

## **CEILING ON DESIRES: 'ONE-IN-THREE' CHALLENGE**

*"Nature is the purest handiwork of God.  
If you are able to love Nature, and feel in tune with it,  
you are that much closer to God.  
It is very easy to know God through Nature, for in Nature  
there is goodness, simplicity, purity and selflessness."  
(Sathya Sai Baba)*

*"The five elements – ether, air, fire, water and earth  
are the vesture of God, as well as of man. Use them  
moderately and with wisdom, with fear and humility."  
(Sathya Sai Baba)*

The ***Ceiling on Desires: 'One in Three' Challenge*** offers each individual an opportunity to help care for the environment on which we all depend, by reducing the impact of our individual and collective footprints on Mother Earth while also serving those in need. This is an opportunity for individuals to truly live His Message.

- The ***Ceiling on Desires: 'One in Three' Challenge*** offers each individual the opportunity to think about the difference between our 'needs' and our 'wants'
- Every time we are about to purchase, or use, goods or services in relation to our daily requirements, we are asked to stop and take a minute or two *to reflect on whether the purchase or use of those goods or services will meet a 'need' we have, or whether, in fact, we are fulfilling a 'want'.*
- We are also invited to think about how we are using the earth's resources to sustain and maintain our lifestyles.
- We are invited to choose, on at least *one in three* occasions, NOT to purchase or use the goods or services, and, by so doing, effectively allow *the 'saving' or conserving of those resources so they can be available to meet real 'needs' somewhere else in the local or wider community.*

The Sai Youth in Australia & PNG and in the U.K. have previously demonstrated the benefits and effectiveness of this practice by saving

thousands of dollars which has then been used to provide for the needs of poor villagers in India.

We can be very creative in finding ways to reduce our desires. For example:

#### Groceries/food items:

We can take a few minutes before taking the shopping basket to the check-out counter to check whether we really do need each and every item (it may be we actually don't need the extra tin of tomatoes, packet of chips, etc.)

Before we reach for the second, or third' helping of food or coffee, or juice, etc., we might consider whether we are really still hungry/thirsty or whether we really do need that item of food/drink to sustain us.

#### Clothing:

While shopping we can reflect about whether we really need a particular item of clothing, such as the T-Shirt, dress, extra pair of shoes, etc. We can ask ourselves if that purchase is, in fact, meeting a 'want', or if in fact we're becoming caught up in advertising, marketing or effective sales pitches and so have, momentarily, lost our conscious awareness of what is happening?

#### Fuel:

Before we jump into the car, we can stop and consider whether it might be a more efficient use of the car and fuel to wait until we have more than one job to do, or whether we might be able to share the trip with someone else, to save two (or even multiple) separate car trips, and hence save the Earth's resources.

We can also consider whether it might be preferable to walk, ride a bicycle or take public transport!

#### Possessions:

We might take some time to look around our homes and cupboards and sheds/garages, etc., to consider whether we really do still need everything we have. If not, we can choose to let go and enable someone else to have the use of that item. By so

doing, we lighten the loads we have to carry or are responsible for! We also may enable someone else's needs to be met.

### Water:

Before having our shower/bath, we might take a few minutes to consider how we might conserve the cool water which runs out of the tap before the hot water. For example, we might catch the cool water in a bucket and pour it onto thirsty plants, or into a bird bath, or fish pond, etc. We can also consider means for redirecting the grey water onto the plants in the garden.

### Energy:

We might take a couple of minutes to:

- check whether we have turned off the electrical items at the power plug when we have finished using them,
- check whether we really do need the hotplate at the highest temperature when preparing food
- or whether we need to fill the kettle to the maximum for one or a few cups of coffee.

We might also consider whether we really do need to heat or cool the rooms in the house which are not in use, or to use more than one computer or television in the same house at the same time, etc.

It may be possible to conduct a 'Green Audit' of our homes and workplaces in order to work out how to reduce energy consumption (ask you regional green officer if you need help with how to do this).

### Time:

By considering **how** we are using our time, we may find ways to reduce time waste. For example, through planning for an activity and with good organisation, we can avoid wasting time. By taking a look at our patterns or habits of behaviour, we might realize that we often waste time.

### The Four "R's" - Refuse, Reduce, Re-Use, and Recycle

We can implement actions which will have the lowest 'footprint' on the Earth by 'Refusing' to purchase goods and 'Refusing' to use services, when we don't need them.

When we refuse, the energy intensity footprint is zero...and we are adding LOVE!

Through all these practices, we are placing a 'Ceiling on Desires', and we are following our spiritual practices.

*"It is here that our insistence on a desireless life, in which human wants are reduced to the minimum needs, comes to the rescue as the only possible way of restoring the social and economic balance. Curb your desires, reduce your wants, live in spiritual austerity, and the available material will be sufficient for all humanity. More than that, the tensions of a competitive ...socio economic system will be dissolved and peace of mind will be restored." (Sathya Sai Baba)*

### **GOODWILL FUND**

Each individual is invited to record the estimated value of the 'savings' made through choosing not to purchase goods or use services (including, if we wish, the estimated savings of 'footprint intensity') in a Spiritual Diary. This may then become a Study Circle exercise, or just for personal interest or 'fun'. In addition, individuals are invited to register the \$ value of the foregone purchase(s), or estimated value of services not used, in the Goodwill Fund at the Sathya Sai Baba Centre of their choice, as equivalent 'Goodwill points'.

(For example, the \$ equivalent value recorded as 'Goodwill Points' calculated on basis of \$1: 1 Goodwill point).

The points can be registered under an individual's name (or initials), or under a code known only to the individual. The decision to forgo a 'want' is simply a personal decision, that individual's personal spiritual practice, and a commitment between them and their Lord. After an agreed to period of time (e.g. 3, 6 or 12 months), Centre members have the opportunity to determine how to use the 'Goodwill Points' which have accumulated in each Centre's Goodwill Fund for a particular service project. Centre members are invited to be creative with how they wish to use the accumulated 'Goodwill'.

Centre members will be invited to translate the points they have personally accumulated into an offer of time, skills or resources, and the like. This can be determined by each individual according to his/her capacity to contribute to the Service activity decided upon. Centres can also choose to combine their respective Goodwill Funds for a joint Service activity.

*"Trees bear fruits, rivers carry water, cows yield milk, not for their own sake, but for the sake of others. Equally the body is given to man for helping others." (Sathya Sai Baba)*

It is possible that the effectiveness of this ***Ceiling on Desires: 'One in Three Challenge'*** may be such that others in the Sai Organisation worldwide, and perhaps members of the wider community, may be inspired to do the same in the future.

*"I know you have the enthusiasm to carry My message among the people of this country and other countries. Let me remind you that the best and the only successful way in which you can do it is to transfer the message into your own lives. Your thoughts, words and deeds must be saturated with the message. Then, they will spread effortlessly and efficiently, and the face of the world will be transformed."*

*(Sathya Sai Baba)*

*"A wave of service, if it sweeps over the land, catching everyone in its enthusiasm, will be able to wipe off mounds of hatred, malice and greed that infests the world."*

*(Sathya Sai Baba)*

***"Life is a Challenge, Meet it!"***

***Life is a Game, Play it!"***

***Life is Love, Live it!"***