



National Education Conference, Murwillumbah, NSW

August 20 and 21 August 2011

Closing remarks

Albert Barelds, Deputy Central Coordinator

May our Beloved Sai accept the following summary comments.

Om Sai Ram!

Neville Fredericks, our Central Coordinator, has asked me to speak because his voice and physical condition don't allow him to address us this morning. I hope you feel better soon Neville!

Swami has guided us in His physical form since 1940, over 70 year, and the work presented here during this conference through some 36 contributions [if I have counted correctly] demonstrates how He has multiplied Himself to spread His teachings. The smorgasbord of presentations was of a uniform high standard and I congratulate all presenters. We should particularly thank the overseas guests for the efforts made, not only to come and actively participate but to make such strong contributions.

It has been such an incredible experience to come together at this beautiful venue, a grand building, so well designed and a real asset to this township of Murwillumbah. We have to say 'thank you' to Neville Fredericks who played such a central role in the development of these buildings and to all those who have helped establish this Sathya Sai demonstration primary school. We are blessed indeed to have the opportunity to be together in what can only be described as the engine room of Sathya Sai Education in Australia.

Such a joy to walk around and meet in the various classrooms where the Sathya Sai values education comes to life; see the study material, photos and work by the students and feel how this whole place is saturated with the energy and ideals that we all recognise as the expressions of the Sai teachings. Thank you very much to the principal Leelah Broughton and her staff to make us feel so welcome in this very special and indeed blessed place!

We have been spoiled by the many volunteers looking after our needs with so much love – some of us were even given a ride to the centre of town to get a fresh coffee! Please show your appreciation.

So here we are at the end of a very successful conference what we planned since last meeting 2 years ago at the Canberra Sathya Sai Education conference. Looking back and then reflecting on this conference, it is very obvious that our beloved Swami has increased the tempo of the development of the Australian Institute of Sathya Sai Education. It demonstrates that the massive amount of work for some 12 years by Dr Pal Dhall and Dr Tehseen Dall is bearing high quality fruits. The various training programs in the ISSE have come of age and the work of Pal and Theseen, of course with the assistance of many, is greatly contributing to the deeper understanding of the Sai teachings by many within the Sathya Sai Organisation. We owe them and we are grateful.

The capacity of the ISSE to launch specifically into Sathya Sai EHV programs has grown remarkably, as is demonstrated by the contributions of so many alumni of the ISSE to this conference. And I sincerely hope that the ideas and initiatives become better known in the wider Sathya Sai Organisation.

At this time it appears that we are not well synchronised between the ISSE and the SSO. Where those becoming involved with the ISSE demonstrate a growing commitment to understand the Sathya Sai teachings more deeply, in the Sathya Sai Organisation we appear to have many who attend devotional activities to have their weekly spiritual top up or, for example, to have an Indian cultural experience. There is nothing wrong with this, we all come to Sai for various reasons, no good or bad, but I urge us to work towards a much closer collaboration between the SSO and the ISSE in order for the fine fruits of the ISSE to be shared more widely and for the members of the SSO to know and feel that the ISSE is also their vehicle for transformation.

Various SSEHV projects have been initiated by the ISSE but these have not necessarily been owned by the SSO and vice versa. There is some learning to be done from these experiences and I sincerely ask that we investigate how we may collaborate more closely whilst realizing that each organisation has its own role to play in the unfolding of the Sathya Sai mission.

I was at Prashanti Nilayam during Guru Pournima in July and, together with Roger Packham, represented Australia at various functions and meetings. It was a very powerful experience for me personally to be at the ashram so soon after our beloved Swami left His physical form and to be confronted with my grief and sense of loss. Although I thought that I had become less attached to the form over the years, it was confronting to realize how much spiritual work and development there is still needed before deeply knowing that You and I are One!

Although the loss and confusion of many was palpable, there was also something very beautiful what I now reflect on with great hope and a sense of excitement for the future. Where before, whilst going to Parthi, we'd all focus on the form and were somewhat pre-occupied with darshan and to being as close as possible to Swami, the single focus of our attention, I now noticed that there was less interest in where we sit or how well positioned we were. There was also much more attention for those around us. It was very obvious to me that the love and care for each other, between devotees, between devotees and sevadals, between SSO office bearers present at the ashram, was dramatically increased. Instead of focussing on Swami, we appeared to focus on each other and on the Sai within each one of us.

I'd like to believe that it is the coming of fruition of the statement by Swami, 'Your Life is My Message' and I was possibly not able to really hear that till the physical form is no longer with us. It was demonstrated also in the meeting of the international office bearers where, instead of having a business meeting, we had a lengthy satsang and shared, at the request of Dr Goldstein, beautiful and very inspiring individual experiences with our beloved Sai.

Part of what I shared in that meeting was a powerful dream I had from Swami the day before He left his body. It was one of those dreams that you wake up from and not know what was dream and what was so called reality. In the dream Swami came in a much younger form, very powerful but so sweet. He stood with some of us as office bearers of the international Sathya Sai organisation in a circle with the arms around each other shoulders, a tight group that included Dr Goldstein, Pal, Neville and some other of our overseas brothers and sisters and He made very clear to us, lovingly but sternly, that in the next 2 years we need to bring the Sathya Sai Organisation to the fulfilment of its real purpose!

Well brothers and sisters, the dream demonstrates to me that we have incredible opportunities lying ahead of us. The theme of this important conference, 'Sathya Sai Education: Practical Steps Towards Future Prosperity', and the high quality contributions made by you auger well for the times ahead and the creation of a Sai Civilisation.

Aum Sai Ram!