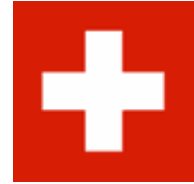


## THE SAI MOVEMENT IN Switzerland



Home to pristine and scenic vistas, constitutionally strong, a forward thinking, progressive, and determined direct democracy, philanthropic, peace loving, environmentally responsible, independent willed, popular tourist destination in the heart of Europe ...if this description instantly conjures up the image of Switzerland, then the story of the Swiss Sai movement cannot be far behind.

Despite their modest numbers, the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Switzerland have been blazing effective and efficient trails, by creating an appreciation for His universal message of love and harmony among various sectors of the Swiss society, proving once again that good things often come in small packages. The Swiss Sai Organisation is a reflection of the country's overall culture of high work ethic and professionalism, representing the microcosm within the macrocosm that is Switzerland, of quality over quantity.

### **The Swiss Surreal Beauty**

Switzerland is of course famous for its scenic variety and natural beauty. What is special in this small country is the fact that one is able to admire and enjoy all this natural beauty over a very small geographical area: almost every place has its picture-postcard views and may be reached very quickly and without problems, thanks to the excellent public transport system. From the ice paradise of Europe's highest railway station on the Jungfrauoch (3454m above sea level), using public transit one can reach the shores of the sun drenched Lake of Lugano, with its Southern atmosphere and its palm trees, in just eight hours!



*In eight hours from the glacier...*



*...to the palm trees*

Among Switzerland's most well known natural wonders is, of course, the whole Alpine landscape with its permanent snow and glaciers. Mountains cover two-thirds of the country's total area and within are packed many wonders. Very famous are the high peaks – for example the Matterhorn or the Jungfrau, which are among the highest of the whole European Alpine chain.



*Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau (4158 metres)*



*Matterhorn (4478 metres)*

**A Few of Switzerland's UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage**



*The vineyards of the Lavaux at Lake Geneva*



*Aletsch Glacier*



*The Cloister of Saint John in Mustair*



*The Abbey Library in St. Gallen*

## **The Swiss Fascination**

Switzerland is an important water reservoir for Europe. Two of the largest and longest rivers in Europe have their source in the Swiss Alps: the Rhine and the Rhone. In what was originally largely an agricultural country, today only about 4% of the population is engaged in agriculture. Switzerland is not rich in raw materials and obtains very little from the ground, so that the services sector, tourism and industry have become all the more important.

It is also well-known as one of the world's leading manufacturers of watches and other precision instruments, pharmaceutical and chemical products, food items, including the world's largest food manufacturers, Nestlé, and recently also of medical technology. In the services sector it is mainly the Swiss banks and insurance companies that operate successfully throughout the world. Tourism however remains as one of the most important contributors to the Swiss economy.

Every year millions of foreign tourists spend their holidays in Switzerland, with more than 30 million overnight stays per year. Then there are also other important characteristics that play their part as by words to live by in this country: cleanliness, punctuality, precision, quality, reliability, honesty, and respect.

## **Swiss Culture – Leading the Way**

The current population of this landlocked country in Western Europe is about 7.5 million. More than 20% of them are foreigners, making the society more cosmopolitan and international in its composition. Originally the two large Christian religions, Protestantism and Catholicism, each accounted for about 50% of the population. Today they each account for about 40%, with increasing proportions of other religions, such as Orthodox Christianity and Islam, as well as Buddhist and Hindu religious communities.

Although the European Headquarters of the United Nations have been in Switzerland from the beginning, it was not until 2002, in a popular referendum that the Swiss people decided on membership of this international organisation. In contrast, they are still not a member of the European Union as there is still not the necessary majority for this. Switzerland will have to decide whether, with the policy of complete neutrality, the country could and should also become a significant and valuable member of this international community.

It may surprise many people in other parts of the world to learn that the ISO country code for Switzerland is CH. CH stands for the Latin designation Confoederatio Helvetica. But what is the origin of this designation? Firstly one has to know that the people who had settled in the region between the Lake Constance and Lake Geneva in the first century B.C. belonged to the Celtic tribe of the Helvetians. We hear this name in, among other places, Caesar's famous chronicle "De Bello Gallico", where we also learn that the Helvetians wanted to move from the area to migrate towards South-West France, presumably to escape from the Teutonic hordes who were storming in from the North. However, Caesar was able to stop this emigration undertaking at the Battle of Bibracte, so that the Helvetians had to remain in the region that is present-day Switzerland. The designation "Confoederatio" means "Federation" or "Association" and in fact relates to the long history of Switzerland, which finally led, in 1848, to the country's present constitutional form as a federal state.



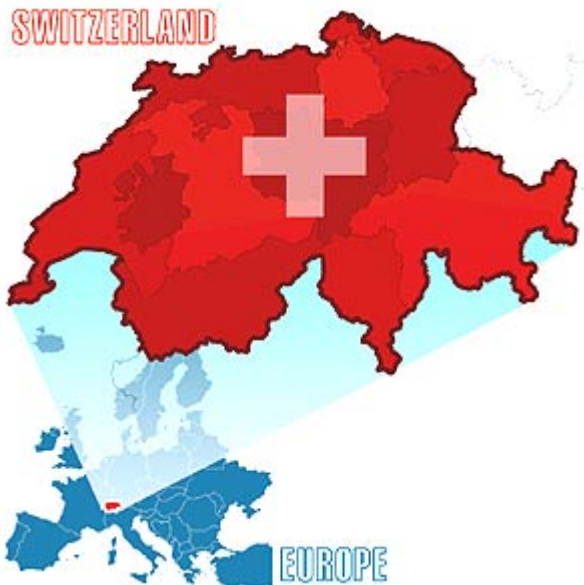
*Lake Oeschinen in the Bernese Oberland which at an elevation of 1500 metres is mostly frozen for five months*



*The cascades of the Staubbach Falls with a drop of 300 metres*

### **The Historic Heart of Europe**

For its size, Switzerland enjoys a rich linguistic mix. Four languages - Swiss German, French, Italian and Romansch - are spoken over a relatively small area of about 40,000 square kilometres!



*Switzerland is located in the centre of Europe*



*The Pact of 1291*

The Swiss are proud of this cultural diversity. It makes the country cosmopolitan and tolerant, and provides an important boost to its hospitality sector, that forms the foundation of Swiss tourism industry.

The early history of the Swiss Confederation goes back to the 13th century, when the four Forest Cantons of Central Switzerland formed an alliance against the domination of the Habsburg Empire. This early history also includes the legend of the freedom fighter William

Tell, who through the writings of the German playwright Friedrich Schiller became one of the most famous figures of Swiss history. The oldest document of Swiss history dates from 1291 and has remained one of the most important pieces of writing to this day: “In nomine domini, Amen” – so begins this pact. And since then this declaration has remained valid for the whole of Switzerland and those words, **“In the name of Almighty God...”** are in fact the preamble to the Swiss Federal Constitution right up to today. Although Switzerland is a secular state, this invocation of God has remained. In this the Swiss nation sees a trust in a higher power, and gratitude and responsibility to creation and to the creator, which apply to all people, irrespective of each individual religion.

The national anthem which has been the official anthem of Switzerland since 1981, also begins with this invocation of God:



*The Swiss Cross*

**When the morning skies grow  
red  
And o'er us their radiance  
shed,  
Thou, O Lord, appearest in  
their light.  
When the Alps glow bright  
with splendour,  
Pray to God, to Him  
surrender,  
For you feel and understand,  
That He dwelleth in this land.**

The sublime prayer

After 1291 more and more new Cantons joined this alliance, to form a political entity which by 1648, with the Peace of Westphalia after the Thirty Years' War, had almost reached the territorial extent of the Switzerland of today. A decisive aspect of this contract, however, was that it established that Switzerland was recognised as a neutral country. Since then this neutrality has remained an important feature of the country's political status – and it has helped the Swiss to “stand aside“ during the major European wars. However, the internal conflicts which also occurred in Switzerland, for example due to the Reformation, were touchstones and enormous challenges for the survival of the Swiss confederacy. Two of the great reformers were active in Switzerland: Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich and Jean Calvin in Geneva. The Napoleonic era then led to temporary occupation and a new order in the country (the Helvetic Republic) which, with the Congress of Vienna of 1815, then returned to the old order (Restoration). With the last three Cantons to join, namely Valais, Geneva and Neuchâtel, the country finally took on its present territorial form in 1848. At the Congress of Vienna the “perpetual armed neutrality“ of Switzerland was also once again confirmed and the country was given its official name, “Swiss Confederation“. In November 1847 renewed disturbances – mainly of a religious nature – led to the last civil war, lasting 27 days, fortunately with only few dead and injured, thanks to the first Swiss General, Dufour. As a direct result of this conflict, victors and vanquished met together for the renewed sealing of an alliance which, with the first legitimate constitution in September 1848, led to the founding of the present-day Federal State of Switzerland with its Federal Capital in Berne. (The largest city in Switzerland – Zurich – received, as compensation, till today the very important Federal Technical University, known as the ETH, Lausanne became the seat of the Federal Courts of Justice and Lucerne the seat of the Court of Insurance).

The Swiss cross, as the country's official flag, was defined in its official form in 1889: "The emblem of the Confederation is an upright white cross on a red field, the four equal arms of which are each one-sixth longer than they are wide".

The same flag, but with the two colours reversed, was deliberately chosen as the symbol of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1864, in honour of the Swiss founder of the Red Cross, Henry Dunant. The square shape of the flag is almost unique worldwide (only the Vatican City also has a square flag).



*Henry Dunant*



*The headquarters of the International  
Committee  
of the Red Cross in Geneva*

### **An Outstanding Democracy**

At the time of the foundation of the Swiss state in 1848, the political system was largely based on the Constitution of the United States: two chambers represent on the one hand the people (based on the population of each Canton) and on the other the 26 Cantons (each with two representatives), and constitute the legislative assembly.

A special feature of the political system however is the executive, that is, the Federal Council, which is made up of seven members who, all with equal rights, form the Government. Each year, in rotation, one of the members acts as President of the Confederation, in the sense of a *primus inter pares* (first among equals).

The seven members of the Federal Council are bound by the so-called "concordance": this means that in the final analysis all the different political parties and interests have to be in agreement.

Switzerland is a free, independent country, which means that **the people always consider themselves as belonging to one nation – and this in spite of the many cultural and linguistic differences.** The most important element of the Swiss political system, however, is the concept of *direct democracy*, through which decisions made by the Parliament can be



**ICRC**

contested by means of a popular vote (for such a referendum 50,000 signatures are needed). The people also have the possibility, by means of an initiative with 100,000 signatures (collected within 100 days), of demanding a vote on almost any subject.



*Geneva - the city with the second highest quality of living in the world*

Thanks to its neutrality, this small country has always played an important mediating role on the international stage.



*The Great Fountain "Jet d'Eau" of Geneva*



*The European Headquarters of the United Nations at the Palais des Nations*

### **Switzerland - Sustained by the Power of Unity**



*The dome of the Federal Parliament building in Bern*

The unofficial motto of Switzerland appears in the dome of the Federal Parliament building in Bern, in its Latin form: *Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno* (One for all, all for one).

This wise old saying for solidarity, fraternity, alliance, fellowship, etc. forms the core of the Swiss Confederation. Even though in the everyday political conflicts and troubles this great, sacred and lofty maxim is often forgotten, the political will continually finds, in this concept, renewed sustenance for maintenance of the high

principles of typically Swiss hospitality and readiness to help – as exemplified by such great Swiss celebrities as Henry Dunant (1828-1910, founder of the Red Cross), Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827, philanthropist, philosopher and pedagogue) or Niklaus von Flüel (1417-1487, recluse and mystic).

So, into this hallowed and heavenly beautiful land, how and when did Sai manifest Himself?



*Brother Niklaus von Flüe is a venerated Saint, who lived in the centre of Switzerland in the 14th century*

### **The Sai Movement is Born**

It was in August 1975, after returning from his first Darshan of Swami, a visionary named Dr. Ali Hussein, at that time assigned to the WHO (World Health Organisation) in Geneva, sprung into action to share his joyful encounter with a being whose love and divinity had touched him deeply. Along with a few other Indian families he had met, who were already devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Dr. Ali Hussein's family began the *bhajan* or devotional singing sessions at their respective homes.

Today, Dr. Ali Hussein is considered and fondly remembered by all Swiss devotees as a pioneer and the father of the Swiss Sai Organisation. As one of the most active members of the Sai Organisation, he dedicated his life to Swami from the moment of his first Darshan. From August 1975 until his last breath in 2006, he propagated Swami's message with love and dedication. His tireless effort to teach Bhajan singing to all the Swiss devotees and create awareness about His universal teachings is duly and gratefully remembered by all.



*A rather large Swiss group in Prasanthi*



*The 1985 Pentecost Retreat in Switzerland*



## **The Early Years...**

From 1976 until 1980 sporadic Bhajan sessions, in rotation, were taking place in the homes of various devotees in Geneva. In 1979 regular study circles and the first Balvikas classes for devotees' children were organised and headed by Mrs. Saroj Iyer, a devotee from the Geneva Centre, who is now living in Prasanthi Nilayam, where she is in charge of the Western Canteen. In summer 1980 Ali Hussein, together with a Swiss devotee who had already visited Swami many times, took a first group of 28 people from Geneva to Prasanthi Nilayam. They remained for 3 weeks, enjoying Swami's Darshan in Prasanthi Nilayam and in Whitefield, and during this stay the Geneva Group was registered at the Prasanthi Nilayam Head Office as the Sai Centre of Geneva.

After returning from Prasanthi Nilayam in August 1980, Dr. Hussein began to organise regular Bhajan sessions in his home. By 1984 the Group had become too big to be hosted in a private home and they finally transferred to a public hall for their meetings. On 10th of November 1984 and every year onwards, a regular 24-hour Akhanda Bhajan has taken place in Geneva, organised by Dr. Hussein and the devotees from the French-speaking region. Many devotees from other parts of Switzerland also joined.

Already in 1980 Dr. Hussein, together with his wife Mrs. Zahra Hussein and other devotees, had started visiting Indian devotees in the German-speaking towns of Basel and Berne to help organise Bhajan sessions. On the sacred date of 23rd November of the same year, the Berne Sai Centre (in the German-speaking region) was officially established by nine members. From then onward the Geneva and Berne Centres have been active with His activities and have been enthusiastically sending reports of their activities to the head office in Prasanthi Nilayam.

A first Swiss Retreat was organised in May 1983 in a private home, and devotees from all over the country were invited. Many more devotees soon joined and in October 1985 a mixed group from Geneva and other French and German parts of Switzerland went to Prasanthi Nilayam to celebrate Swami's 60th Birthday and to attend the fourth World Conference. Between 1980 and 1988 several small Groups of devotees met in private homes intermittently to sing Bhajans and exchange experiences in study circles in Basel, Zürich, Aarau and Lucerne (German-speaking region), Veytaux/Montreux and Renens (French-speaking region) and in Locarno (Italian-speaking region).

## **Miracles Abound...**

In January 1980 the former Italian Naval Officer Eugene Wolk Sr, a Swiss resident living in the Italian part of Switzerland, now deceased, came across the book "Sai Baba, Man of Miracles" by Howard Murphet. Stunned by what he had read, Mr. Wolk immediately decided to see the "miracle man" with his own eyes. He travelled to Prasanthi Nilayam the following Christmas with his wife and 8-year-old son. Swami blessed them with three interviews and spoke in loving and revealing details of their life and past experiences and materialised several keepsakes.



**During this first visit, the Wolk family witnessed several more miracles and materialisations, foremost of which were the sacred ash *vibhuti* which Sai Baba uses for healing, the sweet honey-like nectar, called *amrith*, the healing of the crushed knee of an Englishman who, unable to walk, could throw off his crutches the moment Swami commanded him to stand up.**

**But the most marvellous miracle happened on the second day of Christmas. At four o' clock in the morning, Mrs Wolk, like other devotees, was absorbed in her prayers, walking around the temple, and suddenly she became aware of a hush in the crowd - all, one after the other, were looking up to the sky. There manifested the most brilliant band of light in a circle covering the ashram and the village of Puttaparthi. The full moon shone right at the tip of the top of the mandir.**

All who saw this extraordinary manifestation knelt upon witnessing this phenomenon, a proof that "God was there and only He could manifest His glory and presence in such a miraculous way." It was a very happy experience. With daylight this manifestation vanished. Later, Swami confirmed that such unique happenings only occur at special times and in coincidence with certain constellations.

As a result of such marvels and astounding manifestations all doubts whatsoever disappeared and the realisation of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as Avatar of the age become clear and evident.

Another grace which Swami conferred on the Wolk family was the opportunity to assist at the inauguration of the Administration Building of the University in Prasanthi Nilayam. **On the occasion of this first visit, Mrs. Wolk in a personal prayer asked Him: "Swami, if you are God, the one who I am looking for, please chain me to you in order that I shall never be separated from you." In the years that followed, Swami materialised three chains for Mrs. Wolk, each with a different significance.**

Also during this first visit, Mrs Wolk bought a small sandalwood container to keep Swami's vibhuti in. Unfortunately, upon arriving home, each time she attempted to consume the vibhuti, she found the taste bitter as if it was a poison. During the next eagerly awaited visit she questioned Swami about this strange phenomenon. Swami took the little container and banged it three times, then told Mrs. Wolk: "Put a little sugar in it and it will be all right. Any sugar will do, I will give you lot of sugar." At the next attempt to consume it the bitterness and seemingly poisonous taste of the vibhuti were gone. Some weeks later Mrs Wolk received a letter from a friend in Florida who had visited Shirdi. The letter contained a postcard with a picture of Shirdi Sai and a little nylon packet divided in two parts, one part containing vibhuti, the other sugar. She phoned her friend to ask an explanation and her friend replied it was a custom in Shirdi to distribute vibhuti with sugar, sugar being the symbol of wisdom. Years later, Mrs. Wolk realised that Swami, in His miraculous way, by symbolically banging the little vibhuti container, took out all bitterness and poison from her life.

Swami also materialised a Lingam, which cured several family members of illnesses. And once, invited as a guest in His house in Kodaikanal, He materialised a marvellous mother-of-pearl shell full of sacred vibuthi for their son, which replenished itself for years.

### **The Sai Organisation Crystallises**

In 1988, the Central Office and World Council in Prasanthi Nilayam requested that a Sai Organisation be established in every country. On Gurupurnima, in August 1988, on a visit with a Group from Ticino, Switzerland, Swami asked Mrs. Wolk to act as coordinator of the newly emerging Organisation and Sai Centre of Switzerland.

At Swami's direction, the Sai Organisation in Switzerland was started and was inaugurated on 3rd December 1988 with the first meeting of the Coordinating Committee of five devotees, representing 4 Sai Centres and 5 Groups from the different language regions of the country.

The Groups started to gather regularly and to integrate activities suggested by the Central Office in Prasanthi Nilayam, to establish the rules and regulations and to develop the three wings of the organisation: the spiritual wing with Bhajan sessions and study circles; the service wing with several kinds of service activities for elderly, handicapped and socially disadvantaged people; and the educational wing with Balvikas and Education in Human Values classes, holiday camps for children and workshops for adults. A teacher-training course lasting several weeks was added in conjunction with the Education in Human Values programme. In addition, a two-day retreat was organised for all members to foster the unity between the three language-groups.

In May 1990, the "Sathya Sai Association Switzerland" (the name has recently been changed to "Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Switzerland") established on the basis of the principles and rules of the Charter of the Sai Organisation was registered legally under Swiss Law.

The Sai Centres and Groups operating under the name of the Sai Organisation, have since evolved and expanded. **Today there are 8 Centres and 9 Groups and information points with a total of nearly 270 devotees as members and around 70 persons as visitors.**



*In 1985, at a retreat during Pentecost, three crystals materialized on the altar in front of Baba's picture*



*A printed version of the welcome booklet is available in English, German, French and Italian. For e-version click [here](#) to more and more people.*

The Centres and Groups are distributed evenly over the whole country in all the language-regions. “Again, we are proud of our many languages – but on the other hand this also involves a lot of extra work: all the information and printed matters have to be translated in the various languages and meetings require simultaneous translations. But we are happy to do this, “ say the dedicated Sai devotees.

Several public meetings, as well as pilot projects for introducing Education in Human Values were added in the Centres to bring Bhagavan’s teachings

### **Stimulating Public Meetings**

On the national level, many very interesting and invaluable meetings took place, organised mostly in Aarau, located in the centre of Switzerland. “We remember those worthwhile moments with such eminent and inspiring speakers as Mr. J. Jagadeesan from Malaysia, Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai from Thailand, Mrs. Phyllis Krystal and Dr. Michael Goldstein from the United States of America. These meetings were very well attended and proved to be a great stimulus for revitalizing the work of the organisation,” says an active worker.

The Ticino Centre (in the Italian-speaking region of Southern Switzerland ) organised many public meetings. Best remembered is the meeting with the late Don Mario Mazzoleni, a well known Catholic priest, who on account of the publishing of his book “A Catholic Priest Meets Sai Baba” was excommunicated by the Catholic Church. Don Mario, a fervent devotee of Bhagavan, although terminally ill, continued his valuable work of propagating Swami’s message in several European countries till his end.



*On many occasions, Mrs. Phyllis Krystal conducted satsangs at Aarau*



*Don Mario Mazzoleni at the Sai centre in Aarau*

## Talking About Sai at the UN in Geneva

It is in fact a great honour for Switzerland to be the host to many UN organisations in Geneva. Thanks to personal contacts, in 1995 and 2004 two major conferences, held on United Nations premises, were organised by the Sathya Sai Organisation. For the first of these conferences, under the title “Universal Peace through Human Values”, **Sathya Sai Baba sent a personal message which began with the words “My Dears! Accept My Love and Blessings!”**



*From left: Dr. Safaya, Dr. Jumsai and Mr. Ryuko Hira*

of “The way to peace: A brief historical review”; Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai, Member of Parliament and NASA scientist of Thailand discussed “The role of education in human values for world peace”; Dr. A. N. Safaya, Director of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences in Puttaparthi, enlightened everyone on the “Free high-tech health care: a unique example”.

Other eminent speakers and their topics included Mr. Carlos Fortin (“Human values in a globalising economy”); and Mr. Ryuko Hira, Zone Coordinator and businessman from Japan (“Human values in business for promoting world peace”). Each of them delivered inspiring talks to a large audience. These talks were later published by the Swiss Sai Organisation in a booklet which was distributed free of charge.

Nine years later in 2004, on the same date of 9 July, there was a second conference organised at the ILO (International Labour Organisation) Geneva on the topic of “Peace and Goodwill in our Troubled World”. A panel of distinguished speakers caught the attention of an audience of more than 100 people, many of whom were UN and NGO (Non-governmental organisation) officials.

Justice P.N. Bhagwati opened the meeting with an inspiring talk stressing the worldwide need to recover Human Values in all areas of society. As he gradually revealed the full meaning of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence, Justice Bhagwati mentioned the 6 inner enemies – anger, lust, envy, jealousy, hatred and ego, and how it is necessary for humankind to overcome these by educating its innate divinity. “Wars are made in the minds of men and it is the minds of men that must be transformed through the inculcation of human values...” he said... “With the right understanding that not hurting others means also not hurting others’ interests”. Two musts were absolutely clear: personal effort and transformation. Finally, as a synthesis to his introductory speech, Justice Bhagwati stated that Humanism is nothing but

The whole event was really a great blessing for all concerned. Eminent speakers such as the then International Chairman Mr. Indulal Shah delivered the welcome address while Justice P. N. Bhagwati, member of the UN Human Rights Commission and former Chief Justice of India spoke on “Human values, human rights and world peace”.

Mr. Jacques Pillet-Will, the late national coordinator for France, addressed the gathering on the topic

human rights in action, and that respect for human rights is impossible if not backed up by human values practised in thought, word and deed.

Professor Eric Arnott, (Hon. Professor of Ophthalmology, Retired Consultant, Charing Cross Hospital and Arnott Eye Centre, London, England) then took the floor. His focus on the unity of faiths and service can be condensed into a few words: 'Health is wealth' and, quoting Jesus, "The body without spirit is dead; faith without deeds is dead". The service activity he and his wife initiated together, and which was presented during the conference, was a living comment on these words.

Professor Keith Critchlow, A.R.C.A., Professor Emeritus of the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts Department of the Prince of Wales' School of Traditional Arts, London, England, and architect of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences in Puttaparthi, enlightened the gathering with his presentation where he brought values, health and architecture harmoniously together by explaining that "When the human form and the cosmic form are in proportion we have health". With the help of his slides, Prof. Critchlow unveiled a minute of mystery to his entranced audience, who realised how all architectural components, i.e. all shapes and forms, are an expression of inner meaning, which interconnects and resonates at subtle levels with our surroundings and ourselves; and how with the right understanding of this truth we can build our architectural environment and shape it to our true and most uplifting needs. In this light, the Super Speciality Hospital of Puttaparthi was introduced in its essential identity: a temple of healing in which Vitruvius's words find fulfilment: "A healthy piece of architecture is like a healthy body, its requirements are the same: strength, convenience and beauty".

Finally Dr. Surendra Upadhyay (Hon. Professor of Ophthalmology, Consultant Ophthalmologist, London, England) touched everyone's heart by presenting his extensive medical endeavours with both the Sathya Sai Service Organisation and Mother Teresa. The outstanding words "Somebody has not come to help them but to love them" and "Serve them as you would serve your own mother or father" echoed the essence of true service: that which springs forth from love and not self-interest or compulsion.



*From l. to r.: Prof.K. Critchlow, Dr. S. Upadhyay, Prof. E. Arnott, Dr. A. Pabari, Dr. A. Hussein and Justice P. N. Bhagwati*

Service to the needy and love in action based on unchanging truth and the will to do good were the leading lines of the day, while Sathya Sai Baba's presence, teachings and social work highlighted the various talks of the eminent speakers who for one reason or another had become acquainted with his message and since then instrumental to the same.

The Conference ended with questions and answers. An NGO delegate expressed the need for adding the word 'love' to the UN charters as a key commitment. A few comments were made

on this, while a final reflection shed light on how important it is to first love ourselves, transform ourselves and, as a result, merge our consciousness into pure, divine love. More important, in fact, than inscribing the word 'love' to any charter, is the humbling attitude and choice of cherishing it in one's heart and acting on it from there. The power of pure feelings works in silence.

The Conference was generously organised by the Sathya Sai Centre, Geneva, Switzerland, grateful for the opportunity to hold a public meeting of merit, whose members arranged all the details necessary for its Sai success.

### **The Mission in Full Swing – Public Meetings Galore!**

Four public meetings took place during 2005 and 2006. The meetings welcomed the support of outside speakers such as Mr. George Bebedelis (EHV Coordinator for Greece and ESSE & ESSE Academy faculty member); Dr. Giancarlo Rosati (esteemed author of many books on science and spirituality); and Prof. Thorbjörn Meyer (Director of ESSE and the ESSE Academy).

The meetings introduced topics such as: "Is a Spiritual Approach Viable? The spiritual teachings and social work of Sathya Sai Baba"; "Is Peace possible in a world of Pieces?", "The importance of a spiritual Master today"; "Human Values and Human Rights: the Essence of Love" and "The Human Mind: Fountain of Serenity and Key of Non-Violence".

The concept behind these meetings was to initiate a step-by-step process of exchange and spiritual inquiry with the local community by providing practical key questions with a socio-existential and spiritual orientation, elaborating on the same. Sathya Sai Baba's teachings were gently brought in, inspirational for further individual and group inquiry.

The initial step of the global programme of meetings was to clarify the essence of Sathya Sai teachings, their spiritual principles and their moral and ethical implications. In this light George Bebedelis provided an overview of ancient Greek philosophy, linking it with subsequent western thought and culture, emphasising its unity with what Sathya Sai Baba professes; Dr. Rosati skipped from down to earth advice on vegetarianism, the risk of misinterpretation of the teachings and fanaticism, to a higher metaphysical focus and Prof. Thorbjörn Meyer pointed out the inner significance of Human Value (i.e. Values) and how the issue of 'Human Rights' cannot be tackled properly, and even less achieved, before a deeper understanding and practice of true humanness is properly secured. Finally, Father Anthony highlighted the two key tools of introspection (self-inquiry) and meditation.



*Service work in a local home for the blind*  
 the prosperous country already has a very well organised network of charities which deal with the various problems and tasks very well, they have initiated and are engaged in various service activities at the local level – all done with great love and commitment.

These include visits to, and the care of, people in homes for the elderly, care of the disabled and Alzheimer patients, food for the homeless and many other useful and valuable contributions to the well-being of the less fortunate in the country. Great importance is attached to international solidarity, expressed by the fact that in the event of disasters and other emergencies the Swiss respond with generosity and great heart.

The video, “Sathya Sai Baba - His works”, closed the meetings, showering the Grace of Swami’s Darshan and blessings on all who attended. Between 40 and 100 persons attended each of these various meetings.

### **Discovering Novel Opportunities to Reach Out**

Though the Sai Organisation has not undertaken any major service project at the national level, mainly because



*Relief work after a natural disaster  
 by the Swiss Sai youth*



*Service in an old people’s home, once a month  
 continuously since 1986*

### **The Far Reaching Service Initiative of Swiss Med**

On the individual level, with their natural and professional gifts and within their possibilities, Swiss devotees are always active in the service of others. A good example with international effects is the work of the service project of the small group of Zollikon nearby Zurich: In September 2006 the service project of this small Baba group came to a successful conclusion. It had been the plan to publish a live interview with Dr. A. N. Safaya, Director of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences in Puttaparthi, in the Swiss Medical Journal *Swiss Med*. Such an interview would serve two purposes. First, it would make the readers of a well-known, neutral, ordinary medical journal which had been published for 28 years,



acquainted with Sathya Sai Baba's work and His teaching in the field of health care, readers who were mostly non-devotees and had never heard of Baba before.

Secondly, it was planned to distribute the journal worldwide in a circulation of 10,000 copies in order to draw the readers' attention to the then forthcoming International Medical Conference on "Ideal Health Care for All", which was scheduled for September 3 and 4, 2005 and formed part of the events staged on the occasion of Sathya Sai Baba's eightieth birthday.

The plan was subsequently realised. *Swiss Med*, a Swiss journal of medicine and medical technology, published a long live interview which Dr. A. N. Safaya granted to the editor-in-chief of the journal on February 12, 2005. The issue, heralded by a foreword by Prof. Thorbjörn Meyer, Chairman of Zone 7 of the Sathya Sai Organisation (Europe), Chairman ESSE Institute and ESSE Academy, also contained an article by Dr. Narendranath Reddy, the Chairman of the International Medical Committee, and Dr. Michael Goldstein, the Chairman of the Overseas Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, on the concept and the aims of the International Medical Conference mentioned above. In addition, Dr. Narendranath Reddy and Dr Michael Goldstein also provided an overview of the programme "Sai Ideal Health Care for All" and its activities worldwide.

In a fascinating article Professor Dr. Mitchell W. Krucoff, a famous American cardiologist who works at the Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, describes how he, who did not know anything about Baba, was miraculously led to Him and became a member of the planning staff of the Hospital in Puttaparthi. Another contribution in this remarkable issue is of a purely technological nature and describes a software product solution for the capture, storage and transmission of echocardiogram images. The man who invented and developed the system is a Sai devotee and presented the first prototype of the machine to the Puttaparthi Super Speciality Hospital where it was installed and has been successfully operated since. In the article Dr. Safaya and some of his colleagues testify to the benefits of this new medical technology.



*The cover page of the SWISS MED journal 1/05*

More than 3,000 copies of *Swiss Med* 1/05 were sent to Puttaparthi. Each and every participant in the Medical Conference (there were nearly 1,000 people from India and abroad), all the delegates from all over the world, VIPs and guests on the veranda, all received their personal copy of this special issue of *Swiss Med*. Dr. N. Reddy, member of Prasanthi Council, received 1,200 copies to circulate to his medical colleagues and friends in the United States.

The issue was also sent to about 600 addresses in Switzerland and a further 500 addresses in other countries, mainly to members of governments and to people involved in health care administration. Some 160 embassies, diplomatic representatives of their countries accredited to the Government of Switzerland, received a copy of the *Swiss Med* issue along with a friendly letter. A mailing list was compiled of 700 of the most eminent people in culture, medicine and politics all over the world.

Within the Sai Organisation a copy was sent to all Zone Coordinators, Regional Coordinators, and National Sai Organisations worldwide. The Swiss Sathya Sai Bookshop received an adequate number of copies to be given to visitors.

**This concerted effort by a small yet sincere group proved highly effective in creating awareness about the unique Sathya Sai Healthcare system among peoples from various walks of life, including decision makers, policy pundits and most importantly, medical professionals the world over.**

Immediately after the Medical Conference the second part of the project was started. Dr. N. Reddy wrote a report on the Medical Conference and thus made it possible to follow up *Swiss Med* 1/05 with the post-congress issue *Swiss Med* 2/05, also in English. The translation of the English version into all the languages spoken in Switzerland had been started. It was simply overwhelming, how Sai devotees from the French and Italian speaking parts of Switzerland, as well as devotees from Italy, Germany, France and Belgium spontaneously offered their help and support, so that it was possible to realise the various issues in translations into the languages mentioned. The English publication can be seen as a PDF document on the website of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences:

[http://www.ssihms.org.in/pdf/SWISS\\_MED.pdf](http://www.ssihms.org.in/pdf/SWISS_MED.pdf). For the German, Italian and French languages one can visit [here](#).

### The Spiritual Wing – Always on a Song!

**Akhaṇḍa Jyoti Jalāo** 1

*Part of a much larger Swiss song-book*

As already mentioned, it was mainly the dedication of a single person, late Dr. Ali Hussein and his family that created an interest in *bhajan* songs which are so very unusual for a Western culture. They travelled tirelessly from group to group and taught this spiritual music. At the same time they took great trouble to collect and foster songs in all the languages of Switzerland and this led to the cooperation with another musical group and to the creation of a special Swiss song-book, which has translations of the songs into different languages and is of enormous help to all the devotees.

For the Bhajan part a new group – enthusiastic lovers of Indian music from the Sai Centre of Basel – were prepared to transcribe the Indian songs into musical notation (as far as this was

possible). This led to the publication of the Bhajan song-book, which aroused considerable international interest and is now on sale in the bookshop in Prasanthi. (This work is ongoing and can be followed on the website: [www.bhajan.ch](http://www.bhajan.ch))

In the Spiritual Wing those responsible also prepare the work and the teachings of Sai Baba for study circles and compile explanatory texts. In this way the level of the study circles is raised, step by step.

The organisation's own printed medium, the "Sathya Sai Bulletin", appears twice a year and besides the latest of Baba's talks it also publishes extremely interesting articles on the different activities both in Switzerland and abroad. To a certain extent this important journal forms the link between the Organisation and the individual members.

Another such link is the Sathya Sai Book and Media Shop ([www.sathya.ch](http://www.sathya.ch)), which was inaugurated in autumn 1999, in Aarau. Its premises also serve as a meeting centre for people who want to find out more about Sathya Sai Baba.



*The bookshop in Aarau*

Finally, the Swiss Sai Organisation also has its own website under the address [www.sathyasai.ch](http://www.sathyasai.ch). Here, too, all the information of course has to be translated into at least three languages, a requirement that is sometimes difficult for the small country to fulfil. But with goodwill it has up till now always been possible to find the necessary people who can help with this.

### **Empowering Education with Human Values**

When the first Balvikas programmes were started in 1980 in the Geneva Centre, about ten children took part in the classes. After the founding of the Sathya Sai Organisation Switzerland in 1990, the activities of the Education Wing were expanded.



*General M. L. Chibber leading a workshop in Ticino, 1996*

Switzerland, with more than 100 participants and 14 facilitators. The programme was divided into 5 basic units, with follow-up meetings at both Centre and regional level, as well as preparatory meetings with the facilitators. The programme produced much resource material in four languages!

Regular satsangs, training sessions and workshops were held throughout the country in the 1990s. Camps for children and adolescents were also arranged. Many devotees attended courses abroad which were organised by the ESSE Institute. High points were the three-day workshop with June Auton in 1994 and the weekend workshop with General M. L. Chibber on the theme of his leadership book in 1996.

From 2000 to 2002 a major seminar was held at different venues in

It was conceived as a synthesis of ESSE, ISSE and the personal experience of the two leading facilitators. Each of the 5 units were studied during a national 2-day seminar plus regional

follow-up meetings. Individual presentations covered the practical application of Human Values in education and other spheres of life.

These presentations were given in small groups of 8-10 people and were monitored by a facilitator. They lasted between 15 and 30 minutes and were submitted in writing. Certificates were delivered by the Coordinating Committee of the Swiss Sathya Sai Organisation.



*National workshops on Education in Human Values*

As a follow-up to this orientation-training activity, a three-day seminar entitled “Business with Heart” was held in 2003.

“May the world live in peace, and not in pieces.

May the world live in love and not in pain.

May we work together to make it better,

loving thoughts words and deeds is what it needs”.

Special focus was placed on values *at the workplace*. Three one-day workshops were held during the months of January, February and March 2003 at the Sai Centre of Ticino, within the context of regional-Centre activity. The meetings were held in English and Italian, which made it possible to open the programme to participants coming from other Swiss Sai Centres as well as devotees from Northern Italy, and more than 50 people were welcomed in all.

The cultural diversity of the participants – owing to the foreign origin of many Swiss devotees – created an enriching international setting, in favour however of the unifying factor of common purpose: the desire to explore the topic of values at work, to learn how to manifest them in everyday life and to improve the working atmosphere by fostering right human relations, self confidence and character, and the quality of life in general. The structure of the programme proposed the modules which had proved valuable in the earlier training programme: text sheets, toolboxes, work with group facilitators, presentations in plenary sessions and in-depth work in sub-groups.

The very meaningful programme entitled: **‘Unlocking the Power of Human Values in the Workplace: Business with Heart’** – was made possible thanks to the contributions of many people.

Immediate focus was placed on the meaning of one’s work, i.e. profession, to understand one’s working relationship, what our job/profession/activity is teaching us; what challenges we must face and overcome; how all this is an opportunity for spiritual discipline and personal transformation.

One meeting introduced the concept of the ‘Inner Manager’ to the participants – and focused on the necessity of strengthening one’s dialogue with Conscience. Tangible questions such as: When and how did you know that your conscience was guiding you in your decisions? How did you feel? Did you follow the inner guidance or resist it? What happened?... were put forward to help the group examine this inner relationship – giving specific focus to ‘the workplace’ and becoming aware of how the leading principles and universal values are there to guide us, inherent in ourselves.



*Workshop with Dr. Jack Hawley in Ticino, 2003*

The topics that emanated from this close-up on heart-to-heart communication were *self-confidence* and *true leadership*.

The third workshop of this programme tackled the topic of Character and was conducted by Dr. Jack Hawley – business consultant and author of the book, ‘How to Reawaken the Spirit at Work: Dharmic Management’.

The programme ‘Business with Heart’ was a new step along our way; it was an opportunity for fostering further inquiry, solution-finding for practice and also a chance to experiment with training modules with an eye to the future possibilities for a non-devotional public. This training programme not only confirmed the previous one but added something new to it, as each new step always does.

The feedback received was all very positive and encouraging. A few non-devotees who were there (friends of members/devotees who had expressed a sincere interest and need for this kind of training) were also extremely happy with both the informal setting and the high quality of the training itself.

To have also been able to include a group of more than 10 participants from Northern Italy was a positive factor that we feel paves the way for further activity that could be jointly prepared, organised and carried out together, so as to strengthen mutual efforts and endeavour.

## Demonstrating Values Creatively

A creative exhibition on Human Values was opened in the year 2003 in Aarau, Switzerland, thanks to the inspiration, skills and talents of the many Sai devotees who eagerly participated. The exhibition, which was based on a low budget set-up, was the first step towards a more professional exhibition and was seen as a ‘family rehearsal’ of what could be proposed to a non-devotee public in the future.



*Works of Art presented at the National Art Exhibition*

previously carried out. Regularly participating in an annual birthday celebration at the local retirement home, its members would offer what they could, with music and any other talents they had.

The realisation of the exhibition was a much larger process that helped all people *feel* how the energy of *service* can be connected to *human values*, and how this energy creates, by simply expressing it creatively from within, as one participant recalls:

“Thanks to what was a truly heartfelt experience for us all, we realised to what extent it is necessary to live and practise Human Values. Neither the pictures nor the description of the work done can reflect our gratitude to the team of four ladies who planned the work with so much harmony and devotion, portraying an example of God’s grace and love. We also learned that when you try again and again... with full trust in God, one day He will make your aspirations come true!”

For two days 25 people were occupied in preparing the exhibition, installing its many components in 5 small rooms and one big hall. A specific colour was given to each room, combined with a value. The overall exhibition was conceived to be as interactive as possible, and this meant learning alone or with other members and devotee visitors.

The idea of putting one’s ‘creative energy’ to work... was the natural continuation of 9 years of service activity which the Basel Centre had

## Sai Parenting – Making it Work

There is no official parenting programme (though some Centres choose to continue to focus on this topic), but during the year 2004 Switzerland chose parenting as a national focus topic: major importance was given to communication. A paper was produced entitled ‘Understanding as a condition for Unity’, translated into German, Italian and French (the original is in English).

[www.radiosai.org](http://www.radiosai.org)



*Workshops on parenting with Rita and Robert Bruce, in Ticino*

The inspirational reference material normally used – both from a practical (activity and results) point of view and content-wise – are the books by P. and T. Dhall (e.g. Human Values – The Heart of Dynamic Parenting) and by Rita Bruce (Parenting).

Furthermore, Rita Bruce’s workshop on parenting – organised in the Ticino Centre - has provided us with an excellent concept programme that can be easily adopted in Centres both in study-circle format and also in a workshop format.

## The Spirited Sai Youth

The Youth Wing in Switzerland has a varied history – ranging from enthusiastic activity to short spells of hibernation. A small but very committed and keen group is at present working on the restructuring of the Youth Wing. This group consists of about 10 to 15 young adults aged between 25 and 35 years.



*The Swiss Youth Wing of today (2007)*

## Swiss Authority Recognises the Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee

The Swiss Sai Organisation, under its new name, “Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Switzerland”, has its legal domicile in Berne, the beautiful and historical capital of

But there were always older devotees who were there to give advice to these young people. The highlight of last year’s activities was the visit to the World Youth Conference in Prasanthi Nilayam. The young people all returned to their own country full of enthusiasm and were able to report on their experiences and what they had learned, at a national meeting called Satsang.

Switzerland ([click here](#)). Since 14 October 1993 it has been recognised as being an organisation of public utility.

In accordance with the “Officers’ Guidelines” issued by the International Sai Organisation on 17 May 2005, the Swiss Sai Organisation had to change its name to “Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Switzerland”, and as a consequence of this it also had to draw up new Statutes.

Another important consequence of these changes was that the Swiss devotees had to prove to the authorities that they are still, and in the future will continue to be, an organisation of public utility, thus being granted the status of exemption from payment of the direct cantonal and community taxes, the direct federal tax, inheritance tax and the tax on donations *inter vivos*.

The Swiss Sai Organisation therefore submitted to the tax authority a copy of its new Statutes and detailed documentation on all its activities, such as education in human values, service to the community and to individuals, spiritual activities etc. Based on these documents, the Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Switzerland received from the tax authorities of the Canton of Berne, in their letter of 23 October 2006, notification of the decision that the new Statutes were approved and that the Swiss Sai Organisation is granted the status of public utility and is thus exempt from the payment of taxes.

We quote as follows the first and last paragraphs of this letter – sent to the Swiss Sai Organisation, written on the stationery of a Swiss tax authority!

“Under the name ‘Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Switzerland’, an association exists in the sense of Art. 60 ff. of the Swiss Civil Code (ZGB), with its legal domicile in Berne. According to its Statutes, this association is an organisation of public utility which helps the individual to become aware of his inherent divinity and to behave accordingly, in that it allows divine love and the unity of thought, words and deeds to pass into the sphere of everyday life. The aim of the institution is the dissemination of the basic human values – sathya (truth), dharma (justice), prema (love), shanti (peace) and ahimsa (non-violence). A further objective of the association is to promote a culture in which the unity of all beliefs is recognised, without regard to religion, race, caste or creed. In its letter of 4 September 2006, this institution submitted to the Board of Taxation of the Canton of Berne an application for exemption from taxes.

"The documentation of the association, ‘Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Switzerland’, which was submitted shows that it pursues the following activities: collection of clothing and materials for the victims of the tsunami, care of elderly and/or handicapped persons, kitchen service and distribution of food for the homeless and for drug addicts, holiday camps for children and adolescents and other activities that are adapted to the local needs (e.g. care of children, holidays for the elderly, for people living alone and for children at Christmas-time, aid in the event of natural catastrophes etc.). This work is carried out by members of the Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Switzerland in a honorary capacity.

"The activities of the association, ‘Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Switzerland’ in the humanitarian, social and educational fields contribute towards the promotion of the common good. The circle of those who may benefit from this promotion of the common good is open. The question of the common interest can thus be affirmed. The condition that an activity is not pursued out of self-interest is met, since adequate sacrifices are made: the association is



financed through donations and contributions from its members, and very many hours of voluntary work are carried out.”

### **The Sai-Suffused Switzerland**

The National Coordinator of the Swiss Sai Organisation recently had a pleasant experience in connection with the international registration of the name “Sathya Sai Baba” with the World Intellectual Property Organisation in Geneva. This also involved some correspondence from Ireland.



Comité de Coordination Sathya Sai de Suisse  
Comitato di Coordinamento Sathya Sai Svizzero  
Sathya Sai Koordinations - Komitee Schweiz  
Comité da Coordinaziun Sathya Sai da la Svizra  
Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Switzerland  
[www.radiosai.org](http://www.radiosai.org)

*Unity in diversity! The official letter head of the Sai organisation written in five languages*

This letter was addressed by the Irish Patent Office to the Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee Switzerland at the private address of the National Coordinator. Instead of the letter, the Coordinator received a written enquiry from the rather irritated Swiss Postal Service, which read as follows: “Does a Mr. Sathya Sai live at this address?” The question was quickly answered with a heartfelt “Yes!”, because – as we know – **Sai is everywhere!** And the letter then found its way to the right recipient.

- Swiss Sai Devotees  
and the H2H Team