

## SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

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### GLOBAL INITIATIVES

2015

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 people to broaden their share 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 achieve their goals and instills a sense of service and greater connectedness with humanity.

In 1981, Sri Sri established the Art of Living Foundation, an educational organization with a presence in over 152 countries. The Foundation's individual 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, which promotes societal responsibility and human values in political, economic and social spheres.

IAHV and the Art of Living Foundation collaborate on several humanitarian initiatives, including conflict resolution, disaster and trauma relief, environmental conservation, anti-corruption, prisoner rehabilitation, youth leadership, women's empowerment and universal education. Both organizations enjoy special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.



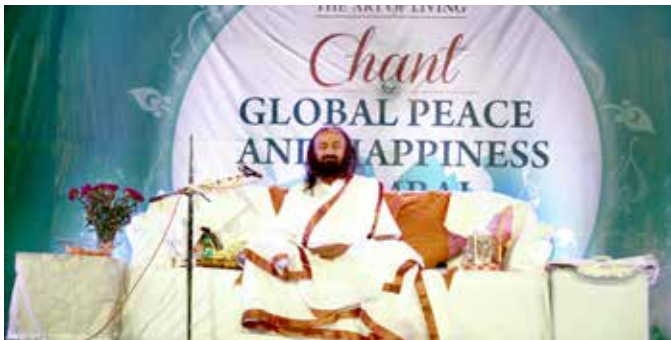
2015  
IN REVIEW



*The whole world is one family, so it is necessary that we live with naturalness and simplicity; only then life blossoms. The wall that we erect between ourselves and others needs to be demolished. From your side, drop all inhibitions between you and others.*

## Global Waves of Peace Emanating from Mumbai

Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, January 11



Gurudev led thousands of people across religions, castes, and nationalities in a mesmerizing chant to promote peace and harmony at the MMRDA grounds in Mumbai.

## 'Venunaad' - Symphony of 4000 Flutes

Nashik, Maharashtra, India, January 12



Venunaad, organized by The Art of Living as part of its sustained initiatives to revitalize the ancient musical and dance traditions of India, reinforced the power of music to spread peace and bring unity.

The artistes, drawn from every age-group, and every segment of society, performed under the guiding baton of renowned flautist, Pt. Ronu Mazumdar, while the revered exponent of the instrument, Hariprasad Chaurasia, was the guest of honor.

Gurudev said at the event, “Spirituality and music together can uplift people, get them out of depression and help them start a new life with enthusiasm. For a stress-free life, you have to embrace both these facets (spirituality and music).”

## Enhancing Employability Through Skill-Training

Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, January 16

Skilling India and fortifying its roots were the two issues highlighted at ‘India Way Forward’, a national conference organized by The Art of Living. The conference focused on sustainable, integrated development in urban and rural areas and on improving the employability of the youth.

Stressing the importance of skill-development training in improving employability, Gurudev encouraged the youth to take steps to increase their self-confidence. “If self-confidence awakens in the individual, one is ready to do anything. Along with enthusiasm, this nation has to develop a new consciousness,” he observed.

## Farmers Meet

Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, January 22



With an aim to enhance and maintain the sustainability and prosperity of agriculture in Karnataka, 1500 farmers from across the state gathered at The Art of Living International Center to attend the ‘Karnataka Organic Farmers Convention’.

Gurudev drew a parallel with ancient times when farmers were honored members of society, and used natural farming techniques. He observed, “Rampant use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides have greatly reduced the fertility of the soil. The only solution is educating our farmers in organic farming.” He added, “It is the duty of the farming community to give healthy food to the world, and the duty of the world to ensure the prosperity of its farmers.”

## “It Is Smart to Be Ethical” Say World Leaders

Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, February 1



In the backdrop of shifting global landscapes, corporate heads, business leaders, government heads and NGOs, from India and across the world convened at the two-day annual conference- ‘Corporate Culture and Spirituality’ (CCS) by The Art of Living and the World Forum for Ethics in Business (WFEB).

While inaugurating the conference Gurudev said, “We need to drive a message into the budding entrepreneurs of society that it is smart to be ethical, it is smart to be service oriented, and it is smart to be sharing & serving.”

From philanthropy to business, sustainability to growth, partnerships to employee engagement, a range of corporate and humanitarian representatives outlined their priorities and what they consider key drivers in forming sustainable partnerships.

## Awards in Malaysia

Malaysia, March

Gurudev was conferred the prestigious Asia Pacific Brand Laureate award in Kuala Lumpur. The award was also given to The Art of Living for its significant contribution to the world.



Some of the previous recipients of the Brand Laureate Award include Hillary Clinton, Nelson Mandela, Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg.

*Speaking at the award ceremony, Gurudev said, “Happiness is the birthright of every individual. The world community deserves to have peace and also freedom from depression, anxiety and terrorism.”*

## Happiness Festival

Japan, March 22

As part of Gurudev’s tour to Japan, a special ‘International Happiness Festival’ was held. Over 5,000 people participated, with felicitations from Honourable Mr. Hakubun Shimomura (then Minister of Sports, Education, Science and Technology in Japan) and Her Excellency Mrs. Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa (Indian Ambassador to Japan).

The program was an electric mix of culture showcasing the best of Japan and the rest of the world; from invigorating Yosakoi (Japanese style semi-modern jazz dance), exuberant

latino rhythms, ancient mantras sung in modern tunes, to taiko (Japanese drums) executed to perfection.



During the rest of the tour (March 18-23), Gurudev interacted with people from all walks of society: with students at a special talk; Members of Parliament at the Parliament House; philanthropists at the Great International Charity Festival, among others.

### **Yoga@The European Parliament** **Brussels, Belgium, April 21**

The European Parliament invited Gurudev to speak on ‘The Yoga Way’ in April as a curtain raiser to the International Yoga Day in June. “From GDP, we are moving to Gross Domestic Happiness (GDH). Yoga can be a useful tool that can aid that,” Gurudev said to an audience composed of Members of European Parliament, Directorates-General, European Commissioners, Ambassadors from various countries and several others.



Throwing light on the power of yoga, he added, “ Prejudice based on religion, race, class, gender, education, financial status have clogged the mind of men and that's how conflicts arise in society. Yoga helps us to reach out and resolve this conflict.” It was for the first time in the history of the European Parliament that any event had found resonance amongst members from all the seven political groups in the Parliament.

### **US Congressional Representatives Meditate with Gurudev**

**Washington DC, USA, April 30**

Congressional Representatives began their morning with a meditation led by Gurudev. This unique event served as a platform for the nation’s leaders to discuss the importance of meditation in resolving the nation’s pressing concerns, particularly PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) symptoms among the country’s veterans and youth.



“Stress arise when we have too much to do, and not enough energy or time to do it,” Gurudev shared with the audience that included war veterans and policy makers. “We can neither change time nor the number of things we need to do. The only option left is to increase energy levels. And this can be accomplished through yoga, breathing techniques and meditation”.

After the meditation, the Congressmen shared how self-empowering it felt and agreed on the positive impact it could have on veterans, students, nation and the world.

Prior to the Congressional event, on April 29, the Embassy of India in Washington, DC, hosted a talk by Gurudev on ‘Nurturing peace through Yoga and Meditation’ wherein he launched a series of events to welcome the International Day of Yoga. He also addressed the All Souls Church in Washington DC.

### **Legal Culture & Spirituality Conference** **June 14**



The Art of Living organized the ‘Legal Culture and Spirituality Conference’ which envisioned establishing value-driven practices in the legal services, tools to manage the wellbeing of the people engaged in the legal profession and also offer solutions to discover and develop the human potential in this field.

## International Yoga Day

June 21



Gurudev gave the keynote address on the occasion of the first ever Yoga Day at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The event was attended by Hon. Minister of External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj, UN General Secretary Ban-ki-Moon, President of the UN General Assembly Hon. Sam Kutesa among others. Gurudev said on the occasion, “This day is very important for people who have been practicing yoga and have found inner peace. In the education sector, it can help our young people. Every child is entitled to a violence-free society. Yoga is a means. I thank the Prime Minister of India for initiating this.” At a separate event the same day, Gurudev also addressed 30,000 people who performed yoga together at Times Square.

## Bringing Peace to Colombia

Colombia, June 28

Colombia conferred the Orden de la Democracia Simon Bolivar, its highest civilian award, on Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar when he visited the country in June last year. Colombia had been suffering from a 50-year conflict with rebel groups, which had claimed over 220,000 lives. While receiving the award, he said, “I promise I will do all that is in my capacity to bring peace to all in the conflict in Colombia. When the conflict is between justice and peace it is a humongous task to reconcile the two. Only a spiritual dimension can ease the situation.” He also met President Juan Manuel Santos in Bogota during his visit. A few days later, he met top rebel leaders from Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) for discussions in

neighboring Cuba. After several rounds of talks over three days, FARC Commander Ivan Marquez declared in a joint press conference together with Gurudev that they would adopt Gandhian means of non-violence in their pursuit of social justice. Within a few days, they announced unilateral ceasefire and the government responded with ceasefire from their side.



FARC members also learned the Art of Living’s meditation and breathing techniques and found immediate benefits. They reported that they felt calmer and more relaxed. Officials of the Colombian government also attended the Art of Living seminars offered in Havana and Bogota.



The Colombian peace process got a major boost when Gurudev facilitated a meeting between the first prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and a delegation of FARC to analyze and address the issue of justice in the context of a peace agreement. The first prosecutor was invited by the Art of Living to advise the FARC leadership in his personal capacity, keeping in mind his expertise in the field of international justice.

## Honored by the Andean Parliament

Peru, June

Peru also honored Gurudev for his social work and peace mission when he visited the country right after finishing

the talks with FARC. He was presented with the "Diploma de Honor" of the National Congress of Peru.



The Andean Parliament (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) also awarded him their highest degree, 'Medalla de la Integracion en el Grado de Gran Oficial' at their General Secretariat in Lima, Peru. He is the first Indian to be bestowed this award.

## Reviving Rivers in Rural India

Karnataka, India, September 19

Extending the tally of rivers being rejuvenated by The Art of Living, Gurudev inaugurated the Palar river rejuvenation. Volunteers of The Art of Living have been working on river projects in Maharashtra and other parts of Karnataka. In Karnataka, the Kumudavathi and the Vedavathi rivers have been revived whereas several rivers in Maharashtra are today springing to life again, thanks to the Jal Jagruti Abhiyan, that is addressing water issues in Sangli, Latur, Osmanabad and Jalgaon. So far, 15 rivers rejuvenation projects have been successfully undertaken by The Art of Living.

## 'Smart Village'

Chikmagalur, Karnataka, India, October 1



Gurudev inaugurated a 'Smart Village' project in Sadarahalli village, Chikmagalur district, Karnataka. He said, "A village should be free of casteism and alcohol while

maintaining cleanliness in its surroundings. Villagers are moving to cities for economic reasons. We should make our villages smarter and bring back our people."

Gurudev also visited the 'Vedavathi' river rejuvenation project center in Chikmagalur.

The 'Smart Village' project envisions:

- Healing and wellness centers:
  - » A Yoga center
  - » Ayurvedic research center
- Economic progress centers
  - » Digital library
  - » Food processing center
  - » Permaculture center
  - » Farmer training center
  - » Organic farming facilities herbal garden
  - » A center for the native cows

## Europe Refugee Crisis Enforces New Paradigm

November 20



In the aftermath of the November 2015 Paris attacks, global experts and decision-makers from the private and public sector including government representatives, former heads of states and members of parliament, NGOs, academics, sports, inter-faith based organizations and the media convened in Brussels for the Annual World Forum for Ethics in Business to examine the agenda needed to face the burning crisis. 250 participants from more than

30 countries commonly agreed that ethics and shared value must be at the core of all decision-making to path the ground for a new Europe.

*“We spend billions of dollars on welfare but very little on peace education. If 1% of the population supports fanaticism and terrorism they affect the whole society.”*

*- Gurudev*

Participants agreed that a new paradigm for business is needed wherein businesses generate economic value by tackling society’s major needs and problems such as health, education and environmental degradation as a core value proposition.

Amongst the speakers were Jigmi Yoser Thinley, former Prime Minister of Bhutan; Roland Koch, Chairman, Supervisory Board, UBS, Former Minister-President of Hesse; MEPs Jo Leinen, Nirj Deva, Alojz Peterle; Dr. Sanjay Pradhan, Vice President Leadership, Learning and Innovation, World Bank, Jörg Himmelmann; Director, Global Training, Daimler AG and Bernhard Schwager, Head of Sustainability, Robert Bosch GmbH.

*“We all need to work together to see that this entire continent is free from violence and stress.”*

*- Gurudev*

## 35 YEARS OF SERVICE



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Have touched the lives of **370 million** people

Run humanitarian projects in **every sphere of life**

Unite **across religion, race, creed**

Run **3000 centers** across the world

Over **100 million man hours** in developing the full human potential

Over **150,000 Stress Relief Workshops** benefiting more than **5.6 million** people

One of the largest volunteer-based networks in the world

Reached **40,212 villages** in India

Developed **50 model villages** in India

Run **425 free schools** teaching over **51,061 children** in rural areas across India





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