

see, nowhere I do not know the way, and no problem I cannot solve. My sufficiency is unconditional. I am the totality – all of it!”

Brothers and sisters! He has come!!

Jesus, Jehovah, Zorasthra;

Dattatreya, Dakshinamurthy, Dhanvanthari!

*He has come! The Supreme Lord of the Universe in
our midst –*

*To awaken the sleeping from the deep sleep of
ignorance;*

To enable the sitting to stand,

The standing to walk;

The walking to march and

The marching to merge!!!

Come one, come all. Let us not be ungrateful called. Let us hear His clarion call and make our lives His Message. JAI SAI RAM!



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Mr. Shashank Shah completed his MBA from the Sri Sathya Sai University School of Business Management at Prasanthi Nilayam in 2004. He was blessed with a gold medal at the Divine Hands for academic excellence. He then completed a Master of Philosophy in Management from the Sri Sathya Sai University School of Business Management in Prasanthi Nilayam in 2006. Once again he was blessed with a gold medal at the Divine Hands for academic excellence. Currently he is a doctoral research scholar at the School of Business Management at the Sri Sathya Sai University, Prasanthi Nilayam.

Why Fear When I Am Here?

Mrs. Rita Chudasama

My loving *Pranams* at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Beloved Swami, respected elders, Sai brothers and sisters, Jai Sai Ram on this most auspicious day!

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is very kind and merciful; He is verily the ocean of compassion. Throughout the ages the Lord has given His devotees an assurance that He will always guard and protect them in times of trouble and distress. In fact, in the ancient *Vedas*, God is described as being Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. That is, He is all pervasive, all powerful and all knowing. Our scriptures are filled with the Divine *mahimas* (Divine glories) of our Lord. One must remember that these *mahimas* and *leelas* (Divine sports) of the Lord cannot just be found in the scriptures or treasure chests of the past, but they are unfolding and manifesting before our very eyes, in the very Presence of this *Poorna Avatar*, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

With humility, I would like to share with you two episodes to demonstrate **His Divine Love and Compassion, His bountiful mercy and Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience.**

Swami's Omnipresence

The first experience I humbly share with you is relating to our visit to Buckingham Palace to attend the Queen's Garden Party. The year 2006 was a very special occasion in Great Britain. It marked the 80th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the 50th anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme for young people. To celebrate both events, a special Royal Garden Party was organised at Buckingham Palace on Thursday, July 13, 2006. Royal Garden Parties have been held at Buckingham Palace since the 1860's. In fact, Queen Elizabeth II has always worked hard to recognise the efforts of those people who best embody the spirit of Great Britain. This year was no exception; 8,000 invitations were sent out to various dignitaries, diplomats, ministers, famous celebrities, and ordinary people who had made a unique contribution to society.

Both my husband and I had been invited by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme to attend and receive a special certificate of gratitude and recognition for the outstanding contribution made by the Sai Youth, on behalf of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. This indeed was a great honour. My husband was also asked to say a few words at

Buckingham Palace during the presentation ceremony on the work of the Sai Youth and the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. This was extremely well received and all marveled at the wonderful work being done by the Sai Youth. A miracle of Swami's Omnipresence occurred during the ceremony. When the certificate was presented, instead of having the name of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, the certificate instead bore the Name of Divinity itself, "Sri Sathya Sai." What a wonderful example was this of Swami's Omnipresence and guiding Hand.

Have No Fear

The second experience I humbly share with you is a deep and personal experience that is near and dear to me. As a young child I used to read many books on how Swami saves the lives of His devotees. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that one day I would be the recipient of this Grace and Blessing.

Let us now travel to London, United Kingdom. It is April 2002. My husband, my mother and I went for our annual pilgrimage to Brindavan, Whitefield to have Swami's Divine *Darshan*. One beautiful spring morning, Swami very unexpectedly called us for an interview. Because I am of a small build, no one could tell that I was just under three months pregnant. However, as soon as Swami walked into the room, He said, "How many months?" We were soon ushered into the inner sanctum, where we sat with Swami. Swami asked my husband, "Do you want a boy or girl?" We replied, "Whatever is Your Will, Swami." Swami playfully looked at my husband and pointed to me and said, "Swami knows she wants a boy!" Suddenly, Swami then went into a very deep trance for a few minutes. We sat there staring at His Majesty and Divinity. Then all of a sudden He came back. In a most powerful voice He said, "Have no fear. This child is My responsibility."

Now let us fast forward to October 2002. It is the day of the holy festival of *Dassera* – the day Durga killed the evil demon Mahisasur, when Rama killed Ravana and when Shirdi Sai Baba left His human body. For one week I had felt the baby had stopped moving. A deep fear engulfed me; I began to feel that something was terribly wrong. I was very scared and feared the worst. Our consultant physician sent us for a scan at a top clinic on Harley Street using the latest scanning equipment. The consultant took a very long time during the check-up. Suddenly, she walked out of the room and called a senior consultant. I could see the



fear on his face. The consultant then gave us the news that would not only break our hearts but would also test our faith. The consultant went on to tell us that there was a serious problem with the unborn baby. He told us that the water around the baby was insufficient, the blood supply to the baby was very poor and the heartbeat was most weak. He then said that under these circumstances the baby would definitely be born deformed and could possibly die.

I was rushed into the hospital and admitted. It was almost midnight and we were told a consultant would only see us in the morning. We did not know who to tell or who to call to comfort us. At that moment Swami's words, "Have no fear. This child is My responsibility," began ringing in our ears. We were not alone, Swami was with us, and we must have faith. We prayed to Swami, chanted the *Gayatri* all night and surrendered our unborn child to His Divine Will.

Mother Sai's Protection

My husband normally never dreams of Swami... that night whilst he slept uncomfortably on a hospital chair by my side...Swami came into his dream.... Swami was descending down a wooden staircase, He went to my husband and started waving His Hand... my husband thought Swami would give *vibhuthi*, but suddenly water started pouring out of Swami's Hand and then a diamond *Shiva Lingam* emerged which my husband caught. Swami then lovingly said, "Have no fear, everything will be OK."

That morning, when a team of consultants came around, they said that they needed to do an emergency caesarean section. However, there was another problem; there were no hospital beds with a special life support system available in London for the baby, especially since he was five weeks premature. From 8 A.M. until 3 P.M. they rang around all hospitals in the United Kingdom. At one point there was talk of flying us in an air ambulance to Edinburgh. We prayed to Swami for help. My husband then remembered that he had private medical insurance from work. He telephoned them and they said it was not a problem, and to kindly

make our way to the Portland Hospital. This was an eminent hospital for the elite classes, and was more like a five-star hotel.

When we arrived at the hospital, everything was ready. As we were being taken down to the operating theatre, the nurse asked if we wanted to play any music during the birth. Otherwise, the doctors would play their own music. Thankfully we had the "Embodiment of Love" CD with Swami singing.

The doctor prepared us for the worst. If the baby did not cry, then it would be rushed into the adjacent emergency theatre.

We continued to pray to Swami as the operation was done. Lo and behold a beautiful baby boy was brought into the world! He was neither deformed, nor lifeless. With Bhagavan's Grace and Blessings he was 108 percent normal. Swami had proved that this child was, indeed, His responsibility.

Tailpiece to this story, the entire cost of the hospital bill came to £108,000, which was paid for by the insurance company. Furthermore, all babies born in that hospital get a special announcement in the births section of *The Times* newspaper. When we were asked what we would like printed, we said, "Baby Chudasama, born on October 16, 2002, with thanks and gratitude to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba."

At the hospital, we had temporarily named our baby "Baby Sai." Two years later, when we brought the National UK Youth Pilgrimage to Swami, Swami in an interview with the 180 youth present blessed him with the name, "Achintya," which means beyond worries. Achintya is today seated in Sai Kulwant Hall, at our Beloved Lord's Lotus Feet, enjoying Bhagavan's *Darshan*!

Indeed, **when you surrender to Swami, when you dedicate your life to Him, He looks after your every need.**

Only a mother could understand the pain of losing a child. My dearest Mother Sai, I thank you with all my heart for protecting me and guiding me through that ordeal. **For our Mother Sai, there is no near or far. His Grace and Blessings are beyond time and space.** He protects us wherever we may be, whether in His immediate physical Presence or across the seven seas. To such a loving and compassionate Mother, I express my most heartfelt gratitude and pray that we are always worthy of His Love and Grace. Thank You my Beloved Mother Sai! Jai Sai Ram!

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Mrs. Rita Chudasama was on the Government Commission for Sustainable Development. In 2004, she was awarded the "Ambassador for Peace" award from the Inter-religious and International Federation for World Peace, which is linked to the United Nations. In 2005 she was appointed by the ASHA Foundation as one of the "Top 40 Most Inspirational Women in Great Britain."

Swami's Infinite Love

Dr. Shaun Prasanth Setty

My humble *Pranams* at the Divine Lotus Feet of our Dear Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I pray to Him to always speak and think through me. Respected elders, dear brothers and sisters, I am truly honoured to be speaking to all of you.

Swami's Declaration to Mankind

Swami wrote a letter to His brother when He was fourteen years old and it was addressed to "All who are devoted to Me." He declared, "I have a Task: To foster all mankind, and ensure for all people lives full of *ananda* (bliss). I have a Vow: To lead all who stray away from the straight path, again into goodness and save them." Swami then added, **"I will never give up those who attach themselves to Me."** As a young adult Swami has brought me back to the straight path. Swami has transformed me immensely since the first time He brought me here.

We often hear the saying, "The youth of today are the future of tomorrow." This is very much the truth. In our chaotic world, things will only change if our actions and thoughts change. This is an easier task to accomplish through the malleable mind of a child or young adult. Training the mind is the key. I wish to share a few things I have witnessed and learned through Swami's teachings.

We Emanate from One Source

One of the first things I noticed when I came to Prasanthi Nilayam was that there were people from every corner of this earth who were singing *bhajans* together, performing service projects together, and living harmoniously together. Everybody is so happy here. The human race needs to be unified. Instead of stating that we are from different countries we should be saying that we are all from one Supreme Being – that is God. We all emanate from one source, but unfortunately, we are very quick to point out differences. Swami says, "Unity in Diversity." There is an Aspen tree that symbolises this. One of the largest known living things in the world is an Aspen tree from

the Wasatch Mountains in Utah – there are over 40,000 trees coming off of one giant root! The whole forest comes off one giant root. From the outside, there seem to be many different trees each with their own unique external features. Like a human being, each tree looks different on the outside but they all develop from one source. The root is the source – like Swami, and we are the seedlings. We have to grow, like one of the Aspen tree seedlings. Yet deep down we are all one. As Swami tells us, we are *Atma* or the soul and not the body.

The Golden Rule

In order to be one, we must act as one. Throughout the Bible, a central theme emerges: The Golden Rule appears and reappears. **"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."** This is a basic law for any religion and more importantly for any way of life. The hardest thing to do is to act kindly to somebody who has been unkind to you. These are the steps we need to take to firstly change ourselves, secondly change our countries, and thirdly change the world. This current world needs change, and it is the youth who need to lead this march. As with anything else we do, we must practise what we preach. I can stand here and preach but it means very little if I do not practise. Swami says, **"Don't be platform heroes and practical zeroes."** We need to practise, practise, practise.

Swami, the Divine Teacher

It took me a long time to learn that if the end result is not what we planned, we should not be disappointed. This is a very difficult thing to accept. When I applied for general surgical training I prayed and prayed to Swami to get my first choice. He told me I would get into the right programme, which I took to mean that I would get my first choice. I didn't get my first choice, but instead got my sixth choice!! While I was dejected, the programme I got into ended up being one which prepared me the best for cardiothoracic surgery, which would be my eventual field of specialisation. We see things through one perspective and think we know

what is best for us, but in reality we have no idea. **Only God knows what is best for our ultimate good**, even if it is what we perceive to be an unfavorable event at that time. Only the future will tell us. These events are needed for us to grow and progress through our lives to ultimately realise our true Self. Swami calls these events “passing clouds.” They only bring darkness for a finite time and then this passes on to brighter days.

True Love for the Lord

We must take the opportunity to soak in Swami’s Love, as we are so lucky to be in His Divine Presence. Sometimes we take Him for granted, but there was one being I met who never did. I had the ultimate privilege of meeting Sai Geetha, Swami’s glorious elephant, before she took her next step in her spiritual journey. When I told Swami I had gone to see Sai Geetha, with a twinkle in His eye He commented that Sai Geetha had wrapped her trunk around my lower torso like a hug. I didn’t know what He meant until I looked at a photo I had taken with Sai Geetha and saw that in one picture she had her trunk wrapped around me! This not only showed the Omniscience that our Dear Lord has but the Love that He had for Sai Geetha. His whole face lit up brightly when He spoke of her. What a beautiful and loving being she was! She took every second she had in the Presence of the Lord to make the most use of it. It is rare to see such devotion in a human as you would have seen in her. Words cannot explain the devotion which she had for her Divine Mother.

Swami’s Omniscience

This leads me to emphasise that we should be aware that Swami’s words are very precious. **Each word and each of His actions have so much meaning that we often do not realise this until years later, if we are so fortunate.** A lot of times we may never understand them. We foolishly think, “Oh, Swami might have misspoken or Swami didn’t completely understand my question.” How silly is this since the Lord never utters anything that will not be true, whether we know it or not. He knows our thoughts even before we think them.

I will narrate a few stories that happened to me. I was blessed to receive a ring a number of years ago. When He put the ring on my finger Swami told me: “When you look into the ring you will see Me.” For years I looked and looked and saw nothing. I was thinking that Swami’s form would be staring at me if I looked into the ring. Then one day I briefly thought, “Oh, He must have meant this figuratively.” But, the more I thought about it the more I was certain that He meant that I should see His Physical Form. Yet I never really saw anything. Then not too long ago I looked at the ring in the direct sunlight. All the previous times I was looking at the ring indoors under fluorescent lights.

Instead of looking at the surface of the ring I looked deeper. I placed my head back and looked again and saw something. There was a blurry crown of beautiful black hair, a face, and an orange robe. There was the image I had not previously recognised. Swami’s Name literally means Truth so why should this story surprise us?

On one of my first encounters with Swami, in passing He mentioned that I would travel to Australia in the future as part of my medical training. I thought nothing of it as I was not even in medical school and was still in college at that time. Eight years later I went to New Zealand for a year of surgical training. Everyone familiar with the story stated that this is what Swami meant when He mentioned Australia. As I got further into my cardiac surgery training in the USA, I could not fathom how Australia would fit into the plans. However, fifteen years later, I was looking for an additional year of training for a paediatric cardiac surgery fellowship. It so happened that there was a very good training programme in Australia. Through Swami’s Grace, I was lucky enough to gain a very competitive position at the Royal Children’s Hospital in Australia. With a few brief words, Swami had told me what would happen fifteen years later! This to me was a reaffirmation of Swami’s Divinity. He knows our past, present, and future. **Therefore, we should follow His command immediately, implicitly, and completely.**

The Entire Creation Lies beneath His Feet

Everyone in this audience is a potential future leader. A person does not need to have a distinct title, a large office, or a fancy degree to be a leader. As Swami does, each and every moment, we need to lead by example and people will follow. This is the true definition of a leader. Lead by example. As devotees we can never complain about working too hard. Look at Swami who works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, year after year. He does not have to do this but He does it as an example for all of us. As Swami says, “My Life is My Message.” We should also work hard like Swami to help humanity. Swami also says, “Your life is My Message.”

The true heroes are the young adults who are here today in the audience who have traveled from so far away through different routes to get to India. They have spent many hours and undergone hardship to reach Prasanthi Nilayam to be in His Divine Presence. A lot of them have done this to be in Swami’s physical Presence just once. Some have collected barely enough money to come to India once. Who needs to hear stories of miracles when we can look at our own stories. We would not be here if Swami didn’t Will it. Believe me in this! Each one of us has a unique story and we could tell our own story to countless others.

Swami once told me, “The entire Creation lies beneath these Feet.” We would never be able to fathom the strength of this statement. Whenever we encounter something unpleasant, remember Swami; whenever we encounter something pleasant, remember Swami and accept this as Swami’s Grace. **We should keep God in our minds and hearts at all times.** After all, we are all God. Swami is like a radio station sending out radio-waves of Love, but we need to have our radio tuned on to the right frequency to receive His Message. I pray to Swami that He guides each and every one of us in our spiritual journey. Jai Sai Ram.



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Dr. Shaun Prasanth Setty is a paediatric cardiac surgeon in the United States. He grew up in California and received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California, San Diego. There he majored in Biochemistry and Cell Biology and had a minor in Health Care and Social Issues. He went to the Medical College of Ohio where he graduated with honours. Shaun then completed his six-year general surgery training at Oregon Health Sciences University which is the second largest general surgical training centre in the USA. He spent three years at the University of Minnesota where he completed his Cardiothoracic Surgical training. Wanting to pursue paediatric cardiac surgery, he did one additional year of congenital cardiac surgical training at the Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne, Australia. He is a fellow of both the American College of Surgeons and the American Board of Thoracic Surgery.

Purity Leads to Divinity

Mrs. Chethana Raju

Om Sri Sai Ram.

With humility, reverence and gratitude, I offer my loving *Pranams* at the Lotus Feet of Divinity Incarnate, Lord Sri Sathya Sai. Most recently the world met in North Germany. The leaders of the world tried to find the solutions to clean up our external life. The world meets here again, today, at the Lotus Feet to find out how to clean from within. Swami says, "Mankind is in need of postulates for the conduct of everyday existence." The need for this is far more superior or pressing than the hunger for scientific knowledge. **Here, intelligence has to be replaced by character, and love for science by love for God.**

Go Inwards

It is our common sense understanding that there are regions of human spirit untrammelled by the world of physics. It is also our common sense understanding that there are regions of individual consciousness which are like the fine texture of the soul which we feel, which talks to us, which whispers, which guides us, but we find it hard to lay our finger on it and touch it.

If we look into human history, for 2,000 years or so we were going very well until we got derailed when we assassinated Socrates, the thinker and philosopher of Greece, who talked about the soul and inner life in the year 399 before the dark era. We seem to have ventured to the external life instead of going inwards. Here I would like to illustrate a small conversation that took place between two people. One was a Westerner who quoted Descartes, a thinker from France, saying in latin, "*Cogito, ergo sum*," which means "I think, therefore I am." He quotes this to a young daughter of India, and he says to her, "Don't you think this is a beautiful thought?" For which this daughter of India replies, "I am baffled by this thought, 'I think, therefore I am.' For myself, sir, I would like to say 'I am, therefore I think. I am, therefore I think'."

Bhagavan has said the world is not all that we see and think. It is much more mysterious than we have dreamed about. It is this mystery that Buddha

sought after, before He attained *Nirvana*. This is the same mystery that the saints and seers of *Vedic* and *Upanishadic* texts speak about. And when that takes a form and shape, and restricts itself to time and space, we call that an *Avatar*, and in this age the *Avatar* is Sri Sathya Sai.

Develop Purity

Swami says, "If you really want to know who I am, you have to strive hard." He said in Sanskrit, "*Kritrimani rhodhamsi*," which means **one has to get rid of the artificial obstructions of the mind and develop purity of thoughts**. In His own words Swami said, "*Chittha shudhi leni Kshudra maanavunaku athma thatwamu etla abbunagunu. Athmathatwamu abbunu athi shuddha hrudayunike. Unnamaata, cheppuchunna maata*." This means, "Without having the purity of thought and mind how can one even think of understanding these high principles of life. **Only when you develop this purity of thought can you think of going on the Godward path.**" There are verses in the *Rig-Veda* referring to Lord Agni, "Oh Agni! Let there be correct thoughts in me that spring from thee." Here we are asking God Himself to give us correct thoughts.

Dear brothers and sisters! Going on the Godward path is not as easy and as simple as we talk here. It is a continuous process of learning and understanding. Understanding the gross and the subtle, going from the immanent to the transcendental, understanding *Satyam*, *Shivam*, *Sundaram* (Truth, Goodness, and Beauty). S.S.S. as Sri Sathya Sai.

Develop Concentration

I would like to illustrate a story from the *Taitreya Upanishad* which will highlight how concentration of mind is a prerequisite. It is a conversation between the son Brighu and his father, Varuna. Brighu says to Varuna, "Father teach me *Brahman*." Varuna replies, "Yes I will teach you *Brahman*. First concentrate on *annam* (food) as *Brahman*." Brighu goes back and con-

concentrates on *annam* as *Brahman*. He is not satisfied. He comes back to the father again and he says, “Father, teach me *Brahman*.” Father says, “Now you go back and concentrate on the vital breath or *Vaayu* as *Brahman*.” Brighu goes back, he concentrates and he is still not satisfied. He goes back and forth like this again and again, and he understands the very explanation is contradictory because he is not able to arrive at a unitary conception of *Brahman*. Then he goes further on concentrating on *Hiranyagarbha*. We are very fortunate to have witnessed this emerge from Bhagavan, Himself. It has everything, the gross, the subtle, and the subtlest. Brighu attains bliss by concentrating on this *Hiranyagarbha*. **Through concentration alone one reaches great heights.** There is also a parallel that one can draw from *Kathopanishad* where Nachiketha also concentrates in the same fashion on *Hiranyagarbha* and detaches himself from the world all together.

The year 1968 is important because it was during the First World Conference in 1968 that Swami proclaimed, “Not only now, but even for thousands of years to come, you will not be able to understand the true nature of MY reality.” I am reminded of a verse from *Kenopanishad*: “*yasya matham tasya matham matam yasya navedasam. Avignaatha vijaanathan Vignaathavijaanatham,*” which means, “The reality – *Satyam* – is neither known nor unknown. It is known to very few and unknown to the learned.” We must be very fortunate that we still have glimpses of this truth through our experiences. Our hearts have been comprehending these truths.

If you were to ask, “What does He really want?” He wants nothing. He is the giver. He is simplicity *par excellence*. In His silence the truth is revealed. You may ask the question, “Who is He?” He is Truth. You may again ask, “How does He do that?” In *Kathopanishad* it is said: “*Aaseeno duram vrajathi shayanamyaathi sarvathaha.*” This means, “**As He sits here, He travels far and wide. As He seems resting here, His Presence is felt everywhere.**” Brothers and sisters, you are coming here from all over the world. Your presence here is testimony to this truth.

Everything Is Brahman

If you ask the question, “What does He change?” **He brings the change from within.** Then you may ask the question, “Where is His field of action?” All is His field of action. Through the infinitesimal, He acts on the whole; in the infinitesimal, He deciphers the whole. I would like to quote His words in Telugu, “*Chukkalanniyu Brahma, suryundu adi Brahma chandrudunu Brahma, jalumu Brahma, swargamunu adi Brahma, vaalabhyamu adi Brahma, thalliyu Brahma, thandriyu Brahma, balyamanthuyu Brahma, jeevaraasulu Brahma, jivi Brahma, puttinchunadi*

Brahma, poshinchunadi Brahma, gittinchunadi Brahma, grihini Brahma, kaalamu Brahma, sarvamu Brahma, ee srushti Brahma, ee sabhayu Brahma, sathyamu cheppu eee Sai Brahma.” It means everything is Brahman. Truth is Brahman. The stars, the sun, the moon, water, heaven, husband, mother, father, childhood, all living beings, the One that creates, the One that sustains, the One that destroys, the lady of the house, time, creation and this assembly are all Brahman. Grihini Brahma – the lady of the house is also Brahman. “*Prakriti Brahma, pranamu Brahma*” – nature is *Brahman*, life breath is *Brahman*. “*Sarvamu Brahma, ee sabhayu Brahma*” – everything is *Brahman* and even the assembly here is *Brahman*. And the one who declares this truth verily is *Brahman*, and that is Sri Sathya Sai.

Brothers and sisters, if we were to imagine this whole creation as a Cosmic Being, the purpose of creation being Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, this world is a field for the realisation of these values. Bhagavan, God Himself, is the ultimate cause. When you put mind over matter, the ultimate result is only spirituality.

Faith Can Move Mountains

The purpose of this Avatar is to build character and make us live with good values. We need to have faith in ourselves. All that we need is to remove the blinkers and see the truth. Here I am reminded of Kabir’s *doha* (verses). God says to him, “Oh, the bound one! You think you will find Me in your *yantra*, *tantra* (ritualism) and *mantra*? Or, will you find Me in your *yoga* or *Hatha Yoga* (austerities)? Will you find Me in your Kasi or Haridwar (pilgrimage places)? No! No! No! You will find Me in your *vishwaas* (faith).” Bhagavan said yesterday, “**In your faith alone you find God.**” Faith can move mountains. You will find Him only in faith. Who says He will not hear your call? He will hear your call only if your yearning was like that of Meerabai who left her palace to merge at the Lotus Feet. Who said you cannot see Him when you want? If only you had the eyes of Surdas who merged at the Lotus Feet. Who said He will not come down running from the hillside of Kodaikanal? Only if your friendship, sincerity, and loyalty was like that of Sai Geetha who merged at the Lotus Feet.

There Is Only One Reality

Bhagavan will teach us all these things. **Through Bhagavan’s teachings we understand that there is only one reality and we are all part of it.** And especially to the youth I would like to ask: What do we really mean by following Bhagavan’s teachings? We mean no drugs, we mean no alcohol, we mean no corruption, we mean no domestic violence, we mean no institutionalisation of God, we mean no politicising of spiritual places. We do not believe in wars and we do not believe in breaking

down the walls of churches, or temples, or mosques. We only believe in incorporating the values *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthi*, *Prema*, and *Ahimsa*. Bhagavan said there is only one caste and that is the caste of humanity and there is only one religion and that is of selfless nature which is love. And there is only one God, worshiped in many names, many forms, many colours, and many places. But for us as Sai devotees there is only one – Sri Sathya Sai.

By His Grace, Love and Blessings, I am sure that as the architects of tomorrow we will be able to walk with any winds and cross any number of bridges. Deep in my heart I do believe we shall overcome any difficulties. Finally, I offer this as my prayer at the Lotus Feet. I take pride in calling myself an alumni student of the Anantapur Campus of the erstwhile Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning which is now Sri Sathya Sai University. Also on behalf of all the people present here I have a humble prayer: Swami we are very grateful to You for our lives because You are our life. You are very, very, very precious to us Swami. Jai Sai Ram.



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Mrs. Chethana Raju received her Elementary education from Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar Hyderabad. Her Bachelor of Arts and Masters degrees are from Sri Sathya Sai University. She worked as a software consultant at Case Consulting Group in Detroit, USA. She was also founder and former CEO of Silicon Systems & Software, Inc. in Detroit. She is now Managing Trustee of Easwaramma Women's Welfare Trust at Prasanthi Nilayam and editor of the journal *Mother Sathya Sai*.

Live in His Presence Always

Mr. Dimitry Udovikin

Om Sai Ram! I dedicate all my thoughts, words and deeds at the Lotus Feet of our Teacher, Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

I would like to start my speech by expressing my gratitude to Bhagavan Baba who gathered us from all over the world and brought us here together. He is leading us and cares about us on our path to God.

Golden Youth of Sai, respected elders from 36 years of age and higher! I welcome the youth on behalf of the youth of Russian-speaking countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other ex-Soviet Union countries. There are more than fifty people in our delegation. Looking at the size of the countries which are included in World Zone 8, we are like little drops in a big ocean. Yet in spite of this, there is a lot we can and should do. Swami says, "One candle may light thousands of candles." So, every one of us is part of unity. If every one of us will change, surely the whole world will be changed.

Practise Love

We are very fortunate to be at this conference, to be in this holy place. We have the opportunity to look at one another and realise that **there is only one caste – the caste of humanity, and there is only one language – the language of the heart.** If we look around us, we see a lot of faces that we are seeing for the first time. Despite being thousands of miles away from our homes, we feel very comfortable. Why? The answer is love. Love unites us all. Love removes the differences and borders. Love removes social, national and religious identities. This is because love is our nature. **Love is our essence. Love is God.**

Sathya Sai says, **"If man will do what God says to him, three will be happy: we, our relatives, and God."** All of us here would like to be happy, but are we doing what God tells us to do?

We are very lucky that God created the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation to make it easy for us to do what He tells us to do. In this organisation, there are devotees

that come from different religions. But really there is only one religion in the organisation of Sathya Sai. It is the religion of love. There is only one God; He is Omnipresent. The main goals of this organisation are: unity of humanity and improvement of our character. **If we would like to change the world, we should change ourselves so that there will be one less fool on the planet.**

We know that to realise the taste of food, we must first taste it. To realise the value of the object, we should explore it. To realise what Sathya Sai says to us, we need to practise His teachings. This is the reason man has a body. Knowledge from practice becomes 'our' knowledge. Practical knowledge comes through experience. Experience becomes wisdom and wisdom helps us to see unity in diversity, to realise and see that everything is God.

God Is like the Sun

I came to Puttaparthi for the first time in 1998. Now it is 2007. Every time I come here, I ask myself, "What is most important for me? What is my goal here?" I thought about it. When we come as pilgrims, we wake up early at 2 A.M. and sit in the *Darshan* line for a few hours. We sit under the hot sun, and the reward for us is the first line. And I thought to myself, "What might be better than this?" I thought that better than this is to be a student of Swami. They get fixed places, and they get more opportunities to talk to Swami. And then I thought, "What might be better than this?" Better than this is to sit on the veranda. You may sleep longer, without being afraid to take a pen with you, and you may talk and connect with Swami. Again, I asked myself, "What might be better than this?" Better than this is an interview. Only you and Swami; you are happy. But, what might be better than this?

I realised that every one of these experiences is transient, and when it ends we will be waiting for it to happen again. **I understood that better than all of these is to feel God wherever you are, to feel happy**



always. And I pondered, “How do I do this? How to realise that?” I imagined the sun in my mind. The sun is everywhere. The sun is in America, Russia, India and everywhere. In every city, there is sun. We may look at it any time. Sometimes clouds hide the sun from us, and we may imagine that there is no sun. **These clouds are “me” and “mine.” All we need to do is to remove these clouds.** Then, in every place we will enjoy the sun. We will always feel God, and we will be happy.

Dear brothers and sisters, Sathya Sai Baba says, “My Life is My Message.” We need to follow His example. We are very fortunate; we have the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. If we work in the three wings of the organisation – spiritual, educational and service – our heart, head and hands will be in harmony. Clouds of ego and attachments will be removed. We will achieve unity of thought, word and action, and we will always be happy. **The best example for us is Sathya Sai Baba Himself. He always keeps His word and He is always happy.**

Brothers and sisters, when Sathya Sai Baba comes out for *Darshan*, we keep our hands together with respect. In our eyes, there is love. Baba! I want to express my gratitude to You. You care of us.

The organisation works based on the motto, “Our lives are HIS Message.” All we need to do is to put Swami’s teachings into practice in our own lives. We should inspire our brothers and sisters by our own examples, so they will be happy, our relatives will be happy, and that will please Swami.

God Is Always with Us

Dear brothers and sisters, God is ours always, wherever we are. But when we feel He cares for us, we are inspired by this. I would like to share a small story.

In the city where I live, there is a shop, and during the holidays they had a lottery. A week before New Year, I bought products there, and each time I got a lottery ticket. The grand prize was a car. After I got a few lottery tickets, I passed by the prize car and I could hear the car whisper, “Oh, win me; I am created just for you.” Then, I prayed to Swami, “Please, help me to win this car.” My inner Swami responded, “But, you already have a nice car.” I pleaded with Swami saying that this is a new car, and mine is old. But Swami inside me repeated saying, “You do have a nice car.” Then I said, “Swami, the main point is not about winning the car itself, but I just want

to experience how one feels when they win a car.” But Swami inside me patiently responded: “You have a nice car.” Then I said: “Okay, Swami.”

A few days before New Year, I went to work at my company and completed all my tasks. As I started to leave the place, some of the workers told me about the New Year lottery at our company. “We got the New Year lottery!” I moved the lottery wheel and took out a piece of rolled paper and opened it. The people of the company said: “Congratulations, you won the car!” I was scared and asked: “What kind of car?” It was a big souvenir toy car, and they gave it to me. I said, “Oh, thank you Swami! Now I know what it feels like to win a car!” Most of all I was happy knowing that Swami always knows where I am and what is happening to me.

Dear brothers and sisters, **most important for us is to always remember God wherever we are!** Then, our lives will become beautiful. In closing, I would like to say this to everyone who has come here; we have had wonderful experiences, listened to beautiful lectures, and read nice books, but if we do not practise what we have learned here, everything will be useless. When we are hungry, we may read books about food, we may hear friends talk about the nice meal they ate, but our hunger will only be satisfied when we ourselves eat some food. So, if we do what Swami tells us – all the three will be happy: we, our relatives, and Swami!

Om Sai Ram!

Mr. Dimitry Udovikin has been the Youth Coordinator of Russian-speaking countries since 2004. He was also Chairman of the Sathya Sai Centre in Vologda. Currently he is a manager in a furniture production company.

Think Wisely, Feel Compassionately, Act Constructively

Mr. Sanjay Mahalingam

I offer my *Pranams* at the Divine Lotus Feet of Swami!

Most Beloved Bhagavan, revered elders, delegates of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference, dear sisters and brothers. Loving greetings to one and all!

We are in the midst of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference. Once upon a time, another such conference was held but it was a conference with a difference. It was a conference of the animals of the jungle. And they had come together to contemplate the authenticity of man's claim to be the apex of God's creation. They had come together to discuss man's moral authority to call himself the monarch of all that walks the earth.

The tiger was summoned. It said, "I am an animal of prey and I kill others for food, but I kill only when I am hungry. But man is using all his energy and resources to create more and more diabolical weapons to wipe out his own sisters and brothers. What a disgrace!" The horse got up. It said, "Man taught me to run and when I gallop at my top speed, he gambles away his hard earned money on my galloping and calls it a horse race. What a shame!" The fox got up. It said, "We have a season and reason for everything. But man has lost all sense of self-control and self-restraint. He does whatever he wants whenever he wants to. He has become a law unto himself and a disaster for the rest." The little sparrow said, "I do not know where my next meal will come from. I have no sure place to rest. Nothing wrapped around myself other than God-given skin, yet I am happy and satisfied; but man has become insatiable and greedy and spoils his present by brooding over the past and worrying about the future." Finally, the venerable old lion stood up to sum up the arguments and give an overall perspective. It said, "Dear sisters and brothers of the animal kingdom. I agree with all of you but we must not make haste and scar everybody with the same brush. It is not without reason that it is said '*Janthunaam nara janma durlabham* (among the animal life it is difficult to obtain human birth).' It

is man alone who has the faculty to solve the mystery of his own existence. It is man alone who is capable of bringing to the foreground his own latent Divine reality which is truth, existence and bliss."

Why Are We Here?

Once Albert Einstein, the great scientist, was asked, "What would you ask God if He were to appear before you?" He said, "I would ask God – God, how did you create this universe?" But then he paused a little and said, "Rather, I would ask God – God, why did you create this universe?" Why are we here, from where have we come, where are we going? Why are we born? Rather, what is born, is there anything like birth at all, what is birth? What is death and what is life? The answer to all these fundamental questions is only one – GOD.

Come whatever we do, however much we may strive, what we have to understand is that **we cannot attain fulfillment and find perfect satisfaction unless and until we have found God.** God is perfect joy, pure love, and absolute bliss. It is our primary duty to cast aside all inferior attachment and offer our sole allegiance to Swami. Man is today forgetting the simple and the only purpose of life – to establish unity with God – and is unnecessarily getting befogged by a million other issues. Refusing to love God alone, he is hiding his infidelity by offering punctilious respect to outward shrines of charity and virtue. These humanitarian gestures are useful as they at least momentarily remove man's attention from his selfish needs, but they do not relieve man from his single most important duty to love God and God alone.

In the bible, a reference was made yesterday (Mathew 22:35-40) – A Pharisee asked Jesus, "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" and Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

What does the world need today? Does it need ideas? Does it need technology, or does it need intelligent people? No. The world today needs men and women of purity. And what is purity? Purity is the ability to say: “God, I want You and only You. In You is my joy, in You is my satisfaction, in You is my strength, in You is my trust, in You is my life and in You is my death. You are the joy of my life and You are the solace of my death. In You I am born, in You I exist and in You I dissolve, God, God, God. You are my everything and I give You my all.” Men and women who can say this from the depths of their being, “God I love You” – that is what the world needs today.

In one of His summer courses Bhagavan, describing who is an ideal youth, said, **“An ideal youth is one who has the head of Shankara, the heart of Buddha and the hands of Janaka.”**

Head of Shankara

The head of Shankara – what does it mean – does it mean scholarship? Does it mean deep knowledge of the scriptures? Because Shankaracharya was a very great scholar. The Bible says that a camel may go through the eye of a needle – but a wealthy man cannot go through the gates of heaven. Once Bhagavan added, “Even a wealthy man may go through the gates of heaven but a scholar cannot.” So scholarship is useful if it inspires us Godward. Otherwise, it is useless. So, by the head of Shankara, what is not meant is scholarship.

Does it mean intelligence? Shankaracharya was extremely intelligent. In fact, debating with the privileged scholars of the time he established the supremacy of the *Vedic Dharma*. His treatises, his commentaries are masterpieces of logical reasoning, yet what is not meant by the head of Shankara is intelligence.

What Bhagavan means when He says head of Shankara is the ability to discriminate between the transient and the eternal; the ability to see through the unreal. And having seen through, to absolutely and completely give up all desire for the unreal and offer our total love to the one real benefactor – God. The intellect that has the ability to turn within and to go back and seek its own source, the source that is God – that is what is meant by the head of Shankara.

In India, we use horses to draw water from the wells and these horses need to move backwards in order to do so. We also have galloping horses, but can a galloping horse be used to draw water from the well? All our intellects are like galloping horses. From our childhood we are trained to gallop ahead, think fast! But to find God we have to think slowly and think deeply. We have to be like the horse that can move backwards to draw water out of the well and not like a

galloping horse that gallops forward at breakneck speed. This is what is meant by the head of Shankara.

Heart of Buddha

The heart of Buddha – all of us know the life story of Siddhartha Gautama who later on became the Buddha. When He saw suffering for the first time in life, His heart experienced pain and anguish that could not be described in words. And then what did He do? He vowed to Himself, “I will find a way out of suffering and having found it Myself, I will share it with all my brothers and sisters.” Sisters and brothers, what we have to learn from the life of Buddha is that the best way to end others’ suffering is to first end it in ourselves. The best way to bring about change in the world is to first become immune to all change ourselves. How can a pauper distribute wealth? How can one share with others what he himself lacks? I can share love if I have super abundance of love in my own heart. I can share joy if I have super abundance of joy in my own heart. The very gaze of Bhagavan fills us with joy. Why? Because every hair and cell of His body screams joy, joy, joy! Bhagavan is the embodiment of Pure Love – so the thought of Bhagavan fills our heart with love and joy.

The next lesson we learn from the life of Buddha is tenacity of resolve, the willpower to sacrifice anything and everything for the only one important purpose of life, the quest of the Divine. Let us not forget He was a king, a king who was brought up with pomp, pleasures and all the joys of regality. Yet, when the inner call came, overnight He renounced everything and never, ever looked back. What untold hardships He had to undergo, what tests of endurance and faith did He not face? And the night before the great dawn of enlightenment, when He sat for meditation, He told Himself, “Come what may, may my bones fall away, may my tissues wither away, may my muscles waste away, may my body fall, I shall not get up unless I see God.” And the rest as they say is history. The tenacity of resolve – the determination is what we learn from the life of Buddha.

Hands of Janaka

Finally, the hands of Janaka. Kabir Das, the great saint, mystic, philosopher, self-realised master of India, was walking on the road one day when he suddenly saw a lady grinding flour. She was grinding grain in a grinding stone. The moment he saw that, he fell down on the road moaning. He started to wail and cry. A holy man passed that way and asked him, “What is the matter son?” He said, “Oh my God, look at the grinding stone. All the grain that goes into it comes out crushed, nothing is spared. When man is born into the grinding stone of this world, he is crushed again and again by the dualities of pleasure and pain. He suffers

because of his attachments and finally undergoes the traumatic experience of death. What a miserable plight – is there no way out?” The holy man took Kabir by his hand, removed the upper grinding stone and said, “See some grains are left uncrushed because they are at the pivot, they are close to the centre. Only he who is close to the centre of his own being, which is the core of Divine existence and is our own absolute Divine reality – only he can escape being crushed. None else can whatsoever!” “Hands of Janaka” means to be in the world but not of it.

Let me give you a small analogy. Most of you must have boarded airplanes to come here. The plane is flying, the pilot is flying it and I am comfortably sitting in my seat and listening to music. I am within the plane, deeply absorbed in the joy of listening to music. In the same way, sisters and brothers, the body acts, the senses perceive, the mind thinks, the intellect discriminates, but the I within all these rests. I only rest. I don’t move, I don’t act, I just rest in the stillness of my own being. That is what Swami says, “I am just I, that’s all.” To hold onto this awareness and to let whatever happens happen and let nature take its own course, completely unaffected, untouched and unconnected, deeply absorbed in the love of God – that is what is meant by hands of Janaka.

Bend the Body

And what is the prescription that Bhagavan gives so that we may reach such a spiritual stature. Bhagavan’s prescription is threefold: “Bend the body, mend the senses and end the mind – *paropakaraartham idam shareeram* (this body is given to serve others).” It is said that the good give until they have, the great give until it hurts, but the Divine gives until He bleeds. From His very childhood Bhagavan has been sacrificing this form for our sake. Like a candle that consumes itself giving light to others, Bhagavan has been incessantly, literally sacrificing for you and me. Can there be a greater example of ‘bend the body?’

Mend the Senses

Mend the senses – let me illustrate with a small story. A man took his seven-year-old son for a routine evening walk. From the opposite direction they were approached by a sinister looking, heavily mustached, hefty young man. He was in chains, and on either side was flanked by policemen. The little boy asked his father who the man was. The father said, “Son, this is a criminal – a transgressor. If left free to appetite his passions, he will commit numerous sins. So he has been caught and booked. He will be tried by the court and finally, punishment will be meted out to him.” The son nodded his head in complete understanding.

After a time they came to the highway and no traffic was flowing on the highway. So the father surmised

that a convoy was about to pass that way. Just then a police van blasting its siren passed that way, then came a lorry full of police, followed by traffic sergeants on their majestic motorcycles, some cars touting their flags, and finally ending with a long shining black limousine with the president of the country sitting in the backseat waving his hands and smiling. The son saw all this and could not contain his joy at understanding all this – he burst out, “Father, father, there goes the worst criminal ever!” By now the alarmed father shut his son’s mouth with his upper garment and said, “Son, this is our president.” The son was a little confused. He said, “Father, a few minutes back you told me that if a man is flanked on either side by a policeman, he is a criminal. This gentleman is flanked by hundred police in the front, the rear, the left, the right, the centre, that is why I thought he was the greatest criminal on earth.” The father said, “Son, this is the president, the first citizen of our country. By his dedicated service and his indefatigable industry, he has come to adorn the post of the president. The president is the best of mankind; the criminal is the worst of mankind. The police that flank the president are there to honour him, to revere him, to admire him and they wait on him. He is the master of the police; the criminal on the other hand is under the control of the police, a slave.”

This story indicates to us the ocean of difference between a disciplined seeker and an undisciplined wanderer. **A wise man with his mind and senses restrained guides his life through the path of goodness, without getting into the muddy entanglement of endless pleasures.** The fool, on the other hand, allows his mind and senses to run wild. Unruly that they are, the mind and senses dash him and wreck him on the roadside of life.

End the Mind

Finally, end the mind. This is the most important because the body is nothing but the mind. The senses are nothing but the mind. This universe is nothing but the mind. That is what Bhagavan says, “*Manomaathram idham jagath.*” The mind alone is this cosmos. End the mind. A small example - Who is speaking right now? And who is listening? A very ordinary question. The answer seems to be a student of Bhagavan is speaking and the thousands of devotees gathered are listening. But nothing can be farther from the truth. The larynx in the throat vibrates and sound comes out of this body. And before the sound comes, there is an impulse to speak. From where does the impulse come? It comes from the thought. From where does the thought come? It comes from the *sankalpa*. And from where does the *sankalpa* come? It comes from the one source. The listener listens, but what happens? Sound waves hit the ear drum and produce a sensation or a vibration

and sound is cognised. But what attaches meanings to the words? The thought. From where does the thought come? From discrimination. From where does discrimination come? From the same source! Thus, if we discriminate, we can clearly see that there is nobody speaking and nobody listening – it is just happening as part of the source! God alone speaks and God alone listens, and when He is tired of speaking and listening, He rests as Himself. That is all. But in our delusion we think there is a speaker, there is a listener, and there is this, there is that.

But Bhagavan reminds us that God alone Is. When walking on the road, our shadow falls on so many things. It falls on water, I don't get wet. It falls on fire, I don't get burnt. It falls on filth, I don't get dirty. The body is a shadow, the mind is a shadow, thinking is a shadow, and I alone exist. But if I cannot separate myself completely with my shadow, what would I do? I turn towards the light and the shadow falls behind. When I face in the opposite direction, the light makes the shadow fall in front of me and that shadow terrifies me, scares me and brings all sorts of worries. But when I face the light, the shadow falls behind. And facing the light is to turn to God and to turn to Him in the totality of love.

Pure Divine Love

Numerous are the examples of pure, Divine, child-like love. I would like to draw your attention to one such exalted devotee of Swami from the *Ramayana* – the great Sabari. Bhagavan has told us that Sabari had such a tender and compassionate heart. When her marriage was fixed, as was the custom in her tribe, a goat was about to be slaughtered. She was so depressed at the impending slaughter that she ran away from home and took refuge in the *Ashram* of Matanga Rishi. The great Rishi that he was, he immediately could gauge the spiritual greatness of Sabari. He gave her refuge and told her that one day Lord Rama would come, as He was in exile and was eager to emancipate seekers that did *tapas* in the forest. From that day onwards, she never, ever had a thought other than that of Lord Rama. Bhagavan says that her heart was so filled with the thought of Lord Rama that her *hrudaya* became Rama-*hrudaya* itself. Her heart became a part of the heart of Lord Rama. Every day she would get prepared in eager anticipation of Lord Rama's visit. She would clean the *Ashram*; she would polish the rocks and boulders on the way, imagining that they might sit on them and take rest. She would remove the overhanging creepers lest their matted hair get caught in that. She would collect the fruits and select them by tasting each one of them and preserve the best and the sweetest for the Lord. She was immersed in *Ramarasa* – the Divine sweet essence of Rama.

How easy it is for us to love Bhagavan! One look in Swami's eyes and the world is forgotten. After having looked once into the deep love-filled eyes of Bhagavan, how can we ever get a worldly thought? We are here all the time, so we do not realise in whose Presence we are. We do not realise in entirety, the purity and the enormity of Bhagavan's Divine Love in which we bask day in and day out. It is so easy to love Bhagavan.

Many years back in the early 1970s Bhagavan had a Grand Impala car and one student wanted to test his driving skills. Finding no other car, he chose Bhagavan's car. And when everybody had gone for *Darshan*, he tried to start Bhagavan's car. But unfortunately it was in the first gear and he forgot to put it into neutral, and the car surged forward and banged into the wall. Bhagavan's car was dented. You can imagine the plight of the boy. He quietly put the keys back and went to the hostel terrified. Two days passed and he didn't dare go for *Darshan*, but instead sulked in his room. Bhagavan missed him and asked the Warden, "Where is the boy?" Enquiries were made and finally the boy was summoned for *Darshan*. So the boy packed all his belongings, kept it at the hostel entrance, booked his tickets and came for *Darshan*. Bhagavan came for *Darshan* looked at him and said, "What happened? Two days no *Darshan*, what happened?" There were tears in the boy's eyes because one, he was scared and second, he was sure that he would be separated from Swami. With tears in his eyes, he looked at Bhagavan but he couldn't speak. Swami also had tears in His eyes and Swami said, "My dear, you are more valuable to Me than the car. You are the most valuable property. You for Me and I for you."

What Makes a Great Organisation?

Sisters and brothers! What is the mark of the greatness of a spiritual organisation? You all agree that the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and the institutions and organisations of Bhagavan are spiritual organisations. What is the true yardstick of the greatness of a spiritual organisation? It is not its assets, tangible or intangible. It is not even the amount of philanthropy or charity that the organisation undertakes. The true yardstick of the greatness of a spiritual organisation is one and only one – the completeness of the inner life of its members. How complete and robust is our inner sanctuary – that alone is the reflection of the greatness of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and nothing else. Therefore, being a part of the organisation, it is our first and foremost duty to connect to Swami, who is the source of all goodness, the source of all virtue, the source of all purity and love. That is imperative. How to do that? By focusing on Bhagavan! It sounds so obvious and simple but sometimes we get so involved in our so-called Swami's work that in Swami's work

we forget Swami. If we truly and objectively introspect how often we falter on these lines, we would be alarmed. Therefore, **to do Swami's work means to be one with Bhagavan and to manifest His Divine Love through us.** And if that doesn't happen – we may do the most earth-shattering philanthropy, but it is not Bhagavan's work. Only Bhagavan can do Bhagavan's work and when we are one with Him, Bhagavan's work happens through us. That's all and that is the only way Bhagavan's work gets done.

In 1999 in Kodaikanal, Bhagavan gave a Discourse on the control of the mind. After the Discourse, He came and sat with the boys and asked, "Anybody has any doubts on the Discourse?" One student raised his hand and said, "**Swami, is there a simple way to control the mind?**" Swami said, "**Love God more and more.**" With these thoughts I seek Bhagavan's loving permission to end the talk.

Jai Sai Ram!

Sanjay Mahalingam



Ivan Bavcevic

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Mr. Sanjay Mahalingam received a bachelor's degree in Information Technology from the University of Delhi. He worked for one year as a software engineer in ST Microelectronics before joining the Sri Sathya Sai University in 2002 where he received an MBA in 2004. Since 2005, he has been working towards a PhD degree in the field of management on the topic of "Corporate Strategy for Success in Emerging Markets."

Surrender to God

Mr. Ivan Bavcevic

Dear sisters and brothers, Dear Friend, Teacher and Lord, my dearest and only Self, I am grateful and blessed for the opportunity to address this holy gathering in the Presence of our Beloved Bhagavan Baba. I pray to Him to think and speak through this body now and ever after.

I thought I would be nervous talking in front of thousands of people, but then I remembered that I can't be nervous in front of my very own Self, even if it is spread in thousands of forms.

It is difficult to even comprehend with our minds what it means to stand here in this holiest of places. But that is exactly what is not necessary. Our soul knows the greatness of this occasion, and that is enough. There is no need to comprehend it with our minds as the mind will only lead us to limited and small conclusions and lead us away from the Truth, from *Sathya*.

Baba Is Always with Us

When I thought about what to share with you today, I realised that I could only speak from my personal experience. I could share with you the knowledge I have accumulated from books and others, but you can all read and listen for yourselves. What is more important is how I implemented the teachings in this body and this life, what things I realised from my own life experiences, and what understandings I have gained. For life serves as a tool for experiencing different aspects of our Divinity. Divinity is present in every thing, every being, every situation, every experience, and every moment we encounter. I realised that all events lead me to the practice of surrender to God.

If I look back into my early childhood, to the moments I can remember, I see some invisible hand leading my life. I did not grow up in a religious or spiritual family, especially since it was a communist country, but my beloved parents always knew there was something greater than us. They did not call it God, but they knew there was some energy, some Being, some consciousness pervading everything. They told my sister and me that we can choose what form to believe in when we grow up. Even though they never went to church or did prayers, they brought us up to always tell the truth, to love and respect others, to tolerate the

differences and to forgive. I am grateful to Swami for them because only God can give you such wonderful parents and such a wonderful childhood. My father, a non-religious man, would tell me at least twice a week: "Son, remember that you are God, and always live your life like one." He was telling me the biggest of all truths from my early childhood, and at that time I didn't realise it. I was not comfortable thinking that I am God. I thought that he should not raise me up to the "stars" in such a way.

So when I look at my childhood, what I got from the parents and grandparents, from birth to kindergarten, from elementary school to high school, and all the good things that have happened, **it is definitely the Invisible Hand of our most loving Lord Sathya Sai Baba that was arranging everything.** While writing this speech I remembered that I spent a great part of the first ten years of my life with my grandparents. In the Croatian language, the word for grandmother is "Baba." I would call that name at least twenty times a day, "Baba, I am hungry; Baba, where are you? Baba, can I have some ice cream? Baba, let's go out. Baba, let's watch TV," and so forth. In a way, Swami made sure that I called His Name from the early days of my life without even knowing it!

The first time I saw His image was in 1985 in Yugoslavia, when they showed on TV a documentary on a Holy Man from India who could materialise a powder (*vibhuthi*) from a metal pot for a long time. At home, we were all amazed by what He could do, and at that moment I wished that I could see Him doing that in person. I never ever thought that He Himself would make that wish come true and that I would go to India more than fifteen years later. **Our Dear Swami never lets any sincere yearning, any innocent and honest wish, go unnoticed and unfulfilled. For He is the fulfiller of our dreams and the giver of all boons.**

Everything Happens for the Best

It was not until my third year of high school that I started reading the Catholic Christian Bible. One night I asked God whether He really existed. That night, I had a dream that Jesus was saving my friend and me from some criminals. I did not believe the dream to be

true. So, the second night I asked the same question, and Jesus again came in my dream and said that He will protect me and that I am safe with Him! From that moment, I believed that God was true.

Then one day, I read a story in the Bible about Joseph, a son of Jacob, who was very dear to his father and whose brothers left him in the desert to die and sold him to a caravan because they were very jealous of him. The caravan took him to Egypt where he was a slave and lived in very terrible conditions. But Joseph was very dear and close to God, and had the power to predict events and explain the dreams of others. He predicted many things, and so the Pharaoh realised that Joseph could help the country in many ways. One day, Joseph predicted that there would be seven years of good harvest followed by seven years of drought. The Pharaoh put him in charge of food supplies for the whole Kingdom of Egypt. When the drought came, they had enough food but all the other surrounding countries were dying of hunger. Jacob, who was living with his sons in Israel, sent his sons to ask for food in Egypt, as they would otherwise all die. When the brothers came to Egypt, it was Joseph who received them. When they realised that he was their youngest brother, they were very ashamed and afraid. He then told them not to worry as it was God Himself who put him through all this trouble in order to be able to save Israel and his family from starvation. Because, if they had not sold him to the caravan, he would never have become in-charge of food supplies in Egypt and would not have been able to help his family.

This story taught me to firmly believe in God's Will and His plan, and to know that everything happens for my highest well being. Ever since reading the story of Joseph, I try accepting everything that happens to me as the best possible thing, the perfect thing. Even if it doesn't make any sense in the beginning, I know that it will all make sense the next hour, or the next day, or in a month or in a few years. I no longer worry, and I don't ask why something happens to me. Actually, it is I who have brought each event to myself in the first place. All I pray to God for is the strength to accept the things and events He sends me and to realise that all is how it should be. That is the first step on the path to surrender. **So, simply always thank God, and be grateful for everything that happens, as it is surely the perfect thing for you.**

Swami's Constant Presence

This reminds me of when I enrolled in a private university in Croatia. University education is free in Croatia, but to attend a private institution one has to pay a lot of money. Somehow, my entire family pulled together enough money to enroll me for the first year. However, for the second year, we had no money. My

parents asked me whether I was worried that we could not afford to pay for my university, and I said that I was not worried at all. I said: "I didn't put myself in this university in the first place; God put me there, and He will pay for it." A month later, I received an unexpected scholarship and was able to continue my studies!

If I look back seven or eight years ago, when Swami was present in my life without my conscious knowledge, I can see that I was quite a frightened person, often nervous and upset, often moody and lonely, sometimes loud and rude, and feeling that something BIG was missing. That something BIG walked into my life at the end of 1999, and turned out to be bigger than I could ever have imagined. Our Beloved Lord made sure that I entered the new millennium with Him in my mind and life. When I came to know about Bhagavan, I recognised many situations in life when it was obviously His Hand that perfectly arranged everything in order and in time.

There are countless events that showed Swami's constant Presence and care for my life, and it would not be possible to tell them all at this time, as they range from admissions to schools and universities, to saving my body without a scratch in deadly car accidents, to getting excellent jobs with famous people and European royalty. When in 2002 I was hired to work as an executive for Her Imperial Royal Highness, Archduchess of Austria, I came to the place where we were opening our new office. There was nobody there and no furniture or equipment. I opened a cupboard, and on the door I saw a photo of Swami in a yellow robe! Nobody knew how that photo came there. **Swami always makes sure to show us His Omnipresence and involvement in our lives.**

Surrender

Dear sisters and brothers in Sai, I would like to share with you some of the changes that occurred in my life since last year. In 2006, I realised that even though I felt I was surrendering to the Lord and believed in His Will, I was still relying on worldly security and comfort. When I honestly looked into my mind and habits, I realised that I believed, "If everything else fails and proves to be wrong, I still have an excellent paying job and career, a house to live in, and I am safe."

I saw that this mental concept was keeping me away from deeper surrender. I decided to leave the dream job and secure salary, and with God's help to open my own business. I do consulting for companies on how to run better businesses based on human values and *Dharmic* (righteous) management. When you have to earn your bread every month, which is not guaranteed, you better surrender to God. I told Swami, "This year 2006 is finishing, and I sense it is the end of a big part of my life. I am ready to be part of your holy mission

and to let go of my petty worldly habits and thinking. I am ready to enter 2007 in a new spirit of dedication and commitment to You.” **When you say “yes” to Swami, then you reject the right to be like everyone else. And when you make that one step towards Him, He makes hundreds towards you.**

Not too many days passed after this prayer of mine to Swami when I received an email from Dr. Narendra Reddy, a Director of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, requesting me to be a member of the Planning Committee for this Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference. You can only imagine the joy, the tears and my complete happiness with this news. I thought I was dreaming. And I knew it was not just an honour, but an enormous responsibility. When you “work” for the Master of the Universe, then you are extra careful in everything you think, say and do. Every day is a new challenge.

I truly feel like I have been growing in my ability to surrender to Swami. When I look back to all the years before, when I thought I had entrusted my life to God, I realised that I had not surrendered, compared to now. Actually, since last December, every day I realise that the day before I had not surrendered compared to this day. There is no limit to how much one can surrender until she or he finally merges with God.

Surrendering does not mean expecting everything to be smooth. On the contrary, God puts in front of us many more challenging situations so that we can progress on our spiritual path. **But when we surrender we do not worry as we are not alone. We know that Swami cares for us because we are dearer than the dearest to Him, and He is there for us in every moment.** Imagine how great is our Lord when He is able to dedicate every single moment to every one of us individually. To all the billions of people and other beings, He dedicates every second to every one individually and personally. Nothing and nobody is left unnoticed.

Realise Our Good Fortune

I can only suggest to each one of us to look sincerely within and see what is still left to be transformed and surrendered to God. One holy man said that it may seem like a process that will lead us to change, but at the end it is an instant that leads to transformation. We can’t know when that moment will happen, but we can start living our lives as if it has already happened. We can create heaven on earth in this life, this day or this minute. And, if you look around yourself, you will see that you already are in heaven, right now.

I would like to remind all of us to realise how lucky we are to be here. We have waited hundreds of lives to be born to serve in the Mission of this *Avatar*. That opportunity has now come. The *Avatar* Himself has

invited us all here in His Name to start carrying His Mission of Love to this world, not in words, but by our own example. Our life should become the mission itself, become love itself. That is why we are here. We should ask ourselves every day, **“Is everything I do in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, at work, at home and in the public making my heart more loving and open?”** If I have more love as a result of all the activities, then I am doing well. If I am not having more love, if I am not BEING more love, then everything I do is lame. For love is the goal, the source and the means.

After this conference we should not just go home and say what a nice time we had, how good the food was, and what kind of workshops we attended. Instead, we should really grasp the meaning of what we have learned and bring a transformation within ourselves. When we go back home, everyone will expect us to be the leaders of the new era. **But we can lead only with our love, our character and by personal example.** This is the greatest opportunity a soul can have, and it should not be missed. Our heirs will tell stories about this great time, and they will not be able to understand how some people could not seize the moment and see its greatness.

Let us now spread this paradise beyond the walls of the *Ashram*, carrying it in our hearts, in our minds, on our lips and in our helping hands. This paradise and its peace can only be spread by living His Message. This way, we can experience our innate Divinity and show to Swami that we deserve to be called “Embodiments of Divine Love,” actual Gods walking on the earth.

I am grateful to Swami for this life, for all lives, and for the opportunity to speak here today. I pray that we will always be in Awareness with Him. May Love lead us. Jai Sai Ram!

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