

SLIDE 1 – Module 2 Title

- Module 2 of the SSIO Orientation Programme is about the Sathya Sai International Organisation.

SLIDE 2 – Module 2 General Outline

- Go through outline

SLIDE 3 – Question for reflection...

- I would like to invite you to participate by using the chat box and answering the following question: (*read question*). Please remember to share your contributions to everyone and not just to the presenter, thank you.
- *Read participants contributions.*

SLIDE 4 – Quote: Do not doubt your destiny...

- I'd like to begin by recalling upon something that once happened during a *darshan* in Brindavan. It is an experience that one of Baba's students narrates... It so happened that Swami was walking from His residence, and like He did on many occasions, He stopped to talk to someone. In that very moment, a leaf from one of the trees around softly glided down and entered Swami's crown of hair. It seemed like as if Swami hadn't noticed the leaf that just fell on His hair, however, some of the students that saw the scene, they looked at each other and smiled like as if they had the same thought, thinking "*oh how fortunate that leaf is*". In that very moment, our dearest Sai approached these students, came closer, took the leaf out of His hair and said: "*It's not the leaf, YOU are the fortunate one!*"
- Swami was lovingly reminding them, or let me say, lovingly reminding us, of how blessed we are to know Him and to be in His fold, having Him as our guide, companion and inspiration. We are indeed very fortunate that Sathya Sai has lent His name to the SSIO and guides its work. As members we are extremely blessed to be part of this global Organisation and to have the opportunity to conduct our lives following the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba.
- (*Read quote*)

SLIDE 5 – SSIO Aims, Goals & Objectives

- Now let us take a deeper look at the aims, goals and objectives of the SSIO.

SLIDE 6 – Aim & Purpose of the SSIO

- All organisations are established for a purpose. It is sometimes known as the vision and explains why an organisation has been created and exists.

- Although the SSIO is a dynamic organisation and some things may change and evolve, adapting to our times, societies, etc. Let us recall that the purpose for which it has been established never changes, as it is the very essence of the SSIO. (*Read slide*)

SLIDES 7 & 8 – Objectives of the SSIO

- (*Read slides*)

SLIDE 9 – SSIO Official Logo

- It was Swami himself who personally drew and designed the original organisational emblem (logo). He selected the lotus lamp and five religions to include in the emblem representing unity of faiths.
- When the Organisation spread worldwide, several people asked Swami to include the symbol of Judaism since there were significant Jewish populations in the Western countries. Some designs replaced Zoroastrianism with the Judaism symbol. Others added an extra petal for the Judaism symbol, this is why we have also seen the emblem with six petals/religions.
- As time passed, Swami himself stated the Human Values were considered more universally relevant for the Organisation internationally and all inclusive. Therefore, the religious symbols were replaced by the Human Values. However, since the Sarvadharmastupa was already erected in Prasanthi Nilayam, this icon replaced the lotus lamp. As such, this is how the unity of faiths aspect continues to be represented in the emblem.

SLIDES 10 & 11 – SSIO Official Websites

- Give brief overview of general structure of Website and what kind of information can be found on it (*SSIO presentation video, annual report, SSIO guidelines, useful resources for office bearers, official logo, etc.*).
- Worthwhile to mention Sai Universe website and Radio Sai Global Harmony.

SLIDES 12 & 13 – SSIO Guidelines & Operations Manual

- Explain importance as office bearers to be completely familiarised with the SSIO Guidelines and Operations Manual for the well-functioning of the SSIO in accordance to these guidelines.
- Worth highlighting the emphasis Swami places on universality in Sathya Sai Centres and Groups being spiritual centres and not religious centres.
- Therefore, the Center premises should be neutral to all religions and religious traditions. The aim should be to create harmony between Sathya Sai Baba's teachings and local traditions.

SLIDES 14 – Code of Conduct

- The Code of Conduct appeared the first time in the Charter and Swami himself blessed it. What is less known is that a student was who wrote it and recommended it to spiritual aspirants and Swami asked for it to be included in the Charter.
- The points in the Code of Conduct are divided in two categories if we observe closely: personal practice and communal/group practice (*family / community*)

SLIDES 15 – Guiding Principles

- Swami spoke about these principles in His discourse given on the 21st of November in 1985. Then professor Kasturi included these principles in a book which then led to the SSIO adopting these principles as directives for their members.

SLIDES 16 – Quote: Food is the medicine...

- (*Read quote*)

SLIDE 17 – His Teachings on the SSIO

- We shall now take a closer look at what Swami Himself has advised and said on the spiritual organisation that bears His name.

SLIDE 18 – Quote: The sole objective...

- (*Read quote*)

SLIDE 19 – Quote: Promote harmony...

- (*Read quote*)
- As office bearers, we must make sure that we wholeheartedly understand that the opportunity we are given to serve within the SSIO is for our own spiritual transformation and progress, and by no means a position of 'power'. This is why all distinctions are only at a functional level as He says, and not at a spiritual level.

SLIDES 20 & 21 – Conduct of the SSIO

- Swami firstly stated "*My Life is My Message*" and then moved on to say "*Your Life is My Message*", therefore it is of utmost importance that we understand that any activity we carry out in His name should reflect His Teachings. This is where our behaviour and our conduct as members becomes a vital aspect.
- (*Read quotes*)

SLIDE 22 – Title: Brief History of the SSIO

- Over the next three slides, we shall go through some key dates and milestones in the history of the SSIO.

SLIDES 23, 24 & 25 – Brief History of the SSIO

- Go through dates. *(Below are some key points worthwhile mentioning...)*
- 1950: meaning of Prasanthi Nilayam *(Abode of Supreme Peace)*
- 1981: Swami granted the Sathya Sai Organisation World Charter, thus formally established the SSIO worldwide on the 14th of January 1981. These were the first ever released official guidelines for the Organisation worldwide therefore are of primordial importance for each member to read.
- 2010: it was in this year when Swami also approved the formation of a specific committee to develop the guidelines and manual for governance of SSIO and its Centres worldwide.
- 2011: significant date on the 24th of April 2011, Sathya Sai's Mahasamadhi. *(share any personal reflection)*
- 2015: recall the inspiring theme of the 10th World Conference: *"Love is the Source, Love is the Path, Love is the Goal"*
- 2016: first ever World Youth 'Festival' rather than just a conference. Reason being, the youth wanted it to be more of a celebration of gratitude rather than just a conference, it included many inspiring activities, spiritual practices, morning physical exercise, interactive workshops, cultural presentations, inspiring talks, etc.
- 2017: Updated SSIO Guidelines and Operations Manual released. Let us note that, as we stated at the beginning of this module, the essence and purpose of the SSIO always remains the same. However, the SSIO, being a dynamic organisation, has aspects that do evolve and adapt. For example, we will see in the next module how the SSIO has 13 International Committees which did not exist in the past, which help optimise its well-functioning. Thus, the most recent guidelines released in 2017, contain this as an important update.

SLIDES 26 & 27 – Membership Requirements

- *(Read slides)*
- So as we know, fees are never charged for any Sai activity, nor are donations solicited from members or the public. Centres & Groups pay no fees to the SSIO at any level.
- Centres may of course meet their expenses by allowing members to make voluntary, anonymous donations, and as advised by Swami himself, donations that stem from their personal practice of the 'Ceiling on Desires' programme.
- At this point I would like to share an inspiring story...

"A few years ago at the time when preparations were being made to begin the construction of the Super Speciality Hospital, Swami seemingly had less time to devote to the students. Day and night He was busy with matters relating to the new hospital. Every evening immediately after *darshan*, He would call a group of doctors for an interview and He would discuss with them matters relating to the new hospital, even the minutest details, as this was to be a model hospital.

Swami would come out of the interview room only after the evening *bhajans* had commenced and thus the students did not have much of an opportunity to interact with Him during this period. Previously after the evening interview, He would come out and speak to the students and guide them, but this wasn't possible at that time as Baba was extremely busy.

There was one very young student of His who could no longer bear the pangs of separation from his mother Sai. He wrote a letter to Swami one day and took it during the evening *darshan* but unfortunately he was sitting a few rows back. When Baba came to his side this boy got up and offered his letter to Him. Swami stopped, leaned over and made a special effort to take this young boy's letter. The boy was of course thrilled! Then the *darshan* continued and as usual Sathya Sai called a group of doctors for an interview. All the students were sad as they felt they had been deprived of the love of their mother Sai yet another day. Then, after about five minutes, to everyone's utter amazement, the interview room door flew open and Swami emerged in all His glory holding a small letter in His hand, the letter of the young boy.

Baba called that young boy to come near and asked him, "*Boy, should I read aloud what you have written to Me in this letter, so that everyone may listen?*" The innocent boy replied. "*Whatever you wish, Baba*". Swami himself read the letter aloud so that all could hear. The letter was as follows:

"Dear Bhagawan,

You have given so much to me and to everyone here. You have provided free education for me and all my brothers and now I hear that you are constructing a big hospital that will provide the most modern health care facilities to every section of the society totally free of cost. Swami! I also want to be a part of your glorious mission but I am just a small boy and I don't know how I can contribute. Baba, my parents are extremely poor but in spite of that they send me a little extra pocket money every month. I know it's due to their love and concern for me.

Bhagawan! For the last three months I have not given my clothes to the dhobi. While all other boys were sleeping in the night I washed my clothes and thus I managed to save a little money. Swami! I have also resisted the temptation of toffees, chocolates and all other things and thus managed to save a little money.

Baba! I offer this 100 rupee note to you. I feel ashamed and small to give you so little but even if this money can be used to buy a small brick for the foundation of the new hospital, I will be the happiest child in the world.

Your loving son.

You know the twinkle in the eye of a mother when her son does something that makes her feel extremely proud. Well, that twinkle was there in Baba's eye. Holding the 100 rupee note in His hand, He said to that young boy. *"My dear son, this is not just 100 rupees, this note is worth millions and millions of rupees for Me."*

- What can we learn from this beautiful story? As we know, Swami, God, Love only looks at the true motive behind each action, the purity of the heart whilst offering any thought, word or deed.
- Thus, it is the heartfelt motivation, it is the sacrifice (which literally means 'sacred offering'), it is the ceiling on our personal desires and it is the honest urge to serve that matters; thus the quality and purity and not the quantity.

SLIDE 28 – Question for reflection...

- I would like to invite you once again to participate by using the chat box and answering the following question: (*read question*). Please remember to share your contributions to everyone and not just to the presenter, thank you.
- *Read participants contributions.*
- We will look at some of the key characteristics of the SSIO in the next and final slide.

SLIDE 29 – Key Characteristics of the SSIO

SPIRITUALITY AT ITS CORE

- Many times when asked, we describe the SSIO as a devotional organisation, or a service organisation, or an educational organisation. Actually, devotion, service and education represent the three pathways to self-realisation. Thus, when asked to describe the very essence of the SSIO, as Swami Himself stated, it is a spiritual organisation.
- Talking about devotion, service and education is like naming parts of the body however not referring to the body as a whole itself. In this way, we should understand that all the activities carried out within the SSIO are spiritual in nature, as their aim is once again is for each one of us to recognise and manifest our true nature, '*Know Thyself*'.
- It is also important to recall once again at this point that the SSIO is a spiritual organisation and not a religious one. This is where universality once again plays an important role. Thus, a Sai Centre should not be referred to as a

temple, a church, a mosque, etc. it is a spiritual centre open to all, including Sai devotees and our society members.

VOLUNTARY, NON-PROSELYTISING

- Participation in the SSIO is completely voluntary. We all may have different reasons as to why we participate in the SSIO, however we surely have many common motives as seeing it as an opportunity to serve Swami, to be part of His Divine Mission, to express our gratitude, for our own spiritual upliftment as well as that of our societies, deriving joy in good company, etc.
- We also spoke about how Swami has not come to establish a new religion, nor attract disciples to His fold or any other fold, etc.

KINSHIP WITH SATHYA SAI BABA

- It is beautiful how we all receive Sathya Sai's guidance at an organisational level through his guidelines, discourses and teachings. However, at the same time, each one of us is also blessed at a personal level to receive this guidance and feel His presence through this unique 'heart to heart' relationship He has established with each one of us.
- This way, we experience kinship with Sathya Sai Baba both at a personal and organisational level. His teachings are key in all the decisions, procedures and activities that the SSIO carries out, and similarly should be key in everything we too carry out at a personal level in our daily lives.

ONENESS – 'UNITY OF FAITHS'

- As already covered in Module 1, and then we will see in greater depth in Module 4 of this programme which focuses completely on the aspect of unity, as we saw in His own words "*God is present equally in all, you should recognise this Oneness*"

"LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL"

- It is only when we see every living being as a manifestation of the Divine (*including animals, plants and Mother Nature*) that we can experience unity, and therefore "*Love All and Serve All*" as verily, there is no other or duality, just One.

Summarising these key characteristics of the SSIO brings Module 2 to an end.