the feeling of mine and thine.

Hitler was a determined man. Why was he destroyed? His determination was filled with ego and

megalomaniac tendencies. The larger good was not in sight. He lost his discrimination for his decisions were not based on the principles of *Dharma*.

While the *Dharma* for each person may be different, depending upon the role he plays, the basic principles of *Dharma*, based on which discrimination is applied remain unchanged, namely, truth, love, fortitude and non-violence. These are the cornerstones of the practice of *Dharma* and upholding *Dharma* is the insignia of a true leader.

When there is *Dharma*, there is victory. And the protector of *Dharma*, will always be protected by Bhagavan. Devotion, Duty, Discipline, Determination and Discrimination are integral parts of the whole and need to come together in perfect balance to form the character of an Ideal Sai Youth.

Each of these attributes cannot be viewed in isolation and when closely intertwined, make for a successful and holistic life. All of you, young delegates are filled with idealism, dreams and aspirations. In conclusion, I would like to share with you the words of Swami, that to me have been through the years, a joyous source of inspiration. “Life is a Game, Play It! Life is a Challenge, Meet It! Life is Love, Enjoy It! Life is a Dream, Realise It!”

Jai Sai Ram!



.....
Mrs. Mallika Srinivasan is the CEO of TAFE (Tractors and Farm Equipment) and is one of the most successful CEOs in India having transformed TAFE from an 80-crore company to a 2,500-crore market leader. She was awarded the Business Woman of the Year Award by the BBC, UK in 1999 and the Economic Times Business Woman of the Year in 2006. Engaged in many social service activities, she is also an active participant in the Mother and Child Care Programme undertaken by the Easwamma Women's Welfare Trust.

Living Up to His Message

Sri Sanjay Sahani

I offer my loving *Pranams* at the Lotus Feet of our Beloved Bhagavan.

Revered elders, Sai Youth from all over the world and Sai educational institutions, brothers and sisters.

We are living in extraordinary times. It is the best of times and also the worst of times. It is the best of times because man will never get an easier opportunity to redeem himself than at a time when a Divine Incarnation walks on earth. It is also the worst of times, because the very Presence of a Divine Incarnation amidst us is a sign of the declining standards of living, which have warranted His coming.

In such a scenario, I am reminded of what Bhagavan Himself has said, "If there is a small scuffle on the road, a constable is enough to set matters right. When the problem aggravates and 20-30 people gather, the Sub-Inspector of Police has to make his presence felt. When the entire city is in flames and there are riots everywhere, then the Inspector General of Police has to appear on the scene." Bhagavan is the Inspector General of Police for the cosmos who has come to save mankind from itself.

Rabindranath Tagore, India's Nobel Laureate in Literature, once observed, "Every time a child is born, he brings a message from God that God has not yet despaired of man. He still has hope in the crown jewel of His creation." Bhagavan Himself this morning was telling us, "*Janthunaam nara janma durlabham.*" Of all the 84 *lakhs* of life forms that are possible, human birth is the crowning piece of God's creation. Having received such a gift from the Divine, what is our role?

Why Do I Need to Transform?

A few years ago, while addressing devotees in Brindavan, Bhagavan said, "I do not want your *bhakthi* (devotion). I want your transformation." What does Bhagavan mean when He says, "I do not want your *bhakthi*?" **That devotion which does not lead to transformation is no devotion at all.** What He wants is that our love for God should goad us, should prompt us, and should nudge us to action.

One of the queries that one of our Sai Youth has expressed is: "Why should we spiritually transform ourselves?" Is it because Swami wants us to transform? Or, is it because we must transform? Or, is it because the world needs our transformation? Or, is it because the world is going to be damned if we do not transform? Why should we transform? That is a very good thought.

I wonder if you have ever seen a caterpillar walking on its little legs on a leaf. As a caterpillar evolves, it grows into a beautiful butterfly, which hops from flower to flower, colourful, giving joy to everyone around. Have we ever asked ourselves, "Why should a caterpillar give up its existence as a caterpillar and become a butterfly?" Because its destiny is to be a butterfly! It is manifesting its own inherent nature when it transforms into a butterfly.

When we ask for whose sake we should transform, then I would like to ask, if you are sleeping, for whose sake should you wake up? For your own sake! When the Lord is walking on earth, if we are sleeping, time will be lost and then if you wake up, what a misfortune?

We are living in an age, which is called the information age, but the need of the hour is transformation. Bhagavan distinguishes between the two by saying, when you keep asking others, "Who are you, who are you?", when you are concerned with the world, you are in the stage of information. When you ask yourself the question, "Who am I? Who am I? You have taken the first step in transformation."

The Most Ideal Form of Love

One very beautiful aspect of Swami's that I have experienced and perhaps many of you have also felt the same is this. When we come to Bhagavan, He accepts us as we are, with all the angularity of personality, with all the vagaries of our minds, and with all our shortcomings; He accepts us completely as we are. But, we have lots of problems in accepting Him. We lay out so many conditions...1, 2, 3, 4. "Swami, if you fulfill this,

then I will accept you.” But, Swami is unconditional in His Love. **He gives us what we ask, so that we begin to ask Him for what He has come to give.** That is, to awaken us to our own reality.

Who Are We?

Decades ago, one day, here in Prasanthi Mandir, as Bhagavan was passing by amidst the students, we observed that there was a little redness in Swami’s eyes. We were a little concerned but hopeful that it would go away. Every *Darshan* that Swami would walk by, we would peer into His eyes to see whether the so-called ‘ailment’ had disappeared. But days passed and nothing happened. In fact, there was an elderly doctor in the *Mandir* who also expressed his concern to Swami.

One evening, Swami called a few of us students who were sitting in the *Darshan* line into the interview room. He asked the question, “Who are you?” We were dumbfounded by that question. “Who are we?” What is the answer that Swami expects? Then **He said, “You and I are one.”** The *Vedas* declared, “*Shrunvanthu vishwe, Amruthasya Puthraha.*” That is, “Listen my dear child, you are not a mortal being. You are the child of immortality!” If this is too high for us to understand, the same thing can be put in much easier terms. We are the children of Sai. If Sai represents the immortal spirit, we as His children, also embody that immortal being.

Swami explained, “See, for the last so many days, you have been worrying about My eye. It has come in the natural course of events. It will go away, in the same way. For the last 60 years of My life, I have never even once used My Divine Powers for My sake. It has always been for the benefit of the students, for devotees. But because you are feeling so much anguish, I offer you a solution. As you and I are one, there is no difference between Me and you. This is not My body, this is yours! If you pray to Me to cure the ailment that has come upon this physical frame, I assure you that it will be cured.” It was a great revelation to us students, to understand that we are truly inheritors of Swami’s spiritual heritage. That is the heritage of every Sai Youth!

What do the letters of the word “SAI” stand for? Swami talks of S.A.I. “S” stands for Spiritual transformation; “A” stands for Association transformation; “I” stands for Individual transformation. And Swami expects each one of us to rise to His expectations.

What Does Bhagavan Expect from Us?

I recall another incident which happened when we were undergraduate students. Swami was explaining the difference between His expectations and the expectations of the parents. He said, “Your parents expect that you study well, get good marks and when the education is complete, get a good job, a good wife, have good children and accumulate a lot of property.

That is the expectation of your parents. My expectation is very different.”

What does Swami expect from us? He said, “Cultivate good thoughts; get a good name, that is My expectation from you!” **“The end of education is character,”** Bhagavan has often reminded us. If a Sai Youth does not have character, he loses his right to use the Name of Sai associated with himself. Swami Himself is the embodiment of perfection.

How to Build Our Character?

How do we build our character, which is so dear to Swami? He says, **“Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a tendency. Sow a tendency, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character and reap your destiny.”**

When we are young, we are afflicted with so many thoughts. One day, the students were with Bhagavan in Trayee Brindavan, Bhagavan’s residence in Bangalore. The Trayee session, the interaction that students have with Bhagavan, was just over. He got up from His *jhoola* (swing). A student who was sitting somewhere in the front, knelt and got up to ask Swami something. Swami also went near him, “What is the matter?” The boy said, “Swami, I have got so many bad thoughts.”

Swami, I tell you, is the greatest psychologist, the greatest psychiatrist. He said, “*Bangaru*, my dear one, this is the season! If in the rainy season, you don’t get rain, when are you going to get the rains?” This is the season! Then He said, “Do you think that you are the one and sole individual who is afflicted with these thoughts?” He pointed to the entire student community and said, “All are in the same boat, it is only a question of degree. Only you are uttering it with your lips and others are keeping mum.”

Swami has said on other occasions, “When you get that wrong thought, you know it is wrong! You know it is not good for you. What should you do? The bare minimum that you should do is to see that it doesn’t translate into action.” Sow a thought, reap an action. Don’t allow the body to follow the thought. At the same time, when you get a good thought, we hesitate to translate into action for 101 different reasons. Maybe the time is not good, or other people may not come forward; so many reasons we have. When you get a good thought, immediately put it into action.

The Divine Master Knows When You Practise Love

One of the queries from a Sai Youth was, “What is the essence of Swami’s Message?” Of course, He Himself has chosen to speak on that. The essence of Swami’s Message is Love. And **the easiest way to experience love, to experience spiritual joy is service.** We may not be able to do many things in life. But in this age, something that you can certainly do is to serve anybody around you in need.

I will perhaps end with this small anecdote. There used to be a devotee in the *Ashram* at Brindavan, who had a mental illness. Bhagavan blessed the students with the privilege and the opportunity to take care of this devotee. It was, in fact, one of the most sought after service activities on campus.

There were a few students who would do this service in rotation. During the summer, when everybody else had gone to their respective home towns, there was one student who was caring for this devotee. Swami was also not in Brindavan. Very few teachers were around and there was this one student who was looking after this devotee's welfare. Even the washerman of the *Ashram* had disappeared. The student waited, one week, two weeks; and three weeks passed. There were 20 pairs of clothes collected over 20 days to be washed. This boy waited but the washerman was not around. He washed all 20 pairs of that devotee's clothes, unbeknownst to anyone in the hostel or in the *Ashram*.

A few weeks later, Swami returned to Brindavan, and suddenly He asked the Warden one day, "Bring the boys who take care of that devotee." When the boys arrived, Swami pointed to that boy and said, "I know that the washerman was away, and that you personally washed 20 pairs of clothes belonging to him." He then blessed the student and filled his hands with gifts.

What I am trying to emphasise is that every good little act you do, in the silence of the night, even if

nobody around knows it, God knows and is willing to bless you and recognise you for your effort.

The True Sathya Sai Student

Truly, it is a great privilege to be a Sai Youth. To be a Sai Youth is actually an aspiration. The other day I was interacting with some of our students and I asked them the question, "What is the difference between being a Sathya Sai University Student and a Sathya Sai Student?" I would like to share with you one student's reply: "To be a Sathya Sai University Student is to be a student of Sai for just a few years, during the tenure of your education. **To be a Sathya Sai Student is to be a Sai Student for life!**"

Brothers and sisters, let me assure you, if you can make this aspiration your heart's keenest desire, the Advent of the Lord amidst us will not have been in vain. Jai Sai Ram.

.....
Sri Sanjay Sahani is a Gold Medallist from Sri Sathya Sai University. He has served as the Warden of Sri Sathya Sai Hostel, Prasanthi Nilayam and is currently the Principal of the Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai University.



Question and Answer Session Workshop Number 1

QUESTION 1: Is it wrong to be ambitious in our worldly careers or should we be more focused on our spiritual life and be like *sanyasis*? How is this important, different, or unique for women?

Mrs. Srinivasan: May I interpret this question to read, “Is there a conflict between material ambitions and spiritual pursuits,” and then take the second question first and say I do not believe there is a difference between men and women and both are faced with a similar issue.

Perhaps, the answer to this can be best illustrated with an example. Let us dream of building an enterprise in the technology arena, which is the most rapidly growing sector today. It is not enough to look at this aspiration merely from the point of view of accumulating personal wealth. We should see how this technology will make the world a better place to live in. If we can use wealth to make the world a better place, use it in service, in the upliftment of the less privileged, then the larger cause of humanity will have been served. Bill Gates is perhaps an example for this. The answer to this question can be summarised in Swami’s saying, “**Be in the world, but do not let the world be in you.**”

QUESTION 2A: I am having trouble finding a method for increasing detachment and I find it very hard to grasp that we should detach ourselves from our friends and family.

QUESTION 2B: How do we develop discrimination since Bhagavan spoke about discrimination this morning?

Mr. Sahani: I will take up the second question first. The one distinguishing feature between animal life and human life is what Swami calls *viveka* or discrimination. Therefore, it is very important that we understand its nuances. We can accumulate all kinds of knowledge but if we do not use discrimination it is of no value.

What is discrimination? Discrimination is to inquire, “Is it good or is it bad, is it right or is it wrong?” The inquiry itself will lead us to the truth. For Sai Youth, for Sai students, we have a very simple prescription to nourish discrimination. **If you are faced with a dilemma, ask yourself this question – will Swami approve of this or not?** Would Swami like me to do this or would He not like me to do this?

Again, Swami has said there are two kinds of discrimination. The first is called individual discrimination and the second is called fundamental discrimination. When I think of protecting my own

self-interests alone, I am indulging in **individual discrimination**. When I think of the welfare of one and all and subsume my individual welfare to societal welfare, then I have cultivated **fundamental discrimination**. In one of His beautiful stanzas, Swami says, and this leads me to the second question, “*Smara Nithya Anithyathwam* (discriminate between what is eternal and what is transient).”

The first question was how do we live in the world and yet be detached. In this context, let me give Swami’s own illustration. He takes the example of a school headmaster. The headmaster of the school looks into every small detail of the school’s welfare. During his tenure he takes care of the entire property of the school as if it is his own property, knowing fully well that one day he will retire, he will no longer be the school headmaster and he will have to leave everything behind.

On the other hand, when he is retiring and he is going back to his native place, he packs up everything in the house including the old sandals and the broken broom because he feels they belong to him. Swami says that we should be like the school headmaster. When he is in the hot seat, he takes care of everything, does everything that is required in the worldly sense but knows all the time that it is transient and one day he will have to leave everything behind. I think if we adopt this fundamental approach to life, detachment will come easily. Again let me give just a one-line definition. **What is attachment? It is detachment from God. What is detachment? It is attachment to God.** This is Swami’s definition.

QUESTION 3: Very often in the workplace it is very difficult to practise sweet and loving speech with everyone. The staff will only listen and get things done when management reprimands them using a harsh tone. How can this be overcome?

Mrs. Srinivasan: Let me begin by saying it is not necessarily true and then try to explain this further. If we can control our anger and really talk without any trace of ego, we can avoid what most often happens in the workplace. Prejudices mar our judgment. So, we should put aside anger, all prejudices, and look at the problem objectively. We can be soft-spoken, but the answer is not necessarily soft. We can present this in an objective yet firm manner. The choice of words is important and with the focus being to maintain the other person’s dignity and self-respect. If the choice of words is made without a trace of ego and without

any prejudices, then I think it is eminently possible to convey the message and get the work done without raising your voice.

QUESTION 4: What attitude does Swami expect us to have towards our non-devotee peers and others whose values are so distant from His teachings? When we are forced to deal with them in the world, how should we best interact with them and yet practise His teachings?

Mr. Sahani: First of all, I do not think any one of us has a right to either call anybody else or even to call ourselves devotees or non-devotees. It is for the Lord to acknowledge, not for us to publicise. I still remember when the U.S.S.R. was under a different set up, Swami used to say, “Communist – come you next.” And on last *Sivarathri* day, we had a wonderful spectacle of so many Russian devotees seated in this hall waving to Swami and who were acknowledged when Swami mentioned, “See in this hall so many Russian devotees have assembled.” **So it is for the Lord to say who His devotee is and who is not.**

But yes, there are some of us who recognise the Divine in this form of Bhagavan, there are others who may not. Some of them may be indifferent, and some of them may be even hostile. How should we relate to such people? Suppose there is a primary school student and there is a university graduate. The primary school student speaks something, which you know is not right. In your heart of hearts, with your knowledge, you know it is not right. You do not get annoyed with the primary school student. You understand that you were also once upon a time in the primary school. If that child is speaking the way he is speaking, he is speaking out of ignorance. There is a saying, “Every saint has a past and every sinner a future.” So let us not condemn anybody because the Lord would not disown anybody.

There is an anecdote in the life of Emperor Akbar. He used to have his favourite minister by the name of Birbal. One day the minister told his emperor, “My Lord, there is something which you can do which God cannot do.” Emperor Akbar was startled and asked, “What is it which I am capable of but that God is not!” Then, his minister said, “*Jahanpanah* (Emperor)! You can banish me from your kingdom, but the Lord cannot.” So let us not cultivate that ego, that here we are the Sai Youth and we are the only Sai Youth.

There are thousands of people, millions of people all over the world who may perhaps be dearer to the Lord because they follow Bhagavan’s teachings in their lives. Swami gives the following example. Suppose you dislike somebody because he doesn’t love Swami the way you love Him. Because of this difference, you dislike each other. How should you relate to this

person? Swami gives this example. Suppose you are walking on the street, and you walk in front of this gentleman’s house. Above the door, you find a picture of a deity hung and you know God is one. You see that image of the Lord and at that point of time you do not say, “This picture of the Lord is hanging over the doorstep of my enemy and therefore does not deserve my adoration or my respect.” Instead, you offer your salutations to the picture anyways because you see the Divine in the picture.

Swami says, “I am installed in every individual. See me in everyone.” In your heart of hearts, do not have any hatred, any ill will because the Lord is installed in every individual’s heart. This is my suggestion. This is another practical tip which I have found very useful. If you feel that your relations with any individual gets sour, and still you want to feel that he is Divine, he is as much a child of God as you are – **think that this individual is only wearing a mask and it is Swami who is actually behind that costume.** Try to imagine and see what happens. It can do wonders to you and the situation at hand.

QUESTION 5: As parents, how should we instill solid family values in our children in a world that apparently has no values?

Mrs. Srinivasan: The first and perhaps the best way to instill values is to personally practise them. It would be quite impossible to tell your children to speak the truth if they found you lying, or avoid bad habits if they found you were addicted to them. In the words of Swami, **keep practice and precept in line.**

Secondly, watch closely the company they keep. Swami often stresses the need to keep good company, for man is known by the company he keeps. As parents we can encourage them and guide them to keep good company. Thirdly, encourage a dialogue. We can’t really control or put a whole set of restrictions on children. What we can do is to instill in them a set of values and the ability to make good decisions, to instill in them and develop and nurture that power of discrimination. Finally, and most importantly, encourage them, encourage their devotion to God, for this is the best anchor in our lives and the only true check that works from within.

QUESTION 6: If you are alone through circumstance and cannot regularly have the benefit of good *satsang*, what is the best advice to help us in our spiritual progress?

Mr. Sahani: What is *satsang*? ‘*Sath*’ means the eternal principle and ‘*Sang*’ means to be in the company of, to be associated with it. So *satsang* is actually not the company of Mr. X or Mrs. Y. ***Satsang* is to be in the proximity of the Lord.** You may have a friend. When



he is talking to you about Swami, you are in *satsang*. When he is talking to you about some worldly affair, you cannot call it *satsang*. So the content of the association is important, rather than any individual.

Also, the questioner says, “I am alone.” When we have discovered Swami why should we ever feel that we are alone? Swami gives an example. Suppose you are coming from Bangalore to Prasanthi Nilayam, and as you near Prasanthi Nilayam, you say Prasanthi Nilayam has come. Actually Prasanthi Nilayam has not come, you have arrived at Prasanthi Nilayam. If you think God is 10 miles away from you, He is 10 miles away from you. If you think God is in you, around you, above you, below you – He is verily with you.

Just to give you an instance from personal experience. One day when Bhagavan was here in Prasanthi Nilayam, a colleague of mine came to me and said that his wife was in the hospital and was in a coma. He asked if we could inform Swami. He said, “Swami is in Prasanthi Nilayam and we are in Bangalore. How do we reach out to Swami?” I said, “First, immediately send a telegram to Bhagavan.” And this happened around 12:15 in the afternoon. Around 12:40 or 12:45 when I reached my room in the hostel, the phone rang. I picked up the phone. The faculty member was on the other side. He said, “I have just returned from the post office. As you suggested I sent a telegram to Swami praying for Swami’s Grace. I reached home and as I entered the home the phone rang. My brother-in-law rang up from the hospital to say that my wife had come out of coma.” I said, “Swami! You are sitting in Prasanthi Nilayam, but You are so very, very much with us, we feel You are with us.” When you feel that God is with you, He is definitely with you.

There are certain other ways in which we can feel Swami’s Presence. Also, we need not wait for distressful situations. For example, Swami says, “There is no difference between My word and Me.” There is a volume of Sai literature that has been published. When you read Swami’s words, when you read people’s experiences with Swami, you are transported to the Presence of Swami. There is another practice our students have cultivated. They have a fascination for collecting photographs of Bhagavan. I do not know how many of you have practised it. Just

take out your photo album, and keep looking at Swami’s beautiful portraits captured in photographs. I tell you, you will have a wonderful *Darshan!* You will not realise how time flies! When we are here, we hear a number of devotional songs, *bhajans*. No matter which part of the world you are in, if you take some cassettes and listen to them on your own personal audio system, it will transport you to where Swami is. Swami is everywhere, but our mind will be transported to His Presence.

Today, we also have Radio Sai, which is doing wonderful work transmitting Swami’s Message to every nook and corner of the world. You can tune into Radio Sai and receive the wonderful vibrations. In fact, in the Poornachandra Auditorium they have put up a wonderful exhibition that is worth visiting. I hope during your stay here, you will have a chance to see it. So there are any number of ways in which we can tune in to the Divine. It is our choice.

QUESTION 7: How is it possible to keep our faith in Swami intact when things go seriously wrong in our lives?

Mrs. Srinivasan: This is best answered in Swami’s own words, when He says, “**I expect those devoted to me to treat joy, grief and loss with equal fortitude.**” He will never give up on those who are attached to Him. Trials and tribulations test our inner strength; they build our moral fibre and bring us even closer to God.



Workshop Session 2



Remember Swami

Dr. Samuel Sandweiss

Dearest Beloved Swami, *Pranams* at Your Divine Lotus Feet. I offer these few words to You and pray that Your Love comes through them.

Respected elders and wonderful Sai Youth, you have been sitting patiently for a long time, and I am truly impressed by your enthusiasm and steadfastness. How remarkable to see 7,000 young adult delegates gathered here today, about 3,500 representing over 80 countries outside of India and about 3,500 wonderful young brothers and sisters from India.

I would like to first address Swami, who is Omnipresent. Although not physically here, how exhilarating to know that He is just across the hall. Swami, in front of these brothers and sisters I want to tell You how much we love You, and how grateful I am for what You have done for our family. You are the central figure in our family, giving steady, loving direction and bearing the burden of our welfare. It is because of Your Love, Your example, and the example of Your students, that my four daughters, my wife, and I have such full and happy lives. For this, I thank You, Swami.

Remember Swami

Swami can give each and every one of us a full and happy life. I came to Swami as a young adult just like you, 35 years ago. Over the ensuing 35 years, He has shown our family that He is the doer in the family, offering direction and solving problems. This is not a philosophic idea. Swami is actually the central figure in our lives, and it is He who makes our family strong and happy.

How is this done? Swami gives us each an extraordinary gift. Its value is immeasurable, worth more than all of the gold and diamonds in the world. Swami gives Himself to each of us, placing Himself in our hearts. We carry Him with us at all times; we are never separate from Him. Swami actually lives in our hearts. We are all here because we have experienced this miracle. Now, we have to care for the treasure. I want to tell you some of my insights about how to

nurture and care for the treasure of Divinity within your own heart.

In order to keep Swami's Love alive and see that it grows day by day with added lustre, we have to remember Him. It's as simple as that. We have to remember Him.

Now you say that this is a simple teaching. Well, here in Prasanthi Nilayam it is simple because we can be physically near Swami all the time. We are living in His Presence, talking about Him, reading about Him, absorbing Him, and loving Him all the time. So, we can't stop thinking about Him while we are here.

But beware: the world is very treacherous, and the mind very tricky. Swami sometimes affectionately tells us that the mind is a mad monkey. Then, even worse, He says that it's a drunken mad monkey – and even worse. The natural inclination of the mind is to look into the world and get attached to sense objects. When we get attached to these objects, we can easily forget Swami who lives in our heart. Because the mind deceives us like this, Swami lovingly reminds us to remember Him and see Him in every being. The *Bhagavad Gita* tells us that we should be aware of Him every moment of existence. His teaching is simply to remember Him, remember Him, remember Him.

Master the Mind

Swami teaches us how to master the mind and become a mastermind. **The mind is a bundle of thoughts and desires.** When the mind thinks of sense objects, it becomes attracted to these objects, desires them, and becomes attached to them. Our mind leads us to believe that the gratification of our desires, including ego gratification, brings us happiness. We want name, fame, and fortune. We want power, prestige, and position. But all these ego gratifications are short-lived. Deep down, we know this to be true.

The nature of the mind is to get attracted and then addicted to sense objects in the outer world. We must battle with the six enemies – lust, anger, pride, greed,

hatred, and attachment. When we get angry we lose our bearings and our reasonableness. We lose our sensibilities and our memory about what is important. We forget the purpose of life, and when that happens, we self-destruct. So, we have to apply a little restraint to this monkey mind.

Right now, sitting here hour after hour in Prasanthi Nilayam, we are learning self-restraint. Even though we endure discomfort and inconvenience, we apply self-control and hold in the energy. Inwardly, we offer the austerity to Swami and pray for His Love. Swami likes to see this type of self-control. I know that He likes us to sit for long periods; I've seen it for 35 years. Inwardly, I say to Him, "Swami, don't You know that my legs are aching, my back is hurting, and I can't sit anymore?" And it seems that He says, "Only another three hours." I believe that He likes us to sit quietly and with self-restraint, to bring awareness to the heart where Swami lives.

See God in Everyone

I'd like to tell you a story about how the mind is transformed when we remember Swami. After knowing Swami for a few years, one day, as a young psychiatrist I was called to see a patient in the locked unit of a psychiatric hospital. He was a middle-aged, wasted and weathered man who was picked up on the street in a confused state. He had not bathed for days, was incoherent, dirty, and reeked of an awful odour. What to do with such a man? Not only was he dirty and foul-smelling, but to make matters worse he had been burned over 70% of his body. Most of his ears, eyelids, and nose were burned off. You could see the holes on the front of his face where his nose once was. Unsightly scars deformed his body and squeezed his hands almost closed.

As I looked at this poor soul I said to myself, "Oh my God, how can he stand to be in such a body?" I felt revulsion toward him. I wanted to leave. Then I caught myself and remembered – "This must be Swami." I reminded myself that if Swami was to come to me, He would do it in a way that would show me my weakness – my inability to see Him in everyone. "My God, this must be Swami," I thought.

As soon as I remembered Swami, everything changed. I didn't want to be like the Shirdi Sai devotee who approached Shirdi Baba and said, "You told me that You were going to visit me, and You never came." Shirdi Baba replied, "I came as the dog wanting your food, but you beat me away. You chased me away." I didn't want to deny Swami like that. The strange thing was that not only did I think that this tortured soul was Swami, I had a strange inner feeling much deeper than thought, an awesome feeling that this person actually was Swami. In an instant, I experienced a wonderful

transformation of my feelings and thinking. I liked this man!

I liked this man. I wanted to be in his presence. I looked deeply into his eyes to see if I could see Swami looking back. I looked at his deformed lips, trying to make out Swami's smile. I wanted a smile from him, and I wanted to do my best for him. Remembering Swami brought awareness of His teachings about *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthi*, *Prema*, and *Ahimsa*, I wanted this patient to have peace. I didn't want to ignore him in any way. When I came to see him everyday, I thought I was having *Darshan* of Swami. How could this transformation come about? It all followed from remembering Swami. This is the way to fan the small flame of love in our hearts so that it grows day by day with added lustre. We have to remind ourselves. We must retrain our mind and transform it into an instrument that sees only Swami. In short, remember Him, remember Him, remember Him.

God Bears Our Burdens

Once my young daughter asked Swami, "How can we get closer to You?" He said, "**You have to talk to me all the time and give me your pain.**" This is a very deep teaching. Be ever vigilant. Swami has even described the process as a fight. He has said, "Follow the Master; Face the devil; **Fight** to the end; Finish the game." Yes, we face difficult situations – and when facing them, we must think of Swami. Remembering Him during difficulties takes **practice, practice, practice**. Practise like a good tennis or basketball player; be creative and persistent in keeping your attention on Swami. This is a critical step because Swami has said that if we offer everything to Him, if we meditate on Him, serve Him, devote ourselves to Him, worship Him, remember Him, if we know that He is always with us, providing for us in this world and the next, He will bear the burden of our welfare.

Will Swami really bear the burden of our welfare? Can He teach us how to be completely unaffected by adverse conditions? Can He teach us how to experience endless bliss and peace and how to give and receive unconditional love? The only way to find out is to practise and see. I can tell you from my own personal experience that this practice constitutes the art of living and is the path to personal freedom and happiness. I have not fully mastered the practice of offering everything to Swami, but have had enough experience to say with conviction that **if we live our lives with Swami and offer everything to Him, we will have full and happy lives**. Who can offer you such an opportunity? Any businessman can tell you that this deal cannot be turned down. When we turn over to Swami all of our troubles and pains, He gives us boundless Love in return. You can't beat this deal!

Offer All to God

Swami says, “A man filled with love has great peace of mind, purity of heart, and is unaffected by adverse conditions, failures, or losses.” By remembering Swami all the time and experiencing love for Him, we can achieve peace of mind, purity of heart, and be unaffected by adverse conditions, failures or losses. We cannot learn this truth from books. **It must be learned through experience, by constantly remembering Swami and offering all acts to Him.** When I remembered Swami and felt His Love, I immediately understood how to practise the five human values – *Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema, and Ahimsa* – in caring for my burnt and deformed patient.

In February 2004, Swami instructed me to bring Him the book *With Love Man Is God*, by Guru Poornima time, July 2004. That gave me about five months to finish a book that I had been working on for five years. He had hardly talked to me about the book but for a few short comments, showing me that He was aware of it. Even so, I had the feeling that He was actually writing the book for me.

I was nervous about the five-month deadline. To get the book ready for publication and then have it printed within that time would mean all-out hard work for the next five months. I would have to complete final writing and editing, choose about 100 pictures and prepare them for placement within the text. I knew from past experiences that Swami frequently has us work very hard and face many challenges in order that we confront our own ego, learn forbearance, and develop faith that He will help us.

Almost every day of those five months, there was a big obstacle to overcome. This prompted frequent conversations with Swami: “Swami, I know that I can’t overcome this obstacle by myself. You told me to bring the book by July. That can only happen if You lift this obstacle. So Swami, now I give the book to You and ask for Your Grace.”

This spiritual attitude should not be mistaken for giving up one’s responsibility. It is essential to work as hard, and with as much talent and skill as possible. Yet, when we meet an overwhelming obstacle, we offer the work to Swami. We become aware that our own gains or losses depend upon Swami. Almost every day, I reached the point of offering the task to Swami because the obstacles I faced were so imposing.

I’ll tell you about one of those obstacles: A young adult was helping me with the desktop publishing software, *InDesign*. This particular young man, who knew much more about this programme than I, lived about 80 miles north of me. Early one morning, I packed my computer and took a train to his apartment. While we were installing the *InDesign* programme, we came upon a message stating, “wrong activation code.”

After all the effort and travel, I was met with the obstacle of a wrong activation code. I called tech support and asked for a solution. I was told that the code could not be given over the telephone. I would have to show proof of purchase and request the code in writing by mail. I told the technician that I didn’t have time as I was working with the book designer right then. The technician simply reiterated that I would have to send the request by mail. As much as I pleaded my case, he held his ground. I felt stymied and in frustration I prayed to Swami, “Dear Swami, I am doing my best to bring You the book by July, but cannot get over this obstacle by myself. I offer the obstacle to You and know that success or failure rests with You.”

There comes a time in life when we reenact the drama of Arjuna and Krishna in the middle of the battlefield. Arjuna felt overwhelmed by the impending war and threw down his bow. Many times in life, we feel overwhelmed by obstacles; at those times, if we look to Swami, He will provide direction. **The outcome might not always be what we like, but He encourages us to fight on, and promises that, by His Grace, we will have full and successful lives.**

I performed the spiritual practice of offering all to Him, and in this particular case Swami brought me through the obstacle in a pleasing way. There was a moment of silence, and then the technician said, “Well, I can understand your situation, and here is your activation code.” Then, as if nothing had happened, we were able to continue on with the book.

God Is the Doer

Almost every day was like this. As each obstacle appeared, I had a conversation with Swami. “Swami, I can go no further; You have to do it.” Then the obstacle would mysteriously disappear. Every day, I practised this spiritual exercise until it was easier and easier to remember. We have to work hard and diligently with as much talent and effort as we can, and when we meet obstacles, call out for Swami’s help. Like a magical movie, almost every day, an obstacle appeared and Swami removed it. The book was finally printed and in my hands two days before my trip. Just preceding its arrival I had a dream.

I was standing in front of a large apartment building. Swami was in disguise, looking like a young real estate agent in a black suit and with His hair slicked back tightly against His scalp. I knew that the real estate agent was actually Swami teaching us about the **real state**. Swami approached me, and I bowed humbly before Him. Excitedly I blurted out, “Swami I am bringing a book to You.” And do you know what Swami told me? He said, “I am bringing a book to **you!**” Yes, of course, who is doing what to whom?

This is a big lesson. We get involved and absorbed in the world and think that we are the doer. When we get into trouble we cry out to Swami for help. Then Swami comes and carries us to success. When all is done and finished, even though Swami clearly has done the work, we take the credit. At the end we announce, "Didn't I do a good job, Swami?" And then He simply reminds us, "What are you talking about? I'm giving the book to **you**."

This is important to understand. Swami can give us a full and happy life. He can make our family life, personal life, and spiritual life so happy. Sometimes we lose sight of this fundamental fact, forget Swami, and suffer from being attached to the material world. **The way out of this predicament is to remember Swami at all times. He is the source of inspiration, discrimination and Grace.** He saves and sustains. So, keep attention on Him throughout every moment of existence. If we can't do this every moment as the *Gita* tells us, then remember Him at least once a day – or at meal times – but remember Him we must.

This teaching is at the core of our *sadhana*. Offer Him our pain and receive His Love. This is a heroic kind of undertaking. When we offer ourselves to God like this, I know that the gods and goddesses in the spiritual realm are cheering us on and the whole world is uplifted.

When we take to the task of remembering Swami, offering Him our best efforts, and surrendering the

fruits of our labour to Him, He promises to bear the burden of our welfare. He promises to take our hand and walk with us like a friend, to lead us like a guide and guard us from evil and temptation. He will be our staff and support. He tells us that we will draw nearer to Him. We will enter into Him and begin to understand His mystery. We will develop and achieve Divine qualities. We will melt into Him, merge into Him and become Him.

Dear young brothers and sisters, let us take each other's hand, and, saying Swami's Name, offer our best to Him. Let us develop ourselves as best as we can, serve Him, and offer pleasure and pain to Him. Then, He will carry us and bear the burden of our welfare. Let us walk with Him, melt in Him, merge in Him, and become Him. Sai Ram.

.....
Dr. Samuel Sandweiss has been a practising psychiatrist for 40 years and has written three books about Swami, *Sai Baba: The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist*, *Spirit and the Mind*, and the recently published *With Love Man Is God*. His books have brought many devotees to Swami. He and his wife oversee Birth Day Publishing Company, which publishes books about Sai Baba by Western authors. He has served on the Sathya Sai Baba Council of the United States since its beginning in 1975. He has had a Sai Centre in his home for 33 years.



Realise Your True Nature with His Love and Grace

Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy

Respected elders, my young brothers and sisters!

The son of God who lived in flesh and blood two thousand years ago said, "My kingdom is not of this earth. My kingdom shall be wherever two or three of you meet in Love, in wonder at the loveliness of life, in good cheer, and in remembrance of Me."

Dear brothers and sisters! We are here, thousands and thousands of us, meeting to remember Him, to be in His Loving Presence. Our lives are filled with love because we have seen God, in the most adorable loving form that ever adorned the face of the earth. We are in good cheer because all of our cares and concerns are lost under His loving care. We live in love because that is the one and the only Message of our Lord. We live in love. We experience it every moment of our lives.

First, I would like to congratulate the youth from Karnataka for making us feel Swami's Love in that gorgeous dining hall – Love manifested in concrete form as food! It is not just food for the body; their love, their humility, and their faith in Swami: all that is food for our soul.

We are here gathered, aspiring to be men and women of God - His messengers - to heal the wounds of the world which is deeply in conflict and misery.

My dear brothers and sisters, every man and woman who is chosen by God to be His instrument in His Mission has one secret. There are two aspects to this wonderful secret. These two facets of that wonderful secret will make us really men and women of God, will make us messengers of His Love, and leaders of an ailing world. One facet finds beautiful expression in a song composed by Meerabai, the great saint-poetess of India. The other message is revealed in the wonderful words of Brother Lawrence, in his immortal work, 'Practising the Presence of God.'

Cry for God

First, let me speak to you about Meerabai. Meerabai said, "I nurtured and brought up the tender creeper of love for God in my heart, watering it with my tears; now the creeper has spread all over, yielding to me wonderful fruits of bliss." That is one secret, one facet of the secret.

*"Asuvana jala seenchi seenchi prembeli boyee,
Ab to bel phailgayee aanandaphala hoyee"*

These are the exact words of Meerabai. It is only with our tears, many times unshed, that we can really bring up the tender creeper of love for God in our hearts. Khalil Gibran said, "The most sacred of our tears do not seek our eyes." What he meant was that there are unshed tears preserved in our hearts like pearls in an oyster shell.

Anyone who wants to be a true devotee of God should long to shed these tears. When a man or woman sheds tears in pangs of separation from God, the day is not far off when God will make him or her shed tears of joy from union with Him. "When winter comes, can spring be far behind?" asked the great poet, Shelley.

Dr. Samuel Sandweiss said we have to share our pains with Him. What is our real pain? **Real pain is not feeling oneness with Him, who is our very heart and soul.** That is our real pain. The panacea for this suffering was revealed by Swami yesterday in His Discourse. He said, "**Where are you seeking God? You are God!**" We have to realise this truth.

Kabirdas said:

*"Mujhko kahaa doonde bande
Main to tere paas mein
Main to tere shwaaas mein
Main to tere vishwaas mein!"*

"Where do you search for Me? Do you look for Me in a temple or a masjid? Am I on a hilltop, or on the shores of a lake? I am always with you. I am always near you. I live in your breath. I reside in your faith!"

The real pain is that we feel separate from God. The root of all problems is that we feel separated from God. If we want to return to Him, the only way is to pine for Him. That is what Meerabai meant in that beautiful poem. That is the power of longing, or a burning aspiration for God, as expressed by Sri Aurobindo.

Live in His Presence

Now coming to Brother Lawrence; he gave the world the other facet of the secret of a man or woman of God. He said, "I found in books many ways of going to God, but I thought that they puzzled me. I threw away all the books and started living with God. I chose to be with God always. As often as my mind wandered away from His Holy Presence, I recalled it

to the remembrance of Him. By often repeating the same act, it became a spontaneous habit. Now I walk before God in faith, in humbleness, and in love. I have no will but that of God. I will not take even a straw from the ground against His orders, or with any other motivation but for love of Him.”

These are the two facets, my dear young brothers and sisters. You aspire to be close to Swami, physically and also spiritually.

After having lived for nearly four decades with young men and children who are bound to Swami with the silken thread of love, whenever I see the blossoming of a young heart in a child, whether a boy or a girl, I feel overwhelmed by the wonderful Love of Swami which relieves His children of the pain of separation from Him and grants them the bliss of union with Him.

Among His children are those who are His students in the University or in schools. In fact there are the other students, students for life - the young men and women who come to Him voluntarily. Among the students who are admitted to the university and the schools, there are those who have been brought to Him by their parents. But all of you have come to Him from many countries on your own. You did not come here because your parents wanted you to come here. You came here because you yearned for Him, the great Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The Power of Longing

It was Khalil Gibran who said, “There is a space between man’s aspirations and his attainments. It can only be traversed by the power of his longing.” We aspire for something. If we have to attain it, we have to long for it.

The *Upanishad* declares,

*“Naayamaatma pravachanena labhyah
na medhayaa na bahunaa shrutena
yamevaihsa vrunute tena labhyah
tasyaisha Atma vivrunute tanum shvaam”*

“God cannot be won over by giving lectures or by listening to lectures; nor can He be attained by a brilliant brain. **God reveals Himself to the one who chooses Him and Him alone to the exclusion of everything else.**”

That is what Jesus meant when He said, “Whoever wants to follow Me, let him take up his cross and follow in My footsteps.” There is a beautiful book – *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas Kempis. He says, “There are many who are willing to share heaven with Jesus, but there is none to carry the burden of His cross.”

The power of longing is everything. The aspiration to love Swami, the pining to merge in Him, the yearning to experience His Presence – that is everything on the spiritual path.

Let me recount one of my experiences. I came to Swami more than four decades ago as a boy of eighteen years. The first words He spoke to me were, “You are worried about your future. Don’t worry about your future. Your future is safe and secure in Swami’s Hands.” Those were the words of assurance that He gave me. Within five years, I decided to take to this path – the path of total dedication to God-realisation and service to mankind.

I was living on the western coast of India in one of the *Ashrams* attached to the educational campus of Swami. It was a very beautiful place; it was surrounded by hills all around. As a young man of twenty-two with love for God and love for nature, I enjoyed living there.

I used to go up the hills almost every evening and watch the sunset. That provided inspiration for my contemplation and meditation in the evenings.

One evening, after watching a very beautiful sunset, I came down to the *Ashram*. There was a book – *‘Ramakrishna, the Great Master’* – on my table; I had left it there before going out. I opened it at random and read the passage that describes Sri Ramakrishna’s visit to Brindavan, the holy land sanctified by the Divine sport of the *Avatar* Sri Krishna as a young boy. Ramakrishna was standing on the banks of the River Yamuna watching the sunset. His mind went back to five thousand years ago and he said to his companions, “The same river Yamuna is flowing; the same cows and calves are returning to their homes; the same cowherds are bringing them home! But where is my Krishna?” And he lost all body-consciousness. He went into *Bhava Samadhi*, the blissful state of experience of oneness with God.

That episode touched my heart, and it served as a very powerful springboard for my contemplation. In my contemplation, I beheld myself in a very beautiful and heavenly setting filled with the strains of soul-stirring music. I was standing in front of a huge door. I said to the Lord, “Swami, everything is absolutely Divine here. I can feel Your Presence, but I am not able to see You! Where are You?” I opened that door only to find another closed door. I opened the second one, and there was another closed door. And finally when I opened the seventh door, I saw Swami standing there, smiling. I knelt down, kissed His Feet and submitted to Him, “Swami, I have crossed seven doors to meet You here.” Swami replied, “Look behind Me; I have crossed fourteen doors to meet you here!” **We have to take just one step and Swami will take a hundred steps towards us.**

What Should We Aspire For?

I was a very frail-minded young man and a “doubting Thomas” when I first came to Swami. I had

hundreds of doubts and questions. It was my good fortune that at a later date, Swami personally answered every one of my questions.

My dear young brothers and sisters, I can tell you, based on the authenticity of my experience, that every one of you can become a wonderful instrument in the Hands of Swami. **Today's world needs Swami's Message; it needs His Love and compassion. We can all become His messengers in the trouble-torn world.**

Living and working with Swami's students and other young men over a long period of time, I have observed that generally there are three types of aspirations in their young hearts. The first is the aspiration of those who never had the opportunity to interact with Swami. They have been having Swami's *Darshan* for many years, but they have never had the good fortune of a personal interaction with Swami or of being in His close proximity. Their aspiration is very, very simple. Many such young men have come to me in despair and said, "Sir, this is all I want. I want to talk to Swami and Swami should talk to me." My dear brothers and sisters, isn't this your aspiration as well? Yes or no? (*Yes! Yes!*)

Second is the aspiration of those young men and women who have had some interaction with Swami or those who have enjoyed His loving proximity for some time. Their aspiration is: "I should continue to enjoy His proximity and loving interaction with Him."

And the third aspiration is one that liberates you from both, the first and second aspirations; it is of a little higher order and more evolved. Many such aspirants have told me, "Sir, I want to realise and experience Swami in my heart. I want to feel His Presence every moment of my life. I want to become an effective instrument in His Hands, in His Mission." That is the third aspiration.

How do we achieve this lofty aspiration? When you are fired up with the ideals of the third aspiration, the first and the second fade into insignificance. Once a well-known saint of Karnataka State came to our little school in Mudenahalli. Today, it is a well-developed institution. At that time, it was very small in size, though not in its idealistic aspirations. There were just two small buildings, one for the school and the other for the hostel. The strength of the school was just fifty-four boys. The visitor was known to be a great saint and a man of realisation. When I took him to our little prayer hall, where there was a beautiful photograph of Swami, he prostrated in front of that photograph. In my ignorance I asked him, "Swamiji, have you met Baba at anytime?" He laughed and said, "I see Him every moment of my life, everywhere."

How to Conquer the Mind

For those who see Him every moment of their life, everywhere, there is no need to interact with Swami physically. Swami is not the physical form at all! It is a sacrilege and blasphemy to limit Him to the form; His reality is much beyond His physical form. He tells us, "You are God! You and I are one!" We have to experience this truth. But, what is our problem? Young men and women, the problem is our own mind. The problems of all serious spiritual aspirants boil down to this. In the words of Khalil Gibran, "Should we all confide our sins to one another, we all would laugh at one another for lack of originality!"

Duryodhana, the great villain of *Mahabharata*, expressed the same truth most succinctly when he confessed,

*"Jaanaami dharmam na cha me pravrittih
Jaanaamyadharmam na cha me nivritih"*

"I know what is right; but, I do not have the will-power to practise what is right. I know what is wrong; and, I do not have the will-power to give up what is wrong."

That is the problem. That is the tragic human predicament everywhere. So the question is how do we control our minds? Among the many questions given to me to answer this morning from Sai Youth, that is one very important question, "To what extent can we control our minds?" My dear brothers and sisters, **if you have found Him in your heart by His loving Grace, you can control the mind and senses completely.**

The *Upanishad* declares,

*"Bhidyate hrudayagranthih chidyante sarva
samshayaah
ksheeyante chaasya karmaani tasmindrushte
paraavare"*

"When one beholds God in one's heart, the knot of ignorance in the heart is cut asunder; all doubts and questions vanish once and for all and the evil consequences of one's past actions are dissolved."

All that we have to do is to see Him face-to-face in our heart, which is very much possible, only if we choose.

Mind is not an enemy to be vanquished; it is our younger brother to be trained with love. Control of mind and senses does not mean complete suppression of mind and senses. It means that we have to make our mind and senses do what we want them to do and utilise them to attain the twin objectives of God-realisation and service to mankind.

How do we do it? There is no man or woman on earth at any time who conquered his or her mind without bountiful Grace from God. Every man and woman is weak without His Grace and Love. But with His Love and Grace, no man or woman will be weak.

How do we attain Divine Grace? We have to long and pray for it; and, we have to establish regular communion with Him through prayers, *namasmarana*, *bhajan*, meditation and loving service to Him who is in the form of our fellow beings. When He gives, He will give Himself to us completely; that is one thing for certain.

Here are some more practical tips to control the mind. The best way to control the mind is to keep it happy by right means. All the time you can keep it happy. The greatest happiness, no doubt, is in union with God. Swami says, “**True happiness is union with God.**” But the minds of young men and women are not stable enough to be in that state always.

Once, I submitted to Swami a question that bothers most of the seekers on the spiritual path: “Swami, it is not surprising that in those who have not tasted the sweetness of Divine joy, the senses and mind will drag them down to the sensual pleasures. But we have tasted, at least to some extent, spiritual joy; but still our senses drag us down. Why is it?” He gave an answer which only He can. He said, “*Dvaitabhaavamunde varaku adi thappindi kaadu, Nayana!*” (“As long as you feel that you are separate from God, it is bound to happen.”) The degrading power of mind and senses will prevail over us only till we experience oneness with God.

Desire the Highest – God

But there is a problem. Most of us cannot be in that state always, though that is our ultimate goal. Then how can we keep the mind always happy? Man has five sources of happiness, in ascending order: The sensual pleasure is the lowest level of happiness. The next level of happiness takes the form of sports, athletics, and other physical pursuits. Third is the emotional happiness which can be derived from music, literature, beauty of nature, loving and caring for others and any labour of love. The fourth level is the intellectual happiness when we pursue study and research in any subject that we love – science, humanities, or commerce. It is not correct to say that intellectual happiness is higher than emotional happiness. In fact, emotional happiness is more satisfying than intellectual happiness. We can surely say that both of them are of a higher level as compared to physical happiness. The ultimate level of happiness that man is capable of is spiritual happiness.

As a young man, I tried to keep the mind happy always by resorting to one of the four higher levels of happiness so that I did not stoop to the lowest level of sensual pleasures. I played games with boys: cricket, volleyball, table tennis. I kept my mind very happy. In fact, I tell you, when you win a point by a smash in table tennis, tennis or any other game, you will feel the thrill of union with God. It is no blasphemy to say this! At

other times, I kept my mind happy by reading ennobling literature like novels, short stories, or dramas. A novel like Dostoevsky’s ‘*Karamazov Brothers*,’ which was a favourite book of Albert Einstein, or ‘*God’s Pauper*’ by Kazantzakis and the plays of Shakespeare and Rabindranath Tagore gave me great joy, and kept my mind happy. I pursued the study of philosophy of the *Upanishads* and of many of the eastern and western philosophers. That also gave me great happiness. At the same time, I practised meditation as long as I could as a means for being in the Presence of God. Thus, I could keep myself happy almost always.

A mind in despair or sorrow is most uncontrollable. A happy mind is easily amenable to control. And I tell you today, the mind does not trouble me much. Since a depressed mind is the most uncontrollable, never allow depression or despair to enter your minds.

Sometimes some young men have asked me, “Sir, how do we give up desires?” I say, it is not possible to give up all desires. Even Swami has a desire. **What is that single desire of Swami? ‘Lokaah samasthaa sukhino bhavanthu’** – May everyone be happy, every being be happy in all the worlds. That is His desire.

There is no way of giving up all desires. But there is a way of replacing a lower desire with a higher desire. It is possible; and the highest desire is desire for God. To those who have attained God, the highest desire is to help their fellowmen. What constitutes a lower desire and what comprises a higher desire for a person depends on the stage of evolution of that person. It is not the same for everyone.

What is a higher desire? Suppose there is a man who is addicted to drugs. If you go and advise him, “Take to meditation; you will be very happy.” He will reply, “Whatever joy you get in meditation, I get it in drugs!” In fact, an American young man said the same thing to Swami Vivekananda when he was explaining to a group of young people the nature of the state of *samadhi* - union with God. One young man stood up and said, “Swamiji, I also experience that joy; but my way is through drugs. What’s the difference between your joy and my joy?” Swami Vivekananda replied, “A man who experiences the happiness that I am talking about, emerges as a prophet. A man who enters the kind of happiness you are talking about comes out as a scoundrel!”

Therefore, you cannot tell a drunkard the highest spiritual truths, but you can coax him to aspire to something higher by saying, “See my dear, today there is a wonderful basketball match on TV. Come on, let’s watch!” Suppose you are in Bangalore, you can tell the young friend, “Today in the Chinna Swami Cricket Stadium, Sachin Tendulkar is playing. Come on, let’s go!” For such an individual, that is a higher desire.

For a young professional with ambitious pursuits in the world, desire for money, position or name and fame is a higher desire. But for a spiritual aspirant, it is a lower desire. **So we have to replace our lower desires with higher desires, until finally we aspire for the highest – the desire for God.**

Practise His Presence

Finally, I would like to answer another question which I have been asked: “How can we practise His Presence always?” I have a simple formula:

Look behind, thank God.

Look ahead, trust God.

Look around, serve God.

Look within, see God.

Look beyond, be God.

Look behind, thank God. When we look at our past, we can recount any number of incidents when Swami has rescued us from the most impossible situations. Thank Him; gratitude is the key to the kingdom of God. Feel grateful to God for everything that He has given, for everything that He has done for you. Immediately you feel His Presence.

Look ahead, trust God. When you look to the future, why do you feel worried? The One who has led you till this point is not going to ditch you now. He is going to hold your hand and take you till the end. Trust Him.

Look around and serve God. Look at the service that our Karnataka youth are rendering in the dining hall during this conference. Anybody who goes there feels that love. Where there is His Love, there is also His Presence.

Look within, see God. Just look within and you will see Him, since He is there all the time. In fact, He is the only real Presence in our hearts.

Look beyond, be God. When you look beyond your individual existence, you are none other than God. The one and the only truth is that He alone exists. Look beyond this little personality of body-mind complex. You will know that you are God.

Thank you, brothers and sisters for your patience.
Sai Ram.

.....
Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, an engineer by qualification, is a keen student of philosophy as well as a lover of sports. His association with Bhagavan's educational institutions dates back nearly three decades. He has served in the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva educational institutions in Alike and Muddenhalli and thereafter, also in Prasanthi Nilayam. He is currently Warden of the Hostel, Sri Sathya Sai University, Brindavan Campus and Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Vriddhashrama (Old age home), Whitefield. He has authored several books including *Sathyam Sivam Sundaram* Volume 5 and is working on Volume 6.



Question and Answer Session

Workshop Number 2

QUESTION 1: How do you balance all of Swami's teachings: a) if your work prevents you from attending the Sai Centre while you are doing your duty; b) you are supposed to take care of your parents but you cannot because you are too far away; c) if you are married to someone who does not share your faith and beliefs, how do you respect his or her beliefs and share Swami's teachings in your home with your children.

Dr. Sandweiss: Dearest Swami! Please answer these questions through me. First, if your work prevents you from attending the Sai Centre but you are doing your duty, then you do not have to attend the Sai Centre and you have to do your duty. We have to be very practical and do what we have to do.

There is no easy, single solution to all the above problems. Each must be carefully evaluated to gain deep understanding. Swami teaches understanding and then adjustment. Remember, adjustment means the capacity to bend and compromise. It is a chance to offer sacrificial love and give up stubbornness. Understanding the circumstances and making intelligent, practical, and loving adjustments are very important elements in spiritual life.

Using and sharpening our *buddhi*, the intellect, allows us to evaluate correctly and leads us to *Atma*. Problems are to be expected, troubles are always there. We can transcend them when we apply our *buddhi* to the task of finding the right balance between work, personal, and spiritual life.

So what are the facets of *buddhi*? The first aspect of *buddhi* that is challenged by troubles is our faith. Swami has told us that *buddhi* can be illustrated in the form of a bird. The head of the bird is faith. Troubles call on us to deepen our faith in Swami. The tail of the bird is *yoga* or balance. Balance means to not accentuate and increase suffering by allowing the senses and selfish desire to grow unchecked. The left wing of the bird is truth. Truth means evaluating the problem clearly with the understanding that problems are given by Swami to teach faith, detachment, and forbearance. The right wing of the bird is unity in thought, word, and deed – unity in head, heart, and hand. This unity is the sign of true integrity.

Even when applying the most purified *buddhi*, the world can present such horrendous problems that even Arjuna threw his bow down and said, "Krishna! You have to save me." We have to use all the powers we have at hand – our mind, body, and *buddhi*, and then

we have to offer the problem to Swami. This offering is very, very important.

When there is trouble, realise that trouble is good for me. "Think: trouble is my friend, trouble is good for me," says Swami. So how do we face the trouble? We face it with patience, perseverance, and purity. Remember *buddhi*, the flying bird. Faith is always called for. Balance is always necessary. In these days of trouble we need to lead a life of truth with unity of thought, word, and deed. Use *buddhi* and then offer all problems to Swami.

QUESTION 2: How do we experience Swami in our everyday lives as we go through the hustle and bustle of everyday life? What is the best way to deepen our inner voice and have confidence in ourselves? How can we receive guidance from Swami and how can we be an example of Swami's Love in this world?

Sri Narasimha Murthy: Let me answer this question in two parts. The first question is, "How do we listen to our inner voice?" A single line answer would be that **we should first stop listening to all outer voices. Then, we will listen to our inner voice.** The outer voice could be from our friends, brothers and sisters, husband and wife or children. The other part of the outer voice is the noise of our own mind. You hear the inner voice in the silence of the mind.

I would like to share my practical experience. Every day, after meditation in the morning I refer all the problems and questions that I have about the activities of the day to Swami whom I have felt in my heart. Promptly I listen to His voice and get all the answers. Therefore, the first thing we have to do is slow down the speed of movement of our mind, especially that of desire and anger. Lord Krishna says, "*Shaknothi hai va yah sodhum prak shareera vimokshanaath, kamakrodhodhbhavam vegam, sa yukthaha sa sukhee naraha* (He who is able to control his desire and anger, even here (in this world) before he gives up his body, he is a *Yogi*, he is a happy man. (*Bhagavad Gita Chapter V, Verse 23*))."

How do you evaluate the culture of a man or a woman? Swami Vivekananda said that the culture of a man is skin deep, just scratch and the animal will come out. How do you really know the culture of a man or a woman? Here is the yardstick. **To what extent you are able to slow down the speed of desire and anger in your mind, that is your culture.** That is only possible with the remembrance of God, with the experi-

ence of spiritual joy. When you have spiritual joy, the inner voice speaks to you all the time. When we are immersed in sensual pleasures, the inner voice is as good as dead. The inner voice is like a good friend who will continue to speak to us only if we listen to him. If we refuse to listen to him again and again he will stop speaking to us.

The second part of the question I have already answered. Live in His Presence.

QUESTION 3: How can we remember Baba at work while we are balancing our career and personal lives?

Dr. Sandweiss: All of life is a balance. It is important for us to learn proper balance when confronting problems. In this regard, I'd like to draw attention to a formula that Swami gave us at the Sai Youth Conference ten years ago, in July 1997. He was talking about the kind of balanced service that brings us enlightenment, awareness of the inner voice, and peace. He gave us a formula in the form of a word "BHAGAVATHAMU" (the name of one of the major Hindu *Puranas*, an ancient story of the life and *leelas* of the Lord). He said there are five elements to this: Bha, Ga, Va, Tha, Mu. Keep this *mantra* with you. Bha, Ga, Va, Tha, Mu, Bha, Ga, Va, Tha, Mu. Put it in your heart and infuse all activities with it.

Bha: Bhakthi (devotion). Anytime we are up against a problem, remember Swami, feel His Love, and ask for His direction. Remember that all work done with love is God's work, be it in our jobs or at the Sai Centre. That is *Bha, Bhakthi*.

Ga: Gnana (wisdom). Perform all acts with the awareness that we are doing it with God, for God, to God. Troubles are a learning challenge given to us by Swami. Don't be frightened; know that He is with you. Why fear when He is here. Look for Him, hold on to Him, and persevere. *Ga, Gnana*, is to look at all problems as given by God, in order to see Him in all and offer all to Him.

Va: Vairagya (detachment). Notice that when we are frightened or worried, it is because of ego. Pray to become empty of ego – to become an empty screen. Let go of selfish desires, the six enemies, and the ego. Troubles scrape us and make us remember *Bha-Ga-Va-Tha-Mu*. So *Va: Vairagya*, let go of ego and experience freedom.

You are young enthusiastic Sai devotees. In your exuberance you might think that you should be able to overcome problems and achieve perfection quickly. No. Patience and perseverance are needed, and then purity will come—patience, perseverance and purity. When we demand immediate results, we have to look at our egos. If we fail, offer outcome and ego to Swami. Swami teaches us to let go of all attachment to ego. He teaches *Va – Vairagya*, detachment.

Tha: Thapas (austerity). Any activity that involves control of oneself and requires sacrifice is austerity. That is part of love. Look what it takes for you just to come here and see Swami. We need to adjust to discomforts and inconveniences and still smile. *Thapas* generates inner energy and teaches the very important lesson of self-control.

Mu: Mukthi (liberation). When we have these—*Bha (bhakthi), Ga (gnana), Va (vairagya), Tha (thapas)*—then we get *mukthi*, liberation. Infuse all acts with *Bha-Ga-Va-Tha-Mu* and we will be emptied of selfishness and ego and a great light will come into us.

QUESTION 4: Swami gives us dreams. How should we interpret them?

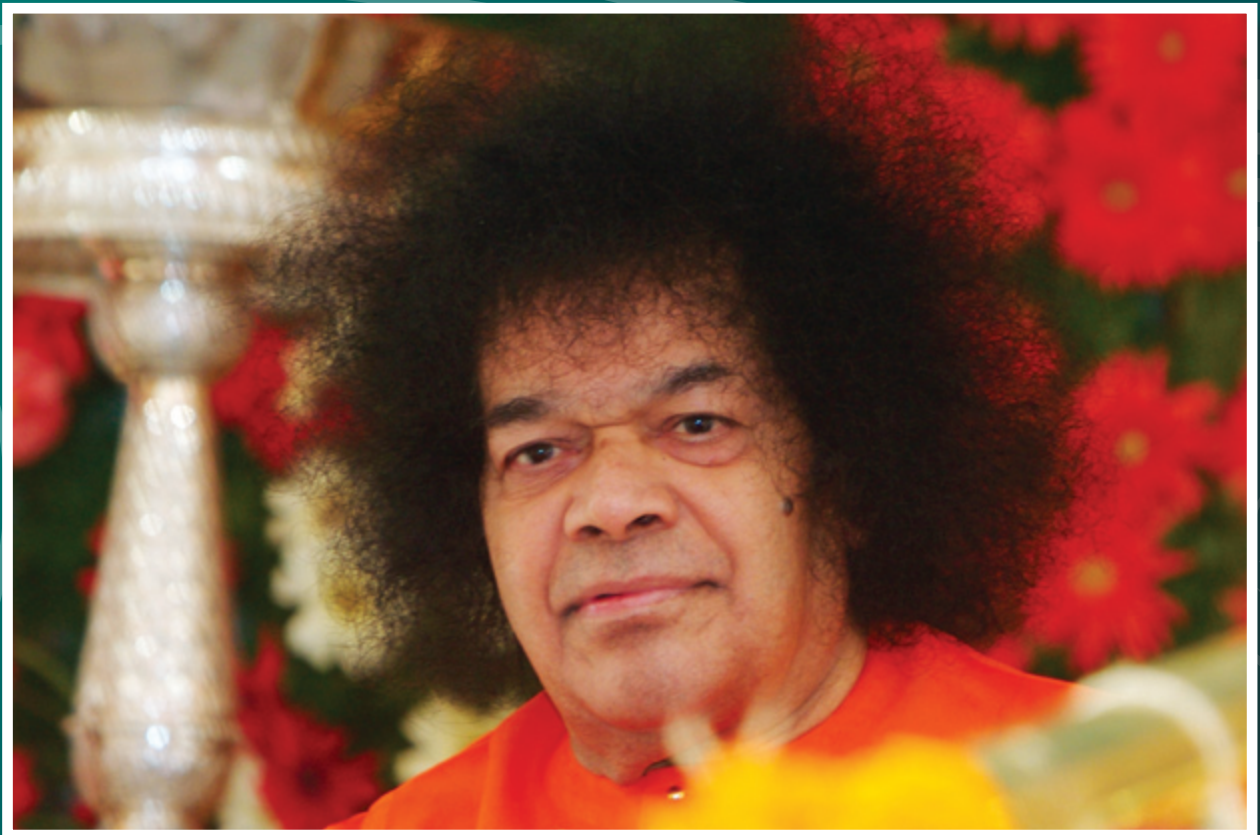
Sri Narasimha Murthy: Dreams... we experience two kinds of dreams. One is vision-like dreams. They are not dreams but actually visions. They are very, very clear. We see everything correctly, we listen to everything correctly, and we remember everything correctly. Those are the first kind of dreams. Second type of dreams are mere aberrations, reflections of our subconscious mind. Swami says these types of dreams happen because of our indigestion.

Regarding dreams in which Swami appears, Swami has said, "Which dreams are real? Dreams relating to God are real. You see Me in the dream. I allow you to do *namaskar*, I bless you, I grant you Grace; such dreams are true."

If the Lord or your Guru appears in your dream it must be the result of His Will and your sadhana, not due to any of the other reasons that cause dreams. How do we interpret dreams? These vision-like dreams are visions, are messages of God in the form of images. It was W. B. Yeats who said, "Wisdom often speaks in images." It is a big science in itself, the interpretation of dreams. But each person who has got the dream is at a vantage point to interpret it for their own self. Suppose you are not able to interpret, you can go to somebody in whom you have confidence. But one thing is certain. **When Swami appears in your dream, He has blessed you with His Love and Grace.**



Workshop Session 3



The Divine Touch

Mr. Leonardo Gutter

I humbly offer my *Pranams* at the Divine Lotus Feet of our Beloved Bhagavan.

Dear brothers and sisters, Sai Ram to all of you.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak to you. I would like to start this talk by asking you a question and giving some possible answers to this question. Why are you here today? Not only here in this hall participating in this World Youth Conference, in the abode of the *Poorna Avatar* of this age, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, but more importantly, living on the planet earth. I will share with you some possible answers.

We are here today because we have struggled for a very long time to be here. In the long process of human evolution, there is a moment when one feels that life is not merely meant for eating, sleeping, drinking and enjoying the gratification of the senses. Eventually there comes a feeling that there must be a higher purpose in life. **The search for this higher purpose is the beginning of the spiritual path.** After many lives of this searching, the seeker may feel the need for help in this search, and prays for guidance. At some point, the seeker may find guidance in the form of spiritual teachings and becomes a student of spiritual knowledge. But eventually the spiritual aspirant realises that studying spiritual books is not as important as actually putting these lessons into practice. Finally, the aspirant realises that winning God's Love is the highest achievement. At this point the seeker becomes a devotee.

Spiritual Evolution

Why are you here? Being here in Bhagavan's Presence is a sign that you have undergone many lifetimes of spiritual evolution. Many of you have traveled thousands of miles to be here, but really you have traveled thousands of lives to be here. This is a special meeting. Let me tell you that you may have young bodies, but each one of you have an old soul that has traveled through many, many lives and worked very hard to have this golden opportunity. So this

World Youth Conference is a special conference of old souls in young bodies.

Let me share with you an experience I had with Bhagavan on my first trip to His Divine Presence. I came to see Swami because I heard of Him in Argentina, and I also had a special dream about Him. So, I decided to come and see if Bhagavan was the *Poorna Avatar* of this age. I met Bhagavan for the first time in Madras (called Chennai now) when He was visiting that city.

One day, there was a special cultural programme and I had the good fortune to be seated not far from where Swami was sitting. So I decided to approach Him and introduce myself. I went to Him and when I was by His side, I gave Him my visiting card so He would know who I was. How naive I was. I did not realise at that moment that He knew me perfectly well, since He created me. It was I who did not know who He was. When I gave Him my visiting card, He looked at me with a smile and while touching my hand said, "You are very lucky." Yes, dear brothers and sisters, let me tell you, we all are very lucky and you are especially lucky. We as human beings have four special good fortunes:

1. To be born as a human being, out of the 8,400,000 forms of life
2. To be born as human beings at the time when God has incarnated on earth
3. To know the glories of the *Avatar*
4. To be His devotees
5. And, I would like to add a fifth – one that you all have: to know about this *Avatar* and be His devotees at such a young age. This is really very, very special.

So, all of you have an incredible good fortune that brings with it a very important responsibility. You have to take full advantage of this golden opportunity.

Why are you here? You are here because you have been brought here; the Divine invited each one of you. No one is here by chance. Bhagavan called each one of you and your hearts responded. You did not decide to

come here. Bhagavan did! Why did He decide to bring you all here? Because He has very important plans for you; each one of you will have a very important role in His Divine Mission. He believes in you and now you have to believe in yourselves and dare to fulfill your part in the Divine plan. You are going to become not just witnesses, but also instruments of the most magnificent and wonderful change that the *Avatar* is bringing about in human consciousness. Most of us don't have the complete perspective of what is happening on this planet right now. But wonderful events are happening at this moment; Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is changing the hearts and minds of people everywhere.

Spiritual Transformation

I have the good fortune of traveling to many Latin American countries and I witness how His Divine Love is reaching so many thousands of people of all lands. Many people unfamiliar with Bhagavan have started the process of spiritual transformation after hearing about Bhagavan's Message. They changed their perspectives, their values and their lives, and became more concerned with the needs of their fellow beings. They started to do service for the people in need, and also personal *sadhana*. This is happening on a global basis and is the most wonderful miracle of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He is changing the lives of millions and millions of people all over the world.

Sai is an infinite source of Love that is guiding millions and millions of people all over the world to become better people, to embark on a process of self transformation. Most of them never came to India to be in His Divine Presence, but they feel His Presence in their lives, His protection and guidance. These people are also receiving, as we do, "The Divine Touch" that melts our egos and opens our hearts, that awakens our dormant consciousness. Once awakened, it starts guiding our lives.

I can give the answer to my first question, "Why are you here?" It is because you have received the Divine touch and the Divine call. Bhagavan has stirred in you the yearning to come, and so you have come. You are drops that are running to merge in the ocean. It is a call to awaken us from the slumber of ages. Your souls have been working hard for so many lifetimes. They now have reached a point of maturity to make a last and sublime effort and become what we always have been: Divinity. You all have a mission. The Lord wants you to fulfill your destiny and help others to do so, too.

What does He want from you? He wants you to become Divine and emulate Him. When we come to the *Ashram*, everything revolves around Sai. When we go back, it should be the same way.

Swami says that what we need today is not a new educational system, nor a new social system – such changes will not serve to solve the problems we are facing. Today, we need men and women whose hearts are pure.

The challenge for the Sai Youth is to become citizens with righteousness in their heart and beauty in their character, and thus help to transform the world. You have to strive towards excellence. You don't have to say very much because your actions and being will speak for themselves. Then you will radiate enthusiasm. You must become true devotees of Sai. A spiritual aspirant must fight against his lower impulses, the passions and egoism, and develop the discipline to advance with steadfastness towards the most important goal of realising our Divine nature.

What are the objectives of this conference? I will summarise what I consider are the most important objectives:

1. To receive information
2. To receive inspiration
3. To recharge your spiritual batteries
4. To increase your yearning and determination
5. To increase your faith
6. To deepen your knowledge and understanding of the Divine Message
7. To accelerate the process of your transformation
8. To help you develop skills to fulfill your duties in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation
9. To feed the flame of love and gratitude to Sai, our Lord, in the altar of our hearts
10. To give us more opportunities to receive the Divine Blessings and Grace in the Divine physical Presence

Today, the heroes and role models for our youth are from Hollywood, Bollywood, Hong Kong film studios, or the singers and dancers of modern pop or rock music. But soon, through Bhagavan's Divine Grace and *sankalpa*, the world's youth will have another hero, the real one, the only hero, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The Sai Youth must be prepared and trained to be leaders now. They must awaken their innate aptitudes for leadership. The Sai Youth must be a positive influence in society. The Sai Youth must assume an important role to reestablish human values on earth. We must ask ourselves if we are doing enough. Let me tell you the simple answer: No! We can all do more at the individual level, more at our family level, and more at the community level. When is it going to be enough? The answer is when we reach the point of feeling His constant Presence in our lives. Spirituality is not the practice of rituals, but living in a spiritual way, remembering God always. We are living a spiritual life when our actions are in harmony with the awareness that Divinity is present in all places all the time, and



when we live with this constant spiritual awareness. When is it going to be enough? When we realise our real Self. Until then, it is not enough. Let's reflect on the word *sadhana*. It means spiritual effort. If we feel comfortable, it means that we can and must do something more.

I would like to use a metaphor to refer to our situation. Having the good fortune of knowing about Bhagavan and His Message is like receiving a very fast car to reach our spiritual goal. Let us say we received a Ferrari, a Formula One car. The irony is that some devotees drive the car at a very low speed because they are afraid; some others are even more afraid and go on pressing the brake all the time, and there are others even more foolish that go in reverse. But there are some that have full faith in Bhagavan and His teachings and put them into practice in their lives. Adhering to Bhagavan in such a way is like traveling at 300 kilometers per hour!

Eradicate Bad Qualities

We have to have full faith in Him and surrender our lives completely to Him. What does this mean? It is understanding what parts of our lives we have to change and not delaying in making the changes! What is the main point we have to learn? That **spirituality is to eradicate our bad qualities and fill our lives with human values**. There is no spiritual path without morality and ethics. There will be no morality in our lives without control of our senses and discipline. There will be no morality without fear of sin and love for God. This is the starting point. What is necessary is to know what we have to change and to have the will power to do so. The habits that we have to check include what we eat, what we drink, what we see on TV, and what we read. We have to start by taking these elementary actions. The company we keep can promote or delay

our spiritual journey. We imbibe the good or bad habits of our company. If we really want to advance, we have to purify our minds and hearts. Embark on service and spiritual disciplines. We are here on this planet to learn a Divine way of living. This is the basis of a spiritual life.

Bhagavan's life and teachings are the most wonderful scripture of practical spirituality. There are simple and practical methods that He teaches us that I call His practical spirituality lessons.

We must be constantly aware of our egos. This is the real enemy: the ego. When we are on the spiritual path, our ego makes us think, "I will do it my way." When in actuality, we

really must do it in Swami's way. We must surrender to His Will. I would like to share a recommendation that has been very useful to me. **From today onwards, take a vow not to criticise anyone by your words or by having negative feelings about another person.** If we are successful in this, we can be sure that we have taken a great step in subduing our little minds and are moving forward in our spiritual *sadhana*.

Another useful spiritual practice that I would like to share with you is this. Write down on a piece of paper the following sentence and read it every day when you wake up. The sentence is, "I am going to die." After reading it and reflecting on this for a while, and especially before you get depressed, write down on another piece of paper another sentence that you will have to read afterwards. The second sentence is, "Not yet." So, when you realise that you still have time, think which is the best way to take full advantage of the time still available.

Let me share another experience I had with Bhagavan on my first trip to His Divine Presence. I was just starting my spiritual journey and I was participating in another spiritual organisation where I had an important responsibility as an office bearer. When I came to His Divine Presence, I was overwhelmed by His teachings, the miracles I witnessed, and by His Divine Love. So, one day I was in my room in the *Ashram* and I felt that I had found the *Poorna Avatar*, and I had to surrender fully to Him. So I felt that I had to resign the position I had in the other spiritual organisation, because I had found the *Avatar* and I had to be free to work for Him. So, I wrote on a piece of paper my resignation for the position I was holding in the other organisation. I felt I was doing the right thing. The next morning, I went to *Darshan* and when Swami came, instead of His usual routine of going first to the ladies

side and then to the men's side, He came directly to me, looked straight into my eyes and said, "Yes, this afternoon I will see you." You can imagine my heart – I was going to have my first interview with God.

When *Darshan* was over, I thought that I should wait in front of His room until the afternoon *Darshan*, but a volunteer stopped me and told me that I had to go, and that I couldn't stay there. He said that in the afternoon I should go to the usual *Darshan* lines and wait. You cannot imagine what went through my mind. I thought that this volunteer did not like me and was ruining my Divine opportunity. I also thought that Swami might not remember, or even if He did, He might not find me in the *Darshan* lines.

Afternoon came and when Swami came out of His room, standing in the veranda, He looked directly at me, without any search to see where I might be seated. He just looked at me, and from there He said in a strong and high voice, "You."

Be Happy and Live His Message

I jumped and went towards Him, a little scared from the tone of His voice, and said, "Yes, Swami." And He replied with the most beautiful word that we all yearn to hear from Him: "Go" – meaning, as you know, that I was invited for an interview. In the interview room, He started to speak to all of us, and suddenly He looked at me and told me all that was going through my mind since morning *Darshan*. And then He whispered into my ears these words that I feel were meant not only for me, but for all of us. He said, "**I will never disappoint my devotees.**"

Yes, dear brothers and sisters, it is my personal experience during the last 25 years that I have known Him and have been following His teachings that He will never disappoint a devotee. **It is we that must be careful not to disappoint Him.** He is waiting for us for many, many lives. He has been waiting for us. Let us not miss the appointment with Him. How can we please Him? By working hard to become better people each day, by putting into practice His teachings in all aspects of our lives, and by being examples of His teachings and life.

Dear brothers and sisters, you have a great responsibility to Bhagavan and to yourselves. You have the challenge of changing your lives and becoming exemplars of Sai's Message. You have to fight until the end and finish the game! Swami said that He has come to give us the courage to see ourselves as the supreme principle that we really are, and to give us the mental power to see that reality. You must make a decision. The time is now. You are all ready.

Dear brothers and sisters, all the delegates that attend this World Youth Conference have a sacred duty. You have come here not just for yourselves. You are

delegates for all the thousands of brothers and sisters that could not come. You are their representatives. When you go back to your countries, you have to convey to them what you have learnt here. You have to share with them the joy you have experienced here and the inspiration that Swami gave you. **You must be torch bearers of the flame of love that Swami lights in your hearts.** Share all the love He has bestowed on all of you.

Go to all the corners of your cities and countries and spread the Divine Message that Bhagavan is teaching us. Don't be afraid of telling the truth you learned here. The spiritual path is not for meek people. Be brave; be the force that the world needs today. If you are asked, be bold and say that you have found God, that He lives in Prasanthi Nilayam, and that His Divine Form resides in every heart. This is what you, the Sai Youth, can and must do to fulfill your part in the Divine plan.

Be active; be full of energy and enthusiasm. Swami will be with you always!!! Show the Presence of Sai in your lives; smile and be happy. We must be happy because we know that Sai is Omnipresent and this gives us joy. This joy needs to expand as a deep feeling of love and manifest itself as service. We will then see the unfolding of a perfect Divine plan that encompasses our lives, filling it with Sai. This is how to live in the constant Presence of Sai.

Remember always the Divine Love. May each one of you express more of this Sai Love day-by-day, through the radiance of your eyes, through your smiles and by your loving actions, words and feelings. May each one of you be nearer and nearer to the Divine Lotus Feet.

All of you are blessed and gained this state of Grace by the good *karma* of many lifetimes. Appreciate it, enjoy it, and realise it. May you all become beacons of this new era, the Sai Age of Love. May you all become the best expressions of His Message. May you all become pure channels of His infinite and Divine Love.

Om Sai Ram.

.....
Mr. Leonardo Gutter is currently a member of the Prasanthi Council and was Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Latin America Zone 2. A psychologist by profession, Mr. Gutter represents some of the largest American, European and Japanese TV and cinema studios in Latin America. He is one of the founding and first Coordinating Committee members of the Sathya Sai Organisation in Argentina.

Role of Youth in Sai Mission

Sri G.S. Srirangarajan

My *Pranams* at Bhagavan's Lotus Feet. Respected elders, dear brothers and sisters.

The Divine Opportunity

We are all so lucky to be here at His Lotus Feet. In this vast cosmos, we all appear like little insignificant beings on a small planet. Left to ourselves, who are we? Nothing. Yet, at His Lotus Feet, we become everything. We are zeroes, but with the realisation of the One within us – our Hero who is within us and with us – we can assume any great value.

The phenomenon of the unseen Cosmic Consciousness concretising in a Human Form for the benefit of humanity occurs but once in millions of years. The *Avatar*, as such a manifestation is called in Eastern philosophy, is with us right now. It is vital to understand the purpose of the descent of an *Avatar*. **Why does God come down in Human Form?** In His own words, it is to set an example to mankind as to how a human being ought to lead his or her life.

If we just look back at the last 80 years of this Divine Manifestation, what do we see? Every moment of His life is filled with acts of Love, acts of concern, acts of compassion, and acts of selfless service to the poor and the needy. He has been working incessantly all these years with one goal, which as He says is the welfare of the entire world – *Lokaa Samastaa Sukhino Bhavantu*. This, He says, is the duty of every human being.

I still remember the day when after the completion of the Water Project in the villages of the Anantapur District, several officials and members of the public had assembled in the Sai Kulwant Hall to express their gratitude to Bhagavan. Swami came out for *Darshan* and as He approached them, all of them knelt down and with one voice they exclaimed, "Thank you Swami." Immediately, Bhagavan stopped them and said, "No my dear, it is not you who should thank Me; it is I who must thank you for giving Me an opportunity to serve you all." That is the attitude with which we need to serve.

Let us also recall the example of Jesus. Before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knew that His time had come. He took a towel and a basin of water and started washing the feet of His disciples. They were shocked and they said, "Master, how can you do this? You are our Lord." Jesus kept silent and continued with His task. Later, when the disciples were very curious to

know the reason for this strange act of their Lord, Jesus said, "You say I am your Master, right? Well so I am. Now if I, being your Master, have washed your feet with so much Love, you too should share this Love with all your fellowmen in the same manner. **Love others as I have loved you.**"

Now, if the Lord has come down to show man the way he ought to live and if the Lord spends every moment of His life serving others and loving others, simple logic shows that we too should lead our lives like Him. So, we may say, it's so simple. But well, it is not that easy. If it were, every man would have been treading this Divine path by now. So, where then does the problem lie?

Mind Is the Obstacle

The problem lies in our mind. *Mana Eva Manushyaanam Kaaranam Bandha Mokshayoho*. As Bhagavan says, it is our mind, which is God's own creation, that has the potential to either take us towards our Creator – God – or cause us to drift us away into His creation – the world. So now let us take a glimpse into the nature of mind.

The mind houses within its palatial gardens the weeds of the six vices: desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy. These vices overpower us, and we get attached to the world and all its offerings. Just look at the state of the world today.

Environmental Crisis

People everywhere are galloping to achieve higher and higher standards of living. Giant economies are growing at a rapid speed to reach and even surpass the American dream. However, nature has its own limits and controls. One estimate states that if every one of the earth's over six billion human inhabitants were to achieve the western standard of living, we would need the resources of seven planet earths to sustain us. Where would all this come from? This drive to consume resources in order to produce material comforts is the cause of our environmental crisis. Yet, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Social Crisis

There are also grave social costs associated with all of this growth. Tremendous divisions plague society today: the rich-poor divide, the digital divide, geographical divide, gender divide, caste divide,

sectarian divide, and what not. These inequalities have led to social unrest, and as predicted by Karl Marx, the masses have risen up to revolt. Terrorism, violence, religious intolerance, sectarian clashes are all the price tags linked to unbalanced growth and development.

The sour icing on this bitter cake is that after all of our “development” efforts, man has not been able to achieve what he started off desiring: unalloyed happiness, peace and security. If he had, then why would we find ever increasing rates of suicides, crime, drug addiction, and other self-destructive tendencies?

We have the vices of the powerful mind which have infected the entire world today resulting in a planet that is struck with war, pain, misery and sorrow. Is this what God created the world to be? The *Avatar* has come down in the Human Form to demonstrate to man how he ought to live.

Roadmap for a Peaceful World

So where do we go from here? That’s precisely why the *Avatar* has come – to show man how to undo all our misdoings and restore the world to its destined goal of peace and harmony. What is the roadmap He gives us?

Bhagavan says, first we must realise our Divine destiny. The ancient scriptures declare that the entire creation came out of God. First came ether, then air followed by fire, water and earth. This gave rise to the plant kingdom, followed by the microorganisms, birds, animals, and finally in the ladder of evolution, right on the top was placed the human being. Thanks to the unparalleled achievements that man alone has been capable of in this world, science acknowledges us as the crest jewel of creation. However, Bhagavan says that the cycle of evolution does not stop here. Man is destined to complete the cycle of evolution by returning to his Divine origin.

Character Building

Bhagavan says, “Man is inherently Divine.” His ultimate destiny is to realise his true Divine origin and merge into it. Ironically, the very mind that has caused the entire catastrophe today is the one which is supposed to lead us to our Divine destiny. Wow! If that is so, how is this magic going to happen?

It starts with the control of the mind and the senses which Bhagavan defines as character. Character, He says, has to be moulded when the individual is young and amenable to change. This is precisely where the youth fit in. Bhagavan says that spiritual transformation, turning the mind inwards to realise the Divine Truth within, is not a last minute affair. Bhagavan says that it may be possible to get another wife if one is lost, it may be possible to get back lost wealth, land or a friend, but youth can never be regained again. Therefore, in this process of self-transformation, we must **start early, drive slowly and reach safely.**

Three Step Process

We must begin this process of transformation now. One youth delegate asked whether transformation is possible without information. I wonder what he or she means by “information.” If it is news about the stock market or the latest movie released or about the merger and takeover of the steel giants, well that has truly nothing to do with transformation. That is for our livelihood and intellectual curiosity. But if it is information about the means to sharpen our intellect, the means to control our mind and turn inwards, then yes, that would necessarily help.

The transformation process begins with step one: **Love for God.** This is the foundation. Without love for God, there can be no drive in man to turn towards doing good. Love for God triggers fear of sin. **Fear of sin** enables man to place a restraint over his mind and senses. This, in turn, empowers him to turn the mind inwards and experience the richness of peace and joy within. Having tapped into his heart, man must then draw out the five human values: Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love and Non-violence and use them as weapons to fight his own vices. Having done so, he then becomes eligible to offer his service to society. That, indeed, is the focus of Swami’s Message – **morality in society.**

To illustrate these three steps, let me quote the example of a crestfallen lorry driver who arrived as a heart patient at the Super Specialty Hospital in Bangalore. Coming from a not very well-to-do family, his only hope for good health was Swami’s hospital. Other hospitals had rejected his case because it was too complicated; in addition, he did not have the money required for treatment. The doctors diagnosed the patient with a serious heart ailment, which was the result of heavy drinking and smoking. He was promptly operated on and was on his way to recovery. One morning the doctor asked him, “How are you? Are you happy now?” There were tears in his eyes, and he said, “Doctor, I do not know how to thank you, and, above all Bhagavan Baba, who has given me a new life. I promise you now that henceforth I will never take recourse to either drinking or smoking.” Love for God had transformed him. It had triggered a fear of sin and had given him the power to control his mind and senses. Not just that, he also resolved that he would come every year for a fortnight to the hospital and offer his services to the patients as a mark of his gratitude. This is the transformational power of selfless love.

Gratitude to Society

Bhagavan says that whatever we are today is because of society. Schools and colleges give us education; the hospitals provide health care; the court takes care of law and order; and the transport services provide mobility. All this infrastructure is available to

us because of society, because of so many people playing their own minor but significant roles. Therefore, we must give back to society as much as we can. This is the obligation of love that we owe to our fellowmen. Swami Vivekananda puts it crisply in two phrases, “*Atmano Mokshartham – Jagat Hithayacha.*” On one hand, we must strive to turn within and seek the eternal truth – the Swami within us – and on the other hand we must, at the operational level, perform all our actions in a manner that benefits society.

We say, “Swami we love You, Swami we love You,” but let us ask ourselves, what is the meaning of loving Bhagavan? Once we love a person, we must be ready to do anything that pleases Him. And what pleases Bhagavan? He says, “*Deena Dukhiyon Se Prem Karo Mera Sai Prasanna Hoga.*” **Love the downtrodden, love the poor, and our Sai will be happy.**

This principle of love is beautifully illustrated in the life of a great social reformer in India, Murlidhar Devidas Amte or Baba Amte, as he is fondly known. He has dedicated his entire life to the care and rehabilitation of leprosy patients at Anandvan near Nagpur in Maharashtra. He would spend the whole day catering to their needs and requirements. Once one of his followers asked him, “Sir, why don’t you ever visit the shrine of Lord Vishnu, which is just a little further away from here?” Baba Amte replied, “My dear son, why should I go all the way to see God when God Himself comes to my doorstep seeking my love and care?” That is true love.

Sometimes we get caught up in wrong understanding and miss the forest for the trees. For example, one youth delegate asked, “Is it a bad thought to become a millionaire? What’s wrong in earning more for others?” Well, if the intention is good, there is nothing wrong. That is why Bhagavan says that if we tie up the goal of *Artha* (wealth) with *Dharma* (righteousness), then there will be no sin. But let us not forget the spirit of service. It does not lie in the quantity, but in the quality of service.

There is a very inspiring story of an American devotee who had resolved to help the poor. Every evening, as he returned from his office, he would buy a few bread buns and offer them to a poor man who sat outside his apartment entrance. However one evening, being in a hurry he could not procure the bread buns. He felt very uncomfortable to face the poor man and tried to dodge him and enter the apartment from the rear. The poor man saw him and cried out, “Hey Sir, why are you avoiding me?” The devotee was crestfallen, but he had no choice. He went forward apologetically and said, “Sorry, I could not get the bread buns today.” The poor man smiled and replied, “Sir, I do not need your bread buns. It is the smile on your face that filled my stomach more than the bread. I just wanted that

smile. It is so nice to feel that someone cares for you.” The devotee was shocked at this revelation.

That is why even Mother Teresa told the Westerners, “You talk of poverty in India. That is just economic poverty, which can be solved. But in the West, the poverty of love, of feeling uncared for, is far more depriving and it hurts more.” Therefore, service is not just about making more money and using it to help others. True *seva*, as exemplified by the life of Mother Teresa, is seeing and serving God in all.

Once, when a senior devotee mentioned to Bhagavan, “Swami, there are many people who still do not understand the magnanimity of Your huge water projects that give free water to millions of people. How do we make them understand Swami?” Bhagavan replied, “How will they understand my dear? Have they ever given even one glass of water to a thirsty man?” Just give a glass of water to a thirsty man, and the smile on his face will tell you the power behind the massive Water Projects of Bhagavan. Just try and provide for the health care of a needy patient, and the grateful moist eyes of the patient will enable you to understand the secret behind the Super Specialty Hospitals created by Bhagavan.

In one of His Discourses, Bhagavan stated that Swami Vivekananda said, “Give me ten strong men of virtue and I can change the world.” Swami says that He does not even need ten. **If He can get one strong individual full of noble virtues and strong character, that is enough to lead the world to its Divine destiny.**

S-A-I

Now one may ask, “Where do I begin?” The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is like a mighty river flowing rapidly towards the ocean of Sai to merge into it. All we need to do is to join the current and become a part of this mighty movement. Let us all reach out for SAI through SAI – **S for Service**, selfless service; **A for Adoration**, adoration of our dear Lord, and the end result would undoubtedly be **I – Illumination**. This is what SAI stands for.

.....
Sri G.S. Srirangarajan received a B.E. in Industrial Engineering & Production from M.S.Ramaiah Institute of Technology, Bangalore. He received an MBA from the Sri Sathya Sai University. Since 1992 he has been offering his services in the School of Business Management, Sri Sathya Sai University.

What It Means to Be a Messenger of Sai Love

Mrs. Phyllis Krystal

I give my love to our Beloved Baba. I am not able to kiss His Feet any longer, so I prefer the contact He once told me, which should be heart-to-heart. So heart-to-heart with our Beloved Lord, but also heart-to-heart with the Baba within every one of you.

Say "I am God"

We have to remember constantly what He tells us – not only is He God, but so are all of us. But I know how hard that is for us to believe. It was particularly hard for me. Having grown up in England with the Church of England, if I had dared to say I am God, I would have been beaten. But Baba gave me a very tough lesson once.

My husband and I were in an interview with many others. Baba came into the room, looked around at all of us and said, "**You don't realise who you are! You are all walking temples. You are really God in human form.**" And, then to my horror, He turned His attention to me and said, "Mrs. Krystal, say 'I am God'." I couldn't! I simply couldn't! I had been programmed to think that it would be the worst thing in the world to say – the worst ego trip. I said, "I'm sorry Swami, I can't." Swami said, "Mrs. Krystal, say 'I am God' " and He wouldn't let me go without saying it. So to get it over quickly, I softly said, "I am God." But that wasn't good enough. "Louder, Mrs. Krystal." So I repeated it a little louder. "No, louder, louder." I said it until I was literally screaming it. Swami is giving this Message to all of us and we still don't believe it. We hear it; we hear what He says, we see what He writes, but we don't really allow it inside of us.

Be Messengers of Sai Love

Along with this message, we also do not put into action any of His other teachings, as well. You are messengers of Sai Love and it is an incredible honour to be carrying His Love; not our limited human variety, which can be very bargaining, very controlling,

and very smothering. His Love doesn't have these limitations. Very often, we are very critical in our love; but, Baba never is.

I remember once, He posed a question during an interview, "When I look into your eyes, who do you think I see?" None of us knew the answer. He said, "I see a reflection of Myself." He sees beyond the ego, beyond the personality, and beyond the limitations, to who we really are. That's who He makes contact with, if we allow it. But, if we don't know that we are God, then we don't know how to allow Him to make contact fully and directly with us. He wants us to be His instruments, and I really think this is His basic Message.

We are not the doers. He is the doer, but He uses us as instruments. Wherever we are, whether we are in a family, whether we are in a Sai Group, wherever we are in the world, He wants us to be His instruments – His messengers of His Love, Sai Love. So we have to look at all of our relationships and see whether we express this Sai Love. With our limited human love, we cannot love other people when they are difficult. If we say we do, we are not being true to ourselves. We are not being honest. It's impossible; we can't do it, because our love is limited. We will always find something to criticise; we will always find something we don't like because nobody can be perfect, not at the human level.

In fact in the old times, the artisans always used to make a deliberate mistake. They would weave a carpet and leave an imperfection. They would paint a picture and leave an imperfection, because they believed that only God is perfect, and no human being could be perfect. Yet look at us and our education. We are all expected to be perfect and it's impossible. But, we can be His messengers. We can be His instruments and allow Him to live through us. First of all, we can ask Baba to think through us all day long. We can't even get up out of our bed without thinking that we are going to get up. We also need to ask Baba to feel through us since feelings and love are lacking in our society.

Yin and Yang

There is a lot of thinking, there is a lot of talking, there is a lot of action which, using the Chinese word, is all *yang*. It's important that all of us can think, which is connected with the brain. But we also have a heart and it's the heart's quality, the *yin* quality, the receptive quality, the ability to feel and love, that's so lacking in the world. **So, in order to change the world and bring about a more loving community, we have to change ourselves**, because the world is made up of millions of people like us.

Be His Instruments

I often think that with Sai Love we are very much like yeast in a great big piece of dough with which we make bread. We know that yeast is the factor which raises the bread so that we can bake it and eat it. Wherever He sends us in the world, He uses us as yeast which can raise the consciousness of the people around us, not with any determined effort on our part. He says so often, "Don't advertise Me. I can do that very well Myself." But He also says that His Life is His Message. He also wants our lives to be His Message. The only way we can allow our lives to be His Message is if we allow it, if we say, "Yes" to Him and say, "Yes, use me as your instrument." I remember long ago when I said, "Yes." However it was "Yes, *but* you can use me only in this way and not in that way." My 'but' was, "You can use me as an instrument any way you wish Baba, but please don't ever, ever, ever ask me to speak to a lot of people."

I like to share this because I think it will encourage many people. Many of you young adults may be as shy, though probably not quite as desperately shy as I used to be. But if He can take one person and enable that one person to overcome such a tremendous fear, He can do it to anyone. So if you are shy, think that being shy is very, very selfish. You might have something to share with someone that they desperately need to hear and if you are too shy to say it or to ask a question, you are stealing that possibility from this person. I was shocked when I heard that, but it's so true. If we can really say to Swami, "I will be your instrument," then He is the doer and He can use us any way He wishes. It would be wonderful to be used as a violin for instance, producing beautiful music or in some wonderful activity that gives everyone pleasure; but He doesn't always use us that way. Sometimes He uses us in a very difficult way, maybe to stir up a lot of things that other people have within them.

Many times He has said that He often stirs up jealousy and envy in people, just to get it out in the open, so that we can see for ourselves what we have buried inside of us. I remember long ago there was one woman who was given a lot of attention in the *Ashram*,

but she broke all the rules and the young people were very upset. They asked us, "What can we do, as she breaks all the rules but we have to follow them." So we requested Dr. Jack Hislop, who was the head of our organisation in the United States at that time, to ask Swami. I will never forget the answer. Swami said, "Oh yes, I do it on purpose to stir up all the jealousy and envy in people who don't know that they have it within them. It has to come out and they have to see it." **So everyone we see, everyone we meet, everyone with whom we are brought in contact, can be a teacher for us.** Each one can be an opportunity for us, particularly the difficult ones. We are all faced with very difficult situations with people. There are people who are jealous of us, envy us, or who are even attacking us.

Baba once told me in an interview that many people were attacking me, and I said, "Yes Swami, but what am I supposed to do about it?" He said, "Don't worry; just erase it." It was as if He wrote on a blackboard in white chalk the message, "envy or jealousy." He said, "What you do is imagine just erasing it," which He demonstrated as if with a wet cloth.

Let Us Change Ourselves First

His teachings are so simple. We make them so complicated because, unfortunately, our education has taught us that only when things are very complex and complicated are they important to learn. That's not what Baba teaches. He always says over and over and over, to keep it simple. We need to keep it simple so that even a child can understand. Do not make it too complicated. He shows us every day of our lives that when we are in contact with other people, what we need to do is work on ourselves, not criticise others. That's none of our business, and it is impossible to change anyone else. We've all tried and I am sure we've all found that we've failed.

You cannot change someone else; it is not our responsibility. Our responsibility is to ask Baba to help us change ourselves. He brings people into our lives, very much like a mirror in which we can see a reflection of ourselves. When we are particularly critical of something in someone else, instead of pointing the finger and saying, "This one does that; that one is not honest; this one is deceitful; this one is envious and this one is angry," we have to turn that mirror and ask ourselves what we have to put right within us. We can ask Baba to help us release these blemishes and negative qualities and let them go, because we are all attached to them. It does not matter if it is anger, jealousy, envy or pride – all of them are negative and are enemies.

We have to keep it simple. The way we can change is to let other people be our teachers. Then even the most difficult people can really be turned into blessings. We can thank the difficult ones in our lives, because they

have shown us what we need to do to put things right in our own lives.

Now you are messengers of Sai Love. What does that mean? It is very easy to listen to speeches, including whatever I am saying. It is very easy to read books. But Baba is saying over and over, **“Don’t just read what I say, don’t just listen to My Discourses, practise my teachings.”**

What are we doing to apply this title “Messengers of Sai Love?” Our own love is inadequate to love those who seemingly are difficult for us. But we can always send His Love. That is the most powerful and the most incredible power in the entire universe. It can move mountains, as He moves mountains. As He creates miracles, He creates them with His Love. **We can all receive His Love and then send it to others.**

Divine Love Saves

We cannot love people when we are difficult ourselves. It would be lying. It would be deceitful to say so. Swami taught me this lesson a long time ago in March of 1975. I didn’t realise what an incredible lesson it was when He taught it. My husband and I were on a plane that was hijacked going from Bombay to London. Two hijackers had brought ammunition onto the plane. Half way through our journey, after we had refueled and re-boarded the plane, they took over the whole plane. They were thoroughly enjoying what they were doing. They had power over us; they knew the lives of a whole planeload of people were in their hands.

I remember immediately thinking of a very kind Indian lady at our last *Darshan* who had shown me where Baba’s room was at the Dharmakshetra. I thought that was so sweet of her to show me the window of His room. But I didn’t realise how important that was and how I would be using it later.

When the hijackers took over the plane and told us that we had to listen and do whatever they said, otherwise they were going to blow us up over the North Atlantic, I immediately remembered Swami’s room. In the midst of the hijacking, I was back at the Dharmakshetra with the window very clear in my memory. So I frantically called Baba, “Baba, Baba, Baba! Please help.” Into my mind came an incredible message, as if it was His voice in my mind saying, “Send love to them.” I said, “It’s impossible, they want to kill us! How can I send love? I don’t have that kind of love.” The next thing that came to my mind was, “No, I cannot honestly say I love them! Of course I cannot! They hate us. How can I possibly love them Baba?”

My next thought was that Swami can see the Baba-self, the God-self, the real-self, even within the hijackers; even within all such people in the world. We cannot, but Swami can. I could receive His Love, as we all can when we are here with Him. Or, we can receive

it when we are in our own homes. I breathed in His Love and directed it to the hijackers, and they got more and more nervous and the plane eventually was saved.

When we went back to Baba at the end of that year for a conference, He called us in for an interview. He said the planeload of people was saved because it was filled with His Love. Not my love, not our love, not that limited kind of love, but His unconditional Love. He could Love those hijackers, not criticise them. He could accept them and Love them. So, if one person on one plane could send, or direct Baba’s Love to the two hijackers and the plane could be saved, we can all be used anywhere we are in the world. It is so simple.

Love Is the Only Power

We can imagine being with Baba, or with His photograph, or thinking of His counterpart in our hearts. If we are willing to receive it, we can breathe in the Love that He sends all the time. We should open our hearts to receive it, and then just direct it. So think of all the people in your life with whom you have difficulties. Can you send your love to them? Probably not! I could not. But we can send Baba’s Love, and this, I think, is His most important Message.

You are messengers of Sai Love. Now how are you going to apply it with your parents, your spouses, your siblings, your children, your neighbours, your co-workers and your enemies? Through meditation, we can send this kind of love, and it is amazing. **We can all join in sending Baba’s Love – first to our family, then to our co-workers, then to the other people in our lives, and then to everyone in the world. This is the only power that can change the world.** Even though we may feel inadequate by ourselves, **when we join everyone else we can truly change the world.**

Om Sai Ram.

.....
Mrs. Phyllis Krystal was born in London, England in 1914, and completed her education and moved to California in 1937. She is a member of the Sathya Sai Baba Central Council of the USA, and a member of the Young Adult Committee. She has been living in Munich, Germany for the past two years. She travels extensively to give seminars and talks to devotees about her experiences with Baba. She has written several books.

How to Be a Messenger of Sai Love

Mrs. Phyllis Krystal

Swami! Once again, I surrender my whole life to You. I trust only You; and only You. Please help me accept whatever You know is best for me.

I honour and love all of Swami's counterparts in each of you; not only each of you here, but each of you in the whole world, the whole universe. This is Baba's Message. Everyone is His counterpart! It's Baba's Divinity.

We were talking about love yesterday and the difference between our very limited love and Baba's expansive Love. He loves everyone, we cannot. But what we can do is receive His Love and send it to everyone.

You, especially the youth, are messengers of Sai Love. A messenger needs to deliver something. To do so, we have to receive something first. **We have to ask Baba to give us His Love. That is the only power in the entire world that can change this very negative energy** that we see around us into a more positive one where people can be happy.

So first of all we have to ask Swami to give us His special kind of Love, which is unconditional, unlike ours: "I love you if..." "I love you but..." He accepts us just the way we are.

There is a way we can resolve this, as I recommended yesterday quite strongly. When my husband and I were hijacked, Baba helped me. I could love the hijackers by being willing to breathe in His Love and send His Love to them. That was the biggest thing that I could possibly have done to help the situation. He acknowledged this later by saying that it was because the plane was filled with His Love that everyone in the plane was saved. But we need to be able to first receive something before we can give it to others.

Experience His Love and Share It with All

Very many people in the world, very many Sai devotees, want something from Baba. They want His Love; they want an interview. But then they are very likely to hold it very closely in their hands, very selfishly keep it within. It is mine! I got the interview; I have His Love.

But it does not do us any good. We have to share it. We have to share it immediately and give it away. Then it can continue to flow. If we do not give it away, it can even poison us. We can even get very greedy and want more and more, and even more and more. So when we give it away, it can continue to flow. **So we need to look at our lives and see whether we are holding on to everything Baba gives us, most of all His Love. Or do we share it?**

From my flight experience, finally I asked Baba what the message really meant. He made me realise that we, all of us, need to be able to share that Love with others.

Let Us Open Our Hearts to His Love

I would like to take you through a special little meditation, where we can ask Baba for His special Love and send it around the world. But first of all we have to open up our own hearts, because many of us have nearly closed our hearts – usually when we have been hurt, or when we have been rejected. Baba's Love can never hurt and can never reject us. His Love can never create any problems, as other people's love sometimes can and so we are safe.

I've been given a wonderful, simple little aid for each one of us to open up our own hearts. Just for a moment, turn your attention to your own heart. Your own physical heart is beating all the time. You are always aware of it, even though you may not be conscious of it.

Now imagine that right in your heart, there is a flower. You don't have to know the name of it. Only ask yourself: "Is the flower of my heart open to receive Swami's Love, or is it still closed in as a bud? Am I still afraid?" You do not need to be afraid of Swami's Love, ever. It is what we all need. It is our food.

Now, remember that flower in your heart. Is it open or is it still a bud? If it is still a bud, then just tell it to open. You have control – you can say 'yes' or you can say 'no'. Just let it open right now. Now, let us imagine that there is a ray of light or a ribbon or some kind of

connecting link between each of our hearts and Baba's enormous heart that loves the whole universe. It is a reservoir of Love that we need. Just feel it, as if in that open flower you are receiving His Love.

Breathe in, feel it moving through you. It is what we all have prayed for, ever since we were born. But we have not been taught what to do, how to open up, how to use it, how to receive it and we can not be messengers unless we receive whatever we're supposed to deliver.

As you breathe in, feel that Love deeply, passing through you, every part of you, every cell. As you breathe out, just breathe out all of the problems, all of the worries, all of the negative feelings – jealousy, envy, pride, all those things that we all have. This is a wonderful way to let go of them. Just give them to Swami because He can handle anything. But you have to be willing to let go of these negative aspects in order to receive Love.

Breathe in as much as you can. He gives willingly all day long so that you can receive it. Now receive it, drink it, and send it wherever it is needed within you. As you breathe out, let go of anything that comes in the way of you receiving it.

Now turn your attention, first of all to your family members. Do you really love them? Do you show them love? Or are you so immersed in what you want, that you forget to ask what they need?

Continue breathing slowly at first and then place your hands together in the *Namaste Mudra*. Send His Love to each one of the members of your family and especially those with whom you have difficulty. **Difficulties would be resolved if we send Swami's Love.** You can not send your own, but Swami's Love is all that is necessary.

First of all to your family members, your neighbours, your co-workers, particularly people with whom

you have a problem. Problems will dissolve when you learn the lesson that has been given to you and this will help you to understand.

Let us extend our love to groups of people all over the world where there is hunger, where there is disease, where there is tremendous control over people. Wherever people are in groups together, in prisons, hospitals, where people are desperate for this kind of Love, we as messengers can send it. We do not have to go personally; we can just stay in our own rooms, in our own homes and send Swami's Love wherever we see it is necessary. Then we will be messengers.

Let us extend this everywhere in the world, all the countries, wherever there is warfare, wherever there is strife and wherever there is terrorism. These people are the way they are, filled with hate, because they have not opened their hearts to love. Perhaps they have never been loved. If we send Swami's Love to them, then that could change them. We do not have to sit helplessly at home and say, "I am just one person, how can I help the world's situation? So I am not even going to try!"

But when many of us are gathered together and many of us are willing to send Swami's Love wherever we see it is needed, we will actually be part of the cure instead of part of the negativity. The world is made up of many millions of people just like us. But we have been given Swami's teachings. We are fortunate enough to have been alive when He is still here.

Pray Only for His Love

You are so fortunate. I did not meet Swami and did not even hear about him till I was 59! You are all very young, and so you have a wonderful opportunity. **Let us send Swami's Love wherever it is needed in the world.** Just feel it, pray to Him and direct it everywhere we see it is needed.

Swami gives us so much. **Every moment of the day**

He is giving, giving, giving and giving.

Let us now give love back to Him. Then it will make a full circle and it will make a continuous flow. We ask for His Love, we send it to others and then we give it back to Him. **This is the only thing we have to give back, our love and our lives.**



Question and Answer Session Workshop Number 3

QUESTION 1: What are the best qualities of a leader in a spiritual organisation?

Mr. Leonardo Gutter: Actually a leader, not only in this organisation, but in the world, must inspire. Swami says that there are some office bearers that are ‘complaining’ all the time, and there are others that are ‘inspiring’. A leader in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation must inspire by setting a good example. For me, this is the most important qualification. Also, he or she has to have faith in God, faith in Swami, and put into practice Sai’s teachings in their life. **One cannot be a leader without practising the Message of Sai.**

QUESTION 2: I am a Sai Youth and I don’t drink, smoke, or take drugs, but I love to listen to music other than bhajans and also like to go out with friends to clubs, etc. Should I give this up as well? What should be my limits here? How should I behave in situations where society expects me to do something which goes beyond these limits?

Sri G.S. Srirangarajan: Well, brothers and sisters, music is Divine. Listening to music is very good. Before I give the answer, let me also mention one thing, which I have found very common in the younger generation. They expect spirituality to be an answering machine. You put a coin “Hey, can I do this?” and pop, the answer should come out, “Don’t do it or yes, do it.” Unfortunately, that is the trend today, but spirituality is not an ATM. If you see our ancient scriptures and texts, they have laid down guidelines and basic principles that should guide your life and lifestyle. I would urge the

youth to ask themselves, “Is this music elevating? Is it merely exciting my senses or is it soothing my heart?”

Talking about clubs, it is what you do there, what you hear there, what you speak there that really matters. Therefore, let us keep the basic guidelines in mind. If as a Sai student or as a Sai Youth we need to elevate ourselves and turn our mind inwards, let us do those things, let us hear those things, let us speak those things which help us in this process.

Answering the second part of the question, a youth is asking about drinking. He says, “Is there any situation where one may be forced to drink?” Swami’s stand on this is absolutely clear. He says, as far as spiritual aspirants are concerned, there are three non-negotiables: smoking, drinking, and eating non-vegetarian food. Bhagavan is absolutely clear on this. But He also knows that this is not an overnight affair. I’m sure He would be very happy if we are striving towards it. But lest we may become complacent, He also warns us, giving us the example of the snake. He says, you have a snake that has suddenly dropped on your hand. What would you do? Would you immediately throw away the snake or look at it, appreciate it and say, “Hello Mr. Snake, how are you? Let me throw you inch by inch.” He says you would just take the snake and throw it out. **So if you feel there are certain habits and qualities that are not desirable, which do not help us in our spiritual growth, which do not help to bring us closer to Bhagavan, it is better we drop it.**

Sri G.S. Srirangarajan





Workshop Session 4



Loving God and Being Happy!

Dr. William Harvey

OM SAI RAM! I offer my humble *Pranams* at the Divine Lotus Feet. Brothers and sisters, young students, and delegates: I am very, very, happy! Very, very happy. We all should be very, very happy!

What a great conference this is! The speakers have been so wonderful. The Exhibition is outstanding. In addition, the composure and discipline displayed by you delegates make us all proud. I believe that it is no exaggeration to suggest that this is one of the most important gatherings to take place in this still new 21st century.

Other speakers have alluded to it, but actually there are no words sufficient to express how fortunate we all are – and, most especially how fortunate you young adults are. You have been chosen to constitute the fundamental and essential leadership and the support mechanisms that will play a crucial role in bringing the world safely through the great crisis in which it is now embroiled.

You will do this as God's instruments. Not necessarily will your impact be demonstrated in a dramatic or highly visible fashion. More often than not, it is likely to be by almost invisible, behind-the-scenes activity, consisting of your quiet interactions with others at educational institutions, in the workplace, in a variety of social settings, and during your community service efforts.

Our Good Fortune

Have no doubt! It is not by *chance* or *accident* that any one of us is here participating in this conference. We are here because Swami Willed it so! He removed every obstacle that might have blocked our way. We can be eternally grateful. And, from time to time, it is well to pause and reflect upon how fortunate we are.

Swami wants us to develop *integrated awareness*. In other words, avoid becoming narrowly focused on a single object of attention. He wants us to broaden our attentive-focus to include not only what is seen, but the See-er as well. He wants us to observe not just the objects of the mind, but to observe the mind itself. We must continually expand our awareness. For example, we may feel tired, but realise that it is the body that is tired, not our real Self. That thought alone will bring us back to the full range of Sai teachings.

In commenting about how fortunate we all are, and especially you young adults, there are so many ways to look at this. First, to be born as a human being. Swami assures us that this is not an easy thing to come by. In fact, we are told that such a fate is envied by some of the celestial beings. To achieve this human birth at the time when the Supreme Lord of the Universe has incarnated in Human Form, is a greater degree of good fortune. Then, it is an added measure of good fortune to come to know of His Presence. Only a tiny, tiny fraction of the world's humans is aware of Sai. Our good fortune does not end there, for we are blessed not only to know of His existence, but also to be able to accept and welcome the Message He brings. And that means that we are, gradually, more and more able to begin to recognise our own Divine nature and the oneness of all manifestation.

All of us have relatives and friends who have heard about Sai Baba and know of our feelings about Him, but who, unfortunately, find that for one reason or another they cannot accept Him. I suspect that at a deeper level, they *sense* it might be true, but their so-called logical mind won't let them go there. It is His Grace that we do not have such mental blocks.

Grace and Personal Effort

Now, what to do with all this good fortune? Quite obviously we have to share it with others, to the extent possible. Swami has explained that the supreme purpose of a human birth is to realise one's Divinity. However, that purpose is not automatically achieved by virtue of just being born a human. Rather, it takes a certain amount of effort on our part. **Spiritual progress is a function of Grace and personal effort.** The Grace is always there. Too often, though, the personal effort lags or is lacking altogether.

Furthermore, we do not know how much time is allotted to us – even though the time of death is stamped on us at the time of birth, according to Bhagavan. This is why we must not waste time. We must not *postpone* undertaking our spiritual efforts.

We have many instances of well-meaning parents mistakenly urging their children to focus exclusively on scholarship, good work habits, and proper social skills in order to first ensure worldly success. These

parents feel that the children can become engaged in spiritual matters later in life.

Swami does not want us to neglect either the acquisition of appropriate social and livelihood skills or attention to spiritual matters. Rather, He advises us to focus on our studies and skill development AND on our *sadhana*, our spiritual practices. In fact, He wishes us to realise that there is no meaningful distinction to be made between so-called worldly work on the one hand, and sacred activity, on the other. Moreover, **He says we should spiritualise our everyday routines by dedicating everything to God.**

Keep It Simple

Swami has given many memorable formulas for how we can successfully negotiate life and move consistently and surely towards our supreme goal. For example, some years back, He put it this way:

*Love God
Fear sin
Lead a moral life, and
Do what service you can*

I recall that at one time, I was blessed to be part of a group interview and took the opportunity to pose a question to Swami. I had been wrestling with trying to figure out why He had in this case used the term “sin,” so I requested more clarification. He looked patiently and sweetly at me and said, softly, **“Just love God.”**

I took that to mean something very important. As always, what at first appears to be a simple statement by Swami, becomes upon examination the equivalent of a chapter in a book or a book in itself, because it is so deep in meaning. I quickly began to realise that we should not confuse ourselves by engaging in too much thinking!! Looking for contradictions or being perturbed by what may at the moment appear to be a contradiction, should be avoided.

It is not hard to keep to the spiritual path. Doing the right thing is a simple, not a complex matter. When it appears to become problematic, we should know that it is *maya* or delusion at work. In other words, we are then unwittingly engaging in self-defeating or self-sabotaging efforts on our own part. Hence, whenever we are beginning to feel baffled, perplexed or confused, we should stop, relax, and bring Bhagavan fully to mind. This will stop all mental agitation and make us happy. Remember, He wants us to BE HAPPY always. Instead of getting mentally agitated and confused, we can just bring to mind the fact of our good fortune. Or, we can simply start softly chanting His Name, dropping all other thoughts.

How to Demonstrate Our Love for Baba

We demonstrate our love for Baba by staying focused on practising His teachings. Obviously, we must first know His teachings, before we can practise

them. To help in this, it is a good idea to form the habit of regularly reading from the *Sathya Sai Speaks* volumes, from the *Sanathana Sarathi*, and the *Vahinis* that Swami has written! Personally, I have found three of Swami’s *Vahinis* to be exceptionally thrilling and easy to read, AND, at the same time, inclusive of the essence of His teachings. So, I strongly recommend these three, if nothing else right now. They are especially helpful for us non-Indian devotees:

Bhagavatha Vahini – the *leelas* of Sri Krishna
Geetha Vahini, and

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini – the story of Sri Rama

Another important good habit to adopt is to choose at least one of Swami’s teachings, and then to practise it, seriously and religiously.

Now a word about the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation...

Swami’s Mission includes the restoring of the practice of *Dharma*. He does this in many different ways, and by many different means. Of course, He does not restrict His instruments to the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. Nonetheless, He has accorded the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation a very important function. It is a great privilege for us to be able to be a part of the only organisation to which the Lord has lent His Divine Name. He has said we should regard the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation as our life’s breath.

Among other things, this means we should attend Centre meetings as often as we can, and become more and more involved in the affairs of the Centre. As young adults, you may have special projects. But to the extent possible merge those projects into and under the auspices of the Centre programme. You are the leaders of tomorrow, but you must become involved today. Think of the older Centre members somewhat in the same way you do your parents. You don’t always see eye-to-eye with the way they choose to do things, but always show them love and respect. Practise patience. There is always something to learn from them, and then you can improve on it.

Most importantly, as you lead your life resist the temptation to worry. Because the mind can be so tricky, we have to be ever watchful. It is a glorious instrument, but must be controlled. Our mind can function better than the greatest computer. But like a computer, the mind must be shut off sometimes.

And as we live our lives, we must keep our eye on the goal. The goal is self-transformation. Let us channel all our love towards God. The more we do so, the more pure our thoughts and feelings become, and the more we transform.

Finally, with respect to practicing Sai teachings, an easy recipe is to remember what I like to call the *A, B, C’s of Sai Teachings*. This is a sure-fire way to stay firm on the spiritual path and continually expand our

normal awareness. The principal A, B, C's are Always be Content, Cheerful, and Careful. Let's look at them.

Always Be Content

Contentment is best. Remember, **you are always in the right place, no matter how it seems at the moment.** For example, let us say you find yourself stuck in a traffic jam. Or maybe you are leaving your building to head for your car and you find the elevator does not come after a minute or two. You press the button again. It still does not come. If you are not careful, soon you find yourself working up an agitated feeling, being restless and irritated. In other words, discontent.

But finally the elevator comes, and you get into your car. However, after driving a short bit you come to an intersection where a very bad accident has taken place. Upon inquiry you find that a run-away truck crashed into the intersection just about five minutes ago – the exact amount of time you had been delayed by the slow elevator.

Always Be Cheerful

We should make it a point to smile and always be cheerful. Swami does not like for us to have a sad or castor-oil face. When we smile, we make others smile. We make them feel better, which makes us feel even better. Think of it: we know the Lord of the Universe! We can at least be cheerful.

Always Be Careful

This is where balance comes in. Be self-confident, but do not become arrogant or conceited. Be always watchful, as Swami tells us. And, avoid any tendency to be overly impressed with your spiritual progress. Spiritual arrogance is the worst kind of arrogance, and very harmful to us.

Actually, we can add one more A, B, C....

Avoid Bad Company

If we remember our Sai A, B, C's, we will be well on our way towards spiritual transformation.

Jai Sai Ram.

.....
Dr. William Harvey received his PhD degree in Psychology from Washington University in St. Louis, USA. He founded a substance abuse treatment centre, which he directed for 25 years, while serving on multiple advisory boards and commissions for the U.S. Government's Health and Human Services Department. He has also been a newspaper editor and an Adjunct Professor of Sociology at Washington University. He has served in the Sai Organisation in numerous capacities, including being President of the U.S. Central Council. He currently chairs the National Executive Committee for the U.S. Young Adult Programme, and is a member of the Prasanthi Council.



Sai Inspiration for Youth: Role in the Organisation

Sri Anil Kumar Kamaraju

My *Pranams* at the Lotus Feet of our most Beloved Bhagavan.

Distinguished members and dear young friends, I recall a statement made by an astronaut a few years ago in the Presence of Bhagavan: “A man walking on the moon is not as important as God walking on earth.”

Our Good Fortune

We are really fortunate to be alive while Bhagavan is walking on this earth. We are extremely fortunate to be in His Presence breathing the same air that He does. You are the contemporaries of an *Avatar*. It is not a trivial matter; it is not our achievement either. To say that I have come to Swami, or to say that I have chosen Him to be my God is a sign of arrogance and ignorance.

Who are you to choose Him? How do you know? **Let us realise first that we have not chosen Him; He has chosen us.** That is the fact. Just reflect on the experience you are having in the Presence of Bhagavan. The Presence of Sai has an electrifying effect. It is a thrilling experience to witness people of all nations, of all groups, of all ages, professions, languages, temperaments, and attitudes assembled under one roof; and it is the hallmark of Prasanthi Nilayam.

Bhagavan’s Message is universal. The Presence of Bhagavan itself uplifts us and our consciousness is raised to a higher state. As the mind withdraws, we are in a blissful state. Watching His blissful face, we are so enamoured that we lose all awareness, and even lose the opportunity to give our letters to Him.

Intelligence and Intellect

Intelligence is more important than intellect. Intellect is the one that makes you an intellectual, respectable and knowledgeable. Intellect gathers knowledge, but knowledge is only second-hand information. Intelligence is nascent, immanent within you, *prajnanam brahma*. Therefore, that intelligence with which we are endowed gives ample scope for intuition; and, all creativity is born out of this intuition.

Practise Spirituality

Bhagavan points out that we have no shortage of speakers, and we have no dearth of books, but there are very few who practise the spiritual principles. Why does Bhagavan say this? Because, **practice is more**

important than precept. Swami extols practice and compares it to a spoonful of cow’s milk which is better than barrels of donkey’s milk – “*Gangi govu paalu gantedainanu chaalu, kadavadainanemi kharamu paalu.*”

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s philosophy is that religion is for practice and not simply to be discussed. Religion is not a ritual; it is spiritual. Spirituality means the practice of religion. Religion is only a banner. True religiousness is the manner in which you conduct yourself. That is what is most important.

Youngsters, I can also tell you this: We are very much enamoured by your enthusiasm and activities.

We say that we have done this, and we have done that. Our doings are not that important. Certainly, there are many other organisations that are into doing things of even greater magnitude. But, that is not important. **‘Doing’ is not important; your ‘being’ is more important.** That is what the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is all about: ‘being’ is more important than ‘doing.’

Self-help books tell us that we should learn to accept ourselves for what we are.

We are living in a society where comparisons and competition divide us. Where there is no competition, where there is no comparison, there is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Let us not compare ourselves with anybody. Let us try to forgive ourselves. Let us love ourselves. **If you can love yourself, you will be able to love others. If you respect yourself, you will be able to respect others. If you are able to forgive yourself, you will be able to forgive others.**

Be Ordinary

We should learn yet another important lesson from Bhagavan – how to be ordinary and simple. He behaves very ordinarily, almost one amongst us. Although we fully recognise that Swami is ordinary, we ourselves want to be extraordinary. That is the tragedy of life. In every way, Swami is very, very ordinary; in how He talks to primary school children, how He jokes with them and what simple food He eats. These are all simple acts. But we want to be extraordinary. Let us learn to be ordinary and simple in every act of our life. Not that I feel ordinary, I am ordinary. The flowers are ordinary, rivers are ordinary, and the valleys and mountains are ordinary. The galaxy, moon, and sun

are ordinary, but I want to be extraordinary. There is nothing extraordinary about being extraordinary. To be ordinary is extraordinary. So this is what we should aspire to.

Encourage and Train Youngsters

Many of us desire to occupy positions. But we should realise that positions are not at all important for a spiritual person. A religious man will never run after a position because the position can be a barrier or an obstacle. It just increases your ego. Let us all say, “Oh, Ego! Be gone so that I can come up well in life.” You lose touch with love, life and the totality of existence if you run after positions. Dr. Goldstein’s statement in his welcoming address very much appealed to me: he said, “In the organisation, one category of people are not ‘willing’ and another category of people are not ‘ready.’” Oh, what a colourful way of putting things! Not willing, meaning they are not ready to quit the post. People who don’t want to quit their post or office consider the post as a seat of power and authority. In reality, there is no power and authority. We all have to work! That’s all. We are servants, servant of the servants – *daasanudaasa*.

In the organisation, let us encourage and train more youngsters. Let us give them the opportunity to serve. The time has come for the youngsters to occupy the positions and see that the organisation blossoms in full. This requires proper training. No doctor can practise immediately without working under a senior doctor or surgeon. No accountant can practise unless he has been trained. No attorney can practise unless he has been trained. So also, let all of the youngsters be trained from this point onwards. We must always be ready to participate and serve in the organisation; we should share responsibilities.

You Are Divine

We should derive joy from working in society.

Baba wants people to set an example to the rest of the community. Who is Sai? You don’t need to speak about Sai. **Realise that Sai is in everyone – you are Sai, you are Sai, you are Sai. That is all.** As Bhagavan says, “Yes! I am God and you are also God.” Your personality is elevated in the company of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It is a blessing proclaimed by Swami that you are verily Divine; what more do you want in this life? We must try to have vision for the future so that our Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, with all its wings, works harmoniously and effectively.

I love the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation. I love Sathya Sai service activities more than my life, more than my family – all because of Sathya Sai Baba. It is an open truth that the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation is verily my life-breath.

Once Swami asked, “What is it that you want?”

I said, “Why should I ask anything from you when you give everything without asking? Why should I ask you, Swami, for so many things?”

Then He said, “Don’t you want *moksha*, liberation?”

I said, “That, I don’t want.” Why? Because, nobody told me how *moksha* looks or feels like, and what it is. If you want me to ask for a boon, this is a request to You, Bhagavan! What is it? Let me be born again and again so that I can speak about the Divinity everywhere, in every nook and corner of the world so that people will realise that Divinity itself is present within.

.....
Sri Anil Kumar Kamaraju received his Masters in Biosciences from Andhra University. He served for 26 years as a lecturer in Botany at the Andhra Christian College in Guntur. He was Zonal Convener in the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, India and was Principal, Sri Sathya Sai University, Bangalore. Currently, he is a Professor in Biosciences at Sri Sathya Sai University, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus and is known to many as the translator of Swami’s Discourses. He has authored several books including *The Universal and Practical Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*, *The Divine Directions*, and *Sathyopanishad*.



His Life Is His Message

Dr. Geeta Reddy

My humble and loving *Pranams* at the Lotus Feet of the Lord of Lords, our own Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. To all the Sai Youth who are here from all over the world, the young members of the universal Sai family, and of course the panel of speakers before you, I offer my heart-felt Sai Rams to all of you.

His Guiding Hand

I consider it a great honour that I am here sharing my thoughts with you. When I was asked to participate in this World Youth Conference and speak to you, I was excited and thrilled. But being in politics and a member of the Cabinet, I cannot always dictate my work schedule. We had our Cabinet meeting just the day I received the invitation from Dr. Hyma Reddy, and our assembly sessions were due to commence during the time of the World Youth Conference. I was in a quandary. I prayed to Swami, "I would love to speak, I would love to be there in Your Presence, but the assembly sessions have just been announced."

I was wondering what the Chief Minister was going to announce about the plans for the sessions. I was so pleased, so relieved when he said that we are only going to have a ten-day long session and that we shall finish this session on the 27th of July. If the Chief Minister had extended the assembly sessions by even one day, I would not have been able to be here. The opposition party was asking for a one-day extension. But the Chief Minister said, "No! Just till the 27th and that's it!" I know this was Baba's doing. The unseen Hand of Bhagavan has constantly been guiding me ever since I came into His fold, making my life a virtual "magic-carpet ride."

To be under the guiding Hand of Bhagavan is a boon to be coveted. I congratulate each and every one of you for your good fortune of being here in His Presence. Having come from so far, and at such a young age when your lives are still flexible, is a great opportunity. My young friends, there are six and a half billion people in the world today. But only six thousand are fortunate enough to be here and receive His Grace and Blessings directly!

He Is the Source

Most of us are from different backgrounds, cutting across nations, race, religion, caste, and community. As many of the speakers have said, "**There is only one**

caste, the caste of humanity." But let us ponder what is going on in this world full of strife and violence. The Hindus are teaching that their religion is the greatest. The Muslims are teaching that their religion is the best. The Christians say, "The only way is Christianity." Today, it is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who teaches about the oneness of humanity, the oneness of religion, and the oneness of love. Rather than promoting one religion as superior, He insists that all religions are worthy pathways to God. He wants you to become a good Christian. He wants you to become a good Hindu. He wants you to become a good Muslim. He has said, "**I have separated Myself from Myself, so that I can Love Myself.**" By that very saying don't we all understand that we are all Him? We are all His reflections and His sparks. He is the one true source of all of this apparent diversity.

He is very simple, loving, and unassuming. We may fall into *maya* (illusion) and be deluded by His drama, but we must go beyond the *maya* and know that He is the only reality of our lives. There is no other reality. He is the only true friend that we have, because His Love is unconditional. Even a mother may find it difficult to be loving towards a child when the child makes a mistake. But for Bhagavan, you may be anything, you may be anyone, you may have done anything, but He is always loving. **That is the relationship we all share with Him, that of Love and Love alone.**

His Message Is His Life and His Life Is His Message

Right from the age of fourteen, He has taken the task to redeem us, to bring us back on the path that we have forgotten. Mind you, when we are young, we are so tempted to do so many things. It is the most adventurous and exciting part of our lives. This is when we need a guiding hand. I envy your good fortune that you have come to Swami at such a young age and are being groomed by Him to be good citizens of the world. Youth is the foundation of society. Youth is the foundation of every country. Youth is the future of every country and every nation. Today, in the Sai Kulwant Hall, in the Presence of the Lord, the future of the world is seated right here. All you have to do here, my young friends, is just hold your hand out and He will take it.

Open Your Heart to His Love

Each of you has God residing in you. There is no one between Sai and you. As Mrs. Phyllis Krystal said, there should be nothing between Sai and you. He is only asking for love, so take Him into your heart. I think what Phyllis has done this morning is a wonderful thing. I want to reiterate her message: **Open up your heart, open it up so widely to allow His Love to flow into you.** The Love should flow into each and every cell of your being so that it reverberates nothing but the Sai Energy, the Sai Love. Then when you walk out of here, you will be radiating and reverberating the same Love as that of Hanuman's for Lord Rama.

The world has seen many *Avatars* before. Lord Rama was born thousands of years ago. Lord Krishna was here around five thousand years ago. More recently, Jesus Christ and Buddha were here just over two thousand years ago. The lives and teachings of these *Avatars* are still revered today. But today that same Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Zorashtra is right in front of us in the form of Sri Sathya Sai Baba! Call Him by any name and He will answer.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba works so hard for the upliftment of the world. He is walking on thorns so that you can walk on flowers. Like one of the young speakers said this morning, He takes on anything and everything and sacrifices His body for us.

So what is our duty? **Our duty is to love, to love Him, and when you love Him you love everybody else.** He brings about transformation, and I am an example of that. As you are aware, I come from the world of politics, which is not an easy profession. I try to balance my life by doing my duty for the people who elected me. This is something He has helped me with and He has corrected me. Today I am nothing without Him.

Love All – Serve All

Armed with weapons, Lord Rama destroyed Ravana, and Krishna destroyed Kamsa. Lord Sai has come armed with the weapons of *Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema, and Ahimsa*. You, my dear students and dear young people, you are His wealth. Swami has repeatedly said, "The young people are My wealth." So when you go out, the responsibility lies on you to carry out His teachings. His teachings are so simple. How can I, leading a complicated life of politics and being a wife and mother with multiple responsibilities, have faith and follow Him fervently? I can do so because His teachings are very simple. **Love all and serve all.** All I can do today is not to hurt or harm anybody. I try to love. Loving everybody is not so easy but I try. The inner transformation that is brought about is the greatest miracle of our lives. There are so many miracles that happen in my life but the greatest miracle is that He has transformed me inside. Politics is full of people who

betray you. I am able to forgive them and say, "Perhaps this is an experience Bhagavan wants me to have." This is the biggest transformation He has brought about in my life, and I feel ever so grateful for that.

There is a small little story He tells us about Abu Ben Adam. There was an angel who was writing down a list. Abu Ben Adam asked, "What are you writing?" The angel replied, "I am writing a list of the people who love God." Abu Ben Adam looked at the list and saw that his name was missing. He said, "I am helping humanity all the time, but my name is not on the list." The angel said, "Wait, there is another list. This is the list of whom God Loves." And Abu Ben Adam's name was first on that list!

It is such a simple tale but carries so much significance. I want all of you to be like Abu Ben Adam. When He Loves you, there is nothing that you cannot do.

Seek the Kingdom of God

There is another story of a young lady and a king. One day, this king asked his citizens to come and take whatever they wanted from the palace. So all the subjects ran into his palace and they grabbed whatever they could see, whatever attracted them, all the expensive and wonderful items. But there was one woman who didn't take anything. The king asked why, as there were so many beautiful, wonderful, expensive items to take. She replied, "No King, I choose you. If I choose you, I get the whole kingdom!" **So choose Him, and you get the whole world, a Sai World.**

Moving Temples of the Lord

There is another statement of Baba's which appeals to me a lot. I don't have time to do rituals, *pujas, homas* and *yajnas*. I used to feel bad about it. But He said in one of His public Discourses, "Why do you want to put Me in your *puja* rooms or temples or mosques or churches? Why do you restrict Me there? I want one temple and that is the temple of your heart. I want to be in your heart, so build me a temple there." That way, my dear young ones, we all will become "moving temples of the Lord."

That's exactly what Baba wants us to do. He has really lifted us from the mundane to the magnificent. Our magnificent Lord wants us to be as magnificent as He is, because we are His creation. Can you believe that He has created 84 *lakhs* of species and we are only one amongst them? And yet we are His best creation because of the power of discrimination He put in us.

You all must have heard about Mahatma Gandhi, the father of this nation. He has said that if we want peace in this world, we have to begin with the youth. You see what a great responsibility lies on your young shoulders? You are going to change this world to be a better place, a place full of peace, full of bliss, and full of love. That is what you have come to do as messengers

of Sai. You can't just walk away from here saying, "Oh, we attended this wonderful conference for three days and we had Sai Baba's *Darshan* all the time." Yes, you had all that, but your responsibility begins the moment you walk out of this gate because you have the whole world to take on.

The whole world is looking at the "Sai-lent" revolution. This Sai revolution is going to change the whole world. You will certainly make it a better world. A lot of people ask me how I can be a Sai devotee while being in politics. Politics is a part of this world and He has created this world. He wants leaders. He wants leaders who will serve the public selflessly.

My job and my life are so simple now, because I have come into His fold. I have come very late, but better late than never. Every moment of my life I ask Swami, "Swami what should I do? What decision should I take?" Those are my silent prayers. He says, "Just ask Me and I am there for you." He is the best friend one can have. It is a challenge to take His teachings to heart. What is the world of love? It is the world of the heart and when the heart rules the head, it leads to love. Everything is filled with Sai. As we say in Telugu, "*Sarvam Sai Mayam*," which means everything is Sai.

Pray Unceasingly

It is so lovely to have God in our lives. Just pray to Him. You do not have to make special time. When you are driving, when you are eating, even before you take up your daily work, just offer it to Him and say, "Now, You take up this work." This way life will be easier. And life for all of you will become a "magic-carpet ride." So my dear young friends! I wish you all the best in your life. May Sai's Blessings, His guidance, and teachings take you to the highest pinnacles of life, and may you make this world a much better place to live in. Jai Sai Ram!

.....
Dr. Geeta Reddy is the Minister for Sugar, Major Industries, Commerce and Export Promotion, Government of Andhra Pradesh. A highly qualified gynaecologist by profession, Dr. Reddy has worked extensively in the UK, Australia and Saudi Arabia. Deeply devoted to Bhagavan, she and her husband run hospitals as well as nursing colleges in Secunderabad. She is an active participant in a variety of social welfare activities and in medical camps organised by the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in the rural areas of Andhra Pradesh. Her achievements and contribution to women's welfare issues have won her numerous national awards and recognitions.



Question and Answer Session Workshop Number 4

QUESTION 1: What does Swami say about a woman's role at home? Is it okay if she works while having children, or does Swami request her to stay at home?

Dr. Geeta Reddy: That's a very interesting question. Of course, Swami says that a woman has to perform her duties at home. Let all of us women feel proud that we are multifaceted personalities, by birth. Man may be the bread winner, but we are not only bread winners but also house/home-keepers; we are by birth, Home Ministers, Defense Ministers, Education Ministers, and Finance Ministers. We govern our home. **Swami is our Mother and He Loves us, His children. That is exactly what He wants us to do as mothers.** So you can be a mother, a home-keeper, and also have a career. I don't think that it is wrong to have children and to have a career. Today's world often demands that both men and women work. I think Swami never wants you to just sit, chanting His Name, doing nothing else at all. So, dear women, please go ahead, be wonderful mothers, be wonderful career women, and manage both your lifestyles equally well.

QUESTION 2: Can the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation formally link with other organisations such as the United Nations or any other volunteer agency?

Dr. William Harvey: That's a question we hear variations on all the time. There are many, many organisations that are doing excellent work, and we should give them our support as individuals. We should speak well of them, we should contribute, if we are able, and we should do what we can. However, the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is a unique organisation. We have precepts, a code of conduct that is distinct and different from every other organisation. We are not saying we are better or they are worse, or anything like that. It is best that we simply support other organisations in a private way, but do our own thing. For example, a lot of times people say, "We don't have enough money and we don't have enough resources to do the kind of service that we would like to do. If we joined with somebody else, we could do more." Well, there is no reason to make a distinction based on quantity of service. Just do whatever you can, and first of all, remember that **our basic goal is to focus on self-transformation.**

QUESTION 3: How do we know if we are progressing spiritually? Is there a way to measure this?

Sri Anil Kumar: How to know that you are progressing spiritually? According to Ramana Maharishi, "When you are not affected by praise or blame, you are equanimous with poise and balanced state of mind, neither elated nor depressed, that means that you have spiritually progressed."

QUESTION 4: Is it better to serve God through a career choice that is selfless such as charity work, or can that also be done through a choice of career that is seemingly selfish such as investment banking?

Dr. Geeta Reddy: When Swami says that work is worship, it doesn't really matter what you do, either selfless service or a job in investment banking, because it is the attitude that matters. You could be in any position, it doesn't have to be in the field of charity alone. Wherever you are, whichever position or profession you are in, you can be charitable to people. When people come to you and say, "Can you do this for me, or can you do that for me?", Swami says that the way you speak to them matters. Therefore, you need not work only in charitable organisations. We should always be loving in whatever we do. I know someone who is a great devotee of the Lord, and she used to sing in bars and nightclubs abroad. I asked her how she could do it. She said, "I carry His picture with me all the time close to my heart. I sing because I need to live, I need to eat; but I love the Lord." So when you love the Lord, whatever you do, it's okay.

Coming back to the question of a woman's role, I wanted to share one other thing. I heard Swami saying this to a group of women during an interview about five or six years ago. These women were saying, "Swami, we have so much work. We are cooking, we are cleaning, where is the time to think of You?" You know what the Lord said? He said, "While you are cutting the vegetables, think you are cutting away all that is bad in you. While you are sweeping the floors, think that you are sweeping away all the negativity that is around you. When the milk is boiling over, think that it is your love for the Lord that is boiling over." When you relate every activity to the Lord, whether it is investment banking or any other work, it is perfectly all right with the Lord.

QUESTION 5: How can we develop unity among the youth and adults at the Sathya Sai Centre level? How can we encourage other youth to follow a disciplined life?

Dr. William Harvey: We already spoke about forming unity in the Sathya Sai Centre and how youth can relate to the older members of the Sathya Sai Centre. The idea of getting other youth in the neighbourhoods or in the community to become more spiritual is something that is important, but we have to remember that we can not do it directly. **We can best influence them by setting a very strong positive example.** When we see a situation that is not as good as we think it should be, we should form the habit of turning our attention away from that situation and turning it back onto ourselves, and asking, “Am I doing all the things that I should be doing?” It is a trap to see disarray elsewhere, to point the finger at other people and say, “They should be doing what we are doing.” We should look within ourselves. By doing that, by being still and silent, and adhering to Swami’s teachings, we will then vibrate with such positive energy that we will positively influence all the people around us.

Dr. Geeta Reddy: I must not leave this hall without saying something regarding my career right now as a Minister in the Government. Truly, these ministerial positions can come and go – I have been a Minister before, and again I am one now. But all I know and have realised through my time with the Lord is that the only position that is permanent is as a devotee of the Lord.

QUESTION 6: If Baba is the source and the goal, why is there still a need to search? Should He not already be apparent to us?

Sri Anil Kumar: When Baba is the source and the goal, where is the need to search? There are flowers and the string. Why do you need another man? You need another man to make it a garland. Flowers are there, string is there. To make a garland, you need somebody. That’s what Bhagavan says. You need somebody to make it a garland. You have a wick, you have oil, but you need somebody to light and ignite it. Therefore, Bhagavan should light and ignite the latent awareness within you so that you will reach Bhagavan, who is the source and the goal. We are most fortunate in that the *Guru*, the preceptor is Bhagavan, and God is Bhagavan. Other people may lead you to God, but Bhagavan, God Himself, is leading everybody unto Himself. That is the greatest thing happening today.

Sri Anil Kumar: Right before you go, I want you to disperse happily. Spirituality is not pressure, spirituality is not heavy; spirituality is not a burden; **spirituality is laughter, joy, dance, and celebration** – that is spirituality. It is celebration, it is dynamism. Therefore, seriousness is not spirituality. Seriousness is sickness, that’s all. If you smile, smile all the way.



Summary of the Workshops

We are very fortunate to participate in this third Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference: Ideal Sai Youth – Messengers of Sai Love in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Let us commit ourselves to spreading His Message of Love and living up to Sai ideals. The Ideal Sai Youth has the head of Sankara, the heart of Buddha and the hands of Janaka.

During the last three days, ten speakers with decades of experience have given the youth guidance to enable this process of transformation. For this, we are grateful to the following workshop speakers: Mrs. Mallika Srinivasan, Sri Sanjay Sahani, Dr. Samuel Sandweiss, Sri Narasimha Murthy, Mrs. Phyllis Krystal, Mr. Leonardo Gutter, Sri G.S. Srirangarajan, Dr. William Harvey, Dr. Geeta Reddy and Sri Anil Kumar Kamaraju. The following is a summary of the talks given by the distinguished speakers during all the workshop sessions.

We are fortunate to be living in this time when the *Avatar* is amongst us. We have taken many births to be able to be here today in His Divine Presence. The youth are truly blessed to know of Him at this young age. Remember that we are here as a result of Swami's Divine Will and Grace. Swami has a plan for each one of us. We have not chosen Him, He has chosen us.

Bhagavan has come to help us transform ourselves and it behooves us to make the best use of this unique opportunity. He says that our devotion alone is not enough, He wants our transformation. This transformation has four facets: Love God, fear sin, lead a moral life and perform selfless service. Swami wants us to rise to His expectations. Spiritual progress is a function of Grace and effort. We have to put in the best effort, and then Bhagavan's Grace automatically follows. Baba says that He will never disappoint us. Let us be careful not to disappoint Him.

To facilitate this transformation, we must make Swami the centre of our lives. We should always speak to Bhagavan and share with Him our joys and sorrows. This will help us to remain in a state of equanimity unaffected by the ups and downs in our lives. What is attachment? It is detachment from God. What is detachment? It is attachment to God.

Swami is in every one of our hearts and it is our responsibility to recognise His Divine Presence within. Our contact with Baba should be heart-to-heart. When

God is in our hearts, we can control our minds and our senses. By restraining our minds and senses, we can build our character and character is moulded during youth. In order to build character, our lives must be governed by the five D's: Duty, Devotion, Discipline, Determination and Discrimination. Swami has told us that when we have bad thoughts, we should ignore them and not turn them into actions. On the other hand, when we have good thoughts it is our duty to put them into action immediately.

God's Love knows no bounds. We should experience this Love in every moment of our lives. Bhagavan's life is full of acts of Love and compassion and His Love is unconditional. He has come to set an ideal for man to live by. It is therefore important to practise Sai Love, rather than just read and talk about it. In order to be messengers of love, we need to receive His Love and let it permeate every cell of our body. We should send Swami's Love to all, including those we find difficult to deal with. As both Jesus and Bhagavan have urged us, we should love others as He has loved us. We should serve Him by serving others. Swami says that the easiest way to experience God is through selfless service and its real value is that it transforms us.

Let us remember that we are walking temples of God and that it is an honour to be messengers of Sai. The youth are ready. The time is now. Let us be the force to bring about individual and worldwide transformation. Swami has said: "Give me ONE youth strong in character and I can change the destiny of the world." Let each one of us make a pledge to become that ONE youth with a strong character. Let each one of us unconditionally say "YES" to Swami for He is our only true friend. On this final day of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference, let us resolve to choose any one of His teachings and practise it diligently in our lives.

Dear brothers and sisters, take back the Message of Sai Love to your countries and be the torch bearers of His Message, and never hesitate to say that God lives in Prasanthi Nilayam!

Jai Sai Ram.

YOUTH SPEAKERS



Head, Heart, Hands: A Practical Spiritual Path

Mr. Jeremy Hoffer

I offer my most loving and humble *Pranams* to Bhagavan. Respected elders, brothers and sisters, Sai Ram. As a young boy growing up in America, I never imagined that I would travel the world, let alone come to the other side of the planet, to a remote Indian village like Puttaparthi. For many, America is a dream land, a land of opportunity for thousands who go there every year in search of a better life. But for me, the road to a better way of life began here, in this tiny corner of Andhra Pradesh, at this abode of highest peace, and home of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

While the miles I have traveled may be great, the transformation I have undergone is greater. Shortly after my first trip, people I knew began to say, “Jeremy, we don’t know what it is about you, but you have changed.” Even my father said to me, “Jeremy, I do not totally understand who Sai Baba is, but based on the positive change I have seen in you, He must be all right.” And thus began my new life.

Guarded and Guided by Him

Bhagavan caught hold of me at a crucial and formative time in my life. I was 18 years old, without direction, and in bad company. But Bhagavan had other plans for me. After learning about His Incarnation, I began studying Sai literature, participating in the local Sai Centre activities, and making trips to see Him at just the same time that the budding youth wing in the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation was beginning to blossom.

I joined a group of 18 youth from the United States who attended Bhagavan’s Summer Course in Brindavan in 1995, and was fortunate to attend both the first and second World Youth Conferences. Thereafter, I did my final year of college in Hyderabad where I lived and worked with the Hyderabad youth group. Now at age 36, I have spent exactly half my life under Bhagavan’s care, and am eternally grateful to Bhagavan for carrying me safely across those important years of my youth.

Three Important Lessons...

With humility, I offer this august gathering a few of the lessons I have learned along this journey:

- (a) First, take refuge in the words of Sai
- (b) Second, take Bhagavan as your only true friend
- (c) And third, engage whole-heartedly in good work

And now I would like to elaborate on each of these lessons I have learned.

First, Take Refuge in the Words of Sai

Bhagavan says that, “**The mind is the source of all suffering.**” And just as a thorn can be used to remove a thorn, so too can suffering of our confused and wayward minds be relieved by thinking about the words and ideas of Bhagavan. But these words must be meditated upon. Food cannot be digested with only one chew, and mental peace cannot be gained from a quick or occasional reading of Sai’s teachings. In my experience, it often takes many years for the mind to grasp the meaning of His teachings.

For example, Bhagavan often describes the spiritual path as a house: the foundation is self-confidence, the walls are self-satisfaction, the roof is self-sacrifice, and the house is self-realisation. For years I listened to this analogy, and it remained largely unclear all the while. Only after some years of working on this puzzle did it begin to occur to me that Swami is describing a sequence of events, and that each stage must be passed through to get to the next. Nothing can happen without self-confidence.

With **self-confidence** we can begin to engage in the world and to extract from it our own desires – **self-satisfaction**. But sooner or later, we must learn that satisfying our own desires doesn’t give enduring peace and happiness. It is at this point that we must begin to use our own potential to relieve the suffering of others. And only after this “roof” of **self-sacrifice** is constructed can the mansion of **self-realisation** be secured.

Perhaps the truth of this simple teaching came quickly to others. For me, it took time to digest. But my point is that we must all put effort into understanding, in a deeper way, the words of Bhagavan, and not skim too quickly across the surface. Mental peace can be attained if we all take refuge in His words.

Second, Take Bhagavan as Your Only True Friend

For young people, friendship is very important, and often misunderstood and misused. Swami often says, “Tell me your company, and I will tell you what you are.” The influence of the company we keep is very powerful, especially in the years of our youth. So, being in good company is essential for a good life. But the real meaning of friendship deserves to be explored carefully.

Bhagavan explains to us that, “God is the only true friend.” We should then ask ourselves, “Who is a friend?” A friend can provide company and companionship – that’s true. But a true friend is the one who knows the deepest reservoirs of our hearts, whose care for us is perfect and inexhaustible and who is closer to us than any other. And who but God can be that friend?

Once Swami patted me on the chest and said, “**This is not a two-seat sofa; this is not musical chairs...Your seat is on that plane, but My seat is in your heart.**” True *sneham*, or friendship, should not be cheapened by putting all things into our hearts. We should reserve our love for God, for who can truly satisfy the pain and deepest yearning of our hearts, but Him?

Lastly, Engage Whole-Heartedly in Good Work

Wrong use of the body leads to all kinds of troubles. But to escape this suffering, we should put our body to good uses. Swami has prescribed that *seva* is the proper use of the body, and also a powerful tool for spiritual transformation. “**Bend the body, mend the mind, end the senses,**” Bhagavan has said.

I would like to share an experience to illustrate this point. In the USA, the youth regularly take up a variety of service projects. One extraordinary opportunity came in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina devastated the coastline of the southern states of Louisiana and Mississippi. Sai Youth responded quickly, locating a town that was not receiving much assistance, and sending a large truckload full of needed supplies to Tylertown, Mississippi.

Not satisfied with this initial effort, we organised a second trip to repair the roofs and homes of poor victims who could not afford to have their roofs replaced after the terrible storm. Such large-scale projects are inspiring to be a part of, but another example I’d like to share illustrates well the power of doing service even on a relatively small scale.

The Magic of Selfless Work

Because winters can be very cold and snowy in many parts of America, homeless people run the risk of freezing without proper clothing and footwear. A few years ago, some members of our group noticed that some homeless men in our city had only plastic bags over their feet as footwear during the winter. So we made a decision that the following winter we would buy 75 pairs of boots and distribute them amongst the homeless people.

When we went to the store to buy these 75 pairs of boots, we were pleased that the owner of the store himself took care of us. It took quite some time to buy so many boots and at some point in our work together, the owner of the store said to us, “Boys, 75 pairs is a lot of boots. Would you mind if I ask what you intend to do with them?” So we explained that we planned to give them away in winter to people without good shoes.

He was just quiet for a little while and then he said, “Boys, in all the years that I have been in the shoe business, I have never seen anyone come into my store to do what you are doing. I will sell you these boots, but I will only charge you the price that I have to pay for them myself. I am only sorry that I did not know about this earlier, else I could have worked with my suppliers to get the boots even cheaper. Please contact me next year so we can work together to do this good work.”

Finally after we paid for the boots and were leaving his store, the owner said, “Boys, every year I invite my employees and their families to come and shop in my store before Christmas, and I give them a very big discount. I want you two boys to also come in with your families, so I can give the same opportunity to you too.”

When Love Is Put in Action

On the day we planned to give the boots away, our youth group had a meeting to talk about our work. Very often, the poor and homeless are treated badly, even by people offering them services. We all agreed that we would work differently. We reminded ourselves that God is the indweller of every living being, and therefore, we would treat every single person as if he were Swami Himself, and give only love towards one and all. As the long line of people began filing into the downtown church where we were giving away the boots, the poor and homeless were at first very restless and aggressive with each other and with us. But our group continued to treat them all in a loving manner.

Very quickly, the atmosphere began to change. Soon, everyone became peaceful, orderly and happy. Each person was invited to sit down in a chair and be served food and drink while they waited their turn to find a pair of boots. When their turn came, our workers peeled off the old shoes and socks from their



worn and tired feet, and carefully fit them with a new pair of socks and boots, and sent them on their way happy and recharged.

At the end of the day, after almost all of the boots were gone, there was one man who had received his pair of boots and was about to leave, when he noticed another man who could not find a pair of boots to fit him. The man without boots was very discouraged as his shoes were in very bad condition and not fit to last through the tough winter months. Observing this, the first man with boots in hand went over to this man and gave him his boots and said, “Here, it looks like you need these boots more than me. My shoes are in better condition than yours, so please take my new boots.” With this, the man walked away smiling.

We need not wait for hurricanes to befall us for opportunities to serve. In fact any act of love directed to relieve the suffering of another person is worthy service. In this work love is the essential ingredient. **Service is nothing more than love in action.** It has the power not only to uplift the downtrodden, but also to transform us into more selfless loving human beings. A very nice Telugu song captures Swami’s Message about service:

*Desham ante matti kadu, desham ante
Manushuloiye*

*Deshaanni premiddaam, tyagaanni chupiddaam
Pavitrāmuga jeevinchi paavana charitamunu
pondi*

Swarthammunu vidanadi Sathya Saini cherudaam

The nation does not refer to the landmass but the
conglomeration of its people

Let us love our country, Let us live by sacrifice

Let us lead sacred lives and be virtuous

Let us let go of selfishness and gather at the Feet of
Sathya Sai

*Mana shaktini manamu telesi yuva shaktini
chatudaam*

Graama graamaallona sevalenno cheyudaam

Sevalennaina avi kashta sadhyamulaina

Okari-nokaru cheri manamu Swamini

sevinchudaam

Let us recognise our inner strength and harness
the power of youth

Let us serve in myriad ways the poor in the
villages

Even if the task is challenging, let us work with
unity and serve Swami in all

*Sai mata biddalam andaram Sathya Sai mata
biddalamey andaram*

We are all children of Mother Sai, We are all, in
fact, His.

Dear brothers and sisters, I am not sure we can truly fathom the significance of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference. That we are here in attendance must be a boon earned over many lifetimes. We have all come from afar to be here – by plane, train, and automobile, but on the path of transformation, we all have more to go. On behalf of the world’s youth, Bhagavan, I pray to you to carry us all the way to our destination and bless us with the strength to be Ideal Sai Youth.

Jai Sai Ram!

.....
Mr. Jeremy Hoffer has been an active member of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation for 17 years, holding positions at the Regional and Centre levels. He has a Bachelor’s degree in History and a Masters degree in Education from the University of Denver, USA. He now works as a teacher in Denver helping to create educational opportunities for low-income children.



Love God with All Thy Heart

Miss Alma Berra

Om Sri Sai Ram! With loving *Pranams* at the Divine Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

“Who indeed would breathe, who would remain alive if this bliss would not fill the sky?”

–Taittiriya Upanishad

Beloved Bhagavan, revered elders, dear brothers and sisters.

We are all here today, gathered around a living and loving miracle. Sathya Sai Baba’s life and the love that we experience from His Incarnation are a wonder of wonders, seldom seen on this earth. For us, youth who have the privilege of growing up under His Divine guidance and example, life turns into a golden opportunity.

In fact, not only Swami’s life but our lives too are a proof that miracles do exist. The rhythmic beat of our hearts, the perfection of our brains are possible because of a force that not even the most modern biologist could fathom. Sathya Sai Baba reveals to us that this force that brightens the human being, and all beings, is called LOVE.

The native peoples of America, who populated our continent centuries ago, had already recognised the existence of a Supreme Soul, hidden in every atom of this creation. They believed that this Divine entity was also present in the human soul. In the same way, the holy *Vedas* proclaim the truth that man is verily Divine.

Sathya Sai Baba is the essence of that Supreme Soul walking down on earth. He is the ultimate reality of our individual souls.

Why Fear When I Am Here?

But, how can we lead ideal lives in a world so full of negativity and untruth? Let me tell you in the words of Swami. A few years ago, Sai Baba called my family for an interview. Once inside, when Swami spoke to me, He said, “Don’t fear. **Whenever you are afraid, because of your career, because of your life, you call Me: Swami, Swami, Swami, and I will be there.**”

After this, brothers and sisters, I could experience the Presence of Swami whenever I called for Him.

Seek His Guidance

The secret of Ideal Youth is to have confidence in our selves and faith in God. Having these, we will be able to face the challenges of *Kali Yuga* and live our lives with enthusiasm. Enthusiasm comes from a Greek word meaning the joy of that one who knows the God within. We may fall, we may fail, but Swami is always there for us, waiting for our call to give help and renew our inspiration. With His guidance, all *sadhana* (spiritual practices) becomes possible.

Swami says, “I am a part of you, a partner and partaker of all your efforts, inspiring and instructing whenever you ask for inspiration and guidance.”

For this World Youth Conference, the youth of Latin America were asked to prepare an exposition on one aspect of *sadhana* that Sai Baba recommends: the discipline of diet. Food is everything that enters our mind through the senses. Controlling our senses means to fill them with love. If we have compassion for every creature, we can only have a vegetarian diet. In fact, the most important international academies of nutrition have suggested a vegetarian diet in order to preserve good health.

Let me share with you a sublime experience with Swami. Some years ago, my family and I had the Grace of being in Prasanthi Nilayam at the time of my brother’s birthday. A few days after the birthday, Swami called us for an interview. He asked my brother to get closer and then told him to put his hands in the form of a basket. He was a very little boy and his hands were really tiny. Then, Sai Baba materialised a sweet (*halva*) and put it in my brother’s hands. Swami said to him, “Follow Me,” and started to deliver a portion of that Divine pudding to everyone in the room. There were 14 people inside the interview room and my brother could feel how the warm food increased every time that Swami gave a portion to a devotee. The *halva*



The Greatest Commandment

When I started reading the *Ramayana*, I began experiencing this feeling of enthusiasm, of vibrant *bhakthi*, vibrant devotion. Therefore, one day I decided to offer Swami a flower in the altar to symbolise all the love that had awakened inside. I remember selecting the flower and the pot with all dedication. When cleaning the flower, the *Gayatri* reverberated in my ears and deep in my heart. Finally, the offer was made. After a week, the blossom was still fresh and to our surprise,

only finished when the last person was fed. How can I describe the taste of that food? It's sweetness and warmth indicated that only a Divine cook could have made the *halva*. Swami's life is like this food. He is the infinite source that has come to delight us with *ananda*. In fact, He says: "Your *ananda* is My *ahara*," your bliss is My food.

When you share the light of a torch, it does not diminish, it can only expand. When you share love, it certainly grows. And in the same way, our happiness should be to make our brothers happy.

Experience His Presence through Service

When I was a little girl I asked myself how I could live in my country knowing that God Himself has incarnated here in India. At the appropriate time, Swami answered this question. At a critical point in my life when I was planning my career and future life, Swami called us for an interview. He looked directly into my eyes and said, "Serve others." And with those two words, the problem was solved.

Today, Swami lets me experience His Presence every day, back in Buenos Aires. As I started doing the medical practice in the hospital, I could feel His Presence at the bedside of the patients. Moreover, their happiness and relief when being treated with love, their thankful looks, are to me clear signs of Swami being there. Similarly, the love of the family and the sweetness of friendship are extensions of Swami's Grace on us.

Dear brothers and sisters, **service enables us to keep close to God**, that Supreme Soul pervading everything and that Supreme Force that is inside every one of us. Let us serve Him with enthusiasm and lead lives of creativity, unity and joy.

specks of *vibhuthi* were sprinkled all over. For me, this is evidence of Swami's constant Presence.

I would like to conclude with these words from the Bible. It says in Matthew, that when Jesus was asked which was the most important precept to follow, He answered: "**You shall love God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. Then, you shall love your fellowmen as your own self.**" These two precepts encompass all the law."

Dear brothers and sisters, may our lives be full of love, may we feed our senses with love and may we walk in life hand in hand with Sathya Sai Baba. May we lead ideal lives and be messengers of Sai Love. I invite all present here to join in this final prayer with all their hearts, so that we can give Swami the treasure of our love.

My Lord, I love You with all my heart, with all my Soul, with all the strength of mine. Jai Sai Ram.

.....
Miss Alma Berra is in her fourth year of medical school at the Italian Hospital in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She was a teaching assistant in the Microbiology and Public Health Departments and has conducted basic science research at the Institute of Research at the Italian Hospital. She is actively involved with the Sai youth group activities in Argentina and participates in *Narayan Seva* and medical camps.

Let Us Respond to the Clarion Call

Mr. Shashank Shah

I offer my humble, loving and reverential *Pranams* at the Divine Lotus Feet of my most Beloved Mother Sai.

Yatha Vrukshasya Sampushpitasya, Durat Gandho Vati

Evam Punyasya Karmanaha, Durat Gandho Vati
(Mahanarayana Upanishad)

Just as the fragrance of a fully blossomed flower reaches far and wide, the glory of the good deeds of a noble one spreads far and wide.

Respected elders and my dear brothers and sisters – Sai Ram to all of you.

Let me begin with a small anecdote of the giant redwood tree. This tree grows in certain parts of the North American Continent. It grows to a height of over 100 feet and the tannin within it gives it its red colour. It also gives the tree a lot of security because fire cannot burn it nor can water wet it. But the tree has one drawback. As this tree grows higher and higher, it cannot take its own weight and it falls. What is the reason for this? This is because the tree has shallow roots. Similarly in life, no matter who we are – however strong and powerful we may be, we will fall if our roots are not deep enough!

Eternal Human Values

And what are these strong roots which form the foundation of our lives. These are the eternal values which Bhagavan has taught us for the last eighty years. These are the eternal human values of *Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi* and *Prema*. Bhagavan says, “*Sathya* is what I teach, *Dharma* is the way I live, *Prema* is My form and *Shanthi* is My very nature.”

It was during the First World Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations held at Mumbai in 1968 that Bhagavan declared, “**Obeying My instructions is enough; it will benefit you more than the most rigorous ascetism.** Practise *Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi*, and *Prema* which are dear to Me. Resolve to keep those

ideals before you ever in all your thoughts, words and deeds. That can confer on you the *summum bonum* of mergence in the Supreme Divinity.”

It was in this vein that Bhagavan composed the song in the 1940s and sung it Himself on the banks of the Chitravati:

Sathya Dharmamu Shanthi Premalatho, Mee
Nithya Jeevan Yathra Saaginchu
Yatna Prayatnamu Maanava Dharmamu,
Jayaapajayamulu Daivadheenamu

Oh man! Lead your life following the path of *Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi* and *Prema*. **It is your duty to put in your best efforts. Victory and defeat are subservient to God's Will.** Let the fruits of actions be surrendered to God's Will.

Man's spiritual journey is three-pronged. It consists of overcoming the demonic and down-dragging animal tendencies, sustaining the inherent human values, and ultimately attaining the Divine qualities. It is this journey which each one of us has to traverse. But the greatest blessing is that all through our journey we have the Lord Himself as our sole companion, guide and guardian.

The *Vedas* declare:

“*Shrunvanthu Vishwe Amruthasya Puthraha!!*”

Listen Oh Man! You are not of ordinary descent. You are verily the child of immortality!

What is the purpose of human life? Is it only to eat, drink and make merry? No, no, no. Man is not born just to eat, drink and make merry. We are born so as not to be born again. It was Adi Shankaracharya who declared, “*Janthunaam nara janma durlabham.*” Of all the 84 *lakh* species of creation, man is the crest jewel – he is the crown of creation.

Because if a dog is born, it will die as a dog;
If a snake is born, it will die as a snake;
If a sparrow is born, it will die as a sparrow;
But man alone has the privilege of being born as
man and ultimately realising that he is God.

“Aahaara Nidra Bhaya Maithunaani,
Saamanyamethat Pashubhir Naranaam
Jnanam Naranaam, Adhikam Visheshaha,
Jnanena Shunya, Pashubhi Samaanaha”

Food, sleep, fear and procreation are common to man and animal. It is only the discriminative knowledge, the wisdom, which man has been endowed with that distinguishes him from the rest of the creation.

Offer Our Best to God

But most of us feel – what’s the hurry? We have a lifetime to work towards the goal! We are in our late twenties and early thirties. We have nearly seventy more years to live. We shall definitely put the ideals that Bhagavan has put before us into practice in the years ahead.

But Bhagavan has warned us against such wishful thinking with this simple example.

It is before we start eating our food, when all the delicious items are spread out on the plate, that we chant our food prayer - *Brahmarpanam* and offer the food to the Lord. Suppose we eat everything and offer the leftover food to the Lord! How would it be? Sacrilegious, isn't it? We are doing just that today. At the peak of our youth, when we are strong and energetic, we waste our energies in unwarranted activities. Finally, at the time of leaving the world i.e., in our old age, when all our faculties have diminished and we are incapacitated, we turn our attention towards God!

To the students of a medical college, Swami once said, “**For a four-lettered degree MBBS, you spend the best part of your life. For attaining the degree of degrees – God’s Grace, can you not spend at least few minutes a day** contemplating silently on the mystery and majesty of God which is evident in the construction, functioning and disintegration of every atom and cell?”

The *Kathopanishad* declares, “*uthistatha, jagratha prapyavaraan ni bodhitha!*” (Arise, awake, and rest not till the goal is achieved!)

Transformation through Service

Now is the time and here is the opportunity. Never before in the history of mankind has any *Avatar* started an organisation and given an opportunity to us mortals to work under His Divine Name. A very senior office bearer of the organisation mentioned during one of the world conferences – The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation is like a mighty river, where each and every one of the members is a small droplet and where all of us collectively are marching forward towards the ocean – our goal – our most Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. But let us remember one thing as that elderly devotee cautioned – it is not we who are doing a

favour to the organisation by participating in its various activities such as *bhajans*, *Bal Vikas*, *Narayan Seva*, etc. It is actually the organisation which is doing us a great favour by giving us a platform and opportunity to progress in our own *sadhana* through participation in the various organisational activities.

In this context, let me share a story which was narrated by a devotee from Greece, who is a member of the organisation, during a summer course on Indian Culture and Spirituality of the Sri Sathya Sai University conducted in the Divine Presence at the Brindavan Campus, nearly a decade ago. This incident happened in Bosnia, when that region was hit by a calamity. Some members of our organisation visited the place, distributed the required items such as food and clothing to the refugees in the various camps. They also distributed Bhagavan’s photograph to all the refugees. As the photographs were being distributed, the refugees started discussing something among themselves. The devotee was intrigued at this and wanted to know what they were discussing. A local person who knew their language said that the refugees were saying, “This person, whose photo you have distributed, was with us for the last three days since the calamity has struck us. He used to get food for us everyday, talk to us, share in our problems and encourage us to have faith in God, His Love and Compassion. Actually, today we were waiting for Him to come and instead of Him you all have come and are giving us His photograph!” The members of our organisation were flabbergasted when they realised that it was Bhagavan Himself who was taking care of these people! Even before the organisation members could be of some help to them, Bhagavan had already heard their call. He is always there to provide for and respond to the call of the needy and the forlorn.

He is Omnipresent, ever available at the beck and call of the distressed and the forlorn. But He is giving us an opportunity to better ourselves through service. It is thus very clear that any *seva* activity is only an opportunity for us to progress in our *sadhana*.

In November 1995, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Supply Project for the Anantapur District, Bhagavan declared:

*Paropakaaraya Phalanthi Vrukshaha
Paropakaaraya Vahanthi Nadyaha
Paropakaaraya Duhanthi Gavaha
Paropakaaraartham Idham Shareeram
Sai Ardhinchu Meenundi Sadgunamulu
Sarva Maanava Sahodara Sakhya Buddhi
Swartha Tyagambu Parishuddha Sangha Seva
Saiki Icchedi Dhanamide Satyamuganu*

It is for the benefit of others that trees bear fruits.

It is for the benefit of others that the rivers flow with water.

It is for the benefit of others that cows yield milk.

It is for the sake of others that this human body has been given – given for service.

It was Swami Vivekananda who declared in this light, “Those who live for others truly live, the others are more dead than alive!”

A constant doubt which lurks in our minds is that how can a few thousand of us guide the billions of people on this planet? Bhagavan gives us the example of the Major General in the army who guides the thousands of people under his command. Bhagavan says – each one of you is a leader. During the First Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference held at Prasanthi Nilayam in 1997, Bhagavan declared, “I want you to be leaders – able, courageous and just. The lion is the king among animals and I want you to be king among men.”

It is only the youth, as Bhagavan says, who have the power to transform other youth through their own example, conduct and exemplary character.

Here is an example of youth transforming others through their own example. This experience was narrated by one of the members of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust during one of the plenary sessions of the World Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations held in the year 2000. During the construction of the Super Specialty Hospital in Bangalore, the senior authorities involved with the project asked for tenders from software companies providing hospital management software. The final choice was made based on the highest quality standards, and the contract was given to a company called Medicom. The company insisted that before providing the software they would like to meet the senior authorities of our organisation for some discussion. After much insistence from their side, the authorities from the hospital agreed. The Medicom group representatives said that they would provide the software to the hospital only on the condition that they would not accept any money for the same. Our people were intrigued as to why the company wanted to give the software free of cost. On persistent enquiry, the company representatives revealed that for the last two years, two employees who joined their company had made a tremendous impact on the organisation culture, value systems and functioning. They had developed tremendous goodwill for the company in the society. These two students were actually alumni of the School of Business Management, Sri Sathya Sai University, Prasanthi Nilayam. The company people said that the free software provided by the company was not a favour but was just a token of appreciation and gratitude to our organisation for preparing such exemplary students. This is what the youth can do

through their own exemplary conduct and personal example.

Quality Not Quantity

Bhagavan always says that during service, it is the quality that is important and not the quantity. Once a group of youth members from the organisation came to Bhagavan and were blessed with an interview. In the interview, they were enthusiastically sharing with Swami the details of the various activities they had undertaken. Bhagavan patiently listened to them and at the end said, “All this is fine but tell me **how much have each of you been transformed in the process of doing this service?** Have you become more patient and tolerant? Have you been able to control your temper and love your brothers more? If that has been achieved, the purpose of your service activities has been achieved.”

His Love Knows No Bounds

That is the Love of Bhagavan. He does not miss any opportunity to teach us a lesson for life. His Love is unconditional. Here is an example of Bhagavan’s Love.

This happened in Prasanthi Nilayam nearly two decades ago during the *Janmashtami* Celebrations (Sri Krishna’s Birthday celebrations). During these celebrations, the students bring the cows in a procession from the *Gokulam* (cow shed) to the *Mandir*. It was during one such procession that a student was injured by a cow and had a fracture. Bhagavan, with great concern, as He always does, ensured that proper care of the student was taken. During this period, He called the boy to the interview room and materialised a special liquid with healing properties and applied it on the boy’s foot. The boy was feeling very embarrassed that the Lord of the Universe was applying oil to his foot. He told Swami that he would apply it himself to his foot. Pat came the reply from Bhagavan, “If you were at home, wouldn’t your mother have done this? I am your Mother. Why do you distinguish between your physical mother and this Divine Mother?”

The Love of Bhagavan is that of a thousand mothers rolled into one and is beyond our comprehension. **We cannot understand Him, but can only experience Him.**

Professor Sampath, the third Vice Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai University once told Bhagavan, “Swami, You are the ocean of Love.” Swami said, “No.” He again repeated, “Swami, You are the ocean of Love!” Swami said, “No” once again and continued, “**The ocean has limits; My Love has no limits.**”

What do we give to someone so loving! Here is a story of a group of enthusiastic youth who wanted to give Swami something on His 40th Birthday way back in 1965.

What Does Swami Want?

Just to give you a background of the conditions existing then, I would like to provide these details. Electricity came to Puttaparthi only in 1963. Arnold Schulman in those years described Puttaparthi as 10 minutes past the stone-age with not even a direct road leading to it. Today, four decades later, not only roadways, railways and airways, but all ways from all parts of the world lead to this haven of peace – Prasanthi Nilayam. The fact that devotees from 175 countries of the world – from Trinidad & Tobago to Tokyo and from Poland to New Zealand flock to Prasanthi Nilayam every year bears ample testimony to Bhagavan's universal Message and His all-encompassing Love.

So, this story goes back to those days when electricity had just come to Prasanthi Nilayam and the Poornachandra Auditorium was just a shed with a roof made of zinc sheets. As you know, Puttaparthi is known for its very hot climate and the zinc sheets added to the heat. In such circumstances, this group wanted to give Bhagavan a pedestal fan as His Birthday gift. What a novel idea! What concern for their Divine Mother! They got the fan with great difficulty to Puttaparthi.

On the evening prior to the Birthday celebrations i.e., on November 22, 1965, these youth gathered outside Swami's dining room on the first floor of the Prasanthi Mandir. As Swami finished His food and came out, all of them gathered around Swami and prayed. They said, "Swami, we have a Birthday gift for You. You must accept it." Swami was very happy and enquired, "What is it, where is it? Can I see it now?" Then all of them followed Swami to the shed where the Poornachandra Auditorium now stands. When Swami saw the gift wrapped in white cloth, He exclaimed in childlike innocence, "So you all have got a ghost for Me!" They said, "No Swami," and removed the cloth covering. Swami said, "Oh! It's a fan; how thoughtful!" Then immediately He asked, just as a concerned mother would ask, "How did you arrange for the money?" One of the girls said, "Swami we received money for *Gauri Pooja* (worship of Divine Mother Gauri), so we pooled together that money and purchased this fan." Immediately Swami quipped, "Oh! So these useless boys did not do anything!" The girls said, "They helped in transporting the fan from Bangalore to Puttaparthi." (Transportation in those days from Bangalore to Puttaparthi was not like the comfortable journey of today. One had to travel first in train and then in bus, and the final lap from Karnatanagepalli to Puttaparthi was on bullock cart across the Chitravati river. So the fan was transported with great difficulty.) Then with great enthusiasm Swami discussed as to where the fan could be placed the next morning during the Birthday celebrations, and all the details were worked out.

Finally the Birthday morning dawned, and the boy who was made in charge of operating the fan was standing next to it. Swami came on the dais, came towards the fan, turned it towards the devotees seated and then said, "Now switch it on."

The Birthday celebrations were over and once again these boys and girls gathered around Swami and said, "Swami, You had promised that You would use the fan. Why did You turn it towards the devotees?" Swami said, "*Bangaru*, when thousands of My devotees are sitting there in the heat, how can I enjoy the fan for Myself? But I am accepting your gift because you gave it with so much of love. But now I want something else from you. It is My Birthday and you all should give Me what I want. Shall I ask you for something?" All the children were very happy that Swami would ask them for something and they willingly agreed. Then Swami said, "This is what I want," and He continued:

*Sai Ardhinchu Meenundi Sadgunamulu
Sarva Maanava Sahodara Sakhya Buddhi
Swartha Tyagambu Parishuddha Sanghaseva
Saiki Icchedi Dhanamide Satyamuganu*

All that Sai desires from you are your virtues;

The brotherhood of all mankind and a feeling of
fraternity towards all;

Relinquishing of all selfish desires and
undertaking of selfless social service activities;

That is the only wealth that you can offer to Sai.

That is what the Lord asked from them nearly 40 years ago. In asking for this gift from the children, Bhagavan had made a clarion call to all youth, telling them what He expects from them and what it is that they can give to Him if they really wanted to make Him happy. The Lord never asks anything for Himself. He only knows to give and to forgive.

He Is the Totality

To conclude, I would like to mention an incident which occurred two days before the 74th Birthday celebrations in 1999 in Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhagavan was giving *Darshan* in the veranda. Since thousands of devotees had gathered for His Birthday, both His Hands were full of letters. One of the devotees sitting in the veranda mentioned, "Swami, Your Hands are full of letters!" Then in the rhyme of the famous poem 'Baa Baa Black Sheep', Swami said, "Yes, see – two hands full, two hands full..." showing the letters in His two Hands. Then suddenly His tone became serious. He said, "But I am not the black sheep, **I am the white ship that has come to take all of you across this ocean of birth and death safely to the shore!**"

Bhagavan says, "My power is immeasurable, My truth inexplicable, unfathomable. I am beyond the reach of the most intensive enquiry and the most meticulous measurement. There is nothing I do not

see, nowhere I do not know the way, and no problem I cannot solve. My sufficiency is unconditional. I am the totality – all of it!”

Brothers and sisters! He has come!!

Jesus, Jehovah, Zorasthra;

Dattatreya, Dakshinamurthy, Dhanvanthari!

He has come! The Supreme Lord of the Universe in our midst –

To awaken the sleeping from the deep sleep of ignorance;

To enable the sitting to stand,

The standing to walk;

The walking to march and

The marching to merge!!!

Come one, come all. Let us not be ungrateful called. Let us hear His clarion call and make our lives His Message. JAI SAI RAM!



.....

Mr. Shashank Shah completed his MBA from the Sri Sathya Sai University School of Business Management at Prasanthi Nilayam in 2004. He was blessed with a gold medal at the Divine Hands for academic excellence. He then completed a Master of Philosophy in Management from the Sri Sathya Sai University School of Business Management in Prasanthi Nilayam in 2006. Once again he was blessed with a gold medal at the Divine Hands for academic excellence. Currently he is a doctoral research scholar at the School of Business Management at the Sri Sathya Sai University, Prasanthi Nilayam.

Why Fear When I Am Here?

Mrs. Rita Chudasama

My loving *Pranams* at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Beloved Swami, respected elders, Sai brothers and sisters, Jai Sai Ram on this most auspicious day!

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is very kind and merciful; He is verily the ocean of compassion. Throughout the ages the Lord has given His devotees an assurance that He will always guard and protect them in times of trouble and distress. In fact, in the ancient *Vedas*, God is described as being Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. That is, He is all pervasive, all powerful and all knowing. Our scriptures are filled with the Divine *mahimas* (Divine glories) of our Lord. One must remember that these *mahimas* and *leelas* (Divine sports) of the Lord cannot just be found in the scriptures or treasure chests of the past, but they are unfolding and manifesting before our very eyes, in the very Presence of this *Poorna Avatar*, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

With humility, I would like to share with you two episodes to demonstrate **His Divine Love and Compassion, His bountiful mercy and Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience.**

Swami's Omnipresence

The first experience I humbly share with you is relating to our visit to Buckingham Palace to attend the Queen's Garden Party. The year 2006 was a very special occasion in Great Britain. It marked the 80th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the 50th anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme for young people. To celebrate both events, a special Royal Garden Party was organised at Buckingham Palace on Thursday, July 13, 2006. Royal Garden Parties have been held at Buckingham Palace since the 1860's. In fact, Queen Elizabeth II has always worked hard to recognise the efforts of those people who best embody the spirit of Great Britain. This year was no exception; 8,000 invitations were sent out to various dignitaries, diplomats, ministers, famous celebrities, and ordinary people who had made a unique contribution to society.

Both my husband and I had been invited by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme to attend and receive a special certificate of gratitude and recognition for the outstanding contribution made by the Sai Youth, on behalf of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. This indeed was a great honour. My husband was also asked to say a few words at

Buckingham Palace during the presentation ceremony on the work of the Sai Youth and the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. This was extremely well received and all marveled at the wonderful work being done by the Sai Youth. A miracle of Swami's Omnipresence occurred during the ceremony. When the certificate was presented, instead of having the name of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, the certificate instead bore the Name of Divinity itself, "Sri Sathya Sai." What a wonderful example was this of Swami's Omnipresence and guiding Hand.

Have No Fear

The second experience I humbly share with you is a deep and personal experience that is near and dear to me. As a young child I used to read many books on how Swami saves the lives of His devotees. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that one day I would be the recipient of this Grace and Blessing.

Let us now travel to London, United Kingdom. It is April 2002. My husband, my mother and I went for our annual pilgrimage to Brindavan, Whitefield to have Swami's Divine *Darshan*. One beautiful spring morning, Swami very unexpectedly called us for an interview. Because I am of a small build, no one could tell that I was just under three months pregnant. However, as soon as Swami walked into the room, He said, "How many months?" We were soon ushered into the inner sanctum, where we sat with Swami. Swami asked my husband, "Do you want a boy or girl?" We replied, "Whatever is Your Will, Swami." Swami playfully looked at my husband and pointed to me and said, "Swami knows she wants a boy!" Suddenly, Swami then went into a very deep trance for a few minutes. We sat there staring at His Majesty and Divinity. Then all of a sudden He came back. In a most powerful voice He said, "Have no fear. This child is My responsibility."

Now let us fast forward to October 2002. It is the day of the holy festival of *Dassera* – the day Durga killed the evil demon Mahisasur, when Rama killed Ravana and when Shirdi Sai Baba left His human body. For one week I had felt the baby had stopped moving. A deep fear engulfed me; I began to feel that something was terribly wrong. I was very scared and feared the worst. Our consultant physician sent us for a scan at a top clinic on Harley Street using the latest scanning equipment. The consultant took a very long time during the check-up. Suddenly, she walked out of the room and called a senior consultant. I could see the



fear on his face. The consultant then gave us the news that would not only break our hearts but would also test our faith. The consultant went on to tell us that there was a serious problem with the unborn baby. He told us that the water around the baby was insufficient, the blood supply to the baby was very poor and the heartbeat was most weak. He then said that under these circumstances the baby would definitely be born deformed and could possibly die.

I was rushed into the hospital and admitted. It was almost midnight and we were told a consultant would only see us in the morning. We did not know who to tell or who to call to comfort us. At that moment Swami's words, "Have no fear. This child is My responsibility," began ringing in our ears. We were not alone, Swami was with us, and we must have faith. We prayed to Swami, chanted the *Gayatri* all night and surrendered our unborn child to His Divine Will.

Mother Sai's Protection

My husband normally never dreams of Swami... that night whilst he slept uncomfortably on a hospital chair by my side...Swami came into his dream.... Swami was descending down a wooden staircase, He went to my husband and started waving His Hand... my husband thought Swami would give *vibhuthi*, but suddenly water started pouring out of Swami's Hand and then a diamond *Shiva Lingam* emerged which my husband caught. Swami then lovingly said, "Have no fear, everything will be OK."

That morning, when a team of consultants came around, they said that they needed to do an emergency caesarean section. However, there was another problem; there were no hospital beds with a special life support system available in London for the baby, especially since he was five weeks premature. From 8 A.M. until 3 P.M. they rang around all hospitals in the United Kingdom. At one point there was talk of flying us in an air ambulance to Edinburgh. We prayed to Swami for help. My husband then remembered that he had private medical insurance from work. He telephoned them and they said it was not a problem, and to kindly

make our way to the Portland Hospital. This was an eminent hospital for the elite classes, and was more like a five-star hotel.

When we arrived at the hospital, everything was ready. As we were being taken down to the operating theatre, the nurse asked if we wanted to play any music during the birth. Otherwise, the doctors would play their own music. Thankfully we had the "Embodiment of Love" CD with Swami singing.

The doctor prepared us for the worst. If the baby did not cry, then it would be rushed into the adjacent emergency theatre.

We continued to pray to Swami as the operation was done. Lo and behold a beautiful baby boy was brought into the world! He was neither deformed, nor lifeless. With Bhagavan's Grace and Blessings he was 108 percent normal. Swami had proved that this child was, indeed, His responsibility.

Tailpiece to this story, the entire cost of the hospital bill came to £108,000, which was paid for by the insurance company. Furthermore, all babies born in that hospital get a special announcement in the births section of *The Times* newspaper. When we were asked what we would like printed, we said, "Baby Chudasama, born on October 16, 2002, with thanks and gratitude to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba."

At the hospital, we had temporarily named our baby "Baby Sai." Two years later, when we brought the National UK Youth Pilgrimage to Swami, Swami in an interview with the 180 youth present blessed him with the name, "Achintya," which means beyond worries. Achintya is today seated in Sai Kulwant Hall, at our Beloved Lord's Lotus Feet, enjoying Bhagavan's *Darshan!*

Indeed, when you surrender to Swami, when you dedicate your life to Him, He looks after your every need.

Only a mother could understand the pain of losing a child. My dearest Mother Sai, I thank you with all my heart for protecting me and guiding me through that ordeal. **For our Mother Sai, there is no near or far. His Grace and Blessings are beyond time and space.** He protects us wherever we may be, whether in His immediate physical Presence or across the seven seas. To such a loving and compassionate Mother, I express my most heartfelt gratitude and pray that we are always worthy of His Love and Grace. Thank You my Beloved Mother Sai! Jai Sai Ram!

.....
Mrs. Rita Chudasama was on the Government Commission for Sustainable Development. In 2004, she was awarded the "Ambassador for Peace" award from the Inter-religious and International Federation for World Peace, which is linked to the United Nations. In 2005 she was appointed by the ASHA Foundation as one of the "Top 40 Most Inspirational Women in Great Britain."

Swami's Infinite Love

Dr. Shaun Prasanth Setty

My humble *Pranams* at the Divine Lotus Feet of our Dear Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I pray to Him to always speak and think through me. Respected elders, dear brothers and sisters, I am truly honoured to be speaking to all of you.

Swami's Declaration to Mankind

Swami wrote a letter to His brother when He was fourteen years old and it was addressed to "All who are devoted to Me." He declared, "I have a Task: To foster all mankind, and ensure for all people lives full of *ananda* (bliss). I have a Vow: To lead all who stray away from the straight path, again into goodness and save them." Swami then added, "**I will never give up those who attach themselves to Me.**" As a young adult Swami has brought me back to the straight path. Swami has transformed me immensely since the first time He brought me here.

We often hear the saying, "The youth of today are the future of tomorrow." This is very much the truth. In our chaotic world, things will only change if our actions and thoughts change. This is an easier task to accomplish through the malleable mind of a child or young adult. Training the mind is the key. I wish to share a few things I have witnessed and learned through Swami's teachings.

We Emanate from One Source

One of the first things I noticed when I came to Prasanthi Nilayam was that there were people from every corner of this earth who were singing *bhajans* together, performing service projects together, and living harmoniously together. Everybody is so happy here. The human race needs to be unified. Instead of stating that we are from different countries we should be saying that we are all from one Supreme Being – that is God. We all emanate from one source, but unfortunately, we are very quick to point out differences. Swami says, "Unity in Diversity." There is an Aspen tree that symbolises this. One of the largest known living things in the world is an Aspen tree from

the Wasatch Mountains in Utah – there are over 40,000 trees coming off of one giant root! The whole forest comes off one giant root. From the outside, there seem to be many different trees each with their own unique external features. Like a human being, each tree looks different on the outside but they all develop from one source. The root is the source – like Swami, and we are the seedlings. We have to grow, like one of the Aspen tree seedlings. Yet deep down we are all one. As Swami tells us, we are *Atma* or the soul and not the body.

The Golden Rule

In order to be one, we must act as one. Throughout the Bible, a central theme emerges: The Golden Rule appears and reappears. "**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.**" This is a basic law for any religion and more importantly for any way of life. The hardest thing to do is to act kindly to somebody who has been unkind to you. These are the steps we need to take to firstly change ourselves, secondly change our countries, and thirdly change the world. This current world needs change, and it is the youth who need to lead this march. As with anything else we do, we must practise what we preach. I can stand here and preach but it means very little if I do not practise. Swami says, "**Don't be platform heroes and practical zeroes.**" **We need to practise, practise, practise.**

Swami, the Divine Teacher

It took me a long time to learn that if the end result is not what we planned, we should not be disappointed. This is a very difficult thing to accept. When I applied for general surgical training I prayed and prayed to Swami to get my first choice. He told me I would get into the right programme, which I took to mean that I would get my first choice. I didn't get my first choice, but instead got my sixth choice!! While I was dejected, the programme I got into ended up being one which prepared me the best for cardiothoracic surgery, which would be my eventual field of specialisation. We see things through one perspective and think we know

what is best for us, but in reality we have no idea. **Only God knows what is best for our ultimate good**, even if it is what we perceive to be an unfavorable event at that time. Only the future will tell us. These events are needed for us to grow and progress through our lives to ultimately realise our true Self. Swami calls these events “passing clouds.” They only bring darkness for a finite time and then this passes on to brighter days.

True Love for the Lord

We must take the opportunity to soak in Swami’s Love, as we are so lucky to be in His Divine Presence. Sometimes we take Him for granted, but there was one being I met who never did. I had the ultimate privilege of meeting Sai Geetha, Swami’s glorious elephant, before she took her next step in her spiritual journey. When I told Swami I had gone to see Sai Geetha, with a twinkle in His eye He commented that Sai Geetha had wrapped her trunk around my lower torso like a hug. I didn’t know what He meant until I looked at a photo I had taken with Sai Geetha and saw that in one picture she had her trunk wrapped around me! This not only showed the Omniscience that our Dear Lord has but the Love that He had for Sai Geetha. His whole face lit up brightly when He spoke of her. What a beautiful and loving being she was! She took every second she had in the Presence of the Lord to make the most use of it. It is rare to see such devotion in a human as you would have seen in her. Words cannot explain the devotion which she had for her Divine Mother.

Swami’s Omniscience

This leads me to emphasise that we should be aware that Swami’s words are very precious. **Each word and each of His actions have so much meaning that we often do not realise this until years later, if we are so fortunate.** A lot of times we may never understand them. We foolishly think, “Oh, Swami might have misspoken or Swami didn’t completely understand my question.” How silly is this since the Lord never utters anything that will not be true, whether we know it or not. He knows our thoughts even before we think them.

I will narrate a few stories that happened to me. I was blessed to receive a ring a number of years ago. When He put the ring on my finger Swami told me: “When you look into the ring you will see Me.” For years I looked and looked and saw nothing. I was thinking that Swami’s form would be staring at me if I looked into the ring. Then one day I briefly thought, “Oh, He must have meant this figuratively.” But, the more I thought about it the more I was certain that He meant that I should see His Physical Form. Yet I never really saw anything. Then not too long ago I looked at the ring in the direct sunlight. All the previous times I was looking at the ring indoors under fluorescent lights.

Instead of looking at the surface of the ring I looked deeper. I placed my head back and looked again and saw something. There was a blurry crown of beautiful black hair, a face, and an orange robe. There was the image I had not previously recognised. Swami’s Name literally means Truth so why should this story surprise us?

On one of my first encounters with Swami, in passing He mentioned that I would travel to Australia in the future as part of my medical training. I thought nothing of it as I was not even in medical school and was still in college at that time. Eight years later I went to New Zealand for a year of surgical training. Everyone familiar with the story stated that this is what Swami meant when He mentioned Australia. As I got further into my cardiac surgery training in the USA, I could not fathom how Australia would fit into the plans. However, fifteen years later, I was looking for an additional year of training for a paediatric cardiac surgery fellowship. It so happened that there was a very good training programme in Australia. Through Swami’s Grace, I was lucky enough to gain a very competitive position at the Royal Children’s Hospital in Australia. With a few brief words, Swami had told me what would happen fifteen years later! This to me was a reaffirmation of Swami’s Divinity. He knows our past, present, and future. **Therefore, we should follow His command immediately, implicitly, and completely.**

The Entire Creation Lies beneath His Feet

Everyone in this audience is a potential future leader. A person does not need to have a distinct title, a large office, or a fancy degree to be a leader. As Swami does, each and every moment, we need to lead by example and people will follow. This is the true definition of a leader. Lead by example. As devotees we can never complain about working too hard. Look at Swami who works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, year after year. He does not have to do this but He does it as an example for all of us. As Swami says, “My Life is My Message.” We should also work hard like Swami to help humanity. Swami also says, “Your life is My Message.”

The true heroes are the young adults who are here today in the audience who have traveled from so far away through different routes to get to India. They have spent many hours and undergone hardship to reach Prasanthi Nilayam to be in His Divine Presence. A lot of them have done this to be in Swami’s physical Presence just once. Some have collected barely enough money to come to India once. Who needs to hear stories of miracles when we can look at our own stories. We would not be here if Swami didn’t Will it. Believe me in this! Each one of us has a unique story and we could tell our own story to countless others.

Swami once told me, “The entire Creation lies beneath these Feet.” We would never be able to fathom the strength of this statement. Whenever we encounter something unpleasant, remember Swami; whenever we encounter something pleasant, remember Swami and accept this as Swami’s Grace. **We should keep God in our minds and hearts at all times.** After all, we are all God. Swami is like a radio station sending out radio-waves of Love, but we need to have our radio tuned on to the right frequency to receive His Message. I pray to Swami that He guides each and every one of us in our spiritual journey. Jai Sai Ram.



.....
Dr. Shaun Prasanth Setty is a paediatric cardiac surgeon in the United States. He grew up in California and received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California, San Diego. There he majored in Biochemistry and Cell Biology and had a minor in Health Care and Social Issues. He went to the Medical College of Ohio where he graduated with honours. Shaun then completed his six-year general surgery training at Oregon Health Sciences University which is the second largest general surgical training centre in the USA. He spent three years at the University of Minnesota where he completed his Cardiothoracic Surgical training. Wanting to pursue paediatric cardiac surgery, he did one additional year of congenital cardiac surgical training at the Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne, Australia. He is a fellow of both the American College of Surgeons and the American Board of Thoracic Surgery.

Purity Leads to Divinity

Mrs. Chethana Raju

Om Sri Sai Ram.

With humility, reverence and gratitude, I offer my loving *Pranams* at the Lotus Feet of Divinity Incarnate, Lord Sri Sathya Sai. Most recently the world met in North Germany. The leaders of the world tried to find the solutions to clean up our external life. The world meets here again, today, at the Lotus Feet to find out how to clean from within. Swami says, "Mankind is in need of postulates for the conduct of everyday existence." The need for this is far more superior or pressing than the hunger for scientific knowledge. **Here, intelligence has to be replaced by character, and love for science by love for God.**

Go Inwards

It is our common sense understanding that there are regions of human spirit untrammelled by the world of physics. It is also our common sense understanding that there are regions of individual consciousness which are like the fine texture of the soul which we feel, which talks to us, which whispers, which guides us, but we find it hard to lay our finger on it and touch it.

If we look into human history, for 2,000 years or so we were going very well until we got derailed when we assassinated Socrates, the thinker and philosopher of Greece, who talked about the soul and inner life in the year 399 before the dark era. We seem to have ventured to the external life instead of going inwards. Here I would like to illustrate a small conversation that took place between two people. One was a Westerner who quoted Descartes, a thinker from France, saying in latin, "*Cogito, ergo sum*," which means "I think, therefore I am." He quotes this to a young daughter of India, and he says to her, "Don't you think this is a beautiful thought?" For which this daughter of India replies, "I am baffled by this thought, 'I think, therefore I am.' For myself, sir, I would like to say 'I am, therefore I think. I am, therefore I think'."

Bhagavan has said the world is not all that we see and think. It is much more mysterious than we have dreamed about. It is this mystery that Buddha

sought after, before He attained *Nirvana*. This is the same mystery that the saints and seers of *Vedic* and *Upanishadic* texts speak about. And when that takes a form and shape, and restricts itself to time and space, we call that an *Avatar*, and in this age the *Avatar* is Sri Sathya Sai.

Develop Purity

Swami says, "If you really want to know who I am, you have to strive hard." He said in Sanskrit, "*Kritrimani rhodhamsi*," which means **one has to get rid of the artificial obstructions of the mind and develop purity of thoughts**. In His own words Swami said, "*Chittha shudhi leni Kshudra maanavunaku athma thatwamu etla abbunagunu. Athmathatwamu abbunu athi shuddha hrudayunike. Unnamaata, cheppuchunna maata*." This means, "Without having the purity of thought and mind how can one even think of understanding these high principles of life. **Only when you develop this purity of thought can you think of going on the Godward path.**" There are verses in the *Rig-Veda* referring to Lord Agni, "Oh Agni! Let there be correct thoughts in me that spring from thee." Here we are asking God Himself to give us correct thoughts.

Dear brothers and sisters! Going on the Godward path is not as easy and as simple as we talk here. It is a continuous process of learning and understanding. Understanding the gross and the subtle, going from the immanent to the transcendental, understanding *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram* (Truth, Goodness, and Beauty). S.S.S. as Sri Sathya Sai.

Develop Concentration

I would like to illustrate a story from the *Taitreya Upanishad* which will highlight how concentration of mind is a prerequisite. It is a conversation between the son Brighu and his father, Varuna. Brighu says to Varuna, "Father teach me *Brahman*." Varuna replies, "Yes I will teach you *Brahman*. First concentrate on *annam* (food) as *Brahman*." Brighu goes back and con-

concentrates on *annam* as *Brahman*. He is not satisfied. He comes back to the father again and he says, “Father, teach me *Brahman*.” Father says, “Now you go back and concentrate on the vital breath or *Vaayu* as *Brahman*.” Brighu goes back, he concentrates and he is still not satisfied. He goes back and forth like this again and again, and he understands the very explanation is contradictory because he is not able to arrive at a unitary conception of *Brahman*. Then he goes further on concentrating on *Hiranyagarbha*. We are very fortunate to have witnessed this emerge from Bhagavan, Himself. It has everything, the gross, the subtle, and the subtlest. Brighu attains bliss by concentrating on this *Hiranyagarbha*. **Through concentration alone one reaches great heights.** There is also a parallel that one can draw from *Kathopanishad* where Nachiketha also concentrates in the same fashion on *Hiranyagarbha* and detaches himself from the world all together.

The year 1968 is important because it was during the First World Conference in 1968 that Swami proclaimed, “Not only now, but even for thousands of years to come, you will not be able to understand the true nature of MY reality.” I am reminded of a verse from *Kenopanishad*: “*yasya matham tasya matham matam yasya navedasam. Avignaatha vijaanathan Vignaathavijaanatham,*” which means, “The reality – *Satyam* – is neither known nor unknown. It is known to very few and unknown to the learned.” We must be very fortunate that we still have glimpses of this truth through our experiences. Our hearts have been comprehending these truths.

If you were to ask, “What does He really want?” He wants nothing. He is the giver. He is simplicity *par excellence*. In His silence the truth is revealed. You may ask the question, “Who is He?” He is Truth. You may again ask, “How does He do that?” In *Kathopanishad* it is said: “*Aaseeno duram vrajathi shayanamyathai sarvathaha.*” This means, “**As He sits here, He travels far and wide. As He seems resting here, His Presence is felt everywhere.**” Brothers and sisters, you are coming here from all over the world. Your presence here is testimony to this truth.

Everything Is Brahman

If you ask the question, “What does He change?” **He brings the change from within.** Then you may ask the question, “Where is His field of action?” All is His field of action. Through the infinitesimal, He acts on the whole; in the infinitesimal, He deciphers the whole. I would like to quote His words in Telugu, “*Chukkalanniyu Brahma, suryundu adi Brahma chandrudunu Brahma, jalumu Brahma, swargamunu adi Brahma, vaalabhyamu adi Brahma, thalliyu Brahma, thandriyu Brahma, balyamanthuyu Brahma, jeevaraasulu Brahma, jivi Brahma, puttinchunadi*

Brahma, poshinchunadi Brahma, gittinchunadi Brahma, grihini Brahma, kaalamu Brahma, sarvamu Brahma, ee srushti Brahma, ee sabhayu Brahma, sathyamu cheppu eee Sai Brahma.” It means everything is Brahman. Truth is Brahman. The stars, the sun, the moon, water, heaven, husband, mother, father, childhood, all living beings, the One that creates, the One that sustains, the One that destroys, the lady of the house, time, creation and this assembly are all Brahman. Grihini Brahma – the lady of the house is also Brahman. “*Prakriti Brahma, pranamu Brahma*” – nature is *Brahman*, life breath is *Brahman*. “*Sarvamu Brahma, ee sabhayu Brahma*” – everything is *Brahman* and even the assembly here is *Brahman*. And the one who declares this truth verily is *Brahman*, and that is Sri Sathya Sai.

Brothers and sisters, if we were to imagine this whole creation as a Cosmic Being, the purpose of creation being Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, this world is a field for the realisation of these values. Bhagavan, God Himself, is the ultimate cause. When you put mind over matter, the ultimate result is only spirituality.

Faith Can Move Mountains

The purpose of this Avatar is to build character and make us live with good values. We need to have faith in ourselves. All that we need is to remove the blinkers and see the truth. Here I am reminded of Kabir’s *doha* (verses). God says to him, “Oh, the bound one! You think you will find Me in your *yantra, tantra* (ritualism) and *mantra*? Or, will you find Me in your *yoga* or *Hatha Yoga* (austerities)? Will you find Me in your Kasi or Haridwar (pilgrimage places)? No! No! No! You will find Me in your *vishwaas* (faith).” Bhagavan said yesterday, “**In your faith alone you find God.**” Faith can move mountains. You will find Him only in faith. Who says He will not hear your call? He will hear your call only if your yearning was like that of Meerabai who left her palace to merge at the Lotus Feet. Who said you cannot see Him when you want? If only you had the eyes of Surdas who merged at the Lotus Feet. Who said He will not come down running from the hillside of Kodaikanal? Only if your friendship, sincerity, and loyalty was like that of Sai Geetha who merged at the Lotus Feet.

There Is Only One Reality

Bhagavan will teach us all these things. **Through Bhagavan’s teachings we understand that there is only one reality and we are all part of it.** And especially to the youth I would like to ask: What do we really mean by following Bhagavan’s teachings? We mean no drugs, we mean no alcohol, we mean no corruption, we mean no domestic violence, we mean no institutionalisation of God, we mean no politicising of spiritual places. We do not believe in wars and we do not believe in breaking

down the walls of churches, or temples, or mosques. We only believe in incorporating the values *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthy*, *Prema*, and *Ahimsa*. Bhagavan said there is only one caste and that is the caste of humanity and there is only one religion and that is of selfless nature which is love. And there is only one God, worshiped in many names, many forms, many colours, and many places. But for us as Sai devotees there is only one – Sri Sathya Sai.

By His Grace, Love and Blessings, I am sure that as the architects of tomorrow we will be able to walk with any winds and cross any number of bridges. Deep in my heart I do believe we shall overcome any difficulties. Finally, I offer this as my prayer at the Lotus Feet. I take pride in calling myself an alumni student of the Anantapur Campus of the erstwhile Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning which is now Sri Sathya Sai University. Also on behalf of all the people present here I have a humble prayer: Swami we are very grateful to You for our lives because You are our life. You are very, very, very precious to us Swami. Jai Sai Ram.



.....
 Mrs. Chethana Raju received her Elementary education from Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar Hyderabad. Her Bachelor of Arts and Masters degrees are from Sri Sathya Sai University. She worked as a software consultant at Case Consulting Group in Detroit, USA. She was also founder and former CEO of Silicon Systems & Software, Inc. in Detroit. She is now Managing Trustee of Easwamma Women's Welfare Trust at Prasanthi Nilayam and editor of the journal *Mother Sathya Sai*.

Live in His Presence Always

Mr. Dimitry Udovikin

Om Sai Ram! I dedicate all my thoughts, words and deeds at the Lotus Feet of our Teacher, Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

I would like to start my speech by expressing my gratitude to Bhagavan Baba who gathered us from all over the world and brought us here together. He is leading us and cares about us on our path to God.

Golden Youth of Sai, respected elders from 36 years of age and higher! I welcome the youth on behalf of the youth of Russian-speaking countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other ex-Soviet Union countries. There are more than fifty people in our delegation. Looking at the size of the countries which are included in World Zone 8, we are like little drops in a big ocean. Yet in spite of this, there is a lot we can and should do. Swami says, "One candle may light thousands of candles." So, every one of us is part of unity. If every one of us will change, surely the whole world will be changed.

Practise Love

We are very fortunate to be at this conference, to be in this holy place. We have the opportunity to look at one another and realise that **there is only one caste – the caste of humanity, and there is only one language – the language of the heart.** If we look around us, we see a lot of faces that we are seeing for the first time. Despite being thousands of miles away from our homes, we feel very comfortable. Why? The answer is love. Love unites us all. Love removes the differences and borders. Love removes social, national and religious identities. This is because love is our nature. **Love is our essence. Love is God.**

Sathya Sai says, "**If man will do what God says to him, three will be happy: we, our relatives, and God.**" All of us here would like to be happy, but are we doing what God tells us to do?

We are very lucky that God created the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation to make it easy for us to do what He tells us to do. In this organisation, there are devotees

that come from different religions. But really there is only one religion in the organisation of Sathya Sai. It is the religion of love. There is only one God; He is Omnipresent. The main goals of this organisation are: unity of humanity and improvement of our character. **If we would like to change the world, we should change ourselves so that there will be one less fool on the planet.**

We know that to realise the taste of food, we must first taste it. To realise the value of the object, we should explore it. To realise what Sathya Sai says to us, we need to practise His teachings. This is the reason man has a body. Knowledge from practice becomes 'our' knowledge. Practical knowledge comes through experience. Experience becomes wisdom and wisdom helps us to see unity in diversity, to realise and see that everything is God.

God Is like the Sun

I came to Puttaparthi for the first time in 1998. Now it is 2007. Every time I come here, I ask myself, "What is most important for me? What is my goal here?" I thought about it. When we come as pilgrims, we wake up early at 2 A.M. and sit in the *Darshan* line for a few hours. We sit under the hot sun, and the reward for us is the first line. And I thought to myself, "What might be better than this?" I thought that better than this is to be a student of Swami. They get fixed places, and they get more opportunities to talk to Swami. And then I thought, "What might be better than this?" Better than this is to sit on the veranda. You may sleep longer, without being afraid to take a pen with you, and you may talk and connect with Swami. Again, I asked myself, "What might be better than this?" Better than this is an interview. Only you and Swami; you are happy. But, what might be better than this?

I realised that every one of these experiences is transient, and when it ends we will be waiting for it to happen again. **I understood that better than all of these is to feel God wherever you are, to feel happy**



always. And I pondered, “How do I do this? How to realise that?” I imagined the sun in my mind. The sun is everywhere. The sun is in America, Russia, India and everywhere. In every city, there is sun. We may look at it any time. Sometimes clouds hide the sun from us, and we may imagine that there is no sun. **These clouds are “me” and “mine.” All we need to do is to remove these clouds.** Then, in every place we will enjoy the sun. We will always feel God, and we will be happy.

Dear brothers and sisters, Sathya Sai Baba says, “My Life is My Message.” We need to follow His example. We are very fortunate; we have the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. If we work in the three wings of the organisation – spiritual, educational and service – our heart, head and hands will be in harmony. Clouds of ego and attachments will be removed. We will achieve unity of thought, word and action, and we will always be happy. **The best example for us is Sathya Sai Baba Himself. He always keeps His word and He is always happy.**

Brothers and sisters, when Sathya Sai Baba comes out for *Darshan*, we keep our hands together with respect. In our eyes, there is love. Baba! I want to express my gratitude to You. You care of us.

The organisation works based on the motto, “Our lives are HIS Message.” All we need to do is to put Swami’s teachings into practice in our own lives. We should inspire our brothers and sisters by our own examples, so they will be happy, our relatives will be happy, and that will please Swami.

God Is Always with Us

Dear brothers and sisters, God is ours always, wherever we are. But when we feel He cares for us, we are inspired by this. I would like to share a small story.

In the city where I live, there is a shop, and during the holidays they had a lottery. A week before New Year, I bought products there, and each time I got a lottery ticket. The grand prize was a car. After I got a few lottery tickets, I passed by the prize car and I could hear the car whisper, “Oh, win me; I am created just for you.” Then, I prayed to Swami, “Please, help me to win this car.” My inner Swami responded, “But, you already have a nice car.” I pleaded with Swami saying that this is a new car, and mine is old. But Swami inside me repeated saying, “You do have a nice car.” Then I said, “Swami, the main point is not about winning the car itself, but I just want

to experience how one feels when they win a car.” But Swami inside me patiently responded: “You have a nice car.” Then I said: “Okay, Swami.”

A few days before New Year, I went to work at my company and completed all my tasks. As I started to leave the place, some of the workers told me about the New Year lottery at our company. “We got the New Year lottery!” I moved the lottery wheel and took out a piece of rolled paper and opened it. The people of the company said: “Congratulations, you won the car!” I was scared and asked: “What kind of car?” It was a big souvenir toy car, and they gave it to me. I said, “Oh, thank you Swami! Now I know what it feels like to win a car!” Most of all I was happy knowing that Swami always knows where I am and what is happening to me.

Dear brothers and sisters, **most important for us is to always remember God wherever we are!** Then, our lives will become beautiful. In closing, I would like to say this to everyone who has come here; we have had wonderful experiences, listened to beautiful lectures, and read nice books, but if we do not practise what we have learned here, everything will be useless. When we are hungry, we may read books about food, we may hear friends talk about the nice meal they ate, but our hunger will only be satisfied when we ourselves eat some food. So, if we do what Swami tells us – all the three will be happy: we, our relatives, and Swami!

Om Sai Ram!

.....
Mr. Dimitry Udovikin has been the Youth Coordinator of Russian-speaking countries since 2004. He was also Chairman of the Sathya Sai Centre in Vologda. Currently he is a manager in a furniture production company.

Think Wisely, Feel Compassionately, Act Constructively

Mr. Sanjay Mahalingam

I offer my *Pranams* at the Divine Lotus Feet of Swami!

Most Beloved Bhagavan, revered elders, delegates of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference, dear sisters and brothers. Loving greetings to one and all!

We are in the midst of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference. Once upon a time, another such conference was held but it was a conference with a difference. It was a conference of the animals of the jungle. And they had come together to contemplate the authenticity of man's claim to be the apex of God's creation. They had come together to discuss man's moral authority to call himself the monarch of all that walks the earth.

The tiger was summoned. It said, "I am an animal of prey and I kill others for food, but I kill only when I am hungry. But man is using all his energy and resources to create more and more diabolical weapons to wipe out his own sisters and brothers. What a disgrace!" The horse got up. It said, "Man taught me to run and when I gallop at my top speed, he gambles away his hard earned money on my galloping and calls it a horse race. What a shame!" The fox got up. It said, "We have a season and reason for everything. But man has lost all sense of self-control and self-restraint. He does whatever he wants whenever he wants to. He has become a law unto himself and a disaster for the rest." The little sparrow said, "I do not know where my next meal will come from. I have no sure place to rest. Nothing wrapped around myself other than God-given skin, yet I am happy and satisfied; but man has become insatiable and greedy and spoils his present by brooding over the past and worrying about the future." Finally, the venerable old lion stood up to sum up the arguments and give an overall perspective. It said, "Dear sisters and brothers of the animal kingdom. I agree with all of you but we must not make haste and scar everybody with the same brush. It is not without reason that it is said *'Janthunaam nara janma durlabham* (among the animal life it is difficult to obtain human birth).' It

is man alone who has the faculty to solve the mystery of his own existence. It is man alone who is capable of bringing to the foreground his own latent Divine reality which is truth, existence and bliss."

Why Are We Here?

Once Albert Einstein, the great scientist, was asked, "What would you ask God if He were to appear before you?" He said, "I would ask God – God, how did you create this universe?" But then he paused a little and said, "Rather, I would ask God – God, why did you create this universe?" Why are we here, from where have we come, where are we going? Why are we born? Rather, what is born, is there anything like birth at all, what is birth? What is death and what is life? The answer to all these fundamental questions is only one – GOD.

Come whatever we do, however much we may strive, what we have to understand is that **we cannot attain fulfillment and find perfect satisfaction unless and until we have found God.** God is perfect joy, pure love, and absolute bliss. It is our primary duty to cast aside all inferior attachment and offer our sole allegiance to Swami. Man is today forgetting the simple and the only purpose of life – to establish unity with God – and is unnecessarily getting befogged by a million other issues. Refusing to love God alone, he is hiding his infidelity by offering punctilious respect to outward shrines of charity and virtue. These humanitarian gestures are useful as they at least momentarily remove man's attention from his selfish needs, but they do not relieve man from his single most important duty to love God and God alone.

In the bible, a reference was made yesterday (Mathew 22:35-40) – A Pharisee asked Jesus, "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" and Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

What does the world need today? Does it need ideas? Does it need technology, or does it need intelligent people? No. The world today needs men and women of purity. And what is purity? Purity is the ability to say: “God, I want You and only You. In You is my joy, in You is my satisfaction, in You is my strength, in You is my trust, in You is my life and in You is my death. You are the joy of my life and You are the solace of my death. In You I am born, in You I exist and in You I dissolve, God, God, God. You are my everything and I give You my all.” Men and women who can say this from the depths of their being, “God I love You” – that is what the world needs today.

In one of His summer courses Bhagavan, describing who is an ideal youth, said, **“An ideal youth is one who has the head of Shankara, the heart of Buddha and the hands of Janaka.”**

Head of Shankara

The head of Shankara – what does it mean – does it mean scholarship? Does it mean deep knowledge of the scriptures? Because Shankaracharya was a very great scholar. The Bible says that a camel may go through the eye of a needle – but a wealthy man cannot go through the gates of heaven. Once Bhagavan added, “Even a wealthy man may go through the gates of heaven but a scholar cannot.” So scholarship is useful if it inspires us Godward. Otherwise, it is useless. So, by the head of Shankara, what is not meant is scholarship.

Does it mean intelligence? Shankaracharya was extremely intelligent. In fact, debating with the privileged scholars of the time he established the supremacy of the *Vedic Dharma*. His treatises, his commentaries are masterpieces of logical reasoning, yet what is not meant by the head of Shankara is intelligence.

What Bhagavan means when He says head of Shankara is the ability to discriminate between the transient and the eternal; the ability to see through the unreal. And having seen through, to absolutely and completely give up all desire for the unreal and offer our total love to the one real benefactor – God. The intellect that has the ability to turn within and to go back and seek its own source, the source that is God – that is what is meant by the head of Shankara.

In India, we use horses to draw water from the wells and these horses need to move backwards in order to do so. We also have galloping horses, but can a galloping horse be used to draw water from the well? All our intellects are like galloping horses. From our childhood we are trained to gallop ahead, think fast! But to find God we have to think slowly and think deeply. We have to be like the horse that can move backwards to draw water out of the well and not like a

galloping horse that gallops forward at breakneck speed. This is what is meant by the head of Shankara.

Heart of Buddha

The heart of Buddha – all of us know the life story of Siddhartha Gautama who later on became the Buddha. When He saw suffering for the first time in life, His heart experienced pain and anguish that could not be described in words. And then what did He do? He vowed to Himself, “I will find a way out of suffering and having found it Myself, I will share it with all my brothers and sisters.” Sisters and brothers, what we have to learn from the life of Buddha is that the best way to end others’ suffering is to first end it in ourselves. The best way to bring about change in the world is to first become immune to all change ourselves. How can a pauper distribute wealth? How can one share with others what he himself lacks? I can share love if I have super abundance of love in my own heart. I can share joy if I have super abundance of joy in my own heart. The very gaze of Bhagavan fills us with joy. Why? Because every hair and cell of His body screams joy, joy, joy! Bhagavan is the embodiment of Pure Love – so the thought of Bhagavan fills our heart with love and joy.

The next lesson we learn from the life of Buddha is tenacity of resolve, the willpower to sacrifice anything and everything for the only one important purpose of life, the quest of the Divine. Let us not forget He was a king, a king who was brought up with pomp, pleasures and all the joys of regality. Yet, when the inner call came, overnight He renounced everything and never, ever looked back. What untold hardships He had to undergo, what tests of endurance and faith did He not face? And the night before the great dawn of enlightenment, when He sat for meditation, He told Himself, “Come what may, may my bones fall away, may my tissues wither away, may my muscles waste away, may my body fall, I shall not get up unless I see God.” And the rest as they say is history. The tenacity of resolve – the determination is what we learn from the life of Buddha.

Hands of Janaka

Finally, the hands of Janaka. Kabir Das, the great saint, mystic, philosopher, self-realised master of India, was walking on the road one day when he suddenly saw a lady grinding flour. She was grinding grain in a grinding stone. The moment he saw that, he fell down on the road moaning. He started to wail and cry. A holy man passed that way and asked him, “What is the matter son?” He said, “Oh my God, look at the grinding stone. All the grain that goes into it comes out crushed, nothing is spared. When man is born into the grinding stone of this world, he is crushed again and again by the dualities of pleasure and pain. He suffers

because of his attachments and finally undergoes the traumatic experience of death. What a miserable plight – is there no way out?” The holy man took Kabir by his hand, removed the upper grinding stone and said, “See some grains are left uncrushed because they are at the pivot, they are close to the centre. Only he who is close to the centre of his own being, which is the core of Divine existence and is our own absolute Divine reality – only he can escape being crushed. None else can whatsoever!” “Hands of Janaka” means to be in the world but not of it.

Let me give you a small analogy. Most of you must have boarded airplanes to come here. The plane is flying, the pilot is flying it and I am comfortably sitting in my seat and listening to music. I am within the plane, deeply absorbed in the joy of listening to music. In the same way, sisters and brothers, the body acts, the senses perceive, the mind thinks, the intellect discriminates, but the I within all these rests. I only rest. I don’t move, I don’t act, I just rest in the stillness of my own being. That is what Swami says, “I am just I, that’s all.” To hold onto this awareness and to let whatever happens happen and let nature take its own course, completely unaffected, untouched and unconnected, deeply absorbed in the love of God – that is what is meant by hands of Janaka.

Bend the Body

And what is the prescription that Bhagavan gives so that we may reach such a spiritual stature. Bhagavan’s prescription is threefold: “Bend the body, mend the senses and end the mind – *paropakaraartham idam shareeram* (this body is given to serve others).” It is said that the good give until they have, the great give until it hurts, but the Divine gives until He bleeds. From His very childhood Bhagavan has been sacrificing this form for our sake. Like a candle that consumes itself giving light to others, Bhagavan has been incessantly, literally sacrificing for you and me. Can there be a greater example of ‘bend the body?’

Mend the Senses

Mend the senses – let me illustrate with a small story. A man took his seven-year-old son for a routine evening walk. From the opposite direction they were approached by a sinister looking, heavily mustached, hefty young man. He was in chains, and on either side was flanked by policemen. The little boy asked his father who the man was. The father said, “Son, this is a criminal – a transgressor. If left free to appetite his passions, he will commit numerous sins. So he has been caught and booked. He will be tried by the court and finally, punishment will be meted out to him.” The son nodded his head in complete understanding.

After a time they came to the highway and no traffic was flowing on the highway. So the father surmised

that a convoy was about to pass that way. Just then a police van blasting its siren passed that way, then came a lorry full of police, followed by traffic sergeants on their majestic motorcycles, some cars touting their flags, and finally ending with a long shining black limousine with the president of the country sitting in the backseat waving his hands and smiling. The son saw all this and could not contain his joy at understanding all this – he burst out, “Father, father, there goes the worst criminal ever!” By now the alarmed father shut his son’s mouth with his upper garment and said, “Son, this is our president.” The son was a little confused. He said, “Father, a few minutes back you told me that if a man is flanked on either side by a policeman, he is a criminal. This gentleman is flanked by hundred police in the front, the rear, the left, the right, the centre, that is why I thought he was the greatest criminal on earth.” The father said, “Son, this is the president, the first citizen of our country. By his dedicated service and his indefatigable industry, he has come to adorn the post of the president. The president is the best of mankind; the criminal is the worst of mankind. The police that flank the president are there to honour him, to revere him, to admire him and they wait on him. He is the master of the police; the criminal on the other hand is under the control of the police, a slave.”

This story indicates to us the ocean of difference between a disciplined seeker and an undisciplined wanderer. **A wise man with his mind and senses restrained guides his life through the path of goodness, without getting into the muddy entanglement of endless pleasures.** The fool, on the other hand, allows his mind and senses to run wild. Unruly that they are, the mind and senses dash him and wreck him on the roadside of life.

End the Mind

Finally, end the mind. This is the most important because the body is nothing but the mind. The senses are nothing but the mind. This universe is nothing but the mind. That is what Bhagavan says, “*Manomaathram idham jagath.*” The mind alone is this cosmos. End the mind. A small example - Who is speaking right now? And who is listening? A very ordinary question. The answer seems to be a student of Bhagavan is speaking and the thousands of devotees gathered are listening. But nothing can be farther from the truth. The larynx in the throat vibrates and sound comes out of this body. And before the sound comes, there is an impulse to speak. From where does the impulse come? It comes from the thought. From where does the thought come? It comes from the *sankalpa*. And from where does the *sankalpa* come? It comes from the one source. The listener listens, but what happens? Sound waves hit the ear drum and produce a sensation or a vibration

and sound is cognised. But what attaches meanings to the words? The thought. From where does the thought come? From discrimination. From where does discrimination come? From the same source! Thus, if we discriminate, we can clearly see that there is nobody speaking and nobody listening – it is just happening as part of the source! God alone speaks and God alone listens, and when He is tired of speaking and listening, He rests as Himself. That is all. But in our delusion we think there is a speaker, there is a listener, and there is this, there is that.

But Bhagavan reminds us that God alone Is. When walking on the road, our shadow falls on so many things. It falls on water, I don't get wet. It falls on fire, I don't get burnt. It falls on filth, I don't get dirty. The body is a shadow, the mind is a shadow, thinking is a shadow, and I alone exist. But if I cannot separate myself completely with my shadow, what would I do? I turn towards the light and the shadow falls behind. When I face in the opposite direction, the light makes the shadow fall in front of me and that shadow terrifies me, scares me and brings all sorts of worries. But when I face the light, the shadow falls behind. And facing the light is to turn to God and to turn to Him in the totality of love.

Pure Divine Love

Numerous are the examples of pure, Divine, child-like love. I would like to draw your attention to one such exalted devotee of Swami from the *Ramayana* – the great Sabari. Bhagavan has told us that Sabari had such a tender and compassionate heart. When her marriage was fixed, as was the custom in her tribe, a goat was about to be slaughtered. She was so depressed at the impending slaughter that she ran away from home and took refuge in the *Ashram* of Matanga Rishi. The great Rishi that he was, he immediately could gauge the spiritual greatness of Sabari. He gave her refuge and told her that one day Lord Rama would come, as He was in exile and was eager to emancipate seekers that did *tapas* in the forest. From that day onwards, she never, ever had a thought other than that of Lord Rama. Bhagavan says that her heart was so filled with the thought of Lord Rama that her *hrudaya* became Rama-*hrudaya* itself. Her heart became a part of the heart of Lord Rama. Every day she would get prepared in eager anticipation of Lord Rama's visit. She would clean the *Ashram*; she would polish the rocks and boulders on the way, imagining that they might sit on them and take rest. She would remove the overhanging creepers lest their matted hair get caught in that. She would collect the fruits and select them by tasting each one of them and preserve the best and the sweetest for the Lord. She was immersed in *Ramarasa* – the Divine sweet essence of Rama.

How easy it is for us to love Bhagavan! One look in Swami's eyes and the world is forgotten. After having looked once into the deep love-filled eyes of Bhagavan, how can we ever get a worldly thought? We are here all the time, so we do not realise in whose Presence we are. We do not realise in entirety, the purity and the enormity of Bhagavan's Divine Love in which we bask day in and day out. It is so easy to love Bhagavan.

Many years back in the early 1970s Bhagavan had a Grand Impala car and one student wanted to test his driving skills. Finding no other car, he chose Bhagavan's car. And when everybody had gone for *Darshan*, he tried to start Bhagavan's car. But unfortunately it was in the first gear and he forgot to put it into neutral, and the car surged forward and banged into the wall. Bhagavan's car was dented. You can imagine the plight of the boy. He quietly put the keys back and went to the hostel terrified. Two days passed and he didn't dare go for *Darshan*, but instead sulked in his room. Bhagavan missed him and asked the Warden, "Where is the boy?" Enquiries were made and finally the boy was summoned for *Darshan*. So the boy packed all his belongings, kept it at the hostel entrance, booked his tickets and came for *Darshan*. Bhagavan came for *Darshan* looked at him and said, "What happened? Two days no *Darshan*, what happened?" There were tears in the boy's eyes because one, he was scared and second, he was sure that he would be separated from Swami. With tears in his eyes, he looked at Bhagavan but he couldn't speak. Swami also had tears in His eyes and Swami said, "My dear, you are more valuable to Me than the car. You are the most valuable property. You for Me and I for you."

What Makes a Great Organisation?

Sisters and brothers! What is the mark of the greatness of a spiritual organisation? You all agree that the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and the institutions and organisations of Bhagavan are spiritual organisations. What is the true yardstick of the greatness of a spiritual organisation? It is not its assets, tangible or intangible. It is not even the amount of philanthropy or charity that the organisation undertakes. The true yardstick of the greatness of a spiritual organisation is one and only one – the completeness of the inner life of its members. How complete and robust is our inner sanctuary – that alone is the reflection of the greatness of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and nothing else. Therefore, being a part of the organisation, it is our first and foremost duty to connect to Swami, who is the source of all goodness, the source of all virtue, the source of all purity and love. That is imperative. How to do that? By focusing on Bhagavan! It sounds so obvious and simple but sometimes we get so involved in our so-called Swami's work that in Swami's work

we forget Swami. If we truly and objectively introspect how often we falter on these lines, we would be alarmed. Therefore, **to do Swami's work means to be one with Bhagavan and to manifest His Divine Love through us.** And if that doesn't happen – we may do the most earth-shattering philanthropy, but it is not Bhagavan's work. Only Bhagavan can do Bhagavan's work and when we are one with Him, Bhagavan's work happens through us. That's all and that is the only way Bhagavan's work gets done.

In 1999 in Kodaikanal, Bhagavan gave a Discourse on the control of the mind. After the Discourse, He came and sat with the boys and asked, "Anybody has any doubts on the Discourse?" One student raised his hand and said, "**Swami, is there a simple way to control the mind?**" Swami said, "**Love God more and more.**" With these thoughts I seek Bhagavan's loving permission to end the talk.

Jai Sai Ram!

Sanjay Mahalingam



Ivan Bavcevic

.....
Mr. Sanjay Mahalingam received a bachelor's degree in Information Technology from the University of Delhi. He worked for one year as a software engineer in ST Microelectronics before joining the Sri Sathya Sai University in 2002 where he received an MBA in 2004. Since 2005, he has been working towards a PhD degree in the field of management on the topic of "Corporate Strategy for Success in Emerging Markets."

Surrender to God

Mr. Ivan Bavcevic

Dear sisters and brothers, Dear Friend, Teacher and Lord, my dearest and only Self, I am grateful and blessed for the opportunity to address this holy gathering in the Presence of our Beloved Bhagavan Baba. I pray to Him to think and speak through this body now and ever after.

I thought I would be nervous talking in front of thousands of people, but then I remembered that I can't be nervous in front of my very own Self, even if it is spread in thousands of forms.

It is difficult to even comprehend with our minds what it means to stand here in this holiest of places. But that is exactly what is not necessary. Our soul knows the greatness of this occasion, and that is enough. There is no need to comprehend it with our minds as the mind will only lead us to limited and small conclusions and lead us away from the Truth, from *Sathya*.

Baba Is Always with Us

When I thought about what to share with you today, I realised that I could only speak from my personal experience. I could share with you the knowledge I have accumulated from books and others, but you can all read and listen for yourselves. What is more important is how I implemented the teachings in this body and this life, what things I realised from my own life experiences, and what understandings I have gained. For life serves as a tool for experiencing different aspects of our Divinity. Divinity is present in every thing, every being, every situation, every experience, and every moment we encounter. I realised that all events lead me to the practice of surrender to God.

If I look back into my early childhood, to the moments I can remember, I see some invisible hand leading my life. I did not grow up in a religious or spiritual family, especially since it was a communist country, but my beloved parents always knew there was something greater than us. They did not call it God, but they knew there was some energy, some Being, some consciousness pervading everything. They told my sister and me that we can choose what form to believe in when we grow up. Even though they never went to church or did prayers, they brought us up to always tell the truth, to love and respect others, to tolerate the

differences and to forgive. I am grateful to Swami for them because only God can give you such wonderful parents and such a wonderful childhood. My father, a non-religious man, would tell me at least twice a week: "Son, remember that you are God, and always live your life like one." He was telling me the biggest of all truths from my early childhood, and at that time I didn't realise it. I was not comfortable thinking that I am God. I thought that he should not raise me up to the "stars" in such a way.

So when I look at my childhood, what I got from the parents and grandparents, from birth to kindergarten, from elementary school to high school, and all the good things that have happened, **it is definitely the Invisible Hand of our most loving Lord Sathya Sai Baba that was arranging everything.** While writing this speech I remembered that I spent a great part of the first ten years of my life with my grandparents. In the Croatian language, the word for grandmother is "Baba." I would call that name at least twenty times a day, "Baba, I am hungry; Baba, where are you? Baba, can I have some ice cream? Baba, let's go out. Baba, let's watch TV," and so forth. In a way, Swami made sure that I called His Name from the early days of my life without even knowing it!

The first time I saw His image was in 1985 in Yugoslavia, when they showed on TV a documentary on a Holy Man from India who could materialise a powder (*vibhuthi*) from a metal pot for a long time. At home, we were all amazed by what He could do, and at that moment I wished that I could see Him doing that in person. I never ever thought that He Himself would make that wish come true and that I would go to India more than fifteen years later. **Our Dear Swami never lets any sincere yearning, any innocent and honest wish, go unnoticed and unfulfilled. For He is the fulfiller of our dreams and the giver of all boons.**

Everything Happens for the Best

It was not until my third year of high school that I started reading the Catholic Christian Bible. One night I asked God whether He really existed. That night, I had a dream that Jesus was saving my friend and me from some criminals. I did not believe the dream to be

true. So, the second night I asked the same question, and Jesus again came in my dream and said that He will protect me and that I am safe with Him! From that moment, I believed that God was true.

Then one day, I read a story in the Bible about Joseph, a son of Jacob, who was very dear to his father and whose brothers left him in the desert to die and sold him to a caravan because they were very jealous of him. The caravan took him to Egypt where he was a slave and lived in very terrible conditions. But Joseph was very dear and close to God, and had the power to predict events and explain the dreams of others. He predicted many things, and so the Pharaoh realised that Joseph could help the country in many ways. One day, Joseph predicted that there would be seven years of good harvest followed by seven years of drought. The Pharaoh put him in charge of food supplies for the whole Kingdom of Egypt. When the drought came, they had enough food but all the other surrounding countries were dying of hunger. Jacob, who was living with his sons in Israel, sent his sons to ask for food in Egypt, as they would otherwise all die. When the brothers came to Egypt, it was Joseph who received them. When they realised that he was their youngest brother, they were very ashamed and afraid. He then told them not to worry as it was God Himself who put him through all this trouble in order to be able to save Israel and his family from starvation. Because, if they had not sold him to the caravan, he would never have become in-charge of food supplies in Egypt and would not have been able to help his family.

This story taught me to firmly believe in God's Will and His plan, and to know that everything happens for my highest well being. Ever since reading the story of Joseph, I try accepting everything that happens to me as the best possible thing, the perfect thing. Even if it doesn't make any sense in the beginning, I know that it will all make sense the next hour, or the next day, or in a month or in a few years. I no longer worry, and I don't ask why something happens to me. Actually, it is I who have brought each event to myself in the first place. All I pray to God for is the strength to accept the things and events He sends me and to realise that all is how it should be. That is the first step on the path to surrender. **So, simply always thank God, and be grateful for everything that happens, as it is surely the perfect thing for you.**

Swami's Constant Presence

This reminds me of when I enrolled in a private university in Croatia. University education is free in Croatia, but to attend a private institution one has to pay a lot of money. Somehow, my entire family pulled together enough money to enroll me for the first year. However, for the second year, we had no money. My

parents asked me whether I was worried that we could not afford to pay for my university, and I said that I was not worried at all. I said: "I didn't put myself in this university in the first place; God put me there, and He will pay for it." A month later, I received an unexpected scholarship and was able to continue my studies!

If I look back seven or eight years ago, when Swami was present in my life without my conscious knowledge, I can see that I was quite a frightened person, often nervous and upset, often moody and lonely, sometimes loud and rude, and feeling that something BIG was missing. That something BIG walked into my life at the end of 1999, and turned out to be bigger than I could ever have imagined. Our Beloved Lord made sure that I entered the new millennium with Him in my mind and life. When I came to know about Bhagavan, I recognised many situations in life when it was obviously His Hand that perfectly arranged everything in order and in time.

There are countless events that showed Swami's constant Presence and care for my life, and it would not be possible to tell them all at this time, as they range from admissions to schools and universities, to saving my body without a scratch in deadly car accidents, to getting excellent jobs with famous people and European royalty. When in 2002 I was hired to work as an executive for Her Imperial Royal Highness, Archduchess of Austria, I came to the place where we were opening our new office. There was nobody there and no furniture or equipment. I opened a cupboard, and on the door I saw a photo of Swami in a yellow robe! Nobody knew how that photo came there. **Swami always makes sure to show us His Omnipresence and involvement in our lives.**

Surrender

Dear sisters and brothers in Sai, I would like to share with you some of the changes that occurred in my life since last year. In 2006, I realised that even though I felt I was surrendering to the Lord and believed in His Will, I was still relying on worldly security and comfort. When I honestly looked into my mind and habits, I realised that I believed, "If everything else fails and proves to be wrong, I still have an excellent paying job and career, a house to live in, and I am safe."

I saw that this mental concept was keeping me away from deeper surrender. I decided to leave the dream job and secure salary, and with God's help to open my own business. I do consulting for companies on how to run better businesses based on human values and *Dharmic* (righteous) management. When you have to earn your bread every month, which is not guaranteed, you better surrender to God. I told Swami, "This year 2006 is finishing, and I sense it is the end of a big part of my life. I am ready to be part of your holy mission

and to let go of my petty worldly habits and thinking. I am ready to enter 2007 in a new spirit of dedication and commitment to You.” **When you say “yes” to Swami, then you reject the right to be like everyone else. And when you make that one step towards Him, He makes hundreds towards you.**

Not too many days passed after this prayer of mine to Swami when I received an email from Dr. Narendra Reddy, a Director of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, requesting me to be a member of the Planning Committee for this Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference. You can only imagine the joy, the tears and my complete happiness with this news. I thought I was dreaming. And I knew it was not just an honour, but an enormous responsibility. When you “work” for the Master of the Universe, then you are extra careful in everything you think, say and do. Every day is a new challenge.

I truly feel like I have been growing in my ability to surrender to Swami. When I look back to all the years before, when I thought I had entrusted my life to God, I realised that I had not surrendered, compared to now. Actually, since last December, every day I realise that the day before I had not surrendered compared to this day. There is no limit to how much one can surrender until she or he finally merges with God.

Surrendering does not mean expecting everything to be smooth. On the contrary, God puts in front of us many more challenging situations so that we can progress on our spiritual path. **But when we surrender we do not worry as we are not alone. We know that Swami cares for us because we are dearer than the dearest to Him, and He is there for us in every moment.** Imagine how great is our Lord when He is able to dedicate every single moment to every one of us individually. To all the billions of people and other beings, He dedicates every second to every one individually and personally. Nothing and nobody is left unnoticed.

Realise Our Good Fortune

I can only suggest to each one of us to look sincerely within and see what is still left to be transformed and surrendered to God. One holy man said that it may seem like a process that will lead us to change, but at the end it is an instant that leads to transformation. We can't know when that moment will happen, but we can start living our lives as if it has already happened. We can create heaven on earth in this life, this day or this minute. And, if you look around yourself, you will see that you already are in heaven, right now.

I would like to remind all of us to realise how lucky we are to be here. We have waited hundreds of lives to be born to serve in the Mission of this *Avatar*. That opportunity has now come. The *Avatar* Himself has

invited us all here in His Name to start carrying His Mission of Love to this world, not in words, but by our own example. Our life should become the mission itself, become love itself. That is why we are here. We should ask ourselves every day, **“Is everything I do in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, at work, at home and in the public making my heart more loving and open?”** If I have more love as a result of all the activities, then I am doing well. If I am not having more love, if I am not BEING more love, then everything I do is lame. For love is the goal, the source and the means.

After this conference we should not just go home and say what a nice time we had, how good the food was, and what kind of workshops we attended. Instead, we should really grasp the meaning of what we have learned and bring a transformation within ourselves. When we go back home, everyone will expect us to be the leaders of the new era. **But we can lead only with our love, our character and by personal example.** This is the greatest opportunity a soul can have, and it should not be missed. Our heirs will tell stories about this great time, and they will not be able to understand how some people could not seize the moment and see its greatness.

Let us now spread this paradise beyond the walls of the *Ashram*, carrying it in our hearts, in our minds, on our lips and in our helping hands. This paradise and its peace can only be spread by living His Message. This way, we can experience our innate Divinity and show to Swami that we deserve to be called “Embodiments of Divine Love,” actual Gods walking on the earth.

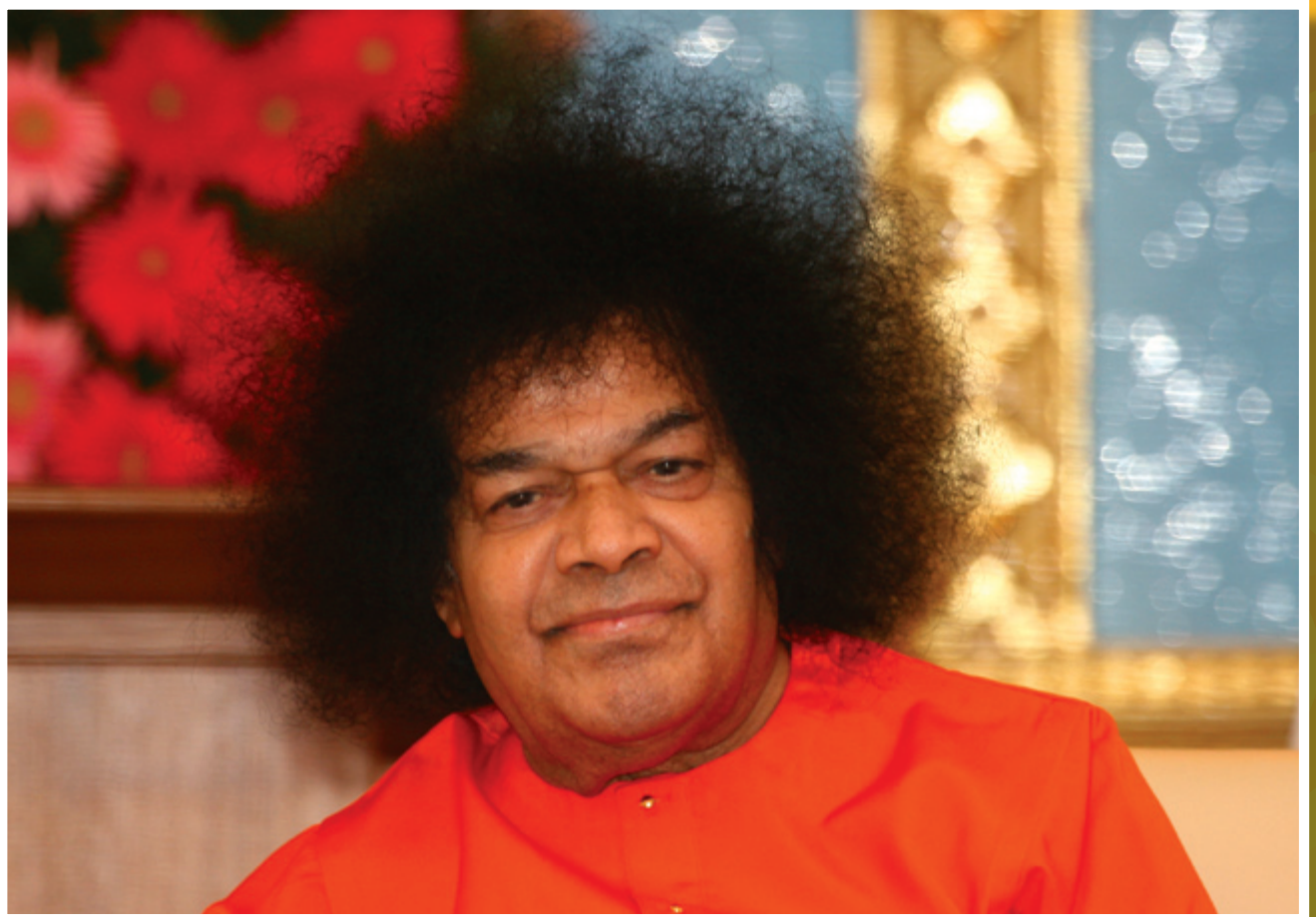
I am grateful to Swami for this life, for all lives, and for the opportunity to speak here today. I pray that we will always be in Awareness with Him. May Love lead us. Jai Sai Ram!

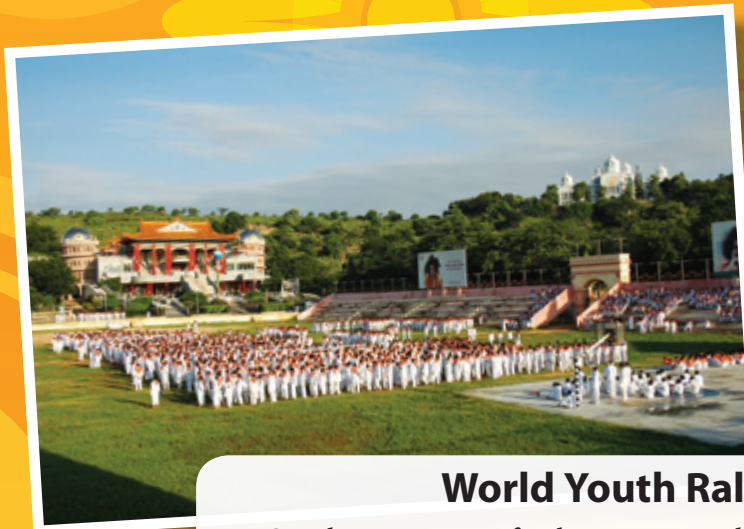
.....
Mr. Ivan Bavcevic graduated with a B.Sc. degree with highest honours from the American College of Management and Technology in Dubrovnik, Croatia. He owns a small private business involved in adult education, professional development, training and business consulting. He is a regular correspondent for *Croatian Business Advisor*. He was Chief of Staff of the Office of Her Imperial Royal Highness, Archduchess of Austria, Francesca von Habsburg, Croatia. Earlier he was an Assistant Professor at the American College of Management and Technology in Croatia. He is Youth Coordinator for Zone 6 (South Europe) and member of the World Youth Conference Planning Committee.



Highlights of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference

A grand spectacle of world unity was witnessed when over 6,000 youth from 86 countries of the world congregated at Prasanthi Nilayam to participate in the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference held on July 26 – 28, 2007 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This conference was unique in that Bhagavan blessed the youth of Sri Sathya Sai University to participate and attend the conference as delegates. The theme of the conference was, "Ideal Sai Youth – Messengers of Sai Love" and the five human values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence. The venue of the conference was Sai Kulwant Hall which was befittingly decorated with colourful festoons, buntings, flowers and banners with Bhagavan's main teachings. The highlights of the conference were the Inaugural and Valedictory Addresses of Bhagavan, a grand rally of the youth, inspiring talks by eminent speakers, four workshops on the theme of the conference, a variety of cultural and music programmes and a friendly basketball match between India and Sri Lanka. An exhibition was also set up on this occasion which depicted the story of the transformation of youth worldwide and explained the modes of transformation.





World Youth Rally

On the morning of July 26, 2007, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 8:00 A.M. amidst *Vedic* chanting by the students of Sri Sathya Sai University and the international delegates to the conference. Soon after Bhagavan's arrival, the procession of youth started entering the Hall from the main gate. At the head of the procession was a *Veda*-chanting group of delegates carrying the *Poornakumbham*, who offered traditional welcome to Bhagavan. This group was followed by the brass band of Sri Sathya Sai University. After this came the delegates from 86 countries, carrying the name-plates and national flags of their countries. All of them came to the dais and offered their salutations to Bhagavan who showered His Blessings on them. Many of the groups were chanting *Vedic* hymns and singing *bhajans*. The gents were followed by the contingents of ladies. At the head of the ladies procession, there was also a *Veda*-chanting group with *Poornakumbham* and lighted candles. This was followed by the brass band of Anantapur Campus and the bagpipers of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam. The groups of delegates carrying the name-banners of their countries came before the dais, bowed in reverence to Bhagavan and occupied their seats in the Hall. This grand rally started at 8:00 A.M. and came to a close at 8:55 A.M.







Peace through Basketball: Friendly Match

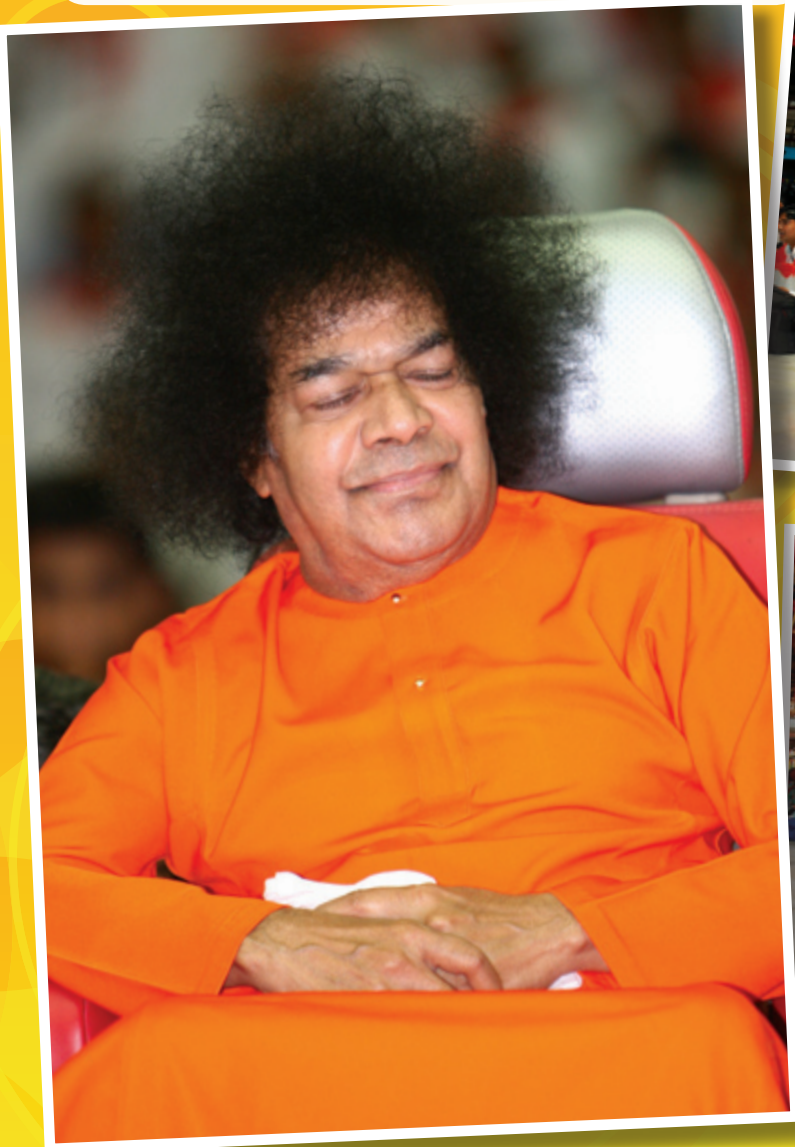
On the occasion of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference, a friendly basketball match was held between India and Sri Lanka in the Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Sports on the afternoon of July 26, 2007. All the delegates to the conference were invited to witness this match. Bhagavan arrived at the stadium at 4:25 P.M. and blessed both the teams. The Secretary General of FIBA, Asia, Dato Yeoh Choo Hosk introduced the players, coaches and officials of both teams to Bhagavan. The match began at 4:45 P.M. What followed was a thrilling display of speed and skill. Though both the teams were poised equally, India maintained a slight lead from the very beginning and the score at the end of the first half was 26-23 in favour of India. India maintained its lead in the second half and clinched the match with the final score of 46-40, ending the match at 5:10 P.M. During the game breaks, a dance troupe entertained the spectators with their exhilarating dance.



Music Programme

An enthralling music concert was presented by the overseas delegates from 21 countries at the end of the Valedictory Function of Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference, on the afternoon of July 28, 2007, marking its befitting grand finale. The programme entitled “European Music Programme” comprised nine devotional songs in German, Russian, Polish, Latvian, Italian and Czech languages. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan blessed the artistes and presented each of them with a watch. The proceedings of the conference came to a happy conclusion with *Arati* to Bhagavan at 6:15 P.M.

The youth of Italy, Spain, Croatia and Slovenia made a soulful musical presentation entitled “Love All, Serve All” on the afternoon of July 30, 2007. The programme began at 3:45 P.M. after the Divine *Darshan* of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. A group of 45 singers poured out their hearts to Bhagavan in their sweet compositions. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan showered His Blessings on the singers. He also materialised a gold chain for a lady singer.



Love in Action – Karnataka Youth

Mr. Vinay Kumar

The Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference held in Prasanthi Nilayam from July 26-28, 2007 has etched many sacred memories in the minds of all the Sai Youth from Karnataka who were part of this wonderful event. Sai Youth from all over the world came together at the Divine Lotus Feet of our most Beloved Bhagavan. In fact, this unique opportunity for the youth of Karnataka, India, to be part of a conference originally intended only for the overseas youth was created and conferred by none other than Bhagavan Himself!

Compassionate Mother Sai

It all happened just a few weeks before the conference was set to begin. On one beautiful morning in Prasanthi Nilayam, when Bhagavan had finished Blessing the multitudes of devotees who had gathered for His Divine *Darshan* and was gracefully making His way towards the *Mandir*, He called the conference coordinator. Bhagavan asked how many youth were scheduled to attend the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference and when they would start arriving at Prasanthi Nilayam. And then, out of the blue, He suddenly called out to me and said, “The overseas youth are coming in large numbers for the conference. How many are you getting for the conference from Karnataka?” I was actually stunned and dumbfounded because it was a well-known fact that youth from India were not scheduled to be part of this conference. I somehow gathered myself and prayed, “Swami, whatever number you want will attend. Please guide us.” He immediately said, “Get one thousand youth from Karnataka and ask them to register immediately for the conference.” I had tears welling up in my eyes

at the Love and Compassion Our Mother Sai had showered on Her children from Karnataka! All I could do was to thank Him in a choked voice and offer my humble *Pranams* at His Lotus Feet.

Since it was His Will at play, we had absolutely no problems in raising the required numbers. In fact it took just two days for us to come up with a detailed list of all the 1,000 youth which I took to Puttaparthi and placed at His Lotus Feet! He graciously accepted the list and lovingly blessed it. In all His infinite mercy, He went through every sheet of the ten-page list and again asked when the youth would be coming. I said, “Swami, they would all be in Prasanthi Nilayam by July 24th and get themselves duly registered.” The Love of a million mothers was there to be seen on that beautiful face of our dearest Swami!

Divine Will at Play

It didn't end with us just being allowed to attend this beautiful conference. A couple of weeks before the conference, Bhagavan blessed the youth from Karnataka with yet another shower of His limitless Love and Compassion. One afternoon, He suddenly called out to me in the veranda and said, “You along with other coordinators from Karnataka take care of all the food arrangements for the conference.”

While it was a great feeling to be chosen by HIM as the official caterers for a world conference, the several challenges the task involved suddenly started surfacing and time was running out! Bhagavan's penchant for meticulous planning and perfection is a well-known fact and we knew there was no scope for any slippage on any count! Invoking His Grace through a collective prayer, we got down to forming different teams for drafting the menu for breakfast, lunch, and dinner on all three days, setting up the dining hall on 40,000 square feet of land, sourcing items and transporting them to Puttaparthi, cooking, moving food to the dining area, pantry management, serving, drinking water dispensation and waste management. Those two weeks were an absolutely thrilling experience for the 350 odd youth who were specifically assigned different roles in His



master plan of making us the official caterers! These 350 youth dedicated themselves totally to the task at hand and it was unity amongst them and an incessant prayer on their lips to Bhagavan that made the entire process seem so simple! **It was yet more proof that once we surrender ourselves to His Will and have no trace of doership in us then He rushes forth and gets the entire task completed in Godspeed!**

The menu that was finally approved by Bhagavan included as many as ten different items for lunch and dinner, with a mix of Indian and Continental cuisines, and with a liberal spread of sweets, salads, and ice cream, not to forget the pistachio toppings!

The Impossible Becomes Possible

With HIS Blessings and only due to His Grace, the dining area could be set up to accommodate 5,000 delegates eating at the same time without any crowding! The smoothness and speed with which the otherwise unqualified bearers (Karnataka youth) served the delegates was yet another testimony to HIS Divine Will that was at play! The ideas that sprung up in the minds of the coordinators regarding the splitting of the dining area separately for gents and ladies, pantry layout, VIP seating, the arrangement of food serving counters, dessert counters, adequate water dispensers and waste disposal mechanisms was all HIS *leela* (Divine play) that was there to be seen! The ambience created within the dining area was breathtaking and many devotees would simply come to have a look at the Sai Magnificence that had unfolded itself in the form of this large banquet hall.

The challenges that surfaced in transporting items on time to Puttapparthi, turning out almost 20,000 *rotis* (Indian bread) daily, and providing limitless scoops of ice cream were all overcome only due to one single factor – **faith in Swami!** The hours and hours of team meetings before the conference for planning the cooking and serving was all HIS way of showing us that **if one did his duty sincerely, then Grace will flow.** It was only His Love that ensured we did not have to turn away anyone for lack of food, and in spite of heavy rains on one of the nights the entire dining area remained guarded without even a drop of water seeping in!

Thus, the 2007 Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference was a very special occasion for all of the 1,000 youth from Karnataka who saw and realised the Supreme Power of our Dearest Bhagavan in getting extraordinary things done out of ordinary mortals like us! It has also motivated the youth, beyond measure, to function as one large united group in order to be able to work as His worthy instruments in HIS Divine Mission!

.....
Mr. Vinay Kumar is the Youth Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations for Karnataka State.



Sadhana: A Step-by-Step Journey – A Pictorial Exhibition

Mrs. Sangeeta Lekhi

“Lord! Your Name is the bridge that can safely transport man across the Ocean of Life.”

In the epic *Ramayana*, an army of monkeys served Lord Rama by chanting and writing His Name on each stone, enabling the stones to float to form a bridge to reach Lanka. This inspired the central theme of *namasmarana* at the international youth exhibition during the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference 2007. The exhibition highlighted Swami’s key messages for each of the nine disciplines of the Sadhana Programme, and how youth are practising them in their daily lives. Swami’s altar became the centre and the heart of the exhibition, highlighting the fact that He is our source and our goal. The altar was surrounded by an “ocean” with bridges of stones, representing *namasmarana*, leading towards the altar. *Namasmarana*, the basis of all our spiritual disciplines, vibrationally and visually permeated the exhibition, and each *sadhana* was graphically and interactively depicted in the respective booths.

With Swami’s Grace, there was full cooperation amongst the Zone youth leaders and each Zone undertook the responsibility of showcasing one spiritual discipline. Nine spiritual disciplines, nine world Zones, and nine booths...it was a perfect match! An international team of artists, architects, designers, and coordinators was also formed to plan, implement, and support the exhibition activities worldwide. The exhibition became a beautiful space for all youth, even for those not attending the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference, to contribute their experience and practise of His teachings.

A few days after the youth arrived in Prasanthi Nilayam, the 7,000 square foot hall of bare walls was transformed into a temple filled with His Love and His teachings. When youth from various Zones first entered the hall to set up their materials, posters, and other exhibits, they were representing only their countries and respective world Zones. However, within a day of working together in harmony, **the youth were no longer focused on their individual booths, but were now representing all Sai Youth, in unity and Love for Sai.** Youth were sharing their resources, sacrificing their time, and most importantly, providing love and support to those groups who needed extra assistance to put together their booths. In fact, the team of youth no longer wished to be called merely a ‘team’; instead, we became one Sai family!

As youth volunteers and presenters filled the hall with their love, devotion, dedication and self-sacrifice, we could feel Swami’s Presence stronger by the day. From July 24th, we decided to start continuous *namasmarana* in the centre of the exhibition hall. From morning to night, this small group committed themselves to staying in the hall and truly experiencing what Swami refers to as the ‘**power of His Name.**’ But from the next day onwards, youth from different parts of the world began to visit, and word spread amongst the delegates about this rare opportunity in the *Ashram*. The volunteers came from UK, Croatia, Singapore, Germany, Hong Kong, USA, Mauritius, Australia, Japan, and Latin America. Delegates would throng to be a part of this non-stop remembrance of His Name. We had not even officially opened the exhibition for viewing, and already, **Swami’s Presence was being felt and experienced by all who entered.**

On July 26th, the day the exhibition opened, visitors from all walks of life came to see the works of youth worldwide. It was an opportunity for us to welcome and share with all how Swami has impacted our lives through the practice of the nine-point Sadhana Programme.

The first exhibit displayed Swami’s key teachings on how one must communicate with love in the family,



by creating a home environment, including a life-size kitchen. The 'Prayer and Meditation' booth had an interactive station with a *stupa* representing the unity of all religions; and the 'Namasmarana' booth allowed visitors to chant His Name using prayer beads. Other exhibits included the 'Ceiling on Desires' world map displaying transformation stories of youth from around the world, while the 'Leadership' booth depicted Swami as our ideal leader, and portrayed exemplary world leaders for youth to emulate. The 'Service' booth took visitors on a 'Journey to Enlightenment' through proper understanding and practice of service, and the last booth depicted the 'Head, Heart and Hand' as the 3HV impact of studying Swami's teachings. There was also a 'Media Centre' where visitors had an opportunity to sit and watch youth in action in the three wings of International Sathya Sai Organisation, namely education, devotion, and service.

Swami showered His Blessings by sending His staff, primary, secondary and graduate school students from all the three campuses to visit the exhibition. They came in hundreds, and explored and inquired about the various exhibits from around the world. They participated in the different interactive activities available in the booths, such as sharing practical tips of how to control the senses or live a *sathwic* lifestyle, and imparting important characteristics that mark a true leader, as per Swami's teachings. They expressed great delight in seeing how young people are integrating Swami's teachings into their daily lives, even though living so far away from Prasanthi Nilayam.

After the three days of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference were over, we were requested to keep the exhibition open for two more days, allowing delegates and visitors a further opportunity to come and experience the love and work of Sai Youth. Over the five days, we encountered more than 7,000 visitors, and each person stayed and spent an average of one hour soaking in this Divine experience. Many visitors including the students of Sri Sathya Sai University made comments that they were moved by this exhibition and suggested that this exhibition should be shown in different parts of India and various parts of the world to help spread the Message of Sai and His Love.

After the exhibition closed, by Swami's Grace, most of the content and design was distributed for further use. Many items were shared with the Sathya Sai Orphanage, with Andhra Pradesh youth for their upcoming exhibitions, and with the Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust in Prasanthi Nilayam. A couple of items were donated to the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum. Also, some youth exhibits were taken back to their home countries to further share and spread His Message. And if the Message wasn't clear, when the hall was entirely empty, only one thing remained: His radiant,



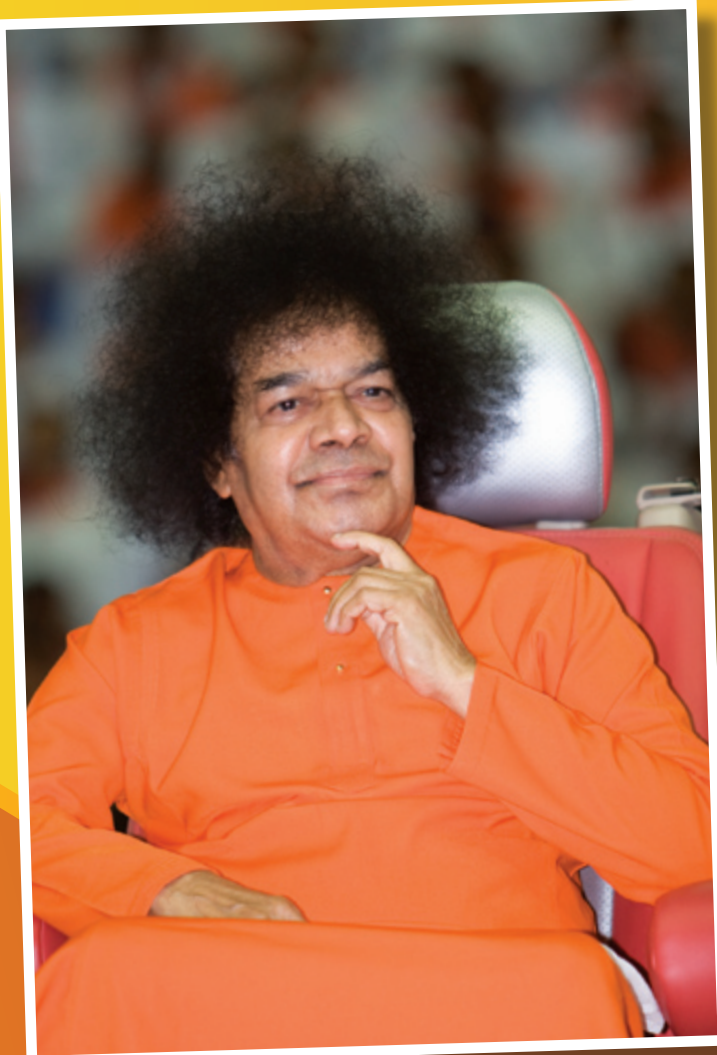
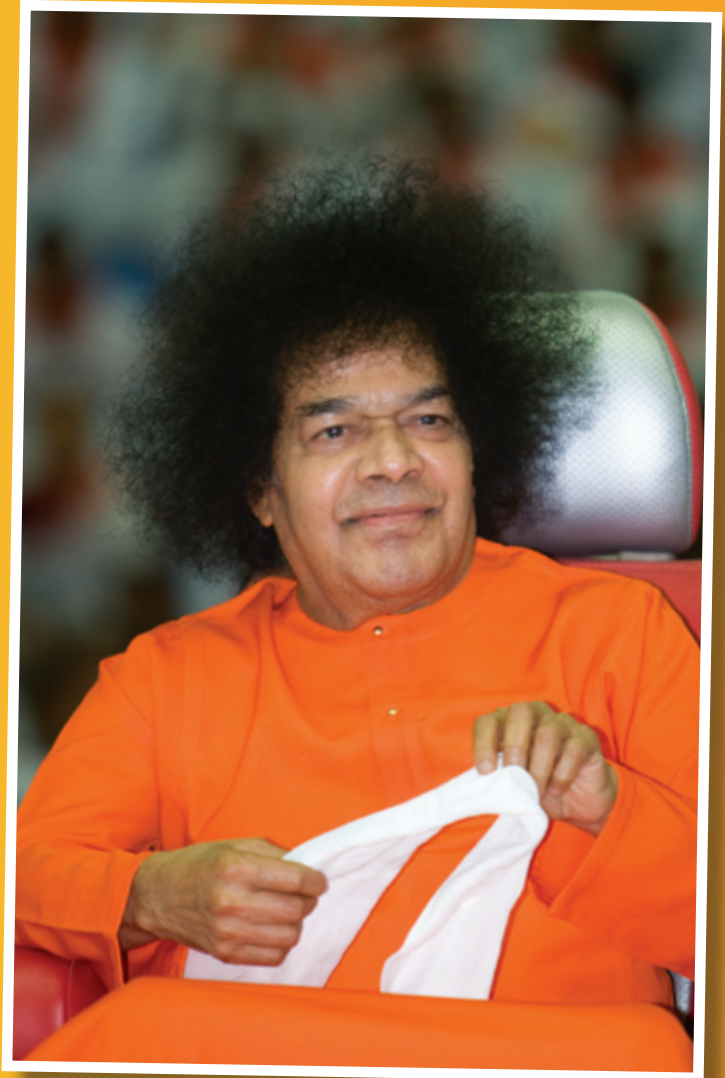
glorifying altar sitting on a lotus flower, crowned with a golden dome. It was a sign that **everything may come and go, but His Presence remains.**

The days and nights that passed in the exhibition hall were unique in that each day was increasingly more fulfilling than the last. Though we were missing days of *Darshan* in the Sai Kulwant Hall, we were actually feeling Swami's Presence more and more each day. One day, I approached two volunteers who swept the carpets from morning to night everyday, missing several *Darshans*. I asked why they don't go for *Darshan*, and stay here all the time. They sweetly replied, "We feel Swami's Presence so much here that we look forward to coming to the exhibition hall right from morning. We do not feel like we are missing His *Darshan* by not going to the Sai Kulwant Hall." Such examples inspire us all and show us the true meaning of being "Ideal Sai Youth - Messengers of Sai Love".

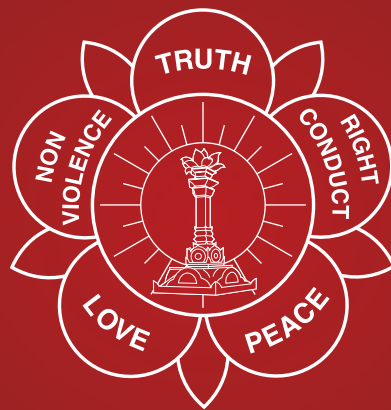
Today, months have passed, but our memories remain strong, our experiences still fill our hearts with joy, and His Message is being practised and shared with our sisters and brothers in our respective regions.

.....
Mrs. Sangeeta Lekhi, National Female Youth Representative in USA, served as the Coordinator of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference Exhibition.

SRI SATHYA SAI
WORLD YOUTH CONFERENCE







Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation