



SATURDAY, 23 JULY AND SUNDAY, 24 JULY 2022
SATHYA SAI GRAMA, MUDDENAHALLI

CONFERENCE AGENDA



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



SRI SATHYA SAI
UNIVERSITY FOR
HUMAN EXCELLENCE



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**Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence
Central Campus, Kalaburagi, Karnataka**



SRI SATHYA SAI UNIVERSITY FOR HUMAN EXCELLENCE

Inspired by the ancient Indian way of education that caters to all aspects of human development with spiritual evolution at its very core, the Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence was established by Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai as a Private University under the Karnataka Legislative Act 2018 at Navanihala Village, Kamalapur Taluk, Kalaburagi District in Karnataka. The University encapsulates values-based integral education in a unique residential environment, with the core idea to create individual excellence in all fields of knowledge. The purpose is to promote and propagate science, humanities, all forms of fine arts, and spirituality, free of any tuition fees or other charges, based on the ancient Indian *gurukula* system of education, to all students without any discrimination.

ātmano mokṣārthaṁ jagad hitāya ca - 'Redemption of one's own self and the welfare of society' is the principle on which the Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence has been founded. The emphasis at the University is, first and foremost, on a perfect balance between spiritual education and material education, or rather, between the means of living and the ultimate goal of life.

The University is determined to reverse the current trends of commercialisation of knowledge, and herald a new goal of divinisation of humans by teaching sciences alongside spirituality, humanities alongside divinity, and excellence alongside enlightenment.

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GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON UNITING RELIGIONS THROUGH SPIRITUAL WISDOM

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Spirituality is the bedrock of all religions all over the world. Irrespective of the masters, their origin, the doctrines and the rituals, there has always been an underlying unity in the very goal and message of religion. Imbibing the values for life from religion helps one live 'spirituality' in everyday life. To make religion relevant to the common man and to the next generation is important to bring back the balance between material life and spiritual life, so that the inhabitants of this planet shall find a greater purpose to their own lives, and move as harmonious peaceful individuals who will co-exist and contribute to collective prosperity. The world's collective consciousness needs to be uplifted from the mundane to the ethereal, and this needs attention to the basic questions that we have about life itself and find answers for it from the spiritual wisdom of religions.

This Conference will bring together a confluence of spiritual masters, philosophers, theologians, and motivational speakers from different spheres of religious practices and studies, to present a refreshing approach to religion, so as to secure its anchor in the unity of its abundant spiritual wisdom.

OBJECTIVES

1. Making religion relevant to every common man.
2. Demystifying the concept of religion and spirituality.
3. Providing practical solutions to make religion appealing to GenNext.
4. Understanding the messages of the messengers in their entirety.





Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai
Founder – Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence

FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

It is said that the word 'religion' is derived from the latin word 'religare' – which means 'to bind'; but much against the original thought, the history of the world shows that more often than not, religion has been the single largest reason for discord and disunity causing wars and loss of innumerable lives. However, this is largely due to superficial understanding of the principles, as opposed to deep assimilation of the spiritual values.

The need of the hour is to relegate the old religious approach of 'carrot and stick', and reinvent it to be relevant to the modern times by seeing it through the lens of spiritual oneness, otherwise religion will soon become an irrelevant relic, no more useful to society.

The new generation cannot be hushed into silence upon questioning certain religious beliefs, but rather needs to be encouraged to understand and experience the inherent spiritual truths for themselves, failing which religion will become extinct along with its God.





CONFERENCE AGENDA

SATURDAY 23 JULY 2022

Inaugural Session: 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

SESSION 1 – 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Theme: Religion for the Common Man

Session Goal: To explore and draw out the values from religion to make a better society.

Speaker Topics:

1. Cardinal Anthony Poola – Practical spirituality applied to daily life.
2. Dr Hafeezur Rahman – Lessons from religion for the modern times.
3. Dharmacharya Shantum Seth – Values derived from religions to make a better society.

End of Session Summary: 12:45 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

SESSION 2 – 3:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Theme: Religion and Spirituality

Session Goal: To demystify the concept of religion and spirituality.

Speaker Topics:

1. Dr Sarina Molina – Role of religions in addressing global problems and finding answers for the society at large.
2. Rabbi Jackie Tabick – Spirituality is a way of life that illuminates the inner path.
3. Ms Gitanjali J B – Spirituality is a thought process; Religion is the method to the means called Spirituality.

End of Session Summary: 4:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

SUNDAY 24 JULY 2022

SESSION 3 – 9:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Theme: Religion for Gen Next

Session Goal: To take religion to the next generation not as a dogmatic doctrine, but as a way of life that can clarify questions and help embrace it willingly.

Speaker Topics:

1. Mr Jayant Kapatker – What can science learn from *vedānta*?
2. Dr Benjamin Zenk – Making religion relevant to the current times and remoulding it to the current needs.
3. Swami Anubhavananda – The measurement of one's spiritual progress.

End of Session Summary: 10:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

SESSION 4 – 11:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Theme: The Messenger and the Message

Session Goal: To understand the messages of the messengers in their entirety.

Speaker Topics:

1. Geshe Lodoe Sangpo – A close analysis of the lives of the messengers.
2. Ms Gulshaa Begum – An analysis of the unifying wisdom projected in all religions.
3. Dr A K Merchant – Exploring the underlying essence of all the religions as a panacea to today's societal problems.

End of Session Summary: 12:30 p.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Valedictory Session: 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Founder's Address

Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai

Founder of Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence, Kalaburagi, Karnataka

SPEAKERS



Cardinal Anthony Poola
Cardinal – Catholic Church, India

Anthony Poola, Archbishop of Hyderabad, was named by Pope Francis as one amongst the new Cardinals of the Catholic Church. He is the first Dalit from Andhra Pradesh to have been elevated to the rank of the Cardinal, which is considered as the second biggest title after the Pope.

Anthony Poola hails from Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. He led the diocese of Kurnool for over 12 years before being appointed as Archbishop of Hyderabad in 2020 by Pope Francis. He had also served as the Chairman of the Youth Commission Telugu Region and Telugu Catholic Bishops Council's treasurer.



Dr Hafeezur Rahman

Founder President – Sufi Peace Foundation, India

Dr Hafeezur Rahman is a well-known Islamic and Sufi scholar. He obtained his PhD of Philosophy in the field of Sufi studies. Currently, he serves as a visiting faculty in the Centre of Persian and Central Asian Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi.

Dr Hafeezur Rahman is the founder of Sufi Peace Foundation, a non-profit organisation that works towards the promotion of sustainable development in the areas of art and culture, health and nutrition, human rights, minorities, vocational training, etc. In his book, 'Rumi – The Guide and Philosopher', he explains the role of Rumi as a Theologian and a Qur'an Commentator, and the reason for his influence on Sufi orders in South Asia. As a promoter of interfaith harmony, Dr Hafeezur Rahman participated in international conferences at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris (France), Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Kyrgyzstan, and several cities in India.



Dharmacharya Shantum Seth

Co-Founder – Ahimsa Trust, India (Representative of Master Thich Naht Hanh)

Shantum Seth is an ordained Dharmacharya (Dharma Teacher) in the Buddhist Mindfulness lineage of the Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh, who teaches in India and across the world. He has been leading pilgrimages called 'In the Footsteps of the Buddha' and other multi-faith, educational, cultural, spiritual and transformative journeys across diverse regions of India and Asia since 1988.

He is actively involved in educational, social and ecological sectors, with the prime objective to cultivate mindfulness in society, especially with the educators, the Central Reserve Police Force and the corporate sector, amongst others.

He is considered the foremost guide at those sites which are associated with the Buddha and has trained tour guides for UNESCO and the Government of India, while also being accredited as an official guide for them. He calls himself a cultural interpreter, and enjoys sharing with the world, the subtleties of India's religions, society, economy and politics with those who are interested in understanding the mind of India.



Dr Sarina Molina

Associate Dean – University of San Diego, United States of America

Dr Sarina Chugani Molina received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Hawai'i in East Asian Languages and Literature with a minor in comparative religions. She earned her Doctorate degree from the University of San Diego in Leadership Studies with a specialisation in character education. She currently serves as Associate Dean and Associate Professor at the School of Leadership in Education Sciences in the University of San Diego, where she guides the PhD students in Education for Social Justice Programme and provides administrative oversight and support for faculty and students. She has been a teacher and teacher educator for over 25 years, and has authored publications on language teacher development, pedagogy, transnational identity, family, school, community engagement, and English language education and social inequality. She has also served as a facilitator for mindfulness workshops for educators, education in human values and spiritual education programmes for children.



Rabbi Jackie Tabick

Joint President – World Congress of Faiths, United Kingdom

Rabbi Jackie Tabick was born in Dublin and grew up in the community of South West Essex and Settlement Reform Synagogue. After reading Medieval History for her degree at University College London, she enrolled at the Leo Baeck College where she completed her rabbinical training. She graduated to become Britain's first female Rabbi in 1975.

Starting her rabbinical career as the assistant Rabbi at West London Synagogue under Rabbi Hugo Gryn until 1998, she further moved on to become the Rabbi of North West Surrey Synagogue and served there until July 2013. At the same time, since 2012, she has held a position as the first female Convenor of the Reform Movement's *Beit Din*. (A *Beit Din* is a rabbinical court of Judaism). She was previously the Vice-President of Movement for Reform Judaism.

Rabbi Jackie is currently the Convenor for the European Union of Progressive Judaism's *Beit Din* and a patron of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE). She has played a leading role in interfaith initiatives, and is an executive of the Interfaith Network.



Ms Gitanjali J B

Co-Founder, CEO and Dean – Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, India

A multi-talented, multi-faceted personality with experience in entrepreneurship, fine arts and martial arts, Ms Gitanjali's first tryst with the education sector in 2015 saw her heading the Cambridge School in Chennai. During this time, Gitanjali gained a great deal of exposure to the education system and its practices in the country, which left her unimpressed. She believed that a lot more could be done in teaching indigenous knowledge, raising student-teacher engagement and learning through experience; and this soon led her to the Himalayan Institute of Alternative Learning in Ladakh. Relocating to Ladakh as a founding member and CEO of this unique Institute, Gitanjali has developed the university's curriculum to provide local solutions to real-life problems, thereby benefitting the wider community. She has also set up an initiative called 'Peaceful Warriors' with the objective of making every girl in India a black belt in karate. Using her numerous skills, Gitanjali has contributed immensely to setting up the Himalayan Institute of Alternative Learning, which as the world's first 'Doer's University', is indeed paving the way for a new system of education by integrating the ancient wisdom of India with the modern, practical techniques of today.



Mr Jayant Kapatker

Founder and CEO – STAM Interactive Solutions Inc., India

Jayant Kapatker graduated as an Engineer from Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and has a MBA from Faculty of Management Studies, Delhi University. As the Founder and CEO of STAM Interactive Solutions Inc., he conducts online training courses on Security Technology, and this has won him the prestigious 'Judges Choice Award' at the International Security Conference, Las Vegas.

His main passion has been to assimilate the teaching of *vedānta* in his daily life. For over 15 years, he has attended *vedānta* and *bhagavad gītā* classes at the Arsha Bodha Centre, New Jersey. During this exciting journey, he has seen many connections between science and *vedānta*. In 2014, he began writing essays to show how the teachings of *vedānta* can contribute to adding a new dimension to the scientific understanding of the universe.

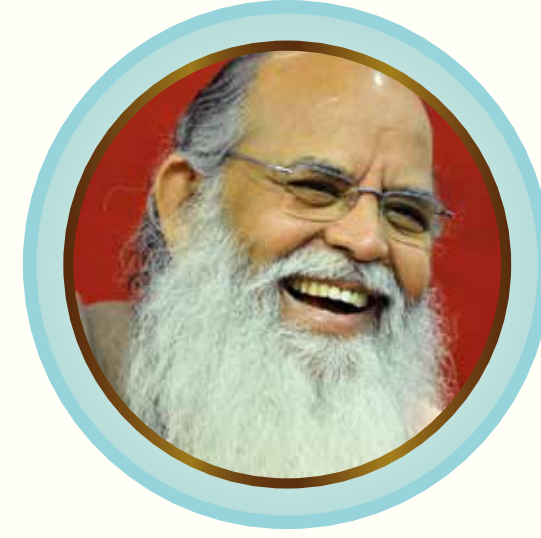
Mr Kapatker is keen about studying quantum physics and space, and he reveals that the more he reads, the more he is finding that science can learn a lot from *vedānta*. The compilation of the articles thus written by him has been published as a book – 'Science Meets Vedanta.'



Dr Benjamin Zenk

Instructor of Management – University of Hawai'i at Hilo, United States of America

Dr Benjamin Zenk is Instructor of Management in the College of Business and Economics at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo in the United States, where he teaches critical thinking, business ethics, environmental ethics, and introductory business. Dr Zenk also works with the University's Department of Philosophy where he covers topics on philosophy, ethics, reasoning, symbolic logic, histories of Indian and Buddhist philosophy, and comparative philosophy. He received his PhD in Philosophy from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in 2018 on the topic of 'Cross-cultural philosophical disagreement.' Prior to this, he received a Master's Degree in Philosophy from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy from Loyola Marymount University (LMU). Dr Zenk utilises a broad array of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary materials in his business and management courses, stemming from his studies of world philosophy, logic, and ethics, as well as both German and Sanskrit language and literature. His work has led to many months of language and cultural research and study, in Germany and India.



Swami Anubhavananda

Founder – Sat Bhavana Trust, India

Swami Anubhavananda is a renowned exponent of Indian wisdom and a well-known *vedāntic* Master. He spreads the message of 'Be Happy.' He urges everyone to live in an inspired mode throughout their lives and be spiritual by observing sincere devotion, positive thinking, expression of joy and zero complaints.

Swami Anubhavananda has been a teacher (an *āchārya*) at the Sandeepany Sadhanalaya at Powai (Mumbai) – a Post Graduate Academy for *vedāntic* Studies. Swami Anubhavananda is famous for his active and informative discourses on the *bhagavad gītā*, the *upaniṣads*, *patañjali yoga sutras*, *śrīmad bhāgavatam*, *pañchadaśī*, *tripura rahasya*, *amrutānubhav* and more. He has conducted various camps for adults and children titled 'Mauj Mein Raho.'



Geshe Lodoe Sangpo

Tenzin Gyatso Scholar – Gaden Jangtse Monastery, India

Geshe Lodoe Sangpo was born in Tibet and came to India in 1992. He enrolled in Gaden Jangtse Monastery and studied Buddhist philosophy for more than 20 years. After completing the monastic curriculum, he took the board exam of Geshe Lharampa Degree for six years and obtained the degree in 2018. He also completed one year of Tantric study at Gyuto Monastery. In addition to this, Geshe Lodoe Sangpo had great exposure to science education, as he was one of the first Tenzin Gyatso Scholars who got the opportunity to study science at Emory University for three years. After graduating from Emory University, he has primarily been teaching science to the monastics. He served as coordinator and translator for the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative, which is a summer science programme, for six years at Gaden Monastery. Presently, he is serving as supervisor of Unit B Thukdam project and science teacher of Gaden Jangtse Monastery.



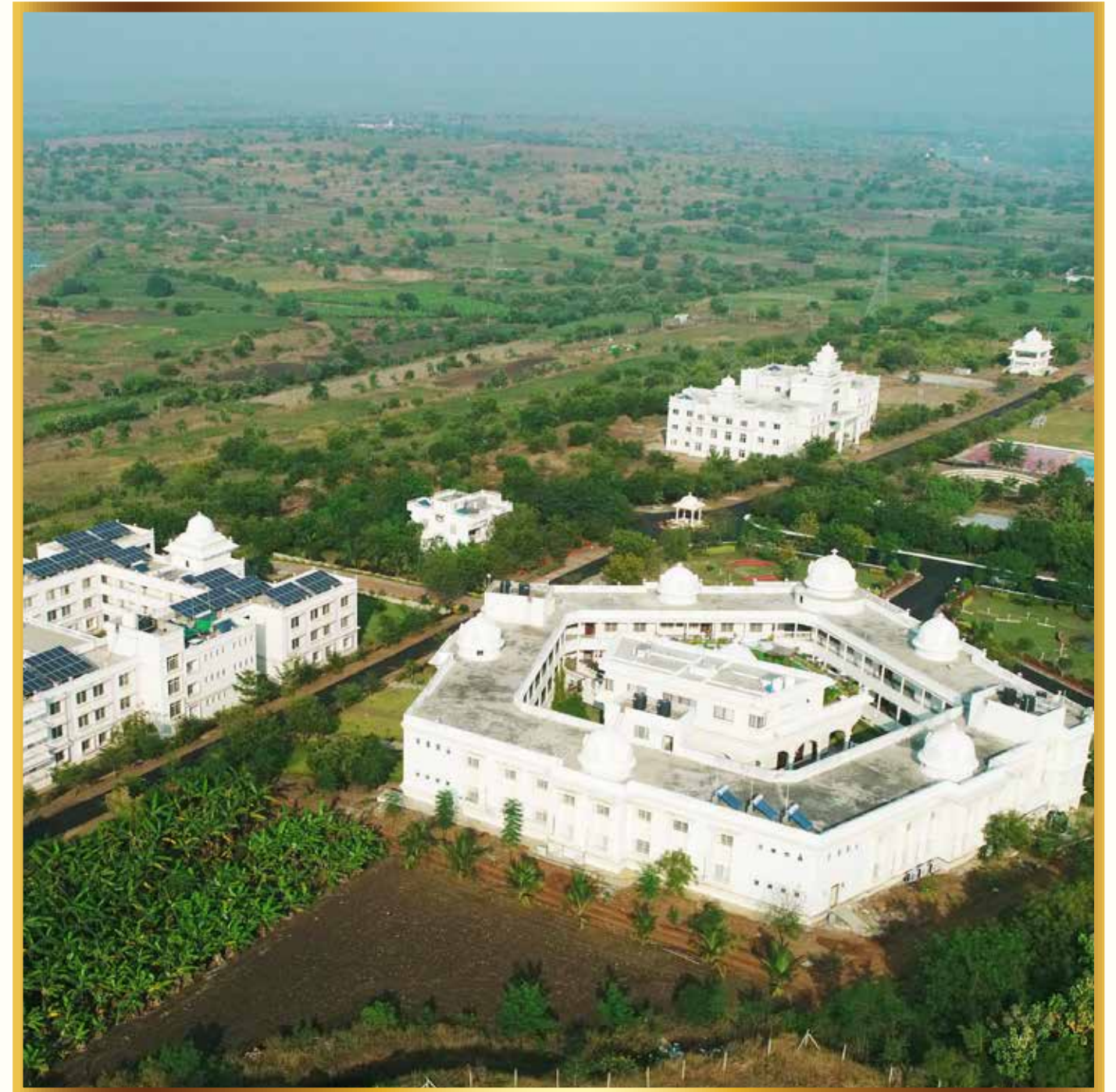
Ms Gulshaa Begum

Chairperson – Divine Abode Foundation, India

Ms Gulshaa Begum hails from a family of Sufi saints and is the direct descendant of Hazrat Khawaja Gul Mohammad Sha Sabri Chishti (R.A.), who moved from the northern frontiers of Afghanistan to South Canara district, Karnataka. A mystic, clairvoyant, healer and an artist, she has been blessed with a series of visions and transcendental experiences through the process of kundalini awakening. The Divine Goddess initiated her on the spiritual path and taught her the Vedas, Quran, Bible, Torah, Healing, Painting, Science, Writing, History and many more. She has extensively promoted inter-faith harmony through her various initiatives, conferences, and programmes to build a culture of peace and also undertakes innumerable service activities towards improving the infrastructure and facilities at Government schools. Gulshaa Begum is also the director of the Annual International Sufi Festival at Ajmer and Delhi and Chairperson of the Divine Abode Foundation, Kamaluddin Charitable Trust and Al Ikhlas Museum and Gallery. She currently resides in Ajmer.

“The highest dharma of man is ātma dharma or duty to realise his own divinity. It is not related to any particular religion. It is applicable to the entire human race. The fundamental truth is that everything and everyone is Divine.”

- Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai



A bird's eye view of Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence, Kalaburagi Campus, Karnataka

