



## SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

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### GLOBAL INITIATIVES

2009

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a renowned spiritual leader and global humanitarian whose mission of uniting the world into a violence-free, stress-free global family has inspired millions of individuals to broaden their spheres of responsibility and serve society.

Sri Sri has devised practical tools and techniques that help individuals achieve calmness of mind and clarity of thought. Such a state of mind empowers individuals to not only achieve their goals, but also instills in them a sense of service and greater connectedness with humanity at large.

In 1981, Sri Sri established the Art of Living Foundation, an educational organization with a presence in more than 150 countries. The Foundation's self-development programs offer powerful tools to eliminate stress and foster a sense of well-being. In 1997, Sri Sri founded the International Association for Human Values (IAHV), a humanitarian organization that advances human values such as compassion, caring and commitment in political, economic and social spheres.

IAHV and the Art of Living Foundation collaborate on humanitarian initiatives that include conflict resolution, disaster and trauma relief, environmental conservation, prisoner rehabilitation, youth leadership, women's empowerment, campaigns against female foeticide and child labor, and supporting education for all.



**2009**  
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*“The purpose of religion is to bring enlightenment to the individual, happiness to the society, and to move from limited individual identity to universality and eventually communion with the Divine. When at a time, these ideals are far from reality, congregations such as this, where people of all faiths gather together, have a great responsibility to ponder on these pressing issues. It is a necessity for the very survival of our planet.”* - Opening Remarks, Parliament of World Religions

**GLOBALIZING WISDOM & PROMOTING RELIGIOUS HARMONY**

**Public Discourse on Human Values**  
Ahmednagar, India January 14



Sri Sri led more than 100,000 people through a meditation for global peace at the renowned Shirdi Sai Baba temple. He also spoke with them on the means of cultivating peace at the individual level.

Buddha, Saint Basavanna, and Dr. Ambedkar; historic figures who advocated harmony in diversity and equality of all people.

**Meeting with Bulgaria’s Ministers of Health, Justice and Social Affairs** Sofia, Bulgaria - April 25 - 28

Sri Sri’s meetings highlighted the ongoing commitments of the Art of Living Foundation in Bulgaria to help build a stronger society. Projects include working with centers for the elderly, disabled and people in need such as one-parent families.

**Consecration of Buddhist Temple with His Holiness the Dalai Lama**  
Gulbarga, India - January 19

Sri Sri joined the Dalai Lama at the Buddhist Vihara in Gulbarga, Karnataka to consecrate a temple dedicated to the Buddha. Sri Sri discussed the contemporary relevance of the Buddha’s message of non-violence, peace and tolerance. He also highlighted the life and work of the

**Dialogue with Representatives of the Vatican**  
Mumbai, India - June 12

Joining representatives of Pope Benedict XVI and Hindu Leaders, including the Shankaracharya of Kanchi Sri Jayendra Saraswati, Sri Sri engaged in a dialogue between the two religions. An inter-faith meeting, the initiative was organized by Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Mumbai, and sought to promote harmony. The Archbishop was

joined by Cardinal Jean-Louis Pierre Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue.



**Keynote Speaker, "Making a World of Difference"  
The Parliament of World Religions  
Melbourne, Australia - December 3**



Speaking at the opening plenary, Sri Sri emphasized the connection between individual stress and global violence. He called on leaders of the multi-faith gathering to act concertedly to address pressing global issues.

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION & PEACE INITIATIVES**

*"We must continue to pursue the path of peace. Conflicts are bound to come and we have to make them a stepping stone for achieving the ultimate goal of global peace."*

**Keynote Speaker, Anti-Terrorism Rally with  
Home Minister of Karnataka, Dr. V.S. Acharya and  
Minister of Higher Education, Mr. Aravind Limbavali  
Mangalore, India - January 15**

Organized by Akhila Bharata Vidyarthi Parishat (ABVP), the rally celebrated the end of a month long campaign that was initiated by the Department of Higher Education and the Directorate of Collegiate Education of Karnataka, to increase civic participation in anti-terrorism efforts. Addressing more than 20,000 people from across South

Karnataka, Sri Sri called on parents and students to pledge to fight terrorism without bias towards religion and ethnicity.



**Humanitarian Efforts for Sri Lankan Refugees in  
Tamil Nadu Rameshwaram, India - January 26**

Meeting with more than 3,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, Sri Sri listened to grievances, offered solace and distributed clothing and other essential items. Sri Sri pledged to serve as an intermediary



between the refugees and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa. He reiterated the Art of Living's continued commitment to build schools and homes as well as provide necessary support to address the refugees' needs, from relief to post-conflict reconstruction.

**Dialogue on De-radicalization of Maoist (Naxalite)  
Extremists Jharkhand, India - February 17**

Speaking with 3,500 former Naxalites and Maoists as well as village and local government leaders, Sri Sri discussed how the former insurgents could become positive agents of nation-building. Sri Sri noted the case of

several insurgents who had participated in Art of Living's de-radicalization and youth development programs and have since established the Art of



Living Peace and Community Center in Jharkhand. Sri Sri exhorted the youth to work towards the nation's welfare and tread the path of non-violence. He emphasized that political participation, not violent revolution, is the appropriate means to address their grievances.

**Three-Day State Visit to Sri Lanka**  
**Sri Lanka - April 20-22**

Sri Sri embarked on a three-day visit to provide solace and courage to internally displaced persons (IDPs) caught in the cross fire between the Sri Lankan forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Having met the IDPs, Sri Sri then conveyed his concerns regarding the physical safety and deteriorating health conditions of these IDPs at the refugee camps to the Sri Lankan President, His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa. Sri Sri also met with leader of the opposition, Mr. Ranil Wikramasinghe, American Ambassador to Sri Lanka, H. E. Robert Blake, Ministers in the Cabinet of Sri Lanka and various Parliamentarians to discuss ways of bringing about peace and uniting the country.



He also established the Committee for Peace in Sri Lanka to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation; the group includes a number of Hindu and Buddhist leaders, including the Dalai Lama. Sri Sri's trauma relief programs have reached more than 80,000 residents across the districts of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara, Jaffna and Kandy in Sri Lanka.

**Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India June 10, 2009**

Dr. Manmohan Singh praised the good work done by Sri Sri and extended his support towards the activities of the Art of Living.



**Chief Guest, "10th International Conference: Millennium Development Goals, Challenges and Perspectives", Szent Istvan University Budapest, Hungary - June 24**

Sri Sri was recognized for his efforts to advance poverty alleviation, promote environmental sustainability, eradicate illiteracy and advance women's education and empowerment globally, and was awarded an honorary doctorate. Sri Sri spoke with the audience of politicians, economists, policy makers and emphasized the role that education can play in fostering collective responsibility for the accomplishment of the MDGs.

**Speaker at the Second Israeli Presidential Conference 'Facing Tomorrow' Tel Aviv, Israel - October 19-22**



Sri Sri was invited to the Second Annual Presidential Conference organized by President Shimon Peres. On his second visit to Israel, Sri Sri discussed the role that multi-cultural and multi-religious education can play in bringing about peace in the Middle East. He was also interviewed by Israel's renowned talk show host Dan Shilon who asked "why is the world not smiling anymore?" Sri Sri replied, "I know there is a lot of work that needs to be done. There is work of reformers, is like that of doctors. The doctor's job is to treat the patient, but if the doctor falls sick there is no hope for the patient. So, if we lose our smile we cannot bring a smile onto the face of others. We need to be focused; we need to work hard to bring the smile back onto the faces of the people." Conference participants included U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, numerous heads of State and government officials.

**Sri Sri Convinces Muslim Clerics to End a 12-year Boycott of India's National Song, Vande Mataram Deoband, India - November 9**

Sri Sri met with Darul-Uloom's Honorable Maulana Margub Urrehman, Mufti Habibur Rehman, Jamiat

*“Trust is the breath of business, ethics its limbs and to uplift the spirit, its goal.”*

Ulema-e-Hind’s Ehsaan Qasmi and Usman Mansoorpuri. After their meeting with Sri Sri, the Muslim clerics softened their prohibition of *Vande Mataram* and issued a statement allowing Muslims to sing it.

**ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, CORPORATE CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY**

**Meeting with the Honorable Prime Minister of Lithuania, Mr. Andrius Kubilius and the Honorable Dr. Vytautas Landsergis, Member of European Parliament and Former President of the Constitutional Assembly Vilnius, Lithuania - May 30-June 1**

During his three-day tour, Sri Sri met with leaders and youth to deliberate on the role ethical leadership and human values can play in helping revive the global economy and prevent repeating mistakes.



**Business Leaders Symposium, Tel Aviv University Tel Aviv, Israel - October 19**

Sri Sri shared wisdom with leading figures in academia and the private sector on ways to quell fanaticism and foster human values of compassion, commitment, and integrity in society. He highlighted the similarities between the Vedas and the Torah, and called for fostering common understanding through multicultural and multi-religious education.

**Meeting with the Honorable Prime Minister of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Günther Oettinger Bangalore, India - November 18**

The Prime Minister commended Sri Sri’s work to integrate spirituality into politics and business. Also present were German Members of Parliament, the Ministers of State for Finance and Economics, the Honorable Minister of State for Large and Medium Industries, Karnataka and the President of the Federation of Karnataka’s Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

**Noted among India’s Seven Most Powerful Individuals by Forbes-India Mumbai, India - November 20**

Sri Sri was selected by Forbes India as among one of India’s seven most powerful individuals. In a panel discussion, Sri Sri emphasized the role of integrating spirituality and economics in the wake of the financial crisis and global economic meltdown and spoke with industrial and financial leaders about the purpose of wealth.



**Inaugural Address, Great Lakes Institute of Management Chennai, India - November 26**

Delivering the inaugural address at the Institute’s Meditation and Inspiration Center for Living and Kindness, Sri Sri spoke on the effect meditation on thought and innovation. He inspired the Center to enhance creativity and improve the effectiveness of graduates of the Institute.

**PRESERVING CULTURE & THE ARTS**

**Recipient of the First Culture in Balance Award World Culture Forum Dresden, Germany - October 10**

Sri Sri was presented with the “Culture in Balance” Award in recognition of his contribution to furthering inter-cultural dialogue, peacebuilding, and fostering ethical business practices. The award was presented by the Mayor of Dresden, Ms. Helma Orosz. Sri Sri accepted the award on behalf of all those people working for a “violence-free, stress-free” society.



*“Deepening the mystery of creation is science. Deepening the mystery of the self is spirituality. When spiritual values - human values - are ignored and neglected, technology brings fear and destruction instead of comfort.”*

## SCIENCE, HEALTH & SPIRITUALITY

### **Keynote Speaker, Indian Space Research Organization Bangalore, India - January 12**

Sri Sri discussed the connection between the mind, thought and action and called for scientists to understand the importance that Indian philosophy attributes the concept of space.

### **‘Spirituality for Combat Leadership’, National Defense Academy Pune, India - January 16**

Sri Sri emphasized the importance of spiritual knowledge in helping build intuition and alertness for an individual’s mind. He called on the Academy to encourage soldiers to draw from spiritual texts and noted that spiritual practices like yoga and meditation can help build both physical and mental stamina.

### **Keynote Speaker, “Innovation, Technology and Science,” Infosys Strategy and Action Planning Meeting (STRAP) February 27**

Sri Sri addressed the annual Strategy & Action Planning meet at Infosys Technologies, and highlighted the connection between meditation, a calm and clear mind, innovation and success.

### **Keynote Speaker, the Centennial Celebrations, Indian Institute of Science Bangalore, India - May 25**

Sri Sri’s talk addressed a wide array of topics including the treatment of physical sciences in the ancient Indian scriptures and their relevance to modern science, like the theory of relativity.

### **Doctors for Daughters: Faith in Action against Sex Selection Bangalore, India - September 12**

Sri Sri called on medical professionals to end the practice of pre-natal sex selection at a symposium hosted by the Art of Living Foundation, United Nations Population Fund and the Indian Medical Association. Persistent

gender discrimination has led to a declining sex ratio across India. Sri Sri has launched numerous initiatives to create awareness about this problem and reverse this trend.

### **Keynote Speaker, World Health Organization Summit Colombo, Sri Lanka - October 6**

Sri Sri joined Sri Lanka’s Minister of Health in calling for society to consider the importance of spiritual knowledge, yoga and meditation as a means to achieve mental and physical well-being.

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT & SOCIAL INNOVATION

### **Rural Development Initiative Ahmednagar, India - January 14-16**

Encouraging grassroots development, Sri Sri urged 550 village leaders to develop socially relevant and market-savvy products. He highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship as the mechanism to help strengthen the rural economy.

### **Youth in Nation Building West Bengal, India - February 16**

Sri Sri addressed more than 150,000 youth in West Bengal and called on them to commit to six months of voluntary service to help build a strong and prosperous India. He also urged some to enter into and reform the practice of politics.

### **Launch of the “YES! We Can” Program and the European Youth Corps Bad Antogast - March 10**

Sri Sri inspired 122 youth from 31 countries across Europe who volunteered for 6-8 months to spread the message and vision of a stress-free, violence free Europe through the newly launched “YES! We Can” program. Speaking on the 12 qualities of leadership, Sri Sri discussed how youth can inspire human values and service across Europe.

*“The need of the hour demands channeling abundant youth energy in a constructive manner”*

### **Youth Empowerment Chicago**

**Chicago, USA - July 23**

Youth Empowerment Chicago was launched to further the Art of Living’s Campaign for a Violence-Free, Stress-Free Chicago by teaching high school students the YES! Program, the Foundation’s youth leadership and stress management course. Youth Empowerment Chicago was inaugurated by Sri Sri, Secretary of State Jesse White, Alderman Joseph Moore and Consulate General of India Ashok Kumar. More than 1,000 inner city teens have since participated in the YES! Program.

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### **Speaker, “Multiculturalism and Education,” World Knowledge Forum-UNESCO Seoul, Korea - October 12**

Speaking at a conference attended by global leaders and dignitaries, including former U.S. President George W. Bush, Sri Sri called for leadership in the private and public spheres to help foster a broader mind-set in the next generation of youth. He also discussed the role of multicultural education in stemming racist and regionalist tendencies.

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### **Keynote Speaker, Second Global Forum on the Power of Peace, UNESCO**

**Bangkok, Thailand - October 28-30**

Sri Sri emphasized the role of Information Technology and Spirituality in building a culture of peace and mutual understanding. The conference drew participants from multilateral development agencies, governments and civil society.





## MILESTONES

### Sri Sri University Bill Passed

on July 29, 2009 by the Orissa State Legislative assembly in India. The university is envisioned to be a world-class center for learning, innovation and excellence

### 7,107 Rural Youth Trained

in the Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP)

### 1,527 Iraqi Women Trained

in trauma relief and vocational training in Baghdad, Karbala and Suleymania

### 19,230 Patients Treated

in health and hygiene camps in India

### 491 Rural Self Help Groups

formed in rural India

### 3,855 5H Workshops

to support community driven development through India. 5H stands for health, homes, hygiene, human values and harmony in diversity

### 7,800 Farmers Trained

in Art of Living Zero-Budget farming techniques

### Millions of Trees Planted

as part of the "Mission Green Earth" Campaign



THE OFFICE OF  
HIS HOLINESS SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

#### INDIA

21st KM Kanakapura Road | Bangalore, South Taluk 560062  
Tel: +91 9986622022 | +91 93425 22022  
Email: [secretariat@artofliving.org](mailto:secretariat@artofliving.org)

#### USA

2401 15th Street NW | Washington, DC 20009  
Tel: 202 492 5522  
Email: [ajay@srisri.org](mailto:ajay@srisri.org)

#### EUROPE

I Bad Antogast | Oppenau Germany D77728  
Tel: +49 7804 910 923  
Email: [secretariat@artofliving.org](mailto:secretariat@artofliving.org)

#### CANADA

525 Bonsecours, #101 | Montréal, QC H2Y 3C6  
Phone: +1 514 836 0809  
Email: [lucie@srisri.org](mailto:lucie@srisri.org)

[www.srisri.org](http://www.srisri.org)  
[global.artofliving.org](http://global.artofliving.org)