

SECTION 2: COMPOSITION OF SATHYA SAI BABA CENTRES

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 A Sathya Sai Baba Centre is formed with the approval of the Registrar of Societies and the Sathya Sai Baba Central Council of Malaysia, which is incorporated under the Societies Act as the umbrella Organisation for all Sathya Sai Baba Centres. What then is a Sathya Sai Baba Centre and what are its objectives? The Sathya Sai Baba Centres are the vehicles for devotees of Bhagavan Baba to carry out Spiritual, Educational and Service activities. The objectives, of the Sathya Sai Baba Centres in the words of Bhagavan himself are:-

"The sole objective of all Sri Sathya SAI Organisations is to enable man to discover his innate divinity - regain his self-confidence and faith in God. The unity of all Faiths is the main platform of every SAI Organisation. Never entertain malice (hatred) towards anyone; the same God is inherent in all beings. This Organisation is intended to broaden your love to channelise your activities through devoted service. It has not been devised to parade devotion or collect devotees to canvass support for some new fangled creed. You must have firm belief that the aim of this Organisation is to remove the obstacles, that keep man away from God... this Organisation must elevate the human into the Divine".

"The Organisation named after Me is not to be used for publicising My Name, or creating a new cult around My worship. They must try to spread interest in japa (constant remembrance of God's Name by repetition), dhyana (meditation) and other sadhanas (spiritual practices), which lead man Godward - they must demonstrate the joy derived from Bhajan (Devotional Group Singing) and Namasmarana (repeating God's Name) and Shanti (peace) that one can draw from Satsang (keeping the company of like minded people devoted to God). Their Seva should not be exhibitionistic; it must seek no reward, not even gratitude or thanks from the recipients. Seva is Sadhana (spiritual practice) not a pastime for the rich and well-placed".

2.0 PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The set-up of a Sathya Sai Baba Centre is based on the divine guidelines set by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba which involves activities organised/conducted by the Spiritual, Education and Service Sections as follows:-

2.1 SPIRITUAL

- a. To conduct devotional group singing sessions – to raise spiritual consciousness of devotees.
- b. To conduct training sessions for bhajan lead singers.
- c. To conduct study circle sessions – to help those interested to enhance their knowledge of spirituality, their own religion, the religion of others and to help transform devotion into understanding so that activities performed begin to reveal their inner spiritual significance and to ultimately realise that all is GOD... He pervades the Universe and affects every aspect of our lives.



- d. To conduct and implement any other necessary activity for the expansion and intensification of spiritual consciousness.

2.2 EDUCATION

- a. To organise educational programmes (Bal Vikas/Sai Spiritual Education) for children of devotees. The programme should cater for multi-racial and multi-religious children of Sai devotees to enable them to understand their own religion, the religion of others and the Human Values of all religions and to help mould them to be useful to themselves, their families and to society.
- b. To conduct the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) programme, to foster the knowledge of religion and spirituality, the love for the Divine, the Human Values of mankind and all the great ideals fostered within SAI Centres for SAI devotees, into societies' mainstream especially to children. The great values common to all religions need to be stressed, rather than the form and name of Sai Baba, so that all children can imbibe these values and become examples to their families and society.
- c. To organise training for Bal Vikas (SSE) Gurus jointly or independently.
- d. To maintain a reference library and reading room containing Sai Publications and journals.
- e. To organise the distribution and sale of Sai literature at the Centre and at all other suitable gatherings outside the Centre.
- f. Working with other wings to organise public events that will help promote Human Values in society.
- g. To be a base for Teen Youths and Youths to evolve to become future leaders of Sai Centres and society.
- h. To conduct and implement other necessary activities for the expansion and intensification of Educare programmes.

Note for Educational Activities: Sathya Sai EHV (Education in Human Values) Classes or Bal Vikas (Sai Spiritual Education) Classes should only be undertaken by devotees who have been trained by the Central Council to conduct SSE or EHV programmes.

2.3 SERVICE

- a. To help Members and devotees (and others interested) to channel their service activities from mere prayers to GOD, to service to man.
- b. To organise and conduct visits and service programmes on a regular basis to:
 - Hospitals
 - Orphanages
 - Leprosariums
 - Prisons
 - Homes for the handicapped
 - Old Folks Homes
 - Rehabilitation centres for drug addicts



- c. To allot to each Member a specific area/scope of service activity keeping in view the experience, aptitude and skill of the Member and to arrange for the necessary training in the specific area/scope of service.
- d. To assist at functions organised by the Centre, in the area of maintaining discipline and order, provision of necessary general items for the respective function and the cleanliness of the Centre etc.
- e. To work with the Education and Spiritual Sections to organise programmes to promote Human Values for a caring society.
- f. To organise Interfaith programmes in order to promote better understanding and mutual respect amongst the various religious groups.
- g. To conduct and implement any other activity necessary for the expansion and intensification of service activities.

3.0 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

3.1 It must be noted that a Sathya Sai Baba Centre is entrusted with tremendous responsibilities. Therefore, unless it is managed properly and effectively, it will not be able to fulfil its spiritual objectives nor meet the legal requirements under the Societies Act. Thus, a Management Committee is formed to manage the Centre, and this Committee is made up of the following principal office bearers:-

- a. Chairman
- b. Secretary
- c. Treasurer

The principal office bearers, namely Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer shall not be from the same family (parents, children, siblings and spouse).

3.2 While the Management Committee is entrusted with the main responsibilities, the Centre as an entity is expected to function smoothly and effectively by working very closely with the Central Council. The Central Council shall take firm action on Centres even to the extent of closing them down if:-

- a. a Centre refuses to co-operate or work with the State Coordinators
- b. a Centre does not fulfil its pledge on activities
- c. there is continuing conflict among devotees of a Centre

3.3 The principal office bearers however cannot by themselves manage a Centre and administer it smoothly. Thus Activity Coordinators are appointed by the Chairman and these Activity Coordinators are entrusted with special tasks for Spiritual, Educational or Service activities. The Activity Coordinators, appointed from among Active Members of the Centre, are entrusted with the coordination of the following responsibilities:-

- Spiritual Activity Coordinator's areas of responsibility
 - a. Study Circle
 - b. Bhajans
 - c. Religious events



- ❑ Education Activity Coordinator's areas of responsibility
 - a. SSE/EHV
 - b. Library
 - c. Sales of Sai Literature - Publication and Distribution

- ❑ Service Activity Coordinator's areas of responsibility
 - a. Hospital Visits & service
 - b. Orphanages Visits & service
 - c. Handicapped Homes Visits & service
 - d. Leprosarium Visits & service
 - e. Prison Visits & service
 - f. Old Folks Home & service
 - g. Visits & service at other Homes/Institutions/Organisations
 - h. Emergency Relief
 - i. Service at rehabilitation centres for drug addicts
 - j. Food supply to the needy
 - k. Inter-faith activities

- ❑ Others
 - a. Ladies Wing Coordinator
 - b. Youth Wing Coordinator
 - c. New Comers Section Coordinator
 - d. SCA and CITRAC Coordinator

Functions of the above Activity Coordinators are described in Section 4.

The above list is not exhaustive and may be expanded as appropriate.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

According to the constitution, no less than nine (9) Active Members are required for the formation of a Sathya Sai Baba Centre. However, this is only the basic criterion. The foundation of the Centre will be made up of the devotees. The Active and Associate Members will form the pillars for the effective functioning of the Centre.

Those who wish to become Members of any Sai Centre (Active or Associate) must have the desire to move their spiritual level higher through service activities, rather than merely singing at weekly bhajans. No membership fees will be collected. MUSLIMS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BE ENROLLED AS MEMBERS - (this is a requirement of the Central Council Constitution imposed as a directive of the Malaysian Registrar of Societies). However, Muslims, if they so desire, are welcome to join the service activities of the centre to help the poor and needy.

5.0 REGISTRATION OF MEMBERS

The Secretary of the Centre shall maintain a register of Members in serial order under the categories 'Active' and 'Associate' showing details such as Members' full names, addresses, telephone numbers, E-mail addresses, blood group and any other relevant details. This updated list shall be sent to the Central Council annually, to enable the Central Council to maintain a Master Register of members in Malaysia.



6.0 MEETING

A meeting of all Members of the Centre must be held once in three months. This meeting will be in addition to the Committee meetings, which may be held as often as necessary, and the Annual General Meetings.

7.0 ACTIVE MEMBERS

7.1 Active Members are those who regularly devote time in the activities of the Centre and have committed themselves (pledged to SAI) to undertake a minimum of four (4) hours per week of community service and/or Sai Organisational work. An Active Member is expected to follow the Nine-Point Code of Conduct or at least to make a commitment to Divinity and to himself that he is prepared to make an effort throughout his life. Further conditions for membership are as follows:-

- a. The applicant must not be less than 21 years of age.
- b. No University or College student shall be admitted as an Active Member of the Centre without the prior written approval of the Vice-Chancellor of the University or the Principal of the University College concerned.
- c. Only Active Members shall have the right to vote at meetings.
- d. Only Active Members may be office-bearers in the Central Council and the various Centres.
- e. All Members must sign a pledge form every year to renew their membership status in the Centre.

8.0 ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

8.1 Associate Members are those who are unable to dedicate time and effort on a regular basis owing to personal or other commitments, or due to health reasons, but are only able to undertake two (2) hours of Community Service and/or Organisational work per week. However, when an Associate Member feels that he is able to commit more time and effort, he may apply for consideration to be upgraded as an Active Member. Other membership conditions are as follows:-

- a. The applicant must not be less than 21 years of age.
- b. No University or College student shall be admitted as an Associate Member of the Centre without the prior written approval of the Vice-Chancellor of the University or Principal of the University College concerned.
- c. All Associate Members must sign a pledge form every year to renew their membership status in the Centre.

9.0 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

9.1 Application for membership shall be made by completing the Membership Application Form prescribed by the Central Council as per specimen Form MF (CC/07/04) No. 5 Rev 1 Yr 06 which is enclosed in Volume 2. Please also refer to the Circular (CC/07/04) No. 5 and the Pledge Form PF (CC/07/04) No. 5 Rev 0 Yr 05, as well as the flow chart and FAQ (frequently asked questions) in



Volume 2 for more details. Completed forms shall be placed at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba (Centre Altar) and subsequently to be collected by the Secretary of the Centre. The Secretary shall then submit the application at the next meeting of the Centre Committee for approval.

9.2 The Centre Committee may, at its discretion reject the application without assigning any reason thereof. Any person aggrieved by the decision of the Centre Committee may appeal within (30) days of the Centre's decision to the Central Council, whose decision shall then be final. Every Centre is required to keep the records of these application forms in hard copy. All Centres must maintain the format and size of application forms as per the specimens shown.

10.0 DISQUALIFICATION

10.1 A Member may be disqualified if he or she fails to meet the requirements of an Active/Associate Member or engages in activities detrimental to the objectives of the Sai Organisation. Other contributing conditions for disqualification are as follows:-

- a. If the Active/Associate Member resigns.
- b. If adjudged insolvent.
- c. If convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude.
- d. Absenting himself from three (3) consecutive meetings of the Centre without leave or does not attend at least 25% of the Bhajan sessions in a month.
- e. Ceases to reside in Malaysia.

10.2 The final decision on the above shall be made by the Committee of the Centre only after consultation with the State Coordinator. Any person aggrieved by the decision of a Centre may appeal directly to the Central Council, whose decision shall then be final.

11.0 NEW DEVOTEES

11.1 New devotees to the Sai movement must be received and welcomed cordially. A 'New Comers Section' must be established and a Coordinator appointed to reach out and attend to new devotees. Every attempt should be made to create a loving, 'family' atmosphere in the Organisation. Senior devotees of the Centre should adopt newer devotees and help them to integrate into the Sai Organisation and at the same time to help them understand Sai teachings, practices and goals of the Organisation.

11.2 The Centre should provide an introductory information package which may include materials such as videos, books etc. for newcomers. This should be made available at the New Comers Section. Periodical induction for newcomers should be carried out. It is important to view ourselves as a united and loving family.

11.3 The Centre can also organise other orientation activities for the newcomers including once a month newcomers meetings, potluck, introductory study circle meetings etc. The newcomers



Coordinator's functions can be further divided to cater for language requirements e.g. New Comers Coordinator (Chinese/Tamil).

11.4 The following guidelines are suggested to create a welcoming environment as well as enhance the atmosphere of the Centre:-

- a. Welcome newcomers with a smile and show them where to sit.
- b. Have a Member act as a friend to the newcomer explaining what is happening by sitting with him through the bhajan session and extend a feeling of warmth and acceptance.
- c. All Members need to recognise the presence of the newcomers.
- d. Give the newcomers literature about Swami and graciously explain the activities of the Centre.
- e. Create a database of newcomers' contact details, and follow up personally to invite them to participate in all activities of the Centre.
- f. Extend any other assistance that may be requested.

12.0 CONCLUSION

12.1 Followers of every religion should consider the Sathya Sai Baba movement as a friend and ally to foster the roots of their own religion. Every Sathya Sai Baba Centre should work to achieve this ideal by urging all devotees to fulfil the religious obligations of their respective faith.

12.2 Education in Human Values programmes should be made a focal point of Sai activities and the human values message should be conveyed to children, youth and parents through organised activities and regular classes/sessions.

12.3 Just as Swami's Life is His Message, our life should also be His message and we must remember that we as Members of the Sathya Sai Baba Centre should in all aspects of our life exemplify Sai's teachings and principles.

