



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>

The Significance of Christmas Celebration

Judie Rowling

Supervising Editor - Sai News Australia, National Sai Media, SSIO Australia & PNG

Advent Candlelights

In the four weeks lead-up to Christmas, Christians throughout the world focus on the meaning of Advent. The word Advent means the coming of an important person or event. The focus for Christians is on the historical event of Christ coming into the world and its spiritual significance for possible growth and enlightenment within us.

It represents a time of reflection and anticipation for a promised return. Since the passing of our Lord Sai, this has become so much more significant with the Advent of Prema Sai.



Candlelight service: Sathya Sai devotees, Prashanti Nilayam

The distinctive symbol for Advent is light, illuminating the way for the pilgrimage Christians make symbolically to the manger in Bethlehem, allowing them to reflect on Christ's claim: *"I am the light of the world."*

On each of the four Sundays one candle is lit within a wreath of ivy, which represents the turning of the season of winter from sunless short days, to welcome in the sun god. As each one is lit, the candle lit from the week before begins to grow brighter in anticipation of, and in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

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EDITORIAL

In this issue of Sai News Australia we have focused on devotion and have included many devotional activities carried out by Sai devotees at regional and national levels to celebrate Sai's Birthday, Ladies Day and Christmas Day.

We have included a number of articles on the inner significance of these celebrations, and personal experiences of some devotees. It also includes very inspiring Divine discourses, which support the inner significance of these celebrations.

The Divine Incarnations take place in the world for the redemption of humanity. They lead mankind to God, just as a locomotive engine takes along with it a long train of carriages. They are also like rivers or lakes, which quench the thirst of many people.

Their divine teachings guide those who are eager to fulfill the purpose of their lives, through self-realisation to attain liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. A spiritual life, and a constant determined awareness of the Almighty helps to purify their minds. It is like getting rid of a disease by means of medicine, under the instructions of a competent physician.

There is no doubt about the sanctity and spiritual benefits derived in chanting God's name and observing the necessary austerities, combined with the deep yearning and love for the Supreme Lord. It is with true sincerity, devotion and earnestness that one can realise the unbreakable bond between our Soul (Atma) and the Supreme Soul (Paramatma). Sai has declared, *"Neither in this world nor in the next is there ruin for the spiritual aspirant. The doer of good never comes to grief"*.

Sai devotees endeavoured to celebrate the birthdays of Jesus and Sathya Sai Baba, and also observed Ladies Day with this attitude in mind.

We include in this issue, various reports on devotional singing and the prayers held to celebrate the above mentioned events. The devotees also engaged themselves in selfless service to needy ones during the birthdays of Divine incarnations. They worked tirelessly and energetically like bees swooping onto flower after flower collecting sweet honey. Just as the bees themselves got intoxicated by the honey, the "Working-Bees" too, have themselves uplifted with the Nectar of Divine Bliss.

The media committee has embarked on many exciting plans for the future. The role we hope to play in spreading Sai's teachings has been outlined in this issue. We would be grateful to receive inputs and suggestions from our members. Members who would like to share their ideas, stories or articles are most welcome. Our contact details can be found on the last page.

Lots of Sai Love,
The National Media Committee
Sathya Sai International Organisation, Australia & PNG

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Each candle also has significant spiritual meaning. Candlelight has always been a universal symbol of hope and remembrance, which crosses all languages and faiths. How many times have you seen the lighting of candles during sorrow, danger or death, or just lighting one on your altar?

The first Advent candle that is lit is the prophecy candle or candle of Hope—signifying that we can have hope because God is faithful to us. It is purple in colour.

The second purple candle is the Bethlehem candle or the candle of Peace—this is the candle of preparation, signifying the necessity to prepare us for His coming.

The third Advent candle that is lit is pink. It is the Shepherd candle or the candle of Joy—the angels sang for joy at the birth of Jesus.



Advent Candle Wreath: White, Pink & Purple

The fourth candle lit is again purple, and is the angel candle, or candle of Love. God loved us so much he sent Jesus to earth to save us.

The fifth candle is actually lit on Christmas Day, the colour being white, represents the purity of Jesus as the spotless lamb, sent to wash away our sins. His birth was for his death; his death was for our birth.

The colour purple symbolises repentance and fasting, but is also the colour of royalty and the anticipation of the presence of a King. Pink represents love, and reveals a shift from repentance toward celebration.

To underscore the importance of the light at Advent, special prayers are said that have particular reference to darkness and light. "We are given the hope to live in the light, instead of wandering in the darkness." (Isaiah 60.1-5)

Sathya Sai Baba says: "Jesus has shown the way in clear terms. He announced very early in life that he had come to illumine the spiritual path. He had the Light within him." – (The Embodiment Of Love, p70)

May you all be blessed with the light of God within and may the Advent of our Lord Prema Sai illumine this troubled world. Let us all bring hope, peace, joy and love into the world through the teachings of all our great masters.

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The Birth of Jesus Christ

Mark Proctor

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Birth of Jesus



Sathya Sai Baba



Jesus: picture materialised by Sai



Sathya Sai Baba says:

“There was a huge halo of splendour illuminating the sky over the village when Christ was born. This meant that He, who was to overcome the darkness of evil and ignorance had taken birth, that He will spread the Light of Love in the heart of man and councils of humanity.

Appearances of splendour, and other signs to herald the era that has dawned are natural when incarnations happen on earth.

Jesus was to shatter the darkness that had enveloped the world and the aura of light was a sign that announced the event.

The Masters arrive in answer to man's prayer.”

*“Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya”
(Lead us from darkness unto Light!)*

Human Values in Christmas Celebration

Sathya Sai Baba says:

“Make your hearts pure, your activities holy, and your feelings beneficial to all. That is the best way of celebrating the Birth of Christ.”

Click on this link for Sai's full Christmas message: <http://www.sssbpt.info/ssspsaks/volume11/sss11-54.pdf>

DEVOTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF SAI DEVOTEES

MY JOURNEY WITH SAI BABA – FROM FORM TO FORMLESS

Neville Fredericks

Zone 3 Chair, Sathya Sai International Organisation

It was 30 years ago that I first came face to face with the Sai Avatar. The direct experience was almost too intense for me to bear. His divine love, the realisation of his all knowingness, his power over matter, these took me to the highest joy, bliss and wonder. Yet through my lack of knowledge, his mystery left me trembling in his presence, as a peasant in the court of an emperor. My western education and culture had not prepared me for what I was experiencing.



Neville Fredericks: Executive Official, Sathya Sai World Conference 2015

Before that fateful Christmas morning at Brindavan in 1985, I had such a limited knowledge of eastern spirituality and little interest in the Christian religion, which had left me somewhat rudderless in my personal life. The word "avata" was not in my vocabulary at that time!

In that first moment when his gaze met mine under the banyan tree, an intense white light rose within his eyes and my life was to change irrevocably.

Over the next week my emotions fluctuated between fascination and fear - fear of the unknown. On New Year's Eve, I experienced his divinity when he showered divine love on me and I dissolved into tears in the highest bliss. At that time my chronic duodenal ulcer was cured and from the next day I was able to move freely and eat any food with no ill effect. On arrival home I could work physically and surf again after 8 years of illness.

Swami told me to do public work and I entered local government again becoming mayor for a second time. There were extreme lessons and hardships in this term of office and I would not have been able to continue without Swami's practical advice.

The many experiences with Baba on that first visit left me inspired and thirsting to read and hear more of the stories and experiences that others had with Sai Baba. In the following years I read books about Swami (Sathya Sai Baba) by Kasturi, Hislop, Sandweiss, Murphet and many more.

I keenly attended gatherings where people spoke about Sai and the miraculous events, which people experienced with almost every engagement with him. This was a very happy and inspiring time for me but the hard work was yet to come.

In the mid nineties my focus changed from reading about Sai Baba to reading what he said and taught. This refocus was the beginning of a more serious effort to modify my own behaviour based on the advice given in many of his discourses.

In the power of his words came a deeper understanding of the purpose of life and how we should live moral and righteous lives if we are to experience the Omnipresence of God.

It was at this time that I took up office bearers' roles in the Sathya Sai International Organisation, a time when, through service, ones spiritual growth can accelerate.

Being a servant in the Sathya Sai International Organisation has been the most uplifting experience for me. I have in the past been in many public organisations and nothing can compare to being with devotees of Sathya Sai Baba. It is here that I experienced the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man in full measure.

Baba advises that we are the beneficiaries of the service that we give and I have come to know the truth of this statement through the love, which is exchanged between Sai devotees and the selfless service, which is given to those in need.

The day after Swami's 80th Birthday I had my last personal interview with Him. There were a number of things, which occurred during that interview which to this day I do not understand what they meant.



1985: Neville and his family visit Sathya Sai Baba

However, for the first time Baba gave me the experience of being a personal friend and although this only lasted a few minutes it was profoundly significant for me.

As I had recently become Central Coordinator for Australia and PNG, I thought that Swami would give me guidance about organisational matters. The only organisational matter he did talk about was the Sai School at Murwillumbah, NSW and he expressed his happiness with its progress, giving me vibhuthi (sacred ash) to give to the devotees who were working there.

From this time my spiritual focus has been on the Omnipresent Sai who is all names and forms and who resides in the hearts of all beings.

Swami asks us to "see me in the eyes of everyone you meet" and to see all people as inherently good, with wrong action only coming about through a lack of knowledge. Baba's teachings have helped me to confidently approach all with the belief that at the core of every person there is truth, goodness and beauty, a spark of the Divine. This spark of Divine Consciousness is in each individual's true identity.

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My personal devotional practice is to focus on service with love. The belief that inspires me daily is that Sai's Divine Teachings will eventually transform the world. This global transformation will be effected through Education in Human Values and the inspirational lives of those citizens who are following the 5 values teachings of Sai Baba, which are also at the core of the great faiths of the world.

All these teachings are one and the same. As swami said *"I have come to repaint the guideposts on the ancient highway to god"*.

Some of Sai Baba's words, which have been fundamentally important to me on my spiritual journey, are:

- *"Follow the dictates of your conscience and you will never be wrong."*
- *"Dharma (righteousness) empowers you, dharma protects you, dharma brings with it its own reward."*

- *"Love is the solvent for the hardest of hearts."*
- *"Love God, fear wrong action, and observe morality in society."*
- *"The beauty that we see in nature is but a reflection of the beauty that is God."*

Sathya Sai said that a golden age will recur and that the seeds are still in the ground slowly germinating as the teachings begin to spread around the world.

What will characterise the coming golden age?

Sai Baba advised that it will be a time when the people of the world are guided in their every action by the prompting of conscience, the voice of God within.

Making His Mission, My Mission

Doug Saunders - Deputy Central Coordinator, SSIO, Australia & PNG

No man is an island. Our welfare, as individuals, is inextricably linked with the welfare of the community in which we live, of our country and, indeed, of the whole world. We should try and change our ways of thinking and see ourselves as part of a whole. We need to act towards one another with caring, understanding and responsibility.

Some two thousand years ago, Christ told us: *"Love your neighbour as yourself"*, but we forget.



Doug Saunders

Our neighbour is no different from us and what affects him or her, affects us also. Our dear Lord Sathya Sai Baba has reminded us that we are social beings - we rely on society for everything that fills our lives - our education, the houses we live in, the food and articles we purchase, our pleasures and relaxations as well as our livelihood.

He said. *"We should strive to use every talent and skill given to us, not just for our own benefit but for the good of the world. We owe everything to society and should be grateful to*

society for all that we derive from it. Expressing this gratitude is our foremost duty". (Taken from a Discourse Sathya Sai Baba gave in Madras 20/1/1986)

Sathya Sai Baba started a spiritual revolution that will eventually transform the world. The spiritual radiance of His teachings has had global influence. It is regenerating the planet, by bringing about a profound upward qualitative shift in human consciousness and real change in the lives of peoples of all faiths, all races, all layers of society and all backgrounds. And it is still going on.

He has fostered this transformation by expressing with great love and deep insight the eternal truths in simple modern language so as to motivate spiritual aspirants to become aware of their inherent divinity and experience it in their daily lives. In essence, His mission is the upliftment of humanity from the world of materialism and fear into one of divine understanding, unity, purity and peace.

Swami (Sathya Sai Baba) always reminded us that for us to have faith in Him, we must have devotion. Devotion is not something that can be taught such as a lesson in a classroom but something that grows from our love and faith in Him. Devotion to God is not to be calculated on the basis of how many temples or institutions one has started or helped in, the number of donations one has given, nor does it depend on the number of times one has written the Name of the Lord or on the time and energy one has spent in worship of the Lord. These are not vital at all - not even secondary.

Devotion is Divine Love, unsullied by any desire for the benefit that flows from it or the fruit or consequences of that love. It is love that knows no particular reason for its manifestation. It is the nature of the love of the river for the sea, the leaves for the tree, the stars for the sky, the waterfall for the rocks down which it flows. It is sweet in bad times as

well as good. Once one has devotion for God it will never leave or be extinguished and He will never stop loving us or advising us and guiding us.

In this distracting and tempestuous world, where some of us may have forgotten the true purpose of life and do not feel a proper sense of the future, Sathya Sai Baba's teachings have been timely and have served as the most effective antidote. They have shown us the true path of purposeful living by enjoining us to practice spiritual disciplines, which will help us to grow and evolve into our divine potential.

Significant among these spiritual disciplines are the following:

- Letting go by cultivating absolute faith and trust in a Higher Power.
- Becoming aware that God is in each of us as the Higher Self, above the limitations of the body, mind and senses.
- Seeing divinity everywhere.
- Integrating our individual consciousness with the universal consciousness.
- Daily prayers and meditation.
- Regular study of spiritual literature and applying the philosophical truths to our daily lives.
- We should progressively free ourselves from enslavement to the mind and senses and excessive body consciousness, do our best to perform selfless service.
- Steadfastly follow one's own faith and promote interfaith unity, learn to accept the dualities of life in equanimity, and practice unity, purity and harmony in thought, word and deed.
- Speak softly and sweetly to all.

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In order to further understand and experience our real self, we are encouraged to act with discrimination and dedication, prompted by stirrings from the heart rather than from the mind and base our actions on the Five Human Values of Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct and Non-violence that Sathya Sai Baba has so many times talked to us about. Living by these values is the foundation for our whole life.

Knowing and living by the Five Human Values will give us a feeling of completeness and serenity, make us happier and more peaceful. It will be easier to make better decisions, and we will be more likely to select the way that leads us to long-term goals instead of short-term benefits. Moreover, these values, when they become an everyday aspect of our lives, assume the utmost importance and have proved such a great healing balm to people all over the world. Our Divine Master, Sai has often given us examples of sages and ordinary persons who have overcome severe challenges of life by practising these values and has instilled in us the need to practise these values for our inner peace and spiritual advancement.

Love is that which embraces all of life in goodness and brotherhood. By the power of love everyone is connected to each other through thought, word and deed. It is a caring energy and feeling for each other immaterial of external differences such as race, religion, creed or nationality. Love is the binding agent that makes everything good happens. It is God. God is love and love is God.

Truth excites people who love learning as it takes us on a path of discovery and of wisdom. Truth means as things really are. We gain wisdom from our experiences as we travel life on the path of truth, of discovery, as there are many things we may have done in the past

that we dare not repeat as we have gained the wisdom of truth. The purpose of truth is to enlighten us and the experience of bad decisions helps us tremendously. There are two ways of learning the truth, one is to seek it yourself through experiences or you may gain it from the wisdom of others. We have been so blessed to have the best teacher and or guru of all - our dear sweet beautiful Lord, Sathya Sai Baba.

Peace is what everyone seeks at various times of our lives. It is when the state of mind is at rest and is not agitated by outside happenings or events. The best way to experience peace is to view all of our experiences with equanimity, which means that we do not over react to anything good or bad that happens in our lives. Everything happens for a good reason so we should try and learn from each experience and not get over exuberant when things go right and extremely unhappy when things do not go our way. I know it is hard to control our feelings sometimes but if we try hard enough and ignore all external happenings then there are times when we can feel very much at peace.

Right Conduct is about acting correctly (in accordance with *dharma*) and is the primary aspect of Right Conduct. Doing so with love magnifies the spiritual quality of the action and adds a much more beneficial dimension. Each one of us in this world is born with responsibilities which relate to our family, associates, work, society and country. If we do all that we have to do with love, then we are acting correctly. The laws of the universe are that every action has an equal and opposite reaction, so the more we think about our actions, the better they and the corresponding reactions will be.

Non-violence refers to physical, mental and emotional behaviour and attitudes. Respect towards all forms of life is essential as Swami tells us, this is an essential quality of a human

being. We are spiritual beings having a human journey and the spirit within us is love, so with love, how can violence exist? Words and emotional violence can be just as bad as physical violence, sometimes worse as it can create mental scars that last for much longer. It is said that those who do not have control of their words will always have great difficulty in controlling their minds. Happiness is union with God says Swami so how can we be happy if we do not see the divine in others? As all the forms of violence inherent within are removed, we will be brought to a state where our lives are more closely fulfilled and spiritually successful.

One cannot learn without being humble, which is an aspect of the elimination of the ego. We cannot grow without accepting all experiences both good and bad as necessary for our development. And we cannot fully merge into the consciousness of God without accepting everyone as our brothers and sisters. When we accept everyone and everything as part of ourselves, we have a better understanding and experience of our true divine nature.

Today, it is obvious that Swami's message of one religion of love, one race, one language of the heart and one Omnipresent God could not have come at a more critical time in the history of our planet. We are blessed to be the beneficiaries of this universal message and should play our part in practicing it. Let us therefore make universal love and truth the guiding principles in all matters relating to our wonderful Organisation and our daily lives. Let us consider all work we do as Swami's work and give richness and meaning to our lives that will make Him consider us as His true devotees.

Love is the Source;
Love is the Path;
Love is the Goal.

“Peace can only be won the hard way, by eliminating violence and greed from the hearts of individual.” - Sathya Sai Baba

*“So long as the sugar is on the tongue, you feel the sweetness in taste.
Similarly, so long as the heart has love, peace and devotion, you feel the bliss.”*

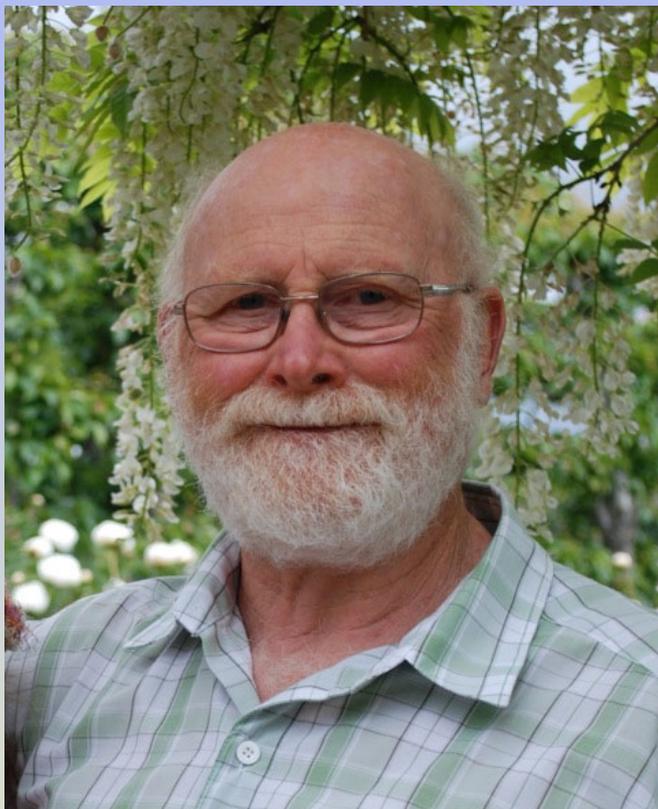
- Sathya Sai Baba

Love is the Source; Love is the Path; Love is the Goal

Dr. Michael Thrush

General Editor: National Sai Media, SSIO, Australia

When asked to contribute an article on developing devotion through our Sai group activities, my thoughts went back to the Pre-world Conference held in Sydney in June. The conference theme, “**Love is the Source; Love is the Path; Love is the Goal**”, focused on Love, the benchmark of all the human values, as well as love in action – Selfless Service. For myself, devotion translates as the “*Path of Love*” and Sathya Sai Baba tells us the expansion of our love is relevant whatever spiritual path we are on.



Dr. Michael Thrush

The lead-up to the conference gave adequate time for in-depth study of Swami’s (*Swami* - a reverential way of addressing Sathya Sai Baba) teachings on Love and Selfless Service. These topics were the subject of two discussion group sessions over the weekend. The excellent quality of discussion and understanding, and the involvement of the participants indicated that the lead-up time had not been wasted and that pre-conference study of Swami’s teaching had been thorough and enlightening. Some of my thoughts that follow are drawn from matters that were raised in discussion.

The conference resolutions, reported in the July edition of Sai News Australia, placed love as the foundation stone of our organisation. They stated that to make our organisation truly effective in spiritual transformation, our groups need to ensure that all their activities have the Love Principle as their operative core.

Selfless Service is a concrete manifestation of love in action and Swami constantly encouraged us to undertake service as an obligation of human birth and for our transformation.

One of Swami’s regular ways of addressing us was “*Embodiments of Love*”. The implications of this statement; the realisation of its meaning; and the living of its message are enormously important. If we are Love, then the more we connect with this Love, the more we practice it, the closer we come to permanently experiencing our true Self.

A suggestion made during the conference was the development of a self-audit tool to assist devotees to gauge their progress with the expansion of pure love in their lives. Whether this is followed through or not, our groups could benefit from regular self-audit on how the Love Principle is integrated in all their group activities. There are many areas we could examine and the following provides a few examples.

In the overall community of our Sai group, is there any sense of alienation or discontent? Swami tells us to see God in each other. To be forbearing and to expand our Love by sharing it with each other. If we all strive to practice this, we will make our Sai units welcoming places that our devotees will want to be a part of. Office Bearers have a particular responsibility in this regard and should always be aware that though executing their duties to the best of their ability is of paramount importance, the devotees they are serving are of equal importance. Watchwords for our groups should be harmony, inclusiveness, tolerance and compassion.

How are new people and visitors treated in our meeting? I think we all know the uncomfortable feeling of being with a group of strangers. This must be especially so for some of our visitors when confronted with spiritual practices that are quite alien to them. How do we treat strangers? Does the group being inclusive and friendly genuinely make them welcome or do they sit isolated, largely ignored after a perfunctory greeting?

It is a constant negative remark made by fellow devotees who have visited groups, especially the larger ones, that they have been generally ignored. If devotees find this unsettling, how do those who have not been to Sai groups before feel? Shouldn’t we consider that the stranger has been sent to us by Sai Himself. The stranger could even be Sai. Wouldn’t it be nice if every devotee in the group thought of himself or herself as a New Comer Officer and welcomed the stranger with love and a sacrifice of their time by being genuinely inclusive?

Just attending our Sai groups is an act of dedication and devotion. The connection we experience with the Divine through our sharing of our love for God with one another is a two-way exchange. We benefit from the presence of the other devotees and they benefit from ours.

Therefore, bring your love with you when you attend. It is amazing how someone radiating love can lift the whole atmosphere, just as someone radiating negativity can dampen it. Rather than seeing what we can get out of our groups, see what we can contribute. Swami tells us to treat the Organisation as our life’s breath and to never leave it. He places so much importance on it for our spiritual development.

My experiences with Swami on a couple of trips have shown me conclusively how the way in which we conduct our devotional singing sessions affects us and all those around. Songs that are sung with love by the group radiate love and affects all who hear them. On another level the spiritual energy engendered by songs sung with fervour, with heartfelt enthusiasm is also very, very powerful. Getting enthusiastically engaged in the singing is something that benefits us and all around greatly. It is something that builds our love and connection with God and is beneficial to the world at large.

Undertaking it is an aspirational goal. Swami has much to say on how valuable it is, as a One of the very positive aspects of the conference was the way in which the participants in the discussion groups were able to interact, enjoy and profit from the experience. It really demonstrated the power of discussion groups to help us understand Swami’s teachings and put them into practice in practical and effective ways.

Study Circles or discussion groups are not immediately associated with love.

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However, properly conducted, apart from an exercise in ego control and tolerance, they help us to connect with one another through understanding, compassion and empathy. One has only to attend a well run session with well thought-out subject matter to appreciate how satisfying and uplifting they can be. All have their own understanding of Swami's teachings. The sharing of that understanding helps us to understand one another, develop our own understanding and can lead to epiphanies, sudden realisation of important points that can propel us forward on the spiritual path. Apart from the important part Study Circles play in helping us come to grips with Swami's teachings, it is an act of loving service sharing our own experience with others.

The study of Selfless Service was a nice reminder of how we can make it a much more fundamental aspect of our daily life. We are all aware of how Selfless Service as a group activity is promoted as a desirable part of our Sai groups and for those groups not undertaking it, an aspirational goal. Swami has much to say on how valuable it is as a spiritual discipline for removing the ego, our desires and attachments, and most importantly, expanding our love. This latter aspect is something we should all be endeavouring to do by seeing God in the one we serve, and also in those who are helping us with the service.

Of course, we can take these principles outside the orbit of organised service and practice love in all encounters. We can transfer all the mundane acts and interactions into worship by offering the tasks to God with love.

Another way we can serve and learn to expand our love, is as an office bearer or volunteer in the group. Often, people plead they are inadequate for the jobs offered them, but most of us grow into the task with Swami's Divine blessings. Swami said that His work, is our blessing. The work He gives us, is a blessing for us. Serving Swami and

our fellow devotees as an office bearer is often a fast-track on the spiritual journey. You are constantly remembering Him and being extended in your spiritual understanding often learning valuable life skills at the same time. Perhaps one of the hardest things to remain aware of during this time is maintaining the Love principle during all your responsibilities and exchanges. Yes, there will be uncomfortable times, and sometimes strife, but Swami uses these experiences for our own transformation.

With reflection and inner guidance there is likely to be many ways in which we can expand Love for God both within the Sathya Sai International Organisation and our daily lives. Each Wing in a group will have its own activities that could be examined. In the larger Sai activities, the way we conduct Unity Functions and multi-faith festivals could also be reviewed. Are these activities leading to an expansion of love and tolerance? The suggestions made are only that, initial suggestions for possible reflection, but nowhere near exhaustive of what we could examine. Each group, or individual in the group would have their own priorities and needs. It is but a matter of our own awareness and determination.

I will close by remarking on something Dr Reddy said during the conference. He suggested that one way in which we can experience Swami's love is to revisit our experiences with Him. This is a beautiful way of connecting with Him and getting a nice recharge. During the discussion group sessions, I know the group I was in experienced this and I am sure others did as well. Many of the conference speakers also shared with us beautiful experiences of Swami, which left us quite moved. It is nice to every now and then revisit and reflect on those special moments we had with our Lord, and of course are still having. The sharing of them often relives the joy and power of the experience and gives a thrill to the people listening.

***“We ought not to be weary of doing little things
for the love of God, who regards not the
greatness of the work, but the love with which it
is performed.”***

- Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God

***“See God in every one you meet.
See God in every thing you handle.
Live together, revere each other, let not the seeds of
envy and hate grow and choke the clear stream of
Love.”***

- Sathya Sai Baba

My devotion and the experience in Sathya Sai Organisation

Dr Mohanadas Balasingham: *Former Devotional Coordinator, NSW Region West, SSIO, Australia & PNG*

Saturday, 23 November 2013 was not only a glorious day, being the birthday of the Advent of Sathya Sai Baba, but it was especially memorable and significant day for me. It was the day I believe, I was called upon by Baba Himself to serve as the New South Wales Region West Devotional Coordinator.



Dr Mohanadas Balasingham

I considered this appointment as the greatest of all gifts, being merit of deeds done in my many lifetimes. I decided then itself, to serve Baba through to the best of my ability.

Sathya Sai Baba, the refuge of all Spiritual seekers, the personification of Daivinity has brought solace, relief, peace and awareness to

millions of followers

in every part of this globe. It was a rare opportunity I could never have dreamt of, to be able to serve in the Lord's Mission itself.

For an organisation to prosper and progress, the organisational structure should be one where the leader or president is given full cooperation, support and motivation by all Wing Coordinators. Being the coordinator of a vital Wing – Devotional, I decided not only to give my full allegiance to president, but to also strive to motivate and encourage all the other Wing Coordinators to do the same.

Following Nine Modes of Devotion are employed in all the activities of our Sai Centres and Regions:

1. Listening to the glories of God
2. Praising the Lord
3. Remembering the name of the Lord
4. Serving the feet of the Lord
5. Worshipping the Lord
6. Prostrating or praying to the Lord
7. Cultivating the attitude of servant to the Lord
8. Cultivating the attitude of friendship with the Lord and
9. Total surrender unto the Lord

Swami says *"All the nine kinds of worship are designed to achieve purity of mind and heart. But purity should find expression in action. Without purity in action, the real nature of the Self cannot be recognised."*

- (Sathya Sai Speaks v 20 - 15)

We strived to implement in all Sai Centres through study circles, Sai literature reviews, sharing of personal experiences of devotees, regular Satang (meeting of devotees) and reading of Sai messages. These activities provided the platform for members to immerse themselves in the glory of God and grow spiritually.

Study Circles:

Study circles provide an excellent opportunity for members to study, discuss and exchange ideas and information of Sai teachings and other great spiritual truths. In the years of 2014 and 2015, the study guides based on the tenth Pre-World Conference, were used as topics for discussion in study circles. The subjects covered included 'Love' and

'Service' among others. Members' participation and interest in these studies increased to a great extent. Study circle facilitators ranging from youths to seniors, actively participated in conducting these sessions. These study circles have become an excellent guide of how an aspirant can spiritualise his life and progress in his transformation.

Literature Reviews:

This involves a facilitator summarising a Sai book he has read, and sharing the teachings with members. This activity enables members who do not find time or lack the interest to get an insight into invaluable Sai literature.

Thought for the Day:

A short Sai message is read after regular sessions every week in Sai centres to keep the members closely associated with Sacred Sai Values and Teachings.

Swami says, *"Listening, reflection on the implications and putting into practice what has been learnt are the three stages in the Spiritual journey. Not information but transformation, not instruction but construction should be the aim of the study circle."* - (SSS v 10 - 51)
"Knowledge that does not give harmony and wholeness to the process of living is not worth acquiring". - (SSS v 12 - 30)

Meetings of Like-Minded Devotees (Satsang):

Weekly meetings are held at members' houses from 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. which have proved to be very interesting and spiritually fulfilling. A member reads a particular passage from a Sai or other spiritual book, and then the subject matter is analysed and assimilated through discussion.

Self-Transformation Program:

We have encouraged and conducted self transformation program sessions throughout the NSW Region West. Some centres have only one STP group while others have more than one. A keen interest is being expressed by members for these STP sessions.

Devotional Singing (Bhajans):

"Where ever my glory is sung, I install myself there" - (Sathya Sai Speaks v 10). Singing of bhajans is the most popular devotional activity in Sai centres and we do our best to promote and encourage this among all members. The Devotional Wing has also organised Devotional singing in the Shiridi Temple, much to the appreciation of the Trustees of the temple. Efforts have also been undertaken systematically to train and encourage members in singing English Devotional songs.

Gayathri Chanting Project:

Devotional Wing started this project on the 26 January 2015 with an aim of offering one million Gayathri (universal prayer for enlightenment) chants, at the Lotus feet of our beloved mother on Swami's Maha-Samadhi day (passing of Sathya Sai Baba). We managed to offer one million chants well before Maha-Samadhi Day on the Auspicious Easter Day.

With this emerging aspirations and confidence we embarked on a mammoth project of offering another nine million Gayathri chants at the Lotus Feet on our beloved Sai's Ninetieth Birthday, commencing from Sai's Samadhi Day. It was an amazing experience that we reached nine million Gayathri well ahead of time on the 1st Day of Navaratri (Prayers to Divine Mother for nine nights) and all up thirteen million offered on the day of Sai's Birthday celebrations. Thanks to, not only the entire Region West members, but interestingly many aspirants outside our region also participated with intense love and devotion. Hopefully people who were used to the habit of maintaining Gayathri chanting, will continue for the wellbeing of the society and for the peace of this beautiful world.

Sathya Sai Baba says: *"Come just one step forward, I shall take a hundred steps towards you. It is my intent and will. Remember - nothing happens without my will"*. (Sathya Shivam Sundaram v 3)

The Power of Unity Purifies Devotion

Dr. Shivendra Kumar

International Youth Coordinator, Zone 3, Sathya Sai International Organisation

Dr. Shivendra Kumar is the International Youth Coordinator for Zone 3 of Sathya Sai International Organisation. Below is his spiritual talk delivered at Sathya Sai Centre of Blacktown, NSW, Australia. To describe the power of unity in devotion, he chose to take an example of the Lord Rama's Divine drama from the epic Ramayana (Hindu scripture). I hope you will enjoy this well presented, clear and easy to comprehend gist of the devotional purity embedded in the unity.

- Compiling editor

My loving *pranaams* (prostration and salutation) at the Divine Lotus Feet of our beloved *Bhagwan* (Sathya Sai Baba).

Revered elders, dear brothers and sisters, Om Sri Sai Ram!

Mother Teresa once said, "What you can do I cannot and what I can do you cannot". Do you agree with that? So if you can do what I cannot and I can do what you cannot, we should all work together and get to do things that needs to be done. I can't play harmonium so I need someone to play harmonium and somebody else can't play tabla hence I am asked to play.

I take you back thousands of years ago when Lord Rama lost his wife, Sita, as Ravana had kidnapped her. You all know the story where Sita wanted the golden deer. Ravana had taken Sita to a location which Rama did not know and Rama at that point in time was left with his brother trying to see where he could find Sita. Rama tried very hard. He looked around the house, He looked everywhere but he could not find Sita.

Eventually Rama had to walk a path, a path which He had not known. He did not know where Sita was, where He would end up. It was a very difficult path for days, for years, which He had to take. But He met people who helped Him accomplish what we know Rama accomplished.

He met Hanuman who took Him and Lakshmana on his shoulders, to Sugreeva. Sugreeva exposed Rama to this big army that eventually helped Rama conquer Lanka and win back Sita. Not only that, Rama had to fight battles with Bali to win another force of army. He met other creatures – Jatayu, Sampathi and various others.

Rama did not have the ability to fly over the ocean (a Divine drama). He relied on Hanuman who could fly over the ocean in order to find the location of Sita. That too, Hanuman did not know that he had the boon to fly over the ocean – He had to rely on someone else to tell him that he had the boon to fly over and get to the destination he needed to.

When Hanuman went to Lanka he relied on people within Lanka to be asleep, and not to be paying attention in order to get to Sita. Coming back, when they had to cross over to Lanka, this army of tens of thousands of monkeys could not cross the ocean by themselves. Even if they chartered the A380 they would not have been able to proceed because 450 people landing in a place where there are hundreds of thousands of soldiers already waiting is impossible. You will have to go in a mass to be able to win. So they relied on Nala, Neela and Angada to be able to put rocks in the ocean so that they all could cross.

Was Rama all by himself? He wasn't. Was He with only Lakshmana? No, He wasn't. He was with a group of people with whom He fought Ravana. He defeated Ravana and got possession of Sita. Rama also relied on external intelligence in the form of Vibhishana because He had been trying really hard to defeat Ravana and could not. At that point in time Vibhishana provided help and said, "This is what you do to win the battle." Unity is very vital for victory.

Brothers and sisters, in life when we take on big projects, when we are working on the path with Bhagawan to restore Dharma on Earth, when we are trying to get back what our real origin is, just like Rama was trying to get hold of Sita, we cannot do it alone. That is the reason why Bhagawan created this Organisation because if we were to alone sit down at home and attain liberation we simply won't be motivated. I need people around me to motivate me and to help push me on this journey.



Dr. Shivendra Kumar

Rama, the Lord of the universe, in one point in time showed us as an example that He had to rely on people to achieve what He needed to achieve. He worked with them. He could have done it all by Himself. We know how powerful He is yet He went to the people, He went to the creatures, He went to all the different levels of the hierarchy of the monkey kingdom. He worked with them and got what He needed to get. We all know that these people eventually helped Him out. Even the doctor who told Rama to send Hanuman to get the *Sanjoivani* (herbal medicine leaves), worked together with Rama.

There are two things that are very important in this story. First is unity. They all worked together for the same purpose. They all knew that they had to defeat Ravana and get hold of Sita. They all worked for that very purpose. And second, that is equally important is humility. Hanumana is much more powerful in His own way than Rama. Lakshmana has His own talents. He is very powerful in His own ways. Jamunanth is very powerful in His own ways. These individuals had power that was unique to them. What Rama could do Hanumana couldn't and what Hanumana could do Rama couldn't. So remember what Mother Teresa said, "What you can, I cannot and what I can, you cannot". We see that beautifully in the Ramayana.

These individuals having so much power, having so much ability, they all listened to Lord Rama in that point in time. He was the leader of the team. He was the one giving directions. He was the one who set the purpose and He was the one who was bearing overall responsibility for making sure that everything got done the way it should have been, with ethics, with all the compliance and by abiding with regulations. He is *Mariyada Purushotama* (the embodiment of righteousness). So He was the one leading and each one of these individuals who were superheroes in their own aspects were humble enough to listen to Him.

Brothers and sisters, in this journey of human existence unity is important – the unity between thought, word and deed. In a family, in an organisation, in the workplace, in the operations, in the running of a country, in sports, in music, everywhere – unity is very important. Always remember that if we are going to achieve anything in life personally, professionally or as a group, it relies on collective wisdom. It relies on the power of everyone. And secondly, it relies on humility. Sometimes I might be doing something and at other times you might be doing something. Sometimes you will be helping me and sometimes I will be helping you.

Together only can we achieve what we need to achieve and in this point in time where the world is right now the most important thing ahead of us, above and beyond all the issues we have, such as the bank balances, politics, arguments with the neighbour, arguments with ISIS, the most important thing for us is the restoration of Dharma. If we all unite and work towards this, every word, every breath, every action we take will get us there and we will get there together. Lord Rama led by example. If Rama can, we all can.

In conclusion, always remember what Mother Teresa said, "What you can do I cannot and what I can do you cannot". Jai Sai Ram!

Sai School and Education in Human Values

The Panacea for the Present Day Problems

Suresh Sampathkumar

Business Manager - Sathya Sai School, NSW



Suresh Sampathkumar

Looking around, one cannot help noticing the multi-faceted problems faced by society. Whilst attempts are being made at various levels to overcome the challenges, the desired result is a far cry from being achieved. Amongst all, children are perhaps the most gullible and easily influenced by the social environment they live in, which plays a critical role in shaping their character. To bring about positive development of our children, Education in Human Values (EHV) could not come at a more appropriate time for society than now.



Sathya Sai Primary School

It is not without a reason Swami has reiterated time and again the importance and need for EHV in society. He says, *"The teachers of tomorrow are the students of today"*.

As School is the primary medium for imparting education to children, it becomes the perfect place to introduce EHV along with the academic programs. Simply stated, EHV is the potent product and School is the powerful medium for infusing a positive change in society. The obvious challenge is how to make our Sai School an attractive choice for students and families across the community amidst the many schools that have been in existence for a long time.

We are in a material world and organisations are often judged initially by external factors. Educational institutions are by no means an exception. A strong selling point for any school to attract the community would be its ability to showcase its educational successes, the opportunities it provides to achieve academic excellence and its state of art facilities. Some of the top schools in the area provide similar selling points and are sought after for this very reason by the community. While Sai School strives to achieve the above, our philosophy and goal goes

beyond this. Our emphasis on character building should be a particularly attractive incentive for families seeking the best for their children.

Like a honey-coated pill, I believe that the school's good infrastructural facilities help package the key element, such as EHV and attract more students (and their families) to be part of the Sai School community. The blending of EHV with the academic programs helps children immensely to adhere to the principles of the Five Human Values: Love, Peace, Truth, Right Action and Non-violence. By tapping this into their conscience, which the students at the Sai School know as the "inner wise one", develops a good character and makes them more resilient and caring.

Swami says, *"True education is not for a mere living, but for a fuller and meaningful life."*



Sathya Sai High School: Will begin with year 7 classes in 2016.

The journey with the Sai School enables a positive change in the lives of young children and through them their families.

But, what does the Sai School mean for rest of us?

The common denominator in my view is our aim to be "role models" in society. As many of us know, the Sai School aims to be a model school for other institutions, while as individuals we aspire to be role models in the community by following Swami's Teachings and living the values. Of course, practicing this is the process of self-transformation. The Sai School seeks to transform its students, where by following Swami's Teachings seek to transform us.

Out of His boundless love, Swami has built several educational institutions to demonstrate the importance of good values-based education to humanity and show how this can change not only the students but also the community they interact with creating for both a better future. He has granted the opportunity for His devotees in Australia and beyond to take part in this great mission by supporting our Sai School in Murwillumbah and experiencing the joy within as we see His mission unfold.

The opportunity also reminds us of an important principle; no matter how we connect with the School in our own little way, Love must remain the undercurrent of our actions and should spread farther and wider, being the undercurrent of all our thoughts, words and deeds, with all we connect with. This connection of Head, Heart and Hand is values in action and truly, a step forward in our self-transformation.

Swami's statement sums it all:

*"Living with God is Education
Living for God is Service
Living in God is Realization."*

**"Pure love
is the chief
manifestation of
education
in human values"**

- Sathya Sai Baba

'Working Bee'

The 'Working Bee' is the national service project to fulfil the needs of our Sathya Sai Primary School at Murwillumbah as well as our newly acquired campus for High School at Dungay, NSW.

Sai devotees can play key roles in preparing our Secondary Campus to be ready for School this year (2016) and also to ensure our Primary School campus continues to be maintained to a high standard.

In order to have these volunteer service activities happening on a regular basis and also to prepare for our 'Working Bee' in a structured way, Board of Governors of Sathya Sai School would like to collect some data to create a database of all Volunteers with various skill sets and also collate information from members interested in supporting and contributing to the working bees that are planned.

To fulfil the needs of our Sai School, the School Board is looking for members who can support our school in many specialist skills including carpentry, plumbing, electrical, IT hardware (Network, Cabling and Server solutions), architecture and event management.

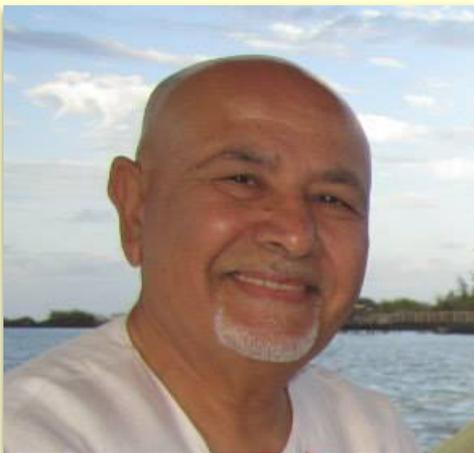
For all those planning to fly/drive in for the 'Working Bee' service, if you need any further information or help, please contact our National Service Coordinator: SundaramSudhan@gmail.com or 0404 829 385

Below are some of the activity reports on the actual 'Working Bee' happening at our Sathya Sai School and experiences of those who have participated in this project on 11-13 December 2015. - *Compiling Editor - Sai News Australia*

Sai School 'Working Bee' Experiences

Dr. Gunu Naker

Team leader Fiji Sai Medicare, Australia. Co-Convenor Sai Medical Unit, Australia



Dr. Gunu Naker

The call came out from Brother Sudhan, our National Service Coordinator, for a Working Bee at the Sai School Murwillumbah. I have seen the school grow since its inception at the foot of Mt Warning as a small facility, to its fully functioning primary school in Murrwillumbah township. The school was blessed

by Swami and the hard work and perseverance on part of all who furthered the project; have progressed it so much.

When the call came for the Working Bee I felt that Swami has given us this project to nurture it to the next stage as a high school and to continue to support in all possible ways. So I registered my interest with skills in handyman work and carpentry. I started looking for two more members who would be able to assist with their skills so we could travel as team with all the tools needed. With Swami's Grace I got two very able Sai volunteers, one an electrician, Pradeep Singh and one a general handyman and trouble shooter, Anil Patel, both in whom I had full confidence.

I had communication with Sudhan as to the jobs we may be doing, which included painting, cleaning, carpentry, electrical work, gardening and so on. So we gathered all the tools that we thought necessary.

We set out on our road trip with our camper van early on the morning of Wednesday 9th December at 5.00 a.m. from Sydney and reached the high school by 5.30 p.m. Already there were Sai youth from Victoria, NSW and Queensland doing cleaning and garden work under the guidance of Sudhan.

At 9.00 a.m. the following day we had an orientation and briefing regarding the jobs at hand by Sudhan and Steve, who has taken up a job as caretaker volunteer. They had done all the planning, preparation, and equipment provision necessary. So various teams were made up from all the volunteers for the various jobs at hand. We were all advised to keep hydrated during the day due to the heat. All started their allotted jobs with lots of enthusiasm, although for some this was a first experience. Sudhan's leadership, involvement, commitment and communication with all the volunteers is commendable.

Apart from work at the new secondary school, we had jobs to do at the primary school too, so we needed to find out what was required from Suresh Sampathkumar, the Manager and Leelah Broughton, the Principal. They already had some youth cleaning up and doing garden work. Our team had to do electrical work at the primary school and carpentry to set out 3 big garden beds at the secondary school. Steve had supplies ready for the garden beds. Pradeep and Anil set out to do all the electrical work.



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The day was broken by a delicious lunch which was provided by Sai devotees from Gold Coast and Murwillumbah.

By the afternoon we started on the garden beds. With the help of the youth we took all the heavy logs to the well-equipped workshop to be cut to the size required. Steve was there to guide us.



We had to stop working at about 3.30 p.m. due to heat. To our rescue the Lord sent us a heavy storm with thunder, high wind, hailstones and rain, which lasted about 2 hours.



Mt Warning Sai Temple

Evening was spent at the Mt Warning Sai Temple with devotional singing and spiritual sharing with Wendy. It was so spiritually refreshing. Friday we set out early to complete our garden beds and had to dismantle the old beds and do repairs to the green house.

There was more electrical work to be completed at the primary school so we obtained all the supplies needed from local hardware shops. With Swami's Grace we managed to get all the needs in the exact quantity required and with Pradeep's skills the job was completed by late evening.



By Saturday more volunteers arrived from Sydney and Queensland so they joined forces and although it was raining the teams managed to clean-up all the bushes and cart trailer loads of cleared material to a heap at the far end of the grounds to be burnt later.



Sudhan Sundaram: National Service Coordinator, SSIO, Australia & PNG

Planning by Sudhan and the team at the school was exceptional. All the volunteers put in the skills and effort needed so that all the jobs were completed in spite of bad weather and storms.

Spiritually it was very elevating experience due to the effects of teamwork, respect, and selfless dedicated work with our aim to do the best we could offer.

I hope future working bees are well supported. Whoever participates will be helping Swami's Mission by supporting the Organisation's main service project for Australia and will gain spiritual benefits from such holy work.

Working Bees – Joint Experience (Rajeshwari and Pradeep Singh)

Rajeshwari Singh

Education Coordinator & SSE Teacher, Sathya Sai Centre of Hurstville

Pradeep Singh is a long time participant of Sathya Sai Centre of Hurstville, especially in selfless service projects. He is a very humble Sai devotee and strongly believes in the practice of Sai principles rather than preaching or talking about his spiritual experiences. Nevertheless, he has the right to follow his own conscience. For him the spiritual principle, "Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray" is very valuable and that is what he strives to do in his life as far as possible, amidst the worldly turmoil.

The following is an account of his experiences shared by his wife, Rajeshwari Singh, which is combined with her own experiences in the 'working bee' national service project. Below is an account of Rajeshwari's experience. - Compiling Editor – Sai News Australia.



Rajeshwari Singh

I thank you for inviting my husband, Pradeep Singh to share his experiences in serving in Sathya Sai School as 'working bee'. As you know that he is a great believer in "Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray". He would usually not like to talk about his service in the 'working bee' national service project.

Nevertheless, I would voluntarily like to share his experience that he has shared with me in relation to

'Working Bee' national service project in Sathya Sai Primary and High Schools on 12–13 December 2015, You may share with this with others through the Sai Media publications.

At first when Dr Gunu Naker approached Pradeep to find out whether he was available to accompany him in the Working Bee national service project, Pradeep was very happy to say yes. He was in fact looking forward to joining the Working Bee group to serve in Sai schools. Dr. Gunu Naker explained to Pradeep that only 3 people can travel in his van. He already had 3 on his list. However Pradeep was told that he can accompany Dr. Gunu Naker if one of the other Sai devotees withdraws.

So when he told me his intention and the opportunity that was available, I encouraged him by saying, "May be you can take a flight and meet them (Dr. Gunu Naker and others in his group) at the Sai school". He was happy with the suggestion but waited for Dr. Gunu Naker's message.

A week passed and he did not hear from Dr. Gunu Naker. I said to him, "Let's see what Swami wants". Then that afternoon he came and told me that Dr. Gunu Naker has sent him an email, which said that one of the other two cannot go because he could not get leave approval from his workplace. I said to Pradeep, "This is Sai's blessing - whatever happens is His will. It's just like going to Prashanthi Nilayam - no matter how anxiously one plans to visit Prashanti Nilayam, one is able to make the trip only if Sai wills."

After this, the preparations to join the Working Bee group began. Pradeep was all hyped up getting ready to go. He said to me, "When I

go there, I don't want to waste any time. I will do my best for Swami."

The first day, upon arriving at the school, Pradeep rang me and said, "I think a miracle has happened." I asked him, "What happened?" He said, "The 3 little Chinese containers filled with fried rice which you packed for Dr. Gunu Naker, Anil Patel and myself, multiplied when we gave it to the school kitchen for heating. When the kitchen people poured it into a pot, there was a potful of fried rice, which was enough to feed 30 - 40 working bees, who were present." Then I said to myself, "This is Sai's way of winning Pradeep's faith even more."

Throughout his service to Sai school, he kept emailing me photos of devotional singing sessions and the service that they provided. This was an expression of his joy and resoluteness in serving the children of Sai.



When Pradeep returned to Sydney, I picked him up from Hina's (Dr. Gunu Naker's daughter's) house. He was full of stories about the Sai school. He was talking like a little child excited about his new toys. He carried on in this way for a few days.

From my perspective, Pradeep came back feeling very energetic, with a stronger faith in Swami, and feeling very contented with himself with what he had to offer at the Sai School. He said to me, "It's like going to Prashanthi Nilayam! That's how blissful I feel." This morning he said to me, "I will go again."

This is my short experience on behalf of Pradeep that I thought I would share with all because I know he would not talk about his experience.

Words of Appreciation to Working Bees

Sudhan Sundaram

National Service Coordinator - SSIO, Australia & PNG

The 'Working Bee' from the 9-13 December 2015 at our Sathya Sai School in Murwillumbah across both the Primary and Secondary Campuses, was memorable on a number of different fronts. Starting on the last day of School at our Primary Campus, witnessing the remarkable talents of our students' through a theatre like performance, the display of commitment of Dr Gunu Naker and his team making a road trip on their caravan with their tools for the long 5 days, to the vibrant and energetic adults and youth from Brisbane, Gold Coast, Melbourne and Sydney.

A special thanks to the delicious food and support from the members of the local Gold Coast and the Brisbane Regions. It was graciously appreciated! It was truly special to be part of a team from all across the country, all getting together in service to our primary service offering - our Sai School.

Below are contributions of their experiences from 3 Sai Youth who participated in the 'Working Bee'. It is refreshing to see so many youth that are motivated to serve at our School.

Working Bee - Feedback from Youth Group members

The working bee that the Victorian Youth participated in at the Sathya Sai High School was an amazing experience. From the day that we got there to the day we left, we had a wondrous time that cannot be simply put into words. From the various service activities, to the bhajans and to the time spent bonding with everyone who came, it was simply put... just incredible. The energy of the place itself is something else and no matter how challenging the work was, everyone jumped on board and the work was carried out with ample amounts of love. More importantly the youth enjoyed themselves! That was the key.



Our National Service Coordinator, Sudhan and everyone else involved created an environment where the youth could enjoy themselves while also doing service and this helped everyone want to continue to do more work. When it came time to pack up and head off, we were exhausted but we did not want to leave. Having done so much work there was a part of us which wanted to stay back and continue.

We cannot thank Swami enough for giving us the opportunity to come and be a part of this working bee. Not only did it give us an opportunity to serve, it also brought us closer to our fellow Sai devotees.

We look forward to more opportunities to come and be a part of similar working bees in the future. We simply cannot thank Swami enough for this wonderful and enlightening experience.

- Prasath Santhakumaran, Victoria

The working bee's held at both the Primary School and High School were such an amazing and spiritual experience for us. The Queensland youth are so privileged to live so close to both campuses but don't always have the motivation to go up to the Sai School to serve without a proper working bee being planned. Having the Sydney and Melbourne youth both there at the same time encouraged more youth to come along and serve the schools. This planned event encouraged youth who had not come before on other working bee's to come and serve. The Queensland Youth have also not had the opportunity before to participate in the Primary Schools farewell ceremony for the year 6's. This was a beautiful experience for those of us who were lucky enough to be there and we were so inspired by the creativity of the Sathya Sai Primary School students. We reflected on the confidence that all the



students portrayed in their play and that we could use their energy in our plays for the Sathya International Sai Organisation!

The next few days were spent gardening, painting and cleaning the Sai High School. Having the working bee over a few days allowed for us to see the difference the Melbourne and Sydney youth made on the campus.

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On the day of the regional clean when more Queensland devotees came to clean up, we weeded in the forest walk area and was able to see the difference in the shrubbery and envisage the students being able to have a calm and quiet place to go to once the school is open.



We were all so grateful for the opportunity to put our energy into the Sai School and were also grateful for the divine energy we got back from the school.

- Dheavini Naicker, Queensland

I was fortunate to be part of the working bee at the Sathya Sai School in December. The working bee consisted of volunteers from all around Australia, helping in various activities in both the primary and secondary Sathya Sai Schools. There was an abundance of work to do and

volunteers were involved in maintenance, preparation and cleaning of school facilities.

Flooding is a seasonal occurrence in Murwillumbah, and so work was done in preparation for the flooding season. We also were fortunate to interact with the primary school kids and teachers on their final day of school for the year. This day consisted of assisting the students and teachers clean the rooms and offices of the school, in preparation for next year.



The sense of responsibility and enthusiasm of the students was inspiring. Other activities included painting, mowing, gardening and mulching. Witnessing the work that has been happening in the primary and secondary schools, it inspires those involved to continue to engage in the abundance of ongoing service opportunities with the Sai School.

Kailaesh Raveendran. NSW

Glimpses of Some Working Bee Activities



90 Years of Sathya Sai Baba's Birth Anniversary Celebrations



Sathya Sai's advice on Celebrating His Birth Anniversary

"As I was coming to the Hall, many devotees greeted me with the words, "Happy Birthday"! They should wish for "happy birthdays" for those who are not happy. I do not need your birthday greetings.

The Divine is perennially in bliss (nithyaanandham).

The Divine is ever blissful, confers supreme happiness on others, is the very embodiment of the highest wisdom, has transcended the opposites, is vast as space, is cloud-like in complexion, and has perfect features."

Like the lightning in the heart of a cloud, wisdom should illumine your hearts. That wisdom will reveal the Divine in you.

Embodiments of Love! You have all come here at great expense and trouble. Make the utmost effort to understand the spiritual basis of the "I" principle. When you regard the "I" as the Self (Atma), you will be free from all suffering. In case troubles come, they will vanish like snow on a mountain. Why should you bother about these passing clouds? When you have realized Self-awareness (Atma-jnana), there will be no need for you to worry about anything.

Swami does not rejoice in the celebration of birthdays. Since all of you have come for this

celebration, I am obliged to give you satisfaction. I have no wants. Whatever I do is for your sake. Recognise this truth. I have no dislike for anyone and no one dislikes me. All are mine and I belong to all. My benediction is "May all be happy". Everyone should adhere to the path of righteousness. All should manifest their spiritual essence and experience spiritual bliss. Till you realise that spiritual oneness, you have to perform devotional acts like bhajans (devotional singing), repetition of the name of God, and prayers. Keep your association with anyone to the barest minimum.

Genuine spiritual aspirants should be particularly careful in eschewing bad company. They should create an environment conducive to their spiritual progress and mental peace. That is the only thing Swami wants.

Having come to Prashanthi Nilayam, all of you must become exemplary devotees. Outsiders must feel spontaneously how exemplary the behaviour of Sai students and Sai devotees is. That reaction will do you more good than satisfying me.

I do not relish the celebration of my birthday or pompous decorations for the purpose. Such ostentation is not good for anyone.

Adopt a practical attitude toward spiritual life. With holy thoughts in you on this auspicious day, you must go out into the world and spread your sacred feelings among others. Don't confine your feelings to yourselves or retain them only during your stay here. Spread them wherever you go."

Divine Discourse: 23 November 1997

A Multitude of Offerings for our Beloved Sai

Around Australia, State and Regional Sai Centres and Groups offered several activities and devotional events at Swami's feet in late 2015, including Ladies Day, Swami's Birthday and a variety of Christmas offerings. Below are some accounts of the various activities that took place.

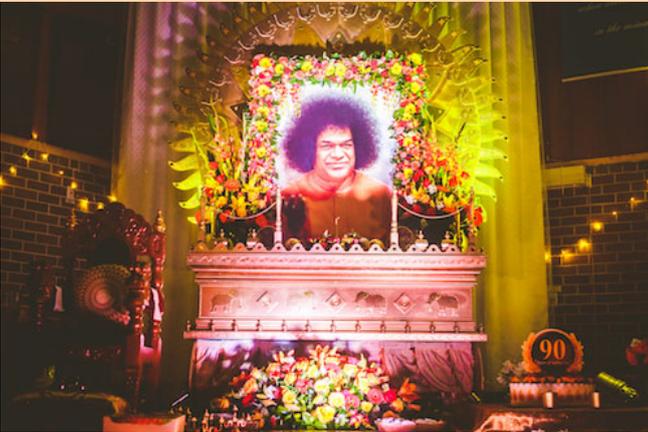
NSW REGION EAST

90th Anniversary of the Advent of Sathya Sai Baba Sunday, 22 November 2015

Haris Dharmaratnam

The most anticipated event of the year was finally upon us! Celebrating the 90th Advent of our Lord Sai! Months of planning, designing and rehearsing has led to this very moment, as we celebrated the birthday of our Divine Master.

However, this offering was merely the culmination of 90 days of celebrations which had manifested through 90 days of service. It was an opportunity for all members of NSW Region East to make humble offerings of service at His Lotus Feet, each and every day leading up to His Birthday.



Devotees were given a personalised journal to write down their own reflections each day, as well as a calendar highlighting many of the service activities that were being organised around the region. These included nursing home visits, tree planting, birthing kits project, hamper drives as well as the Global Akhanda Bhajan (continuous devotional singing for 24 hours) and Ladies Day offerings.



The 89th day marked the grand celebrations of the 90th Year of Advent in NSW Region East.

The event dawned with a golden chariot that oversaw the entire celebration. A grand stage for Swami to watch His Birthday celebrations. With a white shimmering backdrop, the large chariot allowed all the devotees to connect as soon as they entered the hall.

During the first 30 minutes, devotees were given the opportunity to write offerings on specialised post cards which they could offer at Swami's feet. This was an opportunity for each devotee to seek Swami's blessing and be part of the celebrations and have their own personal connection with the Lord. All the post cards offered at the altar were taken to Prashanthi Nilayam the next day to be offered at the Samadhi.

Following the offering of the post cards, the program continued with an acknowledgment to the traditional owners of the land and an epic countdown to his birthday celebrations. This was followed by a discourse from Swami on the unity and oneness of all faiths and the common message of love that they all share. This was followed by a production that explored the various stories of each faith, depicted through a grandmother lovingly telling her grandchild bedtime stories from her knowledge of various faiths. The play began with a prayer from the Zoroastrian faith, and a short depiction of a conversation between Zarathustra and the Prince of Iran.



This was followed by the story of Prahalad, depicted through a dance spectacular depicting the devotion of Prahalad to Lord Narayana and the disdain of his father. The devotion of Prahalad manifest in an epic battle and the lord taking the form of Narasimha. The story highlighted Prahalad's unwavering faith in the lord, no matter what adversity was faced.

The grandmother then described the famous Jewish story of Noah's Ark, a story that showed the importance of always spending time making the world a better place. This story was depicted by young boys and girls who portrayed Noah's faith in God's words and following His command. The production then explored the five pillars of Islam and the importance of each pillar in allowing us to connect to God. From the meaning of Ramadan to the holy pilgrimage to Mecca, the entire scene was an exploration of how each spiritual practice plays an important role in our transformation into instruments of love.

This segued into the story of Quan Yin, which began with a princess, called Mao Shin, who did not adhere to her royal lifestyle. She was the embodiment of selfless love and compassion who went out of her way to help those less fortunate.

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The scene culminated in her selfless actions towards the father who had abandoned and tortured her. Her love transformed Mao Shin into the thousand-armed, thousand-eyed goddess, Quan Yin.

The production concluded with a powerful song called *"I Surrender"* which sang the praises of Jesus and being an instrument of the Lord! The play was followed by a short speech from Prathayini Sivaramakrishnan, the outgoing NSW Region East Youth Coordinator. Prathayini reflected on the theme of the program, *"Your Life is My Message"* and her own experience.

This was followed by a video which featured reflections from devotees around the region and their thoughts on service throughout the ninety days leading up to the birthday celebrations. There were inspiring reflections on the importance of service and the role it plays in our lives. After the video, the outgoing President of NSW Region East, Singanayagam Indrapalan, who delivered his address and introduced the incoming committee for the next two years. This was followed by devotional singing.

The offering concluded with Swami's Divine Discourse in which he declared *"Your Life is My Message!"*

It was a divine birthday celebration that only He could have planned!

Ladies day 2015 Thursday, 19 November 2015

On Thursday, 19 November 2015, NSW Region East gathered together to celebrate and honour the role that women have played in our lives and to reflect on why Swami has given us this important day in the calendar.



The program began with devotional singing by both male and female devotees in the region.

The program also included a dance from three female youth within the region.



Ashvinnie Sri Niranjan

There was an inspiring talk by Ashvinnie Sri Niranjan who reflected on her new role as a mother, after giving birth to young Swate three months ago. Ashvinnie spoke of the lessons learnt through motherhood as well as the important teachings of Swami which she hopes to pass on to her young child.

This was followed by a talk from Meena Radhakrishnan, a former SSE teacher who spoke of Swami's Teachings on the importance of women.

The program concluded with a thank you note from the outgoing Ladies Wing Coordinator, Satya Bhama followed by devotional singing and arathi.

It was a Divine program to celebrate the supreme and important role that women play in this world and in Swami's mission.



Meena Radhakrishnan

Christmas Hamper Drive Monday, 30 November 2015

Devotees from around NSW Region East gathered together for the opportunity to give to those in need. On 30 November 2015, 93 hampers weighing 650 kilograms in total were donated as part of a breakfast program for children who often came to school without any breakfast.



This was a wonderful service activity in the local area which allowed devotees to share love through giving many essential items along with special Christmas cards to spread love during the festive season.



NSW REGION WEST

Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday Celebrations



Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday celebrations began with an early morning start of Aum chanting, the beautiful morning prayer, Suprabhatam and followed by processional devotional singing, Nagar-Sankirtan. The devotees formed two separate groups of male and female and walked around the venue singing devotional songs in full voice to the Lord.

This was followed by a birthing kit project where adults, youth and children came together to prepare approximately 400 birthing kits for donation to those living in disadvantaged conditions. It was a wonderful opportunity to work in unison and share love among us as well as the greater community.



Packing Birthing Kits



Overall, the 23 November 2015 was a wonderful day spent together with the Sai family, sharing and experiencing the Divine Presence among and within us.

The evening program, themed 'Walk With Me', was a beautiful musical offering to the Lord as well as a collage of skits put together by the various Sai Centres within the region, together with an SSE art exhibition. The message of each skit was distinctly and beautifully expressed, and the simplicity of spirituality was well demonstrated.



Christmas Offerings

The Christmas offering by our region was a series of service programs conducted through music. The team, called 'Expansion' (a play on their dedication to expanding their love through serving the community), prepared a list of songs and Christmas carols that were sung at various venues.

The first offering was at a program in Blacktown facilitated by SydWest MSI. The team sang to an audience filled with people of a multitude of varying ethnicity. It was a joyous occasion where people of different backgrounds sang and danced together to music of various cultures. Swami's message of love and unity was strongly felt and experienced by all present.

The rest of the musical offerings were conducted across 7 different nursing homes visited by the team in December. Two groups were formed that travelled through Western Sydney visiting various nursing homes and singing and dancing with the residents. All who were present enjoyed themselves and embraced all that makes the Christmas spirit so special. Swami's subtle hand was amply evident in the ease of organising all the practices, visits and logistics. Again this was a wonderful opportunity to experience Swami's love within the broader community and a great growth experience for all who participated.

NSW MURWILLUMBAH

Celebrating the Advent of Sathya Sai Baba's 90th year

Angeline Gayle



Shrine of Sai: with Angeline Gale

On the occasion of Swami's 90th Birthday I was fortunate to attend the celebrations of the Tweed/Gold Coast Region in northern NSW.

The blissful event was held at the Sathya Sai Primary School in Murwillumbah where approximately 80 devotees participated in a very interesting and enjoyable program. The inner significances of the celebration was emphasised for all devotees to observe daily in their actions.



Change of office bearers

The program started with a warm welcome by outgoing Regional Coordinator Nathan Pellai, followed by a thought provoking reading by Roz Molloy.

After the changeover of office bearers we were immersed in more than an hour of divine devotional singing.



Steve Wedell

A short social tea break was taken before local guest speaker Steve Wedell enthralled us all, sharing some of his personal experiences which had everyone's undivided attention. Steve's talk uplifted and at the same time gave many of us much food for thought judging by the looks on people's faces.



It's always so amazing and also encouraging to hear how Swami weaves His magic, moulding and shaping the lives of His devotees.

Putting them through the wringer and bringing them out the other side to travel a new pathway through their lives.

Of course no birthday celebration is complete without the cutting of the cake and the joyful singing of the happy birthday song to Swami brought tears to my eyes.

The Satsang (celebration) that followed was the icing on the cake of a most memorable day, one that I am sure Swami would be most happy with.



Sathya Sai Primary School

The catering people excelled themselves with a feast that was fit for a king.



So much love and so much devotion was evident and I am sure that everyone went away with a spring in their step and their heart's full of love.

Love
Selflessly

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

90th Birth Anniversary of Sathya Sai Baba

On 23 November 2015 and on the occasion of the 90th Birthday of our beloved Swami, South Australian devotees organised two separate programs, one each in the morning and in the evening.

In the morning, Suprabhatam (morning prayer), Veda (ancient Hindu Scripture verses) chanting and 108 Sai slokas (108 names of Sai) was followed by devotional singing. Devotees were very happy for the opportunity to actively participate in the program. The morning event was very special to all and that set the tone for the evening program.

In the evening, devotees gathered from 5.00 p.m. for a 7.00 p.m. start and were very busy setting up the stage, altar and other necessary preparations. The evening program included a drama reflecting 90 years of Swami, a regional position handover ceremony and devotional singing.

Over 110 devotees eagerly came for the program and felt blessed. The centre where the program was organised was filled with Sai vibrations evident by smiling faces and greetings, and everyone enjoyed the special occasion. The program ended with cake cutting and a shared meal.

Some glimpses of the celebration



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Christmas Celebration

On Sunday, 20 December 2015, the Sathya Sai Organisation of WA celebrated Christmas, hosted by Perth Centre at Wembley Community Centre.

Around 200 devotees were present in the beautifully decorated hall, which included a Christmas Tree adorned with values decorations made by the SSE Children.

The event started with the two MC's, Arunraj and Vidula, introducing the assembled crowd to some of the wonders of both physics and Christmas.

Next up was the Christmas play, in which Santa and three of his elves explore the importance of gratitude around Christmas time. After this, the youth led some classic Christmas carols before some beautiful bhajans, which rounded off the event. Afterwards, devotees enjoyed lunch prepared by the ladies of Perth Centre.



VICTORIA

A compilation of photos of Christmas service in Victoria



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The Essential Truth is One - the selfless Love

The inner significances of all religious celebrations promote selfless Love.

Sathya Sai Baba says,

"The truth proclaimed by all religions is one and the same. All have a common ultimate goal. All religions aim at promoting righteous conduct by transforming the attitude of man, thereby bringing about harmony. The foundation of all religions is morality. Morality is equated with selfless love. Religions were thus instituted to foster the welfare of society through the promotion of (selfless) love for all beings."

- Compiling editor



Prayer For Rain



There is a serious situation in parts of Tasmania and other parts of Australia in respect to bushfire threats to life. Apart from the fire-fighting techniques that are being used to combat such a natural disaster and many other similar natural disasters, perhaps our sincere prayers to our beloved Swami for His Grace can effectively provide relief to all those who are directly or indirectly affected by the long drought. Rain is the most effective natural way of combating fires. Swami under His guidance, love and compassion, has given us a simple prayer for rain, He says:

“When all paths are closed and when at last, one decides to pray to God for rain, how is the prayer to be framed, in what form should it be uttered, should these problems confront one. The disaster is evident, the only refuge is prayer:

‘O God! The growing crop in my field is fast drying up on account of unbearable thirst for rain. The canal has not even a drop of water to slake the thirst of men and cattle. Therefore have pity on us. Give us rain, in plenty, soon.’

- SS Vahini P 139-140.

In the current situation, the same prayer can be framed as:

O God! The growing crops in our fields are fast drying up on account of unbearable thirst for rain. The canals are drying up. There is a shortage of water to slake the thirst of men and cattle. The fire is on a rampage destroying green forests, our dwellings and the lives of living beings. Therefore have pity on us. Give us rain, in plenty, soon.

Members in Sathya Sai Organisation are encouraged to chant the **Gayatri Mantra** (universal prayer for protection, sustenance and enlightenment) with this intention of seeking protection for the people and wildlife in Tasmania and other parts of Australia – both individually and at centre level.

The following information has been received from Dr. Michael Thrush, the Tasmania Regional President:

“Tassie is in its driest year on record with very little winter rain preceding its usual dry summer. The bush and pastures are tinder dry throughout much of the state. A series of lightning strikes a bit over a week ago started numerous fires in the western half of the state in remote and often inaccessible wilderness areas. A few of these fires have spread and now threaten several communities, especially in the north of the state. Given the right conditions, heat and strong winds, the situation could deteriorate very quickly to a much more serious one. At present there are over 50 fires burning throughout the state, most of which, including those in the western wilderness areas (one near Cradle Mountain) are extensive and uncontrolled. Apart from the threat to human life, wildlife and vast tracts of native bush, including pristine rainforest and very fire sensitive alpine regions are being burnt. It is likely that heavy rain is the only remedy to put the fires out because of the topography and the fuel surrounding them. At present, this is not expected until at least April. Prayers for protection of our people, the wildlife and our beautiful forests and alpine regions would be greatly appreciated, but especially for Swami to bring the rain so desperately needed.”

Devotion

From Physical to Spiritual Level - An Overview

Ravi Shankar

Compiling editor: Sai News Australia, National Sai Media, SSIO, Australia & PNG

Devotion to God is based on the comprehension of the spiritual belief that God is. Though it is impossible to fully comprehend His nature in this materialistic existence combined with a little spiritual exercise, yet we are blessed with the necessary vital information in the ancient scriptures to comprehend His presence in every physical form that the universe is composed of.

This priceless knowledge of the scriptures should be studied and emulated with faith and reverence. The complete transformation of one's character and behaviour, bringing about the awareness of one's goal in this existence is possible by the conscientious study of these scriptures. The continuous faith, reverence and devotion to the Almighty, will raise man from the physical level to the spiritual level.

What are these spiritual principles that we must put into practice? The first and foremost one is the attribute which Sathya Sai Baba (Swami) reveals through His physical actions, by manifesting Himself at the physical level, and showering His **Divine Love**. He enlightened mankind with one great truth about the basis of life- "**Love is the Source - Love is the Path - Love is the Goal**". Thus this has been the theme of the Sathya Sai World Conference 2015 at Prashanti Nilayam.

Sai's Love in the establishment of Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO) is the "**Source**".

Sai's Love in action in Sathya Sai International Organisation is the "**Path**".

Sai's Love to be achieved in the Sathya Sai International Organisation is the "**Goal**".



Ravi Shankar: Sathya Sai World Conference, study circle venue – November 2015

together the obstacles that the devotees face in their devotional practice and the solutions to those obstacles.

One may wonder, after all what is the outcome of the Sathya Sai World Conference 2015?

The conference was an input and here is most of the output as declared by the Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO):

Resolutions of Sathya Sai World Conference

We are pleased to offer 32 items in the Conference Resolutions at the divine lotus feet of our beloved Sai. These action items, recommendations and directions will help not only Sathya Sai devotees, but all spiritual aspirants and new-comers to realise the full potential of the Sathya Sai Avatar's teachings and divine guidance.

We examined three main aspects of an ideal Sathya Sai Centre, which is the nucleus of the Sathya Sai International Organisation all over the world. The centre's function is to help office-bearers, devotees and new-comers realise their innate divinity, following Sai's teachings.

The leaders of SSIO should be exemplars of Sathya Sai's teachings. They should practice the human values and lead by personal example.

Sai Spiritual Educational (SSE) programs spread Sai's eternal and universal message to the young and the old, in many lands and cultures, to people of diverse faiths and backgrounds. It unites all, under the common umbrella of the five human values – supported by Love.

Women are the pillars of society. Their role is often not understood properly or overlooked. Sai has reminded us to give prominent attention to the role of women, for the highest good of all.

The youth are the future of the world, and Sai put a lot of emphasis on developing the youth at an early age, so that they can become men and women of exemplary character.

In this day and age, it is important to practice Sai's advice of "*head in the forest and hands in the society*" for inner peace and harmony to cope with the challenges of modern society.

This is an important initiative of the SSIO in sharing Sai's teachings with one and all. Sai directed the SSIO and all His devotees to spread His message and help others move forward on their spiritual journey.

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International delegates: Sathya Sai World Conference – November 2015

This also applies to an individual:

Sai's Love stored within is the "**Source**"

Sai's Love in action from within is the "**Path**"

Sai's Love to be achieved is the "**Goal**"

This sums up the purpose for which the Sathya Sai World Conference 2015 was held whereby every delegate from over 80 Countries participated to plan and find ways and means to put those plans into action for the transformation of every Sai devotee.

The planning was done by spiritual talks delivered by prominent Sai devotees of Sathya Sai International Organisation; and study circles, to assimilate Sathya Sai Baba's teachings and the most effective way to practice His teachings. The process also provided an opportunity to put

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International delegates: Study Circle - Sathya Sai World Conference - 2015

1. Ideal Sathya Sai Centre

The leaders of SSIO should be exemplars of Sai's teachings. They should practice the human values and lead by personal example.

1. The officers should conduct regular meetings with members to increase awareness of SSIO structures and its activities globally.
2. Delegates should present reports in their respective centres of the inspirational stories and projects from the conference and workshops to motivate others and offer opportunities.
3. SSIO leadership should conduct comprehensive training of Centre officers.
4. Ideal Sai leader should possess the following attributes:
 - Ability (have the skills to perform the task)
 - Availability (have the time and interest)
 - Affability (be cheerful with a positive attitude)

2. Educational Programmes

Sathya Sai educational programmes spread Swami's eternal and universal message to the young and the old, in many lands and cultures, to people of diverse faiths and backgrounds. It unites all, under the common umbrella of the five human values – supported by Love.

1. ISSEs and Sathya Sai Schools should make greater use of technology for public outreach, educational videos and sharing of resources.
2. Educational material in human values and other SSE resources should be translated into more languages for local use.
3. The education committee of the SSIO should assist in developing and offering parenting programmes for Sathya Sai Schools, as well as SSE and SSEHV communities.

3. Role of Women in SSIO

Women are the pillars of society. Their role is often not understood properly or overlooked. Swami has reminded us to give prominent attention to the role of women, for the highest good of all.

1. All family members should recognise and respect women.
2. Women should identify ways to build self-confidence and be exemplars of Sai Teachings to inspire children and others to become good citizens.
3. Women should participate in various seva activities such as hospital visits, food for the needy, and so on.
4. Women should take up the role of SSE teachers as recommended by Baba.
5. SSIO should encourage and support women to take up leadership roles at all levels of the organisation.

4. Role of youth in SSIO

The youth are the future of the world, and Bhagawan put a lot of emphasis on developing the youth at an early age, so that they can become men and women of exemplary character.

1. Youth are our future leaders. SSIO should empower the youth to shoulder more responsibilities.

2. Youth should be encouraged to participate in the Sathya Sai International Youth Leadership.
3. Programme, which should also be replicated at national and local levels.
4. SSIO should encourage the youth to contribute in their areas of expertise through their knowledge and talents.
5. Youth should conduct more retreats where they will deepen their understanding of Bhagawan's teachings and also address the challenges faced in practical situations.

5. Balancing Family, Career and the SSIO

In this day and age, it is important to practice Swami's advice of "head in the forest and hands in the society" for inner peace and harmony to cope with the challenges of modern society.

1. SSIO member should give priority to Swami and His work and dedicate all actions as an offering to God. We should conduct a daily audit of our activities to ensure there is no wastage of time, energy or resources.
2. SSIO members should try to see God in all aspects of their life – family, work and SSIO.
3. SSIO members should always remember that Swami is the doer and that He has given us a blessed opportunity to be an instrument of His.

6. Public Outreach

This is an important initiative of the SSIO in sharing Bhagawan's teachings with one and all. Baba directed the SSIO and all His devotees to spread His message and help others move forward on their spiritual journey.

1. There is a need for more interfaith activities, e.g. devotional singing, seminars, service activities, drama festivals, choirs and orchestras that reflect the rich tapestry of faiths.
2. The SSIO should hold effective public meetings to share Swami's message and His love with local communities on a regular basis. New-comers should be welcomed and given information about SSIO activities.
3. The SSIO should more actively engage with communities at the local, national and international levels to serve their practical needs. Online videos and public meetings are strongly recommended for enhancing community participation.
4. The SSIO should promote Walk for Values, where it is accepted by the community. This is a fun-filled community activity, which promotes human values in a subtle way.

7. Effective and loving communication in the SSIO

SSIO officers should remember that when we speak to others, we are speaking to God, the Sai within. We should practice active listening.

1. We should respect other person's opinion and practice "first understanding and then adjustment". Personal communications are preferred to emails for resolving difference of opinions.
2. Important news and information should be shared with internal and external groups in a timely manner with good audio-visual materials. SSIO should document and publicise centre, regional and national activities in a professional manner so that they are suitable for sharing with the general public.

8. Selfless service

1. Healthcare, education, and other committee should share their best practices of local, national and global service initiatives to motivate others.
2. Disaster Relief teams should conduct ongoing training programmes for disaster relief management and maintain certification efforts.
3. Sathya Sai Centres should increase efforts to protect Mother Earth by bringing more go-green practices (recycle, reuse, reduce) at the Centre and all SSIO events, and by encouraging group prayers.
4. SSIO should create a database of skilled and interested volunteers at local, national and global level for the different service initiatives.

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A unified action is required to meet the above mentioned resolutions

Sai devotees are not alone to accomplish the vision as laid down in the above resolutions of the Sathya Sai International Organisation. There are various schemes and programs of its Sai centres and groups, regional, national and at international levels, which provide many means, guidance and encouragements to devotees, which push them forward in practicing what has been resolved in the Sathya Sai International World Conference 2015.

One of the mechanism is our **National Sai Media Committee**, which provides opportunities to devotees to effectively engage in the resolutions of the organisation. The media committee can increase and let the Sai devotees share the awareness of Sathya Sai Baba's universal teachings and various spiritual programs from centre to centre. It can also increase this valuable awareness to the world at large for peace and progress of all people in the diversity of their existence. However, this can be possible only in conjunction and full support of the members of Sathya Sai International Organisation.

The Vision and Goals of the National Media Committee

The following major goals are to build our National Media Committee strategy:

1. To connect with grass-roots, the Sai Centre/Group levels:

Sai Centres/Groups that use the media committee effectively will benefit by being able to connect to the wider community from wherever they are. The members at the Sai Centre/Group levels are the best people who will know what activities they are engaged in and

why. They are the best examples of people, though living in a world of diversity, yet are united in spirituality. Their experiences in spiritual life are of paramount importance. The task of the media committee is to access this wealth of knowledge so as to enlighten the world at large.

2. To receive feedback:

Getting authentic feedback on our media reporting or selfless service activities, is a fantastic way to modify or improve our mode of operations. However, we must be willing to acknowledge and use some of these feedbacks. Our media committee networks are perfect places to monitor the feelings of approval or dissent centering around SSIO activities. The views, opinions and reactions of members will greatly help the committee to plan, modify and upgrade its programs to satisfy the wishes of the majority.

3. To establish a credible National Media Committee:

The National Media Committee has, as its tool a great platform to espouse our values which will be of great help to all. The goals of this committee should be to develop unity in the community, raise the awareness of our innate divinity and create goodwill and trust for one another.

It takes effort, time and dedication. But it's worth it.

Do you have a successful story for our Sai News Australia for the spiritual benefits of our readers and yourself as well?

The national 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 original photos. You can send them to 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 Sathya Sai International Organisation online, the Media Committee has 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/>

For now, the National Sai Media Committee leaves you to reminisce over the articles in this issue, while you relive memories of the grand celebrations full of spiritual values.

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