

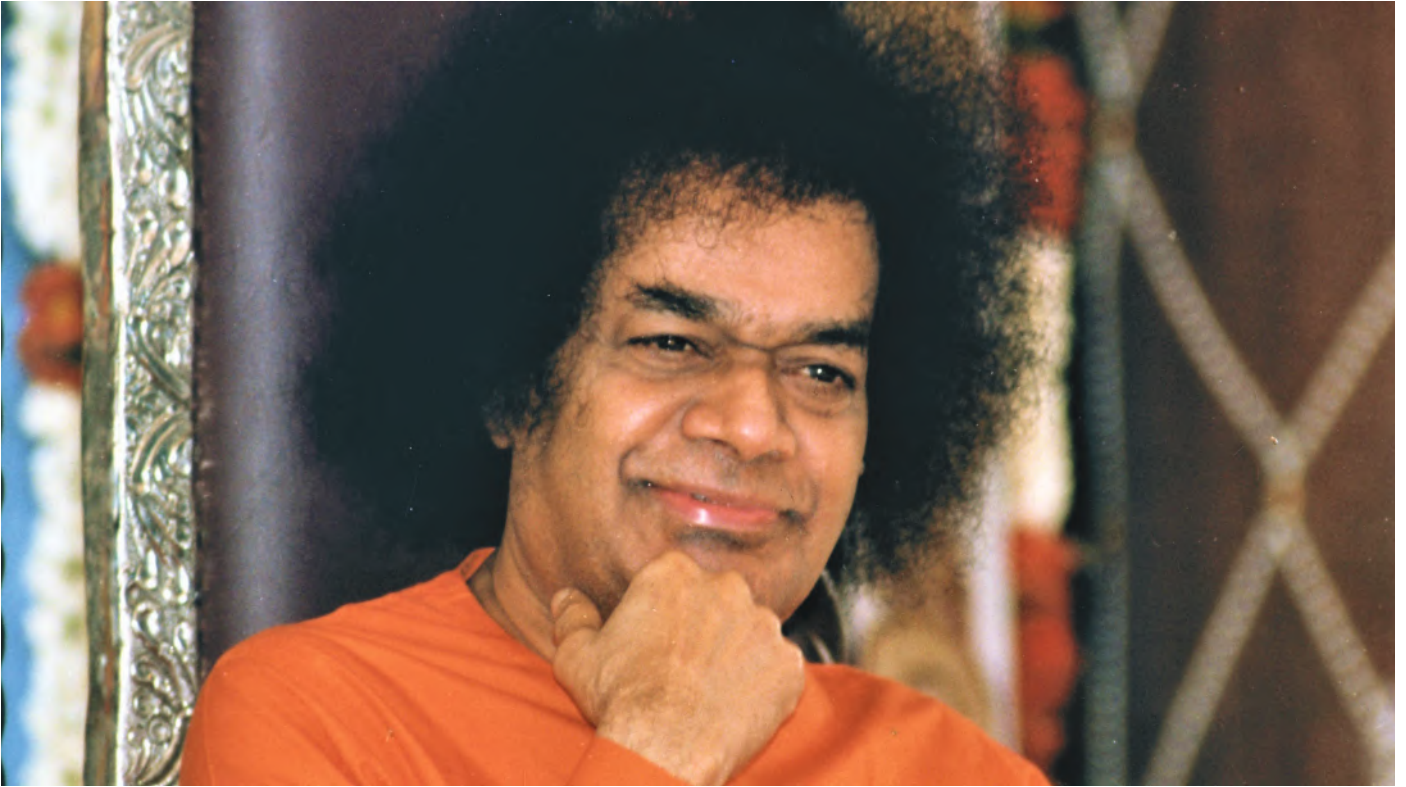


***DIVINE MESSAGE
FOR
SATHYA SAI SAMITIS***





Introduction



It was the occasion of the Navaratri Festival at Prasanthi Nilayam. On the 21st October 1961, during the evening Discourse Swami made a grand and unexpected declaration. He said, “I am launching a Seva Samiti. The persons who become members of this Samiti and perform selfless service will be liberated from the cycles of birth and death; not just them, but also their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. However, the test will be severe. I will bear witness to the number of people who withstand the test and emerge victorious.”

This marked the beginning of a new era in the Divine Mission – the establishment of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations. Swami has always maintained that Seva and Prema are the twin wings in the spiritual journey of man that lead him to his Divine Destiny. The Seva Organisations provide the rare opportunity to blend these two into a seamless whole – doing Seva (selfless service) with the undercurrent of Prema (Divine Love).

For the very first time in Avataric history, devotees got the opportunity of participating in the Divine Mission through a formal Organisation that bore His Name. So, it became an extension, a tangible manifestation of His Form, His Divinity, His Message and His Mission. No other Avatar who walked this earth ever started an organisation where His followers could participate in activities for the benefit of society, and in the process further their personal spiritual Sadhana. The Sathya Sai Organisations have been an effective tool in nation building. They have been His instrument in achieving the objective of universal transformation through the triune message of ‘Daiva Preeti, Paapa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti’ (Love for God, Fear of Sin and Morality in Society).

As we work towards the Centenary Celebrations of the Sathya Sai Avatar, it is time to reminisce the active involvement of our Divine Master at every stage of the Organisations’ evolution over the last 60 years. As He led by example and showed how an ideal socio-spiritual organisation should be run, He gave detailed guidelines on every aspect of its functioning and administration with special emphasis on the spiritual fundamentals of the Organisation and its various activities.

The Samiti is the basic unit of the Seva Organisations and the platform to implement the Divine Mission and spread the Divine Message. Hence, the role of the Samiti Convenors is of central importance in furthering Organisational objectives and undertaking Seva activities in accordance with Divine Directions. The Convenor and the team of office-bearers have the vital task of inspiring members of the Samiti and of the society at large through their action and affection and setting an example through personal conduct and commitment towards Sathya Sai ideals.

The objective of this compilation is to enable Samiti Convenors, Office-bearers and Organisational Members to understand, reflect on and practice in letter and spirit the Divine Directions received on every aspect of the Organisation. The compilation is based on the Divine Discourses given during the All India Conferences of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations held at Madras, Prasanthi Nilayam and Rajahmundry between 1967 and 1975.



This compilation is divided into six sub-sections:

- I. Divine Vision and Purpose of the Organisations
- II. Spiritual Fundamentals for Organisation Members
- III. Administration of Sai Samitis
- IV. Conducting Activities in Sai Samitis
- V. Organisational Discipline
- VI. Managing Interpersonal Complexities

The coding of the source of Discourse excerpts is as follows:

- AIC1 – First All India Conference, Madras | April 20-21, 1967
- AIC2 – Second All India Conference, Prasanthi Nilayam | November 20-21, 1969
- AIC3 – Third All India Conference, Prasanthi Nilayam | November 20-21, 1970
- AIC4 – Fourth All India Conference, Madras | December 22-23, 1971
- AIC5 – Fifth All India Conference, Rajahmundry | January 3-4, 1974
- AIC6 – Sixth All India Conference, Prasanthi Nilayam | November 14-22, 1975
- DD – This followed by the date indicates excerpts from specific Divine Discourses.

This compilation will act as a ready reckoner to Samiti Convenors and Office-bearers to lead their Units in total alignment with Swami's expectations and exhortations. May each one of us be recipients of the Divine Grace for the noble task of 'Transforming Self to Transform the World'.



I. Divine Vision and Purpose of the Organisations

A. Individual and Societal Transformation

1. What is Swami's Vision on the Organisations' role in Societal Transformation?

You are aware that, at the present day, both in India and outside, there is a wave of spiritual discontent surging in thousands of hearts and therefore, we have eager groups who give up everything worldly and seek God and Godly preceptors. But many do believe that this search concerns only the individual and that society need not get involved in their yearning or their endeavours. This is as foolish as saying that one need not worry about the darkness prevailing outside the walls of his residence. The individual and society are intertwined inextricably. There must be illumination, for both. Ananda (divine bliss) must surge out of the individual and fill the lake of society, and from thence, stream into the Ocean of Grace. Society is just a name for a group of individuals; but it has no corporeal body. Individuals are the limbs, that nourish and support the 'corpus' called society. Society shapes the individual, provides the arena for his development and sets the ideals he should plant before himself. When the individual is stronger, more intelligent, more service-minded, and more efficient as a worker, society benefits; when society is more aware of its role and of the need to cleanse that role with humility and wisdom, the individual benefits.

Sai has resolved to transform the individual and society by promoting this mutual regeneration, by the action of one on the other; hence, the formation of this Organisation, and the establishment of its Units in all countries, for the sublimation of the human into the Divine... Whatever is considered by you as good when done by others in your case, endeavour to do them in the case of those others yourselves. Do not advise, exhort and direct others, without yourself following that advice... Sathya Sai Seva Organisation must be unique, free from the slightest taint of hypocrisy, and the attempt to rationalise faults and failings. (AIC5)

2. What role does the Organisation play in Individual Transformation?

When you join the Seva Samiti (Sai Organisation) and share in its activities, you are doing so not for the sake of Swami, nor for the sake of the people, but the sake of the Dharma which you have a duty to uphold and foster. Attachment to Dharma, practice of Dharma and its varied manifestations of Seva (Service) and Prema (Love), can alone help transform Manava (human) into Madhava (God). The destruction of the insidious poison of egoism is essential for the restoration of health and happiness of the mind. Unless you tap the inner spring of joy in your own Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being, Awareness, Bliss) principle you cannot be established in Ananda. This is the best way for you to offer the highest possible Seva to the Motherland. For, India is since millennia the Yoga Bhumi (the land of Divine communion), Tyaga Bhumi (the land of Detachment) and Karma Bhumi (the land of Godward-leading Activity). (AIC5)

3. What is the key message in the name of the Organisation?

You are all members of the 'Sathya' Sai Seva Organisation; remember that 'Sathya' is My Name. It is the first and foremost ideal that must shape and sustain all activities of the Organisation, as well as every one of its members. Give Sathya the first place in your thought, word and deed... You must take delight in sharing the Glory of This Sathya: that is Myself. *You are members of the Organisation bearing My Name and, so, you must live every minute in the consciousness of that responsibility.* Bearing a 'High Class' name, you should not live in a 'low class' way. Rise into Divinity, do not fall into bestiality... *In the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, you have all the chances you need and all the direction and encouragement you want, to make your names cherished by generations. For, the Organisation strives to establish World Peace and Prosperity, promote mutual service in Society and cultivate selfless love in the individual. You have only to share in its various tasks, gladly and with perfect humility.* (AIC5)

4. Should the Organisation focus on Vedas and their Message?

Veda is Wisdom; Wisdom is God. The culture of Bharat is built on the Veda which elaborates this Truth and enjoins its practice. This Truth has now to be lived in daily life so that the dire problems affecting the individual and society can be solved. *Many practices and patterns of behaviour have been added to this culture in the course of history. It is necessary to discard these and purify the outlook. This is one of the main tasks of this Organisation.* Economic development and five-year plans may raise the standard of living, but unless, along with these, the fundamental wisdom enshrined in the Veda is assimilated by the people, such progress will end in disaster. (AIC3)



5. What should Sai Organisations promote?

For the influence available from positions of authority, for acquiring and accumulating power, individuals talk ill of others and breed hate. From dawn till dusk and dusk till dawn, the chief occupation of people today is finding fault with others, trying to publicise the faults in others. This state of things is an insult cast in the face of our hoary culture. It springs from the craving for cheap popularity and temporary fame... Your organisations must endeavour to promote faith in God. If that base is absent, worship, Bhajan, Puja, good works – all become meaningless ritual, done under social compulsion. Inner transformation, which is the fruit, can be acquired only when these are done with faith. Faith can grow only from the root of inquiry. Faith is made firmer by inquiry. You must encourage inquiry by the members whom you contact and welcome their efforts to gain first-hand experience. (AIC1)

B. Samiti and Its Members

1. What is the first aim of every Sai Samiti and the first ideal of every Sai Sevak?

The first aim is to foster and cultivate Bharatiya culture. Let its validity be examined through actual living, and one's own discovery of its values; and communicated to others by those who have experienced the peace and joy derivable from it. I do not want the extolling of the medicine by persons who have not been themselves cured by it. Today, in the very land where this culture grew and flourished, immorality and corruption have destroyed happiness and contentment. Many condemn these things, but those are the very persons who commit the wrongs they deplore. Those who profess to lead the people are themselves led astray by the temptation to fall. So, the very first ideal you must keep in mind, when you start and run these organisations is: "Do not crave for status or authority or position; do not allow any pomp, or show; do not compete for publicity or recognition or praise." Duty is God. Do it and be content... Unattached work is the purest; it does not encumber the mind with elation or disappointment. "I did it," "This is mine": these are the two fangs that make the individual poisonous. Pull out the fangs, the snake can be handled and played with as a pet. The Organisation must be vigilant to see that egoism and the sense of personal possession, pride or achievement, do not invade them. That is the goal to be kept in view. (AIC1)

2. What are the minimum qualifications to be a member of the Organisations?

A spiritual organisation is really above all rules and regulations; the realm of the Atma is beyond the limits of regulations. In this sense, rules are either meaningless or superfluous in Sathya Sai Organisations. But at least, to satisfy the law of the land dealing with associations of this kind, some rules must be adopted. For example, who can be members of these organisations, and what are their qualifications?

- i. Of course, they must be eager aspirants for spiritual progress.
- ii. They must have full faith in the Name that the Organisation bears and in spreading that Name, in the manner suited to Its Message and Majesty.
- iii. The member must have won recognition as a good person.

That is all the qualification needed; nothing else counts. There is no need to have money or lands, or scholarship, influence or authority or official position. If you have the three qualifications mentioned, I assure you, even if you have no place in any organisation bearing My Name, you will have a place here (Baba indicated His Heart as the place where they will be accepted). *The Organisations must be such that members find them congenial places to deepen their Sadhana, to cultivate their virtues and to overcome their ego, by contact with workers who are free from the least trace of that deadly poison. If this is achieved, their success is certain.* (AIC1)

3. Should the Organisation focus on the quality or quantity of Samitis?

I am not interested or elated when this or that district claims to have a larger number of Units of this Organisation than the other one. I am interested in the work, in the loving heart, in the selfless service. There are Units that exist only in name! There are others that function in ways quite contrary to our purposes and ideals! Instead of allowing these to continue, it is best they are wound up, immediately. Better to have two or three that function well than hundreds that function badly or not at all. Two ounces of cow's milk are preferable to a potful of donkey's milk.

If Units are started or if they are functioning only with the idea of helping the Office-bearers to attend these Conferences, if the members have no faith and devotion, if they do not make constant effort to realise the ideal of the Organisation; then it is necessary to wind them up. If we allow them to continue, they will create in the Organisation the confusion we find in the political scene...

My desire is that whenever any slight misunderstanding arises among you, you must set it right among yourselves, exercising love and tolerance. You should not plunge into a passion over it and let things blaze into a quarrel or a factional split. Recognise that you are engaged in the exercise of widening your hearts, of reaching the Feet of the Lord through the expression of love. Unless you cultivate love, tolerance, humility, faith and reverence, how is it possible for you to realise God?

Is love to be scarce, between member and member, in our Units too? No. You must prove by your conduct and attitude, that love, based on the realisation of the One Atma in all, can cure the problems of the world... Be lamps of love. That contains all. Then, there is no need for Japam or Tapas. Love, loving service of others (who are forms assumed by the Divine) will provide you the Grace of God. (AIC3)



C. Seva

1. What is the core of Seva in the Organisation?

Members ask: We are serving others relieving their pain or misery. We are feeding the hungry, poor; we are engaged in many good acts; are these not Sadhana? But this is not service to others, it is service to yourself. A person may invite all of you Office-bearers for a dinner! And he may declare afterwards, "I gave a dinner to all the delegates." He too sat and ate with all the delegates and so, he served himself too, when he served the others, did he not? He derived joy as a result of the dinner he arranged and so, it was a piece of service rendered to himself ultimately. When you feel that it is not the 'other' whom you are serving but yourself then, your service will be better and more effective. Establish this attitude more and more firmly in your mind.

If you do good, you get good from those around you and from the universal entity, God. If you do bad, you get bad. Divinity but resounds, reflects, reacts! God has no favourites, no prejudices. The thought creates a desire, the desire creates a form through which it is expressed. Have good thoughts, you get desires in good forms. (AIC3)

2. How is our approach to Seva different from other organisations?

Manava Seva (the service of man) is really *Madhava Seva* (service offered to God). There are various societies rendering social service nowadays, but, the service does not warm the heart; it is done as a cold routine affair, or as a showy performance, with a great deal of expensive hullabaloo! These societies have reduced the land to its present deplorable condition. *The inclinations of the mind, the implications of speech, and the indications of deeds have to be coordinated and harmonised. That is the test of the success of our Organisation; that is the surest means of achieving it.* Identify the group with which you work as your own self. Do not allow this to be a copybook maxim but try to put it into daily practice. Through the group you can earn *Samasta-Samarasa-Sahanubhuti*, that is to say, "awareness of, and empathy with the feelings of one and all." That is the spring of unalloyed Bliss... All the Organisational units are being activated by One Divine Force, all are activated by One Principle. Resolve to identify it and experience it; then, the purpose of the Organisation is served, use the unique human characteristics – discrimination, wisdom, detachment – Viveka, Vijnana and Vairagya – and drive at that Realisation. (AIC4)

3. What is the uniqueness of the opportunity to serve in the Organisation?

During no previous Yuga did man have this unique chance. No Organisation of this nature was established, no Conference of this character was held in the Presence and no opportunity was given then to derive *Ananda* through such close association, through conversation and singing together. Undoubtedly, you are all singularly fortunate. Therefore, do not let the opportunity slip through your hands. Hold fast to it and make the best of it. With steady faith and enthusiastic devotional activity, tread the path indicated and reach the Goal of Realising the Reality. (AIC3)

D. Rules and Regulations

1. What is the spiritual significance of the Organisations' rules and regulations?

The Organisation has been established, not for publicizing any person or creed, or to provide berths for some ambitious individuals, from which they can exercise authority over others. It is as a means of Sadhana that the Organisation is to be understood. Take it in that attitude. Do not consider the rules as restrictions imposed by Me or as shackles on your freedom of action. They are devised to help you and others in the Sadhana you have entered upon.

Two guidelines, peculiar to this Organisation you should not neglect:

(1) Act and then advise; practise first, precept second. Unless you yourself avoid the evil habits, and the undesirable practices, don't talk against them.

(2) The rules and regulations that we have laid down for the Organisation and its Units, must be observed, scrupulously, down to the smallest dot and dash. (AIC4)

2. What do the rules of the Sai Organisations emphasize?

When an organisation is started, it has to lay down for itself certain rules and regulations. But our rules are of a different nature altogether. Our rules emphasise that members must first practice what they stand for. Whatever you desire others to do, you must first put into daily practice sincerely and with steadfastness. You must do Bhajan regularly and systematically, before you advise others about the efficacy of Bhajans. When you want to be honoured by others, you must learn to honour them first... (AIC1)

The Objectives, Rules and Regulations that the Organisation has laid down have to be scrupulously observed by all, whatever be the difficulties whatever be the reaction of others. Bear calumny, criticism and neglect with courage; do not allow these to affect your equanimity. The good that you do will guard you; have that faith rooted in your mind. Do not exult when your desire is fulfilled; do not be dejected when it is not realised. Faith must be built on stronger foundations. Believing one moment and doubting the next, is like living and dying alternately. Faith is the very breath of *Seva*; doubt is death. One who wavers is as useless as a living corpse. (AIC5)



E. Religion and Spirituality

1. What is the Organisations' fundamental belief about the Omnipresence of Divinity?

The larger the number of storeys you wish to erect, the deeper the foundation must be laid. You are planning to construct the supremely majestic tower of Self-Realisation, and therefore, great attention has to be paid to the provision of a solid foundation of faith and discipline, of dedication and surrender. Examine your own activities in these Units and judge for yourselves, whether such a foundation is being laid therein... *The Lord is neither in Heaven, nor in Kailash, Vaikuntha or Swarga. To believe that He is manifest only in one place or location and to journey thither is a superstition much to be deplored. He is everywhere, in everyone, at all times. He is the witness of all, in all. He is the energy that fills space and time, and He is the energy that manifests as causation. The Organisation must implant this Truth in the minds of the members and spread this Truth, without fear and fumble.* It must reveal man to himself, as a visible, moving embodiment of Divinity, in whom God shines, through whom God beckons. God is to be worshipped in and through man. This is the message that you must put into daily practice. This is the main plank of the programme you have to carry out. You should not import the tactics and tricks of political power-hunting into the Units. Nor should there be any trace of dislike or distrust, on the score of nationality, language, caste, economic status, scholarship, age or gender. Revere the Atma and derive Atma-Ananda through Love. (AIC4)

2. How should the Organisation work towards Unity of Religions?

Four stages are mentioned in spiritual progress: *Salokya* (being in the same Palace), *Sameepya* (being in the immediate Presence), *Sarupya* (being privileged to be clothed with a share of regal authority) and *Sayujya* (becoming King oneself). In the Bible, Christ is said to have announced first, that he was Messenger from God; later, that he was the Son of God; and finally, that "I and My Father are One". Then, there is the further declaration of Identity with the Holy Ghost. In the Quran too, similar ideas are propounded. *The Sathya Sai Organisation must seek out chances of studying and substantiating these basic similarities and promote love and mutual co-operation.* (AIC4)

3. How should Organisation Members revere different manifestations of Divinity?

Do not compare the various manifestations of the Divine and pronounce judgement, declaring that Rama is greater than Krishna or Shiva superior to Vishnu. This line of thought is poisonous and harmful to the devout aspirant. You do not know your own self; but, yet, how dare you pronounce judgement on personalities and powers you have never experienced or understood. Rama is as unknown to you as Christ, and so, it is best to keep silent, and revere both with equal ardour. For, all are manifestations of the same Divine Effulgence. (AIC5)

F. Role in the Future of Bharat

1. What is the role of the Organisation in the future of Bharat?

The glory of Bharat which has illumined for centuries the hearts of humanity is awaiting the surge of the Sai Movement, through proper presentation and practical application by you, to have an even more brilliant future in the coming years. As the spark that causes the fire, as the driver in the engine drawing a long line of coaches along, as the designer and operator of a system of automatic lights, this Sai is here creating and fostering the world, and all its various communities, living and non-living...

Tri-Karana-Shuddhi is prescribed by the sages as essential for tasting the Ananda of the Universal Absolute. That expression means purity of thought, word and deed. This purity is needed even for efficient working of the Organisation, in which you are working. In fact, it is important at all levels of human efforts. But, at the present time, there is no evidence of this purity anywhere. They play false to their professions, talking peace and fanning the flames of war. Our Organisation must strive to correct this hypocrisy, and teach by precept and example, the straight path of sincerity and harmony. (AIC4)

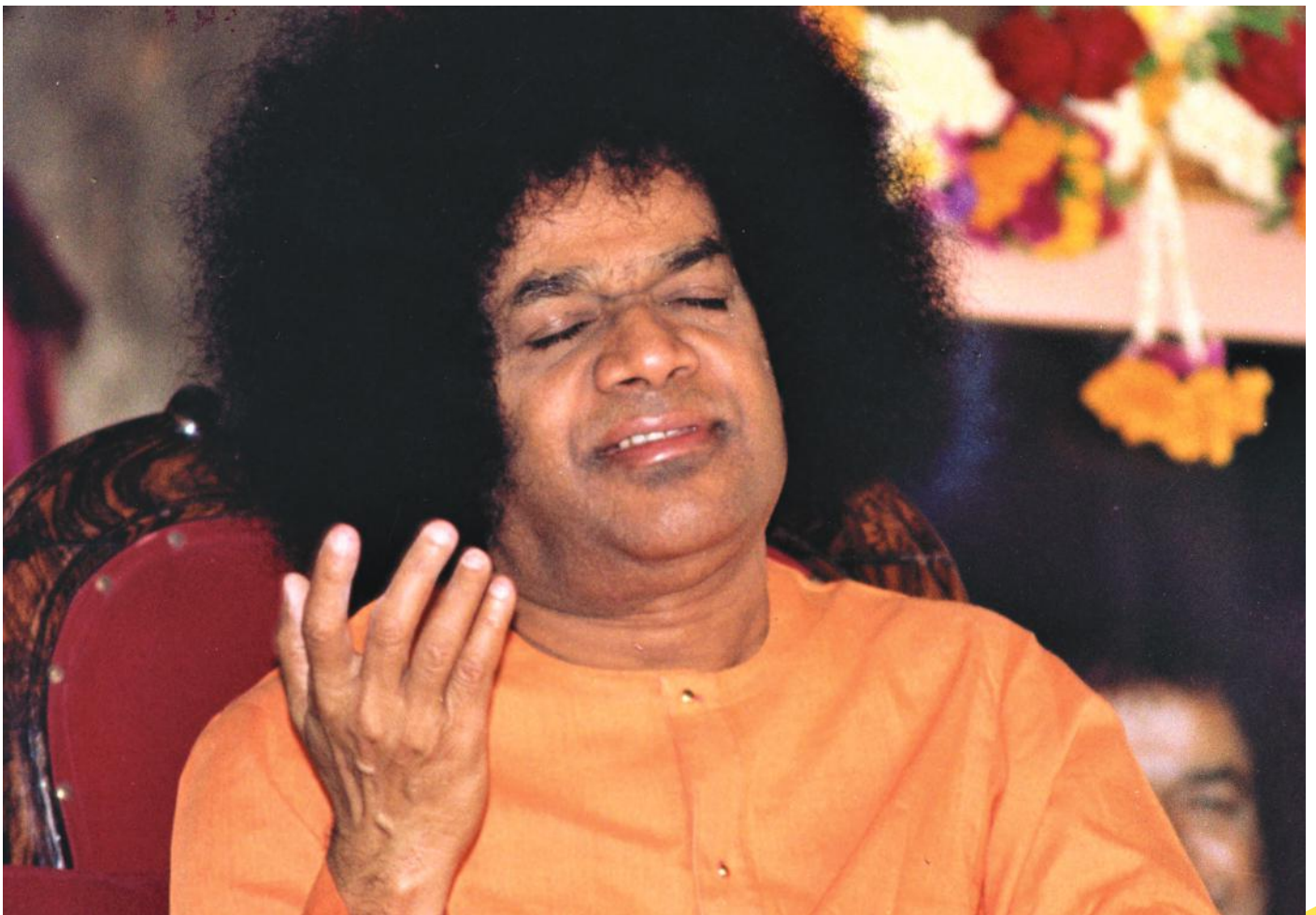
2. What should be the focus of the Organisation in the revival of Bharatiya Culture?

All over the land, we have now Bhajan Mandalis, Study Circles, Mahila Vibhags, Seva Dal and Seva Samitis besides Schools, Libraries etc., studding the entire area. Certain of these who have strayed away into wrong lines, regardless of the ideals placed before them, must be guided back into the path. *More than everything else, Bal Vikas classes must be multiplied so that the children may be saved and trained, to shine as true inheritors of Bharatiya Culture. May the Culture of India which is fast going dry in the land of its origin be restored to its pristine power and purity through your loving and loyal efforts.* (AIC5)



Highlights

- The formation of the Sathya Sai Organisations and its Units in all countries is for the sublimation of the human into the Divine.
 - When you join the Seva Samiti and share in its activities, you are doing so not for the sake of Swami, nor for the sake of the people, but the sake of the Dharma which you have a duty to uphold and foster.
 - The Organisation, through its various activities, must endeavour to promote faith in God.
 - The first aim of every Sai Samiti is to foster and cultivate Bharatiya culture. Many practices and patterns of behaviour have been added to this culture in the course of history. It is necessary to discard these and purify the outlook. This is one of the main tasks of this Organisation.
- Sai Sevaks should not crave for status or authority or position; pomp or show; publicity, recognition or praise. Duty is God. Do it and be content.
- The Samiti should provide a congenial environment for its members to deepen their Sadhana, cultivate their virtues and overcome their ego. If this is achieved, their success is certain.
 - Whenever any slight misunderstanding arises among Samiti members or office-bearers, they must set it right among themselves, exercising love and tolerance. They should not plunge into a passion over it and let things blaze into a quarrel or a factional split.
 - When you feel that it is not the 'other' whom you are serving but yourself, then your service will be better and more effective. Establish this attitude more and more firmly in your mind.
 - The success of the Organisation lies in coordinating and harmonising the inclinations of the mind, the implications of speech, and the indications of deeds.
 - All the Organisational units are being activated by One Divine Force, all are activated by One Principle. Resolve to identify it and experience it; then, the purpose of the Organisation is served.
 - The rules and regulations that have been laid down for the Organisation and its Units, must be observed, scrupulously, down to the smallest dot and dash. Our rules emphasise that members must first practice what they stand for. Whatever they desire others to do, they must first put into daily practice sincerely and with steadfastness.
 - The Sathya Sai Organisation must study and substantiate the basic similarities among world religions and promote love and mutual co-operation.





II. Spiritual Fundamentals for Organisation Members

A. Spiritual Fundamentals for Members

1. What is the spiritual objective for Organisation Members?

Organisational effort in the spiritual field has long been neglected in India; it is fraught with the danger of disruption through the subtle cankers of egoistic ambition and faction. *Unless the individual is first purified and strengthened, the organisation will disintegrate and fall apart... Sacrifice, service, sharing in the exaltation of others, compassion when others suffer grief – these are virtues that purify and prepare the individual to the arduous task of reaching the Goal...*

At the present time, when people meet, a curt of envy, pride and misunderstanding intervenes between them and creates obstacles in the path of sympathy and brotherliness. They miss the basic unity, the essential fraternity, the fundamental equality. Understand and tolerate, sympathise and love – this is the message of the sages of this land, who shaped and sustained the Sanatana Dharma (the Eternal Universal Religion). As Office-bearers of the Units of this world-saving Organisation, you have to revive this Message, revitalise it and guide men, with your experience. If you live along the guidelines of those sages, you will make three people happy – you, them and Me!

Devotion is not an acquisition to be advertised; it is a secret gain which must be communicated only to God. When the spark of envy envelops the mind, it soon develops into a huge fire and destroys all chances of good. Watch for it vigilantly; envy is only the consequence of pride and pride comes of ignorance of your role. *You believe that you have achieved much and that others are not giving you the respect due to you. They honour someone with less achievement, more than they honour you. But, just think for a while: Who granted you the chance, the intelligence, the success? The Lord. You are helpless without Him. He chose, He prompted, He executed, it was done. Be humble, be cordial with all.* They are equally devoted and sincere...

You must have intense faith in the Vedas, the Shastras and the Puranas. They are the repositories of the ancient wisdom, the wisdom that has stood the test of ages. They teach humility, reverence and tolerance. Saturate yourselves with the spirit of those texts. Then, you will be free from the illnesses of sloth and covetousness, lust and gluttony, envy and pride. *Enthroned Love as the Monarch of the Kingdom of Feeling! Enthroned Reason as the Monarch of the Kingdom of Thought! Enthroned Detachment as the Monarch of the Kingdom of Activity. This is the task I set for the Units of the Sathya Sai Organisation today.* (AIC2)

2. What is the role of Organisation Members in the Vedic Way of Life?

Like food to a starving man, like showers on a parched field, the Vedic science of spiritual self-discovery is the lifesaver for humanity sliding down to destruction because it has lost its hold on truth, morality, peace and love... It has become imperative to plan out the process of carrying spiritual knowledge to every door, for the gigantic flood of the modern machine civilisation is fast obliterating all traces of the Divine in man...

You are the instruments in the spread of Vedic science among the farthest corners of this vast land; you are the chosen ones! You have to show by precept and by example that the path of self-realisation is the path to perfect joy. Hence on you lies a great responsibility; the responsibility of demonstrating by your calmness, composure, humility, purity, virtue, courage and conviction under all circumstances, that the Sadhana you practice has made you a better, happier and more useful person. Practice and demonstrate, do not simply assert in words and deny in deeds... Saying one thing and being another will defeat the very purpose. The slightest sign of hypocrisy will weaken the foundations of the edifice. That is why it is necessary to lay down certain tests and qualifications, certain broad guidelines for those who stand forth as workers in this field. Standards and systematic self-examination are necessary at every stage for the success of every effort. (AIC1)

3. What is the task allotted to Organisation Members?

The Vedas and the Intellect, which man is endowed with as a gift from God to separate good from evil, are the means by which the culture of this land is to be preserved and promoted. When the Vedic treasure house is explored with intelligence, the Atma Tattva (essential nature of the Self) becomes clear and when that is recognised, man becomes eternally happy and full of peace... You are allotted the task of bringing once again to the homes of the people the message of Atmic strength and Atmic unity. Transmuting 'man' into 'God' and experiencing that Ananda is the one and only achievement for which life is to be devoted. The efforts you make in your own places are directed to bring this goal into the awareness of each person. Of course, there are in existence many organisations and societies engaged in distributing various cures for the 'spiritual' ills of their constituents, and therefore, a question may arise about the need for this additional institution. The need has arisen to emphasise the basic and essential discipline, which is practical and universal, as prescribed since ages for the revelation of the Divine in man...

Every Indian must learn and practise the spiritual science that the sages of this land have explored and discovered. However, due to



hostile forces, evil company, and ignorant fascination; Indians have neglected this foremost duty. The infection has come; it is well settled in the organism. Now, it has to be cast out. This Conference and the Organisations you represent are attempts to cure that illness. The purpose is the same, whatever the name – *Prasanthi Vidwan Maha Sabha, Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Sathya Sai Seva Dal, or Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali*. (AIC1)

4. What are the spiritual essentials for every Organisational Member?

Duty, Discipline and Devotion, all three, are absolutely essential for everyone in our Organisation. You may have Devotion, you may discharge the Duty entrusted to you. But, unless you are saturated in Discipline, the other two are useless. Many of you rushed forward when I walked along the passage this morning and tried to reach out your hands for touching My Feet, falling over others while so doing. This is definitely an instance of devotion outrunning discipline. *Discipline must regulate and control, not only your activities as members of the Organisation but, every activity of your life.*

I have been telling you since years “Duty is God.” Work is Worship... Duty involves loyal adherence to the rules and regulations framed for the efficient working of the Organisation. Look upon them with a pure vision, a steady mind, and an attitude of reverence in the heart. *Do not talk ill of any one with contempt, do not think of any one as low or mean.* Christ declared, “All are One; be alike to everyone.” *Hating an individual, or institution, or a religion is a low act. The Atma is imminent in everyone; it is the spark of Divinity which gives him light, love and joy.* Do not be content by addressing gatherings from platforms, “Brothers and Sisters” that becomes merely histrionics, unless you feel the Brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. When you have not felt in your heart the *Ananda* of realising that God is installed in the heart of all beings, you do not deserve to speak those words, while addressing others. (AIC5)

5. What should the Sai Organisation and its members dedicate themselves to?

Food is the medicine for the illness of hunger; drink, for the illness of thirst; for the disease of *Bhava Roga* (Birth-Death-Cycle), Bhagavan is the medicine; for the disease of desire, *Jnana* is the specific. For the disease of doubt, despair and hesitation, which are the occupational diseases of *Sadhakas*, the most effective remedy is *Paropakara* (doing good to others). For the major infection of *Ashanti* (anxiety), the course of treatment is Bhajan. It is to provide these remedies to the sufferers that the Organisation has to dedicate itself. (AIC1)

6. What should be the focus of all Organisational Members?

Everyone must learn the secret of happiness which consists in refusing to shed tears for anything less than God. You have won this human body, this human life, as the reward for many lives spent in acquiring merit. You have won this chance, this unique good fortune of being able to get Darshan of Sai. Plunging deep into the waters of this tumultuous ocean of Samsara (worldly life), you have heroically emerged from its depths, with this rare pearl in your hands – the Grace of Sai. Do not allow it to slip from your clasp and fall into the depths again. Hold on firmly to it. Pray that you may have it forever and be filled with the joy that it confers. That is the way by which you can render this life fruitful. (AIC5)

B. Approach at Samitis

1. What should be the attitude of Sai Samitis and its members?

The conviction that I am everywhere, watching everything and aware of everything must keep you on the straight path of Sadhana, through Seva and study. *I want that every Samiti (and every Unit complementary to it) must be bubbling with joy at the work already achieved and with enthusiasm for the work ahead.* Love, respect, tolerance, mutual co-operation, forbearance – these must flow from the hearts of each to all. *There should be no eagerness to capture Office from the other’s grasp or to hold it back when another is ready for it. The Units too should cooperate with each other and not compete in a spirit of envy or faction.* You are all limbs of one body, namely, the Sai body. The Samitis should be guided and if necessary corrected by the District President; the District Presidents should be guided and, if necessary, corrected by the State President; and the State Presidents should have constant contact, advice and guidance from the Centre. (AIC3)

2. What should be the daily prayer of every Organisation Member and Office-bearers?

You know that the State requires you to take a solemn oath, when you take up an office or enter upon an assignment. Similarly, each member and office-bearer must take an oath, from the very depths of the heart, before engaging themselves in the activities. *“Swami, save me from any act of commission or omission which will affect adversely the three qualifications You have laid down. Bless me with the skill, intelligence and enthusiasm necessary for the task I am dedicating myself to carry out for my own uplift. Guide me along the correct path; shower on me Your Grace so that I may earn a fair name in this attempt; guard me from temptation and wrong steps.”* When you rise from bed at dawn, pray thus. At night, when you go to bed, ponder over your activities during the day, examining



them, whether you went against any of the conditions of membership, and if any wrong had been committed unconsciously, pray that it may not happen again. Decide to dedicate yourself in this manner, with these ideals for the work ahead. (AIC1)

C. Spiritual Underpinnings of Activities

1. What should be the spiritual endeavour of Office-bearers?

Office bearers of the Organisation should strive to establish yourselves more firmly in your own Truth and strive to demonstrate in your behaviour that you are aware of the Truth that all men are sparks of the same Divine-Spirit. ***I consider Seva as the most important activity of the Samitis, for it is the highest Sadhana.*** Do not entangle yourselves in pros and cons, in arguments for and against, whether this way or that, they are the consequence of wrong or perverted scholarship. Love ignores logics; *Seva* respects no syllogism. Try to observe the rules that have been framed through Love, to channelize the Love that you are required to cultivate. I have said this so often that all of you know my mind already- “*Start the Day with Love. Spend the Day with Love. Fill the Day with Love. End the Day with Love. That is the Way of God.*” (AIC4)

2. What is the spiritual basis of Sadhana?

Time swoops past like a whirlwind, sweeping everything before it. So, one has to concentrate on the duty of the moment, leaving the consequence to the God who prompted it and made the task possible, giving one the chance to carry it out. Time ticks on relentlessly and man is born, lives, dies, rotating on the wheel of *Karma* and consequence, unaware of the means of escaping from the oncoming destiny. Agony and anxiety have not softened his heart; adventure and achievement have not made him humble. He is proud of his advance in the path of hatred and haughtiness. He revels in cruelty and sin. He displays an unholy satisfaction in immorality and untruth. He has reduced himself to a level lower than that of beasts. Man evokes pity because of this plight. For, he has taken the wrong turn on the road to happiness and landed himself in this hell. No one seeks grief; all seek only joy. ***Those who know that grief is the interlude between two joys, and joy the interval between two sorrows, will seek to attain the stage when they will not be agitated either by the fierce or the friendly storm! That stage of equanimity is the most desirable. It is what is called Nirvana, when the mind is in perfect equilibrium, unaffected by the blows of fortune, good or bad.*** For, he knows that he has no right to judge, whether what happens is good or bad, beneficial or other.

To reach this stage of Bliss, man must; live a life of Sadhana. If you take one step after another, however short the step, you can walk even a hundred miles! An eagle, however intrepid in flight, has to spread its wings and venture into the wind so that it can reach a few feet away. If the will to step forward or to unfurl the wing is not there, progress is but a fond dream. *The Ichha Shakti* (Will Power), has to be sharpened and shaped as an instrument for progress. This individual can fulfil himself only through the service of others, expansion into the universal. *Sadhana* has to enlarge the vision, enhance the experience, and enthuse the Jivatma to merge in the *Paramatma*. It starts with the question, “*What am I contributing to the welfare of my neighbour? Not, what am I collecting from my neighbour?*” You can draw cheques on a bank, only when you have deposited there in; or, you can mortgage your property and take a loan; or the bank may grant you an overdraft. The property on which you can take a loan is the “*accumulated merit consequent on the good deeds of previous lives*”; the overdraft on which you can draw in times of emergency is Grace, which God showers, when you are sincere and steady enough to deserve it. You must give some surety or something as security, to get a loan; the surety is Divine Grace; the security is the fixing of your faith, the fullness of your surrender. The security and the surety can also be the Guru, who knows the disciple and his attainments and possibilities.

But, about the extent of ancestral property (accumulated merit), you have no information; you cannot count on that. Also, you do not know where to get a Guru who will be a reliable surety or an acceptable security. Such are rare indeed. So, win Grace and earn overdrafts, against a lean day. That is the best source. The more systematic and successful your *Sadhana*, the more useful you will be for yourself and society. (AIC2)

3. How can Organisation Members develop spiritual strength for Seva?

The Divine is the inner core of all beings, near and far, big or small. Expand your consciousness to its uttermost limits. Really speaking, it has no limits at all. This cannot be done on an instalment plan, or on a cash-down basis! No. It is possible only through an inner transformation, through Dhyana, Japa, or Nama Smarana, in the constant contemplation of the Supreme Majesty that is in you. Once you reveal to yourself that Majesty, you can be an effective instrument for service and uplift, among the depressed and the distressed around you. ***The Divine sprouts in the heart, grows in the Consciousness and blooms in all the mental and physical activities of man. Now the Divine Principle is beyond your experience, because you are not ready to give your best to others, who also contain the self-same Principle. When you are ready to give, you are entitled to take; not until then...***

Do not waver, hesitate or doubt your destiny. Yearn to realise your Reality; that yearning itself will endow you with steady endeavour and the Grace of God which will remove all obstacles. Be an example to others. Do not scatter advice, without the authority born of practical experience. Do not search for the faults of others; seek your own. Love, cooperate, help, serve. That is your prime duty, as leaders of the Sathya Sai Units in your villages. (AIC2)



4. For what purpose should Organisation members undertake Seva activities?

The District Presidents and the State Presidents have read reports of the activities of the Organisation in their areas; they also send them to Me, off and on. They contain routine activities of a demonstrative nature, but few items that elevate and enthuse.

They mention 'poor feeding' (a word they are not ashamed to use), visits to hospitals, Bhajans in jails, Nagar Sankirtan, etc. For whose sake were these done? Not for the sake of the poor, or the patients or the prisoners, but remember, for your own sake! You take food for your own sake, you take medicine to cure your own illness, don't you?

You serve, for the sake of deriving Ananda, for the sake of realising your kinship with others, for approaching nearer and nearer to God who is in all, for your own mental and spiritual health and efficiency. Be convinced of that. You join the Samiti, you share in its activities, for your own sake; not for the sake of Sathya Sai or the Samiti started in that name. If you feel that you can earn fame or name, or social status, or some other type of gain by entering this Organisation, there is no place for you in it. This is a place for Sadhana, constant vigilant Sadhana ...

The rules we are laying down might appear to some of you as knife-thrusts or hammer-strokes; but they are meant to heal, and to weld. Bow to them and observe them in action sincerely – your path will be soft and smooth, like a path strewn with floral petals. (AIC4)

5. Should Organisation Members prioritise service over personal Sadhana?

The body should be guarded and sustained for the service one can do with it to others, or for realising the Atma, while in it. There are some who observe strict discipline in spiritual practices, who follow a rigorous timetable of Japam and Dhyana. Of course, this is good practice, but do not stick to this timetable or that programme, even when you have a call to go to the help of some person, whose need for service is great and urgent. *If you give up your Dhyana and serve him, you will benefit more, from the service than what you may gain from the Dhyana.*

If you feel that the person next to you suffering pain, needing relief, is a nuisance and move on to some place where your Dhyana will not be disturbed, you surely are not going to get the merit of that Dhyana. It is certainly a wrong you have committed, and you do not deserve Grace. *When God Himself comes down and has come down to serve man, He will indeed be pleased if you too serve man. Engage in those activities which will please God, which you feel and know will please God, rather than in activities which will please you. God is pleased with Truth, with Dharma. Dharma guards those who guard Dharma. Know your Dharma and observe it.* (AIC3)

D. Personal Sadhana

1. What are the four types of Self-Enquiry the Organisation needs to encourage?

This Organisation has spread far and wide, but I must say that it has drifted away from the purpose for which it was started. It has not resulted in the least benefit. For, in the spiritual path, the first step is 'Selfless Service.' Through selfless service, man can realise the Divinity that is all this creation...

The Sathya Sai Organisation is established to translate the principles of Love and Non-violence into daily practice. *It has also to promote inquiry into four basic problems - (1) The Body – What is it? (Deham); (2) The Body – I am not it (Naham); (3) Then, who am I? (Koham); (4) Well, I am That (Soham)...*

We say, "my hand," "my book," "my mind," "my act," "my thought," because there is an I that owns all these, that uses all these as its instruments. Who is this I? Like the current which activates and operates the machine, (with all its nuts, bolts, wheels and belts), the I activates the inert body and its components, inner and outer. We have a microphone here, before Me, and there is a wire which is fixed in it. But, even if the microphone is of the latest model and the wire is of the best quality, if there is no current coming through, My voice cannot reach you! In the body too, there should be this I, this Divine power, prompting and performing the hand, the eye, the mind.

You must carry on the activities of your Unit in the faith that a Divine Will is the basic motive power of all you plan and do. Who are you? You are that Divine Will, that gives you life, vigour, will and wisdom. Realising this is the goal of life. It means an end to ignorance, delusion (Maya).

The sages have laid down four goals for man on earth: Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire) and Moksha (liberation). That is to say, man must earn wealth through righteous means and desire above all for liberation from the see-saw of duality. Liberation is the goal that must dominate all the activities of life. The rest of the three have to be subordinate.

If you need flowers from a tree or its fruits, you do not water the boughs and twigs, where the leaves, buds and shoots are! You feed the roots! So too, when you seek the last of the four, Moksha, foster Dharma; that will sanctify your Artha and purify your Kama and win for you the Moksha you strive for. Develop Dharma and let it saturate your efforts to earn wealth and comfort.

Every worker in this Organisation must rid himself of the idea of separateness or distinction, between one person and another, on the basis of caste or creed, poverty or richness. He must always be eager to share the sorrows – and what is more difficult – the joys of others...



The Sathya Sai Organisation is working with persons belonging to all religions. They do so because all religions – Christian, Parsi, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muslim – have as their basic doctrines, Love and Non-violence. Develop these qualities. Then, you get the title to preach them to others and propagate them. (AIC3)

2. What are the three spiritual fundamentals for every Organisation Member?

(1) Forget the thing that has to be forgotten:

Forget the objective world, ignore it, it is Asat, only relatively real, not absolutely Real. Forget the A-sat. Remember the first statement in the Prayer. *Asato Maa Sad Gamaya* – Lead me from the unreal to the Real.

(2) Give up that which has to be given up.

The Jeeva Bhava, which is Darkness has to be given up, in order to attain Light which is the Deva Bhava. You are not the body; you are not just an individual, not just a chance spark or a stray drop. You are a part of the Divine, a fraction of the Fire, a wave of the Ocean. This is the second statement in the Vedic prayer – *Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya* – Lead me from darkness into Light.

(3) You must reach the place which you have to reach, that is, *Brahma Tattva*.

Brahma means, expanse, limitless presence; you have to pass beyond the limit to the limitless. Limit is death; beyond it, unaffected by it, is Immortality. So, the prayer cited above adds as the third statement. *Mrutyor Maa Amrutam Gamaya* – Lead me from death to Immortality. (AIC4)

3. Should Organisation Members publicise their spiritual attainments?

The Sai Organisation is set up to develop and foster Love; it is not set up through compulsion; it arose from the heart and it expands the heart. The inner desire to achieve Love and expand Love has taken outer shape as this Organisation... There are many who go about the country, preaching about *Japa* and *Dhyana*, pretending to be highly advanced experts. They claim to be masters, so that they can collect huge audiences and show off their skills. But, such exhibition of talent is not a sign of spiritual attainment. Spiritual attainments shun publicity. Spiritual practice is to be done in silence, away from public gaze. The name and form of God are extolled by Meera as '*Precious Gems*'; precious gems are not brought out as wares to the marketplace; only vegetables are so exhibited for all to see. *The Units of our Organisation should not encourage pomp or show – for they are alien to the Spiritual Path... When you are engaged in the various activities of this Organisation, dedicate all desires to God, do everything as the command of the God, whom you have installed in your hearts.* (AIC3)

Highlights

- Office-bearers of Sai Samitis have to revive the Message of Sanatana Dharma, revitalise it and guide others, with their experience.
- Members must have intense faith in the Vedas, Shastras and Puranas - the repositories of ancient wisdom that has stood the test of ages. Organisation members are the instruments in the spread of this Vedic science to the farthest corners of India.
- Duty, Discipline and Devotion, all three, are essential for everyone in our Organisation. Discipline must regulate and control, not only activities as members of the Organisation but every activity of life.
- Every Samiti must be bubbling with joy at the work already achieved and with enthusiasm for the work ahead. Love, respect, tolerance, mutual co-operation, forbearance – these must flow from the hearts of each to all. Samitis should cooperate with each other and not compete in a spirit of envy or faction.
- Seva is the most important activity of the Samitis, for it is the highest Sadhana.
- Do not search for the faults of others; seek your own. Love, cooperate, help, serve. That is your prime duty, as leaders of the Sathya Sai Units in your villages.
- You join the Samiti, you share in its activities, for your own sake; not for the sake of Sathya Sai or the Samiti started in that name. You serve, for the sake of deriving Ananda, for the sake of realising your kinship with others, for approaching nearer and nearer to God who is in all, for your own mental and spiritual health and efficiency. Be convinced of that.
- If you give up your Dhyana and serve, you will benefit more, from the service than what you may gain from the Dhyana. When God Himself comes down and has come down to serve man, He will indeed be pleased if you too serve man.
- God is pleased with Truth, with Dharma. Dharma guards those who guard Dharma. Know your Dharma and observe it.
- The Sathya Sai Organisation is established to translate the principles of Love and Non-violence into daily practice. It has also to promote inquiry into four basic problems - (1) The Body – What is it? (Deham); (2) The Body – I am not it (Naham); (3) Then, who am I? (Koham); (4) Well, I am That (Soham)...
- You must carry on the activities of your Samiti in the faith that a Divine Will is the basic motive power of all you plan and do.
- Sages have laid down four goals for man on earth: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (liberation). Man must earn wealth through righteous means and desire above all for liberation, which is the goal that must dominate all the activities of life.
- Every worker in this Organisation must rid himself of the idea of separateness or distinction, between one person and another, on the basis of caste or creed, poverty or richness. He must always be eager to share the sorrows – and what is more difficult – the joys of others.
- You are not the body; you are not just an individual, not just a chance spark or a stray drop. You are a part of the Divine, a fraction of the Fire, a wave of the Ocean.
- Sai Samitis should not encourage pomp or show – for they are alien to the spiritual path. When you are engaged in various activities of this Organisation, dedicate all desires to God, do everything as the command of the God, whom you have installed in your hearts.





III. Administration Of Sai Samitis

A. Samiti Administration

1. What should be the undercurrent of all Samiti activities?

Love is the solvent for the hardest of hearts. Without love, free, full and selfless, no spiritual *Sadhana* can succeed. Without it, Bhajan is waste of breath, Satsang, a waste of time and meditation a self-deception. *Bhajan, Satsang and meditation done with a mind soaked in love, can confer peace, joy and wisdom.* When the rain drop falls into the sea, it gets the name, form and nature of the sea. So, too, when the individual merges in the vast concourse of humanity and feels one with all, he is endowed with the name, form and nature of Divinity. Whatever you do as service, to whomsoever you offer the act, believe that it reaches the God in that person. (AIC6)

2. What is the relationship between the Samiti and various units under its administration?

Each town shall have a single Samiti (organisation and unit); it shall not have more than one. It may have within its jurisdiction a hundred *Bhajan Mandalis* or a hundred groups engaged in various other activities. But there shall be only one Samiti... Units like Sathya Sai Satsang, Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, Sathya Sai Study Circle, Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali, and Sathya Sai Seva Dal will be subordinate to the Samiti and supervised by it. *The Samiti is the heart, and the units are the limbs. The limbs cannot act independently, as if they are a law unto themselves...* The Mahila Vibhag will be under the guidance of the Samitis concerned. Of course, the *Vibhag* can have its own Chairman and Secretary, but both must follow the advice and suggestions of the Chairman of the Seva Samiti, and the rules laid down for the Samiti. (AIC4)

3. What kind of Samiti activities can be organised for spiritual uplift of its members?

Establish unity among yourselves first; do not seek faults in others or excellences in your own selves. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man – have full faith in this and fill every act of yours with that reverence and love. Meet together once a week or once a fortnight or at least once a month; have someone to discourse to you or engage in Bhajan or study or *Dhyana*; experience the thrill of spiritual comradeship. Every member of the Organisation must have some item of work allotted to him and he must be present whenever such meetings are held, unless of course it becomes physically difficult.

I must tell you about another point also. *Wherever you are, whatever work you do, do it as an act of worship, an act of dedication, an act for the glorification of God who is the inspirer, the witness, the Master. Do not divide your activities as, “These are for my sake” and “These are for the sake of God.”*

When you work, there should be no remainder, nothing should remain over. See all work as one. You should not, the *Shastras* say, leave any remainder or balance in debts, in disease, in vengeance against enemies, in the cycle of birth-death. Finish all, down to the last. They should not recur. If you offer all activities at the feet of the Lord and free them from any trace of egoistic attachment, the consequence will not bind you: you are free, you are liberated, you have *Moksha*. (AIC1)

4. Which festivals should the Sai Samiti celebrate?

The *Bhajan Mandalis*, *Satsangs*, *Bhakta Mandalis*, that are now established must spread the message of *Nama Smarana*, Bhajan and *Nama Sankirtana* at all times and in all places. Jayadeva, Gauranga, Thyagaraja – all these moved through the Bazaars and streets, singing Bhajans and songs about the glory of God and their ecstasy filled lakhs and lakhs of people with Divine fervour...

Yesterday, someone read out a list of holy days which the associations were to celebrate. That list mentioned *Shivaratri*, *Navaratri*, Swami's Birthday and *Guru Poornima*. But you must also celebrate the Birthdays of the Mahatmas who led man to the God within, and also all days held holy by your brothers. Do not set limits to these celebrations and these days. Make every day a holy day and fill it with the recollection of God and His Messengers. (AIC1)

5. How should Members belonging to other religions participate in activities?

Here is another question from a Muslim who is the Vice-President of the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, in his town. He asks whether he can partake in the *Nagar Sankirtan*, *Dhyana*, Puja, etc., that the Samiti is having on its programme. If he desires, he can; if he feels that it goes against his inner conviction, he need not. One should not give up his conviction in the face of ridicule or persecution. He can carry on *Dhyana* according to his conviction in the privacy of his own home; there is no compulsion that he should thrust them on the attention of others, outside. All faiths are inter-related and mutually indebted to each other for the principles they teach, and the disciplines they recommend. *The Vedic religion was the first in time; Buddhism which appeared about 2,500 years ago, was its son; Christianity, which was influenced much by the Orient was its grandson. And Islam, which has the Prophets of Christianity at its base was like the great-grandson. All have Love as the Fundamental Discipline of the Mind, in order to chasten it and merge man with the Divine.* (AIC3)



6. When should the Samiti New Year begin? When should Annual Reports be submitted to District and State Presidents?

The date for the beginning of the official year of the Samitis and *Sanghas* and *Mahila Satsangs* and other units of the Organisations shall hereafter be the *Uttarayana Punya Kala*, viz, the *Makara Sankranti*, which usually falls about January 14th. Annual Reports should reach the District and State Presidents and the Headquarters soon after this date, along with the names of newly elected Committees, if any. (AIC2)

7. How should public meetings be organised by the Samiti?

Public meetings can be arranged in a town or city only under the auspices of the Samiti. There should not be any competition between the Samiti and an overenthusiastic subsidiary unit, in arranging public meetings, involving printing and distribution of invitations, reception of speakers, and elaborate expenses, preparations for seating, loudspeakers, etc. The units of the Samiti will not have the resources for such functions and if each unit seeks to outshine the others, the atmosphere of cordiality and co-operation will be fouled. *There should not be any factional struggles between the members of any unit or between one unit and another.* (AIC2)

8. How should the Samitis report their activities to the senior leadership?

Reports of activities from the Units do not reach the Samiti, the Samitis are not reporting to the District Presidents and they in turn fail to inform the State Presidents, who are unable to present a full picture of the activities of the State to Me. *The flow of information from below and of instruction and inspiration from above must be unbroken and steady. Adherence to these rules will strengthen the Organisation, which has as its aim the fostering of Bharatiya culture as the example for the whole of humanity.* (AIC4)

9. How and where can the Organisation symbol be used?

The symbol of the Organisation is “*the Harmony of Religions, the Unity of all Faiths, the Acceptance of all Approaches.*” I find that this symbol is now being indiscriminately used in badges, letter heads, wedding cards, etc. and it is also being adapted and changed according to individual fancy by the users. This is creating confusion; for, there is no one identifiable symbol for the units of the Organisation or for the Sathya Sai Seva Dal. *You must resolve to adopt the same design for letter heads used in official correspondence, the same symbol for badges all over the country.* If you travel along the royal road of faith and discipline, you can reach the Royal Palace which you long to enter. (AIC4)

10. What can Samitis learn from each other?

Be sincere in *Sadhana*; do not attempt to imitate others; let it arise out of your own genuine yearning. You should not also be urged by competitiveness or the desire to show off. “*That Bhajan Mandali is conducting Nagar Sankirtan twice a week; let us also do twice a week; or, let us do thrice a week.*” This kind of rivalry or exhibitionism must be given up. There are others who desire to bring down units that are doing good work, for, they cannot tolerate or suffer the fame those units earn! So, out of sheer malice, they try to harm or injure the units so that their good work may suffer.

But there is another way of bringing those units down and making your unit more liked. The teacher draws a line on the blackboard and asks any one of his pupils to come up to the board and, without touching the line drawn, make it shorter! The pupils are puzzled but the teacher shows them the way; draw a longer line a little distance above it; the line is now the shorter of the two! *Let your unit do more acts of service more efficiently to more people. That is the proper way to carry on the activities – not calumny or criticism, but work.* (AIC3)

B. Funds and their Management

1. How should funds be collected and spent for the Sai Samiti?

I do not like collection of funds. But, since some expense has to be incurred, I have to allow it under very stringent conditions. Each organisation has as Members (of the Samiti) about ten or fifteen persons. Whatever expense they decide to incur for the work of the Samiti, they must collect among themselves, without seeking help from those outside the circle. They have, of course, to contribute according to their capacity and limit the work to the resources they can pool among themselves.

Do not plan beyond your capacity and move about with lists from person to person to get funds. By this, the institution gets a bad name and you too will not be spared. You may say, “*But, when Swami comes to our place, we must spend a lot on reception arrangements.*” No, I do not need grand decorations, huge pandals, arches, flags and such paraphernalia. I require only a mike to communicate My advice to the people. Even a chair is superfluous! I can talk standing. Spend sparingly for the minimum needs; do not involve yourselves in expensive luxury. I would like you to spend any extra money that you have for the feeding of the poor or for any similar beneficial object.

Attempts are being made in many places to build Sathya Sai Mandirs (halls of worship). But Sathya Sai will be happy if He is installed



in your hearts; that is the Mandir I like, not those. When you seek to build that other Mandir, you have to go about seeking donations. Religion has declined in this land due to this donation-seeking and donation-granting. The most precious donation is a pure mind; give that to the Organisation and it will shine. (AIC1)

I am wishing that none of you (members of SSSSO) take the Sathya Sai Organisation on the path of collecting money.

Rather, you should perform the Sadhana of taking the Organisation along the path of developing virtues and present the model of an ideal life to the world. Those who are interested and enthusiastic and have the ability to give may contribute anything to the Health and Education Trusts. Sai has no objection to that. Here also, there is a simple solution. Do not give any money into anyone's hands. Those of you who are enthusiastic may directly go to a known bank and deposit the money in the account according to your ability and take the receipt. But do not give money directly into the hands of any individual. If you do so, you will be responsible in making the sacred name of Sathya Sai unsacred. In our life, we amass money through many improper means. It is necessary to bring fulfilment to such money by using it in sacred activities. That is why our ancient Bharatiyas have advocated Dharma and Charity. (DD – 21.11.1975)

2. How can extra funds be collected for special Samiti functions?

I shall tell you a method by which the extra funds you may need for any undertaking the Samiti has in view, are to be collected. Estimate beforehand what the expense will be. Suppose it comes to a thousand rupees, give that information to the fifteen members, and fix a day when they shall all meet. That day keep a locked box with a slit on the lid, in an inner room; let everyone go in alone into the room and deposit in the box whatever he feels he can. He can come away without depositing anything; he has the freedom to do so, there is no compulsion. If funds are collected with the knowledge of the rest, a person who is unable to give as much as another may feel humiliated, and so this is the best method. When all have finished their turn, let the box be opened and the amount counted. If it falls short of the estimate, divide the shortfall among all members equally and collect the share from each. If there is some surplus, keep it for the next occasion. Do not have lists, appeals, receipt books and all the cumbersome complex of fund collection campaigns. That way will lead you to stratagems and falsehoods, competition and calumny. Do it in this quiet and sacred manner, suited to the holy objectives you have.

I assure you that funds will come, provided you sincerely pray, for every worthy cause. Have that faith; and watch the funds flow in. The sages of ancient times celebrated many Yajnas, with no resources other than faith and sincerity. Now you are moved more by pride, by anxiety, by want of confidence; so you are not giving My suggestion of the box-with-the-slit to be filled secretly by members only, one after the other, any trial! Moreover, I must tell you that not much money is needed for many of the items of work. Yearning in the heart, Name on the tongue – these are enough for Bhajan and Nagara Sankirtan. The Gopis (milkmaids of Bridavan) sang the Name of God when they churned the pots for butter, in the early morning hours. The bangles on their wrists jingled the time, the whir of the rods in the pots provided the background tune, and the fragrant morning breeze carried the song into every neighbouring ear. You need not collect an impressive crowd; you need no costly paraphernalia; they are superfluous impediments. Do not spend much on lecturers and speakers. If any crave for monetary rewards or showy receptions, keep such at arm's length. A chair and a table will be quite ample; loudspeakers are a luxury for most of your meetings. They have become more status symbols than necessities. Set yourselves out as examples to organisations round about you, in the careful husbanding of resources and in avoiding wasteful expenditure. Have only as many gatherings as you can afford; do not call them together, because you must! People must look forward to them, and not feel they are too many. (DD – 21.01.1968)

Some delegates suggested that sub-committees be formed and recognised. But that will increase the number and so give room for more mistakes. Let the responsibility be on a few dedicated persons. *The District President must see that small associations in the villages are given proper guidance and help to carry out the task undertaken by them, and to send to those villages, exponents of Vedic culture in order to instruct and inspire them.* Attempts should also be made to spread spiritual knowledge and instil the yearning for spiritual Sadhana among students and youth. (AIC1)

Many persons have also started using My name for the purpose of collecting money for various purposes or material. If such men come to you, send them back with the admonition that they are doing wrong. I ask for Bhakti, Shraddha, Sadhana (devotion, faith and spiritual discipline) - purification of hearts - that is all. Only beggars ask for money; I will never associate Myself with the temporary, the tarnished, the tawdry, and the mean. (DD – 27.03.1965)

The Sathya Sai Organisation and its units must not collect money or material from those outside the membership. Fund collection is as much opposed to this movement as fire is to water. If you yield on this point, spiritual advance will perish. Let only members contribute; do not ask all and sundry, or anyone who is not a member of the Samiti. When you collect money from outsiders you become tools in their hands. (DD – 14.05.1971; 20.01.1986)

In some places, Puja (ritual worship) is done by persons who are paid for the job. This is done in some houses also. Now, how can a person have devotion merely because you pay him a few chips? I do not ask for elaborate Mantras (complicated ritual). It is enough if you worship God in your heart, or call upon Him once, with all your heart. It is the ritual, the elaborateness, that needs money and drags your Samitis into the realm of greed, malice and hate. The pig is condemned because of its greed, the dog is decried for its anger. So, do not slide into those evils. (DD – 01.10.1968)



3. How should the Samiti manage its accounts?

The routine expenses of the Samiti or the Seva Dal, must be shared by the members only. There should not be any attempt to collect from non-members. For special occasions, voluntary gifts of material or services from devotees may be received. But there is no need for a Treasurer; the Joint Secretary can manage whatever accounting there is. *Every member of the Samiti must be given some work so that he may develop a sense of belonging and he may contribute his skill, intelligence, faith and devotion to the promotion of the objects of the Organisation.* The members of the Samiti must all partake in the *Nagar Sankirtan*. If they have not that steadfast faith, why have their names on the list? They should be active in *Sadhana* and attend *Sadhana* camps arranged by the Samiti. (AIC3)

4. Can Samitis have Treasurers for managing money?

We have for every Unit a President, a Secretary, a Joint Secretary and a Treasurer. But I wonder why we should have a Treasurer, when we are not concerned with money! The name indicates that we have a treasure, which we have collected, which we guard, and on which we rely! We deal with something much more valuable than money, Love. Where money is collected and kept, misunderstanding grows, factions are rampant, and love departs. Money and the ways in which men run after it, have caused chaos in the world. Base your activities on *Dharma*, fill your hearts with *Prema* – then I will shower Grace and be ever with you.

Where is the need for money for Bhajan, for *Dhyana* and for *Nagar Sankirtan*? For *Nagar Sankirtan*, you require only legs to move, tongues to sing and hearts to receive the name of God. *For special purposes and on special occasions, funds are collected only from members of the Samiti. This has been the rule from the very beginning; it is the very basis of this Organisation.* For all other activities, you need no funds. You need only a loving heart, a pure heart, a wide heart. (AIC3)

Sathya Sai Organisations should never become commercial institutions. The only kind of commerce in which they can indulge is from heart to heart, from love to love. It is in such a sublime exchange that they should take part. They should have no financial or other material involvement. Organisations which get entangled in money or property do not grow. (DD – 17.11.1985)

In the case of earlier Avatars, their fame grew only long after their passing. In the case of the present avatar, in His own lifetime, a university, a big hospital, an aerodrome and many other things have been established for the benefit of the villagers and many more will follow in the years ahead. Many persons have doubts as to how all these are being accomplished. The advent (of this Avatar) took place 64 years ago. All these years, this hand has not been stretched at any time to seek anything from anyone. I have not asked anyone. I will never ask anyone and there will never be an occasion for it. How then are these things happening? For any good work, there is no impediment in Bharat. When you want to do any good work wholeheartedly, money flows in torrents. (DD – 23.11.1990)

C. Duties of Office bearers

1. How should Organisational Office-bearers be appointed?

I do not ration Grace on the silly principles (of Organisational seniority); a person may not hold any office, but he is entitled to Grace, provided he is sincere in the faith and steady in Love. Do not fall a prey to the temptation of office and position of authority in these Samitis and *Mandalis*. Hold the offices in rotation, so that all may get the opportunity of leading in service. There are some *Mandalis* and *Samitis* which select office-bearers by lot. The members feel that anyone who is allotted the post is as good as the others. (AIC2)

2. How should District and State Presidents be selected?

The selection of the District President or State President is done by Me, but I shall consult your wishes too. There must be an atmosphere of love and tolerance, not one of envy, excitement or aggrandizement, when names are considered. When once a person is selected in the atmosphere of peace and love, co-operation and tolerance should prevail, and everyone must follow his directions and respect his guidance. It is only then that the Divine Grace will be conferred on you...

There will be state-wise meetings in the Prayer Hall. When I come there, you can suggest to Me without any emotion or factional spirit, the names of District Presidents and State Presidents whom you would like to have, in Districts and States where there is no President so far. Even in places where we have them already, you can suggest changes, if you feel like having changes. But do it after mutual consultation and agreement. Avoid personal animosity and do not give room for personal misunderstandings. *Remember that the essential qualifications for members are faith and devotion. Remember also that the development of this Organisation will bring peace and tranquillity to the world torn by chaos. The world can be bettered and saved only through spiritual progress, by the efforts of spiritual organisations.* (AIC3)

3. What are the prerequisites for a member to be eligible as an Office-bearer of the Organisation?

People aspire only for the fruits of authority; they shirk the responsibility that the authority involves. Do not think that this is so only in India, it is the attitude of aspirants all over the world today. Power is sought; but the burden that comes with power is not welcomed. The chaos and misery of the world today are the creation of persons who have climbed to positions of authority but do not discharge the responsibilities of those positions. *No one is entitled to such position who is unable or unwilling to shoulder the responsibility inherent in it and who does not discharge it sincerely. Whatever their status, however deep their scholarship, however rich they are, they do not deserve the position they crave for or hold.*

In the Units of this Organisation too, the same rule applies. No one has a place who does not possess the skill, the capacity and the



willingness to carry out the responsibility. Before you enter the Organisation or seek any office therein, consider well whether you have the yearning and the capacity; else, if you join or complain against some person or programme, you are only revealing your own smallness or weakness. Make due inquiry, give full consideration, before you join the Organisation. Having joined, co-operate with others vigorously and carry out all your duties conscientiously. (AIC3)

4. What are the uncompromisable requirements of Office-bearers?

The offices that you hold as Presidents and Secretaries of the Sathya Sai Organisational Units lay on you responsibilities with which, perhaps, no other Organisation burdens its members. (AIC3)

Office bearers should resolve to carry on the activities of their Units on the lines laid down, without trace of negligence. From now, the usual practice of meeting once a year in Conference, passing a few resolutions with great furore, and casting them aside that very day, will not be of any avail. *Only those units of the Organisation are authentic, wherein the office-bearers practise and experience spiritual Ananda, through adherence to the lines laid down here. The rest are mere nominal; they burden the lists with their names and should be immediately removed.* Enough for us if there remain one or two where practice and preaching are correct and sincere. Quality is accepted; quantity is of no consequence. (AIC4)

5. Can Office-Bearers Claim Exemption in Organisational Activities?

Lord Venkateshwara is celebrated as the Lord of the Seven Hills; His Temple is on the Seventh Hill and one has to traverse and go over six hills to reach Him. This is symbolic of the six obstacles of *Kama* (Lust), *Krodha* (Anger), *Lobha* (Greed), *Moha* (Attachment), *Mada* (Pride) and *Matsarya* (Jealousy). One has to go across these passions and cast them behind him before he can stand face to face with the Lord... How can you climb the six hills and reach the seventh, if you hesitate even to ascend the first step? I laid down Nagar as a spiritual discipline, even last year, at the World Conference at Bombay. But, today, at this Conference, I find the Sub-Committee recommends that Office-bearers must attend the *Nagar Sankirtan* at least six times in the year! Can you call this *Sadhana*? *Office-bearers cannot claim any privilege or exemption. They must evince leadership; by their devotion and faith, they must inspire the waverers. That is their function. But, now, they seek concessions!* People crowd into film shows, rush towards social clubs, spend days together in playing cards – but, when they are asked to sing the glory of God and purify themselves and the atmosphere, they clamour for concessions! I cannot accept the plea that people do not find time for going out on *Nagar Sankirtan*. If a hundred things can be done in the time now available, surely the hundred and first thing can also be accommodated. You can stop doing the hundred but this extra one is as the breath that sustains life itself. Do not join the group only when the cameraman is around; move with the party and feel the thrill. *The Office-bearers must be one with the rest, in all the activities of the Unit. Be filled with joy that you have now got the lucky chance of listening to and carrying out the command! This chance comes rarely to man. When leaders shirk the tasks that they themselves have prescribed for the followers, even the strongest organisations suffer disintegration.*

Do not enforce the rules, without mercy or thoughtful consideration. If a person does not attend 60 percent of the meetings, the rules say that he is to be removed from office. Give him chances to reform, to be within the group, so that he may reform. If even this does not mend, remove the name, without any compunction. (AIC2)

6. What are the duties of Organisational Members and Office-bearers towards their Parents?

Office-bearers and Members of Sathya Sai Institutions must have *Sahana* (tolerance of opinions different from one's own), *Satya*, *Daya* and *Prema*. They must revere their parents. *Whoever neglects his parents, allows them to languish and suffer while he himself is enjoying a higher standard of life does not deserve to be a member*, for I always stress the Vedic injunction: *Matru Devo Bhava* (consider mother as God), *Pitru Devo Bhava* (consider father as God). Those of you who are guilty of this malfesance, take note, and be cured by this injunction. The Sathya Sai Family must have only men and women, who honour their family obligation of nourishing and nursing their parents. (AIC2)

D. Duties of Organisational Members

1. Can Organisation members compromise on the rules and regulations?

Consider work through the Organisation as your very process of living. That work is the food on which you live. If you miss a meal, you become weak; if you miss a rule, the Unit becomes weaker. Not merely the office-bearers, but, any one of the members, if he fails to observe any one of the rules and regulations, he is weakening the Organisation and bringing it into disrepute. Members together form the Units. Its strength, its utility, its expansion, its efficacy, depend on disciplined obedience to rules. *Faith in the discipline, marked out by the rules, is as the heart to the various limbs of the Organisation.* Lack of discipline is the root cause of the disorder and discord that are undermining almost all the various types of association of men, from the simplest to the most complex. (AIC4)

2. What should be the Organisational members attitudes to people from different faiths?

Followers of all faiths can join our Organisations; there should be no opposition to their entry; on the other hand, they must be welcomed with sincerity and looked upon as brothers and sisters. No ill-feeling should be allowed upon as brothers and sisters.



No ill-feeling should be allowed to sprout in your minds against, say Pakistanis or Muslims or Americans, as a consequence of the passing phases of history. Motivated by anger against someone, to injure and insult the innocent, is bestial behaviour. No one connected with our Organisation should participate in or encourage such reprehensible behaviour. You must respect every individual who resides in *Bharat as a Bharatiya and love every such person. This is an Organisation dedicated to the promotion of Universal Love.*

Start pouring out Love to all the members of your Unit, and gradually, expand that Love to include all mankind and even the lower creatures. It is an insane idea to perform worship of God, as if He is distinct and different from creation. Do not believe that God will be pleased if He is so marked out. (AIC4)

3. What should Organisational Members' approach be towards teachings of various religions?

So long as Arjuna believed that he was the doer and the enjoyer of the rewards for the deed, he was miserable. But, when the Lord taught him and demonstrated to him that he was but an instrument, that his duty was only to surrender to the Will of the Lord, that those whom he sought to kill had already been killed by the Lord, he was freed from grief; he was filled with unspeakable peace.

This is the teaching of all religions, a teaching that flows like a subterranean spring feeding all the external rites and ceremonies laid down in each religion according to the climate, geographic and demographic, of each region. *The basic lesson each religion teaches is to surrender to the sovereign Will of God, and leave the consequence of deeds well done, to the Lord Himself. It is His Will, and your only duty is to shape yourself into a fit instrument.* To suppress the assertive ego, disciplines have been laid down in every religion, by every compiler of moral codes, by every educator and reformer of human morals. But the oldest, and most effective, and the most successfully practised system is the body of directives laid down in the *Vedas and Shastras* of India. (AIC2)

4. What kind of people should not be allowed as Members of the Organisation?

Do not have any one in, who would much rather be outside the group of Sai *Bhaktas*, either on account of his habits or indifference towards religious matters, especially towards the directions given by Me. For, *My honour is your honour, your honour is My honour. This is not your Unit, your Organisation; it is Mine.* In My institution, minds must mutually harmonise. The hearts of all have to be ploughed by discipline, and sowed with the seeds of Love, so that they grow into the Trees of Dedication, and yield the Fruits of *Jnana*. (AIC2)

Highlights

- Without selfless love, no spiritual Sadhana can succeed. Bhajan, Satsang and meditation done with a mind soaked in love, can confer peace, joy and wisdom.
- Every member of the Samiti must be given some work so that he may develop a sense of belonging and contribute his skill, intelligence, faith and devotion to the promotion of the objects of the Organisation.
- The flow of information from below and of instruction and inspiration from above must be unbroken and steady in a Samiti. Adherence to these rules will strengthen the Organisation.
- Whatever expense members decide to incur for the work of the Samiti, they must collect among themselves, without seeking help from those outside the circle. Every Samiti has some well-to-do persons, and if one or two of them can join, many activities can be carried on without raising funds from all and sundry. Samitis must limit the work to the resources they can pool among the members. Do not go from door-to-door and solicit donations.
- Keep account of all money received and spent. Make it available to the members even if they don't ask. Deposit any big sum in the Trust account and withdraw when needed. Have periodic meetings for planning events.
- Samitis should spread spiritual knowledge and instil the yearning for spiritual Sadhana among students and youth.
- Do not fall a prey to the temptation of office and position of authority in the Samitis and Mandalis. Hold the offices in rotation, so that all may get the opportunity of leading in service.
- Remember that the essential qualifications for members are faith and devotion. Remember also that the development of this Organisation will bring peace and tranquillity to the world torn by chaos. The world can be bettered and saved only through spiritual progress, by the efforts of spiritual organisations.
- No one is entitled to positions within the Organisation if they are unable or unwilling to shoulder the responsibility inherent in it and do not discharge it sincerely. Whatever their status, however deep their scholarship, however rich they are, they do not deserve the position they crave for or hold.
- Office-bearers cannot claim any privilege or exemption in Organisational activities. By their devotion and faith, they must prove their leadership and inspire others. They must be one with the rest in all Samiti activities.
- The Sathya Sai Family must have only men and women, who honour their family obligation of nourishing and nursing their parents.
- Followers of all faiths can join our Organisations; there should be no opposition to their entry; on the other hand, they must be welcomed with sincerity and looked upon as brothers and sisters. This is an Organisation dedicated to the promotion of Universal Love.
- Do not have any one as an Organisation member, who is indifferent towards religious matters, especially towards the directions given by Swami.





IV. Conducting Activities In Sai Samitis

A. Omkar, Nagar Sankirtan and Bhajans

1. How should Members chant Omkar?

Repeat the 'Om' slowly, contemplating its vast potentialities. The 'A' emerges from the throat, the 'U' rolls over the tongue and 'M' ends on the lips; that is to say, 'Om' which is a composite of 'A,' 'U' and 'M' is the sum and substance of all the words that can emanate from the human tongue. It is the primordial, fundamental sound, symbolic of the Universal Absolute. After the 'M' there must be the unheard resonance, which represents the attributeless, formless, Abstract – the *Nirakara Parabrahman*. The ascending voice of the *Pranava* or 'Om' must take a curve at 'M' and descend as slowly as it rose, taking as much time as when it ascended, disappearing in the silence, which echoes in the inner consciousness. (AIC2)

2. What is the spiritual significance of Nagar Sankirtan?

Nama Smarana can be elaborated also into *Nagar Sankirtan*. This has both individual and social consequences. When you inhale foul air, your health suffers. The air is polluted by unwholesome vibrations when people shout hateful, lustful slogans or even talk, without love and reverence. In order to purify the atmosphere, vibrations that are holy, healthy, happy have to be circulated, even before the citizens come out into the open with the break of day. When a group of good men and women move from one end of a street to the other singing aloud the Names of God, each Name redolent with fragrance and resonant with Love, it clears the air and renders it pure for all to breathe. It also calls people living in the houses on both sides to begin their daily round of duties, with the sweet name of God in their ears and the charming form of God in their hearts. (AIC3)

3. How should Samitis conduct Nagar Sankirtan?

Do not start too early or too late; you must go through the streets slowly, singing aloud the Names of all manifestations, just when the people of the locality are preparing to meet the new day that is dawning. Do not carry any photo or picture with you, demonstrating your loyalty to any particular Form or Name. Walk along, in well-arranged groups, men and women separately; do not plan *Nagar Sankirtan* in buses, tractors, cycles or carts. Do not compete with each other in singing *Namavalis* and cultivate envy or hatred. Let those with a good voice and musical talent lead; the *Kirtan* must be pleasant. If your voice is out of tune, do not disturb the melody, but repeat the *Namavali* in your mind. Sing so that the full significance of each Name is evident to the hearers. Do not repeat each line more than twice; let there be time during the journey for a variety of *Namavalis* dealing with many Forms and manifestations of God. Do not plan to go through distances too long for the party. Maintain the sacred atmosphere from the first step to the last. Gather in a temple or some holy place, repeat the *Pranava* and *Suprabhatam* and then, move on for *Nagar Sankirtan*. (AIC2)

4. What kind of Bhajans can be sung in Samitis?

This Organisation believes that the Atma in each is the Atma in all and that the God that each worships is the God that all worship. You cannot insist that in the Bhajans only songs on Sathya Sai should be sung! Fanaticism of that kind I very much dislike and condemn. For, all names and all forms denote Me only! You betray your ignorance of My truth when you stick to any one of My names and avoid the rest. When you have identified the Atma principle and experienced its Glory, you pass beyond the realm of rules; but until then, limits and lines of conduct have to be honoured. (AIC4)

B. Japa and Dhyana

1. Which Divine Name can be used during Japa?

There are some questions among those handed over to Me, on the Name to be used in Japa, whether Ram Naam or the five-lettered Namah Shivaya or the eight-lettered Om Namoh Narayana or whether I would suggest some other Name. The scriptures have given a good answer for this: *God is one without a second. You can adore Him according to your own fancy and pleasure. He does not change. He is not changed, when the Names you adore Him by are changed or the Forms you picture Him by, are changed.* We have many kinds of sweets – many Names and Forms. But sugar is the one substance that makes each one sweet. You may prefer one sweet thing more than another; you are welcome to prefer it, but, do not condemn or prevent others' preferences. You may adore Krishna, for that name and form gives you the greatest joy, the maximum thrill; but, do not find fault with a brother who worships the same God through another Name-Form: Rama, Shiva or Vishnu, or any such other. He has as much right as you, to worship God in the form he likes. *The effectiveness lies not in the Mantra or in the Name and Form it is centred upon. It lies in the heart, in the yearning, in the thirst. God will assume the form and answer to the Name for which you thirst! That is the measure of His Grace.* (AIC3)



2. Can Samitis organise classes to teach Dhyana?

There is a suggestion mentioned in a chit handed over to Me by a delegate: regular classes for training members in *Dhyana* should be held in Prasanthi Nilayam, for through these trainees, *Dhyana* can be spread all over the country. I laughed when I read this suggestion. Can anyone train another in meditation? Or claim to train? It may be possible to teach a person the posture, the pose, the position of the legs, feet or hands, neck, head, or back, the style of breathing or its speed. But meditation is a function of the inner man; it involves deep subjective quiet, the emptying of the mind and filling oneself with the Light that emerges from the Divine Spark within. This is a discipline which no textbook can teach, and no class can communicate. *Dhyana* classes! Those who handle them do not know what *Dhyana* is; those who attend them do not care to know! *Purify your emotions; clarify your impulses; cultivate love. Then only can you become master of yourself. That mastery is the purpose, the process of meditation or Dhyana.* (AIC3)

3. What is the best method to practice Dhyana?

The mind must be allotted some heavy piece of work to hold it down. This work is called *Dhyana*. Keep the mind above the upper lip, between the two nostrils, right in front of the bridge of the nose. Inhale through the left nostril, closing the fist with the right thumb. As the breath goes in, it utters 'So' (meaning, He); then exhale through the right nostril, closing the left nostril. As the breath goes out, it utters 'Ham' (meaning, I). Inhale and exhale slowly and deliberately, conscious of the identity of He (the Lord), and I (yourself) which it asserts, until the breathing and the awareness grow into an unnoticed process. Keep the mind as a watchman, to note the incoming and outgoing breaths, to listen with the inner ear to the Soham that the breath whispers, and to witness the assertion of your being the Divine, which is the core of the Universe. This is the *Dhyanam* that will give victory.

When this *Soham Dhyana* has stabilised itself, you may start stabilising in your mind the *Rupa* (form) of your *Ishta Devata* (the Lord of your choice). Picture the Form from head to foot, taking at least 15 to 20 minutes for it, dwelling on each part of the body and imprinting it clearly on the heart and then, proceed from foot to head in similar way. This will help to fix the form in the altar of the heart. Then, you will see in everyone that Form only; in all beings, you will find Him only. You will realise the One manifold as many. Shivoham, *Soham, I am Shiva, I am He, Only He is.* (AIC3)

C. Mahila Vibhag

1. What is the role of Mahila Satsangs in the Samiti?

Women have a great role to play in the moral regeneration of the people. That is the reason for the new emphasis on *Mahila Satsangs*. They can tell the children the epic stories of sacrifice and heroism, of saints who sought God and saw Him in Truth, Beauty and Goodness everywhere, of great men and women, who delved into the secrets of the Universe and the Law of all laws, which governs the microcosm and the macrocosm, in equal measure. Christ said, "Let children come unto Me." They have the sense of wonder, fresh and free; they have the simple, sincere eagerness to know; they have reverence towards knowledge and power. Tell them of Rama, Krishna, Nachiket, Dhruva, Urmila, Shuka, Hanuman, Arjuna and many others whom they can picture with admiration in their minds... *I want that you should explore the possibility of expanding the work among mothers, children and youth. The Mahila Vibhag must be strengthened. In places where there are no Mahila Satsangs, try to start one, and have Bal Vikas under their guidance.* (AIC2)

2. Can women members participate in Vedic chanting?

For this adventure, all are candidates, women as well as men. *Gender is but a vesture worn by the Soul for the role of life on earth.* It does not affect the life of the Spirit, which is Eternal, and on the supra-sensory plane. *Man and woman have each to purify the inner consciousness so that the Divine may reveal itself in all its Glory therein.* There are some crude thinkers who declare that women are not entitled to pronounce the sacred syllable *Om*, but that is a pernicious narrow doctrine. With one voice, these people revere the Mother, acclaiming the dictum 'Matru Devo Bhava', and with the other, they disgrace the Mother by denying her the fight to save herself? This is hypocrisy. The A U M of the *Om*, represents the *Om Tat Sat* principle – the "That is the Truth," "I am the Truth," "the Truth is One" principle. (AIC3)

D. Bal Vikas

Bal Vikas will be the special activity of the *Mahila Vibhag* alone. For, women can in a unique way, deal with children lovingly, affectionately, intelligently and enthusiastically. Men teachers can run Bal Vikas classes; but they can have only boys as pupils. The Bal Vikas shall take in children in the age group of 5 to 12. From the age of 12 up to 18, children shall be in the Junior Seva Dal. From 18 till 30, they will serve in the Seva Dal, and after 30 they are entitled to become members of the Seva Samitis, especially those who evince dedication and a high sense of service.

When the Bal Vikas movement spreads, and children are ready to join High Schools, High Schools can be opened to receive them and continue their education on lines in tune with the ideals of the Organisation. With the establishment of Sathya Sai Colleges, the process will be completed entirely under Sathya Sai auspices. Thus, the resurgent culture of Bharat will be built on strong foundations. (AIC4)



2. What should be the approach of Bal Vikas Gurus?

As teachers of the Bal Vikas classes throughout the country, you do not look forward to monetary or material benefits, and so, you have ample opportunity to make the child's heart and intellect blossom, through the rays of Love. Let Me tell you that most teachers today have specialised in western types of training, and so they have lost their moorings in our own culture and are unaware of the deeper springs of the spirit. They have been rendered materialistic, worldly and egoistic. They are caught up in the pursuit of sensual pleasure and in the earning of money. They do not know that real education consists in helping the child to manifest the Divinity latent in him. Remember that the children who come to you are all heirs to the richest cultural heritage that the world can give...

I know that great enthusiasm prevails today among both the pupils and teachers of our Bal Vikas classes, for the spiritual ideals cherished in this land since ages. Nevertheless, I must say that there is a great and urgent need for you teachers to receive training in the methods of child education. For example, when teaching the recitation of Bhajans or poems or hymns, you must pay attention to the correct enunciation of each sound, the correct pronunciation of each letter; for, otherwise, the meaning is liable to be warped out of recognition. (AIC5)

3. What kind of stories can be narrated to Bal Vikas Students?

One point I must emphasise here is, that you should be careful, while handling some books being published for school use by so-called scholars, at the present time. They cast doubts on the truth of great epics like the Ramayana and assert that Dasharatha and Ravana did not exist in authentic history. They characterise them as representatives or symbols of opposing cultures, the Aryan and the non-Aryan, and sow the seeds of factionalism and hatred. By such writings, children begin to doubt the very foundations of goodness, truth and beauty; they are confused while deciding on right conduct, behaviour, ideals and ways of living. *You must examine every story or account that you place before the children from the point of view of individual faith and social harmony. Does this lead the child to a better, more harmonious, a more God-oriented life? That is the question you should ask yourself...*

The Bal Vikas children whom you are guiding and inspiring, will be the leaders of tomorrow in this land. The virtues you implant in them, the counsel you are providing them and the examples you place before them will remain carved in their memories and transform their outlook and behaviour in the days to come. (AIC5)

4. What is the role of parents in Bal Vikas?

Teachers are the sculptors who shape the rocks into things of beauty and significance, of utility and inspiration. They study the pupils, their nature and equipment, and decide on their roles in society, their paths and the stages in their progress. But it must be pointed out that the sculptor or teacher is not the only factor, to be reckoned with in the process of education. The mother and father of the child too have important roles in the process... *The teacher and the pupil have to be brought to each other and encouraged to learn and teach, to share lovingly their knowledge and experience, by the parents, so that education might proceed, and the child inherit the heritage left by its forefathers...* The teacher must win the reverence of the pupil by showering on him his Love; the pupil must win the Love of the teacher by showering on him reverence and affection. It is a mutual transaction, a sharing of the emotions of the heart. (AIC5)

5. Why should Bal Vikas Teachers be referred to as Bal Vikas Gurus?

We have heard the Guru being praised as equal to God Himself in the *Shloka* where the Guru is referred to reverentially as Brahma, the first of the Trinity entrusted with Creation; as Vishnu, the second of the Trinity entrusted with the preservation and protection of Creation; and as Maheshwara, the last of the Trinity, charged with destruction and dissolution. This description is symbolically correct, as we can see when we analyse the work which the Teacher or Guru is expected to carry out.

The Guru sows the seeds of virtue, of wisdom, and of faith in the heart of the pupil. He is, therefore, Brahma, of the nature of the Creator. He is like the farmer who plants saplings in the well-prepared soil of his field. But the farmer does not sit with folded hands thereafter. He takes incessant care to see that the saplings grow vigorously and well, and he is vigilant to water the growing crops and feed them with fertilisers at the appropriate stages of growth. This is the role of Vishnu so far as education and the educator are concerned. The Guru cannot sit back and silently watch the fate of the pupil, after the first few lessons. He must guide the pupil at every step, foster and encourage good habits, sound reasoning and valid emotions, and act as Vishnu, the second of the Trinity. The Guru has also the duty cast on him, to watch every step of the pupil, and warn him off, when he takes false step, develops a bad habit, or entertains a deleterious doubt. Like the farmer who has to be vigilant against the growth of weeds or the upsurge of pests, the Guru too must be ever alert to destroy the pests of vice and the weeds of sloth and unsteadiness.

The word 'teacher' cannot denote these high roles; it can mean only those, who transmit information, and train in skills. I direct that Bal Vikas teachers should hereafter be known by the vastly more appropriate name of Guru, so that you may be conscious always of the spiritual role which you have taken on, and its responsibilities and value. You are the lamps from which their tender hearts must receive light and love. By your adherence to truth, righteousness, peace and love, you have to inspire these qualities in the children that come to you and the homes from where they come. (AIC5)



6. What should Bal Vikas Students be encouraged to do in return for the service received from the Guru?

Instruct the children of the Bal Vikas to revere their parents. This is the first thing to do. It is a simple act of gratitude, for those who endowed them with the material instrument for life. But, mere possession of the human body, however wonderful it may be, is not enough, for one's peace and joy. One must know how to unravel its mysteries and how to regulate one's own impulses and hungers. This process is accomplished by the Guru, and so the pupils must be instructed and encouraged to revere the Guru, in gratitude for the service he renders. Education must aim at providing the child, not livelihood, but, a life worth living. (AIC5)

7. Can Bal Vikas classes be attended by children of all faiths?

Some teachers ask Me whether Bal Vikas classes can serve children of all faiths or whether they can admit only children of the Hindu faith. The question has arisen because the questioners do not know the very fundamentals of the Hindu Faith. There is only one religion, remember, and that is the Religion of Love; there is only one caste, and that is the Caste of Humanity. *You must be careful not to encourage or entertain the slightest trace of 'difference' on the basis of religion, caste, creed or colour, in the Bal Vikas classes.* Do not tarnish the spotlessly clean minds of the children by infecting them with a sense of distinction between one child and another. Impart instructions and inspiration equally to all. *Select stories from the scriptures of all faiths to interest the children in the values of good life. Speak to them of the moral heroes of all lands, the saints of all faiths. For, they are all of the same stamp.* No scripture enjoins violence or lays down untruth as a way of life. All religions extol Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Brotherhood and Love. All saints are embodiments of service, compassion and renunciation. (AIC5)

E. Seva and Seva Dal

1. What is the Sathya Sai approach to rendering Seva?

Service has become a word of common currency, but its value is very much reduced by the hypocrisy of the users. Really speaking, only those who are afflicted with agony; equal agony, at the sight of pain and suffering, distress or disease, have the right to offer service; for, they are not serving others, they are serving themselves, serving to remove as fast and as intelligently as they can, their own agony. *Service to others is the medicine one needs to alleviate the distress which fills one at the sight of distress in another being. Feel that you are serving yourself, that you are curbing your own ego. Otherwise service heightens your self-esteem and develops a sense of superiority; which are both harmful spiritually...*

Sathya Sai Seva Samitis have to bear in mind the word, Seva, and take up Seva work enthusiastically. Seva must be directed towards the removal of physical distress, the alleviation of mental agony, and the fulfilment of spiritual yearning. Some regions are affected by floods, some by drought; the Samiti must make efforts to bring relief to the sufferers from these and other natural calamities. (AIC1)

2. What are the criteria for selecting a Seva project by the Samiti?

Doing something because it is being done elsewhere is a sign of ignorance. *The programmes must satisfy a local need, solve a local difficulty. They must arise out of felt needs and should be adapted to local conditions.* It must be taken into consideration whether the place concerned is urban or rural, industrial or agricultural, a pilgrim centre or civic extension, a developing area or a sinking economy, a tribal settlement or a hill station. *The person who borrows some idea from another region and executes it might feel satisfied that he has achieved some concrete programme. But do the people whom he tried to benefit feel better and happier? That is the test.* Do not think of the fame or praise you win; think of the good that people derive. Do not crave for publicity; crave for the joy that shines in the faces of the people whom you help. Seva brings you nearer to Me. The flower that is your heart gets fragrance by means of the Seva you do, and so it becomes more acceptable to Me. Love is the essence of that fragrance. (AIC6)

3. How should Seva Dal be trained?

We have Seva Dals in Bombay, Madras, Kerala, Andhra and some other states, but each Dal is being trained without reference to what is being done in other states. All states must have a common badge, a common curriculum of spiritual discipline and study, a common course of practical training in first aid, social service, etc. (AIC2)

4. How can participating in Seva Dal activities benefit the Youth?

Youth is a stage of life when self-control, self-examination and self-effort are most needed and least exercised. What a mighty potential for progress is wasted by the empty vagaries of the youth today. If only the courage, optimism, strength and imagination of youth is channelised into constructive channels, how soon the human community can attain peace and prosperity. The youth are drawn easily into wild adventures, acts of bravado and exhibition of group fanaticism. They are given to sudden changes of passion or emotion. All over the world they are being swayed on the waves of anger and adventure. The destiny of nations hangs on the direction the youth will take in these turbulent times. They should not be led into the paths of hypocrisy, deceit or greed. They must act the way they speak and speak the way they think. They should think good thoughts, speak good words and do good deeds. That will give inner joy and contentment. That will make them worthy sons and daughters of this ancient land. (AIC6)



5. What is the significance of the Seva Dal badge?

The badge on the chest helps to keep off the ego thumping inside, to broaden the heart and to focus all attention on the Lord resident therein. It is like the wheeled stand which helps the child to walk. It must be revered until you transcend it and feel that all mankind is your kin. The badge should not be impurified by your indulging in deleterious habits such as impulsive anger, selfishness, flippant conversation, smoking, drinking, gambling or loitering in unsanctified places. (AIC6)

6. What is the reward for doing Seva?

The service that you render must reward you, not only with your satisfaction, but with the satisfaction and relief of those whom you serve. When those whom you serve are not relieved or made happy thereby, of what avail is your elation or exultation at the help you have been allowed to offer? You should have the joy of the recipient as your objective. Do not sit back and talk of your having done what is expected of you but try to discover whether your act of service has really been worth-while, whether it has been intelligently rendered with full appreciation of the peculiar circumstances of the individual who needed it. Do not feel that this is an obligation imposed on you by the rules of the Organisation or by the person nominated as your leader. *Do not feel that the scarf and badge that you wear are impediments to freedom. They are reminders of the high mission to which you have been initiated, the keys to your Realisation of reality through the Sadhana of Seva. Even when you do not wear the scarf or parade the badge, you must be eager and alert to render Seva to fellow beings who need it.* (AIC6)

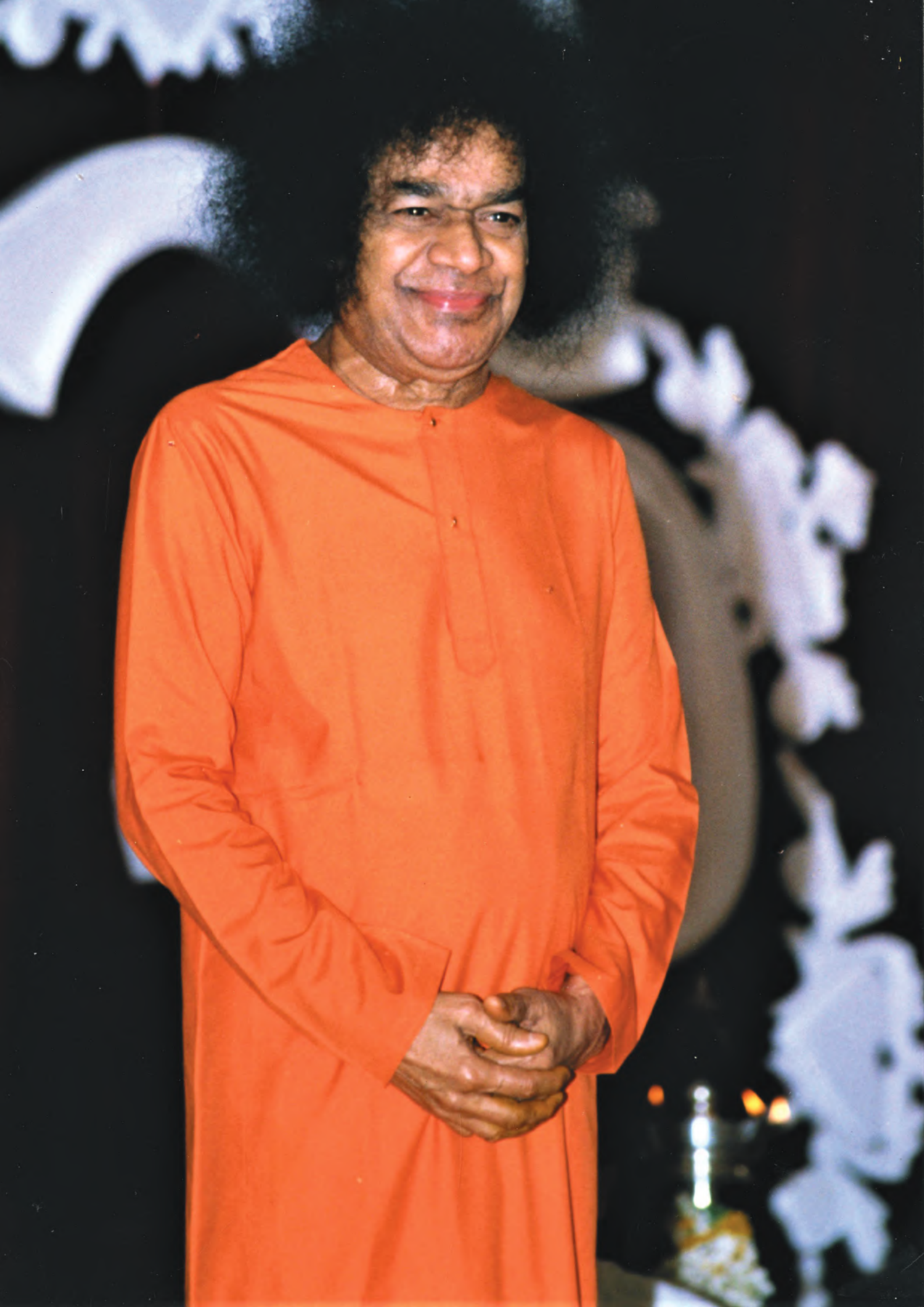
7. What are the benefits of doing Seva?

Through Seva you realise that all beings are waves of the ocean of Divinity. No other *Sadhana* can bring you into the incessant contemplation of the oneness of all living beings. You feel another's pain as your own; you share another's success as your own. To see everyone else as yourself and yourself in everyone, that is the core of the *Sadhana* of Seva.

Again, Seva makes the ego languish for want of food. It makes you humble before the suffering of others, and when you rush to render help, you do not calculate how high or low his social or economic status is. The hardest heart is slowly softened into the softness of butter by the opportunities that the Seva Dal offers. Seva is prescribed as one among the nine steps towards Realisation. You must therefore be earnest about it and welcome all chances to serve the old, sick, disabled, diseased and distressed... Wearing a scarf and badge round the neck is but an indication of the joy that is within reach when you actually serve. *Your Seva will be judged with reference to the mental attitude accompanying it. So, whatever work is allotted, do it with fervour, understanding and reverence. In Seva there can be no high or low, for Sai is in all. Sai receives your Seva, to whomsoever you may offer it.* Do not be sad that you have been posted on some duty that keeps you far from Me. Know that I am nearest to him who calls on Me and sees Me in all beings... Let Me tell you that mere execution of some duties enjoined on the Dal by the rules cannot be recognised as *Bhakti*. Duty done without love is deplorable; duty done with love is desirable. But acts of love that emanate from a person because it is his nature and not because it is enjoined on him as a duty he has to fulfil, is really Divine. (AIC6)

Highlights

- This Organisation believes that the Atma in each is the Atma in all; and that the God that each worships is the God that all worship.
- The effectiveness lies not in the Mantra or in the Name and Form it is centred upon. It lies in the heart, in the yearning, in the thirst. God will assume the form and answer to the Name for which you thirst! That is the measure of His Grace.
- Explore the possibility of expanding the Samiti work among mothers, children and youth. The Mahila Vibhag must be strengthened. In places where there are no Mahila Satsangs, try to start one, and have Bal Vikas under their guidance.
- When the Bal Vikas movement spreads, and children are ready to join High Schools, High Schools can be opened by the Organisation to receive them and continue their education in tune with the ideals of the Organisation. With the establishment of Sathya Sai Colleges, the process will be completed entirely under Sathya Sai auspices. Thus, the resurgent culture of Bharat will be built on strong foundations.
- Sathya Sai Seva Samitis must direct Seva activities towards the removal of physical distress, alleviation of mental agony, and fulfilment of spiritual yearning. The Seva programmes must satisfy a local need, solve a local difficulty. They must arise out of felt needs and should be adapted to local conditions.
- The Seva Dal scarf and badge are reminders of the high mission to which you have been initiated, the keys to your realisation of reality through the Sadhana of Seva. Even when you do not wear the scarf or parade the badge, you must be eager and alert to render Seva to fellow beings who need it.
- Your Seva will be judged with reference to the mental attitude accompanying it. So, whatever work is allotted, do it with fervour, understanding and reverence. In Seva there can be no high or low, for Sai is in all. Sai receives your Seva, to whomsoever you may offer it.
- Duty done without love is deplorable; duty done with love is desirable. Acts of love that emanate from a person because it is his nature and not because it is enjoined on him as a duty he has to fulfil, is really Divine.





V. Organisational Discipline

1. How should Organisational Members conduct themselves?

Discipline entails the strict observance of rules and regulations and directions. The sense of duty can yield results only when discipline is observed, and devotion to Sai and the Message of Sai is the basis for the sense of duty which keeps you ever bound to discipline. *Do not be part-time devotees, leading one kind of life when you wear the scarf and badge and another kind of life when you have removed them. Be ever Sadhakas and Sevaks.* Do not forget, do not modify. In the path of service that you have chosen, there should be no bumps of doubt or jumps of deviation. Move on steadily and bravely, with your eyes fixed on the Goal, the Grace of the Lord. Be intent on the development of the man-mind. Not the monkey-mind. Do not hop about from decision to indecision, from acceptance to denial. Be alert and inspired as humans, not dull and fitful as beasts. Above all, cultivate love, express love, move among other Seva Dal members with love. Let love be your very breath. Let the sum of love help the lotus of your heart to blossom. (AIC6)

2. How should the Organisation deal with Samitis that do not follow rules?

In some places, there are Units which do not carry on any activity. Or, if they do, the activities are quite contrary to the principles and practice of Prasanthi Nilayam or to the rules laid down for the Organisation. Wherever there are such Units, the State President or the District President must take steps immediately to remove them from the Organisation.

In some Samitis, members do not attend meetings, even 50 per cent of them. They are absent for 100 per cent of the meetings. Some Samitis do not hold meetings at all, so that no one can calculate the percentage of attendance. It is for such Units that rules and regulations are imperative. If rules are not observed as laid down, the Organisation will come down in confusion.

Some Units are established with the sole purpose of earning money for the promoters. When a certain name or person is known all over the world and revered by all, such men are tempted to utilise that name for filling their own pockets or for earning name and fame for themselves by associating their activities with that name. This is natural stratagem. Several such persons are found to emerge everywhere. When this happens, the Organisation gets a bad name. (AIC3)

3. What should be the approach and relationship of the Organisation with other spiritual organisations and their members?

There are many other organisations with spiritual objectives in this land, run under different names, attached to other names and forms of God, like Rama, Krishna. You know that Indian culture insists that you should offer reverence to all the names and forms of the One Godhead. In your Organisations, there may be some who insist that only Sai Bhajan should be sung, only the name and form of Sathya Sai be used. This is a great mistake. You are thereby dishonouring Sai. If you attach yourself to Sai and detach yourself from Krishna, you get a plus there and a minus here; the resultant gain is zero. In this matter do not develop fanaticism or sectarianism. Others may have these, but that is no reason why you should meet them with the same failings. Try your best to avoid such infection. *When other organisations require help, go and help them. This will make them realise the loving universal nature of your attitude.*

Again, do not encourage differences based on region, language, religion, or any such flimsy grounds. For example, people who exaggerate these differences argue in Madras that only Tamil songs should be sung or in Andhra Pradesh, that only Telugu songs should be sung. If such ideas are entertained, they will undermine the spiritual outlook, the attitude of unity and oneness which is the keynote of the spirit. This is a field where inner joy, inner satisfaction, internal purity are more important than outer expression. (AIC1)

4. How should the Organisation deal with those who misuse its name and symbols?

The State Presidents must pay immediate attention to this point. In some States, peoples have started publicising the manifestations of My Power, and converting themselves into propagandists with a view to making a profit out of the transaction. There are some Units doing this type of business, still existing inside the Organisation. You must decide to dissociate these Units from the Organisation. *Using our Name, many collect donations and contributions; so, those who are not aware of the norms of this Organisation are being misled and deceived. Efforts must be made to remove from the Organisation anyone, however rich, however renowned as a scholar, however influential and important in society, if he transgresses the rules of Organisation. This must be done as soon as the transgression is known.* (AIC4)

5. Can Organisation Members be simultaneous members of other Spiritual Organisations or follow other Gurus?

It is also laid down strictly that those who are in our Organisation should not have any connection with other Organisations of spiritual or religious character. Of course, so far as service is concerned, members should help and serve all, without distinction. Everyone in distress deserves help. But no member of the Samiti should have any connection with other such institutions or societies. For example, there may be a Sai Samaj in your locality. "Sai is Sathya Sai; Sathya Sai is Sai." I have declared often, and you know it and have



realised its truth. Why then, you may ask, is the Sai Samaj distinct from the Sathya Sai Samaj? Well, this body with the name Sathya Sai, has full authority over all institutions established under this name.

For the Sai Samaj, there is no body with that name to hold and exercise authority and so, if funds are collected, used or misused, this body has no control over the Sai Samajs in a tangible manner. So, it is best to keep the two distinct and allow those societies to go their own way.

There are a number of other institutions also started and run by Swamis of various types. If we have any who associates with these, I ask the District and State President to remove them immediately. *Though people can revere and worship whosoever they like, we should not have in the Organisation men with dual loyalties. Only those with faith and devotion to this Name and Form can carry out its objectives with zest and enthusiasm.*

Of course, every person is Divine but there are degrees in the manifestation of that Divinity. The fire at the end of a lighted scent-stick or cigarette, is incapable of igniting even a dry stick of wood. But a forest fire can consume in its conflagration even the greenest tree. There is difference in the degree of the manifestation of the Divine element in the voltage of the bulb which turns the current into light. Some persons may claim to be superior or supreme, but though they have reached heights, their eyes are roaming like those of vultures, searching the plains for food. Their forms and names are those of advanced Masters, but their thoughts are low. Do not associate with such people, however high their positions, if their vision is low. Save yourselves by your own effort; acquire discrimination and realise the Truth. Then, you can move out to help others to realise. (AIC3)

6. How should the Organisation deal with those who claim special grace from Swami in the form of miracles?

Bharat is the centre of spiritual progress for ages and the region where Divine incarnations re-establish *Dharma* for the good of humanity. In order to make known My majesty and My glory as the Divine that has incarnated, miraculous happenings of an amazing nature do take place in certain areas. Taking advantage of the attraction that those happenings draw upon them, many misuse them for personal propaganda and aggrandizement. They trade for money the Vibhuti that the pictures in their altars shower! They go about pretending that they are 'superior devotees' of a higher order and conferring boons and blessings on the innocent folk whom they fleece. Others put forth false claims that Vibhuti is emanating from the pictures of Baba in their homes, that *Amrit* (nectar) is dripping from them or that material objects are falling from them, like written answers to questions. Samitis and other Units should have no contact with such cheats and crooks. Anyone who is attached to such or who encourages such can be immediately removed. (AIC3)

7. What should be the Organisations' approach towards those who claim that Swami speaks through them?

There are others who claim that I am speaking through them, and answering questions put to them. These people must be either insane or hysteria-affected or they are possessed by some ghost or by the greed to earn money thereby. I can only tell you that it is not I that speaks through them. I do not need media; nor do I need substitutes or subsidiaries or representatives. There are some crooks who are publicising that I have allotted them some regions for ministration by them on My behalf, because they say, My devotees have increased so much that I am unable to attend to all of them, single-handed! On the face of it, this is an absurd lie.

Moreover, consider another aspect. Even those who cry in pure agonising yearning, Sai Sai Sai, and lead pure unselfish virtuous lives, even these find it hard to realise Me; how then can these low scheming vulgar men who know no Sadhana, sincerity, truth and humility, how can these people claim that they have been blessed by me? *They may wear the same style of dress, imitate gestures and style of speech but these will only bring their falsehood into greater prominence. That I am supposed to "possess" such people or speak through them or shower My Grace on them is an assumption of which one ought to be ashamed! How then can anyone believe it, I wonder.*

Evil forces which design to damage or diminish the faith and devotion of the simple and the sincere do emerge into action and try to attract attention by devious means. They try to draw away aspirants from the spiritual path into worldly paths of avarice and malice. There is a big chasm of difference between the *Sai Shakti* and these inferior *Shaktis*. Since the opportunity has now offered itself, this has to be said. There can be no limit for *Sai Shakti*, no hindrance, no opposition or obstacle. You may believe it or you may not, but *Sai Shakti* can transform earth into sky, the sky into earth. Only, there is no call for that transformation. This Divine behaviour is far distinct from the mean exhibitionistic tricks of the inferior *Shaktis*. This is spontaneous manifestation; those are calculated to collect customers and exploit the ignorant. The inferior *Shaktis* may imitate the dress or the gestures, for imitation cannot be prevented. But you have to ask yourselves the question: *"Can all green feathered birds be parrots? Or, can all worms on petals turn into butterflies? Or, can a donkey wearing a tiger-skin become a tiger or can an overgrown boar be honoured as an elephant?" Beware of being cheated by dress or speech or by tricks. You need not feel angry or upset by these. For Truth is ever Truth. Falsehood can never become Truth, whatever its tactics.* This is the very embodiment of Truth. It has no unreality or falsehood in its composition...

Whoever may join in this campaign, whatever tactics they employ, even if all the '14 worlds' unite as one, they cannot succeed; they cannot affect Me in the least. And, even if ten more worlds, say 24 in all, lend them their support, their falsehood will not be accepted or established as Truth... When you light a lamp in your home, you have to go around the homes of others and invite them to come and admire it. But when the Sun rises in all its splendour, there is no need to draw the attention of the world to the event. This is the splendour of the Sun. It will itself command attention. No one need be invited to notice it. (AIC3)



Highlights

- When Samitis or their Units undertake activities that are quite contrary to the principles and practice of Prasanthi Nilayam or to the rules laid down for the Organisation, immediate steps must be taken to remove them from the Organisation.
- Though people can revere and worship whomsoever they like, we should not have in the Organisation men with dual loyalties. Only those with faith and devotion to the Sathya Sai Name and Form can carry out its objectives with zest and enthusiasm.
- There are people who claim that Swami speaks through them. These people must be either insane or hysteria-affected or possessed by some ghost or by the greed to earn money thereby. Swami does not speak through anyone. Swami does not need media, substitutes, subsidiaries or representatives to communicate.





VI. Managing Interpersonal Complexities

1. How should the Organisation deal with factions?

Why are we in this Organisation? What is the purpose? You must have the firm belief that the aim of this Organisation is to remove the obstacles that keep man away from God, that separate *Manavatwa* (humanity) from *Madhavatwa* (Divinity). There can be no human; it is all Divine. This Organisation must elevate the human into the Divine...

There are certain persons in our Organisation who revel in factions and who dwell on differences; there are others who have no faith in it and its task, others have no enthusiasm for work, they are full of envy or malice... These evil traits should not be found in any one in this Organisation. If you take in as members only those whom you like and keep away anyone who has faith and devotion, you are committing sacrilege against God. *This Organisation does not attach value to the likes and dislikes of any office-bearer. It is based on devotion and faith only. Whoever has these and loves the Organisation as his own life, all such have a place in it, have a right to be in it...*

People may claim that they are engaged in social service; that they are directing or sharing in Government activities which promote the welfare of the community. But, whatever is done as a job, without inspiration or renunciation and heart-felt Love, cannot be 'Service'. *I have come for Loka Sangraha (promotion of the welfare and happiness of the world) and so, when you spread concord and love, throughout the world by means of this Organisation, your activity will certainly please Me. We can have peace and prosperity in the land if all Units work in love and tolerance and mutually co-operate in service.* (AIC3)

2. How can Samiti Members work in Unity?

It is enough if Prema is cultivated, the Prema that knows no distinction between oneself and another, because all are but limbs of God Almighty. Through Love alone can the Embodiment of Love be gained. Here, no scholarship is needed; in fact, scholarship will be an impediment, for it caters to egoism and it breeds doubts and the desire for disputation and laurel of victory over others preening themselves as learned! When this Love is established, no member of the Organisation will compete with another, or look down on another. The bond of Love will knit all into a rare type of family, which knows only one Will and one direction. Malice extraordinary may persuade some low minds to resort to the courts of law, for paying off private scores, but no member of the Organisation will ever do so, in the administration of the units, who values the *Dharma Sthana* (abode of virtue) that is available in this Form and Name...

Devotion must confer peace and joy; do not therefore use the Mandalis and Satsangs of which you are members to disturb your peace or the peace of others. If you remember that the one goal you must place before you is Atma Sakshatkara (Self-realisation), and if you enter upon Sadhana, then, such tendencies will not develop in you. It is because your aims are worldly, your ideals, material success, fame and authority over others, that you breed discord and doubt among the members. Change your attitudes and outlook. Make your lives worthwhile. Render the Units more useful for all. (AIC2)

3. How can Organisation Members handle criticism?

When you live the life of *Sadhana*, you will meet with opposition from various sources. But, do not attach any importance to such. First, your kith and kin will try to divert you into worldly pursuits. Krishna had his own maternal uncle as his inveterate foe! Rama had a stepmother who sought to exile him into the jungle! Do not be cowed down by cynics or the critics, who may abound in the family. Then there is public opinion, which might decay the spiritual path and subject you to ridicule or worse. Shishupala, Jarasandha and the brood of traducers tried hard to smother the mission of the Lord, when he was here as Krishna. Another obstacle is from the worshippers of Names and Forms different from those which you have adopted as most appealing to you. People who are attached to one particular Name and Form, either through hereditary preference or mere fancy are prone to persecute those who adore other Names and Forms. It is far better to die tracking a tiger than live to boast of shooting a lame jackal!

Some State Presidents and District Presidents have written to Me that they are being misunderstood and maligned and that they receive letters – attacking their bonafides. To be agitated by these letters is a sign of weakness in a *Sadhaka*. Beware of losing peace by giving ear to such maligning. Give ear to truth, things that give tranquillity. Then, your *Sadhana* will succeed...

Follow regular Sadhana in order to control the senses and the emotions. Do not pay heed to others who may ridicule you, for your changed way of life. They may point you to others and laugh, "Look at this man! He has become a great Sai Bhakta!" "Look at him with his *Japa and Bhajan!*" But have your Vision steady and your Will strong. Do not deviate; march straight on. (AIC2)

4. How should difference of opinion with the leaders be resolved?

Do not wag or argue just for the sake of argument. Let your words be few, fair and felicitous. Soft speech adds sweetness to living. Even when you are engaged in discussion amongst yourselves, be short of speech and polite in behaviour. Some amongst you have been selected as leaders and guides; carry out their instructions without demur. If you feel any doubt, regarding the propriety or advisability of those instructions, talk them over with the leaders alone, in a spirit of friendliness. But do not disregard to modify those instructions at any cost. The leader has to pay attention to the overall situation which may not be so clear to you. (AIC6)



5. Can Organisation Members have caste- and community-based preferences?

Do not infect these Associations of Aspirants for My Grace with the virus of rivalry and factions. Do not inquire into the caste affiliations of anyone and develop partiality or prejudice thereon. Strive to win the gift of My Grace, not the glitter of Presidency or Secretaryship. *Pay attention to your duties and responsibilities. This is no ordinary burden that you have been privileged to carry.*

I can see you through and through. Do not carry your head high, and taunt people. Stoop, so that you can pick your burden up and place it on the shoulders. Bend as the branch heavy with fruit bends! Each duty well done is a deposit to your credit in the Bank of God! Fatten that deposit; you can draw on it by means of cheques; you can claim payment as of right. (AIC2)

6. How can members get proper training in leadership and rise above interpersonal problems?

Bharat is the land where the triple *Sadhana* of Discipline, Devotion and Duty was first laid down, and where it has had the largest number of votaries through the ages. *You must maintain the fair name of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. On the one hand you have the call of the motherland and on the other, the command of Sai, who is no less than the Mother Herself.* Ganesha is reputed to have two Mothers - Gauri and Ganga. Gauri is the daughter of Himalayas, who is merged in the left half of the body of Shiva. Ganga is another daughter of the Himalayas who has her place in the matted hair which forms the crown of Shiva. You, too, have two Mothers—*Bharat Mata and Sai Mata.* *You must emulate Ganesha not in the quantity of food eaten, but in His aspect as Vinayaka, for to become a Vinayaka, a special type of leader, you must be for long an earnest and enthusiastic servant engaged in selfless, loving service. Service is the best school for training in leadership.* You should eliminate in that school all traces of disgust, anger and impatience. Pride and personal prejudices will try to put spokes in the wheel as you go to serve the distressed and the diseased. But you should never give up faith in the right path you have chosen. Remind yourself that you are a *Sadhaka* and that Seva is the spiritual path that you have ventured upon as the easiest and the best.

- When you mix with others who have no deep faith or sweet experience of the value of Seva, you may get caught up in conversation that might shake your conviction. Do not allow their superficial judgement to undermine your steadfastness. Keep away from such persons; let them test their doubts on the touchstone of their own experiences of Seva. Take their disbelief indifferently and allow them time to realise and overcome their doubts by their own will. (AIC6)

Highlights

- This Organisation does not attach value to the likes and dislikes of any office-bearer. It is based on devotion and faith only. Whoever has these and loves the Organisation as his own life, all such have a place in it, have a right to be in it.
- When you spread love throughout the world by means of this Organisation, your activity will certainly please Swami. We can have peace and prosperity in the land if all Samitis work in love and tolerance and mutually co-operate in service.
- Devotion must confer peace and joy; do not therefore use the Samitis of which you are members to disturb your peace or the peace of others. Change your attitudes and outlook. Make your lives worthwhile. Render the Samitis more useful for all.
- Follow regular *Sadhana* in order to control the senses and the emotions. Do not pay heed to others who may ridicule you, for your changed way of life.
- Do not inquire into the caste affiliations of anyone and develop partiality or prejudice thereon.
- Service is the best school for training in leadership. You should eliminate in that school all traces of disgust, anger and impatience.



Reflections

- Beloved Swami in all love has given us this platform of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, with the aim of individual transformation to societal transformation. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti is the basic unit comprising of Sai devotees, guided and motivated by the Samiti Convenor and his team, towards transformation, through the three wings of the Samiti namely Spiritual, Educational and Service.
- The main aim of this Sai Family is spiritual progress comprising of transformation of the self and transformation of the society, both going simultaneously and continuously following the Divine guidelines.

What is Individual Transformation?

What individual transformation is needed so that it results in the transformation of the world? The change must come in our mindset - the way we think about ourselves and the world/creation. This includes two key paradigms:

1. I am not the body-mind-intellect complex. I am Atma Swarupa. I am essentially Divine.
2. Not just me, all beings are Divine. Divinity is all-pervading. Nothing but Divinity exists – ‘Ekam Sat’.

This ultimate Truth has to be understood, accepted and assimilated by each of us. This Truth has to become the basis as well as the motivation for all our thoughts, words and deeds - both in our living and life. This is the required transformation. The universal prescription given by Swami for this transformation is Sadhana and Seva.

What is Sadhana?

Sadhana is practicing sincerely and regularly certain spiritual practices like Omkar, Japa, Dhyana and Bhajans wherein we concentrate, contemplate and meditate on Divinity - that I am Divine, and all manifest creation is Divine. During this period of Sadhana, our thoughts are focussed in the chosen name and form of Divinity. Thus, mentally we are in unison with God. This is Yoga and the Sadhak becomes a Yogi.

How does a Sadhak become a Sevak?

Every morning, after spending some time in spiritual practices, mentally uniting with God, for the rest of the day, one has to become Upayogi. Upayogi at the physical level means useful. Thus, the rest of the day must be spent in activities useful to both self and society. Upayogi at the spiritual level means being in union with God. ‘Upa’ means ‘being near’, and ‘Yoga’ means ‘union with God’. Thus, being united with God at the mental and physical levels, being useful to others is “SEVA”. In this way, a Sadhaka becomes a Sevak.

How can we transform Work into Worship?

Swami says, ‘Work Is Worship’. This is the stage where a Sevak becomes a Nishkama Karma Karta. i.e. a Upayogi transforms himself to being a Karmayogi. Here, there is no doer and doership (Karta and Karta Bhaav). Neither does he have attachments to the results of the action - Karmaphala. The Sevak is ever aware that:

1. God is the doer and hence the doership belongs to God.
2. God is innate in every work / Karma.
3. God is the receiver or the ‘Bhokta’.
4. Karmaphala is as per God’s will and hence belongs to Him.

With this clarity deeply embedded in the understanding, the Sevak performs Seva as an instrument of God dedicating everything along with Karmaphala as Worship to the Divinity residing in the receiver.

What is the basic pre-requisite in this spiritual journey?

Swami addresses us as “Prematma Swarupulara”. Love is our original form, our true nature and hence has to flow out continuously and express itself through our thoughts, words and deeds. But this does not happen. It gets suppressed... even when it expresses itself, it does so in a graded manner. What is the reason? It is because of our negativity, desires, feeling of I and mine, and the feeling of otherness.

What is the remedy? Swami says, “Shut your mouth and open up your hearts”. Let us reduce and remove the negativity caused by Deha Buddhi and make space for expansion of our hearts, thereby becoming more inclusive. We all love Swami. Let us remember that the same Swami is the Indweller of all beings and things including us. Let us cultivate the habit of loving Swami present in all so that we can serve Swami present in all.



The Way Forward

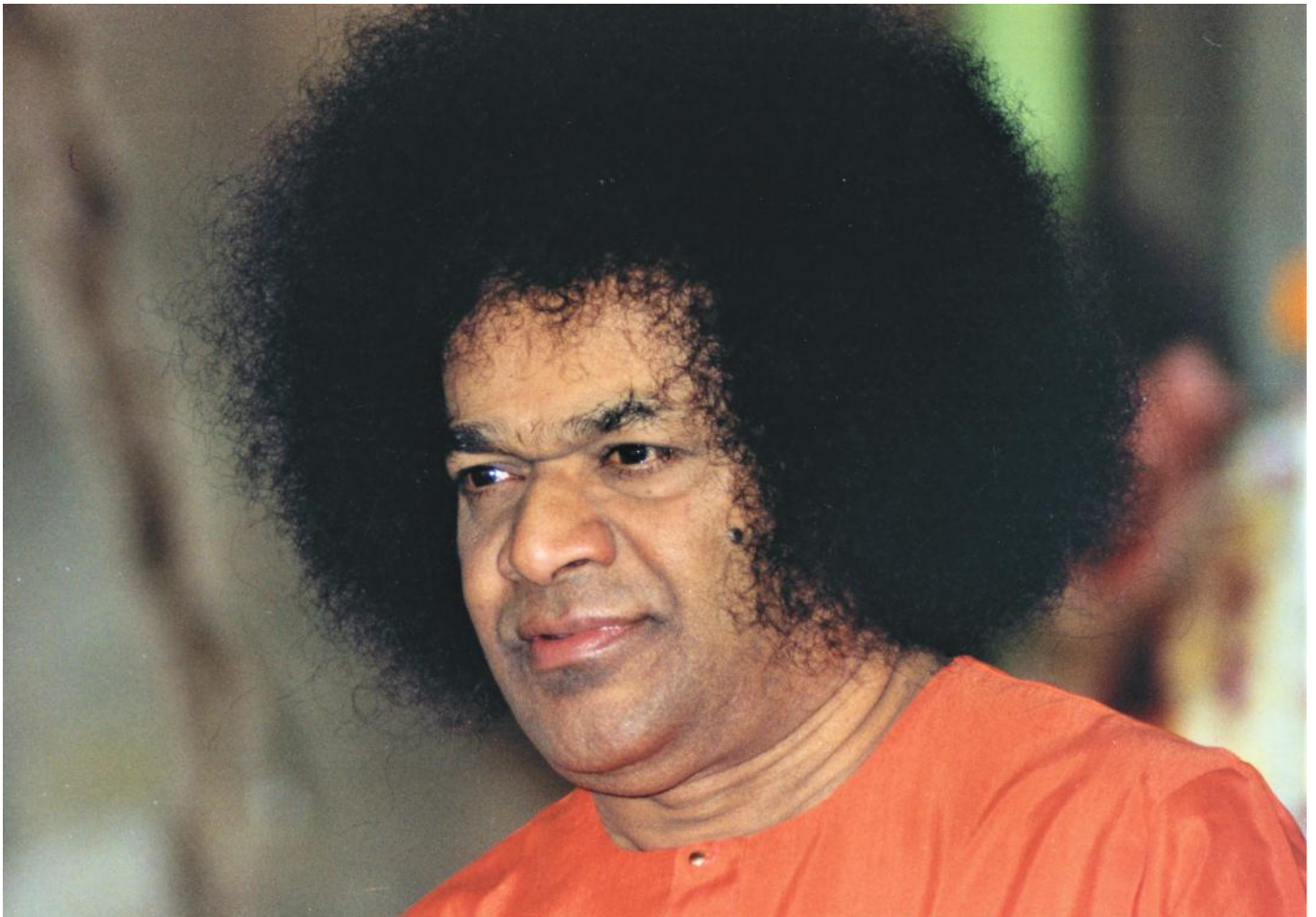
Swami says, “Home is the starting point.....”. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations and Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti is our Home. We the office bearers and members of this Home should become the starting point of this inner transformation. Let us all pledge:

1. To be regular, sincere and dedicated in our Sadhana of uniting our thought force with Divinity.
2. To continuously assert from within that I am Divine, all are Divine and nothing, but Divinity exists.
3. To regularly study Sai literature, sacred scriptures, and Vedic texts so that we understand, accept and assimilate the One present in all - the Unity in Diversity.
4. To plunge into Seva activities as per Swami’s directions, with an expansive heart filled with unconditional and selfless love

Omnipresent and Beloved Swami is always with us, in us, and around us, taking care of everything for us. Let us surrender and submit ourselves to Him and march forward as leaders of the Samiti, taking all with us in this journey of spiritual transformation with total faith and conviction in His Divine Will.

Murli Jajoo

National Spiritual Coordinator
Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations
India





Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations

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