

Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference July 2007

Sadhana Program for Sai Youth



**Oh Lord, Take my love and
let it flow in Fullness of Devotion to Thee.**

**Oh Lord, Take my hands and
let them work incessantly for Thee.**

**Oh Lord, Take my soul and
let it be merged in one with Thee.**

**Oh Lord, Take my mind and thoughts and
let them be in tune with Thee.**

**Oh Lord, Take my everything and
let me be an instrument to work.**

SUMMARY

Based on the input from Sai youth and leaders of the International Sai Organization, the Planning Committee of the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference, 2007 presents this Sadhana (spiritual practices) program for the youth as an offering to our Beloved Swami. We urge every Sai youth, even if they are not participating in the conference, to practice this program. Let us all offer the fruits of our efforts, with humility and love, at the Divine Lotus Feet of our Beloved Swami. The Sadhana program consists of nine spiritual activities to be undertaken by Sai youth. Each action is a form of spiritual discipline and together they enable a singular focus on the Divine.

Spiritual Discipline 1 – Practice Namasmarana - Chanting of The Lord’s Name

Spiritual Discipline 2 – Read Swami’s Discourses/Books Daily and Conduct Weekly Youth Study Circles

Spiritual Discipline 3 – Engage in Selfless Service Activity as a Group

Spiritual Discipline 4 – Practice of Dietary Discipline

Spiritual Discipline 5 – Learn to Speak Softly and Speak Less

Spiritual Discipline 6 – Take Active Part in Sai Centres

Spiritual Discipline 7 – Improve Communication and Interact Respectfully with Parents

Spiritual Discipline 8 – Practice Ceiling on Desires by not Wasting Food, Money, Energy and Time

Spiritual Discipline 9 – Practice Daily Meditation and Prayer

Spiritual Discipline 1

PRACTICE NAMASMARANA – CHANTING OF THE LORD’S NAME

“Namasmarana is the remembrance or chanting of the name of the Lord. Once the sweetness of that name has been experienced, the person will not have exhaustion, unrest or sloth. He will fulfill his pilgrimage of Sadhana, joyfully, enthusiastically and with deep conviction.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Prema Vahini

Suggested chantings for Namasmarana:

1. Om Sri Sai Ram
2. Gayathri Mantra
3. Om Sri Sai Ganeshaya Namaha
4. Om Namah Shivaya
5. So Ham
6. Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father
7. Allah-ho-Akbar
8. Om Mani Padme Hum
9. Shema Yisrael

“Whatever Sadhana a person may or may not perform, he must practice uninterrupted Namasmarana. Then only can he master the natural attributes of greed, anger, etc. Since the Lord is the universal Goal and this Journey of Life has Him as the destination, keep Him constantly in view and subdue the mind which makes you wander from the path. All the good qualities automatically gather around the person who practices control of speech and the constant contemplation of the Lord.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Prema Vahini

(Excerpt from *Conversations with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba* by Dr. John S. Hislop)

Q - Hislop: Swami, please tell us more about chanting the name of God?

A - Swami: Here is a small example. A man had to pass through 20 miles of forest at night, and he had only a small lantern that lighted about a three-foot circle. He put down the lantern and started to cry, for he could see for only three feet. Some travellers came along and asked the reason for his sorrow. They exclaimed, "But sir, if you walk, carrying the lamp with you, if you can see only two feet ahead of you it is enough, and you could travel in that way through a hundred miles of dark forest without trouble. But if you leave the lantern where it is, you cannot move at all in this dark forest."

"In the same way, the name of the Lord may be written in the book you are looking at, but you may find your way only by using the Name. The Name should be woven into the breath so that you are calling on Him all day long. Soham- 'He and I'. 'He' with the in-breath, 'I' with the out-breath. Or Sai Ram. Or the name of your choice, said with the movement of the breath. Breath is form, thus the name and the form go together. Breath is life. Life is God. Breath is God. The name of God and the form of God. Breathe God. See God. Eat God. Love God. The name of God will illumine every step of your life and take you to Him. The name must be said with love. God is love. If breath is said with love, then life is love. There is no Shakti stronger than love. If it is said with love, the name of God, any name of God - Ram, Sai Ram, Krishna, Jesus, Sohum - that small name will open up and illuminate the whole of life. For the one who desires to realize God, only the Name is needed."

Spiritual Discipline 2

READ SWAMI'S DISCOURSES/BOOKS DAILY, AND CONDUCT WEEKLY YOUTH STUDY CIRCLES

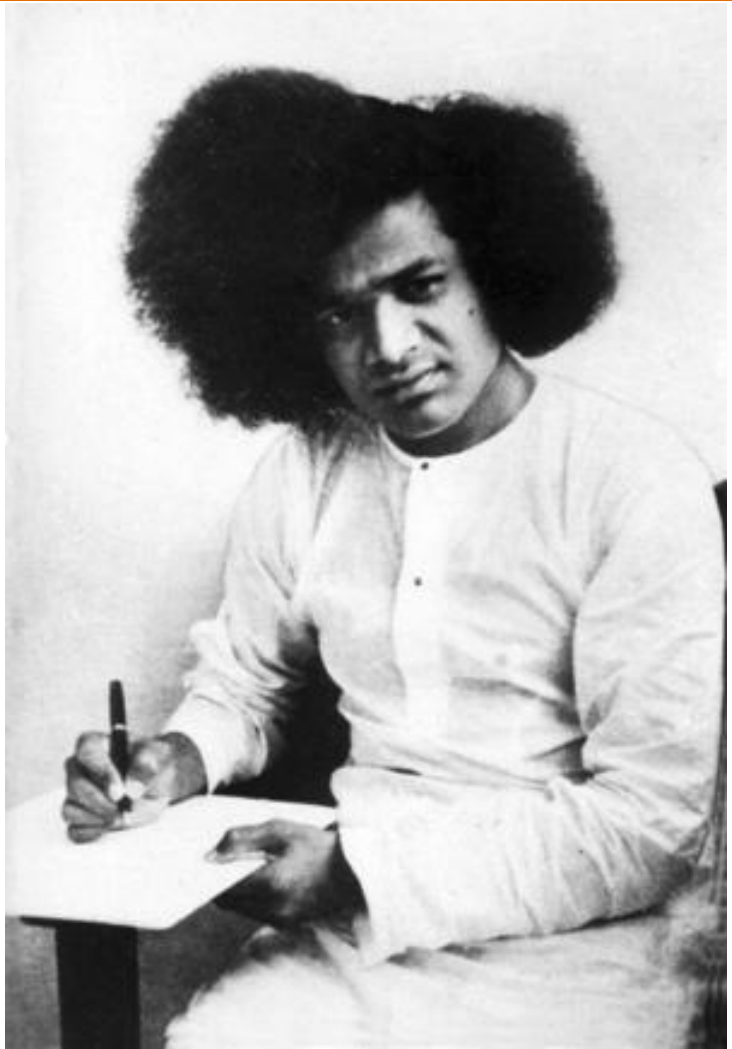
It is rare to have the three boons: 1) Human birth 2) Desire for liberation or Self-Realization 3) Proximity to a Maha-Purusha (Guru or Saint) who can guide his disciples to God-Realization. We are not only gifted with this rare opportunity but also gifted to have God Himself guide all of us to reach the goal of Self-Realization. At a meeting of overseas Central Coordinators during Swami's 80th Birthday celebrations it was concluded youth should dive deeper into Swami's teachings. In order to understand the mission and teachings of Swami, youth should constantly read Sai literature and hold regular study circles.

Therefore, the second spiritual discipline in this Sadhana is to conduct weekly or bi-weekly study circles. Youth should meet in a disciplined manner, read and put into practice Swami's discourses especially the discourses given by Swami at the Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conferences in 1997, 1999 and discourses for Karnataka youth (May 27, 2006) and Kerala youth (May 21, 2006). They are urged to spend a few moments meditating together and discussing how to aid one's own spiritual transformation.

WHAT IS A STUDY CIRCLE?

“What is a study circle? It is not just reading books. 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 their 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 of the study circle.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba,
Conversations with
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai
Baba by Dr. John Hislop,
pages 125-126,
Conversations recorded in
1968



“A study circle does not mean only just reading and discussing and taking information into the head, but also putting into practice what is learnt.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1985

“Knowledge about what this author says or that sage teaches is not what your study circle must aim to acquire. 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.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1974

“In the study circle you can learn a lot of things, but the most important thing to be learnt is your own true nature—your Atma-tatwa. Learning all about external things without knowing your real self is like studying the branches of a tree, ignoring its roots. There are many fruits on the tree. We can see the fruits. What happens if you water those fruits? They will fall down. But if you water the roots down below, the tree flourishes and will give fruits which can be enjoyed. You have to develop self-knowledge and self-confidence and then only you can help others.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1985

WARNING

However, youth should not treat these sessions as socializing Forums. Boys and girls should, where possible, meet separately or if meeting together ensure that no mixing takes place. These study circles should take place either at a Sai centre, or a devotee's home. Study circles cannot take place in restaurants. Youth should be mindful of Swami's omnipresence at all times.

"There are some who are attracted by various systems and methods like Hathayoga, Kriyaayoga, or Raajayoga, which claim to help people to realize the self. But, I must tell you that no one of these can make you realize God. I am saying this most emphatically. The Premayoga (Discipline of Love) alone can lead you to God. Those yogas may calm the mind's agitations temporarily and may improve health and prolong life for a few more years, but that is all that they can do. What is the good you hope to achieve with that body in those extra years? If Love is absent, they weigh you down like big burdens."

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1970

All Sai youth should read a few pages from "Prema Vahini", written by Bhagawan, every week and discuss what they have understood in a study circle. "Prema Vahini" was the first series of articles written by Bhagawan Himself for the monthly magazine "Sanathana Sarathi".

Spiritual Discipline 3

ENGAGE IN SELFLESS SERVICE ACTIVITY AS A GROUP

Sai youth should undertake one selfless service activity or project in their region and serve the community continuously until July 2007. A collective submission of reports of all these service activities will be made at the Divine lotus Feet of our beloved Lord during the Conference.



"The individual and the society are one. Whatever one does for society is also good for him. When service is done in that spirit, the individual as well as the society derive benefits from it. It may not be easy to cultivate such a sense of identity. But through persistent effort one can get over the sense of 'mine' and 'thine' and identify oneself with society at large. All service should be regarded as an offering to God and every opportunity to serve should be

welcomed as a gift from God. When service is done in this spirit, it will lead in due course to self-realization. It is this kind of selfless, spiritually oriented service that is needed today. To a world riddled with conflict and chaos, this will provide a climate of serene peace. Regard yourselves as brothers in a family. Shed completely all selfishness and self-interest and enter upon service activities as the highest purpose of life. Service must become your life-breath. You must become ideal Sevaks (selfless servants) and set an example to the world.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1987

“Everyone live up to the motto- ‘Help ever, Hurt never.’ Every educated person should engage himself or herself in selfless service to society, with humility and a pure heart.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1994

“The age span, 16-30 years, is crucial, for that is the period when life adds sweetness to itself, when talents, skills, and attitudes are accumulated, sublimated and sanctified. If the tonic of unselfish Seva (selfless service) is administered to the mind during this period, life’s mission is fulfilled—for the process of sublimation and sanctification will be hastened by this tonic.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1984

“Without offering selfless service, how can you expect to receive God’s love? To receive God’s love, you must be totally free from worldly desires and constantly engage in selfless service. The service must be of a pleasing nature. All actions must be performed exclusively for God’s pleasure. For this, you do not have to give up anything. Just keep on doing your normal duty in the manner ordained by Destiny. You wish to study; by all means do so. But in what manner should you study? You should do it for God’s pleasure. You are employed in some place. How should you do your work? Do it to please God. Tell yourself, ‘I am doing this job as an offering to Him.’ Install this feeling in your heart and do whatever you want to or have to. However, before rushing to adopt this course, pause, reflect, and make sure that God would really be pleased with what you are trying to do and offer to Him! You cannot do all sorts of silly and stupid things, claiming that you are doing it for God’s pleasure. Every action of yours must have the stamp of quality that is acceptable to God.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 2000

“Young people should reflect on the question what gratitude they can show to the society which has given them so much. What service are you doing to society? Every man should show his sense of gratitude to society by rendering selfless service.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1997

Spiritual Discipline 4

PRACTICE OF DIETARY DISCIPLINE

“By regulating your diet and avoiding certain bad habits, you can preserve health. Moderate food, and food of the Saathwik type, will promote mental poise and also physical happiness. Mitha-ahaara (moderation in food) is always to be welcomed. Many people consume more than the necessary quantity of rich food and such have to practise moderation.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1960

“Man is the only living being which dislikes raw food found in the natural state. All other animals eat things as they are—grain, grass, leaves, shoots, fruits. Man boils, fries, melts, mixes and adopts various methods of cooking in order to satisfy the cravings of the tongue, the eye and the nose. As a consequence, the food value of these articles are either reduced or destroyed. When the seeds are fried, they do not sprout; that is clear proof that the ‘life-force’ is eliminated. Therefore, uncooked, raw pulses just sprouting are to be preferred. Also nuts and fruits. The coconut, offered to the Gods, is a good Saathwik (pure) food, having good percentage of protein besides fat, starch and minerals.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1979

“Today, let it be anyone, whether one deems himself a devotee or not, he should give up meat eating. Why? Meat eating promotes only animal qualities. It has been well said that the food one consumes determines one's thoughts. By eating the flesh of various animals, the qualities of these animals are imbibed. How sinful is it to feed on animals, which are sustained by the same five elements as human beings! This leads to demonic tendencies, besides committing the sin of inflicting cruelty on animals. Hence, those who genuinely seek to become devotees of God have to give up non-vegetarian food. Calling themselves Sai devotees or devotees of Rama and Krishna, they fatten the chickens. How can they be deemed Sai devotees? How can God accept such a person as a devotee? Therefore, whether they are devotees in India or outside, they should give up from this instant meat eating. [...] Therefore, those who aspire to become devotees of God must give up meat, liquor and smoking.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1994

“On this sacred day of Vijaya Dasami take an oath to give up vices such as smoking, drinking and partaking of non-vegetarian food. Many do not realize the evil-effects of these bad habits. If a smoker blows air on a white handkerchief, he will find yellow spots on it. This is a sign of disease. Smoking leads to cancer. Drinking is a demonic quality. It makes you intoxicated and to forget yourself. Consuming non-vegetarian food is also a bad quality. When human body itself is made of flesh, where is the need to consume the flesh of birds and animals? You should partake of only sacred food. Only then you will have sacred feelings. For sacred thoughts and sacred deeds, sacred food is essential.”

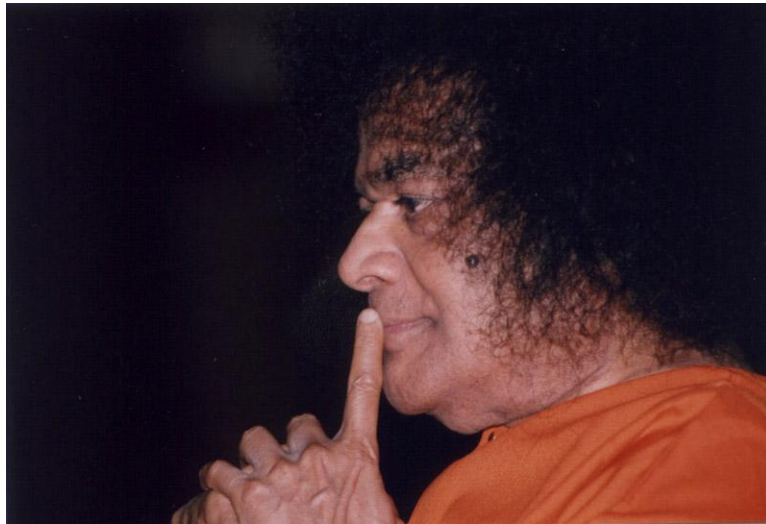
- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1998

“Man should consume what is in accord with the needs of the human body. Doctors speak about proteins. Are there not proteins in vegetables, milk and curds and pulses? Non-vegetarian food not only affects the body but also the mind. Food, Head, God—these three are inter-related. By consuming animal food, animal tendencies are aroused. As is your food, so are your thoughts. Men today are behaving in a manner worse than that of wild animals in the forest. They have become cruel, pitiless and hard-hearted. There is no sympathy or understanding between man and man. The main reason for this condition is the kind of food that is consumed. Students! Be careful about the food you eat. See that it is conducive to your health and happiness. The ancient sages used to eat only once a day. Today people go on consuming food at all times, not to mention drinks and snacks in between, with the result that indigestion sets in. Young people should be satisfied with 2000 calories of food per day. This is enough to sustain them. Anything in excess will cause indigestion and sleeplessness.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1990

Spiritual Discipline 5

LEARN TO SPEAK SOFTLY AND SPEAK LESS



Swami says, "Before you speak, THINK: 1) Is it necessary? 2) Is it true? 3) Is it kind? 4) Will it hurt anyone? 5) Will it improve on the silence?"

"You feel the presence of God when silence reigns. In the excitement and confusion of the market place, you cannot hear His Footfall. He is Sabdabrahma, resounding when all is filled with silence. That is why I insist on silence, the practice of low speech and minimum sound. Talk low, talk little, talk in whispers, sweet and true. Examine each act of yours and see that you execute it with minimum noise. Do not shout to a person standing far; go near him or beckon to him to approach you. Loud noise is sacrilege on the sky, just as there are sacrilegious uses of earth and of water."

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1966

"Silence is the only language of the realized. Practice moderation in speech. That will help you in many ways. It will develop Prema, for most misunderstandings and factions arise out of carelessly spoken words. When the foot slips, the wound can be healed; but when the tongue slips, the wound it causes in the heart of another will fester for life. The tongue is liable to four big errors: uttering falsehood, scandalizing, finding fault with others, and excessive speech. All these have to be avoided if there is to be Santhi for the individual as well as for society."

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1958

"The first step in the Sadhana is the cleansing of the speech. Talk sweet without anger. Do not boast of your scholarship or attainments. Be humble, eager to serve; conserve your speech. Practice silence. That will save you from squabbles, frittering thoughts and faction."

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1961

“Speak the truth, do not inflict pain by word or deed or even thought. That is the way to gain Santhi; that is the highest gain which you can earn in this life.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1958

“The next virtue is right speech (samyak vak). Right vision and right listening lead to right speech. Your speech should be good. Never utter harsh words. Speak softly and sweetly. That is why I tell you often, ‘You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.’ Say what you have to say without harshness. Speak softly so that only the person for whom your words are intended may hear you. Such soft and sweet speech should be developed.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1999

“Speak softly, sweetly, without malice in your heart; speak as if you are addressing the Sai who resides in every one.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1959

Spiritual Discipline 6

TAKE ACTIVE PART IN SAI CENTRES

Each youth group should have a one-on-one meeting with their Sai Centre Chair (President) and find out what help and support they can give to the Sai Centre. Each and every youth should take on some sort of project at the Sai Centre level under the supervision of the Sai Centre Chair (President). The results will be tabulated and a report will be compiled.

This does not simply mean teaching bhajans, SSE, or setting up the centre for bhajans. Each youth must identify a need, something that the Sai Centre is struggling with and help them out, make a difference and earn a good name.

Spiritual Discipline 7

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND INTERACT RESPECTFULLY WITH PARENTS

“The sacred books want you to honour them and worship them. ‘Maathru dhevo bhava.’ ‘Pithru dhevo bhava,’ — ‘Let your mother be your God;’ ‘Let your father be your God’—that is the teaching. Yes; how else can you thank them? What else can you give, in return, than your Love and Service? Think of all the care, all the love, all the pain, all the hunger and sleeplessness they underwent and undergo for your sake. Be kind, be soft and sweet to them. Do not be rude and disrespectful. Try your best to make them happy; obey them, for they know much more than you do of the world and its dangers. That is the way to worship them.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1969

Always look after your parents and never shout at them. This will make Swami very happy. Sai Youth should all try and speak softly and obligingly to their parents, no matter what has happened in the past. Speak to them in a loving, soft manner. Swami says that *“you cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.”*



“While the parents have given you all kinds of protection, sacrificing their comforts for looking after you, if you in turn show a disrespectful attitude to your parents, God, also, will be displeased with you. Parents fulfill your material wants and desires; and if you cannot respect and love them, how are you going to respect and love God? How can you please God if you cannot please your own parents?”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1977

“Respect and revere your parents, Bhagawan himself will manifest before you and shower you with His Grace”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1997

Spiritual Discipline 8

PRACTICE CEILING ON DESIRES BY NOT WASTING FOOD, MONEY, ENERGY AND TIME

When someone asked Swami, “Who is the poorest man? And who is the richest man?” Swami replied, “He who has many desires is the poorest man in the world. He who has much satisfaction is the richest man in the world”.

“This (the ceiling on desires program) enjoins on everyone not to waste food, money, time and energy. Avoiding waste of these four forms of gifts from God is spiritual Sadhana. It is the means to Self-realization.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1993

DO NOT WASTE FOOD

“Don’t waste Food. Food is God.’ Your body is made of food and you are the result of the food eaten by the parents. ‘Anna Brahma’ (Food is God). Eat as much as it is necessary to eat. But do not throw away food by taking too much in your plate. By wasting food you will be wasting the energy Divine.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1993

DO NOT WASTE MONEY

“Misuse of money is a great evil. Even men will have to do their own bit in controlling the expenditure on unwanted and unnecessary things. Money is Dhaivaswaroopam

(embodiment of Divinity). When you talk of wealth you should be careful to avoid avaricious accumulation and extravagant expenditure.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1983

DO NOT WASTE ENERGY

“Don't waste energy. Energy enters into every one of our actions. When you see, speak, hear, act or think energy is expended. In every one of these activities you should see that you do not waste your energies unnecessarily.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1997

DO NOT WASTE TIME

“You should be careful about 'time', which is the yardstick of life. Seconds become hours, hours become years, years make yugas (ages) and so on. You should not waste this most valuable 'time'. Time lost in wasteful pursuits can't be got back by any means. All our activities should be planned for utilizing the available time to maximum advantage.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1983

Youth should be more mindful when they are with friends. The time spent gossiping can be spent in talking about God, thinking about God and engaging in selfless service.

“You should enjoy Nature according to your need. You should not rob Nature of its resources to satisfy your greed. Here is an example. Once a greedy person owned a duck, which used to lay a golden egg every day. One day, he ripped open the stomach of the duck thinking that he would get many golden eggs at a time. Today man also is indulging in such foolish and greedy acts. Instead of being satisfied with what Nature is giving him, he aspires for more and more, and in the process, creating imbalance in Nature.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 2001

Spiritual Discipline 9

PRACTICE DAILY MEDITATION AND PRAYER

“We always have enough time to talk, visit cinemas etc. There is certainly time for meditation. Real meditation is getting absorbed in God as the only thought, the only goal. God only, only God. Think God, breathe God, love God. Concentration means, when all senses and desires fall away and there is only God. In between concentration and meditation, like a separation between the two, is contemplation. Concentration to contemplation, then meditation. As long as one thinks 'I am meditating' that is the mind and not meditation. As long as one knows he is meditating, he is not meditating. In absorption in God, one puts aside every form and merges into God. In that process the mind naturally stops.



“Meditation as described by Swami is the royal road, the easy path. For meditation to be effective there must be steady practice with no hurry and no worry. With steady practice, the person will become quiet and the state of meditation will naturally come about. To think otherwise is weakness. Success is assured. Call upon God, He will help you. He will respond and He Himself will be your guru. He will guide you. He will always be at your side. Think God, see God, hear God, eat God, drink God, and love God. That is the easy path, the royal road to your goal of breaking ignorance and the realization of your true nature - which is one with God.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, *Conversations with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba* by Dr. John Hislop, pages 145-156, Conversations recorded in 1968

MORNING PRAYER

“Oh Lord! I am now born from the womb of sleep. I am determined to carry out all the tasks of this day as offering to Thee, with Thee ever present before my mind's eye. Make my words, thoughts and deeds sacred and pure; let me inflict no pain on anyone; let no one inflict pain on me; kindly direct me, guide me and protect me this day.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

EVENING PRAYER

“Oh Lord! The tasks of the day, whose burden I placed on You this morning are over. It was You who made me walk, talk, think and act. I, therefore, place at Thy feet all my words, thoughts and deeds. My tasks are done. Receive me, guard me and protect me. I am coming back to you.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

SUMMARY

The nine spiritual disciplines described above constitute a rigorous but necessary Sadhana for youth aspiring to serve society and live the teachings of our beloved Bhagawan. The disciplines enable youths to learn Bhagawan's teachings, transform themselves and selflessly serve others in the joyful bliss of Divine oneness. When these disciplines are put into daily practice with dedication, devotion, discipline, discrimination and determination, they lead to purity of heart and thus make one experience innate divinity and manifest it in daily life.

