

8th World Conference

Sri Sathya Sai Organization

Unity – Purity – Divinity

2005 November

**Offered With Love and Humility
at the Divine Lotus Feet**

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Bhagawan's Divine Message

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said, "Start the day with Love, Spend the day with Love, Fill the day with Love, End the day with Love, this is the way to God."

If we begin our spiritual journey guided by His Words, adhering to His Words in all aspects of our human lives, selflessly loving and selflessly serving as taught by Him, then surely we will fulfill the divine Destiny that belongs to each and everyone of us.

Let us begin our contemplation of the proceedings of the 8th World Conference with the Divine Messages of our Beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba that He so graciously gave to us during the period of the 80th Birthday Celebrations and the 8th World Conferences of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations.

November 19, 2005

1. Unity in Diversity

We distinguish and differentiate between ladies and gents on the basis of *upadhi* (vesture) or physical form. However, the principle of Brahman present in ladies and gents is one and the same. *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma* (verily all this is Brahman). God transcends names, forms and attributes. He is infinite and not limited to a particular form.

2. Avatar

In response to the prayers of sages and seers, God comes down in human form. He strives for the welfare of humanity and bestows joy on one and all. One has to develop inward vision in order to experience Him.

3. GOD as Director and Actor

Easwarah sarva bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings). In this cosmic drama, God alone is the director and also the actor. He is donning all the roles such as mother, father, husband, wife, daughter, son, etc.

4. GOD Is ALL

Whatever you see around is also the manifestation of God. Even the small birds that you see here are endowed with the principle of Divinity. There is no place which is not pervaded with Divinity. There is no form that is not divine.

5. Accept God's Will

Whatever may happen, accept it wholeheartedly as the Will of God. Have firm faith that it is God and God alone who is the doer. Do not consider your fellow human beings as mere individuals. When you talk to someone, think that you are talking to God. When you do not see God in others and treat them as your own, you will be giving room to evil qualities like anger, jealousy, hatred, etc. Develop the spirit of oneness. Only then will your life be redeemed.

6. Selfless Desire

Whenever anyone expresses a truly selfless desire, Swami will surely fulfill it. Mother Easwaramma is an example of this. She prayed to have a primary school in Puttaparthi which was fulfilled as a complex of educational institutions ranging from a primary school to a prestigious university. She wanted a small clinic for the patients and now there are full-fledged Super-specialty hospitals. She asked for a drinking water well for the village; now there is a mammoth project providing free drinking water to thousands of villages. (One attains merit by helping others and commits sin by hurting them.) Help Ever, Hurt Never. Hence, always strive to help everybody. Selfishness is an evil. Fish is better than “selfish”.

7. Totally Depend on God and See God Everywhere

If you depend on God, He will turn the minds of people in your favor. God is everything. Victory is secured only when you totally depend on God's Grace. Here again your prayers to God should not be for selfish reasons. Wherever you look, God is present. From stars to hillocks, from insects to elephants, everything is pervaded by Brahman. Fill your heart with Divine feelings.

8. Live in Love

Love is God. Live in Love. Love should not be tainted with narrow feelings of I and mine. Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you. Consider Love as your very life-breath. Grow in Love. Be broadminded and share your Love with everybody. This is what I call 'Expansion Love' as contrasted with 'Contraction Love'.

November 22, 2005

Educare

1. Purpose of Education

There is a purpose and goal for education; that is truth. In fact, spiritual education is the only true education, which will recognize the existence of God everywhere. “The end of education is character.” Devoid of character, all other possessions are useless. Unfortunately, today character-building has been relegated to the background. Modern education may help one to gain control over men and matters, but it utterly fails in uplifting one's own self. The harmony between thought, word, and deed is of utmost importance. Education should enable one to cultivate good qualities, character, and devotion. When there is Unity between thought, word, and deed, one can acquire purity and realize Divinity. Modern education is totally self-centered. Wherever you see, selfishness is rampant. Contrary to it, true education teaches selflessness. Truth and righteousness form the foundation for character. As the saying goes, *Sathyannaasti paro dharmah* (There is no *dharmah* greater than adherence to truth). The mansion of righteousness rests on the foundation of truth.

2. How to Get Peace

When truth and righteousness go together, Love manifests itself. There can be no peace without truth, righteousness and Love. If only one has peace of mind, one can be happy in the world and will have no troubles at all. Peace is something that cannot be purchased in a market. It depends upon one's attitude to life and living. Hence, one has to cultivate

ekatma bhava (feeling of oneness). If this *ekatma bhava* is developed, one can move about freely in the world with no attachment to any particular individual or object.

3. People, Places and Things

Man's behavior is influenced by *sthanabala* (power of the place) and association with people as well as the company of books. One's association with a particular place also has its effect on one's behavior. That is what is called *sthanabala*. Youngsters often move in bad company and cultivate bad qualities. This is not correct. They should always make friendship with good people and emulate their qualities. One has to read good books that will bring about a transformation of heart and uplift the soul. You often find youngsters going to the library and engaged in deep study. What sort of books do they study? They read bad books camouflaged in a good cover.

4. Real Guru

Love all. In fact, Love is the most important aspect of education. One who teaches the method by which man can cultivate selfless and universal Love is the real Guru.

November 23, 2005

1. Equanimity

Human birth is meant to attain peace and not for occupying positions of authority. One may have all types of wealth and comforts but bereft of peace life itself has no meaning. Everyone has to experience ups and downs in life, but they are like passing clouds. Difficulties are a part of life. None can escape them. Hence, one has to treat happiness and sorrow with equanimity. There is pleasure in pain and vice versa. One should not be elated by pleasure nor depressed by pain. We have to develop the spirit of equanimity in order to progress in life.

2. "Who Am I"

How can one attain peace of mind? It is possible only when one realizes his innate Divinity. Why are we not able to experience peace? Where does the mistake lie? We go on enquiring others, "Who are you?" But we do not make an effort to enquire into ourselves, "Who am I?" There lies the mistake. Once we realize who we really are, we will be free from sorrows and difficulties forever. Hence, first and foremost, we should make efforts to realize our true identity. What is the use of knowing everything without being aware of the Self?

3. Live in Atmic Awareness

Lord Vishnu told Narada, "I have to assume the form of a human in order to move among men and protect the world. I am present in everyone in the form of *Atma*. When man constantly contemplates on the principle of *Atma*, I manifest Myself to him." The same divine principle of *Atma* is present in all. One who realizes this truth experiences the all-pervasive Divinity. You are God and your fellow human being is also God. Develop such principle of oneness and equality. Who are you? You think you are the body. But you are neither the body nor the mind. The human body is like a water bubble and mind is like a mad monkey. Mind is nothing but a bundle of desires. One day or the other you have to give up all desires. Hence, do not identify yourself with the mind. Give up body con-

sciousness and live in the constant awareness that you are God. There is no point in merely worshipping idols if you do not realize your innate Divinity. Everyone must respect and revere the principle of the *Atma* within.

4. Give up Desires

You are deluded because of your materialistic outlook. You have to change your vision. Do not expect God to change the creation. He has given you everything in its pristine form. But, you are polluting it because of your selfish desires. Your heart is naturally pure and sacred but you are deluded by the clouds of desires. Just as the sun and the moon are not visible to us when they are covered by the clouds, we are unable to visualize our reality because of our desires. Man is ruining his life because of his bad habits. He should lead a life of righteousness. Do not give undue importance to food and drink. Consider character as your very life-breath. If you lack character, you will have to face innumerable difficulties in life. You should contemplate on one name and one form till your last breath without changing like a weather cock. You should remain unperturbed by difficulties and lead a spiritual life.

5. Pray Only for Divine Love

Everything is in My hand. I can give you whatever you ask for. However, do not crave for materialistic things from Me. They are transient like passing clouds. Ask for that which is eternal. The entire world is sustained by the twin principles of truth and Love. They are present in everyone. I am the truth that is present in all. I am the Love that is present in all. Truth and Love are all-pervasive. You may forget anything in life but not truth and Love. Bereft of truth and Love one does not deserve to be called a human being at all! Having come here and listened to My message, you should practice truth and Love in your daily life. Only that will make Me very happy. Consider whatever work you do as God's work. See God everywhere. I will be happy when you develop such Divine feelings.

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* (spiritual discipline), 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 to eliminate evil for all time.

We are fortunate that we are witnesses of this spiritual revolution, and are 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 mem-

bers 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 (great maxims) in relation to the individual, the family, the Organization itself, 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. We have much to learn from them to mould our work on the right lines to meet the challenges of these modern times.

In closing, I only express gratitude to Bhagawan on behalf of all the delegates assembled here for permitting us to hold this conference in the Divine presence and for all the arrangements that HE has made for our comfort, our care, our food, our accommodation. Bhagawan has done all this. Even a thousand mothers would not care as much as our Lord for His devotees. Jai Sai Ram.

Dr. Michael Goldstein

The third speaker, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council, added his welcome to the delegates, noting that "every five years over the last 35 years our beloved Bhagawan Baba has graciously permitted us to assemble in His Divine presence to reflect upon what we have done." He further said:

Drawing upon His divine inspiration, we strive to perfect our ways, and to become worthy of bearing His name on this spiritual organization. What has been, is, and will be in this saga of God on earth will comprise the sacred volumes of holy scriptures for the societies and civilizations of humankind that live in the centuries and millennia of the future. This is indeed a momentous time.

The plan for this conference has changed. At first we who have responsibility for the planning of this great event intended to draw out the program for many days. We planned to ponder the mysteries of man's spiritual sojourn and the dilemma of this spiritual Organization. Our beloved Bhagawan Baba, in His infinite Love and wisdom, knowing always what is best for us, has curtailed our zeal and put a ceiling on our desires. Instead of wasting time, Bhagawan Baba has aptly given us sufficient time to do the needful.

What is the dilemma of this spiritual Organization, the Organization that bears the Divine Name of the *Kali Yuga Avatar*, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba? What is our dilemma?

Our dilemma is to realize Unity, Purity and ultimately Divinity as an Organization. A group of spiritual aspirants, we as individuals are striving for that end, following the inner light. Sometimes we go astray. But our beloved Swami curtails our wanderings. We return to the only true path for man, the spiritual path, the path of selfless Love, the path to the realization of our Divine heritage. Now, we as a group aspire to act collectively in the world in a manner that is spiritually authentic. We aspire to create an environment that is conducive to the self realization of all peoples by raising divine consciousness. Our dilemma is that we, who are imperfect, join together to act collectively to manifest perfection in the world.

Only by the Grace of our beloved Lord, Bhagawan Baba can such a feat be accomplished. Only He can melt away our impurities and smelt the pure ore of our noble intentions. What must be done in this unique conference, this meeting of spiritual aspirants, this gathering of Love? Swami says, "always be careful." We must proceed with loving care. While order and understanding are prerequisites to accomplishment, bureaucracy is antithetical to spiritual progress. Therefore, let's beware, lest we institutionalize mediocrity. And let us take care, lest we trivialize Divinity. When we give up our 'control', when we forego the machinations, manipulations, and politically contrived controlling and selfish actions, then we become the chief beneficiaries. We become capable of genuine spiritual experience and accomplishment. Clearly, we need faith; we need heart, we need Love. We need Bhagawan Baba's Grace to achieve our goals.

... What is the Sri Sathya Sai Organization? It is composed of people who have been called by Him through their conscience to follow His teachings. Thereby we uplift ourselves spiritually. In so doing, we contribute to the redemption of mankind. First, the beckoning of the divine indweller, the individual; then, the coming together of like minds. Then groups organized to have collective spiritual meetings and activities. Then the geographical division into groups of various sizes, ranging from small Sai groups to large Centers with hundreds and even thousands of members — nations and groups of multiple countries in a hierarchy of organizational management.

The current status of the Organization, as stated by Sri Indulal Shah, includes thousands of Centers and groups in hundreds of countries. They are engaging in spiritual activities, falling under the three wings of the Organization, devotion, education and service, representing the tri-marga of Bhakti, Jnana, and Karma Yoga.

The theme of the 8th World Conference is: Unity, Purity, and Divinity. Ultimately, we seek to develop the perspective of Unity, the experience of Purity and the bliss of Divinity. That is the goal of this conference and the aspiration of each and every one of us. Beloved Bhagawan Baba has taught us that Unity, Purity, and Divinity are not three distinct

things but rather three stages of spiritual progress in our spiritual sojourn as human beings. The human life wasted consists of wandering from one pleasure and worldly pursuit to another, none conferring lasting peace or joy, none resulting in a life well lived, none resulting in the fulfillment of our profound purpose.

The human life worth living is a spiritual progression through Unity, Purity, and Divinity. Being one, knowing who you truly are, is spiritual Unity. Removing the distractions that result from our animal nature, the desire for power and pleasure, that is spiritual Purity. These are intrinsic to our nature, that we should accomplish these goals. That is, this is the reason that we have taken these human births to pass through these stages until we become what and who we really are. We go through Unity to Purity; and then we achieve all-enduring, all-encompassing Love, which is Divinity realized.

Swami's teachings inspire us to cast off the shroud of delusion and enable us to live without a shadow of doubt. Unity of thought, word, and deed put us in command of our worldly selves. We subdue the worldly pretenders, so that We, the real We, prevail. We achieve Purity by removing the cardinal enemies, the contaminants: lust, anger, greed, pride, attachment, and jealousy.

How do we gain this quintessential command? We put aside the distractions of our meddlesome minds and the interference of our incessant desires. Our thoughts, words, and deeds, actually our bodies and our minds, are surrendered to the dictates of our conscience. Thus, spiritual Unity and Purity are achieved. As a result, we cease meandering through the maze of illusion, being blinded by the haze of desire and attachment. Upon cessation of these distractions, we achieve realization of who and what we have always truly been. Divinity is realized. Thus the Embodiment of Divinity, our Beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, teaches us.

In this 8th World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations, we will consider the profound spiritual significance and the practical worldly application of Unity (being one), Purity (removing contamination and distraction), Divinity (being a personification of selfless Love).

The All-India and International Sai Organizations will exchange whatever is spiritually constructive, amongst one another. United we will always stand. We will act and practice in the name of Divinity, our beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We will work together as true brothers and sisters. Can it be any other way? Can the Light of perfect Love, divine Consciousness, be contained, defined, or constrained by religion, race, caste, or nationality?

Swami said, "all are one, be alike to everyone." Therefore, we, the Organization, must strive to erase ignorant bias and see the God in all. If not the first commandment of this Organization, it is certainly near the top.

In conclusion, from time to time, some of us are drawn into the world and we lose sight of the spiritual path. We become forlorn, and then we become skeptical. We ask ourselves: will we ever achieve this or that? When we ask if we will ever do this or that, we acknowledge the possibility of never. Asking "if ever" gives power to "never".

Swami has said that we should have no doubts. His mission will be accomplished. Therefore, for us there is no "never". We will become genuine devotees of our beloved Bha-

gawan Baba. We will act collectively as a genuine spiritual Organization and manifest the light of His Love all over the world. For us there is no “ever” or “never”. For us, there is only the inevitable — inevitable self-realization, inevitable fulfillment of the Divine proclamation of our beloved *Kali Yuga Avatar*, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. *Jai Sai Ram*.

Mr. Leonardo Gutter

It appeared that the session might be ending, but at this point, Prasanthi Council member, Leonardo Gutter, got an indication to approach the dais. He approached Bhagawan, received His blessings and permission and went to the microphone. Mr. Gutter began his spontaneous, extemporaneous remarks by saying,

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to share with you the Love of God.

Since the first time I met Bhagawan I felt His Divine Love, His incredible Love. I know all of you here have felt the same Love. He is here in this beautiful form in Prasanthi Nilayam. Though He is here, He is also with us always in our homes, at our work, everywhere.

Bhagawan, as Shirdi Sai, said “If you look to Me, I look to you.” The only thing that we have to do is to think about Him all the time.

When I first came here, I had many experiences with Him, some of which I will share with you now. On that first trip, I was with a small group of Argentineans, and I was waiting for a divine opportunity to have an interview with Swami. At that time I was part of another spiritual organization. But one night, overwhelmed by the reality of His Divinity, I felt that I had to surrender to Him completely. So, that same night in my room, I wrote a letter of resignation from the position I had in the other organization and placed it on my altar. The next morning during *darshan*, Swami, instead of doing His usual rounds, came directly to where I was sitting and said, “yes, I will see you, I will give you an interview.” I thought I was supposed to go in the afternoon, sit in front of the interview room and wait for Swami's call. But the volunteer told me “no, it is not like that; He will have to call you again.” Then I thought that the *seva dal* just didn't like my face, and had spoiled the opportunity I was looking for. So in the afternoon, feeling sad, I thought Swami won't remember me. And even if He remembered, He wouldn't be able to find me in the large crowd. However, when He came out for *darshan*, He did not leave the verandah, just looked straight to where I was sitting, pointed and said, “You.” I stood up, and He said “go!”

In the interview room, He spoke about all that was on my mind, my doubts, and then He approached me and whispered something in my ears that I feel was not just meant for me, but for all of us. He said, “Swami will never disappoint His devotees.” I will always remember these divine words. I pray that we all always remember His words.

Since that time my life has been a life filled with divine experiences. I would like to share some of these with you. For over 20 years I have had the opportunity to travel to many, many Latin American countries, where I have seen how Bhagawan has touched the lives and hearts and minds of so many hundreds of thousands of people to change their lives forever. Many of them have come here. One day, Swami came and stood in front of a young boy and said to him, “One day, you will be the leader of your country.” That boy became the President of El Salvador. Today, the Secretary of the Department of Educa-

tion for Venezuela is here. Tomorrow, the Speaker of the Parliament of Venezuela is coming. The former president of one of the Centers in Guatemala was the former President of Guatemala.

Swami, we have devotees in every country in Latin America. We have over 300 Centers in Latin America. In every country there are Sai devotees; even in Cuba, there are thousands of Sai devotees.

One day, when I was traveling to several Latin American countries to attend some of the public meetings we were holding there, I landed at the Miami International Airport around five o'clock in the morning. My connection flight was not until late in the afternoon. This is a very large airport, with planes taking off every thirty seconds. I was there for a while, and suddenly I noticed that the bag in which I kept my ticket and passports and all my other valuables was gone. I looked around for it frantically for a long time, looking everywhere. I even went to the Lost and Found desk, but no one had turned it in there. I was very distressed. If you lose your ticket, you may get another, but to lose your ticket, your money, credit cards, and your passport, you are in a very bad situation.

I continued to look everywhere, but no luck. Then I remembered that Swami says you must ask God with all your heart. So, remembering this, I went to a secluded area and I prayed to Him. I prayed very hard for nearly one half hour, "Swami please, please Swami, Swami," like that. And finally I reached a point where I could not ask anymore. So I gave up and, surrendering to His Will, I left the area.

Just as I came back into the lobby area, a cleaning woman came up to me, just a foot away, with the bag in her hand, and said, "Sir, is this yours?" Everything was still there, money, passport, ticket, and all, untouched.

Mr. Gutter went on to share a number of other very touching and inspiring experiences that greatly moved the assembled delegates and made everyone very happy.

The Session ended with the singing of Arati.

Second Session

1.45 P.M. – 3.00 PM November 20, 2005

The afternoon session was opened with some brief remarks, by the conference moderator, Dr. David Gries. He announced some changes in the timings and the fact that the Sai International Symphony would be performing in Sai Kulwant Hall at 4 PM. The three speakers for this session would be Dr. Narendra Reddy on 'Devotion', Professor Anil Kumar on 'From Education to Educare', and Air Chief Marshall N. C. Suri on 'Service'.

Dr. Narendra Reddy

Dr. Reddy is a member of the Prasanthi Council and Chairman of the International Medical Committee. He began his talk by asserting that everything about Swami can be summarized in one word: Love!

Bhagawan's life, message, mission, His ideals, His humanitarian works — all can be enshrined in one word: LOVE. But His Love cannot be expressed in words, nor can it be comprehended by the mind. We can only experience His Love, enjoy His Love, and expand His Love by sharing that Love with others. Love has no bounds, no limits. Love is infinite. We are really fortunate and blessed to be in the presence of the embodiment of Love. Swami has come not to destroy the evil doers but to transform them and to inculcate in all of us this Love, to teach us this path of Love, this message of Love, this obligation to Love, this duty to Love. He has also said He wants us to realize that Love is our essential nature, that we are Love personified.

But what is this “Love” of which Swami speaks? He says that true Love is often confused with attachment and affection, etc. But real Love, He says, is pure, selfless, unconditional, eternal, universal and never-changing. On Guru Poornima day of 2005, He said that we should pray to Him only for pure Love. Contemplating on that, I was reminded of what Jesus said, “Seek ye the kingdom of God and everything will be added unto you.” So if we have pure Love, everything will be added to us.

Swami says our Love should be one-pointed. He compares Love to a single seat sofa, not a double seat sofa. Similarly, Jesus said you cannot serve two masters nor ride two horses at the same time. We can remember JOY, J-O-Y. **J**esus first; **O**thers second, **Y**ourself last. We can also apply this to SAI: **S** - Swami first, then **A** - All others next, and then **I** - I myself last. Jesus said the greatest commandment is: “Love thy God with all thy heart, mind and soul.” Hence, divine Love must be the highest goal for all of us. Swami also says that our Love must be intense, not merely one-pointed. I remember once, when I asked Swami, “How do I know I have devotion?” He said when you have intense longing for God, that indicates you have devotion.

Sri Ramakrishna said devotion should be like the combined Love of the mother for her child, of a miser for money, and of a chaste woman for her husband. One should have an intense yearning for God.

Swami emphasizes that true Love gives priority to quality, not quantity. Quality is more important. Once, I mentioned to Swami that the number of devotees attending the Center meetings in our home had grown from ten up to 100. Swami admonished me, and said,

“Is that all you've learned after all these years? Quality is important, but not quantity.” However, He said in another context, “Expansion is the essence of Love.” How to reconcile these two apparently contradictory statements of His? The clue may be found in another beautiful alliterative Telugu dictum of Swami: *Premanu panchuko, panchuko*. It means, “Expand your Love and then share it with others.”

How to develop that Love? Swami has given nine modes of expressing devotion in His discourses. Because of time constraint, I shall not go into the details, but you can find them in many of His discourses. They include listening to the stories of the Lord, singing the glories of the Lord, constant remembrance of the Lord, serving His Lotus feet, salutations to the Lord, worshipping the Lord, service to the Lord, friendship with the Lord, and ultimately complete surrender to the Lord. The details of this can be found in *Prema Vahini*. If we follow any one of these paths, we will reach the goal, because according to Baba, Love is the common '*sutra*' or thread running through all the nine modes of devotion.

Swami tells us that in order to experience pure Love, we should rid ourselves of impurities. Instead of fighting with the six cardinal enemies, Swami says we should channel all our desires towards God. Even negative emotions can be made beneficial by directing them toward God. For example, if we feel greed, we should convert the greed to wanting more and more of God. If we have pride, we should be proud to be a Sai devotee by following His teachings. We can have anger at our failings and shortcomings. In past ages, the sages prayed that God would come into their midst. But today we have the good fortune to be contemporaries of the *Avatar*. Let us all enjoy Swami's Love. This is the way to get rid of impurities and enjoy pure Love.

Of course, Swami always tells us that the root cause of impurities is our body attachment. Yesterday, on the Ladies' Day, Swami addressed this issue of body attachment. Usually, on this day Swami calls a woman devotee to translate His message. But He surprised everyone by calling on Anil Kumar, who was not expecting to translate His discourse. Every action and every gesture of Swami has a profound meaning. Swami then started the discourse. Usually, He begins by commenting on the importance of the role of the woman in society. But this time He said, “There is no difference between man and woman. These are all vestures. There is only one and that is *Atma*.”

This shows that we are only one. We need to find out who we really are. Avoid body consciousness. This is the way to develop pure Love for God. Swami also talks about spiritual evolution. First stage is *bouthika bhakthi*, when we start at the physical level, making prayers, meditation, *japa*, etc., to God. The second stage is *ekantha bhakthi*, when we go inward. The third stage is *ananya bhakthi*, when we see God inside and outside and everywhere. The conclusion of these three can be described as SAI, **S-A-I**. Sai And I are one. Also, we can say: See Sai, that is, to see Sai Always Inside.

What are the signs of devotion? Swami says that the proof of rain is wetness of the ground. Similarly the proof of devotion is to have peace and equal mindedness under all circumstances. If we are disturbed and agitated, it indicates we do not have true devotion. Swami has said, “Be equal minded. Nothing should disturb your equanimity.” Then, we will show our devotion in action through service, which is done with Love, humility and with no desires for self. Mother Teresa said “Fruit of Love is Service.” We should not

worry about loss and gain, etc. We should always be cheerful, happy and radiate the joy to others. Swami says “Be Happy.” The goal of all spiritual practices is to Be Happy, and happiness is union with God. Let us all pray only for Swami's unconditional, changeless, boundless and pure Love. We must realize we are embodiments of Love. This requires Unity-Purity-Divinity, the theme graciously given by Bhagawan for this world conference.

Prof. Anil Kumar

Professor Anil Kumar of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning spoke on the subject: “From Education to Educare.” He used a PowerPoint presentation, making comments about each slide. “Spirituality,” he said, “is an opportunity to know the Reality.”

Spirituality, or religion, is not seriousness. Seriousness is a sign of sickness. Religion is laughter, spirituality is ecstasy. Life is dance. Life is celebration.

That's why we ask if anyone is serious, “why are you like that?” But if one is smiling, we don't say, “why do you smile?”

In order to understand the beauty of life, Educare is absolutely necessary.

We hear of so many “cares” nowadays: Agri-care, Aqua-care, Spirituo-care, Medicare, etc.

But this “educare” is something different. Through education, we receive knowledge, but the knowledge is just bookish information. The knowledge will make you a scholar. And knowledge will also make you knowledgeable. Knowledge-ability, scholarship, ability to gather information are the criteria of a man of education. But educare is something different. Educare is for wisdom; and it is a product of the heart, nothing to do with the head. While education is full of Fund of Information, Educare brings about Transformation!

And it is educare that gives us a sense of awareness of our true selves.

And in education, we are used to questions. More so the teacher. Students are eager to ask questions, if they care to listen. They ask so many questions, and seek answers. Whereas educare has nothing to do with questions and answers. Educare is a Quest! Educare is an eternal quest. The road ends there.

Education is based on communication skills — email, slides, powerpoint, etc. When it comes to educare, it has nothing to do with communication. Educare is communion. Communion and communication are different. Communication is external, communion is the one within.

We may say of someone, “he's a great intellectual.” But intellectuality is a product of education. We say he's a great intellectual, meaning that intellect is an extension of the mind. An intellectual can earn respect, prestige, and status in society. Whereas educare will never make you an intellectual but will make you intelligent. So, intelligence is different from intellect. We are born with intelligence, because even an insect knows which flower to go to. Therefore, this intelligence is the birthright of every living creature.

Education is full of logic. You say something, and someone will say “I disagree.” Education is full of arguments, disagreements. If you say you disagree, you think you are educated.

Education helps you to develop personality, while educare will build up individuality. Personality and individuality are two opposite poles. Personality is ego-centric, ego-centered, whereas, individuality gives you emotional satisfaction. Personality is self-centered conditioning. You condition yourself, and therefore you stipulate so many narrow limitations. But educare gives you self application, you applied yourself to the Self.

Education is full of hallucinations and imaginations. One goes on imagining and dreaming of the future. Education will make you hesitate and be indefinite. But Educare is meant for mental rehabilitation.

Education will tend to lead toward escapism; educare leads to self- improvement. It gives you power and vitality. Education is for materialistic benefits and gains, whereas educare teaches us the art of life, the discovery of man.

Education deals with the objective world, composed of the five elements and is external. Whereas educare is subjective, dealing with the inner reality. Education lays an emphasis on conscience, the physical glory. Whereas educare is spiritual, taking us from Conscience to Consciousness. Conscience is Divinity at the level of the individual. Consciousness is all-pervasive, universal, cosmic Divinity. The same Divinity limited at the individual level is Conscience. Divinity, which is cosmic, is Consciousness.

Education always takes us to the sense of doer-ship. But educare focuses on the fact that things just 'happen'. That is, “I did not do this, rather, it simply happened." 'Doing' is egoistic, while 'happening' is divine and spiritual.

Life is a challenge. An educated man should be prepared to meet the challenge of life. Life is a game. There is a difference between game and play. “Life is a game. Play it,” Baba says. Why? Game has rules and regulations.

A Game is serious, while play is playful. In a game, someone wins or loses, while in a play, there is nothing like winning and losing. Game is within the limitations of rules and restrictions, while play is a matter of fun and frolic. It's God's Play. Therefore, education will make you an expert in games, which are rigid, while educare will make you playful, full of laughter, and flexible.

And then there is passion. An educated man is passionate. A passionate person always thinks in terms of competition and comparison. The educated man is passionate, rigid, and competitive. Where there is competition and comparison, there is no spirituality, no God, because the spiritual texts say that there is only one God — One Without A Second. When there is One Without A Second, with whom are you going to compete? With whom are you going to compare? Educare will make you full of compassion and not competition. Educare confers gratitude. You remain ever grateful to God for all the opportunities given to you.

Education will make you have higher standard of living, while educare brings higher standard of life in general. Education teaches you the art of becoming; while educare gives you the art of Being. Education helps you toward proficiency, while educare leads to efficiency.

Finally, there are two words I would like to speak about: dreams and visions. Dreams are the qualities of educated people. Dreams, actually speaking, are unfulfilled desires. People are always telling about their dreams. Dream is nothing but a mind phenomenon. But dreams relating to Bhagawan are not mere dreams, but Visions. After the dream, you get tired, exhausted. But Visions give energy, because you are in contact with Existence. You dream in sleep in an unconscious state. Dreams take you farther from reality whereas Visions take you closer to yourself. Dreams are black and white but Visions are technicolor. Dreams relating to Bhagawan are Visions and leave you with full of energy and in contact with God. Visions can happen while awake also.

My friends, education as taught in the typical classroom is quite different from educate. An uneducated man, may through educate acquire depth and profundity. Finally, I want to thank all of you for having heard my thoughts. *Jai Sai Ram.*

Air Chief Marshall N.C. Suri

The final speaker of the session was Retired Air Chief Marshall Suri, whose topic was Selfless Service in the context of Unity, Purity, and Divinity. He observed that, “for 70 years, I was in total darkness; whatever little I have learned I learnt in the last few years. So do not expect from me any great words of wisdom to flow through my mind. What you will hear from me is what I have begun to believe. And that is what I prayed to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba just now.”

So the first thing that I need to mention here is that I Love each one of you, intensely. I say this, not because of your face, not because I am able to read your hearts, but because each of you is a reflection of Sathya Sai Baba.

And the moment you accept my Love, I know that God will enter my heart and I will have no room for hatred, envy, jealousy, or animosity. So I beg you, please accept my Love.

I shall start with some of the comments made by Dr. Michael Goldstein with great brilliance in the letter which he circulated to all of you. In his letter, he says that Unity is oneness. But we have to look at that in the greater dimension. Unity is the consciousness of one *Atma*, which means that you and I are not different. When I told you that I Love you, it means I Love myself. When I say I serve you, I am serving myself.

Unity also means that every time you look at someone, feel that you are looking at yourself, and behave accordingly.

As far as Purity is concerned, it is the removing of the contamination from your mind, the distractions that your mind creates because these really lead you nowhere.

And the third is Divinity, which, really is the personification of Love. Dr. Goldstein put it nicely in the letter when he said that Unity, Purity, and Divinity are not attributes but three stages of spiritual progress.

Educare. I might mention that I have written an article on this subject. To me, educate means that every dunce, under correct care, can have enlightenment. That is the secret of educate. If you follow this program, you are bound to be enlightened, no matter what you may do.

As far as service is concerned, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said that service should be your life breath. He also uses, more often than not, the expressions: “Love All, Serve All. Help Ever, Hurt Never.” We repeat these words, but very rarely do we tell people how to prepare themselves for this mission. What is the inner meaning? The reason I say this is because, paradoxically, knowledge and ignorance are the two sides of the same coin. To gain knowledge, you do not necessarily erase ignorance. Ignorance has to be addressed separately.

Presently, a lot of people in the spiritual field believe that pedantic knowledge should be our focus. They quote scriptures for all occasions. But in so doing, they often forget that Ignorance is not erased.

Now, I am going to be using certain acronyms that have been coined by me, which are perhaps not quite intelligent, but do convey the meaning of my orientation. For example:

E-G-O, to mean *Every General's Orientation*.

L-O-V-E, *Life of Visual Enlightenment*.

S-E-R-V-I-C-E, *Service Encompasses the Real Vision of Community Enlightenment*.

P-O-L-I-C-E, *People of Love Involved in Community Enlightenment*.

Mark the words “Community Enlightenment” at every stage. You and I are really Bhagawan's police. The only difference is that we have Love instead of the stick, or the handcuffs, or whatever.

Please remember that service is a function of life. Service is not merely giving out a few packages of food. It is throughout your waking hours, and possibly even in dreams. We should dream of giving service to others.

In doing service, it is important to realize that nothing really belongs to us. It is all Bhagawan's; and He has given it to us so that we may use it judiciously.

If we wish to serve, let us not think just in terms of food packets. Let us not think of what would be a seasonal activity. Let us think in terms of 'what would be service to God?' I think the best service to God would be for us to understand that no matter to whom you pray, what form you worship, you are praying to the one God.

Air Chief Marshall Suri concluded his remarks with an appeal that we all strive to come together, be loving to one another and be respectful of each other's religious orientation. He said it is not important to know when Sai Baba was born, or when Jesus was born, or when Rama was born, or when Mohammed was born and died. What is important, he said, is that Rama, or Christ, or Sai, or Mohammed be born in your heart and live in your mind. Baba wishes us all to remember that “Service is living in enlightenment.”

Third Session of the Conference

The third session of the conference commenced on 21 November 2005 at 10:30 in the morning. Moderator Dr. David Gries stated that there would be only one speaker, with the rest of the time devoted to an interactive question and answer session.

Shitu Chudasama

Shitu Chudasama, who is the Youth Coordinator for UK, spoke on the subject of “Ideal Sai Youth”.

Sathyam vada, dharmam chara — Speak truthfully, act righteously. This is the principle of the *Avatar* and the motto of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. As youth, it is our vision and mission to become exemplary Sai youth. How do we accomplish this? The divine Indweller must become the Ruler of our being. Sai youth must contribute their enthusiasm, creativity and courage to the Organization. The youth must recognize that among the members and elders of the Sai Organization, they will find examples of self-less Love, profound wisdom and extensive spiritual knowledge.

All of us must remember that Swami pays little attention to chronological age. The main qualities of youth are: purity, sacredness, and courage. If a devotee has these then he or she is worthy to be called a Sai youth, regardless of chronological age. Elders must see themselves as they were at a younger age and youth must see the beauty and goodness that has resulted from many years of devotion to the spiritual life. This is the first step in transforming oneself into Ideal Sai Youth. Leaders of tomorrow must be participants of today.

Youth involvement in the Sai Organization should result in the deepening of our devotion to our divine Lord Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It should mean always striving to be aware of our own Divinity. It should also mean that we are consciously involved in self-less action and Love in the world. And it should mean that we have adopted a spiritual way of life enhanced by our organizational programs and activities, perpetuated by our faith, determination and self-confidence. These goals are the purpose of human life.

Before Purity and Divinity can manifest in our hearts we must strive for Unity. Swami says that we are One, regardless of our national origins; and although the world is haunted by suffering, unrest, disorder and agitations, any country filled with noble beings is bound to be peaceful and happy. Baba says that the absence of young men and women of noble character is the reason for the sad plight of our countries. Swami has also said that character is the basis for all our behavior, qualities and actions.

The golden rule for every youth in our Sai Organization is to uphold the sacred teachings and mission of our Lord. His likes and dislikes should become our sacred mantra. Before doing anything, we should ask ourselves, “Will Swami be happy?” Youth should note that the thing that most displeases Swami is boys mixing with girls in the activities of the Organization. The purpose of the Organization is to help us grow spiritually. It is not an outlet to socialize and meet new friends. We should bear in mind that, wherever we go, people will be judging Swami from our actions and conduct.

When we respect and revere our parents, we will feel Bhagawan's divine presence and He will shower us with His Grace and Love. Youth should emulate Pundarika's ideal and serve their parents. If we want to realize God, the first and foremost is we should love and show devotion towards our parents.

Throughout my life I made Swami my best friend. He looks after my every need, wants and desires. People will let you down but Bhagawan will never let you down. Therefore, everyone should look to God as a faithful friend, one's only true friend in life. Swami says, "only those who are immersed in the Divine are dear to Me and are My dear friends. If you want to be dear friends of Swami, conduct yourself in the divine manner. In such a case you do not need to come here. I will come to you, wherever you are. I'll come there wherever you stay. I am with you, in you, around you and behind you. I am not separate from you. You and I are one."

Youth should have strong and unwavering faith without even a trace of doubt. There must be harmony in thought, word, and deed.

Swami says that youth are generally very good but change their behavior due to environment. As Sai youth, we must make efforts to understand our true nature. The difference between God and man is very subtle. As long as we do not understand this, we will remain human beings. However, once we recognize this truth, we rise to the heights of Divinity.

As Sai youth, we are capable of eradicating the restlessness in society. From today we must keep a check on our desires. We must always make sure that we respect our parents and serve them well. We should always keep in mind the welfare of society and of the nation at large. Swami wants us to earn a good name in society.

As I said earlier, Sai youth must always follow Swami's dictum of: *Sathyam vada, dharma chara* – Speak truthfully, act righteously. This is the essence of Unity, Purity, and Divinity.

Interactive Panel

At the conclusion of Mr. Chudasama's talk, Dr. Gries announced that the questions the delegates had written on the 3 x 5 index cards that were passed out at the conclusion of the previous session had been categorized and sorted and given to the panel members. He introduced the panel as consisting of Dr. Michael Goldstein, Dr. Narendra Reddy, Air Chief Marshall N. C. Suri, and Dr. William Harvey, member of Prasanthi Council.

Question 1. Why are previous Conference recommendations and resolutions not implemented?

Answer 1. Dr. Goldstein: Many recommendations and resolutions have been made. Suggested changes to the Charter are being considered by the Prasanthi Council. Some resolutions may have been changed by Swami, some by the Organization, some were not suitable for adoption, some were impossible to implement, and it was resolved not to implement them. Some in responsible positions may not have been responsible. We all do our best but we are all imperfect. Still, we should always come together in the spirit of Love and Unity.

Q2. There were a number of questions about the importance of vegetarian food. Swami advises us to abstain from non-vegetarian food. There are some officers that are not vegetarians, what is your opinion on this? Is being vegetarian necessary to achieve Unity, Purity, and Divinity?

A2. Dr. Reddy: It is important to be a vegetarian for a spiritual seeker. Swami has been giving many discourses on food. Food is not only what we eat but also what we see, what we hear, etc. It connotes all sensory experiences taken in through all the sense organs including the mind. Swami has given us the pathway of vegetarianism. *Sathwic* (pure, serene) food is very important in order to put us in tune with the Divine. Swami says that the subtle essence of our food becomes our mind. Therefore, our thoughts are influenced by the food we eat.

Swami's four basic requirements of His devotees are: vegetarianism, no smoking, no gambling, no alcohol. Whatever food we take should be offered to God. We shouldn't be too obsessed with food. We are devotees of Swami and He has told us what is good for us. *Sathwic* food is good for us, and it is very important in order to tune into the Divine. Even *sathwic* food in excess becomes *thamasic* (indolent, ignorant). We should follow His command. Offering the food to God before eating is the first step to Unity, Purity, and Divinity.

Dr. Harvey: A point about enforcing rules on others. We should try to set good examples, by focusing on trying our best to follow Swami's teachings in our own lives. We have to be careful not to judge others. Swami once said it is more important what comes out of the mouth than what goes into it. Let us first be sure we study and discuss Swami's teachings on this, and other subjects. And one of His main teachings is for us to avoid criticizing or finding faults in others. We should work on ourselves, set good examples and try not to become judgmental.

Q3. In Europe we talk about our own culture. Why can't we spread Baba's culture of Unity when we go back?

A3. Dr. Goldstein: We are one spirit. We are consciousness. It pleases God that there is diversity in the world, with Unity as the basis. Don't talk of Sai culture. Think of Unity in diversity. It transcends all cultures.

Q4. Is it necessary to have Hindu rituals and Indian culture in Sai Centers in Australia?

A4. Dr. Goldstein: Swami says that all Sai Centers should reflect human values. Swami emphasizes the human values. The primary thing is Love. Do not emphasize the rituals. Emphasize the Unity of faiths and reflect the five human values.

Q5. Should Sai Centers in the West be outposts of Hindu spirituality and culture?

A5. Dr. Goldstein: No.

Dr. Harvey: The most important thing is that we try to make the people that visit our Centers feel comfortable. The emphasis should be on the universality of Swami's message. People do not have to change their religion or adopt a new one because they are drawn to Sathya Sai Baba and His teachings. Therefore, we should not give the impression that one has to worship Him within the context of any particular religious orientation.

Also, it is just a matter of common courtesy that we should seek to make visitors to our Centers feel comfortable. Welcome them warmly and lovingly, because whether they realize it or not they were drawn there so that they might experience some of the Love that we have received from Swami. Let's not put obstacles in their way. Try to explain things in a loving way. The setting should reflect universality of faiths. Swami's Love should be allowed to flow through us.

Air Chief Marshall Suri: It is important to have a focus on equality. Baba has now given me the inspiration to look into other religions. I have learned prayers from other religions. They are all to the same God. The focus in the Sai Centers should be the unity underlying all faiths.

Q6. Will Swami answer these questions?

A6. Dr. Goldstein: Swami likely will not address everything in His Discourse. His answers come in many ways. The answer may come from friends and others, it could be an insight. That is Swami's way. He is Divinity. We must look into our own heart and reflect on our actions. Swami will uplift and inspire us and help us address these questions.

Q7. How can we always be connected to Swami?

A7. Dr. Reddy: Swami says “Hear no evil, hear what is good. See no evil, see what is good. Speak no evil, speak what is good and think no evil, think what is good— this is the way to God.” Let us practice this and be in tune with the Lord. Onetime when I asked Swami, how to communicate with Him when I am not in His immediate presence, He told me, “When you have a problem, go to a corner, sit quietly, think about Me and the answer you get is My voice. It is in the depth of silence that the voice of God can be heard.” It means that we can always be connected to Swami by turning our mind inward. Let us practice the essence of the values: Help Ever, Hurt Never and Love All, Serve All.

Dr. Harvey: We are always connected to Swami, we just have to switch on our receiving unit. The experiences we are given are specific messages to each of us, especially when we are here in the *ashram*. Swami says that none of us come here of our own volition. He has brought us here, and He is constantly looking at each of us — in the context of our past, present, and future. The most important thing is for us to keep in mind this fact. We'll never understand Him fully through the mind. So don't try. “Relinquish the imperative to understand,” He has said. He is giving us precisely the experiences we need. We are fortunate to be here and must take this Love back home and share it. Practice seeing God everywhere: practice, practice, practice.

Air Chief Marshall Suri: In order to be near Swami, you have to surrender to Him. If you do, you will be near to Him. This morning I was sitting on the veranda wanting *pad-namaskar*. An inner voice said, “Move to the other side,” which I did, and I got *pad-namaskar*. If you want to hear Swami, surrender. If you want to serve Swami, surrender.

Q8 How can I Love people who constantly irritate me or try to rule others' lives? Explain how can I see God in them?

A8. Dr. Harvey: Everything is God; everyone is God. He has taken all these various forms. The person who is irritating us is playing a role. The role has a purpose that is divinely inspired.

But we should not be focusing so much on what others are doing, but on how we are responding. That is the key. Our buttons are being pushed for a good reason, to stimulate us to reflect upon our own behavior, or reactions and emotional responses. Go inwards. We should look at ourselves, continually go inward. We have to ask, 'Why does this irritate me so? Why am I upset?'

Dr. Reddy: Whenever we are criticized, Swami wants us to understand that God is speaking through the person who criticizes us. Our critics are our real friends because they point out our flaws so we can improve. We don't like people pointing out our flaws, but it is helpful if we can take this positively and learn from it. What can I learn? How can I improve? Try, try, try to accept everything that happens as Swami's Prasad to us, and reflect on our reactions in the light of Swami's teachings.

Dr. Harvey: Pain and suffering have a positive value for our spiritual development. If we never get out of our comfort zone, we stagnate. Swami frequently asks, "What change is there in you from coming to Prasanthi Nilayam for many years?" We must strive to welcome every experience that comes, even the painful ones, that come to us. Everything is for our good. Just witness everything and don't label it good or bad. We should always remember Swami's message that whatever happens is through His Will, and is for our good.

Q9. What is the role of the Sai Organization in responding to disasters such as the tsunami?

A9. Dr. Goldstein: We are a spiritual Organization. We render service when we can. But we are not an Organization like the Red Cross. Adversity in the world and suffering of fellow beings is an opportunity for us to respond lovingly, to alleviate that suffering. Collectively as an Organization, it allows us to use our resources for this purpose. We are not primarily a service Organization but service is for our sadhana.

We are being exemplars of people who recognize the Divinity within all. We are not here to formalize an army of disaster managers. Our service is to uplift others. Hungry people can't think about God. Serving food to hungry people empowers them to see the Divinity in themselves. Obviously, when human suffering occurs, then they can't think about God. They are mainly concerned about sustaining their bodies. The same is true for other handicaps such as mental disturbance, homelessness, alcoholism, etc.

We must think in terms of the higher spiritual significance of service. We are not here to create a bureaucracy of managers who will go out in the world, responding to every tragedy. As leaders, we always pray to Swami for guidance, and try to act appropriately in terms of whatever guidance we get. Often, leaders pray and obtain guidance. We are always looking to serve, but we should not become preoccupied with making the Organization a place to train people to go out and manage disasters. Seek Swami within. Adversity and enemies are opportunities to go inwards and to Love.

Q10. Doesn't the Organization need to set a vision? The Organization is not addressing its sustainability. The speakers are not addressing the theme of the conference.

A10. Dr. Goldstein: First of all, there is no question of addressing sustainability. This Organization is imbued with Divinity, founded in the name of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Imbued with Love, wisdom and power insofar as we are able to come together as

devotees and tap that Love, the Organization is invulnerable and eternal as is Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Swami has said so.

The vision is not a five- or a ten-year plan of building edifices, etc. The vision is that all will look for Love in our hearts, find that Love and practice that Love and then take that Love into the world as embodiments of Love. That is the vision of the Organization. This was also said by Sri Indulal Shah and by Sri V. Srinivasan.

There is effectiveness and efficiency. With effectiveness, we know what is right by looking into our own hearts and the Charter. With regard to efficiency, we do what we do with the least amount of energy. Sometimes, when we are acting with the highest Love in mind, it is not the most efficient. Sometimes, efficiency is mindless or insensitive. We're not efficient in the economic sense. It is not the Organization's nature. At times like this, we must think who we are. We come together to pursue the purpose of this Organization, but we have to do within an orderly structure.

Q11. Can there be social mixing of sexes in the Sai Organization? It is strange in my society to separate the sexes. There are no arranged marriages in the west, how are they to meet?

A11. Dr. Harvey: Try to look at what Swami says, and strive to move towards that.

Our minds will foster doubts, always. We worry what happens if my child does not meet the right person. It comes back to the fact that we have to keep working on ourselves and to pray for stronger faith. Our mind convinces us that we are the doers, but that just is not so. All is God's Play. He is the Director. It is all in Divine order. We have to relax, to "let go, and let God." Have confidence that things will work out. We don't have to be worried that we are the ones who do everything.

Air Chief Marshall Suri: Men and women can relate. Our understanding of Love now is based on animal instincts, but Love should be pure. Swami gives us options, take time to think about what will be correct action. Do relations have to be physical? It is the manner in which we relate to one another that becomes important. Love is different from relationships. We have the task of letting people know the difference. The problem you mention is not foreign to Indians.

Q12. All the members of the Prasanthi Council are men. Why? This panel is all men. Why?

A12. Dr. Goldstein: Swami appointed the members of the Prasanthi Council. With regard to the panel, I thought these people would be the best to serve you.

Q13. What should we do about money? Money is a problem in organizing events. Could our Sai Center turn to other Centers when we don't have money for the event? Should Sai Schools levy fees?

A13. Dr. Goldstein: We should not levy fees in Sai Schools. Don't embark on anything that exceeds your resources. Let Swami guide you from within.

There was a similar question about whether a Sai Center may accept support from government agencies. The answer is no! Of course, unusual circumstances may arise. In that event go through the Sai Organization hierarchy and obtain approval from a higher authority in the Sai Organization. Normally, we don't involve ourselves with other agen-

cies about money. What is the single most important thing the Centers should observe? Swami told Dr. Hislop that the Organization should have as little to do with money as possible. Use common sense, but in general, we should avoid those situations that cause us to become embroiled with money. We're not fundraisers, finding money to train people to do this, that and the other. This is not the nature of the Organization. We are spiritual aspirants. We are a group of loving people.

Dr. Harvey: Frequently, we reflect on the nature of our Organization and draw parallels with other organizations, but we are unique. We view service as a spiritual practice. Our service activities do not have to be big, large scale projects. It is service to smile at someone, or to ring up a shut-in with a few words of cheer. We don't have to have big projects. Look for the Unity beneath the diversity. Navigate the world with awareness that all are One. We don't have to think of ourselves as "doing" so much. Swami assures us we will reach the goal.

Q14. Is it right to try to correct the faults of others?

A14. Dr. Reddy: We are not here to correct others. Never try to find fault with others. We are all here to know who we are. We are here to transform ourselves and mind our own business. Jesus said, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Forgiveness should be our very nature. On her deathbed, when Holy Mother Sarada Devi was asked to give her final message, she said, "If you want peace of mind, don't find fault with others but find your own faults." You can find answers to this in *Prema Vahini*. If any member of the Sai Organization commits faults, we should not criticize them behind their back; if we feel it is necessary, we should meet them personally and settle the matter with mutual understanding, respect and Love.

Q15. Heads of the Sai Organization are becoming status conscious. How could this be remedied?

A15. Dr. Goldstein: The remedy for officers who are so status conscious is to treat them with Love. If they remain status conscious and this is a problem, then there is recourse to higher levels of the Organization. But first reflect and check that this is not something within yourself that you are projecting onto others. Make sure there is no dirt in your own eye. If status consciousness is detrimental to the function of the Sai Center then appeal to a higher level in the Organization.

Dr. Harvey: The faults we see in others are reflections of unresolved issues within ourselves. It means we have work to do on ourselves. When we find ourselves finding faults, we should take some time out to reflect on the irritating events. And then ask do I have some tendencies in the same direction? For example, we might conclude we have 10% of the bad behavior, and the office bearer has 90%. Work to reduce your 10%. If you reduce yours to 5%, you will find what you now perceive in the other is reduced by 50%.

We need to give others the benefit of the doubt. There is always another side to the problem. When a child comes up to the teacher on the school yard complaining about another child, the teacher always knows there are two sides to the story. However, as adults we tend to take sides when we hear a complaint. Swami tells us not to take sides, not to enlarge the conflict. Show patience, Love and understanding, and solve the problem quietly as you do with small children. Bring people together in a loving way.

Dr. Reddy: Swami tells the story of Dharmaraja, who was an embodiment of goodness and righteousness and Duryodhana, who was a man of evil nature. Sri Krishna sent both of them to the town to look for a good person. Dharmaraja came back and said all the people in the town were good while Duryodhana could not find anybody good other than himself. Swami says the world is thus our own reflection. We have to wear the eye glasses of *Prema* (Love) and then we see everything as *Prema*.

Q16. Office bearers in the Sai Organization should not hold an office in another spiritual Organization. Please discuss.

A16. Dr. Goldstein: Office bearers should be single-minded on this Name and Form. If an office bearer wants to be in another Organization, then they should resign as an office bearer from our Organization and just be a devotee.

Q17. Should overseas Sai Centers in their meetings copy what happens at Prasanthi, or should they reflect the local culture?

A17. Dr. Goldstein: The Center should reflect Prasanthi to the extent that it is steeped in Love only. All Centers should reflect that Love. Regarding the actual content of the programs, we talk about Unity in diversity and that God is in all names and forms. Therefore, Centers should adapt to all cultures. Do you go back and make wholesale changes? No. We should evolve toward our own culture. We need to be conscious of culture. It's a part of creation. Don't become preoccupied with this. As we become enlightened, Love will shine through Swami's Divine message in all lands and cultures.

Interactive Session 2 Panel Discussion

At 1:30 PM Dr. Gries welcomed the group back to the fourth and final session of the conference. Dr. Goldstein made a few opening remarks:

There are many questions about education. I will make a brief statement. Professor Anil Kumar will make some further comments later this afternoon. The Prasanthi Council has convened a subcommittee to review the status of SSE, SSEHV, and their relationship to the concept of educare. Eminent Sai educators are involved, including Dr. Pal Dhall, Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai, Ronne Marantz, Bea Flaig, Victor Kanu, Thorbjorn Meyer, Tom Scovill, and Mr. Gomez. They have compiled a document, which is still under deliberations. The Prasanthi Council will act on the recommendations in a way that best serves the Sai Organization.

We will now continue with the questions.

Q18. When can we expect the answers to the questions?

A18. Dr. Goldstein: It will take a while to put all the answers in some order. They will be sent out by the Organization. The notes from the Conference will be distributed at some point, but not in the next few days.

A question from this morning was about how to handle difficulty with officers. First talk to the officer, then go to the Regional Officer, then to the Central Council President and finally to the Central Coordinator.

Sri Anil Kumar and Sri Narasimha Murthy

Dr. Goldstein announced that Sri Anil Kumar and Sri Narasimha Murthy, Warden of Brindavan Campus, would join in the panel discussion of those questions relating to education/educare and spirituality. He said that Sai Spiritual Education and Sathya Sai Education in Human Values are ways of eliciting the human values that are intrinsic within us. Educare is drawing out that which is within, the same as bringing forth who we really are. The teacher should be an exemplar of these values. The teaching techniques used are silent sitting, group activities, group singing, quotes, and stories as components of the pedagogic formula. The only difference is that SSEHV is used in public schools and based on the Unity of Faiths, whereas SSE focuses on the teachings of the *Kali Yuga Avatar*, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Sri Narasimha Murthy: Educare is all about spirituality. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna has said, "Among all types of education, I am spiritual education." The tragedy is that now God and spirituality have no place in education in schools and colleges. Spiritual education is for cultivating faith and devotion in all hearts, which is what Swami has been doing. It is our duty that we do this. In fact, I found a young boy in school wearing a T-shirt. On the front, it said, "I was born good but spoiled by education." On the back, "I was born smart, but made dull by education." This is what has been going on in education. In contrast, as in Swami's Schools, it is important to implement values education in all schools from primary to college level.

Sri Anil Kumar: Yesterday, I gave a talk, 'Education to Educare'. I did not speak on all the points. Educare deals with the center of our life. It cannot be taught. It is the truth of our being. Education deals with the periphery of your life. Educare is the very being of life, it is the center. Education and educare are not contradictory. Both are necessary. Root [educare] and fruit [education] go together. Awareness, alertness, awake-ness, responsiveness, acceptance, and conviction are features of educare, not to be acquired. To be in the presence of Swami is the best form of educare. Educare is beyond religion. It is spiritual.

Q19. Is Love really necessary when the demonic personalities can also attain liberation?

A19. Sri Narasimha Murthy: Demons are symbols for gluttony, anger, jealousy, sleepiness, etc. The demon Kumbhakarna exemplifies that. But his Love for God finally overcame these to take him to the Lotus feet. Kumbhakarna and Ravana were two brothers, who were doorkeepers to Vishnu in their previous births, cursed by Sage Brighu, who was frustrated by them in his access to Vishnu. They had the choice to take either nine births as friends of the Lord and then return to the Lotus feet or three births as enemies of the Lord. They chose three births. They were born as Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashyapu, Ravana and Kumbhakarna, and Dantavakra and Sisupala, in three births. After these three lives, they went back to Vishnu. Where there is true Love, all negativities fly away. If we develop Love, we will overcome all weaknesses.

Dr. Reddy: Their Love for God was so intense that they chose to come to earth for the shortest time, as His enemies rather than wait for nine births as His friends. Thus their intense Love for God led them to attain liberation.

Q20. Discipline of *seva dals* on the ladies' side is severe. Can anything be done?

A20. Dr. Goldstein: *Seva dals* are volunteers and are not highly trained or experienced. They are doing their best. Forgive them and be patient and gracious. Clearly, if their transgressions are serious we will take up these issues if you bring them to our attention.

Sri Anil Kumar: *Seva dals* are not paid or trained. They are there to enhance *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). It also helps our *sadhana* by bending to the discipline. Once, a devotee was trying to offer Swami a letter in *darshan*. The devotee was roughly restrained by the *sadhana*. Then Swami reached over and took the letter. The *sadhana* was looking distressed and feared. But Swami consoled her by saying, "You did your duty, and I did Mine."

Q21. You said that Swami was not happy because we had not changed in 20 years. Are there any signs of change now?

A21. Dr. Goldstein: This is not quite what Swami said. He did say that we are not taking seriously His teachings: Our lives have not changed. We have the same habits and are not applying the teachings. Time is the body of God. We have access to the divine teachings, but do not take them seriously. Swami is never unhappy. He is encouraging us to become blissful.

Q22. Kindly elaborate on conscious, conscienc,e and consciousness.

A22. Sri Narasimha Murthy: According to Swami, Conscious refers to the body and senses. Conscience refers to the subtle body and mind, and the Divine spark that makes

the body work. Consciousness is the one source from which everything emerges. In Ramayana, Rama asked Hanuman, “Who are you?” He replied, “When I have body consciousness, I am your servant. When I feel the divine spark within, I am part of You. When I realize the ultimate truth, You and I are one.”

Sri Anil Kumar: What is limited to the body and senses is conscious. God in me is Conscience. God is everywhere, that is Consciousness.

Q23. What are the aspects and milestones by which we may measure our spiritual progress?

A23. Sri Narasimha Murthy: People have misconceptions about how to assess spiritual progress. There are four yardsticks that I call, a, b, c, and d. These are based on Swami's teachings and the Bhagavad Gita. (a) awareness of inner joy and Love; (b) balance of mind, equanimity, (c) control of desires and senses (to what extent have you mastered the senses?); and (d) dedication of selfless service for the welfare of others. This contains all the essence of the scriptures. Remember that we can be egocentric even in doing Swami's work.

Q24. Is it necessary to teach mantras, *slokas*, and 108 names in Western countries?

A24. Sri Anil Kumar: Please do not do this. Following Baba's teachings is not a religion. Baba said all names are Mine. Teaching such *slokas* is conversion. Sathya Sai Organization is not a sect. We will invite animosity by doing this. Sathya Sai represents Unity of Religions. God does not speak only Sanskrit, God speaks English also. Use your mother tongue for prayers.

Q25. How to achieve Unity in thought, word, and deed.

A25. Dr. Reddy: Swami says that sincere spiritual seekers have harmony of thought, word and deed. Swami corrects us when we deviate from this. Swami says that practice of Unity in thought, word, and deed is the penance for this age. If you sincerely follow your conscience, you can achieve this Unity.

Q26. What is the difference between emotion and devotion?

A26. Sri Narasimha Murthy: It is the *bhava* that leads to *avesha*, thrill in devotion, and that leads to *bhava-samadhi*, ecstasy of union with God. Ramakrishna said that the power of emotion leads to experience of devotion, which leads to *samadhi*. Ramakrishna used to dance like a madman. His devotees started to imitate him, to show their devotion. Vivekananda said, “Do not be sentimental fools.” However, devotion is Love for God and is an emotion. But this emotion is free of attachments. We can become mad with joy. Devotion is not sentimental. It is feelings from the heart that lead to the experience of devotion, and it further leads to union with God. Once, Swami materialized a matchbox and took out a match and struck it to light it. Then He took out another match, dipped it in water, and struck it. This match did not light. He said, in devotion, if there are attachments, it will be like the wet matchstick.

Sri Anil Kumar: Distilled, crystallized, solid, and spiritual emotion is devotion.

Q27. Can a person be involved in business, i.e. in material life, and also lead a spiritual life?

A27. Sri Anil Kumar: Why not? We are all examples of this. Spiritual life is not giving up our daily routines and running away from the world and neglecting our respective duties and responsibilities. It is an attitude, it is awareness and understanding, it is what we do and how we act. If I do my job as service to God, and offer my work to God, that is a spiritual life. There is only one work — God's work. All is spiritual, whatever we do. There is no secular or sacred. All is Swami's. Begin every job with a prayer and end the day offering the fruits to the Lord. That is spiritual life. As long as there is separation of secular and spiritual, we miss the point.

The Interactive portion of the session was concluded, and Dr. Goldstein announced that Sri Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus, would conclude the conference with a talk on the topic: *An Ideal Sai Devotee*.

Sri Narasimha Murthy

Sri Narasimha Murthy expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the program of the conference. He said:

Speaking about Jesus, Khalil Gibran, the great mystic poet said in his beautiful book, *Son of Man*: we shall pass with the flowing of the rivers, and we shall be nameless. But those who crossed Him in mid-stream shall be remembered for crossing Him in mid-stream. We have not only crossed the greatest divine master in our lives, we have consecrated our life to Him. We have submitted ourselves to Him. And He has taken upon Himself, the burden of our emancipation.

Some years back, in Prasanthi Nilayam, it happened that we were sitting with a few students at the feet of Bhagawan. “What is the news?” Swami asked each of them. All of the students replied one by one. Finally, He turned to me and said, “What is the news?” I had nothing in particular to say. So I replied, “By your Mercy and Grace, and the blessing of our parents, we have got this good fortune of sitting at your Lotus Feet. Please bless us so that we find fulfillment in this very life.” Swami said, “Why do you want to wait until the end of your life? I am ready to give you what you are asking for, this very moment.” “I am ready,” He said.

Then I said, “Swami, give us, I'm ready.” He looked at me and said, “You are saying that you are ready, but you don't deserve it.” Seeing the despair on my face, He said, “Some other time I will tell you why you don't deserve it.”

After a few months, Swami came to Brindavan, and one day He was sitting on the swing, the *joola*, in Trayee Brindavan Hall, and I was alone with Him. I thought this might be the right time to know from Swami why I did not deserve it. Even before I asked Him the question, Swami began to speak about my mother, who had passed away five years back. Swami said, “Your mother was a great devotee. Do you know what was your mother's last prayer to Me? It was about you only. Do you know what she told me about you? She said that Narasimha Murthy is a great fool. His mind is very fickle. By your mercy, he has the great opportunity to serve You. But because of his foolishness, because of his fickleness, he may commit any number of blunders and mistakes. Please don't kick him out. Swami, You are the ocean of mercy and he is a fool; don't kick him out.”

I fell at His feet and said to Swami, “What my mother said about me is correct. Also, what she said about Yourself — that You are the ocean of mercy — is correct. So, please don't kick me out.”

I remembered this episode when I was asked to speak on this topic, 'An Ideal Sai Devotee.' I don't know why I was asked to speak on this topic, because if I had any insight, Swami has already destroyed it. I have come across many great devotees. There was one whom I considered as my mentor. His name was Narayana Bhatt. When he passed away, Swami sent a telegram saying, “Don't worry; he has merged with me. Be bold.” I have aspiration of idealism even though I may not be an ideal devotee.

Swami says that most devotees come to Swami to receive things; but that there are four classes of devotees.

1. Those who are distressed by adversity and sickness and come to be relieved;
2. Those seeking money, power, wealth and position;
3. Spiritual seekers who want to realize God; and
4. The Jnani who lives in the constant awareness that, “He is with Me at all times.”

And Swami says that although most of the devotees who come to Him are at the first stage, “time will change.” I have myself seen this. More and more devotees are not asking for material things, but only for His blessing so that they can spend their time serving Him. So initially the devotee comes to Swami hoping to receive something from Him. Then he goes to the stage of wanting to serve Swami.

Regarding qualities of an ideal devotee, the *a, b, c, d* points that I mentioned earlier apply here also, though slightly differently. An ideal devotee will have found Swami within himself, in the form of unsullied joy and selfless Love. Once a devotee was complaining that by not being physically present at Prasanthi Nilayam, she would not be able to talk to Him if the need arose. Swami said, “My phone number is 1, I am right in your heart. I am always available to you on the hotline. I am always in your heart.”

That means any of us can contact Him at any time, by simply turning inward. Therefore, finding Swami within is the first quality of an ideal devotee. In *darshan*, sometimes He talks to us, sometimes He doesn't talk to us; and it leads to doubts and upsets in our mind. But we can always instantly establish contact with Him in our hearts. Wherever we may be if we develop longing, and yearning, or what is called the power of 'seeking', we will be able to establish contact with Bhagawan at any time anywhere. Jesus spoke of that power when He said, “Seek and Ye shall find.” The power of seeking in the human heart is capable of getting a Divine response in the form of a spontaneous rush of Love and joy. That power of seeking only arises in a pure heart that is cleansed of worldly attachment. That is what Jesus meant when He said you cannot worship God and mammon at the same time. An ideal devotee is aware of this; he is Aware of his true relationship with Swami and realizes that it is not physical.

This Awareness leads to Balance of Mind, which comes naturally when we enjoy that kind of spontaneous bliss at least for sometimes during the day. We are able to have that communion with God at these times, either during meditation or concentration or prayer. If we can experience this presence of Swami sometimes during the day, that makes us

balanced, and we are not overcome by doubts and worries. We are not irritated. We can see Swami in everyone. But first we have to be able to see Him within ourselves. Then we can face life with a smile and see God everywhere.

Once we are able to establish that Joy and Bliss, then comes spontaneously Control over the mind and senses. This is most difficult, but very important.

Finally, we have 'D', Dedication to Sai Vision. This comes out of devotion. I dedicate my life for the erudition of the Sai Vision. And, as regards to our actions, we have to change the motivation for all our actions. Generally we are egocentric. But we have to continually remind ourselves that we are doing Swami's work, because many times we forget Swami even while we are doing His work.

I remember a small story, which illustrates this point of forgetting our motivation. There was a small farmhouse in England with a lake. A turtle used to live in the lake. The young boy who lived in the farmhouse used to go and see the turtle everyday. He became friends with the turtle. One morning, he found it lying on its back, apparently lifeless. He was very upset and was inconsolable in his grief. His father tried to console him by saying that they would have a funeral for it. Together they would make a coffin, and give him a ceremonial burial and make a nice grave, and build a tomb and install a tombstone, engraved Mr. Turtle. Together they prepared for the turtle's burial. When they went back to get the turtle, it was not dead, but was alive in the lake. Now the boy was so enthusiastic about the burial, he said to his father, "Father, father, let's kill it so we can bury it!"

Likewise, we can become so enamored of our project that we forget the original motivation for that project. It is important not to allow this to happen. Whatever we say, we should do; and we should consider that we are doing it as a dedication to Swami, to please Him. That kind of motivation will definitely purify our thoughts and will take us nearer and nearer to the goal of the Ideal Sai Devotee. Thank you very much for your patience and attention. *Jai Sai Ram.*

Dr. Goldstein

Dr. Goldstein thanked all the speakers and the delegates for their participation. In closing, he observed:

Clearly you have come to this conference with serious intentions and concerns. I have heard pressing questions and enquiries regarding administrative and management issues. It is our duty to respect and respond to all genuine concerns and we certainly will. But, the preeminent concern is Love. I ask all of you to look around the room and recognize that we are in the divine presence of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. All of us who are gathered here and, in fact, all men and women everywhere, are truly embodiments of His Divine Love.

The conference was officially closed with the assembly chanting the prayer, *Loka samas-tha, sukhino bhavantu* (May all the worlds be happy!).