

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 practising 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 *Sathyapanishad*.



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.

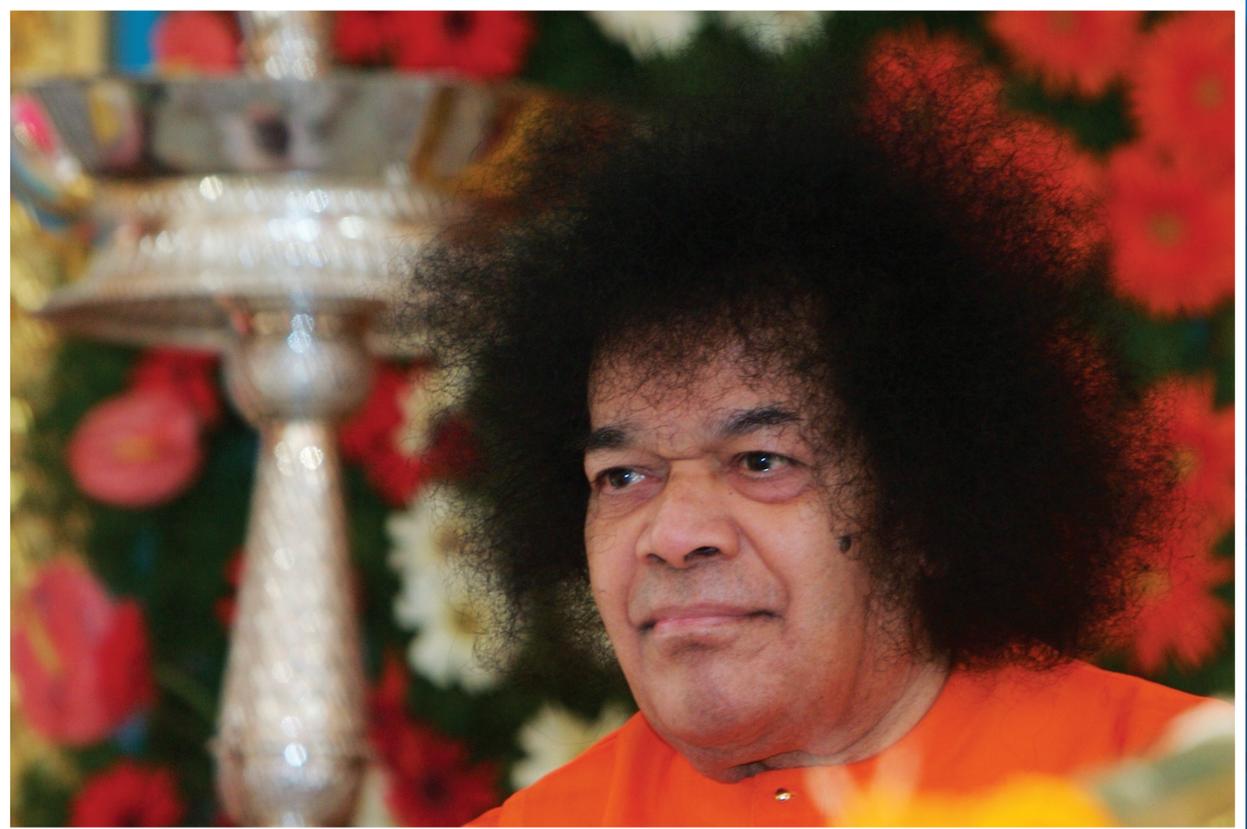
Let us remember that we are walking temples of God and that it is an honour to be messengers of Sai. The youth are ready. The time is now. Let us be the force to bring about individual and worldwide transformation. Swami has said: "Give me ONE youth strong in character and I can change the destiny of 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, and 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.

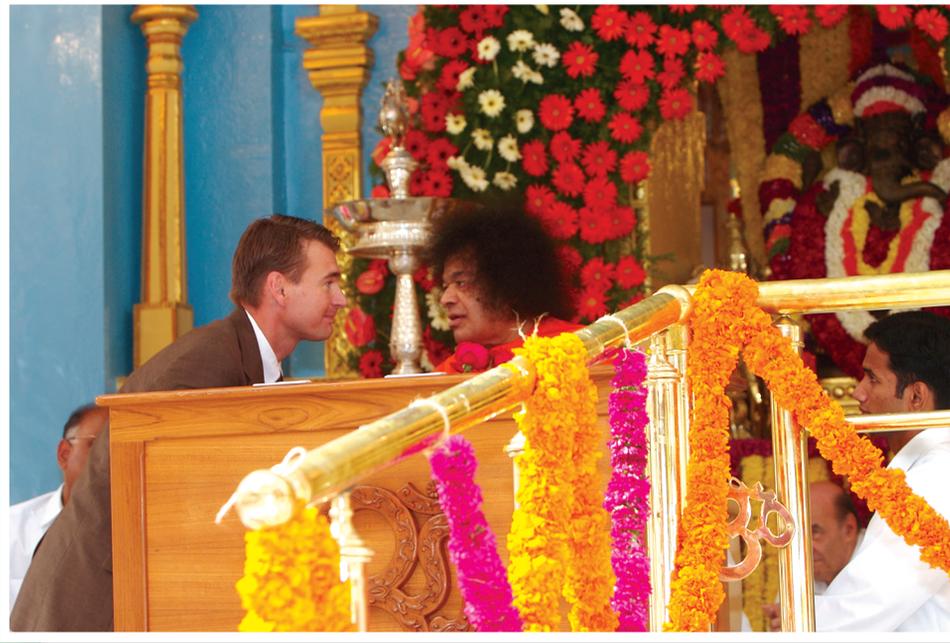
He was just quiet for a little while and then he said, "Boys, in all the years that I have been in the shoe business, I have never seen anyone come into my store to do what you are doing. I will sell you these boots, but I will only charge you the price that I have to pay for them myself. I am only sorry 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

*Pavitramuga 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 *bhakti*, 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,

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.

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.

.....
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 Puttapparthi only in 1963. Arnold Schulman in those years described Puttapparthi 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, Puttapparthi 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 Puttapparthi.

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 Puttapparthi.” (Transportation in those days from Bangalore to Puttapparthi 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 Puttapparthi 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