

8TH WORLD CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

OPENING SESSION

The 8TH World Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Organization was inaugurated at 08:00 AM on November 20, 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Sri Indulal Shah

The first speaker was the former International Chairman and current Advisor to Prasanthi Council, Sri Indulal Shah, who offered salutations to Bhagawan on behalf of the 15,000 delegates assembled from 180 countries. Recalling that the first world conference was held in Bombay in May 1968, he noted that “the Organization has now spread to every district in India with thousands of Centers in India and thousands of Centers abroad. Whereas earlier emphasis of the Organization was on encouraging devotees to practice the five tools of sadhana, viz., Devotional Singing, Meditation, Study Circle, Prayer, and Service Activities, the Avatar is now calling for the personal transformation of every devotee to the point of experiencing God within.”

The 8th World Conference, Sri Shah said, provides an opportunity to take stock of past achievements and plan for the future. Describing the students of Sri Sathya Sai Schools and Colleges as “our most valuable assets,” he urged that this strength be consolidated; and he publicly requested the Sathya Sai University teachers to help in this endeavor. He also called for action “to involve the Bal Vikas and Sathya Sai students in activities of responsibility, which will enable the propagation of Bhagawan's message for all mankind.”

Sri Shah said that Bhagawan has clarified that the 21st century is going to be “the age of transformation technology, not information technology.” Continuing, he said that this transformation technology will have each one of us who are devotees of Baba everywhere in the world as an integral part of it. This will be the world's most beautiful World Wide Web. That is, (W)ork, (W)orship, and (W)isdom.

Sri V. Srinivasan

The second speaker was Sri V. Srinivasan, President of the All-India Sathya Sai Organization. He said:

We are gathered here today at a unique time in history, when the world celebrates the 80th year of the advent of the Avatar in the Kali Yuga, an Avatar who is great and glorious, and yet unlike any other. One who has come not for the direct destruction of evil but to transform mankind through the medium of Love, and thereby eliminate evil for all time.

We are fortunate that we are witnesses to this spiritual revolution, and experiencing the thrill, the joy, and the wonder of Bhagawan's Divine mission as we move ever forward. The Sai Organization and its members are particularly blessed as Bhagawan is permitting us to play a part in this glorious transformation of mankind. From the members of the Sai Organization, Bhagawan expects neither wealth nor status nor intellectual capacity. All He wants is Love for our fellowmen. That is enough for Him. And then He takes us under His fold, like a loving mother, and cares for us, nourishes us, and leads us on to our Divine destiny.

Sri Indulal Shah has set a precedent, several decades ago, and we have seen the growth of the Sai Organization all over the world about which brother Goldstein will speak in his talk. And even in the far off, remote corners in India, Sai workers are working through the medium of service and spirituality. Yet it is clear that Bhagawan is doing everything. We are the visible instruments. We do not have to say that Bhagawan is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. We experience this everyday. It is a continuous lesson for us in our sadhana. We can only express gratitude to Bhagawan for His patience and for His deep Love for us, and for giving us real happiness. While the Organization is growing rapidly, we have to always remember that Bhagawan places importance on quality, and not quantity. This should always be our guidepost in whatever we do.

The theme of the conference is appropriately 'Unity, Purity and Divinity.' Bhagawan repeatedly teaches us that unless we have Unity in thought, word and deed, we cannot achieve Purity, which alone can enable us to realize our latent Divinity. At this conference, the Sai Organization in India proposes to examine these three mahavakyas in relation to the individual, the family, the Organization itself, and society and the nation. Bhagawan has revealed to us the importance of every individual, who is the basic building block for the family, the society and the nation. Through His Grama Seva Program, He has taught us to reach every single individual, in every single hut, in every single village. Bhagawan, we assure you that we will always start from the individual to reach out to the world. By the Grace of Bhagawan we are fortunate to have eminent speakers to address the sessions of the conference on these subjects.