



वसुधैवकुतुम्बकम्
vasudhaiva
kutumbakam

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Message from *Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai*

It's time!



In India, this is the last month of the four most important spiritual months of the year—starting somewhere in mid-July during the Indian month of *āṣāḍha* and ending around mid-November in the Indian month of *kārtika*, with August, September and October in between known as the Indian months of *śrāvaṇa*, *bhādrapada* and *aśvin*. This period of four months of around 120 days, which appears towards the end of the calendar year is the most sacred one, during which several festivals starting from Guru Purnima to Krishna Janmashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi to Varalakshmi Puja, Durga Puja, Navaratri, Dussehra to Deepavali are celebrated. I am aware that while most of you may not know the Indian names of these months, yet most of you from around the world celebrate these festivals at least while in India. I am also aware that many of you bitterly missed participating in the festivities here at Sathya Sai Grama, owing to travel restrictions, but thanks to the wonderful team of Premamrutha Prakashana, who ensured that all programmes were streamed online for everyone to view from the safety of their homes.

So, while the festival-filled-four-month-period called '*cāturmāsya*' is coming to an end in mid-November, it is also leading us up to the most sacred of all festivals for Sai devotees, which is the 96th Birthday Celebrations of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It almost feels that these four sacred months starting from Guru Purnima to Deepavali through Dussehra and Navaratri *yajñas*, were to purify and prepare us to celebrate the biggest festival of the year – the descent of the Divine. And in a way, this four-month period is very symbolic of our spiritual journey, where we begin with the worship of the *guru* on Guru Purnima and end with the celebration of the descent of the Divine, just as a *guru* leads one to God.

While we are all gearing up to observe and celebrate the 96th Birthday celebrations of the *avatāra*, this number is very significant for all devotees of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for obvious reasons. Let's not forget to prepare ourselves to give the best birthday gift to the Divine by becoming Divine, for when someone asked, "What can I do for you?", He simply replied, "Become Me."

It's time!



October 15, 2021 – Inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Veda Gurukulam, Sathya Sai Grama, Muddenahalli

Vedas are the mother of all the *śāstras*. It emanated from God Himself as His inhalation and exhalation. The word ‘veda’ means knowledge and is derived from the *saṃskṛta* root ‘vid’ which means ‘to know.’ *vedas* are the basis of everything one does in their daily lives and they serve as the guide post to righteous living. According to the ancient wisdom, *vedas* are the ‘revealed sounds’ that are self-evident and self-authoritative and was heard by the great sages by *śravaṇam*, thus getting its other name – *śruti*. *ṛṣis* or the ancient seers were called as *mantra dṛṣṭas*, as the distilled wisdom of cosmic knowledge was not composed by them, but was rather visualised and heard by them. That is why *vedas* are called *apauruṣeya* – that which is not composed by man. *ṛṣis* in turn handed this down from one generation to

another by verbal transmission. Since time immemorial, the knowledge of the *vedas* was shared only with deserving students. The *guru* would test the disciple and thereafter, the sacred teaching would be taught at a *gurukulam* with the vision to contribute to the revival and proper understanding of *sanātana dharma* globally; and to spread the *advaitic* message that unequivocally states ‘All is Divine’.

With this lofty purpose of rejuvenating and enlivening *sanātana dharma* and taking it to all parts of the world where it truly belongs to, as the universal wisdom, Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai, by acting the Divine will, has established Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Veda Gurukulam at Sathya Sai Grama in Muddenahalli. The purpose of the *gurukulam* is to promote learning and research in *vedic* studies, and disseminating its priceless wisdom to all, without any discrimination, while also relating it to the contemporary context.



Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai along with āchāryas and the first batch of śiṣyas



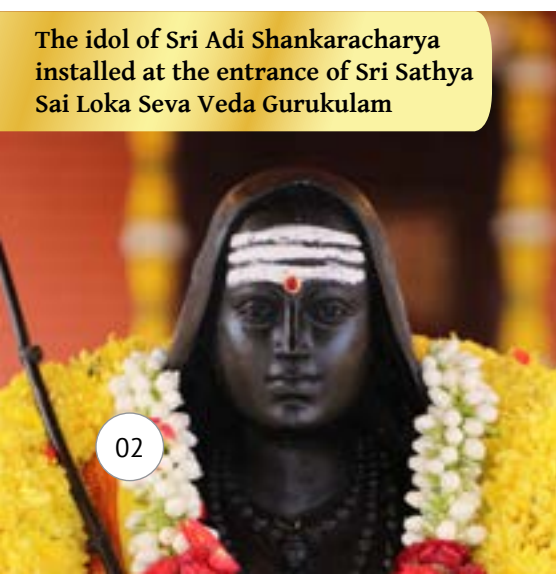
Sri Sri Dr Siddheshwaranandagiri Maharaj offering his obeisance at the feet of Sri Adi Shankaracharya

Students, who will be trained in the *karma*, *upāsana* and *jñāna kāṇḍas* of the *vedas*, will be encouraged to travel across the globe to spread *vedantic* teachings to all.

Spread across 2.5 acres of land, the *veda gurukulam* at Sathya Sai Grama exudes the symphony between the beauty of nature and the quaintness of the *gurukulam* style of living, the effect of which is going to be accentuated by the positive sounds of the *vedic mantras*. āchāryas who are adept in the *ṛgveda* and *yajurveda* from the Sri Venkateshwara Veda Vijnana Peetham, Tirumala, will be imparting the wisdom of these *vedas* to the students. Students will be admitted into the *gurukulam* after their *upanayana* or initiation ceremony. They will be provided with accommodation (boarding and lodging) and education – both *parā vidya* (spiritual knowledge) and *aparā vidya* (secular knowledge), completely free of all costs, right from the time they join as a student at the primary school level till their university level studies. *vedic* and *vedantic* studies will be the prime focus of the *gurukulam* alongside academic subjects with special attention to English speaking skills for effective communication and computer skills to cope with the modern times. Secular education

through the NIOS Board will be imparted to the students to make them eligible for Grade 10 and 12 board examinations, after which university education will also be given to them in the streams of Bachelor of Arts in Vedic Studies and Master of Arts in Vedic Studies.

The holy days of *dasarā* were used as the most auspicious times to propitiate Gods and Goddesses through *homa* (fire ritual) at the *veda gurukulam*, and it also welcomed several dignitaries of the *vedic* fraternity during this time. Sri Sri Dr Siddheshwaranandagiri Maharaj, *uttarādhikārī* (successor) of Dattagiri Maharaj Ashram at Bardipur, Telangana in South India, who completed his doctorate in *saṃskṛta* at Tirupathi and offers services at the *pīṭham* continuing the *avadhūta paramparā* (lineage of *avadhūta*); and Sri Malladi Surya Kiran Sharma who hails from Telangana, presently working as the Deputy General Manager at IDBI Bank (Hyderabad) and also serving as the Trustee of Shankara Seva Samithi and Haridas Dharmic Seva Samithi—proficient in literature, *jyotiṣa* (astrology), *pravacana* (talks) and *lalitā leela rachana*, graced the *veda gurukulam*. Honourable Minister for Primary and Secondary Education, and Sakala of Karnataka, Mr B C Nagesh also visited the *veda gurukulam*.



The idol of Sri Adi Shankaracharya installed at the entrance of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Veda Gurukulam



Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Veda Gurukulam



veda adhyāpana and adhyayana

October 15, 2021 – Inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Veda Gurukulam, Sathya Sai Grama, Muddenahalli



The official inauguration of the first phase of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Veda Gurukulam took place on the auspicious vijayadaśamī day in the Divine presence of Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai. vijayadaśamī is the day when Goddess Durga killed the demon Mahishasura; it is the day when Lord Rama executed Ravana and returned back to Ayodhya. Thus the day marks the triumph of dharma over adharma. Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai graciously inaugurated the gurukulam by offering pūrṇāhuti (final offerings into the sacred fire) in the sacred homa (fire ritual) conducted at the gurukulam premises. The Guest of Honour for the inaugural event was Sri Bachampalli Santosh Kumar Shastry who hails from Dharmapuri, Telangana. He is a renowned Hindu priest, speaker and a writer. He is also known for his pravacana (talks), literature on jyotiṣa (astrology) and Hindu dharma.

Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai in His Divine discourse said, “We have so many projects which are going on like hospitals – super speciality and multi speciality hospitals, schools, university, nutrition programmes, and various other rural development programmes. But of all the projects, veda pāṭhaśālā is closest to my heart and in times to come, I want to see it grow into a vedic university, that will offer various aspects of learning and teaching to the students. This is just the beginning and the initial batch of students are very fortunate to be the first ones to study here. Many batches of students will learn here and this should continue for hundreds of years from now. In the taittirīyopaniṣad, the Guru prays:

āmāyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā |
vimāyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā |
pramāyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā |
damāyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā |
śamāyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā |
yaśo jane’sāni svāhā |

Hon’ble Minister for Primary and Secondary Education, and Sakala of Karnataka, Mr B C Nagesh attending the Sathyanarayana Pooja



Sri Bachampalli Santosh Kumar
Shastry addressing the gathering



Sri Malladi Surya Kiran Sharma
sharing his thoughts on veda gurukulam

‘Let this gurukulam attract brahmacharis (celibates) from all the directions, of all types who have great control over their minds and senses, have discipline and śraddhā in them. May this vedic gurukulam grow in its glory in all times to come.’ This is our prayer to mother Saraswati and Sri Adi Shankaracharya who is adorning the entrance of the veda gurukulam. It is Sri Adi Shankaracharya, who spread the idea of vedas and vedanta in this country. But for him, we would not be what we are today as a country. Our pranams and gratitude to all the great ṛṣis, pandits, mahatmas, who have continued this tradition of vedic teaching and learning for thousands of years. India is one country where vedic education is happening for thousands of years. No other country can claim this. Maybe other countries have education system which is 400-500 or 800 years old at best. But this is thousands of years old. Sri Rama, Sri Krishna—all of them went to veda gurukulam—and so also you (pointing at the students) are going to study in this veda gurukulam. That continuity is what is sanātana (for all times). This alone is permanent; all other things will change. Technology will change. Earlier we used to have trunk

calls, then came phones with key pads and now we have touchscreen smart phones. We don’t know what is coming next. Everything else has changed in this world, but this remains as it is.

In this temporary world, vedic education alone is permanent. What is most important to me is you realising your true divinity within. Your education ends when you realise that you are Divine. For me, your education won’t be finished if you learn all the scriptures and graduate from the gurukulam. It will complete only when the jīvātmā and paramātmā becomes one. According to me, that is graduation, till then I would consider you only as uneducated. Therefore, all the students studying in the veda pāṭhaśālā have a great responsibility on their shoulders. Learn everything with utmost śraddhā (dedication), bhaktī (devotion) and with the feeling of ātmasamarpaṇa (self-dedication). In the coming future, this gurukulam will grow into many more such gurukulams, and it will be the responsibility of the students passing out from the portals of this veda gurukulam to look after them.”

pūrṇāhuti being offered in the homa



Joy Village, Nigeria

It all started when Father Charles Ogada was seventeen and had an encounter with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This first encounter came to be a revelation that changed the course of his life forever. In that particular revelation, Baba asked him a question—He said to him, “If a father takes his children to the hospital, will that father charge fees to his children?” To this, Father Charles replied, “No.” By giving this example, Baba told him that He will be sending His children to him and that he shouldn’t charge them for anything.

Consequently, Father Charles joined the Spiritan order of the Catholic Church to deepen his understanding about spirituality and service, and gained BA, MA, and BPhil degrees in the core aspects of religion and philosophy. After completing his seminarian training, he served as a parish priest in Nigeria. He then travelled to Zambia to gain experience as a teacher at a leading values-based school in Ndola.



Upon returning to Nigeria, Father Charles actively involved himself in various community development projects and poverty alleviation programmes. He conducted mobile medical camps in rural villages for providing free treatment to thousands of people, who are deprived of the access to quality medical care.

In the year 2010, Father Charles took an enormous leap of faith with immense courage and unquenchable energy, and founded the Spiritan Self Awareness Initiative (SSAI), a non-profit humanitarian organisation, of which he is the current Executive Director. Later, Swami constantly guided him to start various projects, one after the other, based on the need of people in Nigeria.

Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai christened his little county as ‘Joy Village’ in the year 2015. The Joy Village, as the name suggests derives its joy from love—being loved and becoming love, and thus experiences pure joy. The premises currently comprises of – Heart of Love Children’s Home (Girls Hostel and Boys Hostel), TELA Nursery School, Anuli Chapel, Aruike Specialty Hospital, TELA Primary and Secondary School and Skills Centre, Doctors Quarters, Nurses Quarters, Aruike Specialty Hospital Laboratory, and Liquid Love Water Tower.

Aruike Specialty Hospital (ASH), Ebe, Enugu



Liquid Love Water Project

Liquid Love as Water

A little boy roaming in the orange orchards of a village was found licking an unripened orange, and when enquired, he said in a tone of exhaustion and exasperation that he was very thirsty and was only trying to quench his thirst. This pulled at the heart strings of Father Charles, and thus he embarked on materialising the very first project – **Liquid Love Water Project**. Currently, this project quenches the thirst of about **34,600 people** across **11 communities**. Since its inception, **over 1,790,550,000 litres of water** has been supplied.

Heart of Love Children’s Home (HOLCH)

After the Liquid Love Water Project, Father Charles felt the need to provide education to all children, especially to those children who cannot access or afford good education. This prompted Father Charles to adopt **12 orphan children** who



Heart of Love Children’s Home (HOLCH)

have nobody to look after them. He took them in his care and provided them with an environment where these kids blossomed to their fullest potency. The very first batch of children stepped into the ‘**Heart of Love Children’s Home**’ on October 01, 2012. Currently, this home houses **28 children** who have found their true home and family here. Two of these children are currently pursuing their higher studies at Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence in Kalaburagi, Karnataka.

The initial batch of 12 children was the first set of students at **The Embodiment of Love Academy (TELA) Nursery and Primary School**. This school was a very humble beginning with just four teachers, out of which Father Charles himself was one of the teachers. However, the school has now included a secondary section as well into its premises; it has employed **67 teachers**; and it provides free values-based education to about **1,198 students** completely free of all costs.

Two students – Emmanuel and Obinna from HOLCH, currently studying at Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence



In Focus - Global

Anuli Chapel

Aruike Specialty Hospital (ASH)

'Aruike' means 'good health' in the Nigerian language. To take healthcare to a place where the villagers had to travel 9 to 14 miles to reach the nearest hospital or doctor otherwise, was at the core of intent of the Spiritan Self Awareness Initiative. Thus came about the **Aruike Specialty Hospital** in the year 2016, as a preliminary medical facility. Gradually men and material poured in and the hospital developed in phases to what it is today with **34 beds, two experienced doctors, 11 nurses/paramedics, two operating theatres, a maternity ward, and a modern laboratory**. On an average, ASH treats **50 to 70 patients** on a daily basis.

In August 2020, another **Aruike Specialty Hospital** was inaugurated in **Alike, Obowo town, Imo State**. As on date, the two hospitals together have treated more than **184,925 patients**, completely free of cost.

Gift of Limbs

Spiritans Self Awareness Initiative (SSAI) takes care of people who have lost a limb due to accidents or diseases. In 2018, the Foundation started 'Gift of Limbs' programme in partnership with ISKH Limbs Centre, Lagos; the German Leprosy and TB Relief Association, Nigeria; and the Ministry of Health, Enugu State. In August 2018, **179 amputees and victims of polio diseases** received free artificial legs, arms, hands and polio callipers. The programme also took place in December 2019 and September 2021 where a total of **850 limbs** were offered to the needy.

Gift of Limbs - The joy of walking

Gift of Limbs

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The Embodiment of Love Academy (TELA) Schools and Skills Centre

Food distribution during COVID pandemic

TELA Breakfast Programme

Joy Village School Feeding Programme feeds **500 students** from 'The Embodiment of Love Academy' (TELA) and two other government schools in Enugu with steaming hot nutritious breakfast on a daily basis. The motto behind the programme is to ensure that 'no child is taught on an empty stomach.'

COVID-19 Food Distribution

During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, SSAI embarked on food distribution and around **1,500 individuals** were benefitted. Most of the rice grains which were distributed were the direct yield or harvest of Nneani Farms—an initiative of SSAI for a self-sustainable living.

Old is Gold

In 2020, SSAI Inaugurated the 'Old is Gold' programme which focusses on elderly care, especially those who have been abandoned and have no one to look after. SSAI currently has **127 elderly men/ women** under its care.

The Rescue Service

SSAI also started the hospital rescue service to bail out sick people who were treated at the hospitals, but were unable to pay the hospital bills and hence were detained indefinitely in the hospital, which made them feel sicker. Till date, over **100 patients** have been rescued by SSAI.

Apart from these, SSAI is also working towards bridging the gap to reduce the poverty experienced by thousands of villagers in Nigeria, few of whom, in the past, had even committed suicide or had chosen the path of crime to fend for their basic amenities.

TELA Breakfast Programme

Nneani Farms

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September 29-30, 2021 – Ideal Village Conference 2021, Stanford, USA

Ideal Village Programme is an integrated collaboration platform aimed at delivering holistic solutions for education, healthcare, energy, water, sanitation, and sustainable livelihoods that lead to healthy, self-sustained, economically viable rural communities globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all lives across the globe, irrespective of national origin, colour, gender, social or financial status, or any other population classifier. The severity, duration, and impact of this virus have surpassed what even most experts had predicted. With recurring pandemic waves brought on by viral mutations, inequities in vaccine distribution, and lack of public trust; the world is facing several multidimensional challenges with no easy answers.

The sixth edition of the Ideal Village Conference this year, was conducted on September 29-30, 2021, as a two-day Conference, on the topic – **Post-Pandemic Normal – A Path Forward** and it focussed on post-pandemic challenges and potential solutions in the key areas of healthcare, nutrition, education, water, sanitation, energy, environment and livelihood. The challenges that the world has experienced for more than 18 months as the pandemic waxed and waned in different global areas include – inadequate access to medical facilities, lack of essential medicines, oxygen supplies and hospital beds, overworked frontline medical and essential services staff, lockdowns, distance schooling, work from home, a widening ‘digital divide’, inequities in vaccine supply, social isolation and loneliness, mental health problems, migrant labour problems, misinformation regarding safe practices and vaccines, and the list is seemingly endless.

On the brighter side, several success stories demonstrate how humanity has adapted and responded to these challenges. Technology-based solutions like tele-health and tele-education, collaborative online tools to enable professional and family gatherings, re-awakening of man’s duty to help fellow beings in need, families living together again, home delivery of food and essential supplies, reduced level of emissions/carbon footprint, cleaner air, accelerated efforts in pursuing non-fossil energy sources, unprecedented vaccine development cycles, international co-operation in research, and ‘new age’ entrepreneurship – these are some examples of how human ingenuity, helped humanity survive during these testing times.

The two-day Conference featured inspiring thought leaders to guide humanity to get back to their basics by the revival of human goodness and a values-based society that builds a global ideal village through innovation, technology, compassion and co-operation; leading to new growth opportunities and a healthy planet Earth. The Conference was co-chaired by Dr Kanwaljeet (Sunny) Anand, Professor of Pediatrics and Anesthesiology, Stanford University School of Medicine, CA and Dr Sundar Kamath, Senior VP / CTO, Sanmina Corporation, CA.

The speakers at the Conference were:

Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai – Social and Spiritual Leader

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar – Spiritual Leader and Founder, Art of Living Foundation

Sri M – Spiritual Guru and Founder of The Satsang Foundation

Dr Kamrul Ahsan – Bangladesh Representative of Africa Asia Rural Development Organisation (AARDO)

Mr Mahesh Babu – Managing Partner, Scale and Sustainability Associates

Dr Donal A Barr – Stanford Graduate School of Education, Stanford Medicine

Dr Catharina Boehme – Chef de Cabinet, WHO Geneva

Ms Rachel Carben – Deputy Director, Water Health and Development, Woods Institute, Stanford

Dr David Cornsweet – Co-director/Trustee, Gumpert Foundation

Dr Desh Deshpande – Chairman, Sparta Group LLC, Boston MA

Dr James Doty – Founder/Director, The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, Stanford

Dr Paul Edwards – Stanford Center for International Security & Cooperation

Mr Robert Fung – Principal, San Diego Metropolitan Regional and Technical High School

Mr Balaji Ganapathy – Chief Social Responsibility Officer, Tata Consultancy Services

Dr Kristina Hesbol – Associate Professor Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver

Mr Arun Jain – CMD, Intellect Design Arena Ltd

Mr Pradeep Kapur – International Strategic Adviser to Intellect Design Arena Inc., Former Indian Ambassador

Mr Raymond Larsen – Past Chair of IEEE Smart Village

Dr Ann Lopez – Professor Teaching, OISE University of Toronto

Dr Robin Podmore – President, IncSys

Mr Stuart Rudick – Founder, Mindfull Investors Venture Fund

Dr Raj Shah – Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer of SmartCareDoc

Mr Suresh V Shenoy – President, WHEELS Global Foundation (WGF)

Mr Sunil Wadhwani – Founder Donor, WISH Foundation

Dr Smita Siddhanti – Founder & President, EnDyna Inc.

Mr Kalyan Chakravarthy – Executive Director, PARFI

Dr Vibha Gupta – Founder/Director, Center of Sciences for Villages

Mr John Nelson – President, IEEE Smart Village

Dr R S Sodhi – Managing Director, GCMMF (Amul)

Dr Paul Wise – Senior Fellow, Stanford Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford Medicine, Global Health

Mr Timothy Rush – Mississippi State Department of Employment Security

Ms Cindy Gillespie – Arkansas Governor’s Cabinet Secretary, Department of Human Services



Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai in His message said, “These Conferences have brought out several wonderful ideas about solving special issues, especially solving several issues of the ecosystem and turning our villages into ideal villages. Not just smart villages, but ideal villages! The topic – **‘The pandemic enabled inner journey’** is a very well-crafted and well thought of topic, because pandemic is generally seen as an adversity—but the topic seems to convey that the pandemic is an opportunity and not an adversity. As we often hear, man’s adversity is God’s opportunity. This pandemic is something of that sort. Though on the surface it might look like an adversity, it truly has turned out to be an opportunity in various ways. I’m sure in the other sessions, topics related to social, economic, and cultural aspects have been discussed.

Today, I’m here to discuss about the spiritual aspect of the pandemic—how it has enabled us to seek that inner strength within which is the solution to all the problems of the world, including the pandemic also. It is like the answer that lies in the question. The pandemic is indeed an opportunity to find solutions to all the problems in the world, not just in the villages, but in the urban areas and in every place where we live as a human society. Last two years have been a game changer—a kind of disruptive one in the history of human kind—while we often hear this word ‘disruption’ which is a huge deviation from the so-called normal. This pandemic has created something which is a new normal. And the new normal is not only at the social, economic or geo-political level, but more importantly at an individual, inner level. I remember, when the pandemic struck, there was pandemonium everywhere and people did not know how to deal with it. They were worried thinking what was in store for them. A lot of uncertainty and anxiety was built upon. Adding to this, the media was rolling out stories of horror, many of them illusory and imaginary, thus creating great anxiety, depression, frustration in people around the world.

September 29-30, 2021 – Ideal Village Conference 2021, Stanford, USA

All of a sudden, the support system which they ever depended on—be it their wealth, family, ability to deal with situations, intelligence, etc started to fall apart. This novel virus did not spare anyone; the rich and the poor; the mighty and the weak; the learned and the illiterate; the rural and the urban—everybody was equally vulnerable to this issue. This is the time when something happened. When people couldn't find peace and happiness outside, they had to turn within. I would like to call this as 'The Buddha Moment'.

Siddharta Gautama, a young promising prince, the son of a great king of a huge empire somewhere in Nepal that time, was under the protection of his father. The father was afraid that according to the predictions of an astrologer, his son may turn out to be a monk instead of a king. And so, he protected him so fiercely, guarded him so very zealously. He never allowed him to see any old, crippled, sick or a dying person. He was given the best of the food, clothes, comforts, etc. If anybody would turn old or sick in the palace, they would be removed and replaced by someone young and handsome. This way, this young prince lived in a world of his own, far away from the truth, far away from the reality—until one fine day, he ventured out of his own into the town. It is then he met a person, who looked very different than him, with wrinkled skin, stooping, deformed and with ugly body. He immediately asked his charioteer, "What is wrong with that individual. What happened to him?" The charioteer replied, "Nothing is wrong with him. He is fine and the only difference is that he has grown old." That was for the first time that Siddharta Gautama came to know that old age exists. He asked back in disbelief, "Will that happen to me too?" The charioteer said, "Yes, it will. It happens to everybody. Everyone grows old." This was a shock to the young lad. As they moved forward, they met another man who was lying in a corner and groaning with pain and suffering. All his kith and kin had left him. Again, the young prince asked the charioteer, "What is wrong with this guy?" "He has contracted some infection which is contagious

and therefore people have abandoned him." replied the charioteer. "Will that happen to me too?" asked Siddharta to the charioteer for which he got the reply, "Yes. You might fall sick and people might abandon you as well for the fear of infection." As they moved further, he saw a dead man being carried on four shoulders in a funeral procession. The prince had never seen a funeral. He didn't even know that death exists. This was the ultimate nail in the coffin. It is only now that he realised that death happens to everyone, just like old age and sickness. These incidents changed his perspective. While he was thinking like most do, that life will go on like an endless party and nothing will go wrong ever, feeling so safe, cocooned in their own little world between their friends, family, wealth, position, society, name, authority, and so on—then something like this pandemic happens which becomes the buddha moment for all of us. Now this young Siddharta returned to the palace all perplexed, anxious to know the truth because he didn't want to invest his time and energy into the body which would eventually grow old, decay and die. He did not want to invest his time and energy into the people who would leave him, should there be an issue like the pandemic or an infectious disease. He did not know what he was to do with his life. He sought answers to his questions outside and he found none. This is the moment when he decided to turn within.

This 'Buddha Moment' happened to so many people during the pandemic. When people could not find the answers to questions such as the ephemerality of life, transience of pleasures, temporariness of all the relationships, and the body itself—people were forced to turn within and find the answers within. As it is truly said, 'The only way out is the way in'—what so many spiritual organisations, gurus and teachers could not achieve in a century, was achieved in just a year or less than that through this pandemic. The whole world was brought to a grinding halt. Everyone was stopped in their tracks and were made to think. They were made to question their belief system, their support system. All were equal in the misery, the sorrow, the grief to have lost their loved ones. In a way the pandemic was a great leveller.

At an individual level, people did turn within to find peace, solace, rest, refuge, respite within themselves. They took to yoga, meditation and several other spiritual wellness programmes both online and

offline. They read books, learnt scriptures and tried finding answers to these problems. Finally, all of them realised that one cannot resist, remove or eliminate these problems. Yes, vaccines were created and to some extent it provided the needed defence against the virus, but that wasn't the ultimate solution. The ultimate solution to the pandemic was to find the inner strength. When the physical strength, intellectual strength and emotional strength cannot deal with it, the only strength left is the inner/spiritual strength.

Acceptance is that spiritual strength. Resistance is the outward way – *pravṛtti mārga*. Acceptance is the *nivṛtti mārga* – the way within. Now we have accepted to live with this issue knowing fully well the consequences of it. That acceptance has brought peace to so many people.

By far to extrapolate it to suit the Ideal Village Conference, what is ideal about this situation from the rural perspective? For those who have travelled India or other countries where there are many villages—in India alone there are more than seven lakh villages where 65% of Indian population live—you go to any village small or big, you may not find a hospital, educational institution, road, internet connectivity, but one thing you will find for sure is a spiritual centre in the village. It could be a temple of the local God or deity or a spiritual institution run by a sage or some spiritual personality existing in every village, who becomes the centre of the lives of people.

When such pandemic or similar issue strikes a village, their first reaction is not to resist, fight and cry foul, but rather turn towards that centre where they will find peace, where they can pray together, feel united with each other and collectively decide to work together and solve the problem. These centres of religion in every village of the country, were the source of the inner strength which helped people unknowingly undertake this inner journey every day. People would wake up and hear the temple bell or prayer emanating from the place of worship and their mind would be diverted from all the daily mundane chores to this idea of the inner Self. That was the village culture in India which was lost in the passage of time due to urbanisation.

We have educational institutions in rural villages. When I asked the students coming from villages about how was the pandemic and what did they do? It seems like no one even understood that there was

a pandemic. They were quite happy with pure air, pure water. They were cut off from most of the infected areas and cities where the infection was spreading. Most of the children were busy playing and learning the traditional and professional skills from their parents and benefitted from it. Now think from the urban point of view—most of the kids were locked down in their homes immersed in their gadgets. They could not go out and play. The only thing they could do is to play on their phones. It was a great set back for the urban kids.

Think of ideal village surroundings, especially in India where schools were situated in the rural areas, forests or far away from the cities. There were residential schools called gurukulas which we also run. We have seen the benefits of it. So, the system of education or the social structure of Indian societies which emanated from the rural villages remained the backbone for this country's survival over centuries despite several invasions. I think the pandemic has made people to turn towards this culture again.

The only path for all the problems is the path inwards. *nānyaḥ panthā ayanāya vidyate* – there is no other way than this. We need to teach the present generation to deal with such situations with confidence and courage. What we teach them now will keep them in good stead for years to come. This is just one instance of the pandemic—there could be many in the future that we do not know. Let this learning be the uppermost lesson to all of us which will help us deal with such situations in the future.

oṃ sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ

sarve santu nirāmayāḥ

sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu mā

kaścidduḥkhabhāgbhavet

May all be healthy. May all be free from illnesses. May all see good and auspiciousness things everywhere. Let nobody experience any sorrow or pain—because now we know, we can be happy only when the whole world is happy. We can be healthy only when the entire world is healthy. We can only see good if everybody is doing good, and there won't be any pain if we do not inflict it on each other. Let us live according to these ancient ideals which were core to the Indian culture. The Indian culture lived in its villages and the hearts of the village people and that is how it is an Ideal Village Conference. This ideal of spirituality must permeate and spread through one and all across the world for us to create a better world, a better future for our children and generations to come."

September 16, 2021 – Web Conference on ‘Vedas for World Peace’

A web conference on ‘Vedas for World Peace’ was jointly presented by three Universities that share the soul of ancient Indian wisdom, with ideologies that suit the modern world – Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence, Banaras Hindu University, and Maharishi International University, on September 16, 2021. The purpose of the Conference was to deliberate and reiterate the scientific, philosophical, and spiritual wisdom of the *vedas* that are an ocean of vast knowledge and deep insights; and thereby have thinkers from all walks of social relevance to think, speak, and act the wisdom of the *vedas*, in order to promote the greater good of all.

vedas are the voice of the Divine, beyond the reach of human intelligence, logic and reasoning. They are called *a-pourushaya* since they are not of human origin. They emerged from God Himself and were ‘heard’ by sages attuned to the voice of the Divine. The sages taught the words to their pupils, who in turn taught them to their disciples. The *veda mantras* are believed to protect the world. *mantras* means sounds. How is sound created? As per science, where ever there is a movement/ a vibration, sound is created. When the vocal chords of the throat vibrate at different frequencies, different sounds are created. If we look at the creation—this rich diversity of creation must have emanated from a source, which must have vibrated at different frequencies, and remember—every vibration is a sound. Now-a-days, science says that every thought is a vibration too. Thus, sounds and vibrations go together. Sound is the source of all creation. The space is filled with the sounds and vibrations created by the different activities in creation and by the co-existence of everything

in creation. Thus, positive sounds can create the desired positive impact on creation. If a place inspires good thoughts in people, it only means that the place is charged with good vibrations. If we can create such positive sounds, then it shall definitely have a beneficial impact on society. The *vedic mantras* have the potential to create such positive vibrations. The sacred chants of the *vedas* are only meant to bestow supreme wellness, prosperity and peace for the entire creation.

The web conference commenced with the introductory address by Dr Rajesh Naithani, who has served as an advisor to Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ and has been on the Board of Education for the last eleven years. This was followed by the keynote address delivered by Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’— Former Union Minister of Education, Government of India. The ancient *vedic* wisdom and its profundity has been one of the topics, the Minister has dwelled upon at several forums and conferences and has shed light on its grandeur over and over again. *Vedas for World Peace* was yet another forum where the Minister elucidated the importance of *vedas*.

This was followed by a book launch—a book authored by Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ with the intent to unite the entire globe to shed the idea of education that has so far limited the infinite potential of a human to produce narrow outcomes, and instead embrace the kind of education that is truly ours, that belongs to all universally, and leads humanity to the culmination of their life’s purpose— **VALUES-BASED EDUCATION – A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE FOR WORLD PEACE**, as it was aptly titled. The book was originally written in Hindi by

The vedic mantras have the potential to create positive vibrations. The sacred chants of the vedas are only meant to bestow supreme wellness, prosperity and peace for the entire creation.



Dr Pokhriyal and it has been translated into English. It is also being translated into Spanish, Portuguese, German, French, Italian, Malay, Mandarin, Japanese and Russian, since the book and the wisdom it carries is common to all, cutting across geographies.

The Maiden Address was given by Dr Tony Nader, who is a neuro-scientist and a globally recognised vedic scholar. As Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s successor, Dr Nader is head of the International Transcendental Meditation Organisations in over 100 countries. He is currently the President of Maharishi International University – a non-profit university that was originally founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The university is known for its uniqueness in bequeathing Consciousness-Based Education that promotes self-knowledge and a culture that is based on the heart. He is also the leader of Global Country for World Peace – a non-profit organisation that promotes Transcendental Meditation, education, and the construction of ‘buildings for peace’ in the world’s major cities.

WEB CONFERENCE
JOINTLY PRESENTS
VEDAS FOR WORLD PEACE
September 16, 2021 – Thursday, 19:00 Hrs

Keynote Address
DR RAMESH POKHRIYAL 'NISHANK'
Former Union Minister of Education, Government of India

Benedictory Address
SADGURU SRI MADHUSUDAN SAI
Social and Spiritual Leader
Founder of Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence, Kalaburagi, Karnataka

Maiden Address
DR TONY NADER
President, Maharishi International University
Leader, Global Country of World Peace (GCWP)

BOOK LAUNCH
Values-Based Education – A Global Perspective for World Peace

ESTEEMED SPEAKERS

Mr Amish Tripathi
Author
- Director of The Nehru Centre, High Commission of India, London, United Kingdom

Padma Bhushan Dr Anil Prakash Joshi
- Founder, Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation (HESCO), Dehradun

Prof Devi Prasad Tripathi
- Vice Chancellor, Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, Haridwar
- Vice Chairman, Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Vaidika Pratishthan, Ujjain

Prof Dinabandhu Sahoo
- Director, Centre for Himalayan studies, University of Delhi

Prof MP Poonia
- Vice Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Delhi

Dr Raja Luis Alvarez
- Chief Administrator, Universidad Mahatma de Latino America y el Caribe (UNLAC), Latin America
- Chief Administrator, Global Country of World Peace, Latin America and Caribbean

Prof Ramesh Kumar Pandey
- Vice Chancellor, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University, Delhi

Prof Upendra Kumar Tripathi
- Coordinator, Vedic Vigyan Kendra, Banaras Hindu University

Harbinder Singh Mehra
- President & CEO at Paris based Le Frehindi

Ms BK Shivika
- HQ Coordinator Education Wing - Brahma Kumaris

Mr Sambhram Sharma
Director Education, Executive Committee Member, Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry

OUR PARTNERS

September 16, 2021 – Web Conference on ‘Vedas for World Peace’

The Benedictory Address was given by Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai. In His own words:

**“asato mā sadgamaya
tamaso mā jyotirgamaya
mṛtyormā’ mṛtaṃ gamaya.**

Lead me to truth from untruth

Lead me to light from darkness

Lead me to immortality from mortality

Collectively praying to the three Divine spirits of the three great spiritualists of the modern world, who have founded, and are an inspiration behind the three great universities that are co-hosting this Web Conference today — Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the guiding spirit of the Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence; the great Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Founder of the Maharishi International University; and the personage of Maha Manav Sri Madan Mohan Malviya, Founder of the Banaras Hindu University—we collectively bow down to their work, life and message which has been an inspiration to all of us.

My personal gratitude to Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’—despite his ill health, he is attending the Conference for rendering his talk on the topic. It is said that the body may undergo certain sufferings due to various external factors, but the Divinity residing within has given a very articulate and descriptive talk on values education which is the foundation of Indian Culture and Spirituality. Many greetings and wishes to Pokhriyal Ji. The book **‘VALUES-BASED EDUCATION – A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE FOR WORLD PEACE’** will reach every nook and corner of the world, inspiring millions of people across the globe, who are involved in education—be it the students, teachers, parents, etc.

As correctly said by Dr Tony Nader, vedas along with vijñāna is the need of the hour. The current generation is a questioning one. They demand for answers for everything that is told. This modern generation won’t accept anything blindly. We cannot give them the reference of vedas and ask them to believe, without properly relating the topic.

Dr Pokhriyal Ji has very beautifully explained the concept of vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam – the entire world is one family, where love should prevail and not trade. It shouldn’t be driven by market forces, rather should be driven by the source (God) which is within all. Unless we realise the oneness in everything and everyone, it is difficult to love and serve each other. This was the exact message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in just two simple terms – ‘Love All, Serve All’. He would say, ‘You cannot love all unless you see them all as your own selves’ – ek ātmā sarva bhūtāntar ātmā – there is one soul which dwells in all the beings. The vedas teach us these higher truths in different ways – ēkaṃ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti.

Dr Nader has explained this truth with the example of unified field theory. Yes, we all are energy converted into matter, only to become energy at the end. This goes on repeating. Sri Adi Shankaracharya had told the same truth thousand years ago, which is being slowly and gradually discovered by science. This perspective of vedas must be presented to the younger generation—that’s what I’m looking forward to.

As a University, we are committed to the cause of spreading the knowledge of vedas to all parts of the world, and that’s the reason why precisely we felt the need to translate the book written by Dr Pokhriyal, into many other languages. All the Indian scriptures must be translated to all the languages around the

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world. The mission of our University is to take the vedic and spiritual literature, and translate it into many languages. When I travel around the world, I see the hunger in people to know more about Indian vedic scriptures. But they are deprived of this due to lack of translated material. For this, I look forward to having a partnership with all of you, in order to complete this task as early as possible.

The topic of the conference says ‘Vedas for World Peace’. They are not two different concepts. If vedas are preserved, peace will automatically be the end result. Without vedas, there is no universal peace. Only when we know that God, who is bright and self-effulgent like that of the sun which dispels the darkness of ignorance, resides in us, can we cross the ignorance of this world. There is no other way, other than this. Only by knowing our true Selves, we can be ever happy and peaceful!”

The forum was then opened to 11 speakers who shared their wisdom from their own experiences and inclinations, and yet all of them spoke the same language of promoting world peace and well-being. The speakers were:

Mr Amish Tripathi – Author and Director of The Nehru Centre, High Commission of India, London, United Kingdom

Padma Bhushan Dr Anil Prakash Joshi – Founder, Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation (HESCO), Dehradun

Prof Devi Prasad Tripathi – Vice Chancellor, Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, Haridwar and Vice Chairman, Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Vedavidya Pratishthan, Ujjain

Prof Dinabandhu Sahoo – Director, Centre for Himalayan studies, University of Delhi

Prof MP Poonia – Vice Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Delhi

Dr Raja Luis Alvarez – Chief Administrator, Universidad Maharishi de Latino America y el Caribe (UMLAC), Latin America and Chief Administrator, Global Country of World Peace, Latin America and Caribbean

Prof Ramesh Kumar Pandey – Vice Chancellor, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University, Delhi

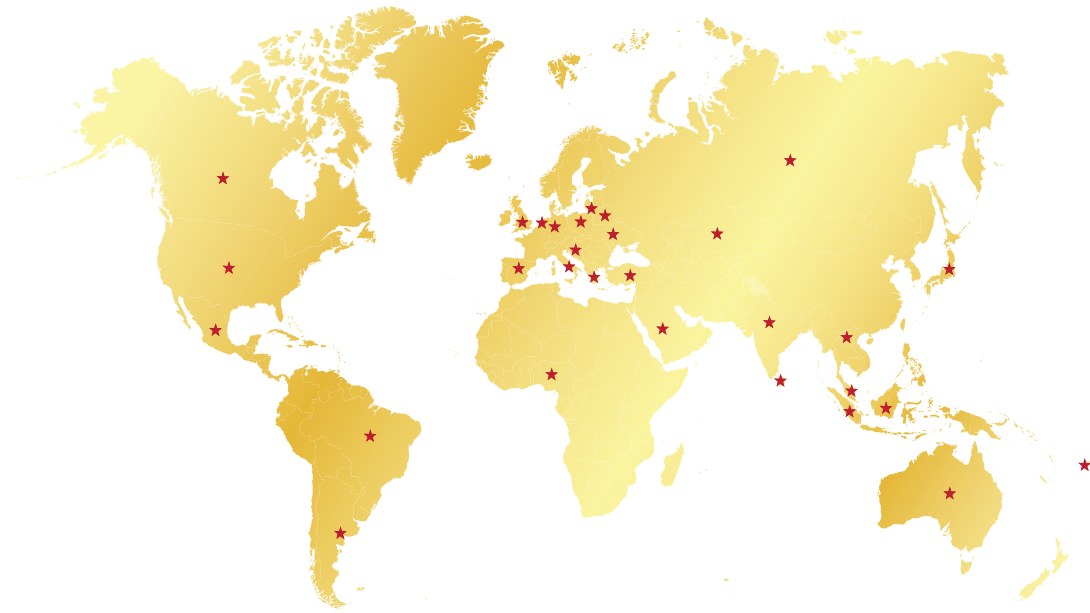
Prof Upendra Kumar Tripathi – Co-ordinator, Vedic Vigyan Kendra, Banaras Hindu University

Harbinder Singh Mehra – President & CEO at Paris based Le Frehindi

Ms BK Shivika – HQ Coordinator Education Wing, Brahma Kumaris

Mr Sambhrant Sharma – Director Education, Executive Committee Member, Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry

The Conference ended with a sense of harmony and unity of purpose, whereby all the speakers and listeners had their own take home and a certain magnitude of motivation to do their best for world peace.



"Service is the ultimate expression of Love", says Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The Centres for Human Development of the Sai Global Federation of Foundations are the beacons of hope for the world with the twin goals of spreading the light of love and the joy of service. The COVID pandemic wrote tales of 'distancing' and 'isolation' on the canvas of the world. Human contacts were feared for contact with the virus. This threatened to stall all sources of even the basic humanitarianism that urged people to play the part of a benefactor for a beneficiary who is in need of help. Despite these, the members of the Sai Global Federation of Foundations swore by the value of living for others greater than living for one's own self and reached out to the ones who needed help more so now than ever before.

*"Service is the ultimate
expression of Love"*

Region 1

Fiji



Sai Prema Foundation



Sai Prema Foundation Fiji

Collaborative Partnership with Three Cancer-Based NGOs

'Hearth on Wheels' is one of the initial projects that were initiated by Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai in September 2015 on the islands of Fiji. This is an outreach medical camp that serves the rural villages of Fiji with quality healthcare, totally free of cost.

In a period of six years, after incessant dedicated service to the rural communities, 'Health on Wheels' is today, Fiji's largest and most successful rural outreach programme. The programme offers a large number of general and specialist healthcare services, where multitude of organisations, medical professionals and volunteers have extended their knowledge, skills, time and the intention to serve.

Three cancer-based NGOs – **The Fiji Cancer Society, Suva Golden Oldies Rugby Club** which specialises in the service of prostate cancer, and **WOWS Kids Fiji** which focusses on cancer in children, have entered into a collaborative partnership with Sai Prema Foundation by



signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), whereby they will leverage the strengths of Sai Prema Foundation in terms of their projects and initiatives, and use it as a platform to fulfill the goal of serving the people of Fiji.

Sai Annapoorna Fiji

Sai Prema Foundation's national feeding project 'Sai Annapoorna' has provided solace to thousands of families across Fiji over the past 18 months, as Fiji had to battle with the devastating impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

In September 2021, over **9,500 underprivileged and needy individuals** in Fiji's mainland and outer islands were recipients of monthly food and ration packs. The distribution was primarily focussed on individuals with disabilities, single mothers, families with many children and individuals in the tourism industry who had lost employment due to the pandemic.

In addition, healthy breakfast packs were provided to families with young children to give them a fresh, healthy and nutritious start to the day.

Support for Artists

Sai Prema Foundation collaborated with Fiji Performing Rights Association. Through this collaboration, over **70 local musicians** who had been hit hard following the closure of hotels and restaurants across the country because of the COVID-19 pandemic, were given the necessary help.

Region 1

Laos



Sri Sathya Sai Foundation Lao PDR

Food Distribution

Sri Sathya Sai Foundation Laos provided over **two tonnes of rice** to more than **200 needy families** and two Buddhist temples, in the month of September 2021.

Two times in a week, the Foundation provides food provisions including fresh vegetables, rice and bread to a vagrant home which houses over **370 people**.



Region 2

Middle East



Sai Love Kits to the Needy

2 **5 boatmen** who were also boat dwellers due to homelessness, were provided with Sai Love kits. **Six housemaids** were also given Sai Love kits, considering the meagre income that they were earning.

A Sai love kit consists of essential groceries like rice, flour, sugar, salt, lentils, tea powder, spices, cooking oil along with essential hygiene items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, soaps, detergents, shampoos, sanitary pads, sanitisers, etc. One Sai Love kit could typically last for a month.

OMAD - One Meal A Day

“A world without hunger is a world full of peace”—marching towards this goal and envisioning a day where there are no hungry people in the world, volunteers from Middle East feed the needy individuals and families through this initiative – One Meal A Day. In the month of September 2021, **nine volunteers** served close to **294 meals**.



Special Ganesh Chaturthi Celebrations

On the festive occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi, volunteers served **131 needy people** with special home cooked food. Freshly prepared lunch with laban (buttermilk), water, sweets and blankets were distributed to the needy with much love and joy.



Region 2

Nigeria



Spiritan Self Awareness Initiative

Joy Village Enugu, Nigeria



Aruike Specialty Hospital, Nigeria

Aruike Specialty Hospital (ASH) runs two clinical facilities in the remote rural areas of Enugu and Imo. These hospitals are meant for rural dwellers who do not have access to quality healthcare services at an affordable price. Both the Hospitals offer paediatric and maternity services, while treating children and adults from all age groups. The Hospitals treat an average of **72 patients** every single day.

During the month of September, the Hospitals served **339 children, 1,043 adults and 110 patients for their eye treatment; 18 deliveries** were also conducted. Surgeries and several other procedures such as appendectomy, lipoma incision, manual vacuum aspiration, catheterisation, etc., were also conducted successfully, which helped the rural population in both the States immensely.



Joy Village's medicare sector under the Spiritan Self Awareness Initiative (SSAI) takes care of people who have lost a limb due to accidents or diseases. In 2018, the Foundation started '**Gift of Limbs**' programme in partnership with ISKH Limbs Centre, Lagos; the German Leprosy and TB Relief Association, Nigeria; and the Ministry of Health, Enugu State.

In September 2021, Joy Village conducted a 'Gift of Limbs' camp where a total of 110 limbs were given to amputees. Since the inception of the programme in 2018, a total of **850 limbs** have been gifted to needy individuals so far.

Sociocare

Joy Village's school feeding programme feeds about **500 students** from the Embodiment of Love Academy (TELA) and two other government schools in Enugu with nutritious and tasty breakfast on a daily basis.

TELA Graduation Preparation

The Embodiment of Love Academy (TELA) was established in the year 2013 to provide free values-based education to impoverished children from more than **38 surrounding villages**. Initially, in 2013, TELA accepted children only from the age group of three to eleven, in its nursery and primary schools. However, gradually secondary education was also given; and presently TELA educates about **1,200 children** in its free nursery, primary and secondary schools. The students are currently achieving scores in the top 10 percentile in the State level exams. In September 2021, TELA celebrated the graduation of its pioneer students from secondary school.

Region 3

Greece



'Ιδρυμα Μοιράζομαι'
(Foundation of Sharing)

The volunteers of the Foundation distributed 60 ration boxes, which consisted of rice, legumes, pasta, milk, oil, and other essentials in each box, amounting to **4,590 meals** for the poor who were in the fold of St Panteleimon Church of Anavyssos.

40 ration boxes were packed and distributed to the poor families of 'Support Centre for Children and Families' in Athens. This amounted to **3,060 meals**. The members of the Foundation also volunteer three times in a week to assist the poor children at the Centre with their school lessons and home work.



Just like every month, 80 ration boxes were given to the poor families of Anavyssos, containing food items equivalent to **1,840 meals**, as well as necessities such as coffee, milk, sugar, napkins, toilet paper, cereals, biscuits, shower gel, dishwashing liquid, toothpaste, etc.

The monthly service of providing **1,200 portions of yogurt, 720 litres of milk and 40 kilograms of feta cheese** to the two nursery homes for the elderly at Athens and at Palea Fokea was done in the month of September 2021 as well.

Twice a month, the Foundation serves the physically challenged children and adults of the 'EGNYA' Association with **35 pizzas**.



Region 3

Poland



*Stowarzyszenie Misja Prema
(Prema Mission Association),
Poland*

Misja Prema continued with its activity of recovery and distribution of food, saving food from being wasted and delivering the same to the needy individuals and families. In the month of September, food was delivered to the kitchens of three nursing homes in Warsaw, from where it was served to about **1,000 people**. Families and individuals in need were also regularly visited and were extended help by volunteers in Warsaw, Wroclaw and Bialystok.

*Stowarzyszenie Love All –
Serve All (Love All – Serve All
Association) Poland*

The Polish Association 'Love All – Serve All' distributed packages with essential food items like oil, fruits, cheese, sugar, milk, juices, etc. to **nine families** which was equivalent to **40 meals**.

The Association continues to co-operate and work with Association Warsaw Seva. In the centre of Warsaw, hot Indian meals with chilled lemonade were served to 1,061 individuals in total.



Region 3

Turkey



*Karşılıksız Hizmet Vakfı
(Selfless Seva Trust)*



Once every week, grains or pastas with legume was cooked and served alongside milk or yoghurt, and bread to the needy. A total of **1,725 meals** were distributed door to door in the districts of Şişli, Pendik and Ömerli. 60 meals were distributed to individuals in the city of İstanbul.

In the district of Uskumruköy, grocery boxes consisting of feta cheese, kaşar cheese, green olives, black olives, tea, snacks, and hygiene items were distributed to **10 families** in collaboration with the head of the village.

The volunteers of the Trust helped **12 economically deprived families** by paying their house rents and bills for utilities such as electricity, water and gas in the district of Şişli.

Due to the fires in August, many grasslands had burnt down to ashes. The Trust was requested by the localites to send animal feed to the farmers in Bodrum, a district of Muğla. Around **4.5 tonnes of animal feed** was sent by the Trust. The animal feed was distributed door to door to **43 farmers** for feeding **530 cows** and for the chickens in their farms as well.



Region 4

Argentina



Fundación Sai Prema de Salud, Educación y Valores Humanos (Sai Prema Foundation for Health, Education and Human Values)



After a very long time, all the members and devotees gathered together in the Prema Shanti Ashram to celebrate its third anniversary on September 26, 2021. Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai had inaugurated and blessed the *ashram* in the year 2018. To mark this auspicious day, a beautiful and charming wooden sculpted idol of Lord Ganesh was consecrated in the *Ashram*.



Along with the ongoing construction of the new auditorium, volunteers joined their hands and continued to serve meals to the underprivileged and homeless. Through the project '**Assis Alimentare**', provisions were delivered to soup kitchens in different areas throughout the country such as Merendero My Sweet Dreams at Escobar in Buenos Aires Province, Merendero Adonai in Capilla del Monte City, Province of Cordoba, and Children of Juan and Evita in Buenos Aires City. In addition, the volunteers also distributed food in Bariloche and La Plata on the same day. A total of **31,240 meals** were distributed in the month of September 2021.



Region 4

Canada



Sai Global Service Foundation of Canada

The elderly volunteers of Alberta joined in to serve the hungry individuals on the streets of Edmonton city. Food packets which included banana, fruit juice box, muffins and granola bars were distributed. Grocery items were collected from a food bank drive and distributed to the city food bank. Continuous efforts were made to obtain a city permit to operate a licensed food kitchen, so that hot food and soup could be served to the homeless individuals during the freezing winter conditions.



Region 4

United States of America



Sai Global Mission



Science for Society – Ideal Village Conference at Stanford was held on the September 29 and September 30, 2021, under the leadership of Dr Sundar Kamath and Dr Sunny Anand. The theme of this year's conference was **'Post-Pandemic Normal – The Path Forward.'** This power packed two-day conference was attended by eminent speakers from all parts of the world who shared their insights about their work completed during the pandemic under the areas of healthcare, education, water and sanitation, societal issues, sustainable livelihood, energy and environment; and their insights and learnings from the pandemic.

The conference was graced by Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Sri M to name a few, who talked about the importance of the journey inwards, which is one of the most important lessons of the pandemic. Dr David Cornsweet, the Co-ordinator of Sai Global Federation of Foundations, rendered a presentation about Sri Sathya Sai Sarla Memorial Hospital, and played an important part in the healthcare panel discussion.

The audience and other speakers came forward to seek opportunities for collaboration after listening to the detailed account of various service activities undertaken under the leadership of Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai.

One of the key sponsor partners, Wheels Global Foundation discussed about their partnership and their plans to expand the work of the Ideal Village Programme, by the following ways:

- Collaborating to apply technology solutions for scaling rural development by bringing NGOs, research organisations, universities, industry and government together
- Expanding telemedicine centres to the villages where we serve
- Adopting Annapoorna and nutrition programmes and health awareness programmes to Aravalli, Gujarat
- Adopting the Divine Mother and Child Health Program for maternal and infant care
- Expanding Sanjeevani's Congenital Heart Defect Programme to rural children born with CHD through the WHEELS Heart Council
- Pursuing the WHEELS concept for launching an Indian Institute for Rural Development with the Ideal Village Programme at Stanford University in the USA and also in India

The conference recording is available on online platforms:

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/science4society>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/IdealVillageConference>

To read more about the Science for Society – Ideal Village Conference, please visit: <https://www.scienceforsociety.com>

Lessons For Life

Swami, we love you so much! How long must this yearning continue before we merge in You?

Where are you going to merge in me? It is here, it is now. What stops us from meeting is only a little bit of the wall called 'the mind'.

What is mind? It is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. Each thought is like a brick; all the bricks together make a wall. The problem is not that people do not love Me or want Me. The problem is that they love so many other things and want so many other things as well. Each of the things you like is like a brick in the wall.

Unless all the bricks are removed, you and I cannot meet and merge. Love only Me; want only Me—then you will not have to break the wall. I Myself will break it down and will merge in you. You do not have to merge in Me!



My Inner Journey

Being Available to God

By Mrs Geeta Bhat

Being born as a third-generation devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Mrs Geeta Bhat, even as a child and until date, has been immensely blessed by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. She has been instrumental in carrying out various projects of service in Canada. She is the Senior Director of Diagnostics and Business Development at Fio Corporation, Toronto, Canada and also the Chief Executive Officer of GB Medical Device Consulting Inc, Toronto, Canada. Presently, as per Swami's command, she is serving as the Trustee of Divine Will Foundation, Canada.

I consider myself to be very fortunate to have been born in a family, as a third-generation Sathya Sai Baba's devotee. To me, the experience of Divinity through Swami was as tangible and true as the sun and moon that I see through my eyes, and hence I had never questioned its veracity. There was never a day, when I had to reflect back and understand the nature of divinity, because I had always seen it in action right in front of me.

The extraordinary grace and love of Swami has been our family's guiding post and solace. He was the doer, literally physically, of all that happened in my life, right from christening me with a name to guiding my education and finally my marriage. To our great surprise, Swami guided us to move to Toronto, Canada in 1997, just at the right time. Since my husband and I did not get a chance to study in His institution, He ensured our children were given an opportunity to study there and be a part of His prized possession.



As a family, we were very fortunate to witness His love and His unique methods of teaching life's lessons to us. We had witnessed, how Swami through His infinite patience and compassion, had guided us to become better versions of ourselves. I was a witness to how my in-laws settled down in a small single room in Puttaparthi just to serve at the Super Specialty Hospital and yet how happy they were. I had also silently observed how Swami had ensured that they served Him till their last breath.

Our experiences with Swami and the miracles that we witnessed with Him and through Him are too many to mention, and I believe that those miracles have served their purpose, by helping me to generate an unbreakable bond with my master and developing an unshakable faith in Him. With Him by my side, there was no task I could fail at. Yet, when Swami calls all of us as Divine beings, I could only see all my faults as a mere human and could never understand how I was ever going to achieve the goal of realising my Divinity.

Swami on many occasions reprimanded me, because, by nature, I was a very short tempered, a very impatient person, who needed a candid answer from Him for anything that I asked Him. His teaching to me when I got angry was to repeat at least 10 times, 'I am a man and not a dog.' If I keep worrying constantly about situations which are beyond my control, then He would ask me to repeat, 'If you worry so much, Swami will stop worrying about it for you.' And when I wanted things to happen as per my schedule and planning, He had asked

me to repeat, 'Oh, so you think you are the one deciding it? All things are a gift from Swami, and they will happen only when Swami wills it.'

The advent of the subtle form of Swami was a great joy to me. I was told about the phenomenon by Mr Isaac Tigrett, who is a very close friend of our family because of our association with the Super Specialty Hospital at Puttaparthi. For some reason, I had the idea in my mind that I cannot visit Sathya Sai Grama unless I was invited, and hence, I never made an attempt to go there. Finally, through a lot of happenstances, I reached there along with my daughter in June 2015. In His usual style, Swami ensured there was no doubt in my mind regarding His new way of working. His first words to me, His actions when He blessed me with *vibhūti* (sacred ash) and His answering all my questions before I could even ask, left me breathless. In the same month, Swami spoke to my husband when He visited Ottawa, Canada. In the same year, we were then invited for the birthday celebrations and Swami told me that He would visit us in Toronto. Swami visited our humble home in Toronto in June 2019 and graciously named it as '**Sai Ashrayam**' and converted it into His Divine abode.

This second innings with Swami, in His subtle phenomenon, is yet another powerful trek that urges me to transform myself into God. Am I there yet? – No!; but do I know the path now? – Absolutely! I got the opportunity once again to witness how Swami imparts His teachings. There was more hope and optimism in my realising my Divinity, after witnessing the ascent that happened with Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai. Through him Swami showed us how each one of us can attain the Divinity within. I observed and learnt from Sri Madhusudan Sai—his unwavering faith in Swami, his total sacrifice for Swami's work and choosing God by completely surrendering himself to Swami's Divine will.

To track down my own spiritual progress, I can say that slowly and gradually, I'm moving closer to myself with every passing day. I always wanted to serve in Swami's mission. In the past, I was able to do it, but I did not pay attention if my act led to my purification and transformation. This time when Swami gave me the opportunity to serve in His mission in Canada, He was very clear. He mentioned that service should be done to transform ourselves. I understood that all I need to do is to initiate the task that Swami has asked of me and put in my best efforts. He will make sure the task happens in the right way at the right time. Now, I am learning to be available for Him.



My Inner Journey

It might be the tiniest of tasks like writing this article or major ones like starting a Foundation, I ensure that I'm available to Him and work hard with a broad smile on my face saying "Yes Swami." With all this in mind, I also see to it that I keep my ego aside and do the work without thinking of the rewards.

I am learning to keep patience and acceptance of the fact that once Swami says or wills something, it will happen for sure. But it will happen when He wills it and not as per my schedule. I am understanding the concept of a Divine calendar that trumps my Google calendar. This has been a hard change for me because my professional work is run strictly by schedule and deliverables. I am re-wiring my brain to the Divine Programme Management, where my only deliverable is to perform the task asked of me.



I always had faith in Swami, but now I am learning to surrender to His will. This has been the most significant part of my transformative journey. In the past 18 months, COVID-19 pandemic has taught me a very valuable lesson that 'I have absolutely no control on the events happening around me.' I lived in the city which faced the longest lockdown and is now grappling with the fourth wave. My professional life underwent changes with the work from home regime, and I felt a sense of isolation. My personal life has seen its fair share of unexpected tragedy. Through all these different situations, the one constant thing which acted as a soothing balm was the feeling that Swami is with me. This time I didn't question, "Why me Swami?" Instead, I lived my best life and I performed all my duties with the knowledge that everything is happening according to Swami's plan.

When I was very young, Swami had told my parents, "I have a masterplan for her life and she will perform according to it." My only prayer to Swami is to be with me always and grant me the wisdom to never question Him, but to only serve Him in whichever capacity that I can.

My Inner Journey

Emptying Myself

By Mr Rafi Bedikyan

Mr Rafi Bedikyan is a staunch devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba for the past many years. Spiritual upbringing and the constant company with spiritual people led Mr Bedikyan towards the search of truth from the early years of his life. His mentor, Mr Kaya Günata introduced him to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and in Him, he found his God and Guru. Mr Bedikyan is a Partner and a Member of the Managing Board of Asakaynak ve Metal Alaşımları Industry. Currently, under the guidance of Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai, he is serving as the Chairman of Karşılıksız Hizmet Vakfı (Selfless Seva Trust), Turkey.



Thus began my spiritual journey with Mr Harutyun Arslanlioğlu, who guided and introduced me to Paramahansa Yogananda in 1981. While being together with Mr Arslanlioğlu, he one day brought me to Mr Kaya Günata in the year 1992. A group of 30 to 40 people who were curious spiritual seekers with loads of bookish knowledge on spirituality, but yet not mature to fathom the truths about life and apply them practically in everyday situations, embraced me also as one amongst them, and thus I became a mentee under the mentorship of Mr Günata.

Mr Günata told us about Sri Sathya Sai Baba in detail, and he endeavoured to teach us Baba's fundamental teachings and their inner meaning - 'Help Ever Hurt Never' and 'Love All Serve All', by being an example himself, for all of us to emulate. In December 1994, Mr Günata took all of us for the hallowed darshan of Swami at Puttaparthi. We stayed there for 21

days during which, Swami graciously granted us three interviews. He advised my family to stay back in Turkey and not to immigrate to any other country; not to read about, discuss or watch anything that has to do with politics; and to establish a Centre on the European side of Istanbul for carrying out service activities; and also to set up a kitchen in order to serve the needy. Mr Günata warned us that these were not just advices, but decisive instructions, for he had already set up a kitchen at his home a few years ago, for cooking and serving the needy.

In 1997, Mr Günata gave away his residential apartment to his close relatives, and moved to our house. I would say that this was Swami's greatest blessing for us. We, as a family, lived together with him until he left his physical body in 2018. Mr Günata set up a clinic for serving patients, a kitchen for cooking food for needy people, and a Sai Centre where bhajans and study circles were conducted. He was so simple that he needed only a six square metre room at the Sai Centre where he used to sleep on the floor.

My Inner Journey

During that time, the site plan of an *ashram* in İstanbul was drawn and a model was made, which was then taken to Puttaparthi and presented to Swami. Swami blessed it; but said, “*Wait!*” From then on, until the day Swami left His mortal coil, we carried on with the work as per His instructions. A few years later, Mr Günata told us that we had to go to Muddenahalli, and from here on, our spiritual life began on a much higher plane.

During the initial visit of Mr Günata to Muddenahalli, Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai told him that the time for establishing the *ashram* had come. Later, Sadguru visited İstanbul and performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the *ashram* on April 03, 2017, and blessed it with the name ‘Prema Yoga’. This name thrilled Mr Günata and the rest of us. In the meantime, Mr Günata started talking about leaving the physical body. Although we prayed that he should not leave us when there were such important tasks to carry out, he declared that on the other plane (subtle plane) he would be able to work more efficiently. As for building the *ashram*, he said, “*There is no problem, as long as you remain in unity and carry out the work as per Swami’s instructions.*” And he stated that he would always be with us and help us. Accordingly, we are trying to follow Swami’s instructions meticulously. All the work associated with the *ashram* and the mission is accelerating our journey towards

our Self, while practising the golden teachings of – ‘Help Ever Hurt Never, Love All Serve All’, which summarises the essence of all the scriptures. The purpose of our lives shall reach its culmination by making all of us one with Swami.

During Sadguru’s visit to Turkey in June 2019, He gave us yet another guideline by instructing that we should say, ‘Yes’ to anyone and everyone who comes to the Prema Yoga Ashram, seeking help. Moreover, when I suffered with COVID infection and had to be isolated in a hospital room for 12 days, I was able to turn the adversity into an advantage, by introspecting and diving deep within the recesses of my heart and finding the positive and negative aspects that were lurking within me. It is my feeling that for the last four to five years, we have persevered to progress steadily on the path towards being one with Swami. We feel that we are becoming His instruments and that everything is unfolding according to His Divine will and grace, making us go through such incidents that would intensify our urge to find the oneness with Him. Day after day, I’m letting go of myself only to lose myself (my identity) and gain Him within me.

May we all tread the path of attaining oneness with Swami, just as declared by Jesus Christ during his ascension – “*My father and I are One.*”

