

PROCEEDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 7TH WORLD CONFERENCE

The 7th World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations was held at Prasanthi Nilayam, November 19-24, 2000, in the Divine Presence. 18,000 delegates, representing every district of India and 165 overseas countries, took an active part in the deliberations. The theme was Journey with Sai. Several months prior, pre-conferences were held in most of the countries represented; and the suggestions and recommendations from those pre-conferences formed the basis for establishing the agenda for the actual conference. The pre-conference report from the USA was cited by the Conference Planning Committee of the International Central Coordinators as being especially helpful, and it was extensively utilized in establishing the agenda.

Swami showered the conference with His blessings. He graciously delivered a Divine Discourse for the Inaugural Session, as well as the Valedictory Discourse. In addition, He was physically present at a number of the sessions. Among the highlights of the conference were the recollections by several of Swami's boyhood classmates of their experiences and interactions with Him in those early days. Similar sharing was done by devotees who had had close interaction with Swami in the second and third 25-year periods of His life.

After the inspiring and enlightening plenary sessions, the conference divided into seven workshops in order to consider the topics suggested by various pre-conferences held in the 15 world regions. Presented below is a summary of the suggestions and recommendations from the Conference, along with excerpts from Swami's Divine Discourses.

Sri Indulal Shah, the International Chairman, welcomed the 18,000 delegates who had come from every district of India and 165 countries outside of India. He stated that the Sai Organization is unique, because at every stage of its growth Swami has been guide and the inspirer. He urged all devotees to ask themselves: Is there any change in me after I met Baba? After reviewing the accomplishments of the previous six world conferences (which occur every five years), the chairman characterized the objectives of the 7th World Conference as two-fold: (1) to take stock of the enormous amount of spiritual information given by Bhagawan and (2) to define and properly understand the concept of Spiritual Transformation which is the need of the hour for all members of the organization.

Extracts from Swami's Inaugural Discourse to the 7th World Conference

Prema and Seva are the two wings that make man reach the goal of life.

Cultivate Selflessness

Man is born to render Selfless Service. Selfless Service alone can achieve unity in humanity. Only through unity, can humanity attain divinity. Hence Service is very essential to understand unity in diversity.

All persons are essentially one. The differences lie only in their feelings. So, one should change one's feelings and try to recognize the truth that the same divinity exists in all. Only then can there be transformation.

All these limbs of the body may be different from each other but the divine power that exists in them is one and the same. Likewise, the same divinity exists in all beings. Once you understand this truth, the Service you render will become divine.

Body attachment is the root cause of ego. Ego will vanish once the body-attachment is given up. The spirit of oneness will sprout once the ego is annihilated.

You should not think that you are different from the one whom you are serving. This kind of dualistic feeling gives scope to evil qualities like hatred, jealousy, etc. In fact all the evil qualities like desire, anger, greed etc. are one's own making. They arise out of the head, whereas noble qualities like love, compassion, forbearance, etc., originate from the Heart. Head sees unity as diversity, whereas heart proves unity in diversity.

All that is seen outside is nothing but the reflection, reaction and resound of the inner being. You go to a temple in order to have the vision of God. But when you stand in front of the idol, you close your eyes and pray. The inner meaning of this is that one has to see God not with physical eyes, but with eye of wisdom. You will get the eye of wisdom only when you close your physical eyes and turn your vision inward. That is the reason people meditate with their eyes closed and picture God within.

In order to control the worldly thoughts, one has to reach the level of super mind. Super mind is nothing but superior mind. The fundamental basis to attain super mind is to cultivate super love, meaning to love without any desire. When you wake up in the morning, do not think of your mundane activities. Wake up with the feeling of pure love.

Share your love with more and more people. You will experience oneness. Once you start sharing your love with everyone, then the whole world will become one family. After expanding your love in this manner, control your external thoughts and turn inward. Then you will attain the state of illumination mind where there are absolutely no thoughts and no actions. What is it that you have to do in order to attain this state? Serve all with love.

No visit to any pilgrim center, no penance, no Yogic practice will help you in crossing over the ocean of Samsara other than the service rendered to the noble. (Sanskrit Sloka)

When you serve others, the power in you also will increase. The power of attraction is present in everyone. The purer you become, the greater will be your attraction power.

God assumes human form to serve and sustain humanity. I am your servant not the master. Understand this truth. I come to you, wherever you are seated, to give Darshan, I never say that you should come to Me. It is said, God always stands at the entrance of your Prayer Room ready to give whatever you ask for. God is always ready to grant the wishes of his devotees. God renders service to you, so that you may serve your fellow human beings.

Speak softly and sweetly. Speak good words. That is also a form of Service. Never use harsh words. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly. Bandaging and using proper medicines can heal bodily wounds. But the wound inflicted on the heart can never be healed. That is why I tell you to cultivate Love and speak with Love. I never use harsh words,

even when I appear to be angry. I always speak lovingly. You too will become divine when you cultivate such Divine Love.

Recommendations Emerging from the Conference Workshops

In order to follow through on the suggestions and recommendations that resulted from the Pre-conferences that were held around the world, seven Conference Workshops were organized to address:

- 1 Unity of the Three Wings of the Sathya Sai Organization
- 2 Spiritual Transformation through Bhagawan s Spiritual Directives
- 3 Expansion of Love through Service
- 4 World Transformation Through Transformation Of World Education Systems
- 5 Youth Members Carrying Sai Love into the New Millennium
- 6 Role of Ladies in the Sai Mission — Home, Sai Organization and Society
- 7 Administrative Matters

Specific Recommendations from the Workshops are as follows:

All center members should be informed of activities of all three Wings, using bulletin board, weekly announcements, emails, telephone calls, personal invitations etc.

Youth and Newcomers should be given special opportunities to learn and develop service skills.

Transformation begins with the individual who makes a commitment to follow spiritual practices with discipline. It then extends from the individual to the family and then into the society. In this respect:

- 1 Family prayers and joint spiritual activities should be encouraged within the Sai Centers
- 2 Devotees should be assisted to reappraise their awareness and commitment to the Nine Point Code of Conduct.
- 3 Devotees should be encouraged to start spiritual diaries for self-assessment and self-enquiry
- 4 Parents should be encouraged to involve themselves in EHV/Parents workshops

Study Circles and workshops should be conducted on Jyoti Meditation, the Gayatri Mantra, the Soham Mantra, the practice of Spiritual Silence, Vegetarianism, and the spiritual significance of Selfless Service.

Center members should be thoroughly familiar with the SSEHV program

A greater emphasis is needed on the Practice of Ceiling on Desires

Service Activities must first start at an individual level, then extend to members of the family, and then into society

Young Adult members should be supported in their activities to enhance their understanding that they are an integral part of and not a separate wing of the Organization.

Young Adult groups should undertake one or two major projects each year that are coordinated on a national basis. Conducting computer literacy classes for underprivileged youth, human values oriented drama competitions, music and art programs are cited as examples.

Training workshops should be conducted for Young Adults in public speaking, decision-making, conflict resolution, and project planning. Central Councils and Coordinating Committees should promote the improvement of two-way communication with centers.

Central Councils and Coordinating Committees should provide guidance and assistance to the centers on ways of implementing the Recommendations from the 7th World Conference. For example, they may organize national or regional Arts and Cultural Programs, and/or develop booklets and informational bulletins that address such topics as Jyoti Meditation, the Gayatri Mantra, Spiritual Silence, etc.

In order to encourage creativity and innovation, the organizations at various levels may consider establishing Planning Groups or Think Tanks. The structure of these Planning Groups should be determined by the presiding body of the organization at that level, and will include experienced old time devotees and retiring office bearers. The ideas that are forthcoming should be presented to the organization for consideration and, if approved, implementation.

Summary of points made in Swami s Valedictory Discourse

- 1 A small thought in your mind, like the stone dropped in the well, produces disturbances pervading the whole mind; and from there pervades the whole body. Therefore, you should cultivate pure and sacred thoughts in your mind. Such thoughts then enter the heart from the mind and spread to all the limbs and make the entire body pure.
- 2 Born with the reflection of Divinity in the heart, you should not allow evil thoughts to enter your mind.
- 3 The tongue is the most important part of the body. Since the entire creation emanates from and is sustained by Truth, the tongue has to constantly adhere to Truth.
- 4 Just as the water bubble has many properties of water, which is its source, man emanating from Divinity, shares the qualities of Divinity in him. The evil thoughts arise out of the physical, external and worldly life and should be avoided at all costs.
- 5 Only when you recognize the unity amongst the diverse objects and phenomena, can you realize Divinity.
- 6 As the Vedas proclaim, immortality is attained by self-sacrifice.
- 7 True sacrifice is that which is made towards Divinity. Your act or sacrifice should not have any element of self-interest and should not result in evil consequences. Ensure that your sacrifice is always in the righteous path.
- 8 Only when you surrender some of your belongings to God, it is possible for you to gain love or grace or peace. There is no need to give any material things; it is enough if you surrender your pure unsullied love.
- 9 Discharge your duties with proper attention to the extent possible; help others.
- 10 If your desires are more, you should sacrifice more. Always avoid extravagance and waste. Consume the absolute minimum of whatever is required.

- 11 All people connected with Sathya Sai movement should sacrifice to the maximum extent possible.
- 12 The entire universe is pervaded by peace. You, yourself, are the embodiment of peace. Only you are not aware of it. Indulging in evil ways, increasing your desires, the peace within is shattered to pieces.
- 13 You should uproot egoism and ostentation from your being. In fact, peace is satisfaction.
- 14 With excessive desires, one loses one's humanity and become an animal. Humanity should strive towards Divinity, and not towards animal nature.
- 15 Do not waste money. Do not waste time. Do not waste energy hearing or looking at evil. Do not waste food.
- 16 One should see in everyone the Divine form and install it in one's own heart. Only then can one grow in devotion and experience bliss.
- 17 Love is highly sacred. When you develop love, it will gradually get transformed into wisdom. All worldly property has a certain limit, but love has no limit. It is unlimited property.
- 18 All those who have participated in this Conference should recapitulate what has been said here and should try to practice at least a little of what has been said here.
- 19 Remember that it is not possible to live in this world of duality without the qualities of rich and poor, good and bad. Happiness lies in living with God; not in material comforts.
- 20 It is not proper on your part to remember God only in times of misery. Under any circumstances, your love for God should not waver. Your faith should be steady.
- 21 Sathya Sai Organization is meant to emancipate the world. Being members of such an organization, you should take part in activities that will uplift the society.
- 22 Practice before your preach. That is true Devotion. That is true Service.