

Newsletter

ZONE 7

ISSUE 6
MAR 2013



Interview with K. Chakravarthi

In the grand story of the Sri Sathya Sai Avatar, a devotee who has played a key role is Mr. K. Chakravarthi, I.A.S. He was the first Registrar of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, and later the Secretary of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. He now serves the Central Trust as a Trustee. Mr. K. Chakravarthi's association with the Sai Avatar dates back to 1975. An over-achiever by any measure, at the age of 24, he had completed his university education in Economics and Law, and was inducted into the prestigious Indian Administrative Service.

Although a native of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Chakravarthi opted to serve in the Andhra Pradesh cadre, because it was home to the Lord Venkateshwara shrine at Tirupathi. Born and raised in the Vaishnavite spiritual tradition, he found it hard to resist the draw of the Lord at Tirumala. During his 15 year tenure both in the central and state governments, he earned himself a reputation for his competence and integrity.

The turning point in Mr. Chakravarthi's life came when he was posted as the Collector of the Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh, the very jurisdiction within which lies Puttaparthi. At the insistence of his wife, Mrs. Sudha Chakravarthi, and his colleague, Major Vishwanath, he visited Prasanthi Nilayam for the first time in 1975.

Bhagawan's very first words to him were, "I may be new to you, but you're not new to me." The declaration proved prophetic, as it led to a completely unplanned and unscheduled detour in the life of the

Contents

Mr. K. Chakravarthi	1
Dutch Choir, NL	8
Youth value training, CZ	10
Youth meeting, DE	11
Sai Quotes: Time	13



This newsletter is intended for members of SSO. This newsletter is published by the SSO Zone 7 Newsletter team.
To contact us, please use e-mail: secretariate@sathyasai-zone7.org

Chakravarthi family.

At the peak of his professional life, at the age of 45, Mr. Chakravarthi shifted his gears from I.A.S to S.A.I. Today, for the past 31 years, Mr. and Mrs. Chakravarthi have been full-time ashramites, living here in Prasanthi Nilayam, and serving the Sai mission.

Here are parts of the interview with Mr. Chakravarthi, the full text and videos of the extensive and intensive interview can be found [here](http://media.radiosai.org/journals/vol_11/01FEB13/05_Chakravarthi.htm):

http://media.radiosai.org/journals/vol_11/01FEB13/05_Chakravarthi.htm



Q: Let's talk about life before and after that fateful day when Bhagawan was rushed to the Super Specialty Hospital - March 28, 2011. As the Secretary of the Trust at that time, and His close devotee, what do you recall of that day?

K.CH.: All that we can say is we were all traumatized. I had just come home from Prasanthi Nilayam, and half an hour later, I got a frantic call from the Yajur Mandir saying that Swami has to be rushed to the hospital, and that I should get back to Yajur Mandir. Hardly few minutes later, I was back in Yajur Mandir and we had to arrange the ambulance. The doctors were there and Swami had to be brought down. It was a fairly hectic time, and our reactions were rather slow, because however much we knew that Swami was not well, we were not mentally prepared to see Swami in a condition in which He had to be rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. And I think my mind was blank. All that I could do was I showed Swami (by gesture) that I am following His ambulance. So I went behind Swami's ambulance in my car.

Q: Was Bhagawan awake and conscious at this time?

K.CH.: As He came down, He was visibly conscious. He was in a chair; we had to take Him sitting in His chair. To what extent could things around Him have registered is very difficult to say. Well, we presume that He was, I think, in a condition in which He was at least aware of what is around Him, who were around Him. That's how it happened.

Q: The days that followed, were obviously very difficult for everybody, especially so for the members of the Trust – constant media attention and then the responsibility of handling the situation in the hospital. What was it like?

K.CH.: It is a question of being caught unawares firstly, because it is not as though that we were planning to take Swami to the hospital for a long treatment. At least I was always hoping that there will be some unknown, mysterious way in which Swami would pull Himself up and therefore there will be no need for Him to go to the hospital. Now having gone to the hospital and being told that His condition is serious, it was a question of waiting during those days; in other normal cases, people would expect recovery of their loved ones. But here was a case where I suppose more than He being the beloved of many, it was always a question of His extraordinary power by which He could recover Himself.

At one level your mind says "We have got to go through the normal procedures", at another level I suppose you're not prepared to believe that these are the things which have got to be done as in the case of an ordinary patient.

It is very difficult for any person, not only me; I think it would have been the normal reaction of many people there. So, it became, a very prolonged stay. And a prolonged stay means you can think of it as a time for recovery. You can also think of it as a situation which is going downhill, physical condition being what it is. So, it is very difficult to look back and say precisely this is the moment in which hope was lost.

Q: Understandably! And then once the Mahasamadhi happened on April 24, 2011, and for millions of devotees around the world, life just changed in a trice, but in your case it was even harder because you had the loss, the grief, as well as the added responsibilities to handle because the entire world was descending into Puttaparthi. What was going through your mind?

K.CH.: I didn't think that I was in any way responsible for handling many things which are happening around. No one could have thought that he's going to handle it single-handedly.

...

Q: It's very hard to draw that strength in the moment of grief and loss and to stay together, and think of the logistics, I can't even think of a Head of State who has had such a send-off.

K.CH.: In certain cases like that, you prepare in advance, as to what should be done, what should be the protocol, etc. In the case of Bhagawan, it is rather difficult, because if you start preparing, it looks as though you have accepted the inevitable, and you do not allow for a margin of mystery. And if you don't do anything at all, it looks as though you have been careless in handling the situation. So it is very difficult to prepare, and to stay not prepared.

...

Q: Talk of walking on a razor's edge! Now during this period, Sir, suddenly the Trust was making a lot of headline news and it was often being described as the all-powerful Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust with global assets worth some astronomical amount, and the spotlight was on the Trustees from both the media and the devotees. Yet, it appears you consciously chose to lie low and stay away from the limelight. Why? Was that a considered decision?

K.CH.: Now, I think there are a few things in this. Many of the comments which I found in the press had not been based on information on facts. And none of the people who had written anything had met me or, for that matter, any of the trustees earlier to ascertain the facts about what they are going to write. So I think it was more of a speculation in terms of the Trusts' property and its worth. The difficulty at the time was that when people wrote that the Central Trust has assets running into thousands of crores, it was an instance of utter incredulity for us. We know what the situation is; we know how much assets are there. So that's why we had to wait for some time until all these things come to a certain sense of normalcy, before addressing the press to give them a complete picture of what the Central Trust assets are and what its income is, and to point that a number of things which are not directly connected with the Central Trust might have been possibly attributed to the Trust by the press. ([Transcript of the Press Meet held on 28 June 2011](#))



And we had to possibly bring to their notice that there are a number of organisations all over the country and the world which bear the Sri Sathya Sai name.

They are not directly connected with the Central Trust as an entity. We had to tell them there are Sri Sathya Sai State Trusts, and other sister Trusts, and there is an Organisation abroad which is not a legal entity, the Sri Sathya Sai International Organisation.

These are all again totally outside the purview of the Central Trust, and we had to inform that the territorial jurisdiction of the Central Trust is only India, and Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust is one organisation which does not own any property in any part of the world other than India. So I think these must have come possibly as a surprise to them, but at the same time having made wild guesses about the worth of the Trust, perhaps they didn't want to revisit those figures and they just came to a certain understanding of the facts as they were put out to them.

...

K.CH.: (We had to tell them) These are the lands that we have and these are the buildings; and these are connected with the work. The lands that were given by the Governments of the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, and these were all for specific purposes, and those purposes have been carried out by Bhagawan till now and will continue to be carried out by the Central Trust.

If you talk in terms of the value of assets, you will find in our books of accounts as zero, because these were all given free, and today's market value may be anything, you can compute, but then these are not real estate in the sense in which we sell the property, make money or do anything of that nature. These are linked to certain obligations on part of the Central Trust. If land is being given by the Government of Andhra Pradesh for Anantapur Campus, it is being run for more than 30 years as a university.

And even earlier as a college and this is a continuing obligation of the Central Trust. We have to do that and take care of it and ensure that the campus of the university there runs. Similarly, if there is a land given by the Government of Karnataka to the Central Trust for putting up a building for housing a free Super Specialty Hospital, it again is an obligation. The land has been given but once again on the condition that we would run a free hospital. So in fact you should look at it not as an asset; it is as an obligation made out by the Government; each so called "asset" has an obligation attached to it.

It takes time for people to understand that if you have some acres you don't multiply it by the current market value, and say that this is asset value and so on, and even there again, in the books of accounts, it will be shown for whatever value in which it was given. So I think it took time for people to understand that the value of the property which they had given had no basis on facts pertaining to the Central Trust.

And if they had thought that because the name Sri Sathya Sai is there, all of them come under the

umbrella of Central Trust, it was not so. And I think it took some time for them to understand that the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is different from Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, and Sri Sathya Sai State Trusts are different from the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. So I think it has taken some time but I'm sure people have now come to understand what all these are about.

Q: How do these verticals intersect, namely, the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, the Sri Sathya Sai State Trusts and the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust?

K.CH.: There are two ways of looking at it. Bhagawan had made it clear that the organisation He blessed to use His name 'Sri Sathya Sai' was more for the sake of devotees getting together and engaging themselves in service, not for the sake of Bhagawan but for the sake of their self-fulfillment. After all, what's the purpose of doing service? It is not for Swami's sake. Serving selflessly in a community could be in the form of value education, a non-formal setup like Bal Vikas, it could be by way of bhajan mandals where people could congregate and then sing the glory of God, or organize medical camps or veterinary camps in order to provide some relief to the people in those areas. All these things are not meant merely to provide emotional and physical relief to people, but also to really refine one's self and also promote a sense of selflessness in human beings so that you not only care for yourself and your immediate family, but you're expanding yourself by thinking about others, by doing work for others. So, this enlarges the devotee's vision of what one is meant to be.

Organisational Chart



Source: Annual Report of the SSSCT (2011-12)

Swami made it clear that whether it is at a district level or state level, these activities have got to be done from the point of view of giving cohesion to the setup. You have a district level, there are a set of devotees who get together and organize. Similarly at the state level, and then all the states put together create the

All-India Organisation and similarly Organisations in different countries are set up, but they are all meant to be for the sake of doing not only social service but also for promoting one's own spirituality.

Here is an Organisation which is a spiritual Organisation but from Swami's point of view, spirituality is best attained through service. Therefore it's a spiritual Organisation, it's a service Organisation, and the basis of it is spirituality. The expression of it is service.

Q: How do the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of India, for instance, and the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust connect?

K.CH.: The Central Trust is a body which is governed by the laws of the land, especially Income Tax Act, and the Religious and Endowments Trust Act. These are the laws which govern the setting up and the functioning of the Trusts in the country and the state. So, the Central Trust has to apply for Income Tax exemption for donations received; the people who give money as donors have to get eligibility to deduct their income for tax purposes; that means you have to get an exemption from the Income Tax Commissioner.

... The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation is a congregation of devotees. And they have their local service activities, and then in order to facilitate some of these activities, there are also the State Trusts.

... The organisation has its relevance. Now for instance, you look at the volunteers, after all it maybe the biggest spiritual voluntary organisation in the country. Seva Dal plays a very major role in maintenance of the Hospitals, especially Super Speciality Hospitals - both men and women volunteers take a lot of responsibility in keeping the whole place clean and tidy. They do so in General Hospitals and in the Ashram. Everywhere, all institutions - schools, colleges, general security, and then they are at the service of the large number of devotees who come.

... And these Seva Dal volunteers manage during major activities like 23rd November Birthday Celebrations. When Swami was there, the congregation of people who came were not counted because you just don't count people, the heads, etc., but you see a vast sea of faces and those people have to be taken care of whether it is a water distribution in the Hill View Stadium... Every activity which you can think of is all done by these Seva Dal volunteers who are the heart of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation.

... **Q:** Let's talk about the Trust once again. Now that the mainstream media attention has reduced, there are some questions that still linger in the minds of our devotees. For instance, since the Mahasamadhi, what

steps has the Trust taken to reengineer itself for preserving, nurturing and expanding the legacy of Bhagawan Baba?

K.CH.: The Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust does not require reengineering; it just...

Q: But it had a sole Trustee till almost the Mahasamadhi.

K.CH.: Yes but the year before, Trustees were inducted by Swami Himself. Swami had been not merely a Founder Trustee but He was a sole Trustee for a long time.

Q: And the major decision maker, one would guess.

K.CH.: Yes, He was... I would say that all decisions were made by the Founder Trustee; He was also a sole Trustee. If the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust has to do something after Swami's Mahasamadhi, it is the human beings who have been appointed as Trustees who have to get together and take some decisions on the basis of their best judgements.

When Swami was in the body, it is not as though the people involved gave up their judgement, but then they knew that the supreme judgement was vested in Him and therefore it was not necessary for people to take a position and then see whether this will meet with the approval of others and then come to a consensus and then do these things.

Anything that had to be done, you'd go to Swami and say, "Swami, this is the thing that needs to be done" and He asked you certain questions, you replied and He gave the decision; you carried it out; whether it's small or big it makes no difference. But when people in the physical absence of Swami have to take a decision, then there is no one single person who takes a decision.

So, the people who would have worked with Swami in various capacities, meeting in His presence know how Swami gives instructions. But, they are now put in a position where they have to look at these issues before them – whether it's a question of Hospital administration or giving assistance to the University or take some decisions regarding the activities in the Ashram, whatever it is. But there is a need for people to get together, discuss and then arrive at a conclusion and then take steps to implement them.

...

Q: And you are 9 of you, I remember the media was dubbing you as the 9 planets, the 9 Ratnas, the 9 gems. Now, are the 9 gems united in their vision?

K.CH.: Basically, I would say that there can be no difference in terms of perspectives because it is a Sai perspective ultimately. But in terms of emphasis, in terms of the nitty-gritty details, now each one perhaps brings their experience, their judgment, their wisdom, their own perception. And what normally emerges at the end of it is a consensus and we say "Yes, this could be done, we will do that."

So, we do not go by a majority/minority view because that polarises issues. What we normally do is that when some differences in perspectives are there, then we go through these things again and again, more by way of clarifying in one's own mind, by listening to a lot of people around you and then say that this seems to be the preferred way of doing things and therefore there is a consensus that emerges – not out of a formal mechanical way of building consensus but a way of spontaneous understanding of each other's position.

Management

The Trust is managed by a Board consisting of the following members.

No.	Name	Background
1	Justice P.N. Bhagwati	Former Chief Justice of India, Former Chairman of International Human Rights Commission
2	Sri Indulal H. Shah	Leading Chartered Accountant
3	Sri S.V. Giri, I.A.S (Rtd)	Former Vice Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Former Central Vigilance Commissioner, Govt. Of India, Former Secretary to Government of India, Department of Education.
4	Sri V. Srinivasan	Leading Industrialist and Former National President, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
5	Sri K. Chakravarthi, I.A.S (Rtd)	Former Collector & District Magistrate of Anantapur District, Former Finance Secretary (Projects), Former Commissioner Commercial Taxes, Govt. of A.P. Former Registrar of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.
6	Sri T.K.K. Bhagavat	Former Chairman of Indian Overseas Bank, Consultant International Monetary Fund
7	Sri J.V. Shetty	Former Chairman and M.D. Canara Bank
8	Sri S. S. Naganand	Chartered Accountant and Senior Advocate of the High Court of Karnataka and the Supreme Court of India, President, Karnataka Section of International Commission of Jurists.
9	Sri R. J. Ratnakar	Active Social Worker with an MBA from SSSIHL

Shri GSRCV Prasada Rao, I.A.S (Rtd), formerly Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh and member AP Administrative Tribunal is the Secretary of the Trust.

Those who attend the meeting do this work as a dedication to Swami's work. It is not personal work that you are carrying out in the Trust. If you talk of a Hospital, what does it represent to us? It is not a mere building; it's no doubt a magnificent structure – architecturally beautiful and it has won the awards, national and international; these are things alright but then what does it signify? It signifies life and it is a living institution. It will continue to be a living institution. Look at the way in which the doctors are performing, the nurses, the technicians, the administrative account staff – everyone. There's a great identification on their part with a mission.

Q: And a higher purpose and drive.

K.CH.: Always a feeling that you're a part of a very wide noble activity and anything that is done there is a way of ultimately pleasing Swami. And where does Swami's pleasing lie? It lies in the fact that everyone realises their own responsibility and works together. Always, it is a question of people having to work together that has given lot of pleasure to Swami. If He sees His people working together, He always used to say "Nothing gives me greater pleasure than that."

So, it is that overarching idea which I think is a very important aspect and of course we have a University

in which again you would have seen how students take upon themselves responsibilities – whether it is scholastic, or sports or any programme for that matter – with great seriousness. Nothing is trivialised in this place; things may be simple, complex or complicated by virtue of the activities; but it is never trivial, it is never treated as something of inconsequence, because in Swami's scheme of things, everything is important. Swami used to say, "There is nothing like small or big, everything is important."



Bhagawan blessed him with many rare divine moments of proximity - including an opportunity to release a butterfly trapped in the divine locks

Similarly, there is nothing like a big person or a small person; everyone is a person, equal in the eyes of God. I have seen myself when I was Registrar at the University - the deference which Swami shows to a gardener is the same as the deference which He shows to the Vice Chancellor. It is in the scheme of things. I suppose a Vice Chancellor has his role to play and a gardener has his role to play and in Swami's kingdom, everyone had a legitimate right to work for a cause.

...

But as institutions which need to be looked after, protected and sustained - these are the two great institutions (healthcare and educational institutions) that are there and they do require a lot of support from the vast Sai fraternity. In fact, these institutions would not have come into existence but for their i.e. the Sai fraternity's active understanding of the mission of Swami. When Swami wanted to put up the hospitals, etc., it is their willingness to come forward and do something and participate in that great task which Swami has undertaken that has resulted in these institutions being set up.

Q: But today, are we poised to sustain them?

K.CH.: Yes, at this point, as it is, we are but it needs the continued effort of all the devotees who have been responsible in some way in bringing such institutions into existence.

Q: But these institutions require upgrading, expansion.

K.CH.: Yes, that is why it is important to understand that the role of these institutions in future is to continue

to serve the way in which it is required. And in basic economic terms, every successive year is going to mean little more expenditure given the increase in the cost and the inflation.

Every institution will have to really go on providing for more; at the same time, it's not as though it's only the expenses, the income or the people, the growth in the economy, the number of people... There is a desire on the part of many to participate in a very noble cause. And when it comes to a question of Hospitals and University, I am sure that the devotees whether in this country or in various parts of the world would see in the same manner in which they possibly saw when Swami was with us.

I do believe that over a period of time, the continued sustenance and maintenance of the Hospital as providing first-class service free of cost would really bring in a great response from them. It has a resonance of its own because it has been set up by Swami, it has been guided by Swami, it has been run by Swami and has been provided for by Swami.

Therefore, I think the connect between the vast assemblage of devotees and these institutions will continue for a long time. It's not merely a question of knowing Swami in person; it's a question of being able to identify with all that He stood for. The coming generations certainly would not have seen Swami physically, in flesh and blood but I think the legacy that is there would really be a part of the legacy of mankind as a whole.

And in that sense I think the devotees, let's say of the next generation or a generation thereafter, would continue to look upon these institutions as providing them an opportunity to identify themselves with a very great noble task. And if they're going to do something good in their own lives, this would certainly hold a very high position in their own scheme of things.

Q: That's reassuring to hear. But there's a question on people's minds. These are great projects and this is good news, but ever since the Mahasamadhi has there been any drop in the contributions coming from devotees to support these projects?

K.CH.: You see it is expected, I suppose. Anything which is so huge as the Mahasamadhi is not merely a transition... it is historic.

It is something of a totally different nature. Now, it takes time for people as they have their own response mechanism. Some are able to come out of it quickly, some take a longer time, some feel that if there is no presence of Swami, what is there in that place. Some feel that visiting a place itself is really going to give them a sense of being close with Swami. Human beings differ in their responses, their reactions, also in the time for recovery.

So I think given the fact that it is a huge difference between having Swami in His physical form and not having Him; it is traumatic for many people, it's not

easily explained. I think those who have gone through as the devotees would understand what I say because what has affected me must have equally affected everyone.

Q: And grieving is a process.

K.CH.: That's why I said some people are able to get over that faster than others. Some people perhaps are thrown into situations they find extremely difficult to get out of. But I'm sure with Swami giving them the necessary strength to get over, it's a question of time. So any fall in the people's contributions towards these, yes I think is understandable. But I do think that when people see that these activities are carried on in the same spirit of service.

Q: With further growth and expansion happening...

K.CH.: Yes. Look at the way in which the hospitals' work is going on for the last 18 months, for instance; there is no drop in any figure. All parameters, in fact, have registered a slight increase. Look at the university. Look at the faculty, look at the students. No way is the commitment to the cause of higher education now less than or in no way is that commitment to Swami, His ideals, His mission, less. I think Swami's mission is not defined by His physical presence alone. That is yes a very important thing; it has been especially for us, this generation which has been contemporary of the Avatar but I don't think we can circumscribe Him, to this limited period of time. If you look at the general span of time, the physical existence of any person, even the divine

manifestation, is limited. It could be decades but not centuries.

If you look at the institutions that have been built by them or by Him especially, I do not think a second of this nature is there in the history of humanity.

But if you look at the certain institutions which have been growing over centuries... clearly, these hospitals, this university, etc., will have a time span of centuries. So if the divine manifestations limited itself to a few decades, the institutions which embody His spirit will last for centuries. And if it comes to a question of His message, it will be for eternity. It is timeless. Therefore, to think of these things in a timeframe with which you are accustomed is not correct.

I'm sure these institutions will continue to inspire generations of people to come. And I think people would like to be a part of that great endeavour, that history, that tradition of service. I think these institutions will be a rallying point for many, many people to come. And we believe that there will be a connection which Swami will establish between Himself and the successive generations that come to inhabit this world.

See the full text and video interview at:

[PART 1:](#)

http://media.radiosai.org/journals/vol_11/01FEB13/05_Chakravarthi_03.htm

[PART 2:](#)

http://media.radiosai.org/journals/vol_11/01MAR13/an%20exclusive%20conversation-with-Mr-K-Chakravarthi-at-radiosai-part-2.htm



Zone 7 news	Region 71	Region 72	Region 73
Outstanding activities and best practices from Zone 7	Austria Czech R. Germany Hungary Slovakia	Belgium Denmark Netherlands Norway Sweden	Estonia Finland Latvia Lithuania Poland

Dutch choir, Netherlands

The (Dutch) Sathya Sai Seva Choir has 35 members. Their repertoire consists of 180 songs, most of them spiritual and devotional. The origin dates back to 1995.

They are asked to perform during festivities of the Sai Organisation but also other festivities and also funerals. Twice a month they perform during a Church service in different jails spread around the country.

A minister in one of the jails describes the impression the choir makes: "I really enjoy the atmosphere the choir radiates...while singing they look the prisoners in the eyes and that gives them courage! This is what I hear from the prisoners...Their optimism is contagious..their faces radiate joy!"

The members come together once a month to practice.

Choir in prison

Six devotees from Amsterdam form a small choir that sings during the church services in Amsterdam prison. Masses are alternative Catholic and Protestant. There are two or three services every Saturday or Sunday morning.

Continued on page 9



Zone 7 news

Outstanding activities and best practices from Zone 7

The songs that are sung are chosen from the songbook of Taizé. Also some universal bhajans are sung about Jesus or Maria. Before the day of the service, we come together to practice the songs that are chosen to be sung. Two instrumentalists are part of the choir: a violin player and a guitar player.

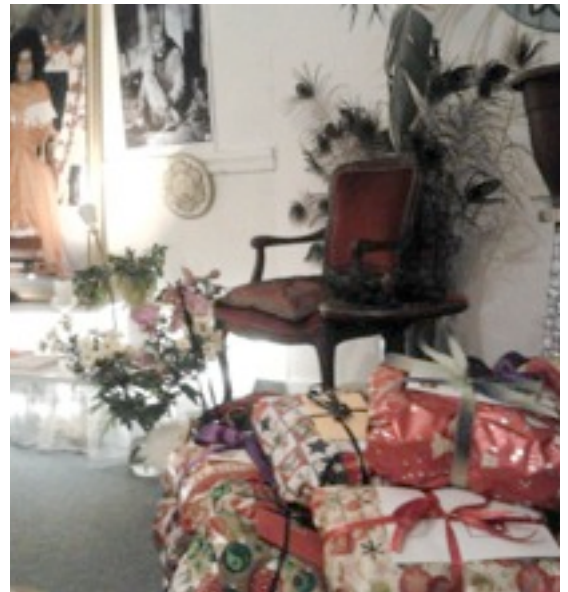
There are some fifty people present and it is touching when each one is praying silently to the One God who has many names. Needless to say that we experience great joy offering the harmony of music to these man and women.

Christmas 2012

The devotee members of 2 Amsterdam Sai Centres prepared Christmas parcels and went together to a place where the homeless are offered a bed and meal during wintertime in Amsterdam.

In a personal contact with the homeless (man and women) the parcels were handed over. While delivering the gifts, devotees had a conversation with the receivers so that Swami's love could flow to many that were present.

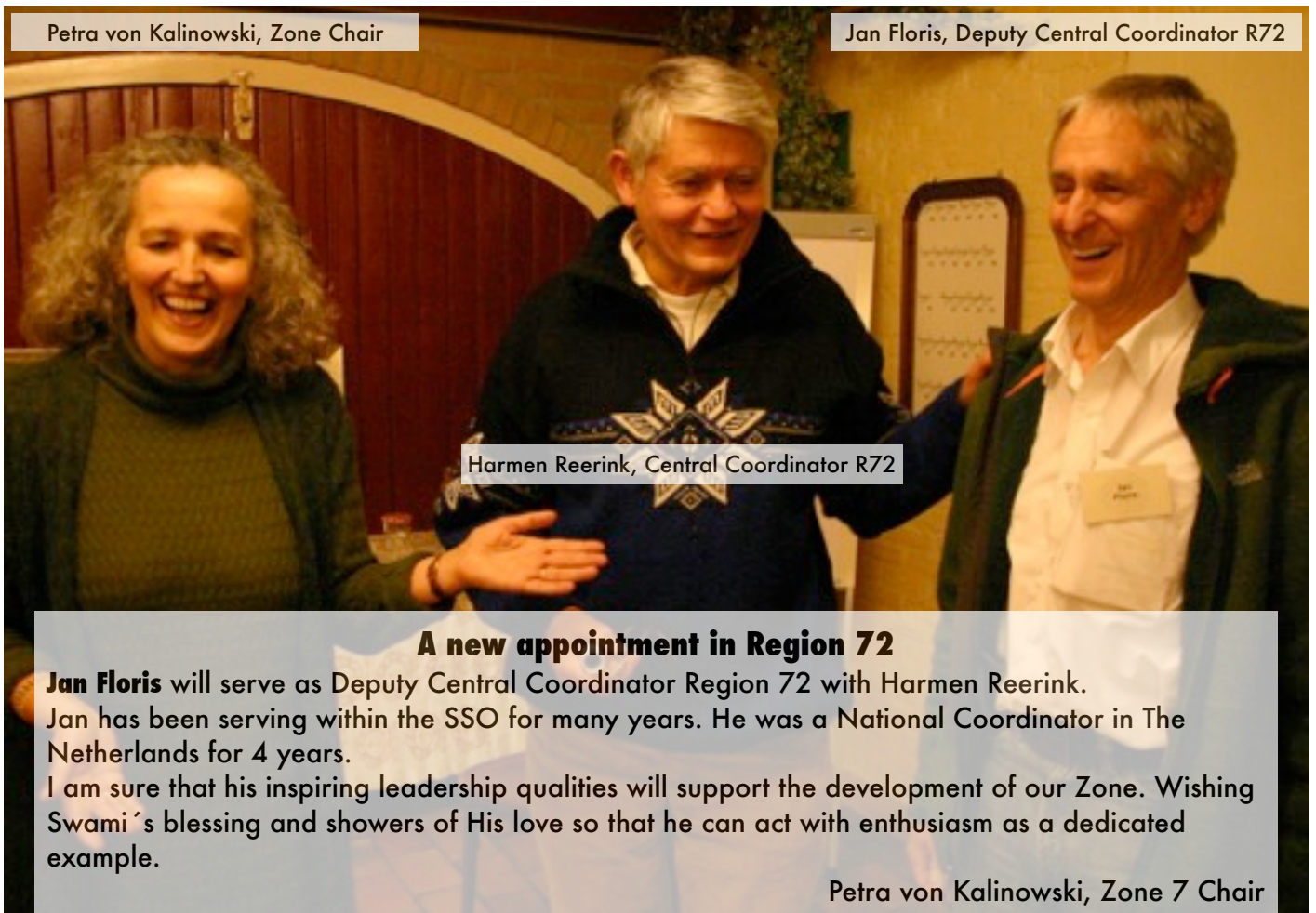
This was the second year the Lotus Centre of Amsterdam distributed these Christmas presents to the homeless. As it is forbidden to take photo's of the homeless we attach the wrapped presents before being distributed.



NETHERLANDS

Petra von Kalinowski, Zone Chair

Jan Floris, Deputy Central Coordinator R72



Harmen Reerink, Central Coordinator R72

A new appointment in Region 72

Jan Floris will serve as Deputy Central Coordinator Region 72 with Harmen Reerink.

Jan has been serving within the SSO for many years. He was a National Coordinator in The Netherlands for 4 years.

I am sure that his inspiring leadership qualities will support the development of our Zone. Wishing Swami's blessing and showers of His love so that he can act with enthusiasm as a dedicated example.

Petra von Kalinowski, Zone 7 Chair

Zone 7 news

Outstanding activities and best practices from Zone 7

Sathya Sai Leadership training

After more than a year of preparations and another year of execution, SSO Czech Republic successfully concluded the first run of the Sathya Sai Leadership Training Programme (SSLTP) in March 2013.

SSLTP is a 5 weekend long programme focusing on understanding and development of leadership (in particular within the frame of the Sathya Sai Organisation). The programme was organized by joint efforts of youth from the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland and Latvia. Each weekend was attended by about 10 participants recruiting from the youth and senior members of Czech and Slovak Sai Organisation.

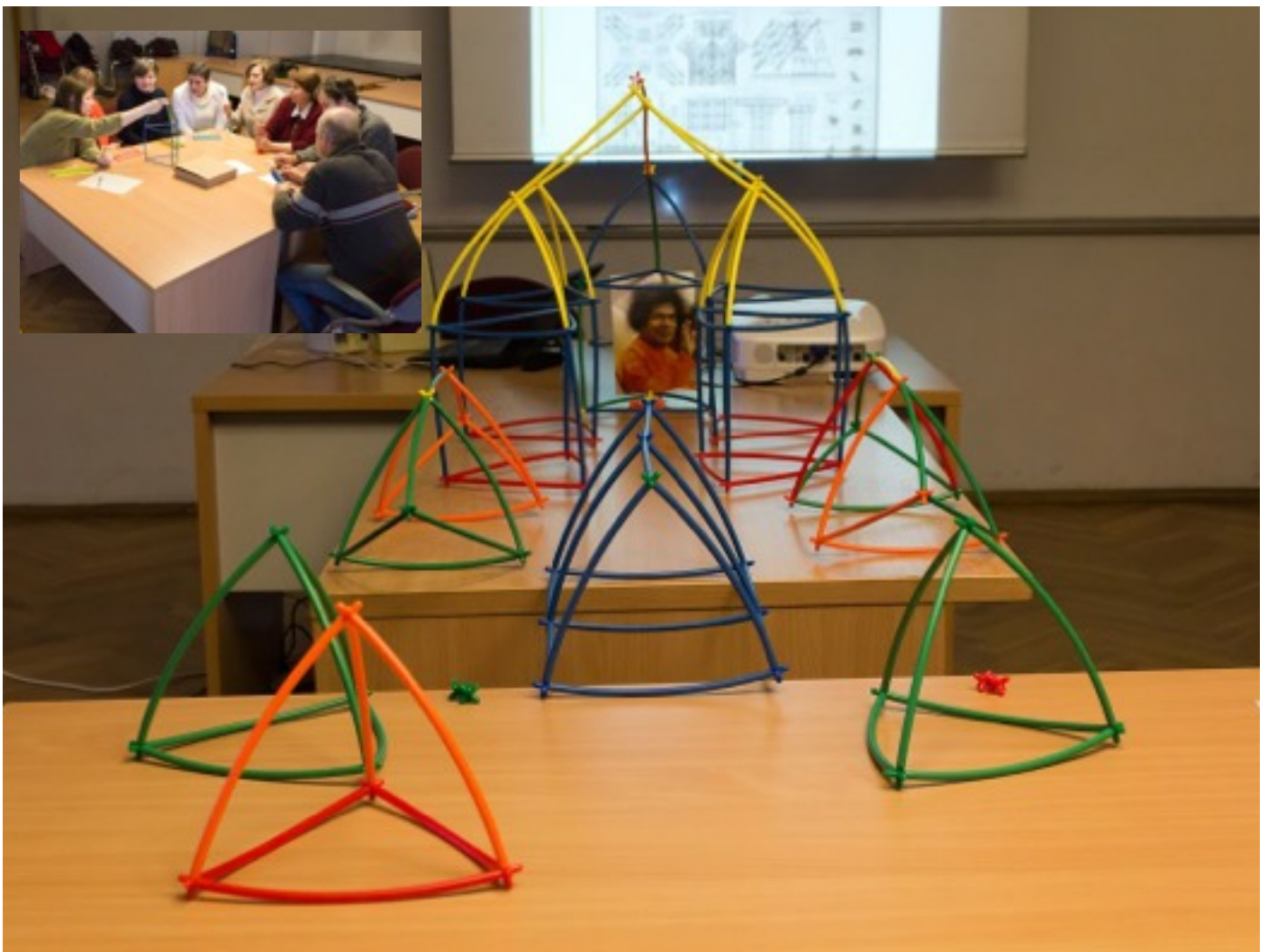
The atmosphere throughout the whole programme was very inspiring and elevating. This can be possibly best expressed in words of one of the participants:

"Excellent interconnection of new things – we watch a video, we sing, we play a game. Nothing is tedious or too long. We are happy to be here; the energy is beautiful. The learning and sharing here is just amazing."



Youth leadership
training (SSLTP)

CZECH REP.



Sathya Sai Organisations Zone 6 & 7

European Youth Meeting 2013



"Seva Vision"



February 19, 2013

Dear youth of Europe,

We are very pleased to invite you to the upcoming European Youth meeting in Germany. The meeting will take place near Leipzig from **Wednesday May 1 till Sunday May 5**.

The purpose of the meeting is to experience joy and the power of youth, to grow together and to share a great time in the spirit of service and unity. During the meeting we will be working on the site of Atmaseva. Closely connected with the German Sathya Sai Organisation, Atmaseva is an association with the aim of creating living space without barriers, where elderly people and people in need of every age can live in a loving spiritual environment.

What the world needs today is the redeeming and unifying force of love – love which continually expands and embraces more and more people. By developing a broad outlook and cultivating the company of the good, you can elevate your life and make it meaningful and satisfying. Imbibe good thoughts and develop a large-hearted attitude towards all.

– Sathya Sai Baba, 25 Dec 1985

The Atmaseva association was blessed and authorized by Sai Baba, and was officially founded in 2011. Since then, many people from Germany and neighboring countries have started to work with much enthusiasm and joy to make its vision a reality. The setting for the project is the lovely village of Hohenpriessnitz in the countryside near Leipzig. In this village, Atmaseva has acquired a complex of old houses which are now being renovated through voluntary work.

The program of the youth meeting will consist of singing, working together, evening programs, shared meals, time for exchange and other activities. We will work together on renovating living space and the central hall of the complex (the future spiritual center), as well landscaping in the surroundings of the site.

From previous meetings in Hohenpriessnitz we know how satisfying and joyful it is to see (and feel in your body ☺) in the evening what you have done, and how much is possible to reach in a short time with a team of dedicated people.

Feel welcome to share this experience of joy with us, and be part of the European youth meeting 2013! To participate, please fill out the attached registration form as soon as possible (**at the latest on 24th of March**) and send it to your National Youth Coordinator.



We greatly look forward to see you in May!

For the preparation team: Mathias Seitel (Zone 7 youth coordinator)

<i>Date</i>	Wednesday 1 st of May until Sunday 5 th of May	
<i>Venue</i>	Hohenpriessnitz (close to Leipzig, Germany) Visit www.atmaseva.de for information about the Atmaseva association	
<i>Participants</i>	Young adults (18-35), maximum 70 participants	
<i>Program</i>	Service work on the site of Atmaseva (various renovation tasks, landscaping), music, singing, exchange, evening programs	
<i>Registration</i>	Please fill out the attached registration form and send it to the National Youth Coordinator of your country – Registration deadline is March 24! – <i>Participation number needs to be limited to 70 due to accommodation and work coordination. Please be sure to register as early as possible!</i>	
<i>Accommodation & Costs</i>	Different kinds of accommodation are available, both in pensions and on the site of Atmaseva. The below prices are for the entire stay (Wednesday till Sunday) and include vegetarian meals etc. <i>Cost will be less/more if staying shorter/longer</i>	
	Accommodation type	Total costs
	Guest room in pensions (~50 beds pre-booked in Hohenpriessnitz and neighboring villages)	120 €
	Dormitory (simple beds and mattresses) in the Atmaseva complex itself both for men and women (own sleeping bags)	70 €
	Camping on Atmaseva site (in own tents + sleeping bags)	60 €
	Note: For participants staying in dormitory and camping site, simple temporary shower facilities will be available (including hot water ☺)	
<i>Getting there...</i>	Leipzig has an international airport, train station and international bus terminal. The airport of Berlin is approx. 2 hours away by bus/train. Pick-up service from/to Leipzig will be arranged. Details of connections are given in the attached document.	
<i>Arrivals</i>	Until Wednesday May 1 st , 16:00. The program will start in the evening	
<i>What to bring?</i>	Don't forget: suitable clothes, sturdy shoes, raincoat, work gloves, musical instruments... More details will be sent to you upon registration!	
<i>Contact</i>	For any questions or suggestions regarding the meeting, the time-frame, accommodation etc. please send an email to sevavision@sathyasai.de	



Sai quotes on...

God is the Master of Time. Unfortunately, man fails to understand the power of God. He wastes three quarters of his time in unworthy earthly pursuits. Spiritual pursuit is the right way of making use of time. It calls for numbing good feelings and doing good deeds without selfish motive, extending love and compassion towards all beings. This is real sadhana. Sa means *atma* and *dhana* means wealth. By utilising your time in spiritual pursuits, you can enjoy spiritual wealth. But, man wastes all his time in unholy thoughts and evil deeds without understanding the divinity within him. One should understand the value of time, each moment of which vanishes faster than lightning. If you want to sanctify your hard-earned human birth, you have to cultivate divine thoughts.

Sathya Sai Speaks/volume27/sss27-11

I want you to be active, fully engaged. For, if you have no activities, time will hang heavily on your hands. Do not waste a single moment of the allotted span of life, for time is the body of God. He is known as of the Form of Time. It is a crime to misuse time or to waste it in idleness.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 1, Chapter 9

For man to recognise the Brahman, he has to comprehend the nature of that, which transcends time. Time is consuming the body. God is the Consumer of Time itself. Hence, the Vedas have declared that time is powerless against those who have taken refuge in the Over Lord of Time. Man's joys and sorrows, happiness or misery, are not dependent on Time. They are based on man's actions. Time has no relations or friends. Time is not subordinate to anyone. All are subject to Time. Hence, if one has to realise the Divine, who is the Lord of Time, one has to carry out His injunctions. God looks with love only at such a person.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 26; Chapter 1, pg. 60

You should not waste time, because a moment gone, will not come back. You are only looking after the needs of the body; eager to make it last longer. But you forget that Time is God. There is nothing that can supersede this. So the Sadhana you should do is to utilise your time in doing good deeds for the benefit of the society at large and not to satisfy your self-interest.

Time

Sathya Sai Speaks/volume27/sss27-11

Spiritual practices done without the principle of love are useless. Some people sit for hours together in meditation but are unable to experience Divinity because their mind is unsteady. Instead of wasting time in this manner, it is better to do some useful work. God is the embodiment of time. So, do not waste time. Think of God at all places, at all times, under all circumstances. Pure and selfless love is the only way to attain Divinity. Fulfilment of worldly desires will confer only temporary happiness. So, put a check on your desires. Your goal is permanent and eternal bliss. It is within you and can be attained only through love.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 32, Part 2; Chapter 16

When time itself is swallowing every individual, to grieve and to think that an individual is permanent is not the right thing. The Goddess of time is swallowing everyone. It is possible that the beautiful spring season that has gone may come again. It is also possible that the phases of the moon that have gone may come again. But the water that has once flown in the river and the youth that has gone behind you, will never come back. Since life is a stream moving in one direction only, it is necessary for us to spend our life in a purposeful manner.

Summer Showers In Brindavan 1973

In fact, the best teacher is one's own heart. Time is the best preceptor and awakener; the world is the best scripture; God is the best friend for man. So there is no need to wander in search of a guru (preceptor). Learn lessons from every living being, everything that you find around you. Learn faithfulness and gratitude from the dog, patience and fortitude from the donkey, perseverance from the spider, farsightedness from the ant and monogamy from the owl.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 15; Chapter 15

God is the embodiment of time. So, do not waste time.



This newsletter is intended for members of SSO. This newsletter is published by the SSO Zone 7 Newsletter team.
To contact us, please use e-mail: secretariate@sathyasai-zone7.org