



Prasanthi Council

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The Five Mandates

Talk by Dr. Narendranath Reddy on November 25, 2013
Prasanthi Nilayam

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Sarva Roopa Dharam Shantam. Sarva Nama Dharam Shivam. Sat Chit Anandam Adwaitam Sathyam Shivam Sundaram (Peace is the vesture of all forms, auspiciousness is the basis all names, the non-dual form is Truth, Awareness and Bliss, and this is Truth, Goodness and Beauty).

With love and reverence I offer myself at the divine lotus feet of our loving, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent Lord, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

I thank Bhagawan and all of you for giving me this opportunity to share His love and message with you this evening. We should be grateful to Bhagawan for blessing us with this wonderful opportunity to be part of these joyous birthday celebrations for the Lord who has no birth, no death, no beginning and no end. Swami has repeatedly said, “God is beyond name, beyond form, beyond time, beyond space and beyond change”. He is eternal. He was with us, He is with us, and He will be with us forever. We should never forget that He is our eternal companion. We should not limit Him to the human form. Lord Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, “*Avajananti mam mudha manusim tanum asritam parambhavam ajananto mama bhuta-mahesvaram*”. (These ignorant and foolish people think I am this embodied being; I am not this body. They do not realize that I am the all-pervading supreme reality, the indweller of all beings.) But this *nirguna, niraakara* Brahman (formless, nameless reality) in His infinite compassion and love comes down in human form from age to age. This descent of God for the ascent of man is the purpose of the *Avatar*.

Whenever the Lord comes, whether it be as Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Buddha, Shirdi Sai, Sathya Sai—He grants us the following three divine gifts: *Nama (name)*, *Roopa (form)* and *Leela (divine play)*. He comes with a sweet, beautiful name like Sathya Sai. By chanting His name we can redeem our lives and be liberated from this cycle of birth and death. The second divine gift is an enchanting divine form. Though the Lord is *sanathana* (eternal), He is also *nityainutana* (ever-new). The more we see Swami the more we want to see him. By contemplating on the divine form our life becomes sanctified. The third beautiful gift of the Divine is His *leelas*, His divine play. As Sai devotees we lose track

of time while talking of His *leelas*. We delight in stories of His divine sport and never get tired of hearing them. This is verily *Sai Bhagavatam*. The great King Parikshit attained self-realisation just by listening to the *leelas* of Lord Krishna.

We should always remember how blessed and fortunate we are to have been contemporaries of the loving Lord Sai. In the First World Conference on 17th May 1968 Swami revealed a great truth about His divinity. It was an inspiring discourse, which every devotee should read. Swami said, “In this human form every divine entity, every divine principle, that is to say, all the names and forms attributed by man to God are manifest. Never let any doubt distract you”. We should always remember this profound declaration like a *mantra*. He is *Sarvadevataswaroopa*, the embodiment of all names and all forms. At the same time, Swami is *Sarvadevatatitaswaroopa*, that is to say, He is beyond all names, forms and attributes. “He is one in all, all in one, all in all and beyond all”. He is the supreme *Parabrahman* who has come to release us from the cycle of birth and death.

One of my friends, a long-time devotee of Bhagawan, Mr. Robert Bozzani, from USA, was recounting his experiences with Swami during his first trip to India. On his way to Puttaparthi he stopped in Kolkata to see Anandamayima, a holy saint. She asked him, “Where are you proceeding next”? He said, “I am going to Puttaparthi to see Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba”. Immediately she went into a trance and said, “He is *Paripoorna Avatar*” (Incarnation of God with manifestation of all divine attributes). Only a diamond merchant knows the value of the diamond. Likewise, saints and sages know who Swami is.

About twenty years ago Swami called our family for an interview. Swami eats very little. As a physician, I know how many calories are required to maintain a certain body weight. From the viewpoint of modern medicine, the little that Swami ate was insufficient to maintain His weight and yet He was healthy and strong. In that interview twenty years ago my father expressed his concern, asking Swami, “Swami you eat so little. How can you maintain this body?” Then my father mentioned that in the Himalayas, the saints derive their energy from the air. They synthesize nitrogen, hydrogen, oxygen—*vayubhakshana*—from the five elements. He asked, “Swami do you derive energy from these five elements?” Then came the answer, “The five elements derive energy from Me”. He is the controller and the source of all the five elements. We are truly blessed and fortunate to have proximity to the *Avatar* and to have seen Him (*darshan*), touched Him (*sparsan*) and heard His nectarine words (*sambhashan*).

During my travel around the world, I have met several devotees whose love for Swami touched me very much. I was in Russia in May this year and one of the devotees told me about an incident that happened during a service activity. An elderly lady in her eighties saw a picture of Swami while being served. She had never heard of Swami, nor had she ever seen Him. As soon as she saw the picture she started crying and repeating “He is God. He is God”. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have seen Me and believe

in Me. But more blessed are those who have not seen Me and believe in Me”. She is a blessed soul.

In September of this year while I was in Croatia, I met a wonderful devotee. She is an orthodox, Catholic Christian and a school teacher. She heard about Swami and wanted to visit Prasanthi Nilayam. But she did not want to share this with anybody because she thought she may lose her job in the Christian school. Also, she did not know how her family would react as they were orthodox Christians. She was very close to her grandfather and told him, “I’m going to India”. She did not want to tell her grandfather that she was going to see Swami because she thought he may be disappointed. Surprisingly, her grandfather said, “If you go to India, you should go and see Sathya Sai Baba. He is the Christ of today”. She was amazed and pleasantly surprised to hear this from her grandfather, who had never gone to India and had never seen Swami. This is another example of how Swami’s glory and grandeur touches people all over the world. When this lady devotee came to Prasanthi Nilayam, she was sitting in the tenth row during *darshan*. She saw Swami from a distance but immediately felt that He is Christ come again, that He is the Supreme Lord. That experience brought tears of joy to her eyes and she could not stop crying for two hours. She said that she had the most blissful experience of her life and that she would do anything to have that experience again. Thus, Swami touches the hearts of people in every corner of the world.

After having experienced this pristine divine love, what is our duty? How can we express gratitude to Him? Swami says, “Man minus gratitude is equal to animal”. Therefore it is imperative that we express gratitude to Bhagawan.

In Islam they have five mandates. The first mandate is to regard Allah as the Supreme Creator and God. The second mandate is to pray five times a day. The third mandate is to fast during Ramadan. The fourth mandate is to give part of the income for charity. And finally, the fifth mandate is to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Similarly, I would like to share five mandates for Sai devotees. The first mandate is always to remember that Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is our *guru*, God and saviour. In His first *bhajan*, “*Manasa Bhajaree Guru Charanam Dustara Bhava Saagara Taranam*” Swami assured us that He will take us across the ocean of *samsara* if we hold on to His lotus feet. As Sai devotees we must hold onto His feet with unflinching faith until our last breath so that our lives are redeemed. Unfortunately nowadays some people are going to various *gurus* in various parts of the world. This is occurring in Netherlands, Nepal, India, and Australia. Swami says there are two types of *gurus*—*badha gurus* and *bodha gurus*. *Badha gurus* cause you pain. They are not real *gurus*. They are like the blind leading the blind. They do not give you illumination. Rather they give you pain. They chant a *mantra* in the ear and collect money. Swami says “*Chevulo mantram, chethilo dabbu*”. It has become quite fashionable to go to a *guru* or to a transcendental meditation course which

promises enlightenment in return for a hefty fee. In Prasanthi Nilayam there is no *bundi* (collection box). Swami says, “Where there is greed, God does not manifest”.

Bodha guru is the real teacher who shows the path of enlightenment. It is our good fortune we have Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who is the *guru* of *gurus*, *paramaguru*, *divyaguru* and *jagadguru*. He is the teacher of teachers, divine teacher, and universal teacher. We have to be steadfast and hold onto His feet.

The second mandate is to implicitly follow Swami’s message and to practice His teachings. Because of His infinite compassion and love, Swami has given over fifteen-hundred discourses. Swami himself wrote the *Vabini* series, starting with *Prema Vabini* followed by *Gita Vabini*, *Bhagavata Vabini*, *Ramkatharasa Vabini*, *Jnana Vabini*, *Dharma Vabini*, *Prasanthi Vabini*, *Sathya Sai Vabini*, and others. These books contain pearls of wisdom. Never before has an *Avatar* written in this way for the benefit of humankind. Therefore it is our duty to study these teachings, contemplate them and, most importantly, put them into practice in our daily lives. It is said that the *Bhagavad Gita* is the essence of all *Upanishads*. Swami’s teachings are the quintessence of all the scriptures of all the religions of the world. Swami’s every word is a *mantra*. Swami’s every sentence is a *sutra* or aphorism. Swami’s every conversation is a *gita*. Swami’s every discourse is a *veda*. So we need to dive deep into His teachings in order to be uplifted. Every word Swami says, although it may seem casual, has a divine message. I would like to share an anecdote told by late Professor Kasturi, the biographer of Swami. There was a wandering monk who was going to many holy places in quest of Truth. He came to Prasanthi Nilayam to see Swami and expected that Swami would call him for an interview. Swami ignored him for two weeks. After two weeks this man became restless and during *darshan* he was trying to get up to get Swami’s attention. Swami said one word “*Kurcho*” (sit down). After this the monk told Kasturi “I am leaving today”. Professor Kasturi asked, “What happened? Are you disappointed?” The man replied “No, no. Swami gave me *mantropadesha*—“*kurcho*”. That means “sit in one place and contemplate and do not wander here and there”. That one word from Swami, *kurcho*, became a profound message for him. As spiritual seekers we need to study and contemplate and put into practice teachings given in His divine discourses and writings.

The third mandate is to go for pilgrimage. Muslims go to Mecca. For us our *Punyabhumi* (holy land) is *Puttaparthi*. *Parthipavana punyabhumi gamanam prarabdha karma kshayam*. By coming to this holy land of Puttaparthi all of our *prarabdha karmas* (past *karmas*) will be washed away. Puttaparthi is the place where the Lord chose to take birth. This is the place where he walked amongst us, blessed us, talked with us, joked with us and sang with us. This is the holiest of holy places. Swami in one of His discourses said, “This place will be like a Shirdi or Tirupathi”. Every stone, dust particle, bush and tree in this holy land is saturated with Swami’s love and blessings.

Twenty-five years ago there were flights from Mumbai to Puttaparthi. As we were disembarking from the plane, a devotee from Denmark prostrated and rolled on

the ground and exclaimed, “Hallelujah! I have come to the holy land”. I was moved to tears to see his love and adoration for this holy land. We should always keep a strong connection to this holy land of Puttaparthi. People might say, “Isn’t God omnipresent?” Yes He is omnipresent. He is there in Los Angeles, New York, St. Petersburg and everywhere. God is everywhere. But certain holy places like Jerusalem, Mecca, Gurudwara and Bodhagaya have special divine vibrations. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say, “Water is everywhere underneath the earth. Even in the desert you can get water if you dig deep. But if you go to the riverbed or to the seashore water is readily available and you don’t have to dig deep”. Similarly, it is easy to be in tune with God in a holy place like Puttaparthi where the *Avatar* walked amongst us.

The fourth mandate is the divine legacy. Swami has established many institutions. He established educational institutions, which we call *vidyalayas*, temples of learning where Swami is providing education from kindergarten to post-graduation completely free of cost. In these educational institutions the emphasis is not only academic excellence but also character development and social service. God Himself was chancellor of this university. When the International Sathya Sai Sports Centre was inaugurated by Swami in November 2006, then President, His Excellency Dr. Abdul Kalam made a wonderful statement. He said, “Millions of students graduate from thousands of universities from around the world. But these few-hundred students who graduate from Sathya Sai University are of highest character and beacons of light for humanity”. This is why Swami said “I spend three-fourths of my time with the students”. The students are the torchbearers and the future of humanity. They carry forth Swami’s message. There are educational institutions, Education in Human Values programs, and SSE programs all over the world based on this same principle. Outside of India there are twenty-eight educational institutions and forty schools in thirty-eight countries around the world. The Sathya Sai School in Canada was ranked number one among the two-thousand-seven-hundred schools, both public and private, in the province of Ontario.

Swami established medical institutions, the temples of healing. On 21st November 2013, a beautiful presentation was made here in Sai Kulwant Hall about Swami’s hospitals, which provide primary-to-tertiary care, comprehensive health care and preventive health care, all completely free of cost. And most importantly, this health care is delivered with love and compassion. On 19th January 2001 the Super Speciality Hospital in Whitefield was inaugurated. The then-Prime Minister Honourable Atal Bihari Vajpayee, during his inaugural address, said, “I have seen many hospitals but this hospital is a temple where you get both *dava* (medicine) and *dwa* (divine blessing)”. As His children it is our responsibility, whether in India or overseas, to support His institutions by giving our talent, time, energy and other resources. These are the institutions which Swami conceived; for which He laid the foundation stone; and which

He inaugurated, visited and managed. This is the divine legacy which we inherited from our divine parent.

Swami gave His sacred name “Sathya Sai” to the Sathya Sai Organisation. To be part of His divine mission and to serve in the Sathya Sai Organisation is a sign of His grace. Mr. Charles Penn, a devotee in the USA, received a message from Swami that only those whom Swami has chosen can serve Him and that He has been preparing His devotees over many lifetimes to do His work and to be instruments of His love. But we should be aware, the minute the ego descends, His work stops. We should always be careful (ABC of life). Swami clearly defined the purpose of the Sathya Sai Organisation in His historic divine discourses given during the first All India Conference in April, 1967, and at the First World Conference in May, 1968. “The purpose of the Sathya Sai Organisation is to make us realize our divine nature and that we are the *atmic* reality”. The main purpose of the organisation is to help us reach that goal.

Swami has shown us that *premayoga*, the path of love, is the way to reach this goal. This is the fifth mandate. The first *vabini* Swami wrote was *Premavabini*. Swami said, “For this age of Kali the easiest and best path is the path of love. God is love. Live in love”. He also says, “Start the day with love. Fill the day with love. End the day with love. This is the way to God”. Swami has shown us how to live in love. To live in love we have to put love in action through service and sacrifice.

There are approximately two-thousand Sathya Sai Centres in 123 countries doing service in the fields of education, healthcare and community service. There are thousands of Sathya Sai volunteers and devotees all around the world who have been doing selfless service. The true translation for the word “*Swayamsevak*” is that service is for our own good. The English translation “volunteer” does not truly reflect the significance of this word “*Swayamsevak*”. Service helps Sathya Sai volunteers to achieve their own transformation.

The mayor of Houston, Texas, USA declared Swami’s *Mahasamadhi* Day, April 24, as Universal Love and Unity Day. The Ministry of Social Services has given an award of excellence to the Sathya Sai Organisation in Haiti for doing selfless service to needy children since the massive earthquake in January of 2010. They declared the Sathya Sai Organisation to be one of the five best service organisations that did service in Haiti after the massive earthquake in 2010.

Here I want to share a miracle that happened in Haiti. Six months ago the mayor of Port-au-Prince in Haiti visited our service centre where we supply food and water to needy people. He was impressed with the service and he volunteered to pay out of his personal account one-thousand dollars per month towards the rent of the service centre. Then the volunteers at the service centre made a special request to the mayor to repair the road to the centre as it was in very bad shape. The mayor replied, “No the city does not have funds and it is not possible to do this”. But on November 15th, the

person who is in charge of our service centre was invited by the mayor to attend the community hall meeting. When he went there, to his surprise, the mayor declared, “I am going to repair the road”. The devotee was dumbfounded because the same mayor had refused the request a few months prior. The mayor explained, “Your Sathya Sai Baba came in my dream last night and was walking on that horrible road serving the needy people. So now my duty it is to repair the road”. The next day itself he sent the tractor and the road work began. He then requested Swami’s picture and *vibbuti*. This episode shows Swami’s omnipresence and how He touches people’s hearts and transforms their lives.

Another miracle happened just two days ago on November 23rd in Haiti, as devotees were celebrating Swami’s birthday. As a part of the birthday celebrations all over the world, our centres do service activities. The devotees in Haiti wanted to give food to the needy people and prepared eighty-eight food packets. To their surprise more than three-hundred people showed up and they did not have enough food. They chanted 1008 Gayatris and 1008 Sai Gayatris throughout the night and in the morning they served not eighty-eight or three-hundred, but five-hundred people. The coordinator of this project, Mr. Shanti, went home after completion of the service and slept. He got up in the morning and went to the altar to do his *pooja*. There he saw a shower of *vibbuti* on Swami’s picture. This again shows that Swami’s grace and blessings are present all over the world. There is a beautiful song, *Tere mahima likhe na jaye, tere mahima kahi na jaye* (We cannot really comprehend His glory and cannot express it in words).

Swami says, “Love requires sacrifice”. Some of you might have heard the story of the Kannappa Nayanar, who sacrificed both of his eyes for Lord Shiva. He became one of the greatest Nayanar saints because of his sacrifice, though he was never educated and was from a tribal community. He did not know any *Vedas* or scriptures but he had pure love for God. I can share with you a similar story of the late Mr. James Johnson, an African American from the state of Ohio, USA. He was living on a meagre income, enough for his food, clothing and shelter. He didn’t even have a car. On 22nd November 1991 Swami inaugurated the Sathya Sai Super Speciality hospital in Puttaparthi. At that time they announced names of many patrons who donated large sums of money. One of the names announced was Mr. James Johnson, who donated one-hundred-thousand dollars. Devotees from Ohio, USA who were present at that time were surprised and could not believe how he could donate such a large sum, since he lived on a meagre income. When the devotees from Ohio went back to USA they said, “We heard that you gave one-hundred-thousand dollars to Swami’s hospital project? Is this so?” He did not want anybody to know about his donation because he felt embarrassed and wished to remain anonymous. The devotees said, “No. No. Swami wants others to be inspired by your act of charity”. This is an example of service with humility. As Jesus said, “Let not your left hand know what your right hand does”.

Swami used to joke, “People donate a ceiling fan for a temple and they want their name on every blade”. But here is a man, an example of true sacrifice. He did not have any money. He gave one-hundred-thousand dollars. How did he get this much money? He was serving his sister who was dying of cancer. She did not have any children. So when she died, she bequeathed her estate of one-hundred-thousand dollars to James Johnson. At the same time Mr. Johnson heard Swami was building the hospital. He felt, “This is not my money. This is Swami’s money. Swami gave it to me. It should go back to Swami”. This is true sacrifice. Most of us think, “OK, let me give fifty-percent to God and fifty-percent I can have”. But this man gave the whole amount to God. That is real love. Love in action and love which involves sacrifice.

In summary, the five mandates are as follows:

1. We should remember that Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is our *guru*, God, and saviour.
2. We should study Swami’s teachings, remember, contemplate and practice.
3. We should make a pilgrimage to the holy land of Puttaparthi (the *punyabhumi*).
4. We should participate in the divine legacy—Swami’s educational institutes, medical institutes, social service projects and the Sathya Sai Organisation.
5. Most importantly, we should practice *premayoga*, the path of love.

If we fulfil these mandates our lives will be sanctified. We have experienced the pristine, divine love of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who is the incarnation of love, the embodiment of love and love walking on two legs. Let us resolve to reach the *summum bonum* of life, the realisation of our divine nature in this very lifetime.

If not now, when? If not us, who?

JAI SAI RAM,

**With Loving Regards,
Narendranath Reddy, MD
Chairman, Prasanthi Council**