



# Sai News Australia

The source of peace and harmony is in every human being

When there is peace in the individual, there is harmony in the home

When there is peace in the home, there is harmony in the society

When there is peace in the society, there is harmony in the nation

When there is peace in the nation, there is harmony in the world

<http://www.saiaustralia.org.au>

Sai Ram Dearest Devotees,

Welcome to the latest issue of Sai News Australia. This edition has a focus on the Pre-World Sai Conference held in Sydney earlier this year. All who were present at the conference would agree that the standard was impeccable, and the organisation that went into the conference behind the scenes was of a high quality. We present to you some highlights of the conference, from a variety of adults and youth that were present.

Also in this issue is a tribute to the late Dr Sara Pavan, a dynamic personality whom many were close to, and who had the incredible opportunity of learning precious life lessons first-hand from the Lord of the Universe. He will be much missed, but we are sure that Swami has taken him under his wings once again, and we can truly experience his love by the valuable words of wisdom he left behind.

As the new incoming media committee, we have many exciting plans for our future ahead. Thus, we have outlined below in this issue the vision of the role that the Media committee hope to play is serving our organisation and to spread Swami's teachings. More than anything, we would love input from YOU. If you have any ideas, stories you would like to share, articles or any other pearls of wisdom, we would love to hear from you. Our contact details can be found on the last page.

For now, we leave you to reminisce over the articles below, whether you are hearing these words for the first time, or if you are reliving memories from the Pre World Sai Conference.

Lots of Sai Love,  
The National Media Committee

*"Of all the righteous acts, help rendered to those needing it, is the most righteous."  
- Sathya Sai Baba*

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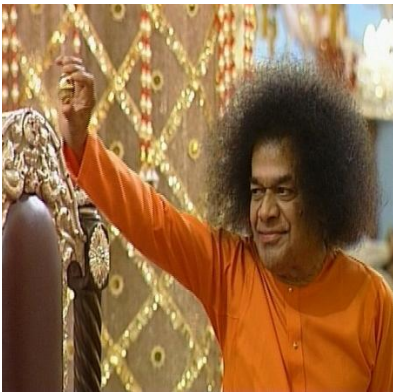
## Sara Pavan – A Place in the Heart of Sai for Australia

Sara Pavan was one of my earliest points of contact with the Sathya Sai Organisation in Australia, circa 1991. I was living in Picton at the time and I found a phone number for Sai Baba in the White Pages and rang. I was given the address of a school in suburban Sydney, and a time for the meeting. I drove up and joined a group discussion on a cold and cloudy Sunday afternoon.

There was a circle – around Sara Pavan – and he was asking people for their responses to a selection from Sathya Sai Speaks. He was wearing a suit and tie – and looked most proper and attentive to what people were saying. He responded most authoritatively to what people said and added a lot of context to their answers. I felt I was listened to carefully and drove home to Picton feeling rather good about Sai Baba and the Sathya Sai Organisation.

I next met Sara Pavan at the Sai Awareness Programs that were conducted in 1993, at a high school somewhere in the western suburbs. I heard other speakers (Ross Woodward and Bernard Hoy) and I recall Linda Muschellknautz-Walker leading a medley of songs, and then Sara Pavan spoke. I recall this occasion for he told stories about how Swami corrected him, and told him about his own character – Swami called him “Chinese Crackers” – and Sara Pavan went on to explain how that was so.

I next met Sara Pavan at the fabulous Sai National Conference in Albury, in 1994, when he took the stage and told us about the recently constructed Super Specialty Hospital in Puttaparthi. The next time I met Sara Pavan, he made me gnash my teeth with frustration. This was at the Ballarat Sai National Conference in 1996, when he showed some videos and then abruptly said, “This is wasting time, we have all seen these videos before!” Well, my heart was in my mouth, I wanted the video to go on, I had never seen this! Nope, he went off on some other topic, to my frustration.



Sai News Australia was a print magazine at that time, and stories were filtering back from Puttaparthi about this wonderful magazine that was being distributed to all on the veranda whenever Sara Pavan arrived in Prashanti Nilayam. We owe the earliest narratives about the Sai Organisation to the work of Sara Pavan; he produced A4 print magazines with news from NSW – and sometimes other states – and would also put in news of groups visiting Prashanti Nilayam. This was in the days before the Internet and Desktop Publishing. It was all black-and-white on folded A4 paper, sometimes held together with a copper staple in the middle. Sai News Australia evolved to a glossy cover and art paper with kangaroos and emus on every page and attractive indigenous borders on the pages. The most important page was the last page, for this held the contact people for the ever-growing list of centres and groups all over Australia. In the days before releases and printouts of World Conferences, Sara Pavan, through his black-and-white A4 “Sai News” and then “Sai News Australia” enabled all of us to feel that we were One, that we were growing as an Organisation.

He was one with us. When I first took up my position as webmaster, Sara Pavan gave me a CD with photos he had taken on the veranda and from following Swami around the environs of Prashanti Nilayam and Puttaparthi. These were precious photos; I would put them on the website with glee and abandon. Later on, he was to give me stills from his video camera, close-ups of Swami sitting, looking mysterious, far away, Swami holding up golden lingams, Swami walking around with a lingam held up high for all to see. Oh, he gave us all such close proximity to Swami!

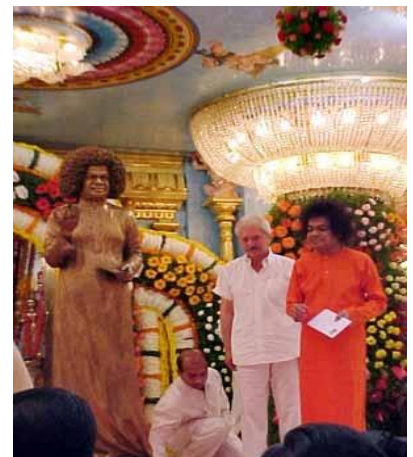
I won't forget Sara Pavan. He was to become a dear and respected friend over the years – and it was over the years that he changed, mellowed, and became humble. If someone was sick and he was told, he would give advice or bring another doctor to help. He told us how to deal with Puttaparthi Cough, he told us how to deal with dehydration, and he sent people to the hospital and would then come and make sure that people were being cared for. He could explode and excoriate staff and nurses if Australians were not being cared for.

Sara – and Devi, let us not forget, they were a team together – also put himself out to visit other states. I recall he travelled the nation with books and videos, to tell us all about the coming Golden Age. Sara travelled Australia often, never losing sight of the need to bring us all together in Sai.

Whenever I was visiting Prashanti Nilayam, he would seek me out and ask how things were in Australia, did I want any photos or videos, how could he help? I watched a man, proud, with strong opinions, become steady in his desire to help, to spread the message of Sai, to make sure that he was understood clearly, and that he was helping those whom he was addressing. He was giving the Sunday talks in the hall up near the bookstore in Prashanti Nilayam and he took task to his heart with the great vigour and determination that we all know so well.



*“He gave me one,” he said,  
“This is special, give it to  
people who need healing”.*



# Dr Sara Pavan – Inspirer and True Instrument



Born in Malaysia in 1938 and educated in Sri Lanka, Dr. Sara Pavan graduated from the University of Ceylon with MBBS in 1962. Since his marriage to Dr. Devi in 1965, he started a life of learning, travelling and broadening his horizons, which commenced in Singapore. He specialised in Anaesthesia in England in January 1969. The couple lived in several countries including New Zealand and Australia.

I have known Uncle Pavan for a long time, as he was a good friend of my late uncle Dr Thanga from Jaffna, Sri Lanka. I met him again in 1985 in Sydney. He used to be involved in all sorts of Sri Lankan Community meetings and was outspoken effectively to suit occasions. He then took up SAI in his life seriously, or rather the other way round in that Swami called him to serve HIS mission. He was a founder of Homebush Sai Centre and he became an inspirational and dynamic speaker at various platforms of SAI meetings all around Australia. He was the editor of the quarterly Australian Sai Newsletter for 10 years since its inception. After serving several years in Sathya Sai Organisation of Australia & PNG, he then moved to Prashanthi Nilayam in 1993 and served in Swami's hospitals. Later he got passionately involved with journalism, including Heart2Heart. He was truly an inspiring international Speaker at Sai retreats, conferences and workshops.

He played an important part in my spiritual journey as an inspirer and role model in many ways. Whenever I heard him speaking in Sydney, he was critical of people being part-time devotees. He strongly says what he believes without any fear or formality. It's because of his true love that he desired us to not only seek Swami within, but to take our journey seriously and be fulltime devotees without any distractions.

I pray for his soul to merge with Swami.

With SAI Love,  
Andy Raveendran  
Chair, Media Committee  
SSIO Australia & PNG

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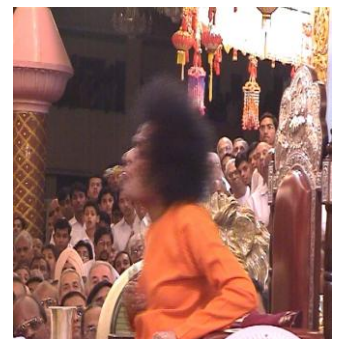
Once, somewhere on the Internet I watched this video of Swami opening the Chaitanya Museum at Hillview Stadium. Sara Pavan crafted the video and music, and some years later, I approached him and asked him for a copy. He said he would do what he could. Before I left, I approached him again, and he had forgotten my request. I put that down to a busy man with lots of commitments, and let it go. Two weeks later, I had a superlative DVD in the mail from Prashanti with profuse apologies; he had made up a whole DVD he had called "Memory Lane". It was full of clips from his videos – Swami at Lunch, Swami in darshan, Swami at College, Swami at the Museum. He was generous to a fault.



Sara Pavan, as many of us know, was not afraid to tell us when Swami corrected him. Invariably, we learned from his lessons, and they were so many. Unbeknown to most, some of the most painful, raw lessons that he experienced from Divine Love itself were to provide a strong and healthy

foundation for the leadership of our organisation in Australia. Yes, some of the things Swami whispered in the ear of Sara Pavan still guide us today, and will probably always guide us. For this, we might look to the Book of Isaiah in the Hebrew Bible, with the songs of the Suffering Servant, where one suffers for the nation, that the nation might follow the path of the Lord.

My memory of Sara Pavan is of a fellow sitting on the veranda in Sai Kulwant Hall, a few rows back, holding a camera up in the air, and taking photos and videos of Swami in his later years. A couple of fellows came to me and complained. I said, "He is taking these photos for devotees, so he can share them and tell his stories of what Swami said and did." At that time, most people



would have said "Any darshan of Swami is precious darshan; not Sara Pavan, he wanted every darshan to be his opportunity to share his experience of Swami, to come to know and share that Divine Love which passes all understanding. Sara Pavan gave us all a place in the Heart of Sai for Australia.

So I leave you with these pictures from Sara Pavan, which he shared with love. Some don't resize well, they are video grabs from the early days of video, some have lost colour, but all of them give us that delight in the heart, and in their time and place, gave us a glimpse of Divine Love. I leave you also with the video titled "Memory Lane", available to view at the following link:

<https://vimeo.com/132690218>

*Thank you Swami, for your instrument, Sara Pavan.*

Chris Parnell  
National Coordinator, Unity of Faiths  
SSIO Australia & PNG



## Reflections on the Pre-World Sai Conference

The request for an article for Sai News Australia has been a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the experience of the conference, which for me, was overwhelmingly positive. The theme "Love is the Source, Love is the Path, Love is the Goal" was evident in every aspect of the conference.

From the moment of arrival I could feel the love and dedication which had been poured into the preparation for us all by the very committed members in NSW. The months of selfless service expressed through activities such as cleaning and painting the pavements, classrooms, meeting hall (gymnasium), repairing heaters, affixing screens, cooking, developing a quality sound system, and beautiful altar and room decorations uplifted us all and set the stage for an immersion in the love of Sai.

It was a great privilege to absorb Sai's teachings through speakers such as Dr Reddy and Professor Anil Kumar. I found it reassuring to hear from our international chairman and to realise the depth of his knowledge and application of Sai's teachings, plus the love and capability with which he attends to every task and every member. The inspiring talks from members on their personal transformation was for me, a highlight.

The conference outcomes, based on our study circle participation and summarised by Krishnan Nair, says it all:

### LOVE:

*It is acknowledged that love is the foundation of the Sathya Sai Organization, as GOD is LOVE. To make our organization truly effective in spiritual transformation, love needs to be the basis of all our activities. With this as our goal it is resolved to implement strategies to maximize the effectiveness of the LOVE PRINCIPLE in all our groups.*

*This will include the training of our office bearers so that they can discharge their duties and responsibilities with pure love, thus providing true examples of Swami's teachings – making the Organisation more harmonious, loving and inclusive.*

### SELFLESS SERVICE:

*It is resolved to make a concerted, coordinated effort by all wings of the Sai Organisation to inspire our membership to see service as their life's work in all activities. This will lead to personal transformation, a flowering of love and experience of the bliss of God's grace. One such method to be explored is the creation of a self-audit tool to assist devotees in their experience of love and selfless service.*

*In relation to both objectives, it is recognized that the study and understanding of Sai's teachings is of paramount importance. To facilitate this effectively on a group level, trained facilitators are needed who can conduct study circles that are inclusive, inspiring and saturated with love. This training needs to extend beyond metropolitan centres to isolated regions.*

*The New Zealand ISSE has undertaken to use its expertise to provide assistance and material towards study circle in that country. It is recommended that other ISSEs in the Zone consider a similar approach and perhaps adopt a collaborative consultation between countries to develop a zonal approach to the task.*

*One of the very positive outcomes of the conference was the very high level of individual participation in discussion groups brought about over a total period of 3 ½ hours. It is recommended that the opportunity for group discussion input of this type be an integral part of future conferences."*

As a result of the conference, I am committed to focussing my awareness on looking at every moment in life as an opportunity for selfless service.

In Sai Love

Jenny Monson

National President, SSI Australia & PNG

## Words of Wisdom from Professor Anil Kumar

Judie Rowling

An enthusiastic round of applause greeted Prof Anil Kumar on Saturday as he came up onto the stage to give his talk on "Love and Loving". Love and loving is non-stop! This is Swami's love. But remember that "God made man in His own image." "I multiply myself, to love myself."

The analogy given as he launched into his talk was: "If we can be in water knee-deep – we can talk! If we can be in water up to our neck – we can talk! If we are deep in water over our head – we cannot talk!" THAT IS LOVE! WE CANNOT TALK!

God simplifies – man complicates!

Prof Anil Kumar, in his inimitable style, hypnotised and enthused the audience regaling his stories, too numerous to write here, but gave explanations and wove multitudes of insights into his talk. At this stage, I lost the thread of my left brain to write much more, instead, listening with my right brain and therefore, allowed it to expand into the consciousness of the Divine words and wisdom of our Lord Sai through this exciting conduit. We sang songs, clapped, laughed all too often and felt our bodies relax into this wonderful energy that is our Lord Sai.

On Sunday, the talk Prof Kumar gave again was as exciting and riveting as yesterday's. He opened our thoughtful awareness with the possibility that Religion has now become a commercial business. Too much advertising, too much money making, too much...

Again, I put my pen down to listen, because the pen, although mightier than the sword, is not as fast as the words coming out of his mouth! I can hardly wait to relive all this by watching our 'commercial production' of the Zone 3 Pre-World Conference 2015 DVD!

*"Service springs out of LOVE and it scatters LOVE in profusion." ~ Sathya Sai Baba*

## Words of Wisdom from **Dr Narendranath Reddy**

*Mick Thrush*

Dr Reddy's talk on Selfless Service during the Pre-World Conference was a particularly comprehensive and informative one. In one hour he virtually covered the whole range of topics that were included in the special study circle booklets assigned as study material for the subject. He kept our attention throughout including numerous experiences and asides that illustrated the key points he wished to make.

In opening, Dr Reddy pointed out to us that whatever service we do, knowingly or not, is service to God. The one serving is an embodiment of God, the one being served is an embodiment of God. Not only is all service to God, we are in fact serving ourselves. This is because of the transformative nature of service in bringing us closer to the Lord.

Swami has said that wherever His work is done, there He manifests. A very nice thing to keep in mind whenever we have the opportunity to serve, and something special to keep in mind whilst we are working for Him through our Organisation. Pray for the opportunity to serve.

Dr Reddy mentioned that according to the spiritual texts there are three things which indicate God's grace: a human birth – that rare and special opportunity for self realisation, having a spiritual yearning, and having contact with a great soul. Our grace must be something very special as the great soul we have contact with is of course Swami, the Avatar of the Age. Dr Reddy added another sign – being able to work for God.

He went on to add that we have been prepared for Swami's work over many lives. However, the moment our ego rises, then His work ceases. The Organisation provides wonderful opportunities to do God's work and grow spiritually, a vehicle specially created by Swami for us, hence His caution to treat it as our "life's breath". Swami has said that those who leave the Organisation are the unfortunate ones.

One important way of serving he pointed out, is sharing the Love we experience with Swami; that Love then expands and multiplies. This is something I think we have all experienced in hearing remarkable stories about devotees' experiences of Swami's love and grace. Dr Reddy also reported Swami as saying that He will repay our sacrifice and service three times, nay, ten times over (and gave a humorous experience illustrating this). It seems to me that the expansion of our love must be one of the most beautiful ways we are repaid. Everything we do should be spiritualised.

The greatest service we can do is to find out who we are! Sincere yearning is essential and having God's grace can grant that awareness in a flash.

Words of advice were provided regarding our attitude whilst engaged in service. When you serve, believe you are serving God. The quality of the service is more important than the quantity. The need of the recipient, the way the service is delivered, the love that flows and the bliss experienced by both the one serving and the one being served, are all important. The greatest yogi is the one who sees himself in the other; who feels his pain and joy; who has empathy. However, the greatest obstacle is our ego; thinking of oneself as the doer. Consequently, remind yourself that you are only an instrument of God. Awareness is thus of paramount importance in service, as in all of life for spiritual development.

So, why do service? Dr Reddy explained Selfless Service is transformative. It transforms both the one performing service and also the recipient. How? By saturating service with love. Service purifies the heart by seeing the One in the many. Unity is Divinity and true purity leads to enlightenment. Importantly, Selfless Service earns God's grace. If you have God's Love, you will have everything else. And the benefits of Selfless Service? Many benefits lead to Unity: the unity of thought, word and deed; the unifying process of undertaking group service; and the unifying function of service bringing together the one serving, the service itself and the one being served. Finally, a delightful benefit derived from the very joy of service for the one serving and the one receiving.

Dr Reddy's concluding remarks were to always be careful, cheerful and calm. Remember, only the fruits of service are eternal. My apologies to Dr Reddy for any inaccuracies in my notes and recollections. Dr Reddy's full talk is much more informative and interesting and well worth reviewing. I recommend taking the opportunity of doing so when the conference DVDs become available.



*"Service springs out of LOVE and it scatters LOVE in profusion." ~ Sathya Sai Baba*

# Transformation Through Love

Talks from Devotees on their personal experiences of Transformation through LOVE

## **Margaret van Hennekeler**

A story of sunshine and clouds: Sai, the sun and the world.

### **BS (Before Sai)**

Love has been happening all my life:

- as a youngster growing up in Melbourne in a safe, secure, regulated family
- as an earnest young church-goer, looking for a way to help the world
- as a naïve but sincere, studious, serious, conformist medical student
- as a besotted fiancé and wife, now also a doctor, trying to help her fellow man
- as an energetic young mother of three, working as a GMO (government medical officer) in PNG and back in Australia as a GP
- finally as a part time hobby farmer, a grazier, on a beautiful 5,000 acre property in the mountains of Mt Perry, SE Queensland.

### **AS (after Sai)**

Those experiences of love, as you will have surmised, were not really the divine love that I finally experienced in 1992, the year I turned 50. In fact that so-called love, the 'worldly' love was not giving me what I needed. There was always a feeling of something lacking in my life, that there was much more to a real life: a mystery, another dimension to find.

My real spiritual transformation started when I came across the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba. How positive, hopeful, confident, inspiring they were to me. I just couldn't (and still can't) stop reading the sweet words of Sathya Sai. There is always something just right for the moment, always something to carry with me for the day.

The Sai energy then just started to permeate my life. What a novelty it was to talk with the language of the heart, turning the rather dry traditional style of consultation I had been trained to do into a richer, more satisfying dialogue.

Mind training began then too – keeping head in the forest, hands in society, not letting the ideas and fears of the world get too great a hold, learning to live in the present, trying not to speak ill of anyone, especially in their absence.

Meditation on a daily basis became a necessity, without it the day seemed too chaotic. Just looking at the small picture of Swami I had put on the wall just behind where the patient sat would always bring a smile to my face.

The love affair with the form of Sathya Sai was another transformative experience. For me it was at first difficult to marry this captivating, somewhat unusual form with the wild hair and orange robe, and all the pomp and ceremony that went with it, to the expansiveness, majesty and power of the concepts and ideas in the teachings. However it did not take too long before the analytical left brain part of me slowed and the right brain learnt to appreciate the wonder of the peace and bliss in Swami's physical presence. There was a realisation that something deep inside me had changed irrevocably, there was a sense of familiarity, of belonging.

The Darshan experience became an exercise in switching off the desires for eye contact and the magical word, "GO". Instead it was learning to be more than satisfied with the bliss glow that followed aarathi.

The next step on the path was putting the teachings into practice, experiencing Sai's love in action. Swami has said that: "Any action that we undertake to please God turns sacred." (DD 3/10/96).

In the country town in QLD in which I lived an enthusiastic group started meeting regularly for bhajans and study circle, travelling long distances whenever the opportunity for more satsanghs presented themselves. Then followed more ambitious seva projects such as the camps for troubled youth – the "Sai Inward Bound Adventure Camps", which involved first building the wooden hut called "Shanti" to house the boys in. A few of us started a cancer support program in line with Ian Gawler's work. We ran many retreats for our Sai family based on Sai's teachings with themes such as "Health is Wealth", "Ayurveda as taught by Sai", "Living the Values", "Be Happy" and "Moiya, Music and Moksha". All were powered, inspired and protected by the wonderful Sai energy we thought we had discovered. How blessed we thought we were! My husband's and my former social life gradually disappeared without trace or regret. We were different, but still struggled to fit into the mould of the conventional medical practice we had joined 20 years previously.

I wonder how many people here today have been shaken out of their complacency by Swami the way I was in 1995? Swami asked, "How are you?", and I replied, "Well and happy". "No, not well", He said, "sometimes depressed", and made a wave-like motion with His hand.

Thinking about this later made me realize that not only can one never hide anything from Sai but that also His standards of complete health are much higher than I had ever imagined. Wholeness means health for Swami and that means body, mind AND spirit!

*(Continued from page 6)...*

It was true that I had in the past experienced some shadow times, almost black nights, sometimes relating to some work problem but more often than not, resulting from my intense self judgements and standard of perfection. I had a strong tendency to be critical of myself, to denigrate and condemn. In short, there was an almost continuous negative inner dialogue. But this was not the type of depression that I had no problems in identifying in my patients (with melancholia, difficulty in functioning in the workplace, biological symptoms etc). Was I, perhaps, a 'wounded healer'?

In any event this must, according to the master, STOP. Here was my opportunity to look deeper into Sai's teachings, and work harder at applying them. Such advice as :

- the proper study of mankind is man
- practise tolerance and love all (including self) while serving all
- never forget God, namasmarana, CIA (constant integrated awareness)
- pray for God's thoughts, words and actions in daily life, and not to take any credit for the good or the bad outcome (quite tricky in the modern medical environment)
- remove all trace of ego, do not create any separation from the God within
- live in the present, forget the past, don't worry about the future
- master the mind, no negativity allowed

I took these words to heart and started applying them as hard as I could. The sun broke through again! An opportunity came for my husband and myself to really try to create a medical practice with a spiritual basis. An old bank became available in a small town in QLD and we could now work in a happier, less commercially focused environment. Life was full, challenging and rewarding.

Then a deeper shadow, in the form of a mental disorder in our son, came. Our son Dirk developed a severe form of depression accompanied by delusional and psychotic thoughts. Searching for ways to help this beloved young man, who was also a Sai devotee, while keeping Sai's teachings in mind became of paramount importance.

When Dirk, completely unexpectedly, took the extraordinarily difficult step to end his bodily existence, the challenge to hold on to Sai's feet was imperative. There was in my mind no question of the omnipotence of Sai. My doubts came from the old habit of self blame, giving rise to sorrow and grief and guilt. MAYA. EGO. Separation from God.

It was in searching for meaning, hope and certainty in this experience that my reality, my truth eventually came: that... ALL IS GOD. I knew that I was not to feel the failure, the pain, the anguish that I did. I knew that Swami was omnipresent and was love for and in all, including me. I knew that Dirk was now at peace and safe with and in that energy. But the moments of Maya were strong and required repeated and sustained effort to transcend.

I went back harder to all the things that I had always done: the namasmarana, singing, chanting, praying, believing, trusting, serving others at the practice, working physically on the property close to nature as wild, wonderful and beautiful Queensland bush, choosing to spend time with other like-minded people, visiting Prashanti Nilayam and reading, reading Sai's literature. The little book, "Children of Immortality" was one of the outcomes.

*"Grief sends you to God. When a child dies, ask yourself the question, 'Is it for my sake that he was born?' He has his own destiny to fulfil, his own history to work out"* (BTBOS p 281), was one of the many comforting sayings my friend Jenny and I discovered.

Now, looking at these experiences, I must thank Swami for this opportunity of self reflection; I can say that:

- I have experienced the Sai energy as a reality; there is a supreme universal consciousness
- I have learned to watch, to really watch, my thoughts, words and deeds more as an interested observer, what's going to happen next sort of thing, TO ENJOY THE DREAM AND DRAMA of life. I still do make plans of course, but have learned not to be at all attached to the outcome.
- And by not being attached to the outcome and by focusing on doing as Swami would, that all will be well, i.e. be what is NEEDED FOR MY/OUR HIGHEST GOOD.
- Finally a human being not doing!

I believe we come on this earth to heal ourselves, to become whole, which is another way of saying to achieve self realisation, bliss, to become divine. And all our paths are unique. We must search out our own. When talking about such things like this becomes impossible then I will know that the process is nearly complete. For in Swami's words, *"When you are immersed in the sea of Universal love you reach the acme of sweetness. When your mind loses its identity and merges in the Universal Mind then there is splendour indescribable."* (SSS 6.42.23.11.66)

Something to strive for!  
Sai Ram.

### **Hamendra Reddy, Fiji**

Many stories and personal anecdotes of Sai have inspired us all. One such anecdote is of a mother and her five children and how they came through the phase of destitute. After her husband died in a car accident she had to eventually ask her two elder children to work and support the family, especially the three younger siblings, to get through their school years. Being a staunch Sai devotee, she ensured her children received Bal Vikas education as well. (Those days in the early 90s, Sathya Sai EduCare was known as Bal Vikas). However, the fate of black cloud would not leave the family. One day they received information from the bank that their house needed to be sold to recoup the long unpaid loan on their property. So her third child said he no longer wished to go to Bal Vikas because he doesn't think it is effective as people just preached and not practiced. In addition, he wanted to work during weekends to support the family. Now the mother was worried that all her children, who had excelled at school, would have to leave school before they finished. She prayed to Swami for a way out. Swami directed her to go to the bank and talk to them. As one would expect, she met not one but two Swamis in the form of bank officers who, after listening to her plight, pledged to become her guarantor to save her house and assisted her to put a flat on rent. Miraculously, the flat was taken by a wealthy businessman which led to the house being paid off; the third child did not have to leave school and finally, after graduating, years later he is standing in front of all of you today sharing his story here at Prairiewood High School auditorium in Australia. That third child is me my dear brothers and sisters, and that was my mum's personal experience with Swami. When I entered university, I realized that even though I did not recognize it then, Swami took care of my life and career. My reason for sharing this story is at times I hear EduCare children treating those children who do not come to Educare to learn human values with some contempt. All are dear children of Swami no matter what their circumstances.

My second experience is my very own personal one and I am compelled to share it as it is such *Déjà vu* to what Brother Kevin was sharing a while ago. I also experienced Swami manifesting himself for me a couple of years ago when I was very sick with pneumonia. One day I happened to take some herbal medicine and some food that did not auger well with the antibiotics that was injected into me for my treatment. I felt such intense heat and excruciating pain in my stomach that I was willing to die that very moment. I saw Swami enter my room and put his hand on my stomach and said "Do not worry, You have lots of work to do" and left. Same thing happened to Brother Kevin! Also, needless to say, all pain subsided immediately.

My third experience is more recent. This, I am sharing because it sealed my faith that all the words uttered by Swami is Sai Veda or Sai Gita. We should adhere to it without question. Here it goes: One of the Sai sisters came and told me that doctors found a tumour in her body and her family was not in a good financial position to send her overseas for treatment. This was during Hanuman Jayanti of 2014 and I also happened to receive a Sai devotee's inspiration story on email. Swami had once told many devotees that instead of everyone lining up at Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospital from all over India, or coming to Him to cure their disease, he advised everyone to engage themselves in selfless service. I thought this email was meant for this Sai sister who was sick so I advised her the same. Eventually she started to actively engage herself in service work. A couple of months later a major Sai youth service project was initiated in Suva, Fiji where all the youth followed Bhagwan's guidelines of practicing *Ceiling on Desires* first before utilizing the saving for service work. Exactly five days after the major service, some surgeons came to Fiji for charitable work and this sister was operated on by the same doctor to whom the family was fundraising to send her at the cost of thirty thousand dollars! All the youth felt that Swami sent the surgeon right on time to save her life. This is why we all must adhere to every word that Swami has uttered with full faith and never be ignorant of it.

Aum Sri Sai Ram



### **Sindhu Charan, Fiji**

My humble pranams at the lotus feet of Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Dear respected elders, brothers and sisters, Om Jai Sri Sai Ram.

I bring greetings from the beautiful Islands of Fiji. The path to God lies through Love. With Love you can achieve anything. Such is the Love of Our Swami. For me, personal transformation only came about through loving Swami.

I would like to share with you how Swami has helped me to build up my faith in Him and realize that without Him I am nothing. If Swami decides to hold your hand you will still go through trials and tribulations in life which will eventually bring you closer to Him, resulting ultimately in surrendering at His Lotus feet. The only difference is that Swami does this through His Love and Love alone. His Love is very transformative and is more than the love of a thousand mothers.

It's so comforting to know that there is someone who you can always look up to for guidance and who is always there to listen to you and make you feel His presence. This builds our confidence and trust in Him. In the process, we get transformed gradually and realize that He is always with us. He is waiting for us to call on Him and He will come running to us.

I have been blessed to be born in a Sai family. However it is only in the past few years, that I have really started to understand the inner significance and applications of some of Swami's teachings. I used to pray to Swami but obviously I had my fair share of doubts. Will He listen to my prayers? The following story illustrates that He was always there and He will always be there for me. come what may.

It was 22nd of July 2013, which happened to be Guru Purnima day and our Sai Centre was having Swami's Paduka pooja. It was well attended and my Dad had this wonderful opportunity to do Abhishekam on Swami's Paduka. On the morning of 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, dad had dropped me to work and after that, he went to the Ministry of Education to do some paper work. He had parked his car opposite the Ministry of Education building. While he was standing on a traffic island to cross the road, a vehicle coming from his right hand side, overtook a number vehicles and hit my dad. My dad got thrown on the windscreen and he was carried about 6 metres before the vehicle stopped.



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I received a phone call about this accident. My whole family was shocked. We immediately went to the accident site only to find out that dad had already been taken to the hospital. The hospital was about 2 minutes from where the accident happened. It was very fortunate that the first doctors who came to the accident scene were Sai devotees. My dad sustained head injuries with lots of bleeding and was unconscious.

After the CT scan reports came out, we were so relieved upon hearing that there were neither spinal injuries nor brain damage. I clearly remember my mum and I were sitting outside the emergency room and the same Sai doctor came out from the emergency room to speak to us. What he said that day felt like Swami Himself consoling us. It felt so peaceful deep inside my being and it's very difficult to have that nature of feeling when you are right in the middle of a situation as such. The doctor said that my dad had a deep gash on his head and it will eventually heal. Both the bones in the left leg below the knee were broken. He further said that he had seen worse cases than what dad had gone through. Of course it will take time for him to heal fully. At that point in time, I felt as if Swami had silently showed His presence and He was asking me to fully accept the situation, trust Him beyond doubt and believe that all will work out as per His Will.

The two Sai doctors were always at my dad's side, providing him with words of encouragement, loving support, positivity as well as professional counselling. My dad had never been admitted to a hospital before.

This incident changed our lives in so many ways. Firstly it strengthened our belief in Swami that HE is in control and this incident created the awareness that when the Grace of God is upon you, you will surely be cared for.

Some years back, prior to this incident, I tried my best to learn and apply Swami's basic teachings such as practising of *namasmarana*, meditation and so forth. But it was very frustrating that I could not focus my mind. I kept asking Swami, *'Why is it that I am struggling to remember you? Why can't I focus Swami?'* As time passed, I was introduced to the power of positive thinking and the Law of Love. Now I realise why Swami had done that. He knew that through the application of these concepts; I would be able to better understand the inner significance of His teachings. That was really beautiful. The most important concept that I learnt was, how to love myself. If you want to improve your life, learn to love yourself first. How do I know that I do not love myself? Every time I complain, feel angry, get worried, become critical, fearful and so forth, I am not loving myself. To overcome these negative emotions and feelings, I constantly recite these 4 affirmations. They are:

I love you. I am sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you.

These affirmations have really helped me to see situations in a different light and not be judgemental or critical. In fact it is an extension of Swami's teachings when He says that everything is a reaction, reflection or resound of what I have inside of me. In other words, you have to be the change you want to see in the world. Just love yourself with sincere feelings and you will see amazing and wonderful transformation in your life. When you start loving yourself, you Love the God within you. The challenge with many of us is, we do not love ourselves as we should. How can you love others when you cannot love your own self?

As I continue to love myself more and more, I notice that I feel a lot happier. This is because God is Love and Love is God. I realize that my happiness does not depend on someone or something. I am happy because I have this firm conviction that Swami listens to my little prayers every time and He responds to it. This has made my connection to Swami even stronger. If I fall short of trusting Him, He comes to my aid and once again makes me stronger in my belief that Swami is always looking after.

Previously it took some effort just to remember Him, but now it is different because I want to experience His love all the time. Loving myself has also touched my work in the sense that I am able to do more work in less time. My manager often complains about work-related issues to me every time I go into his office. So when I started to practice loving myself intensely, I noticed that in the last 3 months, my manager's complaints have reduced significantly.

As for my family, I experience more love and care amongst us as compared to before. It's not that my manager or my family members have changed dramatically. It is only because of Swami's grace, I have started to Love myself and that love I can see and feel everywhere I go. As you think so you become. Just cultivate that love in your heart and you will always be surrounded in His Love. I know my Swami had been instrumental in helping me to achieve this. If you still feel you cannot love like Swami does, ask Him with all your heart to show you how to Love and He will.

As a start, be grateful for all the blessings you have in your life such as your health, the job that you have, your family, the food and the roof you have over your head.

Make Swami so helpless in your Love that he does not have a choice but to come running to you with open arms, showering you with all His love. I then asked Swami since you shower so much Love on me in so many ways, *'Is there anything I can give back to you?'* I cannot give you anything material but what I can give you is try to become that Love that you are and pass that Love to all around, including the whole world.

I use this visualisation/ meditation technique whereby I picture Swami in front of myself and imagine His all encompassing divine loving energy flowing from Him to every cell in my body, saturating with love. Then I pass that Loving energy to my family, friends, country and the whole world. Let the whole world bask in his Divine love. In this way, I become an instrument of love in Swami's mission in transforming the world.

To intensify your love for Swami, silence is the most important practice one needs to cultivate. So the present moment practices such as mindful walking, becoming a witnessing consciousness and thumb meditation really helped me to quieten the mind. By this I mean, one is fully focused or absorbed in whatever one is doing. The key is to be consistent in the practices. In my experience, silencing the mind meant my intuition getting stronger. I strongly feel Swami's presence and guidance from within.

As I started to understand the importance of constantly connecting with Swami, I said to Swami one day, *'Could you please give me time everyday only to remember you.'* After that I let this thought pass and left it totally with Swami and forgot about it. After a few months we moved to our new home at the Fiji Sathya Sai School.

The significance of this change is that it takes about an hour in the morning to travel from home to work and vice versa. So now I

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get about a good 2 hours every day to remember Him and just to Love Him. As I travel, I have time to listen to bhajans / discourses, expressing gratitude to Swami for everything as well as do thumb meditation.

Swami had also blessed me with a job that provides opportunities to remember Him and think of Him throughout the day. Every time I look at the chair in front of me, I visualise Swami sitting there conversing with me. I create scenarios whereby I am in constant contact with Him.

While dealing with clients I visualise Swami in them. Often I have noticed that this has resulted in my clients being more understanding and helpful, especially the difficult ones. When I have an appointment with a difficult client, I use visualisation to pass love energy prior to meeting that person. The outcomes are surprising as to what love can do. Generally as I enter my work premises, I project Swami's Love to all the staff and every corner of the building and believe me, the positive changes that I see in my work colleagues is amazing.

These practices that I have mentioned can be used as a stepping stone to take one closer to God. As you become consistent and start to feel God more and more within you, Swami will help you evolve from there. We must ensure that our EGO has no place in our Sadhana and that our intentions are very pure.

It's so beautiful to note that Swami always comes down to our level to fulfil what we need, so that one day we can ask Him for what He has actually come to give us. Swami cares for you so much and he even looks after your needs, as trivial as it may be.

On this note, I always wanted Swami to appear in my dream but He never came. Frustrated, I told Swami it is fine if you do not respond to my prayers. I forgot about it and after sometime, I had His dream. I saw that I was at a school playground and Swami was there in His wheelchair with His students. No one was allowed to go near Swami as He was within an enclosed space. Somehow I ran towards Swami and fell at His feet. As I lifted myself, I see Swami having a bowl in His hand containing chandan paste. Swami dips His hand in the chandan and puts it on my cheek. I got more than what I had expected from Swami. He not only came in my dream, but gave me padnamaskar and also blessed me. What else could I ask for?

Thank you Swami for your Divine Love, for it is transforming me and making my life a lot happier and peaceful. Through loving Swami intensely, I know this change has come into my life. Your love constantly reminds me of your presence. This is the gift you have given me. It is only through you, that I have found the confidence to move forward in life. Even if I slip you are there to hold my hand and make me steady again. Life is meaningless without you. Words cannot express what I feel for you in my heart but I know you understand. Swami, please help us all grow in your love so that one day we realize that we are God. Until that happens, please continue to guide us in the right direction. We love you so much Swami.

Thank you.

Om Jai Sri Sai Ram.

## TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SERVICE

Talks from Devotees on their personal experiences of Transformation through SERVICE

**Sudhan Sundaram**

Esteemed elders, wonderful leaders of our organisation, brothers and sisters, Loving Sai Rams to all of you!

My relationship with Swami and transformation in the Sai fold begins 20 years ago, when an opportunity to serve began my connection with Swami. I had an Aunt, living close by who had a number of miracles happening in her place. I was cynical of what was happening in this Aunt's place.. There were materialisations of Vibhuthi and messages on a glass panel in front of the altar.

I had my own personal experience of God as a devout Hindu from the age of 5. I used to pray 5 times a day and used to hear voices, and I had a strong belief that these were voices from God. I was unwell with dengue fever at the age of eight and was given 24 to 48 hours to live. I had a vision of Lord Ganesha, Shiva and Shakthi and was completely healed the following day. Therefore I needed convincing that Baba is God.

I was at home one day; my parents were at work. I got a phone call from Aunt who needed help – she was feeling faint and needed food. I decided to get 2-minute noodle soup and some vegetables and went over to her place at about 10:30am

She needed rice instead and was instructing me on how to make rice in the rice cooker. She asked me to leave the rice cooker in the kitchen and asked me to make it in about an hour's time. She asked me to sit with her as she shared all the miracles that was happening in her place – something that I wasn't really interested in listening to at that time. I went into the kitchen in about an hour's time and the rice cooker was full of not just normal rice but biriyani rice. My first miracle in the Sai fold.

### **Journey with Swami started**

If I was to describe my commitment from that moment on, I would say that it was part time devotion, seeking full time benefits. At that stage, as a young man, I was competitively involved in sports in my late teens, surrounded by bad company and exposed to every temptation. This chunky body built from those developmental years, I can assure you is not from eating green vegetables and spinach.

I remember having lots of Swami dreams in those early years when Swami didn't approve of something I was going to do; he would come in my dream and give me a very strong 'No'. Swami intervened in a number of ways. Aside from the very strong 'No's', he also had the ability to be multilingual when he came once and spoke in Greek about something he didn't approve. Once he was too embarrassed to discuss the fact that I was smoking; He escalated it to my sister asking her to tell me to stop smoking. These directions and guidance from Swami kick-started my transformation..

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### **Marriage and office bearer roles**

Post my wedding, I got the opportunity to be a centre chairperson at Baulkham Hills centre for 2 years. I was waiting for my term to come to an end.

Out of the blue, I was asked to take on the role of Region president for NSW Region West. When I was offered this role, I was not experienced, had no knowledge of the role and I thought I had to be 50 to be considered. I thought that the standards had dropped when Swami left His physical form.

Bro Richard encouraged me and Uncle Cugan inspired me saying "Sudhan, your transformation really starts when you perform a senior office bearer role...this is one of the highest forms of service you can do..." Reflecting back on it, Uncle Cugan is absolutely right; as much as undertaking the role was a wonderful opportunity to serve, it played a significant role in my personal transformation.

### **Principle of Oneness and that all work is God's work**

If I narrow it down to the key areas that I believed I have transformed in, it is firstly recognising the oneness principle and practicing non-duality as much as possible, and recognizing that all work is God's work. I fondly remember when encouraged to take on the role as Regional President, personally saying "*I am going to do this for Swami...it is my personal sadhana to serve the Sai community in NSW Region West.*"

It dawned on me that whilst the Love and connection of members to Swami brought the members to the organization, I felt an overwhelming duty and responsibility through love and service to deepen the members connection to the organization. This, I would say, is the service I am doing for Swami.

I remember when I was going through a tough time at work, I would tell *myself* "*you know I really enjoy serving Swami and doing Swami's work – work that I am doing as a volunteer – I find it really enriching and spiritually uplifting; however work that I am getting paid for, I am getting little satisfaction from it.*"

I remember highlighting this very point at a Study circle one day and I remember one of my good friends Richie saying "*Sudhan isn't everything Swami's work? Isn't it all one?*" I remember the silence. How deafening it was. I remember on the drive home Richie's words echoing in my ears. Just in case I had forgotten this truth, the very next day, I went to a retreat and just underneath Swami's photo were His words..." Do all your tasks as offering to God..Do not classify some as "my work" and some as "His work".

These experiences made me realize the oneness between the one serving and the one being served. This led me to realize the truth that the God in us is serving the god in others and most importantly to recognize the truth that the service that I was doing was not for the benefit of others, but for myself.

### **Service that I was doing is not for the benefit of others or Swami but for myself**

A few years ago I saw the passion in a lot of our members of our region when one member from Lawson was badly affected by the bushfires in the Blue Mountains. The members galvanised together and we did all what we could to collect non-perishable food items and clothing and also financial assistance at short notice. As inspiring as it was to witness their gratitude and love that was shared, the personal bliss that I got from the personal one-on-one interaction was one of the most spiritually uplifting moments. As Swami says "We should get rid of the thought that *sevā* activities are being done for others. You should understand that they are being undertaken for your own sake and for your own betterment."

### **Prasanthi 2013**

The personal experience that crystallised Swami's message happened to me when I was part of a group of about 500 Australians who were fortunate to decorate Prasanthi for Xmas in 2013. I was fortunate to be part of the team that was given the opportunity to decorate the Yajur Mandir, Swami's personal residence. I remember clearly articulating to my group what a wonderful service opportunity it was to be given the opportunity to decorate Prasanthi and most blessed to be given the opportunity to decorate Swami's House.

When the team was formed, we were told that we would have a small window of opportunity to decorate from after evening Dharshan 'til 2am. As a team we drew a meticulous plan with an impressive PowerPoint presentation with the small group of about 7 to 8 of us being really clear of our responsibilities. We had a team of 5 boys and about 3 girls. The guys were going to perform the heavy lifting and the girls were going to provide the creative flair, finesse and the final pristine touch. It was all going wonderfully well until 11:30pm when the overall lead came around and said "*Sudhan you have ½ an hour to wrap up our decorations.*"

"*But you said 2am!*" I wildly protested. Swami was testing our equanimity. In the next ½ hour we worked 3 times as fast and I remember when the overall lead came back at midnight, I gave him a piece of my mind. To which the overall lead said, "*I can see how much passion you have all put into this, you can continue this again tomorrow.*" I remember doing a self-audit that night.

What person had I become, what happened to my equanimity? A key question came to my mind – does Swami really need these decorations? This service opportunity is not done for Swami or anybody else. This is being undertaken for my own betterment.

I remember having a coconut the following day with my dear friend Ritchie and we concluded that "*Swami does not need these decorations. These tests are His Divine play to see how we measure and by us being given the opportunity to serve in His organisation, we are actually transforming ourselves.*"

This truth about Seva activities being done for our own betterment is the same feeling I get when I go back to a dear friend and family that we have been given the opportunity to serve in Prasanthi for the last 10 years or so. I always leave thanking Swami for being given the opportunity to serve. but the opportunities have only reinforced the importance of not taking for granted what we have with water, energy and money - many a time reinforcing how lucky we are and how grateful we should be for what we have.

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### **Growth in Self Confidence and the importance of Surrender**

A key transformation as part of performing office bearer roles in the organization has been the growth in my self-confidence and also realizing the importance of surrender, after putting our best foot forward as we are not the doer. Being asked to perform the Regional presidency role came as a shock to me; I really had no idea where to start. It is during this time I realized the power of surrender and also why faith and devotion in God is the basis of self-confidence.

I remember completely surrendering to Swami and saying *"Swami I really have no idea on how to do this role. I am completely in your hands"*. Swami in simple terms made me realize how this role was no different to any leadership role and some of the principles that I had been used to, for example the importance of having a Vision, a plan of how to get from current state to the end state and how important building a team is.

All of this helped me grow in self-confidence, achieving the plans that Swami no doubt laid out for us; sacrificing all we could and not being attached to the outcome was as wonderful an experience and transformation in the importance of surrender.

I remember an experience very clearly on how as a leadership group we had promised the membership a spiritual retreat. As a group we asked Swami to give us a location that gave us the feeling we were in Prasanthi. We asked Swami to bless us with speakers who would be able to transcend the devotees to the next spiritual level by attending the retreat. We were blessed with a fine location at the foothills of the blue mountains and we had our beloved late Uncle Arthur and Poppy, Bro Sumeet Tappoo and the wonderful Shauna and Fiona Brown as confirmed key note speakers. Our confidence was sky high. We asked Swami for guidance and we said we would take the entire retreat location for the weekend that we planned. To do this we had to pay an advance deposit for a minimum number of attendees of 180.

Knowing Swami is walking hand in hand with us, we committed an advance payment for a 180 spots with our own personal funds. We were hopeful we would get this back by early bird registrations, and anything over this, we would be able to contribute the gain to the Prasanthi decorations team.

A week before early bird registrations were due, we had 35 registrations! I remember sitting in front of Swami and saying *"Swami – Swami please help...this may be a financial disaster for my team and myself and if we had made any mistakes in approaching this, please forgive me."* I sat in front of Swami in the prayer room and asked for his guidance. That night I had a clear dream of Swami, where Swami emerged from the photo in the room and entered my body and he commanded me to go and get 300 people.

I woke up from a significant vibration of what I believed was a dream and at that moment my 2 dogs that normally sleep in Swami's room got up and started howling, reinforcing my thought Swami was there. From then on, we increased our communication, put our best efforts in undertaking the retreat and by the time registrations ended we had more than 315 registrations! A wonderful service opportunity to provide the members with a spiritually uplifting weekend.

The above experience highlighted how undertaking major projects within Swami's organization in the spirit of service leads to self-confidence and how self-confidence is the basis of devotion and faith in God. This made me realize that this is a critical prerequisite to seeing God in myself.

The importance of doing the best I can and surrendering the outcome as the best for my own spiritual growth and transformation – this mindset allowed me to realize that we are not the 'doer' and also enabled the growth of my own equanimity

### **Own Journeys**

Given the opportunity to serve through the organization has made me realize that each one of us is on our own journey and how the organization is here for our own personal transformation.

Where I used to be previously burdened by the issues, politics and goings-on of the centre, by undertaking the service role of being an office bearer has made me realize that these issues are for my own personal transformation. In my roles, I have inadvertently incurred the wrath of centre members, discovered how bhajans can be the source of many hardships and even been threatened by a centre member that I would be sued if I didn't take the action that he wanted me to take. When recounting these challenges with an Uncle who attended the chairperson's conference and when the question was posed to Swami as why we have so many difficult people in the organization Swami's response was *"with all my teachings this is how some behave, they will be a danger to society if they left the organization.. It's your duty to keep them in the organization and help transform them"*.

Hearing of this it made me realize the importance of leading from the heart first and then the head, and how positive thoughts, words and actions can enhance the members' connection with Swami in discovering their own divinity and how infectious cultivating a loving environment can be.

Swami says *"With a good word, you can soothe their hearts and by doing good deeds you can soothe their minds. Therefore, by using good words and doing God's work, you will give comfort to others and this is good service."*

To continue my own transformation, I will undertake service activities that enable the organization to integrate better with the local community through not only service but also enable the adoption of human values as a catalyst for societal transformation. I hope to play a bigger role in education of human values and Sathya Sai education as I hope that service in these areas will accelerate my own transformation.



### Sai Karthik Sridhar

Sai Ram distinguished guests, elders, brothers and sisters. And to truly encompass everyone and everything that is present here – Sai Ram Swami.

I'd like to start by thanking the organisers of this wonderful event for giving me the opportunity to speak on this extremely practical topic of Transformation through Service. Just to set some context – I personally am relatively new to the area of service. There are many inspirational individuals within the organisation who have dedicated countless hours in preparing and running major service projects or have even dedicated their careers to working within the social services area or both. Then there is of course our Lord. Swami dedicated each minute of each day to serving humanity and his capacity to do this seemed infinite. Swami was magnetic and his service projects just seemed so much larger than life. The list of projects includes but is in no way limited to:

\* A super-speciality hospital in the village of Puttapparthi performing a multitude of life saving medical procedures from cardiac operations to brain surgery with state of the art equipment and some of the best doctors in the world. This has now been running for over 20 years.

\* Swami also put together a water project that has provided about 10 million people safe drinking water where they previously would have struggled to find a decent source of water. Keep in mind that that's almost half the population of this country. The amount of work and planning that went into this project was immense.

\* Swami also formed an education system from Kindergarten to University level absolutely free of charge for all students. But the free of charge bit is just the tip of the ice-berg. Swami has said this about his university: *"This Institute will be a temple of learning where youth are shaped into self-reliant, contented and enterprising heroes of action and self-sacrifice, for the purpose of serving humanity."*

These were just some of the major service projects that Swami conducted on top of his daily interactions with devotees. At times it hardly makes sense to us that a single human being could have done so much. Because it's so mind boggling, we often come to that conclusion that he was God and hence he could do all this. BUT there is more to this story than that. Swami came to this Earth adopting a human form and went through the different phases and experiences of life just like any human being does. There is a reason why Swami tells us that his life is his message. It would not mean very much if he just waved his hands and made everything magically appear. The hospital was still built brick by brick. The education project still needed expansive amounts of planning and effort. The water project was constructed over a long period of time and took years of dedication and persistence. None of these projects just appeared out of thin air. The miracles happened because of the purity of his intentions and above all, love. This is what Swami tells us each one of us is capable of and hence – his life is his message.

I have learnt that the importance of intentions cannot be overlooked. There is no point in dumping a spoon full of food on a hungry child's plate with no love or warmth. The food you give a hungry person is nothing but a medium. The actual substance you are giving is love. Only then does it become service. So often, the love exuded by the person who you have apparently served is what melts you. Not that we should be expecting this reciprocation - but such is the nature of service that this is often the case. As Swami says, *"the world is reaction, reflection and resound."* Then we realise that the person we are supposedly serving has just given us as much as we have given them and this wonderful act has resulted in both of us being our purest selves, which is love, be it just for a fleeting moment.

Service is a gift from the Lord to help us get a glimpse of our true nature. As Swami has mentioned in his numerous discourses, we are not changing the world through our service! To quote Swami's words: *"Consider service as the best spiritual discipline (sadhana), but do not believe that you can reform or reshape the world."* Many great beings have come and left this Earth – none have been able to end any of the ailments of humanity. And the truth is neither will any of us. If one disease has been cured then another has taken its place. If poverty has ended in one country it generally has come at a cost to another. And the case is similar for any other issue. If the lord so wills, the world could be rid of every disease and poverty and any other form of suffering in an instant. But that's not the point. The story has to go on! From Swami's numerous teachings I don't believe we are here to perfect this world but simply to realise its true nature and more importantly, to realise our true nature. The function of service is to spread love, experience love and be love; because ultimately, love is all that is and love is all that we are.

Coming now to practical application of service, the Sai Organisation as a whole is a wonderful engine for service. Swami has said that the unique feature of Sai Service is that it should be Selfless, pure and unsullied by ego-based motivations. Swami has given us the perfect template and guidance to conduct any project and he has also given us all the talent and skills we require.

A great learning experience for me personally has been the Nursing Home Project that the Sai youth of NSW have been conducting. This was a project that was initiated long ago when members of the organisation would visit nursing homes in Sydney singing bhajans for the residents. Over time, the youth adopted this project and made a few changes in the way it was delivered. We put together a list of songs including some Australian classics and oldies hits and sung these songs at the nursing homes with the aid of pre-recorded backing tracks. This continued for a few years where we would visit nursing homes as individual centres running our programs mostly on a quarterly basis. Until Swami decided it was time to take things up a notch. Enter live music. There is a right time and place for everything to happen. As you have seen, there is an incredible amount of musical flair and talent amongst the youths. With the right motivation – there is also an incredible amount of passion and energy amongst the group. Swami brought all of this passion, energy and talent together about mid last year when the entire western region of Sydney came together as one unit to serve nursing homes with live music, big numbers and a lot of love. We then started visiting nursing homes on a monthly basis, rotating amongst four different nursing homes, and singing and dancing with the residents. The love that exuded through all of this was nothing short of magical and each group of residents would melt us with their love. We then put together a Christmas program which included nursing home visits, a musical program for recent migrants and refugees as well as a program for the homeless. Swami's presence and guidance through all of this was just so evident as everything fell into place with ease. The beauty of all of this was realising that we in fact were doing nothing and Swami had completely taken over. There were no conflicts or tension. There was just love overflowing from everywhere. That is all that matters in this world and Swami decided to give us a demonstration of this.

*"Service springs out of LOVE and it scatters LOVE in profusion." ~ Sathya Sai Baba*

*(Continued from Page 13)...*

In terms of self-transformation, I have always found this difficult to measure. My aim is to enjoy the journey and I find I can do this when I am involved in activities that every part of me is at peace with. When Swami left his body, the yearning for his presence was so strong amongst so many of us – myself included. The Lord has gently prompted us to now find him in this world and truly appreciate his omnipresence. The service opportunities I have had the benefit of being a part of have given me exactly this. In so many ways, it has filled the void left by the romance of Swami's presence. For us as a youth group, the project we put together was a wonderful blessing as I believe it has given us a glimpse of everything that this world is which is love. The hunger for more service was so evident amongst all of us after our big Christmas service project, that we felt a sense of loss once it was over! The love and the sense of family that we shared through all of it was just incredible and it was in these bonds of love that we could once again experience Swami.

For me, this has been a joyous learning experience. Service has certainly emphasised the simplicity of spirituality and why it's best not to overcomplicate things. Swami has overwhelmingly forced me to appreciate how much love there is in this world and how easy it is to access this part of humanity. It was very difficult for me to see this just by reading Swami's books or listening to talks. It was certainly something I needed to experience. The love has been such a wake up to the reality of this world and a constant reminder that our Lord has not gone anywhere! Swami has given us the opportunity to experience him through different mediums. But the love and the magic of it all is the same! I cannot describe the beauty of love as there is no language capable enough to deliver this. The only way to truly appreciate this is to experience it for ourselves.

Thank you all so much for the time to share these thoughts. I look forward to the love unfolding. Sai Ram.

  
**Saiyuri Naicker**

Om Sri Sai Ram Embodiments of love

I have been tasked with speaking about how service has helped in my self-transformation. I can say with absolute certainty that whether I am transformed or not I don't know, but what I do know is that service has become my whole life. I am very fortunate to have been born on Swami's birthday itself and in South Africa where there is a large Sai Organisation. The Sai Organisation to me is primarily one of service and as such I always had that exposure to the idea of serving others. My mother was another source of inspiration to serve. She is a GP and has always gone above and beyond the call of duty to truly love and serve her patients.

My mother also took us to Balvikas every week at the Sai Centre and my earliest memories of Balvikas was when we were taught Swami's message of Love all Serve All. I remember thinking "wow if I were a superhero that would be my catch phrase!" I know that as a child it is obviously difficult to serve in the conventional ways but Sai seva is anything but conventional.

Sai seva means not just serving someone food but sharing a smile and truly acknowledging and recognising Swami in them. I recall once when I was quite young, I think about 8 years old, we made sandwiches to give to the children in a poor community and when we arrived at the community I remember seeing these children washing their faces and brushing their teeth outside using icy cold water, in the middle of winter and I remember saying to mum I wish we could have brought more sandwiches, I wish I had woken up earlier. I learnt that day that we need to really put in the effort when we serve - to wake up that half hour earlier if we need to, to go that extra mile for those people, our brothers and sisters who were so in need. Of course I now know in my heart that everything that happens is Swami's will, even the circumstances those people found themselves in, but I also know that that day I did learn that 200% effort should be made for every act of service.

Growing up we would always look for opportunities to serve and Swami of course always delivered. Even when we left our beloved Mama Africa to move to Australia Swami gave us Swara and Blue care. Swami threw us into a unbelievably active Sai family where every weekend through the SSE program and the centre programs we were able to serve, serve, serve. With examples of true love through service all around us like Auntie Moiya, Auntie Poppy and Uncle Arthur it was pretty easy to get motivated and get involved. I began my spiritual journey inward pondering how I would discover my divinity within and that was when I found the Sai youth. The Sai Youth of Brisbane were so vibrant and loving in their service that they turned every service activity into an offering to Swami. It was so inspiring and my spiritual journey just built from there through service, sadhana and satsung with the youth. Eventually the opportunity arose to visit my beloved Swami or Sai Krishna as I call him.

I arrived with my grandmother in Prashanthi Nilayam on Vijayadhasmi in 2009. We had four precious days in the ashram and unfortunately in her old age my grandmother was not coping well with being away from her home and I was a bit worried about her. That first darshan was unbelievable and I was completely captivated by that beautiful form of Sai Krishna. By our last darshan which happened to be a Thursday afternoon I was so eager to just speak to him, to tell him how much I loved him. It was a warm Thursday afternoon, as I walked to darshan after leaving my grandmother in the seated area. I remember everything about that afternoon, from the feeling of the red soil under my feet to the warmth of the sun on my head. Somehow I ended up being seated in the very front row and very close the gates to Swami's house. As those who have been to Prashanti would know this is where Swami enters darshan, it is a prime spot as you get beautiful view of him as he exits the house and comes towards the gates. I was so grateful just to be seated there that I felt ready to go home; even just that was enough for me. With this happiness in my heart I looked toward that door to see him come out. As he came out in the chair the afternoon sun was shining so bright behind him it looked like he was glowing. He had the most beautiful wide smile I had ever seen. He seemed six feet tall to me and so full of love it burst forth, and as he rolled by everything

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seemed to turn a golden warm shade of orange/yellow. As I was enchanted and overwhelmed by the pure love feeling he was exuding I did not notice the chair coming towards me. But it had and then before I knew it sevadals were nudging me and telling me swami had called for me to go forward. So I shuffled towards that chair where sat the Lord of the Universe. Swami started to say something but I hadn't heard; I was so lost in his energy. He then leaned forward and I went closer to him – he whispered in my ear "where is your ma?" I replied "she is sitting on the chair Swami." He smiled and took my hands in his (I had been holding a letter of another youth). His hands were warm, and I felt overwhelmed with joy and love. He again leaned forward and whispered "do not worry." I looked into his eyes and he looked into mine for what seemed like an eternity; he felt like my mother but my father too, and my brother and sister too, but also like my best friend. I was so overwhelmed I could no longer control myself and blurted out loudly "Swami, I love you!!" He smiled and gave the cutest little chuckle; he seemed to be laughing at my innocence he leaned forward and said squeezing my hands "I am Sai, you are Sai, there is no need for worries or fear, One forever." I was blown away by his beautiful honesty and at that moment I truly felt one. I looked into his eyes and he whispered again "let me show you something that will change you forever." He took my hands once more and said "close your eyes," and I did. The second I closed my eyes it's like there was nothing, an experience that to this day I cannot describe. The feeling I had in that second was enough for me to know that that was the truth that we all search for, the ultimate truth, what I can only describe as pure love although even those words fall short. It felt like hours when in reality mere minutes had passed; as he released my hands he motioned for me to take padanamaskar and I did; I placed my face upon his beautifully smooth, warm feet and felt a jolt of energy through my face down to my feet. It was surreal as his chair pulled away and he smiled a cheeky smile to me knowing that what he had shown me had completely changed my life as I knew it, my understanding of everything had changed, my life focus had changed all in a matter of minutes....I knew then that I would dedicate my life to experience that again, that which he had given me a glimpse of.

In my heart I knew that for me service was the only way back to that which I really am, that which my Sai Krishna had shown to me. More importantly somehow through this experience I was able to come to the realisation that every single breath I take is service. If every breath is taken with fullness of love and devotion to the God within then every breath is an act of service. On a more worldly level I realised that as long as my aim is love all serve all everything that I do in life should be dedicated to achieving that. My life focus had changed and everything I undertook now became a sincere effort to serve others.

In the youth we have so many opportunities to do just that. The liquid love project, serve the planet, feeding homeless people of Brisbane, nursing home concerts and blue care driving. Even outside of the youth I was able to now find time to have fun with the children at the children's hospital and drop in at the local nursing home to hear a real life love story or exciting action war story. And this principle rang true not just in my youth life but in my university life too. Previously when it came to my career I was a little lost, I now knew exactly what I wanted to achieve and how I would achieve it with my career in science. I knew that I wanted to find something to research that would help as many people as possible and so after studying a bachelors, honours and masters and with some work experience under my belt I am finally at a position where I can do just that. I can allow this physical body to be his instrument and serve in pure-hearted devotion through my PhD. I am now able to not just dedicate our youth activities to Swami, but dedicate my life to his seva.

Service truly has become my life to the point where a few years ago Swami sent a bhajan for me to sing through my sister, the words of which I feel perfectly summarises my journey with service.

*Swami When I love all, I'm loving you, When I serve all, I'm serving you.  
Your life is your message and mine is yours too  
A life of true service is me loving you  
Help ever hurt never is my bliss, my food  
To see a reality that is all True  
My life is devoted to you, Swami, my life is devoted to you.*

  
**Malini Somaiya**

Om Sri Sai Ram

My most humble pranams at the lotus feet of our Most beloved Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Respected elders, brothers and sisters, a loving Sai ram to you all.

*"Neither by penance nor by pilgrimages nor by going through sacred texts can one cross the ocean of samsara. Only through service can one redeem oneself."* This is the message that Swami delivered to the youth during the second world youth conference in 1999 in Prashanti Nilayam (21/11/1999).

When I was younger, I defined service as helping those in need in society. I participated in various service activities arranged through the Sai Centres, such as going to nursing home singing or taking those with a disability to church on a Sunday morning.

I remember one activity that I had undertaken with a couple of other youth when I still must have been in high school. A couple had asked for help with gardening as they had a child with a life-limiting condition. We had gone along and done the required gardening on one afternoon. The family seemed to be well off and it was difficult to know the usefulness of the service. After the activity, we questioned ourselves, had this been a service of need? Had we really helped that family by doing this service? A few weeks later, the chairperson of the Sai Centre received a letter from the family involved, to thank us for what we had done and how

*"Service springs out of LOVE and it scatters LOVE in profusion." ~ Sathya Sai Baba*

*(continued from Page 15)...*

much it meant to them. I realize now that we are in no position to judge. We may never realize the impact of our action on others. Swami in this instance had ensured we had received a letter. In fact, we were never asked to do this service again. The reason I wanted to share this experience is that one act, done once, impacts not only the one that we think we are serving but more importantly it changes us. This one activity taught me not to judge but serve if that was the need at that very time. A person once shared with me their thoughts on the Grama seva activity that Swami has introduced. It obviously provides love and care in the form of meals and clothing to the villagers. More importantly, it brings about a change in the heart of the students who provide the service. If they were to hold positions of power where they were making decisions, they would consider the impact of their decisions on those they had served.

Some years ago, having returned from the World youth conference in Prashanti, we were feeling inspired to undertake some service. I joined in an activity where we distributed blankets to the homeless. As a group, we felt that rather than have the homeless come to us, we would walk the streets at night, find those in need and distribute the blankets. In looking back over this time, we would walk the streets every Thursday, late in the night. We never knew who we would find on any given night. I will always remember a man we found living under a bridge that went over the Yarra river. He did not want to move from there despite our concerns. He could see the city lighted up from where he was – it was the best view. Our goal was to distribute the blankets until Swami's birthday. As Swami says, in the Sai Organisation we undertake service as a spiritual activity. The service activity required us to have commitment to what we had started out to do, we were required to have courage to walk the streets late at night, we had a goal and above all faith and trust that Swami was with us. Swami says that "Of the twenty-four hours a day, use six for earning and spending, six for contemplation of God, six of sleep and six for service to others". It is often easy to say that we are time-poor to help others but my experience has been that if any activity is made a priority, then I am able to find time for it.

By profession, I am a social worker. I work in a hospital clinic where we see people who have life-limiting conditions. These are people who have been leading normal healthy lives and then get, with not much warning, a disabling and a terminal condition. Often people say to me that they would find it difficult to work with people who have a condition, where there is "no hope" of cure or survival. Is this not depressing? My response is that I in fact feel inspired by the people that I meet and their families. I see spouses and children who have given up their jobs, sold homes, moved countries to look after the one they love. I ask myself, if I were in their shoes, could I make the sacrifices they do? They teach me to live in the moment for the past is gone and the future is uncertain. They share with me the plans that they had made. They tell me that they wished that they had not waited all their lives to do things that they can no longer do now. I thank Swami for allowing me to work amongst such people from whom I learn daily. These people without knowing or having heard of Swami put into practice His teachings. Their lives remind me that we are not the doer. With them teaching me these lessons daily, I ask who is serving whom?

Within the Sai Organisation, Swami has given us the model of the upside down triangle, where the leader is at the bottom and is there to serve. Swami says that a leader should not ask others to do what he or she is not prepared to do. This is a powerful tool to guide our decision making. I always remember the example of a Sai uncle, Uncle Wal, who undertook a leadership course with the Victorian Sai youth many years ago. We would have sessions early on a Sunday morning, a day that we would normally prefer to have a sleep in. No matter how early we arrived, Uncle Wal was always there before us, despite having driven a much greater distance than us and despite being far older than us (he had already retired at the time). Not only that but inevitably Aunty Heather, his wife, would bring some delicious goodies for us. They inspired us by their own example for us to be there punctually every Sunday.

The opportunity to serve is always there. Swami once said that you could offer a sweet to a crying child and that would be service. I tried this in Parthi darshan lines and received many a grateful smile from the mothers. To send love, prayers and positive energy to those around us is service. Reducing the burden we add to this earth, whether through reducing our wastefulness or reducing our negative thoughts is also our opportunity to serve. Looking at how we can bring happiness to our parents is also an opportunity to serve. We need to be on the lookout for every opportunity that presents to us.

Participating in service activities influences me to think about every decision that I make. Do I think about those who are less fortunate than myself when I make my decisions such as do I buy because of my need or want? It makes me consider the work that has gone into producing a grain of rice, it allows me to appreciate the effort, time and energy that goes into every produce or service that I receive. Our values in fact influence every decision we make. I may not always make the correct decision, but I pray and am hopeful that my actions and choices improve daily.

We need not change the world but change ourselves. As Swami beautifully gave the example of the little boy who was given pieces of a puzzle of the world, to put together by his father to occupy him. The little boy completed the puzzle very quickly. The surprised father asked him how he had done this. The boy answered that on the other side was a picture of a man. He pieced the puzzle of the man together and turned it over, the world had taken care of itself.

Our journey of self transformation is the most exciting journey that we can undertake. After all, we are our own best projects. As Swami takes me along this path, I have become more aware that the type of service activity one is engaged in is not important. It does not matter who we serve, it can be the society, the organization, our families or anyone we meet. If we can offer help in that moment in time, when it is needed, then we should render that service. What matters is our intent – is it noble? Is it pure? Is it selfless? How much love can we infuse the activity with?

Swami says that "You are not doing service for others. You are doing it always for yourselves, to the God in you, the God who is equally present in others." It is important that we serve ceaselessly. Swami says my life is my message. This path of service, this path of love allows us to make our lives His message.

Jai Sai Ram.



## Youth Perspectives on The Pre-World Sai Conference 2015

The Pre-World Sai Conference was an opportunity to come together and to unite in a global effort to spread and understand the message and teachings of Sathya Sai Baba. The theme of the conference was at the core of Swami's teachings and allowed us to realise the simplicity of his teachings. The words of Professor Anil Kumar and Dr Reddy were a rare insight into Swami's intimate moments and the global vision of the Sai Avatar's movement.

The youth were given the rare opportunity of not only participating in the conference, but also having dedicated sessions with our international speakers. These sessions were opportunities for us to unite with youth from around our region and to discover the like-minded nature of one another. From all corners of the country and abroad, the Pre World Sai Conference gave the Sai Youth an opportunity to galvanise and realise the strength we possess as young people in this modern world.

Personally, the most striking aspect of the conference was to realise how blessed we are to have the teachings of the Avatar of the Kali Yuga and to be able to live out His teachings in Australia. We are so blessed with everything Swami has given us and have been given the best opportunity to understand and realise the truths that he has come to give us.

Harish Dharmaratnam

Aum Sri Sai Ram!

The theme of the Pre World Sai Conference conveyed a strong message that *Love is the Source, Love is the Path and LOVE is the Goal*, and throughout the weekend we gained powerful insights on this theme from the various interactive sessions, talks on self-transformation and panel discussions.

The PWSC was an uplifting and educational experience for all those who attended. The youth actively participated in the preparations for and during the PWSC, and it was a journey embarked upon by all to harness and express that love inherent within us.

The youth of Australia, New Zealand and Fiji united together to offer their love to Swami through a heartfelt musical offering, and a drama offering which conveyed a simple but powerful message that *"Being a Good Example is the Best Form of Service!"* The youth were also fortunate to have intimate sessions with our International Guest Speakers, Dr Narendranath Reddy and Professor Anil Kumar. Taking us from life experiences, to life lessons, both esteemed speakers created a loving and joyous environment for the youth and inspired us to take a leap of faith and commit to Swami's Mission.

The increased motivation seen in the youth to engage in service within our Society following the PWSC, is a strong reflection of the understanding gained on the importance of love and service!

In Sai Love and Service  
Gharshani Ganeshanatham  
Female National Youth Coordinator  
SSIO Australia & PNG



# SUMMARY OF GUEST SPEAKER SESSIONS WITH YOUTH AT THE PWSC

*Veena Sri Anandarajah, Zone 3 Youth Coordinator*

## Saturday 6 June – Panel session

\* **Dr. Narendranath Reddy:** There are no longer separate conferences held for youths and adults, in order to bring everyone together and realise the magnitude of task ahead. Youths need to be prepared for the responsibilities to come and they need to demonstrate enthusiasm. The qualities essential for leadership are **Availability, Awareness and Affability**.

\* **Neville Fredericks:** As an advice for practicing spirituality in daily life and work – use common sense first and have spiritual sense next. Always have an understanding for the society that we work in, the way we communicate. The best service is to be an example. It is not necessary to tell everyone about your spirituality.

\* **Shivendra Kumar:** Consider your talents as gifts from God and use it for God at least some point in your life. Be available for His work. There will certainly be more opportunities for involvement in future.

## Q & A session

\* **How should we tackle a clash between duty towards our parents and duties within the organisation?**

The highest goal is to make all our activities sacred so that no distinction between sacred and secular activities exist. Treat all work as God's work. Pay attention to elderly parents. Be careful in balancing your time such that it does not fritter away in useless tasks. The time that fritters away needs to be prioritised for Swami's work. If you have sincere desires, Swami will make things work. Do not yourself be a burden to others, look after yourself and your families before taking the responsibility of society. However, do not underestimate the power of sadhana. Daily meditation and prayer strengthens your heart and mind, which allows concentration and determination. Make use of time early in the morning, which will help prevent burnouts. Love God so much that it changes the life of people around you. Practice the 9 point code of conduct and challenge your will. Identify the people in life who help you improve and such chances are presented through the Sathya Sai Organisation.

\* **What are some simple and effective ways of cutting ego? Is it greedy to want to progress further when one already has a comfortable life?**

Swami wants his youth to always aim high and to have perfection in action – *yoga karma*. Hence be outstanding in whatever you do and work hard but in the process do not use devious but righteous means. Do not get attached to the goal. Have a plan and work with it. Your duty is to put in effort, outcome is in God's hands. Do not have ego – always be vigilant. A way to be vigilant is to always see Swami in the eyes of everyone you meet so that you will not desire to rise above them.

\* **How do we keep youth engaged and committed?**

By having programs with common interest. Some programs like save the planet, youth festival, the 90 international bhajans project are examples of such activities that involve youths in respective communities. Incorporate service or activities with innovative ideas. Know your leaders and the projects. Engage everyone and involve new-comers, give people tasks. Have an understanding for the Australian culture, which is intensely democratic, sport-loving and has an equality factor (collaborative aspect wisdom is greater than that of an individual). Inform your leaders about that which you would like to do or get engaged in. There are currently various projects, which can be accessed through the official websites that can be joined by the youth.

\* **How should we make life changing decisions?**

Swami once told to Dr. Reddy – Go to a corner in your house where you do pooja. Sit quietly for 20 minutes and pray intensely, without an answer already in your mind. During this time the answer that you get in your heart is God's answer. The voice of conscience is voice of God, follow that. Our biggest challenge is being sensitive to that voice. Overtime you have to foster that. If you're not getting the clarity, don't make the decision, sleep on it.

## Sunday 7 June – Professor Anil Kumar session

Religion is not seriousness. Instead, it is ecstasy, dance, music and laughter. Develop an intimate relationship with Swami. Develop His qualities, which were full of love and humour. Parents also have a lot to learn in how to bring up children by learning from Swami's ways and how he corrected and taught children through humour. The experience of living with God is one of humour but also extremely educational. Never leave Swami. Accept the form that you are familiar with and not be carried away by rumours. There is no place for mediums. Talk to the Sai within through direct communication.

## Q & A session

\* **What are some important and basic principles to follow for leading a spiritual life or a materialistic life? How do we bridge both?**

There are no two lives. Begin with thinking of God before every task and offering it to Him. Begin every task with a prayer. As you do work, think that it is Swami who is making you do the work. It is He who is the one giving us success or making us experience failure. See failure as a chance to make improvements. Everything becomes spiritual when commenced with a prayer. At the end of the day remember to offer all the undertakings to Him with a prayer.

\* **What must we do to truly experience Him in our lives and perceive His presence?**

Always see any unexpected, unplanned or unscheduled event as His doing - that which is unexpected is divine.

# LOVE TO RESTORE UNITY AND TRANSFORMATION

Lord Buddha was once confronted by His own Cousin Devadatta. From their very young days, Devadatta was very jealous of Him. They grew up together in the Palace and the young Prince Siddharta, who later became the greatest teacher of the age, excelled in everything. Devadatta nursed the rivalry even after Prince Siddharta was enlightened and continued to try and harm Him and even tried to kill the Buddha on many occasions. After many years, Devadatta was very ill and everyone thought he would not live long. The Buddha, with His infinite love and compassion, decided to visit Devadatta to bless him, even though he had for many decades tried to destroy, defame and harm Him. On arrival, the Buddha addressed Devadatta and declared His love for him. The Buddha proclaimed that even though Devadatta had done many wrong acts, His love for Devadatta was as pure as it was for His own son Rahula and if this is "Sathya", The Truth, by the divine love in His heart, Devadatta will be cured. Devadatta was immediately cured and stepped down from the bed. Dear ones, anger begets anger and jealousy begets jealousy. Our beloved Lord, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, in many of His divine discourses declared that the only way to conquer anger and jealousy is through unity and love.

We are all well aware that a loving word will bring joy and happiness and will heal, bless and make the environment peaceful. Even a timely word in its own sense will level stress. But – careless, cruel and harsh words will kindle strife and even wreck a life.

The world today needs the action of each one of us directed towards common objectives of transformation through love and unity. A mammoth task it is, but you and I know that if each one of us endeavours to follow these powerful divine teachings of our Lord Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to firstly to love our own self, then expand it to our families, friends, to the society, and to all beings, unity and transformation of the entire world is possible. But where do we begin?

Chapter 8 of the Pre-World Conference study circle booklet on Love, clearly gives the answer by Bhagawan's own divine words. If we practice these teachings and apply them to our daily lives, we will immediately begin to experience love. Just as we take vitamin supplements to restore our health, the actions stated in chapter 8 are supplements that can help us restore our true nature.

The first stated point is Love God. Before embarking on the path of unity and transformation, we need to broaden our mind and love God in an unselfish manner. Bhagawan says that we should never forget God. God alone is everlasting. That is the truth. God is eternal. Always adore God. In loving God, we are able to promote the love within us to a higher level. This is mandatory before we make further progress.

There is a small example provided by Bhagawan. Suppose we take a small incense stick. In that small incense stick, we see fire. If one is smoking a cigarette, there is fire in that also. If there is a forest fire on the hill, we see a big fire in that as well. The fire that we see in the incense stick, that we see on the cigarette, and the fire we see in the case of the forest fire, all constitute fire. In the feeling that all three constitute fire, if you bring logs of firewood and put them on the cigarette or on the incense stick, the fire will be extinguished; the firewood will not catch fire. On the other hand, if we take tender, green leaves and put them in a raging forest fire, they will immediately burn away. In the same manner, if the fire of love in you is not broad enough, you will not be able to sustain the great fire of love for God. Before you can experience equal mindedness, before you can experience this love in everyone, the first step is to promote the love within yourself and raise it to a sufficiently high level.

It is therefore important that our own spiritual disciplines and love for God is strong enough to withstand all the challenges in the journey of creating unity and transformation. It goes a long way to preventing what we often term 'burn-out'.

Loving God gives us several times more energy than any of the so called energy drinks and vitamin supplements available in the market today. The best part is that God is available 24/7 for direct access without cost and most certainly, without a medium.

The Love for God strengthens us and readies us for what's ahead. The Sathya Sai International Organization's youth program has carried out a number of global initiatives focused on this aspect. In 2013, the youth globally offered Swami a treasure box full of birthday wishes for our beloved Lord at the Maha Samadhi in the Sai Kulwant hall, Prasanthi Nilayam. Messages were received in several languages from several different countries. In 2014, the youth wrote messages of gratitude for Swami and offered likhita japam scripts for his birthday. The gratitude messages were compiled in a booklet and presented to Swami. Other than this, the youth further express their love for god through multiple service, devotional and other activities in their centres, countries, zones and through pilgrimages to Prasanthi Nilayam.

The next important point for unity and transformation is love without distinction. Swami says that we should have love for all. We should impart our love to even those who lack love. Love is like a mariners compass, wherever you may keep it, it will always point towards God.

Bhagawan made a very important comment on this topic in 1974. I quote, "if you do not feel the call at the sight of human distress or disease, how can you muster the determination and dedication necessary to serve the unseen mysterious God. Despising brother, you cannot at the same time worship God. God does not accept hypocrisy. God is the resident of every heart so offer service to anyone and that service will reach the God within the human heart."

*(continued from Page 19)...*

Nature is the best teacher for this principle. Every passerby for instance pelts stones at a fruit bearing tree. But the tree never retaliates and continues to give fruits to all. Similarly, the cow gives her milk to everyone. It is the same milk she provides to her calves. The goodness in us is meant to be shared with everybody. We should therefore develop good qualities and share with others.

Loving without distinction provides us several times more joy and happiness than the best things money can buy. Furthermore, our wallets will never ever run short of love and neither will we have to pay tax or interest on it. You may wish to change your tax agent if you have had to pay tax for loving without distinction!

The youth programmes globally are promoting love without distinction. Since 2013, a global initiative called Serve the Planet has been offered to Bhagawan. The Serve the Planet initiative is held to commemorate the Avatar Declaration Day. In this initiative, together with the Sathya Sai Youth throughout the world, members of the Sathya Sai International Organisation work with the community to carry out projects that benefit humanity. Across the globe, several thousands of Sathya Sai International Organisation members, along with community members participate in this and render service to the needy. With the theme "Human Values for Nation Building", all zones have a series of service and community based events lined up this year. The key component of the Serve the Planet initiative is engaging with the community to perform service to the needy.

The third point is know thyself. Higher knowledge than all the knowledge acquired in the world is knowledge of the self. There is nothing equal to the bliss of self-realisation. It is acquired when the ego sense is destroyed and there is a prayerful submission to the divine. Bhagawan assures us that love is our true form and the path of divine love is the surest path to God.

Although we have been long reading and listening about renunciation, we realize that we haven't taken a single step towards it. Only through practising what we learn, we will reach greater heights. We should practise what is told; then we will have experience.

In a conversation with students, Swami very interestingly remarked - will hunger be appeased by simply knowing the menu? Will a beggar improve his condition by simply knowing the greatness of the economy? Will darkness be dispelled by listening to the effects of light? So, by simply by listening about spirituality, we cannot acquire the supreme knowledge. It needs to be practised.

Swami further adds that removal of ego is key to knowing thyself and he uses the example of a soccer ball. Life is like football and you are bound to be thrown and kicked about. How long do you bear the treatment? Until there is air in the ball. Deflate it and no one will kick. Air is our ego. When air goes out, bliss comes in.

Ego removal surgeries are not available in hospitals yet. And even if doctors were successful in removing ego, they cannot guarantee that the condition will not occur again. Therefore the only way to treat symptoms of ego is to continue walking on the path towards self-realisation. And as general advice, it is recommended that you perform selfless service activities if symptoms continue for more than 24 hours.

As the Sathya Sai Youth Festival draws near, a global sadhana plan is being launched for the youth. The Sadhana Plan is being implemented to unite the youth and inspire each one of them to promote the next level of spiritual discipline in their lives.

Swami tells us that every living being is on a pilgrimage—whether it is aware of it or not. The destiny of all beings is to return to their origin. The lead up to the youth festival is a divine opportunity to collectively focus with full awareness on Love, purify our hearts and minds, and realise Love as our divine origin and essence. The sadhana plan can also be used by spiritual seekers of all ages to guide their choice of spiritual disciplines in their daily lives.

Furthermore, to develop future leaders of the SSIO, the Sathya Sai International Youth leadership program commenced in February. This program allows youth to explore and understand leadership better and perform leadership duties as a spiritual activity.

Both the Sadhana Plan and the Sathya Sai International Youth Leadership Program allow us to learn that little bit more about ourselves and make steady progress towards unity and transformation.

Having understood our true self and the importance of love without distinction, the next point that is discussed is experiencing unity. *"Religions are many but goal is one. Jewels are many but gold is one. Stars are many but sky is one. Cows are many but milk is one. Beings are many but breathe is one. Nations are many but earth is one. Flowers are many but worship is one."*

Therefore the same principle and concept of love is present in all. All human beings are essentially one. The differences lie only in their feelings. So the human beings should change their feelings and try to recognise the truth, the same divinity imminent in all. Only then transformation can occur.

Unity spreads from one to another through exemplars. In a pond, a ripple originates at the point you throw a stone. How far would this ripple go? The ripple spreads till the end of the pond. You may be able to see it or not; but the ripple starts spreading from the point where the stone meets the water. Similarly, in the lake of our mind, a stone of thought will let ripples spread through the body. The same happens in the eye, in the brain and in the heart. The ripples then expand out.

*"Service springs out of LOVE and it scatters LOVE in profusion." ~ Sathya Sai Baba*



*(continued from Page 20)...*

Flour, sugar, chocolate and butter are the key ingredients in a chocolate cake. They go through the pain of getting whisked, mixed and heated in the oven resulting in a delicious chocolate cake. The value of the cake is created only after baking. Unity therefore tastes like a baked chocolate cake! And I trust you will agree with me that everything is very messy until the cake is baked.

Brothers and sisters, the Youth Program is NOT a separate organisation. The youth program is very much part of the SSIO activities. To reflect this, all over the world, the Pre-World Conferences and Zone Youth Conferences have been combined. This has allowed youth to work with elders and elders to work with youth in preparing the best offering at Zone level for Swami's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. It doesn't stop there. About 50 youth are working with elders globally, across continents helping in the preparation of the 10<sup>th</sup> World Conference.

The Sathya Sai International Youth Festival, further promotes UNITY amongst brothers and sisters, as it invites youth from all over the world to come as one and pay homage to our divine lord. Such events, like the conferences, service projects and even our centre Bhajans, all promote unity. Hence, it needs to reflect unity in its purest form.

Swami said, I separated Myself from Myself to love Myself. He tells us that we are embodiments of love. He always says love is our true nature. We also know we were created from love, we have to live in love and love is what we are striving for. Love is therefore the source, love is the path and the love definitely is the goal. And when there is love there is peace. When there is peace, there is truth. When there is truth, there is bliss. When there is bliss, there is God and when there is God, there is everything.

We cannot return to our source without having conquered the reason for our birth. We cannot return to our source tainted with impurities and disunity. We need to return in the purest form we separated from Him.

Swami provides another perfect analogy. When a festival involves large scale feeding, people borrow for the occasion vessels from rich persons. After using them, they clean the vessel before returning them. The rich man will be greatly disturbed and disappointed if the vessels are returned damaged and unclean. God similarly has lent us this body for use in the festival of life. Vessels are like intellect, mind and senses. We have to use them with gratitude and return them in a clean condition.

Even if seen or not seen, current flows through live wire. When the switch is off, its presence is not felt. When the switch is on, its presence is felt. But you cannot say current is not there. It is up to you to switch on or switch off. God is therefore everywhere. We have to keep the switch on to experience him. The switch is divine love. If the switch is on, love flows in all directions.

As we soak in Swami's divine love during this conference, let us intensify our love for god, our willingness to serve without distinction, our pursuit to know thyself and importantly to experience unity. Let the conference light such a strong fire of love that spreads to our families, friends, society and the planet.

Swami very lovingly once said, *"Love, Love, Love. I love all and I ask all to love. My greatest wealth is love. People speak about my powers and my miracles, but my love is my greatest miracle. All should share in this love. Only then there will be the biggest miracle of transformation, and to know oneness."*

I pray to our beloved lord to continue to shower his choicest blessings on all of you always.

Om Sai Ram  
Shivendra Kumar  
International Youth Coordinator  
Sathya Sai International Organisation



*"Service springs out of LOVE and it scatters LOVE in profusion." ~ Sathya Sai Baba*

# Journey to Destiny - The Role of Media and IT on the Spiritual Path

Media plays an important role in connecting the aspirants online with Swami. We need to be connected constantly online with Swami by means of LOVE and doing Swami's work always.

Our spiritual journey can be illustrated by a simple example. Let us assume that we are taking a journey by a Car. In order for the journey to be fruitful, we should have a destination. The car we are going to use should have a sound engine and the body of the car should be perfect. The car should have a reliable and safe driver to drive it.

**Our Destination:** Our spiritual journey can either be smooth and easy or, on the other hand, long and hard. It is all dependent on the path we are taking. Our ultimate destiny – 'Swami' is based on wisdom of knowledge and keeping constant the flow of love in thoughts, love in words and love in action. So How do we get there?

**Car Body:** For the journey to be comfortable and enjoyable, the car we are travelling should have a strong and reliable body. Imagine the car having a corroded and bad body, the journey is not going to be enjoyable! This is the role of the Media Team with your cooperation.

**Car Engine:** If the car engine is not reliable, the journey may not reach its destination! We have our IT and Website technicians to keep the Media work up to the task and well informed.

**Driver:** Similarly, if the driver is not a reliable or a safe one, we may have bad experiences on the way! Each officer of the Sathya Sai International Organisation is

to play a vital role in HIS mission. Be a role model with exemplary character. Be the change you wish to see in the world.

**Passengers:** The passengers in the car rely heavily on the car (the body and the engine) and its driver to reach the destination comfortably and safely. The work of the Media Committee is to drive all devotees to to meet their aspirations, working closely with Officers at all levels. This is the immediate task of all officers and members of the Sathya Sai International Organisation – to apply 'Walking the Values hand-in-hand with SAI'.

The media committee, and all of us collectively, will be engaged in spreading the message of 'HIS teachings and walking the human values' to the wider community in general and various leaders of our community.

The media committee requires your ongoing support by providing interesting articles and photographs of inspiring selfless service activities. You are encouraged to share your SAI knowledge and SAI experiences in the form of small articles and photos. You can send them to [andyravi.mediaaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:andyravi.mediaaustralia@gmail.com) at any time of the year. We ask Region Presidents or Media officers to send reports and photos immediately after any special events.

To find out more information on what is happening in the Sai Organisation online, we have listed a few website below which you may find useful:

Sai Australia - <http://www.saiaustralia.org.au/>  
Sathya Sai International Organisation – <http://www.sathyasai.org/>  
Sathya Sai Universe - <http://saiuniverse.sathyasai.org/>  
Sathya Sai Humanitarian Relief – <http://sathyasaihumanitarianrelief.org/>

In Loving Sai Service,

**Mr Andy Raveendran** – Chair (Email: [andyravi.mediaaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:andyravi.mediaaustralia@gmail.com) Mobile: 0430 151 485)

**Mr Mick Thrush** – General Editor

**Mr Ravi Shankar** – Compiling Editor, Sai News Australia

**Mr Shiri Chandiran** – Web Writer

**Mr Piranavan Myooran** – Video Editor

**Ms Judy Rowling** – Supervising Editor, Sai News Australia

**Mr Shane Rao** – Webmaster

**Mr Mark Proctor** – Video Supervisor

**Mr Deven Nair** – Member

**Ms Deluxmi Logendran** – Member



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