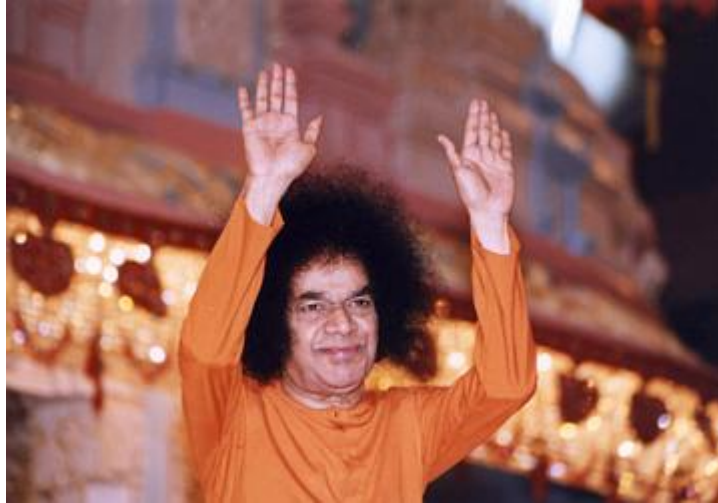


Om Sri Sai Ram



Prashanthi Charter

PERMANENT CHARTER granted by BHAGAWAN SHRI SATHYA SAI BABA to the SRI SATHYA SAI ORGANISATIONS, AT THE THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE DATED this 14th day of January, in the 55th year of His Advent, Anno Domini 1981. BHAGAWAN SHRI SATHYA SAI BABA out of His Infinite Grace and Mercy sends Blessings to all to whom this Permanent Charter shall be seen, showed or read.

WHEREAS the advent of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as declared by Him is for the establishment of Sanathana Dharma.

AND WHEREAS this World Organisation is a Spiritual Organisation founded for the whole Mankind, not recognising any distinction or separateness on the basis of religion, caste, colour or creed.

AND WHEREAS this Organisation takes within its fold persons belonging to all religions in order to establish unity of all faiths **AND WHEREAS**, it is for establishing and promoting the content of Such Sanathana Dharma and also to establish oneness of all thoughts that the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations are taking existence.

AND WHEREAS the most fundamental object of this Organisation as laid down by Bhagawan is to "*Awaken in Man the awareness of the Divinity INHERENT in him*" by propagating through practice and examples the basic principles of *Sathya*, (Truth), *Dharma* (Righteousness), *Shanthi* (Peace) and *Prema* (Love) set by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

AND WHEREAS to experience this Divinity, mere environment and circumstances outside are not sufficient but a change in the minds of men is necessary.

AND WHEREAS the activities of the Organisation are only means to the spiritual progress in this direction and which progress will ultimately enable everyone to enjoy inner peace notwithstanding the stresses and strains, the frustrations and sorrows, the defeats and successes, the ups and downs of life.

AND WHEREAS to achieve maximum results towards these objectives.

IT IS HEREBY DECLARED:

A. That this shall be the Charter governing the Sathya Sai Organisations all over the World.

B. That all the office bearers and members of this Organisation at present and all those who will join this Organisation shall be one in Deed and in Name, by the name of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations and as such, they shall be entitled to carry on the activities in the name of the Organisation.

C. That in order to achieve the objectives as laid down hereinabove, the members shall follow a strict Code of Conduct of Sadhana (Spiritual Exercises) so that they become worthy instruments of our Divine Master in the efforts to fulfill the objectives of this Organisation.

D. That no person shall be qualified to associate himself or herself as office bearer or worker with this Organisation who willfully deviate from the Code of Conduct laid down hereinafter. Thus

CODE OF CONDUCT

That in order to remember continuously Bhagawan's teachings and in order to put the same into practice and to be worthy instrument of our Divine Master every member must undergo, Sadhana, a spiritual discipline which should be merged with day to day life so as to make Sadhana (Spiritual Exercise) a part of his or her worldly life, and Every member shall make his or her "Family as a Unit" for such Sadhana (Spiritual exercise):

Thus with a view to qualify to be a true member of the Organisation the following guidelines shall be followed:

- 1. Every day meditation – Jap.**
- 2. Bhajan with all members of the family once a week.**
- 3. Participation in Bal Vikas Programme by Children of the family**
- 4. Participation in community work and other programmes of the Organisation.**
- 5. Attendance at least once a month at Bhajan or Nagarsankirtan organised by the Organisation.**
- 6. Regular study of Sai Literature.**
- 7. To speak softly with everyone.**
- 8. Not to indulge in talking ill of others specially in their absence.**
- 9. Narayana Seva – Some cereals to be kept separate every day to feed the needy and to form habit not to waste food.**

Thus he or she, through practice of this Spiritual exercises, will develop the quality of selfless love, which in turn will qualify the individual to transmit to others the Divine message of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

A. That in view of the objectives laid down hereinabove there shall be only one set of basic norms applicable to all the constituents of the Organisation in all the countries of the world.

B. That there shall be a World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, as an apex body having its central office situated at Prashanthi Nilayam, P.O. Pin: 515 134,

India, having Chairman and 10 members nominated by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The duties and responsibilities of the World Council will be: -

- i. To guide and supervise the working of the various constituents of the Organisations all over the world.
 - ii. To frame rules and regulations for India and overseas countries for governing the functional pattern of the Organisations from time to time.
 - iii. To issue the guidelines for conducting activities of different wings of the Organisations from time to time.
 - iv. To maintain liaison between various constituents of the Organisations through State Presidents in India, Presidents of Central Councils in overseas countries and Convenors of coordinating committees in overseas countries or in any other manner as prescribed by the world council.
 - v. To deal with all matters of where difficulties arise necessitating an authoritative decision for the Organisation;
 - vi. The members of the world council will meet at least once a year in Prashanthi Nilayam at the time of the Birthday Celebration.
- A. That in order to enable the Organisation to be one in Deed and Name, every constituent of the Organisation shall have to compulsorily affiliate with the World Council of this Organisation.
 - B. That no constituent of the Organisation not affiliated to the World Council shall be entitled to use the name of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in any of the activities carried on by such Organisation.
 - C. That the membership in any Sathya Sai Organisation shall not be claimed as a matter of right. Membership in any Sathya Sai Organisation shall be a privilege solely dependent upon the pleasure of the World Council. No person shall have any legal or enforceable right or claim to be a member of the Sathya Sai Organisations or to hold any office therein. In the event of any difficulty or dispute arising with respect to the affairs of the Organisations or the interpretations of application of rules, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust shall be the final authority to give a decision on the same and the Central Trust's decision shall be final, conclusive and binding on all parties.
 - D. IN INDIA
 - i. That in India, the Organisation shall be divided State-wise with the State President as the Head in each State.
 - ii. That such State President shall be nominated by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.
 - iii. That groups of individuals within each State shall be termed as Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithis. Such Samithis shall function under the authority and supervision of the State President of that State.
 - iv. That every Samithi or State in India shall function strictly in their own areas.
 - v. That the functional pattern of the Organisation in India and the rules and regulations governing such functional pattern shall be as separately laid down.

K. IN OVERSEAS COUNTRIES

- i. That there shall be a Central Council in every Country where there are ten or more than ten centers with the President as the head of the council.**
- ii. That the President shall be nominated by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.**
- iii. That if there are less than ten centers in any country, there shall be a coordinating committee with a convenor.**
- iv. That group of individuals within the country shall be termed as Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of (Location).**
- v. That such Centers shall function under the authority and supervision of the Central Council of the Country and shall compulsorily affiliate with the Central Council.**
- vi. That every Council, Coordinating Committee and affiliated Centers shall function strictly in their own areas.**
- vii. That the functional pattern of the Organisation in overseas Countries and the rules and regulations governing such functional pattern shall be as separately laid down.**

K. That every member shall pledge to abide by this Charter and strictly follow the rules and regulations laid down hereunder, so as to earn the grace of our Divine master to achieve the objectives of the Organisation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, SRI SATHYA SAI CENTRAL TRUST have set and subscribed its seal, the date and year first hereinabove mentioned

**Sd./ S. Bhagavantam
MEMBER SECRETARY**

Where and Why

Discourse of Swami on 22 Dec 1971 at Chennai

The glory of Bharath, 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.

You have gathered here as office-bearers of the units of the Sathya Sai Organisation, activating the villages and towns of this land. I am happy to be with you. You all know that this gathering has a special significance: last week, you and all those connected with the Organisation were afraid that this conference might not meet at all, for, this country was invaded by enemies and we were in the midst of a conflict. But, today, fear and anxiety have gone and there is this atmosphere of Anandham around you.

This conference was decided upon by Sai, it is a Sai-Nirnaya. Nothing can interrupt the realisation of that resolution. Last November, on the 23rd, the day when this body took birth, I announced, as you know, that Bharath will not suffer from any calamity or distress. Therefore, when the conflict with Pakistan came about, you began doubting whether that announcement was contradicted by events. There were some who drew conclusions and started arguing according to their own notions. But, you should not count what happened until a few days ago as 'war.' It was only the last chapter of a conflict in existence since years, and which grew in dimensions during the last eight months. It has little to do with India; it was a struggle of one part of Pakistan with another.

People of Bharath will never inflict Injury on others

This civil war in Pakistan forced millions of terror-stricken people to seek refuge in India; they prayed in their agony that we should help them. And, true to our traditions and our Dharma (moral code), we sacrificed a great deal and gave them food and shelter, and sent them back to their homes, after ensuring that they could be safe there and live in peace. The people of Bharath have never entertained any desire to expand their territory, or to inflict injury to other nationalities. They will never develop such desire hereafter also.

This is the land of the Hindus. 'Him' means 'Himsa' (violence, injury); 'Dhu' means 'Dhuur' (far away from). Hindu means, therefore, free from any desire to be violent, to cause injury or harm. This country is incapable of aggressive intentions on others. The people of Bangladesh who underwent countless tortures and travails were welcomed, treated with sympathy and care, and taken back to their homes and settled on the land, which they had run away from. That is the sacred service that India did; it was no offensive against Pakistan. And, it all stopped well before this conference.

There are still a few who are bothered with anxiety since Bhutto has become the leader of that country, and his intentions are not friendly. You need not entertain any fears on that score. It is inevitable that Pakistan might harbor some resentment at their defeat; but, that resentment cannot grow into anger sufficient to induce them to fall upon India again.

Purity of Thought, Word and Deed is needed

Embodiments of the divine! The welfare of the world depends on the welfare of society; the welfare of society depends on the welfare of the individuals who comprise it. The individual by his thoughts, words and deeds develops or undermines the welfare of society, and thus affects the world. When the world has space and prosperity, the individual can have freedom from fear, and positive joy. Without that Aanandham, one cannot grasp the Brahman-principle (unitive absolute), which is unsullied, immeasurable Aanandham Itself.

Thri-Karana-Shuddhi is prescribed by the sages as essential for tasting the Ananda of the universal absolute. That expression means, the 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. This conference calls on scientists who are blind (though possessing eyesight) to open their eyes of wisdom, and see things whole, see things deeper than ever before. Man has become so insane that he limps though his legs are good, he is mad though his mind is sound, deaf though his ears are efficient enough; it has become urgent to warn him of this absurdity, and infuse some sanity into his behaviour. This conference calls on him to awake into the higher reality.

Service of Man is Service offered to God

The many in the one - that is the real nature of society. All for one, one for all. This has become a slogan rather than a fact. If it is realised in fact, you will find that it is the design of nature that it should be so, and that it is a sign of advanced culture too. This conference calls upon all to share their resources, power, skill and achievements with the rest. For, 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 harmonized. 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 Samastha-Samarasa-Sanubhuuthi, that is to say, "awareness of, and empathy with the feelings of one and all". That is the spring of unalloyed bliss.

We have at present persons who pride themselves on their encyclopedic scholarship and technical skill; they claim to know the innermost secrets of nature; they fly into outer space and even land on the moon. But, ask them, whether they have Ananda and can stay in Ananda, they will reply that they have yet to experience it. If they know everything worth knowing, why have they missed this? It is clear they are suffering under some delusion.

All are activated by one divine Force

You, or at least the Andhras among you, would have heard or read about the pupils of Paramaanandaguru. Ten of them crossed a river, wading to the other bank. In order to find out whether all had arrived safe, one fellow counted the rest and declared there were only nine. Each of the ten counted the rest and everyone agreed there were only nine survivors. One of them had definitely been drowned. So, the ten started wailing aloud in their bereavement, and a passer-by was drawn to the group in sympathy. He saw there were ten, all right. The mistake was - the man who counted left himself out; he ignored himself, in counting the rest.

This is the mistake every one of these encyclopedic intellects commit; they count everyone except themselves; they know everything except the workings of their own minds, and the methods by which they can attain inner calm. So, you must know who you are, and then, if necessary, try to know about other persons and objects. Now it is all topsy-turvy. Just as all these, all the organizational 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 characteristics of man - discrimination, wisdom, detachment - Viveka, Vijnana and Vairagya - and drive at that realisation.

To put it even more plainly, you will derive Ananda only if you succeed in doing three exercises.

1. Forget the thing that has to be forgotten: Forget the objective world, ignore it, it is Asath, only relatively real, not absolutely real. Forget the A-Sath. Remember the first statement in the prayer "Asatho maa sadh gamaya" - "Lead me from the unreal to the real."
2. Give up that which has to be given up. The Jeevabhaava which is darkness has to be given up, in order to attain light which is the Dhevabhaava. 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 Vedhic prayer - "Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya" - "Lead me from darkness into light."
3. You must reach the place, which you have to reach, that is, Brahmathathwa. 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 "Mruthyor maa amrutham gamaya" - "Lead me from death to immortality."

Dharma is acting according to the Truth

Do not accept the half-truth that you are a part of the objective world; hold fast to the truth that you are divine in essence. Your form makes you declare you are human; but, really, you are divine. 'Sathyam Vadha' - 'Utter truth,' is the Vedic injunction. And this is the truth. And, the injunction continues, 'Dharmam Chara.' Dharma is acting according to the truth you have known. You have heard Pandiths expounding most elaborately the axiom, "Brahma Sathyam, Jagath Mithya" - "Brahman alone is real, the world that is the result of a creative act, that is undergoing transformations and that will meet with disintegration, is just an appearance on the basis of that reality."

You might hear such discourses from Pundits and scholars from this platform too. But, observe how tenaciously these very persons are attached to this illusory world! They voice the truth, but, deny it by their deeds. 'Jagath Sathyam,' they announce by their deeds, 'Brahma Mithya,' they appear to aver, when we watch their way of life! This is really a matter for merciless ridicule! Our Organisation must apply the touchstone of practice to any precept that the members might voice forth or profess. That is My desire.

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 Sadhanas 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; practice first, precept second. Unless you yourself avoid the evil habits, and the undesirable practices, don't talk against them.
2. The rules, regulations that we have laid down for the Organisation and its units have to be observed, scrupulously, down to the smallest dot and dash.

If you miss a Rule, the Unit becomes weaker

Now, however, most of the units do not strictly follow these rules, they appear in the lists as Samithis and units, but, in actual working, they do not deserve the place. 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.

Besides these, there are certain matters I have to tell specially to the executives and the office-bearers, matters they have to implant in their hearts: 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 some one, 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 Bharath as a Bharathiya 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, separated and set apart.

Carry on the Activities without any Trace of Negligence

Love the God that is in all men, worship Him, offer Him what you can, dedicate to Him the Ananda that you have. Do your daily duty with the Ananda you fill your worship with. Be glad you have a duty to fulfill, a role to play in the drama He is directing! Others have other roles. Others have their exits and entrances, their words to utter at the appropriate times, their gestures, their actions to go through. They are as earnest in their roles as you are in yours. Don't try to impose your roles on them!

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 furor, 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 practice 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.

A place in the Samithi is for constant Sadhana

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, Nagarsankirtan, 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 Samithi; you share in its activities, for your own sake; not for the sake of Sathya Sai or the Samithi 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 (spiritual striving).

Those who have some thing specially important, some new and fruitful Programme that they have adopted and found beneficent, they may now come forward to report on them. Why use the little time that we can spare to listen to routine reports and common items, which are observed everywhere? We must pay attention now more to the investigation into the causes for our not being able to achieve the success desired; you are welcome to elucidate the problem with your own suggestions, for, this is a gathering called together to develop Ananda and accord. Where have you failed and why? - Think of these two problems.

Then this conference shall pay special attention to two fields of activity: health and education. I desire that you must pay more attention in the coming year to these two fields of service. A sound body is the essential requisite for a sound mind and a sound mind ensures a sound body. Health and education are intertwined fields. Engage your thoughts in these directions and make this gathering fruitful.

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA - THE SOVEREIGN OF LOVE

by Prof. T. Padma

Surcharged as it is with devotion, on the one hand and rigorous discipline, on the other, Prashanti Nilayam, the township sanctified by the presence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba is universally acknowledged as the eighth wonder of the world. The uniqueness of this 'wonder' is the transforming testament of spiritual democracy and as a dynamic exemplar of the ideal of salvation through service. Life at Prashanti Nilayam is training in the right harnessing of one's physical and mental energies to obtain optimal moral development. The aura of Love around Swami is so powerful that it sensitizes every devotee to perceive that the ultimate in moral development is an expansion of sympathy. Enthused by the motto, "See good, Be good, Do good," aspirants in the Sai path strive to replace condemnation of the bad with commitment to reform and refine the bad till it becomes good. No other Avatar before Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has initiated an action plan for the spiritual evolution of the entire mankind.

The Sathya Sai Seva Organisation is blessed in that God founds it in human form, Daivam maanusha ruupena. The only fee for membership is loyalty to the objectives of the Organisation. Members of the Samithis scrupulously and unquestioningly follow the instructions of Swami. They do not try to analyze His actions because they know that God's ways are inscrutable and beyond human comprehension. When Swami was asked to tell about Himself, He once said: "When among men, I am a man; when among women, I am a woman. Among children, I am a child. Alone, I am God." What draws people to Him from all walks of life, from all countries and cultures in the world, cutting across differentiations in political beliefs and religious faiths, is Swami's supreme unconditional Love. Swami is interested not in launching any new religious creed but only in the restoration of Sanathana Dharma, and through that to reinstate India in its lost position as the spiritual leader of the world. As rightly pointed out by V.K. Gokak, Swami's wish is to bring about an integral change in the character of man so that "his intellect attains Truth, his heart attains Peace, his will attains Right Action, and his soul overflows with love".

Many devotees feel perplexed about Baba's granting interviews. Sometimes they feel sad that maybe their devotion is not sincere enough to merit an interview. At other times they wonder if the criterion for an interview could be position or wealth, since Ministers and high officials and wealthy sportsmen and film stars seem to be receiving special attention from Baba. What vexes them most is when Swami grants a man known to lack honesty and integrity. All the above observations are correct. But what the devotees do not know is the reason behind the special Grace.

Baba knows best when and to whom an interview should be given. With millions of people thronging to Puttaparthi, it is impossible to give individual interviews to each and everyone. He gives an "inner-view" to all who surrender to Him with full faith and pure heart. As for interviews, in some cases, it may be merit accrued from previous lives; it may be the dire need of the person singled out for an interview. The need may be with reference to health problems, financial setbacks, or emotional ordeals. It may be to offer a much-needed advice on spiritual sadhana or the running of a service oriented institution. With regard to the interviews granted to affluent and important officials, it is not at all favoritism, but the fact that transformation wrought in them would have far reaching consequences for society at large. When the faith of the people in power is strengthened, they can become effective instruments in the Sai fold and can play a vital role in Swami's primary aim of bringing about a qualitative change in the life of the common man materially, morally, and spiritually.

Bhagawan many times quips humorously that his giving many interviews to the same person is like a doctor of having necessity to give prolonged treatment to a really sick person. Just as the slightly indisposed persons are treated as outpatients and given a prescription and sent away, Swami gives to all who come to see Him the prescription of Devotion, Discipline, and Duty along with the recommended diet of Truth, Right, Conduct, Peace, and Love, and sends them away. Not granting them an interview is, in way, like giving them a clean bill of health.

It is the common experience of Sai devotees that help always comes to them even if they are not granted an interview. The timely help may be from a person, a book, or a conversation overheard. Darshan, Sparshan and Sambashan have tremendous significance. By His glance, by His smile, and by His word Swami charges, vitalizes, and divinises a person. Swami's message is simple: "Help ever, Hurt never." He is only particular that help should not be confined to narrow considerations and should encompass all those in need irrespective of race, religion, or social status. The very terminology Swami uses, like Narayana Seva, to connote feeding the poor underscores that service to anyone is service to the indweller present in every human being. Swami's insistence on Value Based Education, His providing the best medical care to the poor free of cost through Super specialty Hospitals, and His giving through a mega Water Project new hope to farmers living in the hitherto draught afflicted regions testify that boundless compassion is the hallmark of Sathya Sai Avatar.

The supernormal powers that spontaneously manifest themselves through Swami like materializations of things from the air by a mere wave of his hand, miraculous cure of diseases, controlling the fury of Nature, and bringing back to life people declared dead by doctors, and so on draw people to Swami. But what cements their total faith is the Love He showers on them. The therapeutic power of Bhajans, the sense of direction and purpose in life one gets from the code of conduct enjoined in the Sai Path, and the peace one experiences by rendering service with Love ensure the lifelong allegiance of the devotees to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Such is Swami's loving concern for His devotees that He would go to any lengths, perform any incredible miracle to redeem them or rescue them from perilous situations. An army officer who felt hurt when he was bypassed and the promotion he was sure of getting was given to a person much junior to him, wished to commit suicide. It so happened that his wife and family were out of station and he shut himself up in the bedroom, and was about to shoot himself when there was a loud knock on the door. Putting aside the pistol, he opened the door and was pleasantly surprised to find his childhood friend. The friend's wife and another acquaintance also were with him. He welcomed them inside and spent a pleasant two hours in their company. Promising to come again after the officer's wife had returned, the friend left.

The cheerful company of the friend banished depression from the officer's mind, and he went inside to his bedroom to put away the pistol. He could not find it anywhere. In about an hour's time he received a telegram from Swami saying, "Don't worry. The pistol is safe with me." Stunned by Swami's kindness the officer suddenly had an intuition that may be it was Baba who called on him the guise of his childhood friend to prevent him from committing suicide. He searched for his friend's address and phone number in an old dairy. He dialed the number and the friend himself answered the phone.

Knowing that there is no way in which the 'friend' who called on him just a couple of hours back could reach his home thousands of miles away, the officer prostrated before Baba's photo in the shrine room for visiting him in three forms (his friend, his friend's wife and their acquaintance). He took the next flight to Puttaparthi, and Swami smilingly confirmed that he did visit him in the guise of his friend, and handed the pistol back to him. Science

can never explain how Swami can assume three different identities while continuing to be physically present at Puttaparthi, or how a pistol can be transported by Him to a place thousand of miles away without anyone seeing it. Devotees have documented millions of such instances.

On rare occasions, as a warning to a devotee, Swami makes the gift He had given disappear. A man who finalized a deal to sell the rosary given him by Swami was surprised when he could not find it anywhere. A few months later when he went to Puttaparthi, Swami gently rebuked him and gave him back the rosary. Sincere devotees, who accidentally lose the watch or chain given to them by Swami, many times receive them again from Him sometimes even after a gap of several years!

Swami is particular that the energy of youth is constructively canalized. If the enthusiastic participation of students from The Sathya Sai Educational institutes in the 'Grama Seva' Programme were to be emulated by students from all other colleges it would indeed betaken a glorious golden age for India.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba wants only Love from devotees. He is the Sanathana Sarathi come to repair the ancient Highway to God. On the eve of His 75th Birthday, let us all pray to Him to make us worthy instruments in the Sai path and guide us to strive for individual salvation along with global harmony.
