

SECTION 9: NINE POINT CODE OF CONDUCT

1.0 GENERAL

- 1.1 Bhagavan Baba has placed the Sai Movement on a firm footing throughout the World with the pronouncement of the Universal Principles. He has also proclaimed the Nine Point Code of Conduct and the Ten Principles as a guiding light for a devotee's spiritual and personal development.
- 1.2 Let us first examine Universal Principles, which will give a deeper understanding of the very purpose of the Sai Movement and how each and every devotee contributes to the growth and success of the Movement.

2.0 UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES

- a. Belief in God – for there is only ONE GOD for all mankind – though He may be called by many names.
- b. Follow sincerely the respective religions we are born into or we have chosen and to live our daily lives in consonance with the teachings of good behaviour and morality.
- c. To respect all other religions – for no religion advocates negative and low qualities for man. All religions urge mankind to follow the high ideals of Human Values.
- d. Perform selfless service to the poor, the sick and the needy, without thought of reward or recognition.
- e. Cultivate in our lives the values of TRUTH, RIGHT CONDUCT, PEACE, LOVE and NON-VIOLENCE and to promote these values among all people.

With this understanding of Sai ideals, we can now explore the inner significance of the Nine Point Code of Conduct and the Ten Principles (as explained in the next section), the manner and it's practice and this will create a process of self-purification – of internal cleansing for all SAI devotees benefiting individuals, families and community.



3.0 NINE POINT CODE OF CONDUCT

3.1 DAILY MEDITATION AND PRAYER:

- a. Baba has placed meditation as the first code for those who wish to glimpse the Divine within. Much of the other aspects of the code of conduct relate to this process of 'cleansing the water' – not only for ourselves but for our family members as well.
- b. Bhagavan, in various discourses, has instructed devotees on various techniques of meditation: Jyothi, Soham, Breath etc. Devotees wishing to pursue meditation should attempt to listen to tapes/cassettes that are available or read books on it.
- c. We should pray in whatever way familiar to us. This will reinforce our meditation. We can chant mantras, sing bhajans, thevaarams, hymns, kirtans, or just speak to God in our own way – whatever makes us feel closer to Him and makes us truly feel that we are communicating with Him. We can do this silently, or loudly – so that others hearing our prayers may benefit by thinking of God at least momentarily.
- d. But most importantly of all, we should not take this daily task as a burden. Prayers and bhajans etc should be done joyously, giving us a sense of upliftment. If this does not happen, something is wrong with our attitude or method of prayer. We should reflect on this and adjust ourself accordingly.
- e. The hunger for prayer – to communicate with God – should be equal to the hunger that we experience to fill our belly. Pray at least twice a day to feed the 'soul' or the inner being. There will come a time when every moment, every act, every word, becomes a prayer.

3.2 DEVOTIONAL GROUP SINGING/PRAYER WITH MEMBERS OF FAMILY ONCE A WEEK

- a. "The family that prays together stays together". Bhagavan is merely trying to remind us of this forgotten truth. In the early days families used to eat together and pray together. Today, in these modern times, the notion of every man for himself seems to have crept into families too.
- b. Some SAI devotees have expressed this problem – 'I am the only Baba devotee in my house – the rest refuse to accept Him – how can I keep this code?' Bhagavan does not say pray to Him! Have family prayers in traditional methods of worship, be it Hindu, Christian or whatever. We need not even have Baba's photo for prayer, if this will help achieve the objective of weekly family prayers.



- c. Also, it does not matter if all do not join. Start the family prayer with whoever is willing. Keeping to a fixed date and time and continue with faith – let Baba do the rest. Many such family prayers that started with one or two now include the whole family. If necessary, start alone and leave the 'door' open for others to listen to the prayer and to join in. Do not be disheartened by the attitudes of others who do not join. Give them time! Not all buds bloom at the same time when the sun shines – but the sun does not give up – it shines daily and silently, and over time – all will bloom!
- d. Through prayers and other spiritual practices, other family members should see the visible, positive transformation – that sadhana has made one more loving, kinder, gentler, more understanding... this will have a greater effect on non-participating family members and encourage them to join. One should make the whole day an extension of the morning and evening prayers. Slowly, all will be drawn to the power that has transformed one.
- e. After becoming 'born again', one should not be intolerant, demanding, insensitive to the physical or worldly and human needs of others, and should not take a 'holier than thou' attitude. If we are, then that will drive the family members away from prayer – and one can never enjoy the benefit of one's sadhana. Moderation and love should be key guiding factors.

3.3 PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (BAL VIKAS / SSE) ORGANISED BY THE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN OF SAI DEVOTEES.

- a. The reason for this code is obvious, for what is taught to the children in the SSE classes are:-
 - One's own religion – chanting or prayers, songs, hymns, lives of great saints etc.
 - Knowledge and respect for other religions.
 - Human values – respect for parents and elders, cleanliness, good conduct, confidence, cooperation, self-help etc.
 - The Life and Message of Bhagavan Baba.
- b. All these are taught through simple and dynamic programmes where only gurus who have undergone specific training programmes will be qualified to teach.
- c. No parents should want less for their child and none should sacrifice the future destiny of their children. But by giving more importance to karate lessons, taekwondo classes, dancing, swimming, tuition etc and saying that they have no time to spare to send their children to classes designed to mould their very destiny is most regrettable in today's world. It is in this context that this code requires all children of Sai devotees to attend these classes.



3.4 PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY WORK AND OTHER PROGRAMMES OF THE SOCIETY/CENTRE

- a. Bhagavan has declared "Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray". Very often devotees sit back and wait for the Sai Centre leaders to organise service activities, and even when these are organised many find a hundred excuses not to do, instead of finding the one reason to Do. Devotees/Members should realise that this service aspect makes up part of the Divine formula for salvation and God's Grace and they should in fact be urging, and forcing inertia bound Centre leaders to organise meaningful service activities to fulfil their spiritual yearnings.
- b. As for the leaders of SAI Centres who have taken up the Divine task of leading a SAI Centre – they should be fully cognisant of their Divine responsibility. Members depend upon them to show the way, set the example and direction. If by inertia, by neglect, Centre leaders do not fulfil their responsibility of organising meaningful service activities to allow devotees to channel their spiritual yearning, then such Centre leaders may likely face the karmic consequences of their own inaction – their own lack of sadhana.

3.5 ATTENDANCE AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH IN GROUP DEVOTIONAL SINGING ORGANISED BY THE CENTRE

- a. This perhaps, is the only code that virtually every devotee fulfils in good measure. But what is significant is that through this code, the entire concept of bhajan singing, the foundation of the SAI movement, has been brought into its true perspective i.e. that it is only the foundation. By placing the requirement on 'at least once a month', Bhagavan has given the directions for the future i.e. the devotees should not remain at bhajan level – the foundation. The foundation is only valid if a superstructure is built on the basis of the foundation, and all other codes are the brick and mortar for the spiritual superstructure for our lives. Without the superstructure, the foundation itself becomes desolate ground, overgrown with weeds and other undergrowth harbouring snakes and insects, benefiting neither the devotees nor those they come in contact with.
- b. Also, the 'once a month bhajan' should not end there – once a month or once a week, the sincere aspirant must constantly be 'tuned in' to the Devotional songs, their lips or their minds constantly 'singing' of Divinity, analysing the meaning of the songs and their messages, and using them as a guide, as a beacon of love in their daily lives. Only if bhajans are used as such will they bring about the necessary results, the softening of the heart, the gentleness of speech, the kindness of thoughts, the yearning to serve. If the name and message of God is constantly in the mind, the cleansing effect will most certainly take effect, and devotees will see their lives, their character and behaviour transformed; without such transformation, the devotional songs have little or no spiritual significance.



3.6 REGULAR STUDY OF SAI LITERATURE

- a. 'SAI LITERATURE' should be interpreted as literature that helps to promote Spiritual growth, Awakening, Inspiration; any literature that falls under this category should qualify as SAI literature.
- b. The 'regular study'- refers, not merely to individual study, but also participation in 'Study Circles' organised by the Centre.
- c. Sravana (listening or absorbing), manana (reflecting, digesting) Nidhidhasana (putting into practice or acting on the message) are the three stages in spirituality; the person who remains in the first stage, remains stunted.
- d. It is thus not the quantity of knowledge one absorbs, but the quality and the degree to which one reflects and integrates the message into one's life that matters.

3.7 SPEAK SOFTLY AND LOVINGLY TO EVERYONE

- a. This is an interesting code that underwent a slight metamorphosis during Bhagavan's 60th Birthday. In the original code the words were 'to speak softly with everyone'. It appears that many mistook this to mean 'loudness of the voice' and neglected the aspect of the 'harshness of the words'
- b. The code has now been placed in its proper perspective, not condemning those with natural loud, projecting voices, and exalting those who, even in anger and hate, do not have the capacity of 'voice projection'.
- c. Today the code is very clear – speak with love, lower the volume if possible – but love is the essence... harsh words screech even if spoken softly.

3.8 NOT TO INDULGE IN TALKING ILL OF OTHERS ESPECIALLY IN THEIR ABSENCE

- a. Backbiting, character assassination, falsehood about another, trying to belittle or bring down the esteem of one in the eyes of the other, is the deadly cancer that has destroyed many groups, even great movements, and most certainly must be considered an anathema to any spiritual body.
- b. If one indulges in cliques and ignores others, then of course, even the best sincere genuine advice will not be accepted by the person outside the clique. But, if one has practised a policy of equidistance, giving love equally to all within the group, then when one does pass a critical remark it will be accepted as genuine advice... with no hard feelings.



- c. If all devotees along the path of spirituality can expand the circle of their contacts where they can offer criticism and this is accepted with love, this then is most certainly progress; the cup of love in our heart must slowly expand... make it into an ocean of love and we have achieved the ultimate.

3.9 PUT INTO PRACTICE 'CEILING ON DESIRES' AND UTILISE SAVINGS THUS GENERATED FOR SERVICE TO MANKIND

- a. This code is one of those that witnessed change during Swami's 60th birthday. The original code reads as follows:-

'Narayana Seva – some cereals to be kept separate every day to feed the needy and to form a habit not to waste food'

- b. The change took place for two reasons,
(i) due to the fact that many felt it difficult to implement this in their peculiar cultural, or lifestyle environments and
(ii) it was the first stage of a bigger programme for devotees
- c. Whereas the original code suggested a ceiling on food items, to be set aside to serve the poor, the new code urges all aspirants along the spiritual path to put a rein on growing desires, within an increasingly materialistic, uncaring, wasteful and obsolescence oriented society.
- d. The practice of Ceiling on Desires calls on the devotee to curb excessive or wasteful spending, particularly on items which are not beneficial, more so when indulged in excess. The money saved thus is to be set aside, and used for service to the poor, sick and needy. This is a very meaningful way of doing service; having elements which are beneficial to us, as we curb our excesses, while utilising the savings to benefit the needy.
- e. In summary the Divine call is:-
- Do not waste food.... Do not overindulge in food.
 - Do not waste energy.... Electricity, water, our own energy (anger, jealousy and other negative expressions are equally a waste of Divine energy)
 - Do not waste Time
 - Do not waste Money
 - Do not absorb 'garbage' as knowledge into our mind; and whatever knowledge we have, use it well.

