

## ***Talk given by Dr Pal Dhall at the launch of the Spiritual Transformation Plan, Melbourne, 21-6-08***

My humble pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The launch of the Spiritual Transformation Plan is an important event. The emphasis in this plan is on the process of transformation and the product. In life we tend to advance in our spirituality discontinuously. This is a program to assist conscious evolution.

### ***Baba's Mission***

Baba's mission has several components. First there is spiritual transformation. Baba has not come to establish a new religion. The philosophy behind the works and teachings of Baba is that we should make this human birth our last birth. We are born in order that we not be born again. This entire world is Divine. Maya, the veil of illusion, is the challenge we must meet and face. We do this by following an inner path: External events must lead to an inner growth. Baba guides each one of us, one-on-one. There is no middleman between ourselves and Baba, our inner guide.

### ***Spirituality and Religion***

There are four phases in the phenomena of spirituality and religion. The first is a local, *tribal*, limited phase. The next phase is *canonical* in nature, with scriptures, rigidity, maintenance of guilt and conformance. The next phase is a *critical rational phase*, which is axial in nature. The final phase is a *global* phase, where we have many metaphors for the same spiritual reality. We are living, experiencing this reality. It is characterised by an attitude of love and experience of the Divine.

### ***The Avatar's Mission***

The mission of the Sai Avatar is to uplift consciousness and create a global spirituality. He does this through two aspects, firstly the physical aspect, His physical presence in Puttaparthi. The other aspect is the Cosmic Sai Baba, the Universal Formless presence, the *antarayamin*, the inner resident within all.

## ***The Sathya Sai Organisation***

The Sathya Sai Organisation was formed in 1965 under Baba's direct guidance. The most important objective in the charter is to 'awaken the inherent divinity within'. To meet these objectives, Sai Centres have a variety of activities. It is principally a spiritual, transformative culture.

The question arises, to what extent do Sai Centres meet their avowed objectives.

A more critical question is "How do we measure or assess whether or not an objective has been met?" If we assess transformation, is that a measure of awakening inherent divinity? Let us see if we can answer this question.

In a Sai Centre we have many activities, all of which have voluntary involvement. This means that each one accelerates their own growth → this is the principle of individual responsibility. But, individual sadhana becomes family sadhana, which becomes community involvement.

Dr Dharam Sharma undertook an investigation of 30 subjects in depth. He obtained biographical details and studied over 40 aspects of the lives of his subjects.

His findings were:

1. A decrease in negative traits. Arrogance, criticism, talking behind others backs, bearing grudges, being judgemental, talking excessively, fear of death, attachment to outcomes, inner enclaves. All these negative traits were reduced.
2. An increase in positive qualities. Self awareness, introspection, patience, forgiveness, compassion, empathy, speaking truth, experiencing peace of mind, humility, capacity to sacrifice, surrender, social skills and the 5D's, and the practice of the five human values, all these were increased.
3. Acquisition of new skills, attitudes and actions which lead to positive change in personality, which gave rise to a new self definition. The most important new skill was that of self-monitoring, self-regulation, and self-audit.

## ***Spiritual Intelligence***

Spirituality has become the subject of scientific research. The question is being asked, 'Is it an intelligence'? That is, is spirituality a capacity to solve our day to day problems? Research conducted by Howard Gardner and Emmaus found that there were five core components to spiritual intelligence. These were

- Mystical experiences
- Transcendence
- Sanctification
- As a resource to solve problems
- Ethical and virtuous behaviour

The spiritual culture in a Sai Centre supports these five core components.



**Schema of the five core components of Spiritual Intelligence supported by Spiritual Culture in the Sai Centre**

## ***Baba directly assists***

Baba directly assists us in this process. **On the physical level**, there are the new Five D's ... Dreams, Dramas, Darshans, Direct Teachings, Divine Discourses. **On the cosmic level**, there are all sorts of experiences ... inner guidance, care of devotees, protection of devotees, coincidences, external events which manifest unity in diversity.

Sai Centre activities and the fellowship create a very positive spiritual culture to support each of the five core components of individual spiritual transformation. Let us look at these specific elements of Spiritual Intelligence.

### **Mystical Experience**

- Meditations
- Mantras
- Seeing Baba in others
- Experiencing Baba
- Miracles, one on one experiences
- Spiritual dreams, vibhuti and other manifestations

### **Transcendence**

- Multifaith activities
- Service activities
- Workshops
- Group prayers

### **Sanctification**

- To keep Divinity at the centre of focus—divinising every experience.
- Food Prayer
- Genuine surrender
- Dedication of all actions
- Study circle and Discourses to enhance understanding;
- Dr Sharma's finding, 87% increase in devotion
- These are no accidents; all events are planned

### **Spiritual Resources**

- Spirituality used to solve everyday problems of living.
- This is spiritual intelligence in practice. All intelligence is problem solving skill.
- Handling of stress
- Response to Trauma
- Handling disappointments
- Study circle, Satsang, Bhajan, Meditation, Self awareness, all supply spiritual resources for solving everyday problems:

## **Virtuous Traits and Ethical Behaviour**

- All virtuous traits provide spiritual uplift.
- Study circle, SSE, SSEHV, all provide a better understanding of Baba's teachings
- Service activities
- Self monitoring, self regulation, self audit

## **Conclusions**

These effects seen in the biographies of 30 subjects, in the survey by Dr Dharam Sharma are indicative of the transforming power of Sai Centre Activities. There was one interesting observation in this study. None of the 30 subjects joined for the purpose of obtaining self-transformation.

When we join the Sai Organisation, we are intrigued. This leads to a lot of effort to find out more. But after a while, our journey can become unconscious. We become busy with our lives, activities and create comfort zones around ourselves.

Even if we join the Sai Organisation with no intention of spiritual evolution or transformation, we end up on a trajectory of growth. But this is a slower process.

However, if we remain on a conscious path our passage and growth is rapid, and in direct proportion to the conscious effort. From time to time, motivated devotees and office bearers develop programs for this purpose. Programs such as

- Sai Awareness, Sai Vision Programs
- Youth Programs, Sai Warriors
- Ladies Wing, Sadhana Plans

These all have rapid quantum impacts.

Common to all these programs is consciously orchestrating inner growth, open accountability, commitment, self-awareness, awareness of teaching and incorporating this in daily life, and monitoring, self audit. Critical reflection leads to self regulation and autonomy. Examples of this can be found in the Sathya Sai U-Turn program, and in the Cherbourg School experience, using W.A.T.C.H.

The Spiritual Transformation Program is a powerful program that focuses on the Sadhana Plan of the 9 Point Code of Conduct. This is the blue print developed under the direct guidance of Bhagavan Baba.

We wish you joy, and pray for Divine Blessings and Grace.

Sai Ram!  
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Melbourne,  
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