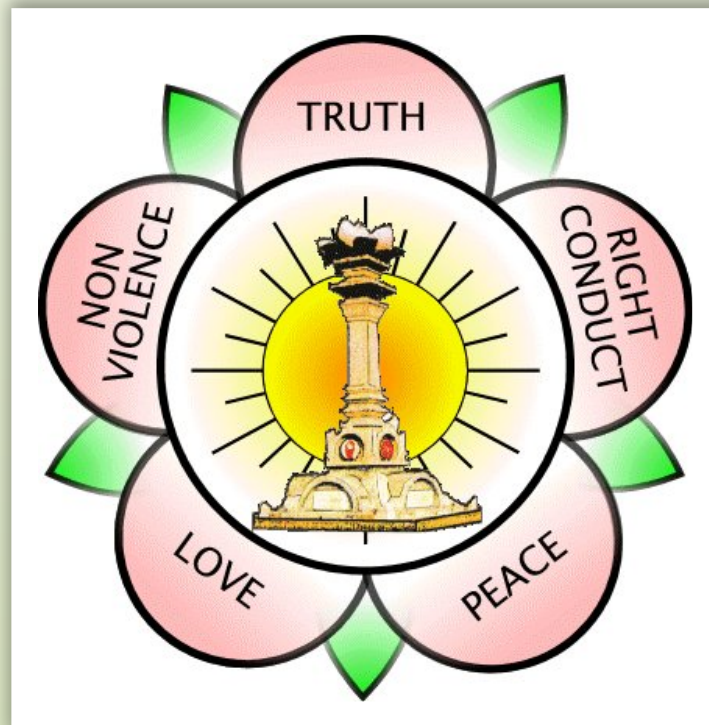


# Sri Sathya Sai Organization

## Region 3 Study Circle Enrichment Initiative

Bala Swaminathan



Region 3 Study Circle Team

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## Swami says,

*“It is not just reading books. Circle, study circle means taking a point and each person discussing what is the meaning of the point to them—like a round table conference. Each person gives his point of view, and finally values are derived from this. If there is just reading, there is doubt, but if each one gives his view, doubts will be answered. The topic is viewed; the study circle looks at different facets. It is like a diamond with its different facets, but there is one facet that is flat, the top facet, and from this all can be viewed. To discover the top facet is the task [purpose] of study circle”.*

*“Not information, but transformation, not instruction but construction should be the aim. Theoretical knowledge is a burden, unless it is practiced, when it can be lightened into wisdom and assimilated into daily life. Knowledge that does not give harmony and wholeness to the process of living is not worth acquiring. Every activity must be rendered valid and worthwhile by its contribution to the discovery of Truth, both of the Self and of nature.”*

*“In the study circle you can learn a lot of things, but the most important thing to be learnt is your own true nature. Learning all about external things without knowing your real Self is like studying the branches of a tree, ignoring its roots.”*

## Study Circle Focus

The focus of this initiative is to enrich the study circle experience by

1. Uniting the region to study the same topics at the same time,
2. Engaging experienced devotees (core study circle team) to prepare the material and,
3. Encouraging centers to nurture an environment to practice Swami’s teachings

The Study Circle is the place to listen and share our experiences and enrich each other’s understanding of Swami’s teachings. The focus of the Center should be to help energize *all the devotees* to practice Swami’s teachings, thereby inspiring and encouraging each other.

The role of the *Center officers* and the *Study Circle presenter* are key in making these sessions motivating. Arrive at center wide activities, for example, visit an old age home if you are discussing a topic about parents or set aside some food that can be collectively cooked and served to the poor when discussing Ceiling on Desires (Don’t waste food). All these actions become a tangible center wide offering to Swami that devotees can relate to.

The current initiative is focused on selecting topics that *apply to a broad demographic of devotees* and focus on *everyday practical application*. In addition, the topics are covered for a *length of time* to allow devotees to practice, internalize the principles before proceeding to another topic.

## Study Circle Topic and Agenda

The topic chosen for this first study circle is termed ‘*Ideal Sai Family*’. Why this topic?

All devotees relate to the various relationships we have in our families and in the Sai Center. Understanding Swami's teachings help us strengthen these relationships and achieve harmony and unity in our home and Sai Center.

The study circle is divided into 6 topics:

1. Introduction - Importance of Family
2. Duty towards parents
3. Relationship with Spouses, siblings
4. Examples of Swami's life
5. 9 point code of conduct for families
6. Relationship in the Sai Center

The final session can be a concluding session where the devotees can share their experiences and feedback on this topic.

*Session 1*

## Importance of Family

### Introduction

(see PowerPoint for Introduction)

### Swami's Quotes

- "Motherhood is the most precious gift of God. Mothers are the makers of a nation's fortune or misfortune. They should teach two lessons, fear of sins and fondness for virtue. Both these are based on faith in God, being the inner motivator of all. If you want to know how advanced a nation is, study the mothers; are they free from fear and anxiety, are they full of Love towards all, are they trained in fortitude and virtue? If you like to imbibe the glory of a culture, watch the mothers, rocking the cradles, feeding, fostering, teaching and fondling the babies." - Sathya Sai Speaks Vol VII Chap 6 P 22
- "Whoever is born, the father is the cause of his birth. Therefore, the father is everyone's visible God." - Ramakadha Rasavahini P 168
- "Love your wife and children and do your duty towards them as a husband and a father. But always hold on to the true values. Do not lose your sense of proportion." -- Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol X, p216
- "Moved by the desire to cross this ocean of samsara, the husband and the wife must both have harmony of mind. The resolution to reach the goal must be equally strong and steady in both. Otherwise sanyaasa is the refuge!" - Dharma Vahini, p50
- "When there is understanding and harmony in the family, peace will spread to the community, and from there to the nation and the world. Unity confers joy and peace." - Sanathana Sarathi, Vol 34, Jan. 1991, p4.
- "If hindrances come, dedicate them too to the Lord, take them quietly as His leela and as His plan; that is the way to follow the grihastha discipline, the path for both men and women." - Dharma Vahini, p50
- "Being married and living with the wife and children does not constitute grihastha ashrama as most people think. Without giving up the duties assigned to one's caste and status, the person has to treat all with equal consideration - kinsmen as well as others. He must be aware of the rights of the elders and the obligations of juniors; he has to be full of sympathy and willingness to help; he should treat with loving kindness all those who are dependent on him; he must grow wiser with each new experience of the world; he should acquaint himself with the sastras and be alert to do dharma and avoid adharma; he must foster and protect his wife and children with a sense of responsibility; he has to trample down the eight egoisms, the conceit that develops from family, wealth, character, personal beauty, youth, scholarship, native place and even accomplishments in austerity. Conscious of the four goals of dharma, artha, kama and moksha, with no pride in material possessions though he might have them in large measure; utilizing a portion of the day in the service of others; with no designs against any other household, himself deserving the trust of his wife and having a trusted wife, each understanding the other and

having full faith in the other; such are the ways in which the grihastha manifests.” - Prashanti Vahini, p10 – 34 minutes

### **Real life scenario illustrating a challenge**

A child has not performed as well as she could have in the school. She brings her report card that is disappointing to her. She didn't eat lunch in the school and returns home hungry. Her mother has several challenges at domestic front including her own health issues. Her father has deadline to finish some office work and brings it home to complete them. How should parents deal with the situation with reference to their child? - 15 minutes

### **Life application exercise**

- Look at the relationships that you have with all your family members and see how those relationships helped make you the person that you turned out to be. Show appreciation to the family members that have had the strongest influence on you.
- Ask every member to recall at least one occasion of how their happiness at home resulted in better outcome in their interaction away from home

### **Multimedia Video on Love**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0rZTf3Di6c> – 5 minutes

### **Affirmation**

“I use love as water to raise children so that their life is sweeter and fruitful. I practice human values to enable my children to build outstanding character, excellent behavior and valuable relationships to achieve inherent bliss.” – 1 minute

## Session 2

# Duty to Parents

## Introduction

Suggested talking points:

1. Swami by personal example has drawn significant attention and focus on 'duty towards parents.'
2. Relevance in our daily lives
3. Tremendous satisfaction and joy in practicing Swami's teachings

## Swami's Quotes

- I must also tell the students that they must be grateful to the parents who give them all the facilities they now enjoy at great sacrifice. In fact, the parents have to be worshipped as visible representatives of the Godhead; they are responsible for your very existence and for all this joy and adventure in the physical and spiritual spheres. For this reason they have to be tended and respected and worshipped. [SSS Vol.01 Ch.11 July 25, 1958]
- You owe a supreme duty towards your parents who are responsible for all that you are. You will be less than human if you do not show your gratitude to them for all that they have done to you. Parental love means for the children what the sun's rays mean for the blossoming of a flower. Wherever you may go, whatever you may achieve, whatever position you may occupy, you must always remember your mother with love and reverence. [SSS Vol.18 Ch.10 May 6, 1985]
- Parents put themselves into a lot of privation, in order to provide their children with good education. And in return, if you cause greater privation to them, turning into a never-do-well, a person whose character is so bad that no one dare take you into his care, how ungrateful you are! Give them the peace and joy they deserve, for all the service they have rendered, all the sacrifice they have made. [SSS Vol.10 Ch.09 May 13, 1970]
- Beyond the biological parents, there are permanent parents whom you should revere. They are Truth and Love. Though the body may go, Truth remains as the permanent father. Likewise Love is the eternal mother. It grows with the passage of time and never diminishes. By regarding Truth and Love as your parents, as essential for your existence as your eyes or as the two wings for a bird or the two wheels for a cart, lead worthy lives. On this sacred day of remembrance, firmly enshrine in your hearts reverence for Truth and Love, and make your lives sublime by rendering dedicated service to your fellowmen and women. [SSS Vol.18 Ch. 10 May 6, 1985]

## Story corner

### **An Ideal Son of a Noble Mother** [SSS Vol.1 Ch.1 January 1, 2004]

You all know about Abraham Lincoln. He used to go to school in the company of wealthy boys, in his childhood. Those boys were wearing costly clothes and ornaments. Lincoln, however, had to go to school with worn out clothes that were mended by his mother. One day, his friends made fun of his poor dress. He could not control himself. He went straight to his mother crying and told her, "Mother! I will not attend school hereafter. My classmates are making fun of me. They are looking down upon me as a poor boy unable to wear decent dress." Then, the mother took him into her arms lovingly and consoled him saying, "My dear son! You need not feel sorry for such a trivial issue. All this is going to help



you in your future life. You keep our family condition in view. Do not give credence to what others say. Lead a life of self-confidence and self-respect. Respect every individual and be respected by every individual.”

From that day onwards, Lincoln put his mother’s advice into practice and started respecting everybody. He used to be courteous with even a cobbler saying “Sir! How sacred is your life! You are doing great service by stitching sandals for us so that our feet are protected from thorns”. Gradually, Abraham Lincoln could command respect from all people by his good behavior. He earned a very good name for himself. After sometime, elections were held in America. He was persuaded by his friends and well-wishers to contest the elections. He expressed his inability saying, “I am a poor man. Who will vote for me? I do not want these positions and power”. Today, Indians are spending crores of rupees to contest elections, but refuse to part with even a rupee as alms to a beggar.

The good words taught by Lincoln’s mother made a lasting impression on his mind. He started respecting every individual. He used to speak courteously with everybody. As a result he earned a very good name for himself. At last, he bowed to the wishes of his friends and well-wishers and contested the elections. He scored a spectacular victory and was elected the President of the United States of America. Then, he went to his mother and said “Mother! I am able to rise to this exalted position and command the respect of the people of America, because of your noble teachings those days”.

It is the mother that is responsible for the children earning reputation and fame. If children wish to earn good name, they should obey the command of their mother. That is why, the Veda has conferred the supreme position on the mother and father and declared Mother is God, Father is God! The mother is like the body and the father, the atma. Hence, we have to respect our father and mother. Then, we can earn any amount of respect. Abraham Lincoln could earn great name and fame and become the president of America, only on account of his respect for his mother.

### Discussion questions

1. How can we express gratitude to our parents?
2. How do you see your parents as the ‘visible representatives of the God-head?’
3. Can you think of and share one instance where you recognized your parents sacrificed for your happiness/comfort?
4. ‘Truth is permanent father and love is eternal mother.’
  - a. What does this speak to you?
  - b. How can one practice it in their daily life?
5. How can we be an ideal child of Sai?

### Life application

- Commit to practice for the next one week any resolution that arose from answering question # 1 or 4b or 5. We highly encourage you to maintain a journal to record and share your experiences.
- Ask every member to either give 1-2 great values of their parents that they passionately remember.
- Examine your relationship with your parents to see if there are ways you could improve and strengthen that relationship.
- Share these quotes from Swami with your own children and grandchildren and try to inspire them to a better relationship with their own parents.
- Visit an old age home as a center to empathize with parents who are away from their families and understand what they long for...

## Multimedia Video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0a4GfJfJGQ>

**Closing song-** [Sing together]

You are my mother, you are my father,  
You are my closest kin, you are my dearest friend  
You are my wisdom, You are my treasure  
You are my everything, You are my lord, my loving lord!

## Session 3

# Nine Point Code of Conduct

## Introduction

Swami has talked about the importance of a code of conduct many times in his discourses. We continue our region wide study circle series on Ideal Sai Family with 'Nine Point Code of Conduct' as the next topic for discussion. We will discuss the Nine Point Code of Conduct and the effect that it has on our everyday lives and how it effects our relationships with others.

The charter of the Sai Organization says that every member should undertake sadhana (spiritual discipline) as an integral part of daily life and abide by the following Code of Conduct:

1. Daily meditation and prayer.
2. Devotional singing/prayer with family members once per week.
3. Participation in Sai Spiritual Education by children of the family..
4. Participation in community service and other programmes of the Organisation.
5. Regular attendance at devotional meetings conducted by the Organisation.
6. Regular study of Sathya Sai Baba literature.
7. Use of soft, loving speech with everyone.
8. Avoidance of talking ill of others, especially in their absence.
9. Practice of the principles of "ceiling on desires", consciously and continuously striving to eliminate the tendency to waste time, money, food, and energy and utilizing any savings thereby generated for the service of mankind.

## Swami's Quotes

- For each person, there is a code of conduct laid down in the Shaastras (scriptures), according to age and status, the profession adopted, the stage of spiritual attainment reached, the goal of life accepted, etc. Do not carp at the behavior of others, or at the efforts they make, to get consolation and courage amidst the turmoil of life, for the path that one has chosen, the Name and the Form of God he prefers! Also do not give up your code of duties and take up that recommended for some one else. [ssspeaks/volume05](#)
- It is the Code of Conduct, which is responsible for the Organization moving forward, growing from strength to strength. The office bearers should exercise maximum care to see that the Code of Conduct is adhered to and guide others also in the right path... There should be no scramble for power or position. What matters is the purity, intensity of devotion and the spirit of self sacrifice. [ssspeaks/volume16](#)

## Discussion Questions

1. How difficult is it for you to follow the Code of Conduct and be an example for other family members? Which are most difficult for you to follow?
2. How do you try to instill these values in the people around you?

## Life Application

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- During the week try to pay attention to the things you do and see if they are within the Code of Conduct. Discuss your results next week.
- Ask every member to speak about one of the Code of conducts and how it had helped them in his/her life.
- Look at the Nine Point Code of Conduct and reflect upon whether it has helped you to be a better person and a better human being.

*Session 4*

## Spouse and Siblings

### Introduction

Swami has often talked about the importance of the relationship between spouses and the relationships between siblings. We continue our region wide study circle series on Ideal Sai Family with 'Spouse and Siblings' as the next topic for discussion. We shall look at specific quotes from Swami that talk about these relationships and the ways that these relationships help to shape the person that we are and perhaps change us in ways to make us better human beings.

### Swami's Quotes

- They will have in their homes one small room set apart for the worship of the Lord. There, they will place images of the Lord, as well as pictures of holy sages and of gurus and guides. They will consider the room specially sacred and fill the atmosphere with their prayers both morning and evening, as well as on holy days and festivals. A woman who is steadfast doing these will be able to transmute even her atheist husband, persuading him to join the prayers or engage in some good activity or some scheme of social service marked by the attitude of dedication to the Lord. Indeed, it is the woman who maintains the home; that is her mission. She is truly the representative of divine energy (sakthi). [Dharma Vahini, Chapter 4](#)
- It does not matter how bad or low the husband is; through love, the wife must bring him round, correct him, and help him gain the blessings of the Lord. It is not correct to feel that her progress alone matters and that she has no concern in his improvement or uplift. On the other hand, she must feel that the welfare of the husband, the joy of the husband, the wishes of the husband, the salvation of the husband is the panacea for her also. [Dharma Vahini, Chapter 4](#)
- Woman has been extolled in ancient scriptures as well as classical poetry as Grihalakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity in the Home. She is the Dharmapathni (the companion in virtue of the husband) in the fulfillment of the duties and rights of wedded life as a householder. While learning home science, you may be getting trained in the art of making the home happy and full of harmony and health. You have to learn also how to steer clear of hatred, malice, greed, anger, anxiety, pride and other obstacles that come in the way of inner peace. It is not enough if the home budget is balanced; the wife (and the mother) must learn the art of having a balanced view of life, which will not be affected by triumphs and troubles, gains or losses, victory or defeat. This balance can be got only by reliance on God, faith in the in-dwelling God. [ssspeaks/volume09](#)
- The ideal for women is the status of Sathi, the faithful wife, the loving mother. The dharma is very laudable. The Indian ideal of marriage is that the right half is the husband and the left half of the same body is the wife; pathi and sathi (husband and wife) are complementary, parts of the same unit. [ssspeaks/volume06](#)
- The feeling of anxiety that you will have when your own brothers and sisters are in trouble must be reflected when anyone gets into trouble. If an unrelated person looks at your sister with some bad intentions, it will cause you a great deal of pain and unhappiness. You should feel hurt in the same manner, when these other brothers and sisters are humiliated or insulted. [summershowers/ss1978](#)
- Hold all your property and wealth in trust for the Lord who gave them to you; even your family, you must treat as a sacred trust, as persons given to you by the Lord to love, foster and guide.

Thus, you must elevate your attachment into worship and make it an instrument for spiritual progress. [ssspeaks/volume04](http://ssspeaks/volume04)

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What do you feel is the most important relationship for a husband and wife? Is it the relationship to one another, to the children, to the whole family or anyone else? Why do you feel this way?
2. Do you feel the relationship with siblings is as strong as the relationship to other family members? What has been your experience with either yourself or what you have seen in others?

### **Life Application**

- During the week pay attention to your interactions with your spouse and siblings. Discuss next week if it has changed over time or if it changed because you watched it more closely.
- Ask every member what specific quality of your spouse/sibling impresses him/her the most and list on quality the member believes that his/her spouse/sibling appreciates the most
- Take time this week to show appreciation for your spouse and siblings and try to show them how they have a positive influence in your life.

*Session 5***Swami as an ideal family member****Introduction**

In this week, we will discuss how Swami teaches us the various situations that occur in a family life and how He responded each time to upkeep His family honor and principles. This session could help us to understand how these situations apply to our own lives and also reinforce what Swami means when He says His life is His message. Note that many of these instances apply to Young Adults as well.

**Swami's Life Instances**

1. **Always willing to help at home despite having a tough school schedule-** 'Early in the morning, Swami would make a millet preparation – two balls of it, one for the grandfather and one for Himself; also, some groundnut chutney to go along with it. After this, Swami would run to school. Once a week, He would prepare some dal [a soup-like preparation made out of pulses], laced with spinach. There were no vessels made of metal; only earthen pots.

After hurried cooking, Swami would run all the way to school. At noon, there would be a break; as soon as the bell rang, Swami would run back home. The distance to be covered was three miles [about four and a half kilometres]. All the boys used to do this, and Swami did the same. On reaching home, Swami would serve food to His grandfather. He would wash the clothes, keep food for the night, and then have His meal. After this, a long run back to the school; this was how life went on for some years.

Kondama Raju was quite upset by all this. He thought, "There is no one to help Raju." One Sunday he asked, "Sathyam, am I giving You a lot of trouble?" Swami replied, "Grandfather, if I do not work hard now, when else then? Start early, drive slowly, and reach safely! This is work that I have to do with pleasure! So long as I am strong in body and mind, I am ready to do any amount of work." The grandfather was immensely pleased with this reply. This is the loving manner in which we spent time together. ' [Summer Course 2000, 29 May] [<http://www.ssbpt.info/summershowers/ss2000/ss2000-14.pdf>]

2. **Soft and sweet speech key to harmonious relationships** - On the following morning, these eleven students planned to walk all the way to the Bukkapatnam Bus Stand along with Swami and His elder brother to see them off. From Bukkapatnam, we were to go to Dharmavaram, and from there to Kamalapuram. These students wanted to give a parting gift and so they collected some money; each contributed half-an-anna. It came to almost six annas. They offered the money to Swami but Swami refused saying, " I do not want all this. You keep it for yourself." In those days things were so cheap that one could buy a short-pant for half-an-anna and a shirt for just one anna. Swami took just what was needed for one shirt and one short-pant, plus two pice for stitching charges. But the tailor was so nice and so full of love for Swami, he said, "Raju, for You there are no charges!" What you must notice here is that everyone had love for Swami. What was the reason? Soft and sweet words, always spoken by Swami. This is what endeared everyone to Swami. These students got the dress stitched and sent it over. [Summer Course 2000, 29 May] [<http://www.ssbpt.info/summershowers/ss2000/ss2000-14.pdf>]

3. **Helping out at home without being asked/ideal brother-** Meanwhile, Seshama Raju got married. Following his marriage, he had to go to Anantapur for some further studies and training. His wife was left behind in Kamalapuram, and Swami had to do all the household work. In those days, a train used to pass by early in the morning. Hearing the whistle of the engine, all the town-people would take their pots and head for a pond five miles away, to fetch drinking water. Swami would go at four in the morning to bring water. It was the time of the Second World War.

It so happened that one day, a special military train passed by at eleven o'clock at night. Hearing the whistle of the engine, all the people went as usual to the pond, without realising what time it was. Swami also went with all the others. It was very chilly then but one had to carry on nevertheless. After daybreak, there was more work to do; water had to be drawn from the well for people in the house to bathe. After this, there was a lot of household work to be done, followed by the cleaning of the entire house. It was only after finishing all this work that Swami could go to school.

In the school there was a Muslim teacher by name Mehboob Khan, who liked Swami very much. One day, with much kindness and consideration he said, "Raju, You work so hard all the time. I live just opposite Your house and, through my window, can see what You are doing. You are fetching so much water and also doing so much household work." Swami replied, "Sir, the body has to do work. In fact, the body has been given for doing work. If there is no work, laziness would set in and the body would become sick. Work is not all that difficult." [Summer Course 2000, 29 May] [<http://www.ssbpt.info/summershowers/ss2000/ss2000-14.pdf>]

4. **Forbearance/not talking ill of family members-** After the cattle fair was over and the scout service had concluded, Swami returned to Kamalapuram. He carried with Him some fruits and flowers to be presented to His sister-in-law [Seshama Raju's wife]. Swami's long absence had infuriated the people at home, especially as all the work normally done by Swami had to be done by them. Thus, when Swami returned, He got a very cold reception. The fruits and flowers that He lovingly offered were flung away; and, Swami was severely punished. As a result, the hand was badly swollen. What could be done? Swami had to bear it all with patience and forbearance.

There was an old lady in the adjoining house. She used to watch all this and cry silently, because she could not bear to see Sathya hurt. On the following day, Seshama Raju's son died and a telegram was sent to Puttaparthi. In those days, the telegram was received in Bukkapatnam and then hand-carried to Puttaparthi. It so happened that Pedda Venkama Raju had gone to Bukkapatnam for the weekly fair. There someone handed him the telegram sent by Seshama Raju. Immediately, Pedda Venkama Raju boarded a bus for Kamalapuram. When he came home, he saw that Swami's hand was badly swollen. He asked what had happened and what caused the swelling. Swami said it was due to a boil. He did not say anything then. But meanwhile, the old lady in the neighbouring house told Venkama Raju all that had been happening – about the heavy work-load, the ill-treatment, etc.

In the evening, Pedda Venkama Raju took Swami out. It was dark and so Swami carried a lamp. We went beyond the limits of the village. There, Pedda Venkama Raju stopped. The lamp was placed on the ground. Pedda Venkama Raju took Swami's hands into his, cried, and then said, "Son, did I send You here because I could not feed You? I will do anything, I will even become a petty peddler of salt to support You. Why do You have to suffer so much here? Though Your father, I have never raised my hand against You and struck You! You are being put to too much



suffering here. Come back with me at once.” Swami gently said, “They need a lot of help here right now. It would not be proper to leave and go away abruptly. You please go now. I shall come back later when the time is appropriate.” Swami never said anything against His brother or the other members of his family. Father went back most reluctantly but after he returned, he kept on writing postcards, “Come back immediately.” And then, in order to get Swami back real quick, the message was sent, “Your mother is in a serious condition.” Swami knew that this was not true. He stayed in his brother’s place till the examinations were over.

Swami is telling all this in order to impress upon students, how young people ought to behave and conduct themselves in relation to elders and teachers. You know a lot about the world. You are aware that even great sages have faced many problems. The best way to get over problems is to develop sacred feelings. Always, help ever, and hurt never. This is the maxim followed by Swami, and that is how He grew up. [Summer Course 2000, 29 May] [<http://www.ssbpt.info/summershowers/ss2000/ss2000-14.pdf>]

### Discussion Questions

1. What key family values did Swami demonstrate? How do they apply in our daily lives?

### Life Application

- Swami placed His family duties higher than His comfort. Let us find one occasion in this week to put our family duty at a higher pedestal than our own priorities.
- Get children to participate in daily household activities to increase their sense of belonging in the family. For e.g., allow them to set plates for dinner or help in preparing dinner.

*Session 6*

## Sai Center Relationships

### Introduction

To many of us, the devotees in the Sai Center are our closest family. They understand us emotionally and spiritually as well. How do we recognize devotees as human beings in the path of spiritual quest and develop a harmonious relationship with one and all.

### Swami's Quotes

- Social life is the very basis of spiritual life. Prema Dhaara, Part 2 p 134
- One's human nature is developed by society and contacts with kinsmen, friends and others. You have to show your gratitude to all of them by striving for their well-being. My Dear Students Volume 2, Divine Discourse June 15, 1989
- It is our duty to share the blessings of our inner freedom and joy with others around us in the society. This is the true brotherhood of man. Our Sai organization should keep this aim constantly before them. Prema Dhaara, Part 2 p 122
- ... the purpose of the Center is to provide a meeting place for those who wish to learn, discuss, and practice the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba, and to serve as an information point or "signpost" for individuals interested in these teachings... Vol1, No1 Jun 15 1976 Sathya Sai Newsletter (Reprinted Sept/Oct 2006 Vo 30 No 4)
- Have the feeling of One-ness permeate all your acts. Only those who do so have a place in this Organisation; the rest can withdraw. [1975.1.6]
- These organisations are exclusively for spiritual development [1969.11.21]. They are established to translate the principles of love and nonviolence into daily practice. They have also to promote inquiry into four basic problems: (1) The body —what is it? (2) The body — I am not it. (3) Then who am I? (4) I am That (God)! [1970.11.20]
- Group devotional singing has a different purpose from silent individual prayers. It is a mutual effort of spiritual practice to overcome the six foes of man: lust, anger, greed, attachment, conceit, and hatred. [1975.4.1]
- What exactly is your duty? Let me summarise it for you. First, tend your parents with love and reverence and gratitude. Second, speak the truth and act virtuously. Third, whenever you have a few moments to spare, repeat the name of the Lord, with the form in your mind. Fourth, never indulge in talking ill of others or try to discover faults in others. And, finally, do not cause pain to others, in any form. Sadhana —The Inward Path, 65

### Discussion Questions

1. What is the ideal relationship between members of a Sai Center?
2. Should the Sai Center Member relationship be different from any other relationship? If not, why? If so, how?

3. Why do center members have disagreements?
4. How to best handle disagreements between center members?

**Comment:**

The Sai Center is our extended family. We share the same parent (Sai), are taught the same values (truth, right conduct, peace, love, non-violence), have the same common aspirations (spiritual growth - realization of our divinity). We should care for each other at the center. It should be a safe nurturing environment where we experience unconditional love. We should look out for each other, support each other, teach each other, learn from each other. The goal is to broaden our love and kinship with a wider and wider scope to include the Sai Center family, the family of the Community in which we live, the family of our Region, Nation, World, and ultimately the entire Universe.

**Life Application**

Choose and implement one of the following for this coming week.

1. I will approach any member of my center with whom I have had a prior misunderstanding and express to them my gratitude and love.
2. I will not look at the perceived faults at others in the center and if such thoughts arise, I will instead realize my own fault for thinking those thoughts.
3. I will sacrifice my need/desire/viewpoint for those of a fellow member.
4. At random have the center members into group of 5-10 members. Each member should talk about another member's good qualities in one or two sentences until every member has spoken about other members in that group.

**Affirmation**

I will feel oneness with all of my Sai Center brothers and sisters, voice my gratitude to them for influencing my life, and strive for their happiness and well-being.

## *Session 7*

### **Conclusion**

Encourage devotees to share their experiences and personal stories from these 6 sessions and feedback on the topic.

### **Survey**

Please choose the topic of the week and provide your feedback through the online form. This may be additional work, but helps record the feedback while it is still fresh in our minds.