



Art of Living Foundation

¾¾¾ a non-profit educational and humanitarian organization

For Immediate Release

Contact: Tara Mathur

650.286.4979
tmathur@factset.com

Modern Day Spiritual Leader to Speak at Nob Hill Masonic Auditorium, San Francisco April 18th 2004, 7:00 p.m.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, leader of what's been called the fastest growing spiritual practice in the world, will make a rare public appearance in San Francisco on April 18th giving local residents an opportunity to speak to him about issues in their everyday life. Shankar is the founder of Sudarshan Kriya, a breathing technique that has shown significant impact in eliminating stress and anxiety, increasing energy and focus and improving overall health. The technique is practiced by more than four million people in 142 countries, including the United States, where it is taught by volunteer teachers in a course called Art of Living. The number of American practitioners increased by 25 percent last year alone, leading the Yoga Journal to describe Art of Living as "the fastest growing spiritual practice in the world."

An internationally recognized humanitarian, Shankar is known for blending humor with gentle wisdom in his public speaking engagements. His appearance on April 18th in San Francisco will take the form of a reflective dialogue so that participants should come away with the satisfaction of having heard him address their personal concerns.

Why are people so inspired by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar? Perhaps the inspiration is due to the timeliness of his broad message of love, compassion, practical wisdom and service. He says that he isn't interested in advocating a particular religion but in bringing society's attention back to human values. It is the lack of proper spiritual education that is the cause for fanaticism in the world, he says. "We accept food from every part of the world," he says. "You don't need to be Danish to eat Danish cookies. Anyone can eat Mexican food. We accept cuisine from every part of the world, music from every part of the world. The time has come to start accepting wisdom from all parts of the world."

In addition to collaborating with other world leaders – including the **Dalai Lama** – to promote human values, Sri Sri's message has found expression in the numerous charitable programs that he has started around the world. His Art of Living Foundation, a worldwide humanitarian and education organization, is recognized by the **United Nations** and now has chapters in 142 countries around the world. Art of Living volunteers step forward to help whenever and wherever there's a need. Art of Living teachers were on hand in the aftermath of 9/11, leading trauma relief programs in New York City and offering people practical tools to help them sleep better, sleep better, relax, and feel a sense of ease again. Last Spring a center in Kabul, **Afghanistan** was started to work with the children and widows. Art of Living volunteers have taken part in earthquake relief in Iran and India; poverty reduction programs in Asia; and trauma relief programs in



Art of Living Foundation

¾¾¾ a non-profit educational and humanitarian organization

Kosovo. Most recently the Foundation has started trauma relief programs in Baghdad, **Iraq** for a population devastated by war and violence.

What does he offer to ordinary people? The powerful Sudarshan Kriya, a unique stress-relieving breathing technique, is taught in Sri Sri's **Art of Living Course**. Practitioners of the Sudarshan Kriya say it is useful for anyone wanting to grow spiritually, emotionally, to manage the stress, and to live and enjoy life to its fullest potential. The Washington chapter continues to grow rapidly as area residents have the option to join the programs and learn techniques from trained teachers in the area.

“The techniques taught on the Art of Living Course may be doing much more than relieving stress ¼..techniques may actually help people connect better with each other...says senior psychiatrist at Columbia University, New York, Dr Richard Brown. In his endeavor to look for natural treatments to eliminate troubling side effects associated with drugs, Brown says that” the best results so far have been with (Sri Sri’s techniques). Other techniques are either so difficult to do that people just stop practicing them or take thirty years or more to show results.” Several scientific research programs are being undertaken to study the benefits of this technique, including its possible effects on people with HIV/AIDS.

Thousands of Washington Metropolitan Area residents have thronged to Sri Sri’s talks every year. According to William Hayden, an engineer at NASA, “Not only does he provide practical wisdom about life, he leads the audience through a direct experience of their deeper selves.” In India, he draws as many as **250,000 to a single talk**, making 3,000 seating capacity a special opportunity to interact with him.

*“Finding inner peace is a primary goal of Sri Sri’s methods.” – **The Washington Post***

*“Indian Guru offers remedies for anger and alienation faced by America’s young.” – **The Seattle Times***

*“Testimonials from prison officials and psychiatrists say Sri Sri’s techniques reduce violence and heighten happiness.” – **Ottawa Citizen***