

Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA

Dedicated with Love and Devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



“Maha-Samadhi”

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Mahasamadhi of Sri Sathya Sai Baba

April 24, 2011



IN LATE MARCH 2011, Swami was admitted to the super-specialty hospital. This caused a great stir throughout the world for Sai devotees, and the world watched twice daily for press reports from the hospital.

On April 24, 2011, at 7.40 am, Swami left his physical body. His body was brought to Sai Kulwant Hall, where he lay “in state” for three days. On the morning of April 27, 2011, last rites were performed and Bhagavan’s body was laid to rest in Sai Kulwant Hall in the presence of a huge assemblage of devotees, also attended by a host of political luminaries.

The press releases from the director of the hospital that were issued during this time and links to various webpage discussions that went on during the time, as well as two videos, are available at: www.sathyasai.org/swamimahasamadhi/swamiMahaSamadhi.html.

The word *Maha-samadhi* means not only the conscious departure from the physical body of a realized soul but also the shrine where the physical body is buried. The image above shows Swami’s burial spot on the verandah of the mandir in Sai Kulwant Hall. [Construction of a permanent monument at this spot began in late May.]

—www.sathyasai.org

Prasanthi Council Report

Messages from Dr Michael Goldstein



Dr Michael Goldstein is the Chair, Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, as well as the Chair, Prasanthi Council, the international body that oversees the activities of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations worldwide. The following include Dr Goldstein's messages during April and May, 2011.

We Must Choose Faith, Not Fear

OUR BELOVED BHAGAVAN Sri Sathya Sai Baba, our Dearest Swami, elected to leave his physical form at 7.40 am, April 24, 2011, due to cardio-respiratory failure, according to the report of the attending physicians. We grieve the loss of our Beloved Swami, the embodiment of Divine Love, who has left us on this Easter Sunday, this day of Divine Resurrection. We lament the greatest loss that we will ever sustain.

No words written or spoken by anyone can completely assuage our grief or allay our apprehensions about the future. However, we can waste the remainder of our lives grieving for the loss of his physical presence, which accomplishes nothing, or we can accomplish everything, the fulfillment of our spiritual destiny that he ordained, by devoting our lives to him and to his divine message of selfless love and service. Before, he lived in our spiritual hearts and also in the presence and identity that he assumed in the world

as Beloved Swami. Now he lives only in our spiritual hearts, as the Lord of Lords. Now, we must turn inward to experience his divine presence and love.

Our mischievous and wayward minds wreak havoc in these solemn moments. The mind asks to no avail; it perplexes and perturbs us. But, our heart answers; it consoles and enlightens us.

Similar questions are being asked in many places: Why did he leave us now? We expected ten more years.

Actually, according to the lunar calendar used by Hindus and others, Swami lived to 95 years, not 85 years. Perhaps he left us sooner than we expected, but our beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is not confined by the demise of the physical presence and identity that he assumed, nor is he constrained by time. He will be with us forever.

What will we do now if we are left to our own devices without the comfort of knowing that he is always there? Has he not been

Prasanthi Council Report

our source of selfless love and wisdom, our recourse in all of the travails of life? He has always been there and always will be there! Just as our mothers and fathers were our protectors when we were children, Swami has been the divine protector for all of us, young and old. “Being there” is being accessible to us always, whenever or wherever there is a need. He resides in our spiritual hearts. He is “always there” for each and every one of us, whenever and wherever we need him.

Just prior to my last conversation with Swami, I was very preoccupied. Swami suddenly called me to come close to him. He reached out, took my hand, and caressed it gently. Then he smiled lovingly and said, ever so softly, “There is fear in your heart.” I felt deeply soothed by his divine love, the love of the Divine Mother and Father. I kissed his hand and feet repeatedly. I felt the exuberant joy of a child. For an instant, I recaptured youth and innocence. His sweet words and gentle caress dissolved whatever fear I must have been harboring and brought exhilaration and a feeling of rejuvenation instead. He will always be there for us. He is our Divine Mother and Father. This has not changed. It will always be so. This is divine truth, impervious to time and unaltered by his casting aside of the body.

What future awaits us as his devotees, each of us individually, and all of us together, as a spiritual organization? How can there be a Sri Sathya Sai organization? How can we come together if Swami is no longer living among us to inspire us and correct us when we go astray?

“Why fear when I am here?” declared our Beloved Swami. He always has been and will continue to be present as the Divine Indweller who resides in our spiritual hearts. Being “here” refers to his spiritual Presence, not his physical presence. He will always be “here.” This has not changed. “Here” is everywhere and forever. “Here” is accessible to each and every one of us in our own hearts. To be with him “here and now,” we must choose faith, not fear.

Swami has come to demonstrate how we should live these human lives. He has come for the awakening of conscience and selfless love in the minds and hearts of all people—to love all, serve all; to help ever, hurt never. The Sri Sathya Sai Organizations are based on these spiritual principles, which he has provided. We will certainly persevere!

When I presented the decisions of the World Conference for his divine approval and guidance—sent to all of you in a recent letter (see pages 12–16), Swami gave his approval to all that I submitted. All that I submitted was derived from the reports on your World Conference study circle comments and conclusions.

His approval of the recommendations represents his approval of your earnest deliberations and sincere aspirations to improve the Sri Sathya Sai Organization. We will certainly abide by these decisions so readily approved by our dearest Swami. Already a committee to draft universal organization guidelines for all countries has been appointed and begun their work, a tentative program for the World Youth

Conference in July 2011 has been submitted, and all of the other decisions are under deliberation.

It is our sacred duty to wholeheartedly support and contribute our love, good faith, and best efforts to ensure that the International Sri Sathya Sai Organization continues as a beacon of selfless love and service in the world. Such is our contribution to the spiritual legacy of our beloved Bhagavan Baba, our dearest Swami, for all mankind.

We must listen to our hearts with spiritual Self-confidence. My heart tells me that Bhagavan's lessons for mankind will not be forgotten or forsaken. My heart

tells me that our spiritual lives, our noble actions, and our selfless love will become worthy testaments to his divine Presence among us.

Lord of Lords, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Divine Mother and Father, Dearest Swami: May we always love you unwaveringly, always follow you without faltering, and always find you in our heart of hearts.

Lovingly, in the service of Sai,

—**Michael G Goldstein, MD**

Chairman, Prasanthi Council

Chairman, Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

April 24, 2011



We Will Persevere: The Work Has Begun

REGARDING THE Sri Sathya Sai Organization, our beloved Sri Sathya Sai Baba said:

This is an organization dedicated to the promotion of universal love. All the organizational units are being activated by one Divine Force. All are activated by one Principle. Resolve to identify it and experience it; then, the purpose of the organization is served.

We were, we are, and we will always be a spiritual movement motivated, inspired, and empowered by the embodiment of divinity, our beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Our beloved Swami will always be accessible

to each and every one of us, by virtue of his presence—his omnipresence—in the spiritual heart of all people forever. Now is the most important time, the greatest test, and, ultimately, the greatest opportunity of a human lifetime. Now, he whom we have known in the world awaits us in our spiritual heart. He beckons to us to seek him and find his selfless love. Let us proceed!

Let us follow him and find him in our spiritual heart by making use of the formulae for a spiritual life that he gave to us for all of life's pursuits: **Love all, serve all; help ever, hurt never;** and application of **the five D's—devotion, determination, dedication, discipline, and discrimination.**

Prasanthi Council Report

In my last conversation with our beloved Swami, he graciously gave blessings and approval to all the proposals resulting from your deliberations at the World Conference IX. I subsequently sent all of you a letter (see pages 12–16) describing what he had blessed and approved. I am very happy to inform you that the work has begun. Let us proceed!

Buddha Purnima (was) celebrated in Prasanthi Nilayam on May 17, 2011, primarily by devotees from Zones 3, 4, and 5. At last count, the pilgrimage included 800 devotees.

The **Young Adult World Conference, “Sai Ideal Leadership,”** will take place on July 13 and 14, 2011. Delegates will be selected among those young adults who have served in national and international Sai organization roles.

Enrollment procedures will be similar to those followed for the selection of delegates to World Conference IX of the International Sri Sathya Sai Organization held last November. The International Young Adult Council will be sending out details for selection of delegates within a week after you receive this letter. The emphasis will be on the qualities and essence of a “Sai Ideal Leader.” While skills and competence are helpful, nobility of character and spiritual awareness are essential.

The drafting of uniform **International Guidelines** for all Sai organizations has commenced with the appointment of a committee of senior leaders in the Sai organization, and their deliberations are underway. The objective, as approved by

our beloved Swami, is a set of guidelines for all international Sai organizations that will define their relationships, responsibilities, programs, and practices.

The plans and programs for **study circles focusing on the cultural relevance of our organizational programs and practices**, throughout the world, in the context of Swami’s universal spiritual teachings, have begun.

The plans and programs for **public meetings** that will bring Swami’s universal spiritual message of selfless love and service to all people are under deliberation.

We will persevere and fulfill all the programs and proposals that our beloved Swami blessed and approved.

For your information, I have attached a wonderful, uplifting article written by the former President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam (see pages 10–11). Dr Kalam has described so poignantly the scope and significance of the great humanitarian institutions established by our beloved Swami for the welfare of the people. Let us emulate and support these monumental works of our beloved Swami.

We will proceed in carrying out the programs that our Swami approved in his last instructions to us. We will succeed by acting properly, lovingly, and selflessly. Certainly this will please our beloved Swami, who lives in our spiritual hearts.

Our beloved Swami came to be with us. He inspired and enlightened us. He loved us as Divine Mother and Father. He always has and always will love us, guide us, and

be present in our spiritual hearts. We must respond. Not emotion, nor mind, but rather our spiritual heart must be our guide, our mentor, our ruler, our very Self. For only thus can each of us experience the divine reality of his pronouncement, “I am I.” This is the sacred legacy of his sojourn among us. Let us abide by it. Let us cherish it. Let us realize it.

Lovingly, in the service of Sai,

—**Michael G Goldstein, MD**

Chairman, Prasanthi Council

Chairman, Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

May 9, 2011

Y*ou already have me, and I have you. I will never leave you, and you can never leave me. From this point on, do not hanker after anything. Do your duty with unwavering love, seeing all as God. Be patient; in time everything will be given to you. Be happy; there is no need to worry about anything. Whatever is experienced, whatever happens, know that this Avatar, through his Divine Will, has made it so. There is no force on earth that can delay the mission for which this Avatar has come, by even one instant. You are all sacred souls, and all have parts to play in the unfolding drama of the Golden Age, which is sure to come.*

—**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

Summer Course, 1976

Sri Sathya Sai Baba: A Divine Legend

India's Former President Speaks About Sai Baba's Work and Contributions

I ADMIRE BHAGAVAN Sathya Sai Baba for his selfless work and contributions to the welfare of the people by providing drinking water for the rural population, free healthcare facilities for the rural poor, and free higher education.

The major factors in human resource development are values-based education and quality healthcare. In addition, the infrastructural requirement, like availability of potable water, is an essential need of the human resource. While the government is actively engaged in providing these resources to the citizens, Baba has been sensitive to these essential needs of the Indian population, particularly of the people living in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, for over four decades.

Keeping this in mind, he has created a vast infrastructure for providing values-based, quality education, to children from primary to university level; established super-specialty hospitals in rural areas—as early as 1991 when there were no corporate hospitals in such interior regions; and worked on a project to provide potable, safe drinking water for the people of the Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. I would like

to discuss the unique characteristics of the [educational] institutions.

Values-Based Education

The best part of a young person's life is his or her childhood in school, and the best time spent is 8 am to 4 pm each day in the school. This is applicable for all children in the age group of five to twenty, living in both urban and rural areas.

Baba has realized the problems of the rural poor and has made it a point that education be provided absolutely free in all the schools and colleges established by the Sathya Sai Trust.

Interestingly, the Sathya Sai educational institutions cater equally to the development of the mind, the heart, and the body. This is achieved through integrated education, which lays equal emphasis on keeping the body healthy, the mind active and sharp, and the heart pure. Baba, being the Chancellor of the Institute, spent substantial amounts of time with the students to groom them into ideal citizens.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said:

Students are the foundation of the nation, the only wealth that I cherish. Students are my all; my entire property consists of students. I have offered myself to them.

He also has said:

The end of education is character, and the end of knowledge is love.

This is why the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (Sri Sathya Sai University) emphasizes character building as an important component of education, apart from acquiring academic excellence.

Nobility in character comes out of humility, generosity, compassion,

helpfulness, and respect for moral values. The single thread that runs through all the activities of the Institute—curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular—is that education is for life and not for mere living.

Experience has shown that leading organizations and companies in the country absorb Sai students. It is claimed that the students so recruited bring about a quiet change in work ethics and inject team spirit as well as a values-based approach to all aspects of organizational activity.

—Dr APJ Abdul Kalam

Former President of India (2002–2007)

(Article appearing in the *Hindustan Times*, April 22, 2011)



Earth Shining in Glory

Our Milky Way is shining with millions and millions of stars;
Our beloved star Sun along with eight other planets around orbits the Milky Way,
finishes one orbit in 215 million years.

Someone in the galaxy suddenly echoed a voice in surprise.
The voice was: “See there the Earth, shining in glory; how come it got so light?”

A sweet and soft reply comes,
“It is not mere light; it is the light of knowledge,
it is the light of service, it is the light of peace,
specially radiating from Prasanthi Nilayam,
when Earth completes its eightieth orbit
carrying the great soul in its bosom.”

—Dr APJ Abdul Kalam

Poem composed for 25th Annual Convocation of SSSIHL, Nov 22, 2006



Prasanthi Council Report

*Conclusions from World Conference IX of
International Sri Sathya Sai Organization*

*The aim of this organization is to remove the obstacles that keep man
away from God, that separate humanity from divinity.*

—Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Sai Ram!

WITH HUMILITY AND LOVE, let us consider the content and conclusions of one of the most important International Sri Sathya Sai World Conferences that we have ever had! Everyone at World Conference IX recognized that this was a special time and opportunity for individual growth, organizational development, and ultimately spiritual progress. In order to comprehend the significance of this conference, it is important to consider the events that preceded this world conference.

Prior to World Conference IX, Pre-world Conferences were convened by the Prasanthi Council and took place in all ten international zones, with Swami's blessings and approval. These conferences provided instruction and inspiration for all who attended, and the greatest benefit to delegates was derived through their own participation in the study circles. Concomitantly, a series of Young Adult Pre-World Zonal Conferences took place in all ten international zones, which enthused, enlightened, and prepared the young adults for the changes that are forthcoming.

Two beautiful albums of photographs were presented to Swami on February 24, 2011. One contained photos of all of you who participated in World Conference IX in November, and the other album contained the young adults who participated in all ten of the Young Adult Pre-world Zonal Conferences. It is no wonder that Swami graciously looked at every page of both of the albums and appeared to be very pleased. We leafed through each page and explained the contents rapidly so that he would not end the session prior to reviewing everything. To show all, explain all, and conclude with his divine blessings and approval was the objective. Joyfully I report to you that Swami saw all, listened to all, and ultimately gave his blessings and approval for all that was placed before him.

In the documentation provided by the committee responsible for recording an account of all the World Conference IX study circles, it was clear that the delegates to the World Conference concluded there is need for greater **clarity, instruction, and opportunity**: the

need for **clarity** of our mission, structure, and function; for **instruction** in all aspects of our current programs and practices and in the new programs and practices that will ensue; and finally, for greater **opportunities** to selflessly serve, effectively interact with our respective communities, and ultimately to achieve spiritual progress. These needs were emphatically expressed. “Clarity, instruction, and opportunity” was the recurrent theme, the need expressed by all, and a good theme for us now at our current level of understanding and development.

We will address these needs through the following means:

Clarity

- Review the World Charter, which must define the spiritual basis of this organization. If indicated, we will have suggested revisions in place by Gurupurnima 2011.
- Draft new International Guidelines for all countries, taking into account the exigencies of cultural and legal differences among countries and present a draft by Gurupurnima 2011. The guidelines will:
 - define programs and practices engaged in by the International Sri Sathya Sai Organization.
 - define the duties and method for selection of all office bearers.
 - define the relationships and responsibilities of all branches of the International Sai Organization and clarify the distinction between the Prasanthi Council and the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation.
 - clarify the universality of Swami’s teachings regarding culture, country, religion, and spirituality, through study circles in all Sai Centers, and apply the deeper understanding derived to the cultural relevance of our Sai Center programs and practices. Materials will be provided as a guide for these study circles, to commence by Gurupurnima 2011, if not before.
 - clarify the structure and function of all trusts that bear the Divine Name, by Gurupurnima 2011.
 - clarify the structure of all Sai Institutes and Sai Schools, their relationship to their respective national Sai Organization, and revision of the current Sai Education guidelines, if required, to be submitted by Gurupurnima 2011.



Instruction

- Cultivate competence and the quality of leadership programs, to begin by Gurupurnima 2011, if not before.
- Become competent Sai Leaders through leadership skills instruction and workshops for officers at all levels: Center, National, and International.
- Learn from the experience of others.
- Become inspiring and exemplary Sai leaders through individual spiritual practices—selfless love and service, prayer, devotion, meditation, study.
- Learn from our own spiritual heart.
- Learn the distinction between *competent* and *exemplary*, and between *instruction* and *inspiration*.
- Initiate a Young Adult apprenticeship program subsequent to the World Conference of Young Adults in July 2011.
- Cultivate competence and confidence in public presentations of Swami's teachings through his message, his works, and his life, for Gurupurnima 2011, if not before.
- Develop a dignified and inspiring presentation to the public on the life, message, and works of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and develop materials, including films and brochures.

Devotees can first speak in their Sai Centers, gaining experience and helpful comments from their brothers and sisters in the Sai Center; then to their local communities, demonstrating who we are, what we aspire to be, and what we have to offer; and then to the national and international community so that, hand in hand, step by step, we progress spiritually and inspire others to do the same.

A special committee will oversee the development of guidelines and materials for all. There will be variation due to cultural differences and other variables. However, there must be oversight to maintain high standards of spiritual authenticity of the presentations.

Opportunities

The culmination of clarity and instruction will provide good opportunities for spiritual growth by:

- Understanding ourselves and the organization through greater clarity and opportunities for instruction and participation in all programs, at all levels.
- Sai Leadership instruction and opportunities for all, at all levels.
- Sai Public Meetings instruction and materials for all, at all levels.
- We pray for spiritual progress for all, always, in everything that we do.
- Ultimately, the ultimate: Self-realization for all, we pray.

Administrative Improvements

Swami has said, *First communication, then understanding, then adjustment.*

As a result of many requests at the World Conference for better communication, Swami has approved an expansion of the Prasanthi Council and specialization of the members of the Council as outlined below. Members of the Prasanthi Council will now devote their attention exclusively to selected zones, thereby providing greater access to the Prasanthi Council. Zone Chairs will report directly to their designated Prasanthi Council Member and send a copy of their reports to the International Chair. This will become effective by April 15, 2011. The designated Prasanthi Council member may also interact with office bearers at all levels of his or her designated zone as he or she deems necessary.

The International Chair will review all Zone Chair reports sent to him, all letters from all devotees from all areas sent to him, and convene regular individual and collective conference calls with all Prasanthi Council members to facilitate effective communication and timely action when needed.

In order to facilitate this procedure, Swami has approved that the following two new members be added to the Prasanthi Council:

Marianne Meyer, currently Chair of Zone 7 (North Europe), will become the Prasanthi Council member responsible for Zones 6 (South Europe), 7 (North Europe), and 8 (East Europe), and Petra Von Kalinowski will become Chair of Zone 7.

Kalyan Ray, Chair of the Sai Education Committee of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, will become the Prasanthi Council member responsible for the Middle East, Africa, and Mauritius. He will also continue his good work as Chair of the Education Committee.

Prasanthi Council Report

In consequence of the above, Zone 9 (UK, Republic of Ireland, Africa, the Middle East, and Mauritius), currently the largest zone, will be divided into two zones, 9A and 9B—as has been done previously with Zone 2, Latin America, into Zones 2A and 2B. Zone 9A will consist of the UK and Republic of Ireland only, and Zone 9B will be Africa, the Middle East, and Mauritius. The current Chair of Zone 9 will continue to oversee Zone 9A, under supervision of the designated Prasanthi Council member, and Kalyan Ray will oversee Zone 9B.

The composition and duties of the newly-constituted Prasanthi Council will be as follows.

Existing Prasanthi Council members will have the following assignments:

Dr. Bill Harvey – Zone 1

Lic. Leonardo Gutter – Zones 2A, 2B, and 9A

Dr. Narendra Reddy – Zones 3, 4, and 5

New Prasanthi council members will have the following assignments:

Mrs. Marianne Meyer – Zones 6, 7, 8

Mr. Kalyan Ray – Zone 9B

Sri Sathya Sai World Conference of Young Adults, July 2011

Theme: Sai Ideal Leadership

Time and Place: July 13–14, 2011, Prasanthi Nilayam, India

Delegates will be selected from the former and current Young Adult leaders of their respective Young Adult groups. The International Youth Coordinator, Shitu Chudasama, will be sending a letter to all concerned. One of the objectives of the conference will be to discuss and recommend the most auspicious structure and function of the Young Adult leadership programs. The much heralded “Young Adult Officer Apprenticeship Program” will be activated after Gurupurnima 2011.

Our Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, our dearest Swami, has given his blessing and approval to proceed with our plans, to succeed in our spiritual endeavors, and even to exceed our fondest expectations. Our spiritual progress as individual seekers and as a spiritual organization has accelerated. We are blessed! Let us rejoice! Let us “finish the game”!

Lovingly, in Sai service,

—**Michael Goldstein, MD**

Chair, Prasanthi Council

Chair, Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

Venezuelan Government Proclamation

in Recognition of Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Sai Ram!

MORE AND MORE, we will experience manifestations of the Divine Presence, the Omnipresence, of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, our beloved Swami, everywhere. Let us fully appreciate the spiritual significance of these wondrous events. Our beloved Swami will always be accessible to each and every one of us. If we seek Him within, we will certainly find Him.

All parties of the national congress of the government of Venezuela have been divided on most issues that are brought before them, as we see today in almost all national governments in the world. Yet, lo and behold, all members of all parties of the National Assembly of Venezuela came together in unity, in unanimity, and in brotherhood, to acknowledge the divine glory of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, our beloved Swami. In this country in South America, on the other side of the world from India, on May 24, 2011, one month after Swami's physical departure, the National Assembly of Venezuela rose nobly to the occasion and issued the proclamation that is reproduced below.

Lovingly, in the service of Sai,

—**Michael Goldstein, MD**

Chair, Prasanthi Council
Chair, Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

As Speaker of the Sovereign People

AGREEMENT/DECLARATION ON OCCASION OF THE PHYSICAL DISAPPEARANCE OF THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA, SATHYA SAI BABA

CONSIDERING THAT

Last April 23, in the town of Puttaparthi, Republic of India, Sathya Sai Baba, one of the most important spiritual leaders of India, transcended the physical plane;

CONSIDERING THAT

The Government of India rendered homage to Sathya Sai Baba during the funeral services, declaring national mourning in recognition of His valuable contribution and spiritual importance for its people;

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CONSIDERING THAT

The vast spiritual, cultural, social, and philanthropic work of Sathya Sai Baba is undeniable, which includes charitable institutions of social solidarity, education, and health, such as universities, specialty hospitals, and countless charity services for the poor in India and abroad, including the “Unidad Educativa Colegio Valores Humanos” of the Sathya Sai Foundation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, located in the rural area of Abejales, municipality of Libertador, state of Táchira;

CONSIDERING THAT

Together with Mohandas Gandhi, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and other spiritual leaders of His country, Sathya Sai Baba is considered a “*Mahatma*,” a great soul of India;

CONSIDERING THAT

There exist excellent spiritual, cultural, commercial, technological, and diplomatic relations between the people and governments of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic of India.

AGREES/DECLARES

First. To spiritually join the Government, the people of the Republic of India, as well as the Sri Sathya Sai Organization, on occasion of the physical disappearance of Sathya Sai Baba, an important spiritual leader of that sister nation.

Second. Name a commission of representatives from the National Assembly to deliver a copy of the present Agreement/Declaration to the Ambassador of the Republic of India in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as to the board of trustees of the Sri Sathya Sai Organization of Venezuela.

Third. Publish this Agreement/Declaration.

Presented, signed, and sealed in the Federal Legislative Palace, seat of the National Assembly, in Caracas, on the twenty-fourth day of May of two thousand eleven, in the 201st Year of Independence and the 152nd Year of the Federation.

—(Signed on the Seal of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela):

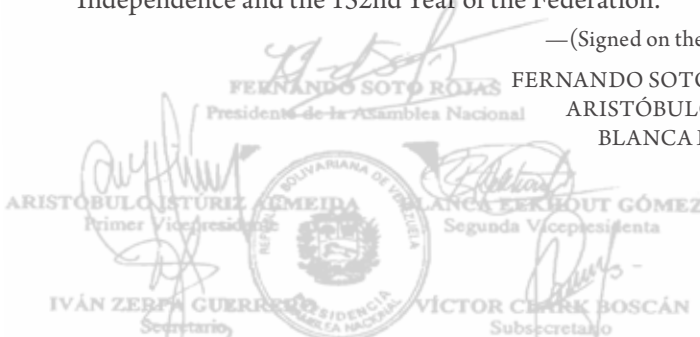
FERNANDO SOTO ROJAS – President of the National Assembly

ARISTÓBULO ISTÚTIZ ALMEIDA – First Vice-President

BLANCA EEKHOUT GÓMEZ – Second Vice-President

IVÁN ZERPA GUERRERO – Secretary

VÍCTOR CLARK BOSCÁN – Sub-Secretary



FERNANDO SOTO ROJAS
Presidente de la Asamblea Nacional

ARISTÓBULO ISTÚTIZ ALMEIDA
Primer Vicepresidente

BLANCA EEKHOUT GÓMEZ
Segunda Vicepresidenta

IVÁN ZERPA GUERRERO
Secretario

VÍCTOR CLARK BOSCÁN
Subsecretario

GACETA OFICIAL

DE LA REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA

ASAMBLEA NACIONAL

LA ASAMBLEA NACIONAL
DE LA REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA

COMO VOCERA DEL PUEBLO SOBERANO

ACUERDO CON MOTIVO DE LA SENSIBLE DESAPARICIÓN FÍSICA
DEL LÍDER ESPIRITUAL DE LA REPÚBLICA DE LA INDIA, SATHYA
SAI BABA

CONSIDERANDO

Que el pasado 23 de abril, en la ciudad de Puttaparthi, República de la India, trascendió el plano físico de Sathya Sai Baba, uno de los líderes espirituales más importantes de la India;

CONSIDERANDO

Que el Gobierno de la India le rindió a Sathya Sai Baba honores durante sus honras fúnebres, recordando, además, duelo en reconocimiento de su valiosa trayectoria y el significado espiritual para su pueblo;

CONSIDERANDO

Que es innegable la amplia labor espiritual, cultural social y filantrópica de Sathya Sai Baba, quien creó instituciones caritativas de solidaridad social, educación, salud, entre ellas, universidades, hospitales de especialidades médicas e innumerables obras de ayuda a los más desposeídos en la India y en el exterior, incluyendo en la República Bolivariana de Venezuela la "Unidad Educativa Colegio Valores Humanos" de la Fundación Sathya Sai Baba que funciona actualmente en la zona rural de Abejales, municipio Libertador, estado Táchira;

CONSIDERANDO

Que junto a Mohandas Gandhi, la Madre Teresa de Calcuta y otros líderes espirituales de su país, Sathya Sai Baba es considerado como un "Mahatma", un alma grande de la India;

CONSIDERANDO

Que existen excelentes relaciones espirituales, culturales, comerciales, tecnológicas y diplomáticas entre los pueblos y gobiernos de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y de la República de la India.

ACUERDA

Primero. Unámonos espiritualmente al Gobierno, al pueblo de la República de la India, así como a la organización Sri Sathya Sai, por la desaparición física de Sathya Sai Baba, importante líder espiritual de ese país hermano.

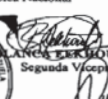
Segundo. Designar del seno de la Asamblea Nacional, una comisión de diputados y diputadas para que haga entrega de una copia del presente Acuerdo, al Embajador Extraordinario y Plenipotenciario de la República de la India en la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, así como a la directiva de la organización Sri Sathya Sai de Venezuela.

Tercero. Dar publicidad al presente Acuerdo.

Dado, firmado y sellado en el Palacio Federal Legislativo, sede de la Asamblea Nacional, en Caracas, a los veinticuatro días del mes de mayo de dos mil once. Años 201° de la Independencia y 152° de la Federación.


FERNANDO SOTO ROJAS
Presidente de la Asamblea Nacional


ARISTÓBULO BUSTOS ALMEIDA
Primer Vicepresidente


ALAN ESCOBEDO GÓMEZ
Segunda Vicepresidenta

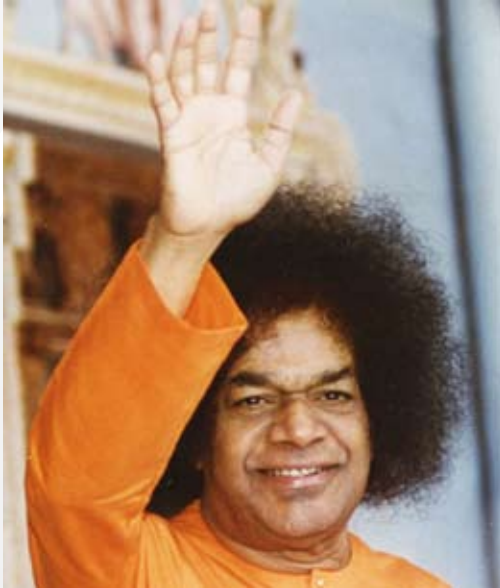

IVÁN ZERBÁN
Secretario


VÍCTOR CLARK BOSCAN
Subsecretario



SAI'S MESSAGE

PURVEYORS OF PERFECT JOY



***L**IKE FOOD to a starving man, like showers on a parched field, the Vedic science of spiritual Self-discovery is life-giving succor for a society that is sliding down to destruction, having lost its hold on truth, morality, peace, and love.*

You are the instruments in the spread of Vedic truth among the farthest corners of this vast land; you are the chosen ones!

You have to show by precept and by example that the path of Self-realization is the path to perfect joy. Upon you rests a great responsibility—the responsibility of demonstrating by your calmness, composure, humility, purity, virtue, courage, and conviction, under all circumstances, that the spiritual practices (sadhana) you follow have made you a better, happier, and more useful person. Practice and demonstrate; do not simply assert in words and deny in deeds.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, April 20, 1967

In Human Form

A GREAT YOGI resolved to delve into the glory of the Divine Principle and retreated to the depths of a silent forest. He started ascetic practices, sat in the lotus posture, kept his eyes closed, and held his fingers in the correct *chin-mudhra* (hand posture with thumb and index fingers joined and other three fingers outstretched). His *thapas* (penance) continued for five long years, whereupon God willed to test the yogi's sincerity and earnestness by appearing before him as a young boy.

At that time, the yogi's eyes were a little open. The boy asked him, "Grandpa! Why have you shut your eyes thus? To whom are you praying? Have you found out how God appears?"

The yogi replied, "Boy! I have seen him only as much as my eyes are open."

Some time thereafter, the yogi's eyes were half open. The boy returned again and asked him, "Grandpa! How much of God have you seen now?"



The yogi replied, "Boy! I have known half of Him."

A year later the boy came again. By that time, the yogi had his eyes fully open. "Grandpa! Have you seen and known God?" he asked, and the answer was, "Yes! I have known."

The boy demanded, "Tell me what you have understood," and the yogi replied, "I have understood that He is beyond understanding."

Now, here was God, standing before this yogi in human form, but the yogi could not identify or recognize Him!

When God assumes the human form and is behind you, before you, and beside you, speaking to you, moving with you, and allowing you to cultivate attachment of various kinds with Him, you do not recognize Him. The Divine cannot be easily recognized, when embodied.

The Divine proclaims, "I am not a mass of flesh and blood; I am not a bundle of desires, like the mind; I am not a heap of delusion, like the imagination; I am the *Paramatma*

In your case, you have earned the type of life that the good and bad karmas you have done entitle you to have. . . . God, however, is not bound or affected by karma.



(Supreme Soul), the Origin and the End. I am the urge within you, the knowledge you seek as a result of the urge of your own Self.”

One word of Swami grants the treasure of all riches; a single glance of Swami bestows all boons—it is the *parijata* (wish-fulfilling flower-tree) glance. The arms of Sai confer the soft comfort the mother gives—not of one mother, no, but the divine love of a thousand mothers! This Sathya Sai is such a *prema dhayi* (bestower of love).”

When the Divine plays and sings with us, meets and eats with us, we should not be misled into the belief that It is just human and nothing more, but we generally forget this truth.

Embodiments of divine love! You must be clear about the distinction between birth in general and the Advent of the Avatar (a divine incarnation). Karma (the cumulative consequence of deeds and thoughts) is the cause of ordinary birth. Birth in the human body is a reward for the merit acquired by worthy karma (past deeds).

But what is the karma that caused the Advent (of the Avatar)? That too must have some karma as the antecedent, you may say. Well, in your case, you have earned the type of life that the good and bad karmas you have done entitle you to have. Unless you go through the mass of consequences, you

cannot change the vehicle or instrument, for it is a role you have been assigned in the cosmic drama on the world stage. The role is part of a play, for which it is allotted. You may appear in some different scenes, but you cannot change your makeup.

God, however, is not bound or affected by karma. He takes on a role, not as a consequence of any karma but to reward good karma and impose retribution for bad karma. God incarnated as Narasimha, as a consequence of the bad deeds of the demon Hiranyakashipu and the good deeds of his son Prahlada. The truth is that the body the Avatar wears is not a karma body, designed according to the nature of the individual’s deeds in past lives. God, as Avatar, can mold or change the body in any way He wills. He can develop it or discard it, as and when He wills. No other power or person can affect it. Everything happens as He desires, as He decides. To look upon the Avatar as the body it has assumed is not correct. The Guru has, as his duty, to teach mankind this great truth—of the Paramatma and the Atma, and of the glory and compassion of God.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
SSS 16:16, July 24, 1983

His Master Plan

The Indications at Darshan



THE MORNING OF April 27, 2011, brought poignant scenes, the likes of which have seldom been witnessed on the face of this earth. As the Mahasamadhi of an Avatar was observed the world over by a number unmatched in human history, tears flowed unbounded. Being in the world at this point in time was such a cleansing experience, for the whole atmosphere was washed with tears—pure, selfless, love-filled, and grateful. They were sufficient to wipe out all sins committed by all humanity, it seemed! A lot has been written about the Mahasamadhi of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and a lot more will be written, for this is “His”tory! But here is a little thought I would share.

The amount of prayers that have gone on in the world has been tremendous. The name of Sai filled every conceivable space, enshrined in a billion hearts. Bhajans, service activities, and spiritual *sadhana* (disciplines) of unprecedented proportions pulsed on Mother Earth. At the physical level, the best men and the best machines worked tirelessly day and night at the temple of healing that he himself had built. His most dear students stayed constantly by his side, aware of every breath he was taking. The sheer magnitude of the combined effort of every devotee was enough to bring life to an inert stone! And yet, the Lord took Mahasamadhi.

This thought plagued me until I realized that prayer is not an act of asking God or

telling God. It is silent communion with him. When we either ask or tell God, we make the preposterous and utterly foolish assumption that we know better than him. Swami often tells us the story of two farmers—one who prayed for rain for his crops and the other who prayed for a dry day so his daughter's wedding could proceed uninterrupted. To whose prayers should God listen? Should he listen to the one who cries more, or to the one who pines more? Should he give precedence to age, or should he give precedence to status and influence?

Of course! He will listen to the one who loves him truly. And who is that? Naturally, the one who has surrendered to his will. When one has surrendered to his will, is not prayer redundant? Our definition of prayer changes as we realize that the one who is always in sync with the Lord has his prayers answered, for he always prays for what the Lord has already willed! This is indeed a very different way of thinking. If my prayer is answered, it is because I am in sync with God; I am in communion with him. If my prayer has not been answered, I am not in sync with him; I have to make efforts to be in communion with him.

It is everyone's experience that we feel some intuitive urges. And then, these urges just manifest themselves. Let us know that these are instances when we have been in communion with him. And when these intuitive urges have manifested in me, I have felt the thrill of experiencing him. I see him, hear him, and feel him, and he speaks to me! I feel the thrill because I "know" his plan. And I know his plan because I have been able to be in sync with him for those precious moments.

So, when I found some instances in my life where Swami had indicated his coming Mahasamadhi, I felt relieved. It was wonderful to "know" that all this was part of his master plan. In the pages of my diary I discovered a dream where, months before, he had indicated that he would be leaving soon. Just like someone with white hair dyes it, or a person who loses teeth uses dentures, I too covered up my knowledge of the dream and went about my life. And then, Swami gave a most poignant indication!

It happened on the evening of March 20, 2011. Swami had not been "keeping well," if I may use that term. His *darshans* (opportunities to see him) had been few and spaced between. And yet on this day,



In the Indian custom, this is how
one takes leave after a visit!

he took two darshan rounds. He called all the students who were seated for blessings and poured grains on their head—blessing about 40 students that day. He distributed a few sweets and smiled at all present. He even called the tiny tots from the primary school and blessed them. In the words of a very senior singer, “Today Swami seems so hyper-active!” There was rejoicing, and when he received Arati, everyone thrilled to the rhythmic tapping of his hands. And then, it happened. . . .

As the *Samastha Loka* (“May all the worlds be happy”) chant filled the air, Swami raised His hands. But it was not the familiar *Abhaya hastha* (“Fear not”) blessing. Instead, he FOLDED HIS PALMS TOGETHER IN SALUTATION! He seemed to send the beautiful message, “Salute all, for God is in all.” The Vedic chant, “*Sahasra shirsha Purushaha* (God has a thousand limbs, heads, and sense organs),” symbolic of the fact that God is in all, resounded in my heart. And, in the Indian custom, this is how one takes leave after a visit!

My hairs stand on end and I get goosebumps when I realize how Swami had indicated the Mahasamadhi. But I did not see! Swami says, “*Pashyan api na pashyati*

mudho (You fool— you see and yet do not see!).” That was my condition.

But I took pictures that day. And today, just seeing the pictures is so relieving and enthralling, for it tells me that Swami knows his plans. Even when he was “fine” and a week away from being “admitted” to the hospital, Swami showed us his decision. And in showing us this decision, he also showed us his expectations. He wants our lives to be his message, and one of his final acts of benediction teaches us that we should see him in all, just as he saw himself in all. We should bow to him in all, just as he bowed to Himself in all. We should love all and serve all, just as he did.

In order to share the experience, ins(a)ight, and blessings from Swami that day, I posted the images [showing his gesture]. Let us pledge to him that we will in our lives imbibe his message of pure love for all. And as a teardrop makes its way down my cheek, a firm resolve flows in my blood—a resolve to love him and see him in all!

—Aravind B, April 28, 2011
Sri Sathya Sai University Alumnus
Puttaparthi, India

Where Are You, Lord?

*I am walking through the forest alone,
Your words resounding in my heart:
"I AM above and below and All around."
... But, Lord, I cannot see.*

*My eyes scan the sky
seeking Your footsteps among the clouds.
I trust that You are there.
... But, Lord, I cannot see.*



*Come meet me on this silent path
and dissolve my sadness in Your Light.*

*I know that You and I are One.
... But, Lord, I cannot see ... not yet.*

—**Monika John**, April 27, 2011
Orcas Island, Washington

HAPPY

*No longer do I search among trees and sky
for signs of Your form, Your Presence.*

*All sorrow has melted with cool mists rising
from the mountain lake surface.*

*Unforeseen joy appears with a smile,
like the watery sun among distant crowns:*

*There in a hollow log next to the path,
small broken twigs spell out: HAPPY.*

*A single word in a wordless place,
Your enduring message to the world.*

*Whoever passed this way before
knew You even if he did not
know Your name.*

—**Monika John**, May 7, 2011
Orcas Island, Washington



Divine Visitor, April 24, 2011

I SUBMIT THIS SMALL but powerful experience I had with Swami on the day he died, to ease the pain a little, if I can, of those people who are deeply grieving the loss of Swami's physical form and wondering just how much "around" he still is after passing.

For some time now, anywhere from 1.30 to 2.30 in the morning, I usually feel that Swami is waking me up from sleep. Sometimes it is very obviously Swami, since my dream becomes lucid and I am aware of a divine energy filling the dream to wake me up. Other times the dream experience is subtler, becoming more insistent until I wake up. During these times I always feel like it is Swami waking me up for our time together when I meditate and just spend time with him in my heart, where I feel his divine presence and love, and the world can be excluded for a little while.

On the early morning of April 24, 2011, my experience was a little different. The night before I had taken some sleeping pills, because I was scheduled to speak at the Flushing Sai Baba Center of New York during our meeting that day, and I am not a public speaker, so I was nervous about the upcoming speech. At the time I was in quite a deep state of sleep.

Suddenly I felt someone's hand on my shoulder, gently but insistently shaking it,

and instantly I woke up. I quickly glanced at the red digital display of my clock; it was 3.00 am. Then I turned on my lamp, and there was Swami, standing next to the bed, looking at me.

It was almost too much for my mind to take in at first, and I quickly glanced around the room, which was completely my room and totally familiar and normal. Then I glanced at Swami's face, which was quietly loving and also totally familiar. Then I realized that he belonged there just as well.

Swami's hair looked much longer—though still a little thin—than the last time I had seen him, in September–October 2010, when his hair was quite short. His face was no longer a little distorted, as it had been the past year or so, although it was definitely an older face of Swami, and age lines were apparent. He was wearing a white gown, and the only thing unusual was an otherworldly blue light that seemed to gleam from the fold lines of his gown.

I was not aware that Swami had left his body. I had thought he was still in intensive care, and I didn't find out that he had left the form until later that morning, when I turned on my computer at 7.00 or 8.00 am.

Swami did not say a word to me, but it was as if he knew every thought going through my mind. Then, suddenly, my body made its own demands, and I had to rush to



the bathroom. Swami came with me and held his arm out protectively to keep me safe from the stairway next to the bathroom door.

As I opened the bathroom door and turned on the light, I looked back at Swami. He was still there but had stepped back into a corner of the hallway. I gazed at him intently for a second, but nature called, and I had to shut the door and quickly do my business, all the while praying that Swami would still be there when I opened the bathroom door.

It was not to be. The form was gone. But how sweet and dear of Swami to give me this darshan. I later found out it was about five hours after he had left his body. And then there is the question, why did he make this extraordinarily loving (I won't say last) gesture to me? Only Swami knows for sure, but perhaps he just wanted to assure me that nothing would change, and that our loving times together in meditation would continue.

—**Andrea Schless**
Great Neck, New York

Could There Be . . . ?

...could there be a mother as loving and forgiving as You?

...could there be a father as wise and strong as You?

...could there be a teacher as patient and silent as You?

...could there be a being as compassionate as You?

...could there be a light as bright as You?

...could there be a guru as supreme as You?

...could there be us without You?

—Ms. Jullie Chaudhary, "A Cosmic Tribute"

The Second Stage

“The Light Is In Us”

Dr Sara Pavan, an anesthesiologist originally from Australia and author of the book, *No Country, No Name* (2010), came to Baba over 30 years ago and has resided in Prasanthi Nilayam since 1993. He produced a number of digital videos about Sri Sathya Sai Baba and has been a regular “10.00 am” speaker to devotees in Prasanthi Nilayam, for over 12 years.

YES, IT IS ABSOLUTELY certain that Swami is physically with us no more. This alone is bound to wake up many of us, his devotees, to revere and to experience God without a form, experience Swami as the indweller in our hearts.

We have reached the second stage: “The Light is in us.”* So far we have kept looking at “the Light outside us.” Not everyone will experience this quantum leap; our “religiosity” and worshiping God in duality may offer some resistance to this leap in consciousness. Nevertheless, we are going to experience this change quickly and start living by the Light within, which will require deeper understanding of Swami’s teachings in silence, faith, and fortitude.

Have we really prepared ourselves for this moment and point in time in our spiritual journey? Yes. Swami is now living in me, in you, and in everyone, [no matter

if we] understand and experience divinity as “GOD IS” ... “I AM I” ... “LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL”—or just pay lip-service to this fundamental truth.

All we need do is make a commitment to ourselves, a promise to Swami, who is no more outside us but within us, beckoning us to look within. HE HAS LIT THE LAMP OF LOVE IN OUR HEARTS. Now let it shine with added luster and spread in all directions and not be confined to a little shrine room. This divine LOVE has to be expressed selflessly and not be institutionalized. This itself is the sum and substance of Sathya Sai Educare.

Oh, Swami! Should you leave your body to wake us up? We remain eternally in Oneness with thee, our dearest Lord. Now you are living in us and will use us as your instruments. We are ready, Swami. We promise to execute your will, as your instruments, to manifest the “Golden Age” of LOVE in us and around us.

Swami! There is nothing in the entire universe greater than what you have given us. *Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.*

Lovingly yours in Sai,

—**Dr Sara Pavan**, April 24, 2011

*As often referred to by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, three progressive stages of spiritual understanding or Self-Realization: (1) “I am in the light” (duality); (2) “The light is in me” (qualified nonduality); and (3) “I am the light” (nonduality).

Sri Sathya Sai Baba: A Personal Tribute

India's National Treasure and a Gift to the World

MY ANCESTORS LEFT INDIA more than 150 years ago for Guyana, and not one of our family had returned to visit India since then, due to our colonial conditioning to western values, images of beauty, and excellence. We preferred instead to visit London, Paris, Switzerland, Vienna, Toronto, or the U.S.—modern centers of civilization. I never thought I would visit India with my family, because of images projected in the western media of it being “backward, poor, and dirty.” It was mainly because of Sri Sathya Sai Baba that we visited India at all.

I loved India from my very first visit. When I first landed on Indian soil at Delhi, I became immediately aware of its beauty and powerful vibrations. It dawned on me instantly under the full moon that this was the land of Lord Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharshi, and so on, as well as Sai Baba—the spiritual giants of the human race. I was very happy when this insight infused my consciousness upon touching Indian soil.

I have only become aware recently of the great spiritual legacy of India, mainly through Sathya Sai Baba. As a Christian I did not pay much attention to the Indian spiritual-cultural-philosophical traditions

and heritage, as I had been indoctrinated with a western mindset. After 35 years in Canada, England, and the U.S., and 20 years in the West Indies, I had become a stranger to Indian thought in any field and considered western thinking as the highest form of excellence, until I started reading Sai Baba’s discourses on Indian culture and spirituality and his amazing wisdom in commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Puranas, and the Ramayana, which as a Christian I had never heard about.

Now I see clearly the rampant alienation and lack of integral vision of human identity in western culture—the fragmentation and compartmentalization of western thinking and the trivial pursuit of happiness in gadgets, designer items, money, and status symbols—in the absence of happiness and true meaning in life; the collapse of human values in education; the loss of moral vision, compass, and heritage; the lack of ideals to live by; and the epidemic of broken community.

Sai Baba has restored to me:

- 1) the essentials of a meaningful life.
- 2) a vocabulary infused with values and ethics, which as a professor for 25 years I never had.
- 3) an integral vision of human identity—as opposed to western

psychology, which has fragmented the human personality, without regard to soul, conscience, values, character, mind, or consciousness as central concepts.

- 4) the unity of all faiths, that all religions are facets of the same truth.
- 5) the urgent need to infuse education with human values.
- 6) the critical goal to translate love of God into service to society.
In Baba's words: *From service emanates a lucid understanding of the meaning and purpose of human existence. . . . Love all, serve all.*
- 7) the essentials of inner peace and happiness: *The mansion of happiness is built on the virtue of love. . . . All sublime virtues have their origin in love. . . . Understanding is the foundation of love. . . . Inner peace is essential for happiness. . . . Happiness is an interval between two sorrows; therefore, happiness is not the goal of human existence.*

Never in all my studies at McGill University, University of Toronto, or Johns Hopkins University have I come across such wisdom.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings on leadership, education, human personality, ethics, stress management, technological change, culture, and management are also awesome. I have used his teachings

in the books I have published and in my lectures at the university and at international conferences.

Sai Baba's educational institutions are models of academic excellence, which the last President of India has noted in his lectures; Baba's hospitals are temples of healing and architectural wonders of the world; his gift of pure water to Indian cities and villages are gifts of sublime love.

But more than these, his inspiration and transformation of the hearts of men, women, and students to engage in service to their communities all over India and the world is phenomenal. The greatest miracle performed by Sai Baba is the miracle of transformation—moral transformation of our vision, values, character, and behavior: What we need in the information age is not more information but transformation of our character—our moral center and the foundation of our personality.

Now I pray to be reborn in India to learn Sanskrit and Indian culture, spiritual traditions, classical music, philosophy, and literature, which through Sai Baba I have discovered to be gems of wisdom. The revival of the Indian classics in Indian culture and spirituality by Sai Baba is a gift to the world. Now, in 165 countries in the world, there are Sai Baba devotees who know the Indian classics and who journey to India every year to Prasanthi Nilayam, the world's spiritual center of gravity.

The world now admires and practices the Indian spiritual traditions coupled with all the other spiritual traditions of the world,

for a moral transformation on the planet. Sai Baba not only preaches the unity of all religions but is the only spiritual leader on the planet who celebrates the birthdays of all the founders of all religions and who gives discourses on their teachings.

He is the only leader who focuses on the common building blocks, values, moral vision, moral literacy, unity in diversity, and the common attributes of God in all spiritual traditions in his discourses. His ashram is the united nations of all spiritual traditions, where the global challenge for harmony, peace, unity, cross-cultural understanding, and moral excellence is translated into action.

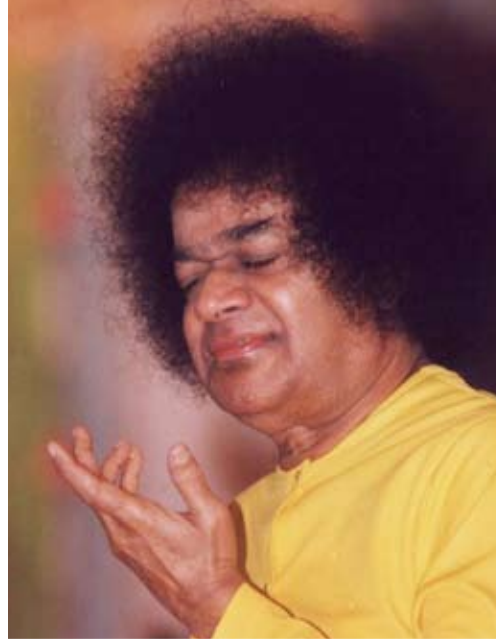
For Sai Baba, leadership is idealism in action. A global spiritual movement has been initiated by Sai Baba to meet the global challenges of peace, human dignity, unity, the quest for human excellence, and to provide a moral compass to guide our choices in life.

Because of Sai Baba, I am a better Christian, my friend is a better Buddhist, my uncle is a better Muslim, and my students

are better human beings, with new moral vision, inner peace, and cross-cultural understanding.

—Dr Y Sankar

Professor of Management
Dalhousie University
Nova Scotia, Canada



There is only one religion, the religion of love.

There is only one caste, the caste of humanity.

There is only one language, the language of love.

There is only one God, and He is omnipresent.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and Council of Management:

An Appeal to Devotees

WE WISH TO EXPRESS our gratitude and appreciation for all the support we have received from devotees of Bhagavan throughout the world during the difficult period of the ailment of Baba's physical body and thereafter. The messages of faith in Bhagavan that were received and the experience of his continued presence fortified us in facing the challenges that confronted us.

Bhagavan has always said that he is not the body but the manifestation of the Supreme Consciousness that pervades all creation and beyond. He also impressed upon us that we were also the images of the Divine. His mission on this earth was mainly to enable humanity to realize its inherent divinity.

The Supreme Consciousness that Bhagavan personified is eternal. Bhagavan is therefore with us, now and forever. Prasanthi Nilayam is the place the Divine chose to be his abode, and it will continue to be so.

It is therefore obligatory on us to ensure that all programs and events that used to take place at Prasanthi Nilayam are continued just as before.

Starting from Guru Purnima this year, all festivals as per the normal calendar of events will continue. These will also include [established annual] programs such as Grama Seva (village uplift), Dasara, University Convocation, Birthday Celebrations, Sports Day, etc.

Other events, such as the Prasanthi Seva, Parthi Yatra, pilgrimage programs, various conferences and training programs, and Bal Vikas (Sai Spiritual Education) and cultural programs, will also continue as before.

The daily darshan schedule has also been set in place and is being faithfully observed. [Vedam chanting and bhajans continue from 8.00 to 9.30 am and 4.30 to 6.00 pm daily.]

Bhagavan is with us and will always be with us, not only at Prasanthi Nilayam but everywhere, every moment of our life. We have to live our life under his unbounded love, protection, and continued guidance. He has shown us the path, and we must faithfully tread it to achieve union ultimately with Him.

—**The Trustees and the Council of Management
of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust**

May 29, 2011





Press Statement of April 28, 2011

1. THE TRUSTEES AND THE COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust thank the representatives of the print and electronic media who are attending this press conference. Though the media wanted reactions from the Trust in the recent few weeks, the situation, particularly the declining health of Bhagavan Baba, did not make it possible for the Trustees to address any issue other than the treatment being given to Bhagavan Baba. Therefore, the delay in calling this press meet.
2. The Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust was founded by Bhagavan Baba in 1972. It is a public charitable trust and has been engaged in service activities mainly in the field of education and health. Two associate trusts also founded by Bhagavan Baba deal with medical relief and higher education: they are the Sri Sathya Sai Medical Trust and the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. The Sri Sathya Sai Medical Trust, which has been carrying out the medical relief activities, has been taken over by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust from Dec 1, 2010.
3. Bhagavan Baba has been the moving spirit behind all these service activities. The medical relief activities are carried out through two super-specialty hospitals, one at Puttaparthi and the other at Whitefield, Bengaluru; and two general hospitals, one each at Puttaparthi and at Whitefield.

Medical relief has been provided to a large number of poor and needy patients without any distinction of caste, religion, and language. The details of the medical relief provided and the infrastructure set up for this are available on the websites of the Sri Sathya Sai Medical Trust (www.sssmt.org.in) and the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust (www.srisathyasai.org.in).

4. In the field of education, the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust runs two schools, one at Puttaparthi and another at Rajahmundry. Higher education is imparted by the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at its campuses at Whitefield, Bengaluru, Anantapur, and Puttaparthi. A new campus at Muddenahalli, near Chickaballapur in Karnataka state, is ready and on the anvil of commencing its operations. The primary focus in all these institutions is values-based education and character building.
5. All these activities are carried on in a spirit of service with the belief that love and compassion form the bedrock of spiritual evolution. Medical relief and education are completely free. The resources are provided by the Trusts. The Trusts have a moderate corpus that fetches a reasonable return, which is augmented by voluntary contributions made to the Trusts by donors from India and abroad.

6. The activities of the Trusts are spread over the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The Trusts own and possess land and buildings, which are required for education and medical relief activities. The super-specialty hospital at Puttaparthi is situated on a campus of about 105 acres of land. Similarly, the super-specialty hospital at Whitefield, near Bengaluru, is situated on a campus of 52 acres of land. The Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust met the costs of the construction and setting up of the hospitals, which was about Rs 65 crores* for the Puttaparthi Hospital in 1991 and Rs 130 crores for the Whitefield Hospital in 2001.
7. The general hospital at Puttaparthi is located on 7 acres of land. The Trust also runs a general hospital at Whitefield.
8. Similarly, in the case of educational activities, the Anantapur campus for women is located on a site of about 115 acres. The campus at Whitefield, Bengaluru, comprises about 38 acres. The other campus, known as Vidyagiri, situated at Prasanthi Nilayam, comprising the school, university, stadium, administrative buildings, planetarium, etc, is located on about 60 acres of land.
9. Also, as regards the schools, the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust runs a school at Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh, situated on a campus of about 25 acres.
10. The Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust also constructed an airport for the benefit of the devotees and patients in the year 1991. The airport is spread over 150 acres of land.
11. The Prasanthi Nilayam campus is spread over 70 acres of land. The Trust also owns land and buildings in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, where the extent of the land is about 3 acres. The Trust also runs a community center known as Sri Sathya Sai Nigamagamam at Hyderabad, which is spread over about 3.5 acres. Another community hall, known as Sri Sathya Sai Samskrutha Sadanam, situated in Bangalore, belongs to the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.
12. In the recent news reports, the value of the Trusts has been hugely exaggerated, and it may be seen from the above that the lands are being used as an integral part of the educational campuses and hospitals. They are not meant for commercial use, especially in the context of alienated lands, which were given for specific purposes.
13. In addition to the above medical relief and educational activities, the Central Trust undertook drinking-water-supply projects in the Anantapur, Medak, Mahboobnagar, and East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. The Trust maintained these projects for a year before handing them over to the Government. They have since been running smoothly. Besides these, a project for modernization of the Kandaleru-Poondy canal for providing drinking water to Chennai city has been undertaken. Such water supply projects, undertaken between 1995 and 2010, involved an outlay of Rs 500 crores.
14. The Trusts of Bhagavan Baba have never made an appeal for donations. The income of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and the Sri Sathya Sai Medical Trust has ranged from Rs

* 1 crore = 10 million

100–130 crores per year during the past four years. The expenditure for the same period has ranged between Rs 75–100 crores per year. It is therefore evident that the size of the Trust is modest.

15. For the medical relief activity, about 1,000 persons are employed, which includes doctors, nurses, and paramedical and other staff. The educational activities involve a total of around 250 employees. In addition, the Sri Sathya Sai Organization, which is a voluntary organization of the devotees of Bhagavan Baba, provides volunteers to support these service activities.
16. Besides these, the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust has set up the Sri Sathya Sai International Center at Lodhi Road, New Delhi. At the said Center, a school, a library, an auditorium, and an international training center for Educare and the dissemination of human values have been provided.
17. Inspired by Bhagavan Baba, many schools are set up and charitable activities are organized by devotees in many cities in India and abroad. These do not come under the fold of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust; they are owned and administered by separate bodies, governed by their respective charters.
18. In light of the baseless, irresponsible, and false accusations of defalcation of gold, valuable artifacts, and even money, it is emphatically stated that these accusations are wholly untrue, and it is believed that these have been engineered by certain vested interests with a view to defame the

fair name of the Trust, its functionaries, and the Trustees. There is no truth whatsoever in these allegations.

19. All transactions of the Trusts are duly accounted for in their books of account. An experienced and qualified chartered accountant oversees the accounting and financial management. The accounts are duly audited by a reputed firm of chartered accountants based at Delhi. Periodical returns, accounts, and audit reports as prescribed by law are duly filed with the concerned authorities under the Income Tax Act, FCRA, and other applicable statutes. There is no proceeding initiated against any of the Trusts by any authority under any statute alleging any impropriety or violation of law.
20. The Trustees, functionaries, and members of the Council of Management have all been personally selected and placed in their respective positions by the revered Founder Trustee, Bhagavan Baba. They are persons of impeccable credentials, having served in various capacities in their respective careers. All of them serve the Trust in honorary capacity, out of their devotion to the Founder Trustee, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, being motivated by His universal message to serve humanity: “*Manava seva* (Service to man is service to God).”

—**The Trustees and the Council of Management
of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust**



It Is Not Emptiness but a Super-Cosmic Fullness

Transcript of a radio broadcast recorded by Prof. G. Venkataraman on April 29, 2011.

OM SRI SAI RAM. At the outset, I offer my loving salutations at the Lotus Feet of our Beloved Lord Sai.

Dear Listener: This is a talk that I never thought or dreamed I would ever have to give. In a sense, the events of the last month or so have gone by like a surrealistic experience, and suddenly I feel bewildered. More explicitly, I am wondering, as perhaps many are, whether the world as it existed before March 28 was real, or the world as it appears today without that Beautiful Form is real, the earlier experience being just a dream. Inevitably, this reminds me of a story that Swami used to narrate occasionally, back in the old days.

The story goes like this. One evening, after a rather tiring day at the royal court, Emperor Janaka returns late to his chamber. Welcoming the monarch, his queen asks him to freshen up and get ready for dinner. Janaka nods as if to say yes, but overcome by exhaustion, slumps into a chair and dozes off. During his nap, he has a disturbing dream from which he later wakes up with a start. As he looks around, the scene is very different from what he was seeing just moments ago—no forest, no tiger chasing him, etc. Puzzled, Janaka begins to mutter, “Was that real, or

is this real?” The queen keeps on reminding the emperor about dinner, but the latter continues to remain in a stupor, constantly repeating the same question. Palace medics are summoned, but they are unable to help. Ultimately, the assistance of Sage Vasishtha is sought, and when he arrives, Janaka is still asking the same question.

With a smile on his face, the sage places his hand on Janaka’s shoulder and gently observes, “O king, neither is real; you alone are!” Vasishtha was of course referring to the Atma (divinity) within, dismissing what is experienced both in the waking as well as in the dream state as illusory. In other words, Vasishtha was telling Janaka that what is real lies beyond the experience of the senses and the thoughts of the mind, both of which are transient.

Alas, today we have no Sage Vasishtha to guide us out of our confusion, but luckily, anticipating precisely the situation we face today, Swami has prepared us through innumerable discourses in the past. Inevitably, I have to make references to them; however, all that must wait for the future. Right now, I have just enough time for some reflections on recent events.

For me personally, this is the way it all started. Every evening during February and a good part of March of this year, I along with a couple of others would go for darshan a little after 6.00 pm or so, since almost invariably Swami came out rather late. His arrival could be anywhere from 7.00 to 8.15 pm, and occasionally even later. Devotees waited patiently while the boys sang bhajans vigorously.

By the way, bhajans would commence punctually at 5.30, but when Swami came out, the tempo of singing would become really charged. For his part, Swami would just sit there quietly enjoying the bhajans, making everyone in the vast Sai Kulwant Hall forget about time. Bhagavan did have the magical power to make time disappear or to lose meaning in his presence.

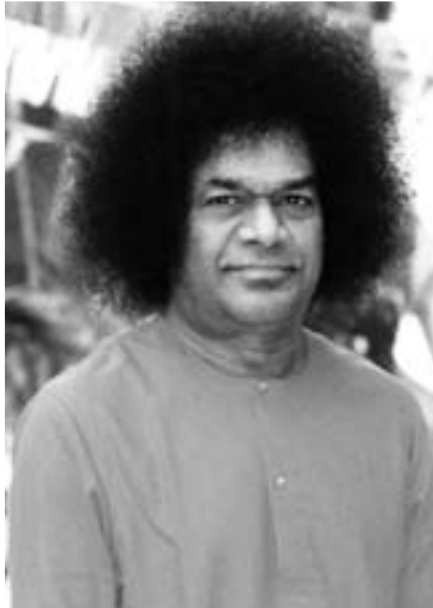
Sai Kulwant Hall would always be packed to capacity, and not a soul moved when Swami gave darshan, including the children from the local schools, who came taking turns. Finally, around maybe 9.00 pm, sometimes even later, Swami would take *arati* (offering of the flame), linger for a while, raise both his hands in loving benediction, and slowly leave. For over a year, it used to be that Bhagavan would come in a mobile chair

(popularly referred to as the *car-chair*) and would leave the same way.

Over time, however, the routine began to change, almost imperceptibly. He would still come using the chair but return using the Porte automobile's car-chair. Still later, he started coming by car and returning the same way. Toward the end, on some

days the car would come to the porch and halt, after which *arati* would be offered almost immediately, without Swami even coming out of the car. All this occurred only on days when he came out; there were also days when Swami did not come out at all, and I shall now briefly refer to that.

Basically, if Swami [the body] were rather tired, he would give an indication, whereupon there would be a signal from Swami's residence,



the Yajur Mandir, and *arati* would be given to Swami's chair. Initially, it was the morning darshans that Swami started skipping, but not very often. When that happened, I inevitably recalled the days when we used to rush out around 6.15 am for morning darshan. In winter particularly, it would be still dark, and yet all the devotees would be there in Sai Kulwant Hall, waiting for Swami to come out. And he always did, gliding out

The scene never remained the same with Swami; he always kept changing the script.



of the Poorna Chandra Hall, even as the sun came out in the east to herald a new day.

By 7.30 am or so, Swami would have taken the first batch of devotees selected for interview into the famous interview room, and all of us with work to do would rush back to our rooms to grab a bite of breakfast and go to college, office, or whatever; that would be the case on weekdays. On Sundays, we would rush for breakfast, while Swami was still in the interview room, and be back in our seats by the time the interview ended.

Bhajans would start on the dot at 9.00 am, and *arati* would be given around 9.20! Swami would then go into the interview room and from there into the adjacent dining room, followed by the trustees, and have lunch with them. Swami would come out after about seven minutes, leaving his guests struggling to finish, wash their hands, and follow behind him. Bhagavan would then take his leisurely walk back to the Poorna Chandra Hall, making his way through the ladies' section, picking up letters and chatting with various people on the way. By 9.35 am or so, Swami would have entered the "PC Hall," as we refer to it here, and one more morning darshan would pass into history.

I am recalling all this just to drive home the point that the scene never remained the same with Swami; he always kept changing the script. Getting back to the late-February/early-March period of this year, on many evenings Swami was rather too tired to come out, and the signal would come to give *arati*, usually around 6.15 pm or so.

Let me cut now to Saturday, March 27, 2011, the day before Swami was admitted to the hospital. That evening, *arati* was given early, after which the current Vice Chancellor, Prof Prasad; the former Vice Chancellor, Prof Pandit; and I went to Swami's residence, as we often did. We were told that Swami was "not well," that two doctors whom Swami lately had permitted to attend upon him were upstairs with Swami, and that some monitoring equipment was being brought to keep a watch on Swami's health condition. At that time, no one had the slightest indication whatsoever that a "crisis" was fast approaching.

Night passed, and when I checked the next morning, I was told that Swami had rested and spent an uneventful night. Around 3.00 or so in the afternoon, Prof. Pandit called me to say that an ambulance had come to the Yajur Mandir and that there

was some activity around there. It seemed as if Swami were being taken to the hospital, so we both rushed there. It so happened that though we left a bit later, our car almost caught up with the ambulance, not only because we took a shortcut but also because the ambulance was being driven slowly.

Anyway, to get on with the narration, both of us managed to be there when Swami was helped out of the ambulance at the entrance to the hospital. Although Swami went by ambulance, he was actually in a wheelchair and not on a stretcher, as I had imagined. Prof Pandit, who was by my side all the time, tells me that Swami gave him a gentle smile. Little did he know that that smile was to become his most treasured memory.

Swami's wheelchair was whisked away to the special elevator meant for patients, and soon he disappeared from sight, having been taken to where, we did not know. Meanwhile, Prof Pandit and I both were shown to a room upstairs where the operation theaters, the cardiac catheterization lab, and the ICUs are located. We waited silently and anxiously in the room we were sent to, while the clock kept ticking. One hour passed and, not surprisingly, both of us became somewhat restless. Coming out of the room where we had waited till then, we tried to see if there were any doctor nearby who could give us some information. There was a surgeon around, standing at the end of the long corridor, near the cardiac operation theaters. He signaled to us to join him and told us that Swami was undergoing

a procedure in the cardiac catheterization lab, which was further down the corridor. He did not elaborate on the procedure but after some time told us that the procedure was probably approaching its end, judging by the test equipment coming out of the lab.

Shortly thereafter, we saw the chief nurse of the hospital standing in the corridor right close to the catheter lab (which, by the way, was more than 50 meters or so from where we were), giving strict instructions to some of the staff nearby. It looked as if Swami was ready to be moved from the catheter lab to a special ICU, located across the corridor. Meanwhile, we saw many people disappearing from the corridor into what we presumed would be the ICU, by way of getting it ready. Roughly about two hours after Swami arrived at the hospital, we saw a hospital bed on wheels come out of the cath lab, with a lot of staff in surgical dress walking alongside the bed—one person holding a drip bottle, while others wheeled along the monitoring equipment to which Swami had been connected.

It seemed to us as if the crisis had been brought under control and everything was looking good, at least for the moment. With Swami having been transferred to the ICU, things began to settle down, and we started getting a clearer picture of what actually had happened. Apparently, Swami's heartbeat had become irregular, and he had needed a pacemaker implantation. That was why he had been taken to the hospital, with the pacemaker duly installed.

Thousands of people the world over walk around with pacemakers, and if you were to see them you would never be aware of it. We thus thought, OK, Swami now has a pacemaker, and everything will be fine in a few days. After that, he will be going back to the Yajur Mandir, and maybe, after resting for a few days, life will return to normal, possibly with a revised schedule to minimize physical strain to Swami.

By around 7.00 or maybe 7.30 pm or so, Prof Pandit and I returned to the ashram. All this, I remind you once more, happened on the evening of March 28. Next morning, I checked with one of the people who had access to minute-by-minute status of Swami's health, and the info I got was that the night seemed to have gone off well. Around 2.00 pm or so—remember, I am now talking of the day following Swami's admission to the hospital, ie, March 29—Prof Pandit called me to say that there was hyper-activity in the hospital, and Swami's condition was causing anxiety.

This scared me, and immediately both of us rushed to the hospital. Meanwhile, with the rumor factory now working overtime, all the cell-phone companies began to mint money. On our way to the hospital, Prof Pandit and I noticed a helicopter parked at the Sri Sathya Sai Airport, and that said something.

When we reached the hospital, Director Dr Safaya, who knew both Prof Pandit and me quite well, showed us a good place where we could wait. This was quite close to the catheter lab, and after a short while we

saw Swami being whisked into the lab, the trolley-bed being rolled along and guided by a battery of hospital attendants and doctors in surgical gowns. Though we were close, it was not possible to see Swami—there were so many doctors walking along with and around the trolley-bed. The doors of the cath lab were shut, and we waited.

After about 40 minutes or so, there was quite a buzz outside, and it seemed as if Swami were being taken back to the ICU. Sure enough, the two specialist doctors who had come by helicopter from Bangalore, came out looking as if not only what they had come to do had gone off well, but also that they were ready to leave. Indeed, they had already removed their surgical gowns, slipped on their shoes, and walked away, presumably to be driven to the airport.

A couple of minutes later, I saw the trolley-bed being moved back to the ICU. This time I was, thanks to Dr Safaya, able to catch a momentary glimpse of Bhagavan's face from about a couple of feet away; the rest of the body was of course covered by a hospital sheet. That was the last time I saw Swami before he shed his mortal coil. Being under the influence of sedatives, his eyes were closed. That was no doubt to be expected; yet that sight was like a huge electric shock, considering that until not so long ago, on many days I would find Swami's face beaming and having an indescribable glow, even around 8.30 pm, after a long and tiring day.

So why did they take Swami to the cath lab, and what did they do there? And what



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about the doctors who had flown in from Bangalore? I got all the answers about two hours later from Dr Safaya. Looking quite tired but somewhat relieved, he dropped into a chair in the corridor next to Prof Pandit and myself and said, “Hey! You fellows are drinking tea! What about me?” We were sipping some tea from paper cups, provided by some kindly soul doing seva there. We signaled once more to that person to bring a cup of tea for Dr Safaya also. After taking a few much-needed sips, Dr Safaya told us that while Swami’s heart was not damaged, it was weak and the pumping action inadequate. The doctors from Bangalore had therefore inserted what was known as a balloon pump. This would lessen the burden on the heart considerably, since the balloon pump would take care of most of the pumping.

Six or so days later, the balloon pump was withdrawn. However, the procedure had to be done with enormous care and ever so slowly. For us, anxious to hear the news that the pump had been safely withdrawn, it was a long wait, maybe ten hours; I cannot remember exactly how many. Shortly thereafter, when Dr Safaya came out, he looked greatly relieved. He even smiled a bit and said to me, “Now he is on

his own,” meaning that Swami’s heart was now functioning satisfactorily without any external assistance whatsoever. Obviously, that was great news, worth waiting for.

At that time, everyone was quite hopeful, but soon a roller-coaster ride of sorts began. It turns out—so a specialist doctor explained to me—that beyond a certain age, when the heart gets affected, it impacts other organs also—most often the lungs and kidneys. If earlier the heart had to be given help from outside, it was now the turn of these two vital organs to receive such assistance. And although it is these two organs that were often in the news—as Dr Narendra Reddy explained to us during the conversation that I had with him that was broadcast by Radio Sai—all organs had to be watched carefully. Thus it was that all kinds of experts had to be called in, some from within the hospital itself, some from other hospitals in the country, and some even from America.

All that ground has been covered, and I shall not go through it again. But this much I can say: medically, the various parameters were sort of holding on, with minor fluctuations here and there maybe, but all this needed strong support from external systems.

Slowly, the organs started showing signs that they might not be able to come back to normal; however, one could not be sure, either. After all, this was not just a mortal patient but Swami, and almost everyone, including the doctors, had the faith that Swami would defy all the medical books and research papers written by man and bounce back.

In fact, one day I asked Dr Safaya, “Doctor, how long would a normal patient with a body age the same as Swami have lasted, with this multiple-organ problem?” The doctor’s reply was short, “Certainly not this long,” which of course boosted my confidence enormously.

I should mention at this point that although from a biological point of view Swami’s body was made up of the five elements, just as all living bodies are, there were several exceptional aspects to it that came entirely from purity rather than divinity, as Swami himself once explained to students.

For example, not a single hair was grey. During the mid-1990s, Swami often complained about loss of hair but also said it would come back. Indeed, it did, after some time, though not to its fullest extent as in earlier times. And then there were his eyes. Not once did Swami ever have to wear spectacles, even for reading a piece of paper—not once. But everyone around him needed at least one pair, if not two—one for reading and another for distant vision. Thirdly, not once did Swami need the services of a dentist.

To get back to the main narrative, days passed while medical anxiety slowly and silently began to mount. At the same time, the confidence that Swami would not leave us also soared. “After all,” said everyone, including myself, “just look at how many thousands, if not millions, are praying, all over the world! There are Christians praying in Madras. There are Sikhs praying in Delhi, and there are the villagers of Puttaparthi, who are praying for their own Swami. Bhagavan has therefore no choice but to sit up, walk away from his bed, freshen up, and come out, exactly as he did at the time of the famous Goa appendicitis *leela*.”

But alas, that was not to be. There is absolutely no doubt that Swami could have done all that and more. However, he chose not to. He had, on many occasions, given hints, both privately and even publicly, that he could go at anytime he chose, overriding all his earlier pronouncements.

Further, he had explained clearly in many of his discourses that while the Avatar is an incarnation of God and comes down with his full complement of divine powers when he manifests as a Poorna (full) Avatar, as in this case, he would, at the same time, not only respect the laws of nature as ordained by him when it came to his own body, but also bow to time, of which he was always the absolute master. Thus it was that Swami would sometimes get tired, catch a cold, come down with a fever, etc. And, as he took care to explain, not all his body ailments were due to his taking on the sufferings of others.



We need to, as Swami himself has said in many discourses, “wake up, arise, listen to the call of the Divine Master, and accept our new responsibility.”

Around 7.30 on the morning of April 24, I received a phone call from a close friend who whispered, “Swami is in a critical condition.” However, I was not alarmed, since my confidence that Swami would go to the very edge and bounce back miraculously had soared to new heights.

Twenty minutes later, I got another call. This was from one of the trustees, who began, “Sad news. Swami passed away at 7.40 this morning. Now this is what we would like you to do: . . .,” and he went on to give me my first assignment in a world where the Light was present but in a passive form, having risen to shine and guide from above. It was a silent signal that the time had finally come for all of us to look for Bhagavan beyond the form, for instructions and guidance, which then had to be followed meticulously. Along the way, we would have to work harmoniously with each other, smashing every ego-built barrier. In short, we HAD to become one family, united under God, and working for the common good. It was not enough to merely chant, “May peace prevail in all the worlds,” etc; it was now our job to make that happen. The examination bell had rung, and God, our coach as well as teacher, had now become the invigilator!

Oh yes, for a while we will all cry and swear we cannot live without Swami and so on. But that has happened before, various times in fact—such as after Rama, after Krishna, and after Shirdi. But soon we must wake up to our new responsibilities, realizing that it is for this test that Swami has been physically preparing us in diverse ways.

Swami Vivekananda is reported to have said, “The death of a near one always makes everybody very philosophical. However, that mood wears off in three days or even less, after which it is business as usual.” That comment applies in the case of the death of an ordinary mortal. The present situation is totally different, since there is no question of death. Swami has merely shed the physical form for the Formless, playing a different and subtler role.

We need to, as Swami himself has said in many discourses, “wake up, arise, listen to the call of the Divine Master, and accept our new responsibility.” The world is still out there, offering us more opportunities for service than ever before; all that is needed is to rise to the occasion.

I would close this talk by briefly recalling what Swami once said while bringing a divine discourse to an end. I do not recall the occasion but I do remember his message,

because of its depth, power, and also for another reason that I shall mention shortly. Swami said, in a powerful voice—and this is a paraphrase:

Dear students! When you sing bhajans here, don't imagine that they will impact only the people currently assembled here in the Sai Kulwant Hall. True, the sound waves coming from the various loud-speakers will be heard only by the devotees here. True, those sound waves will also be heard throughout the ashram. However, besides these sound waves, subtle waves are also generated. You cannot see them, and in fact you do not even know about them. They are ripples in the ocean of consciousness.

Those ripples can travel not just all over this planet but to the very edge of the physical universe and beyond. They will never dampen or dissipate but remain forever. They will penetrate everywhere, including the pillars, the structures, and whatever you see around here. Indeed, the vibrations from every bhajan that you sing will remain embedded in them forever.

Further, every day there will be fresh additions, as a result of which, the intensity of the built-in spiritual vibrations will steadily grow. The more passionately you sing, the greater the stored sanctity. The more love you add to your feelings as you sing, the greater the enhancement of sanctity. Thus, by having sacred thoughts while seated here and by singing bhajans with pure love in your heart, each of you can leave behind an invaluable legacy.

That, in brief, was what Swami said—all of which reminds me very strongly of what the headmaster of a school where I was studying in the late 1940s said one day after morning assembly and prayer—words that still ring in my ears.

He said, “Boys, some of you must be wondering why we go through this routine day after day. To some of you, this may even appear meaningless and a complete waste of time. But here is why we make you come here and do this day after day. While some of you might not do so, many of the boys who come here do pray and sing sincerely. The subtle vibrations from those prayers and songs remain forever bound in the walls of this assembly hall, saturating this place with a sanctity that increases day by day.

“By spending some time here every day, you become at least a bit more spiritually purified. Why do you think people go in large numbers to some temples but not to others? It is because thousands of good people and many saints have worshiped in those temples earlier, conferring thereby the subtle fragrance of *sanityam*.” By the way, the word *sanityam* might be loosely translated as “eternal sanctity.”

Getting back to the headmaster, he continued, “When an ordinary person goes to such a temple, that very *sanityam* spiritually cleanses that person to a certain extent. That also is the reason why people of this country want to bathe in sacred rivers. These are rivers where innumerable *rishis* (sages) and saints have had a dip, making those rivers all that much more sacred. If you

At the subtle and causal level, the Sai Kulwant Hall is the most love-charged spot, not only on the face of this planet but, indeed, in the entire universe.



and I bathe there, a bit of that sanctity seeps into us, making us better persons.”

Dear Listener! There is a particular reason I am ending on this note. If you think about it carefully, you will realize that Prasanthi Nilayam is THE place that has been the abode of the Avatar of the Age, from the time he moved out of the Pata Mandiram in 1950. During the six decades that followed, just think how many darshans he has given here, how many festivals he has celebrated here, how many plays and dramas he has seen here, and how many discourses he has delivered here! Just think how much pure and divine love he has personally poured out in the process, all those years. Have they all vanished into time?

At the worldly level, they have indeed become memories. But at the subtle and causal level, the Sai Kulwant Hall is the most love-charged spot, not only on the face of this planet but, indeed, in the entire universe. For, was this not where the divine chancellor, Swami to all of us, showered his love nonstop, both at the individual and the collective level?

The form will no longer be visible to our eyes. However, if we care to open the eye of our heart—the third eye, if you prefer to call it that—we can have the grandest and most blissful experience possible. Remember,

even the best Steinway piano or the rarest Stradivarius violin cannot produce great music when it is not properly tuned. In other words, if we want to experience eternity, we can do so only if our hearts are properly tuned before going into Sai Kulwant Hall. If we go in without tuning, all we will see is a physical emptiness that will make us cry instead of feeling uplifted.

Swami has not gone. He is very much here, there, above, below, around, etc—indeed, everywhere. However, we need a new vision to see him. That is the essence of the last part of my talk today, and I shall end here. The new situation has, naturally, placed many new responsibilities on us, and I have many more things to say concerning these, as well as about Swami’s teachings; however, those will have to wait for other occasions.

For now, I would as always like to conclude by offering this talk at the lotus feet of our beloved Swami.

—G Venkatraman, April 29, 2011
www.radiosai.org



USA Conference Dates – 2011

USA Regional retreat updates and information may also be viewed at the official Sai website:
<http://us.sathyasai.org/> or <http://us.sathyasai.org/infoconf.htm>.

Region 8 (Southern California): June 3-5, 2011, at Camp Buckhorn, Idyllwild, CA (www.buckhorncamp.com). Theme: “All for the Love of Sai.” Speakers Ms. Geetha Ram and Ms. Sumana Murali. Contact: Mike Congleton, MWC108@gmail.com.

Region 5 (North Central): Sept 2–5 (Labor Day Weekend, Fri 4 pm–Mon noon), the 21st North Central Region Sai Conference and Retreat, at Camp Henry Horner, 26710 W Nippersink Road, Ingleside, IL 60041. Speakers: Ms Dana Gillespie, Dr Aroon Yusuf. Contact: Vijay Sai Reddy, Phone: 224-484-0724; e-mail: admin@sathyasaicenters.org; website: www.sathyasaicenters.org.

Region 9 (Southwest): Sept 2-5, New Mexico “Land of Enchantment” Retreat at Bodhi Manda Zen Center, Jemez Springs, NM. Speakers: Arthur & Poppy Hillcoat of Australia. Contact: Elaine Hausman, 505-660-0283, ehausman@rockridge.biz. Further details to be announced.

Prasanthi Nilayam Event Dates – 2011

July 11, Monday – Ashadi Ekadashi (11th day after the full moon of Ashadi and associated with the worship of Vishnu) sees multitudes from the states of Maharashtra and Goa making a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam to celebrate this holy festival. Devotees from the states of Maharashtra and Goa commence their *dindi yatra* or foot pilgrimage from the town of Dharmavaram, about 40 km from Puttaparthi, reaching Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of Ashadi Ekadashi. This is often followed by a cultural program presented by the Bal Vikas children of Maharashtra and Goa.

July 13–14, Wednesday–Thursday: World Youth Conference Theme: “Sai Ideal Leadership.”

July 15, Friday – Guru Purnima (full moon day of Ashada, falling in June or July), is a day to express love, reverence, and gratitude to our spiritual teachers and the great sages of yore, for the precious gift of wisdom received from them in the form of the scriptures. Also called *Vyasa Purnima*, this day honors the birthday of the revered sage, Veda Vyasa, compiler of the vast body of Vedic knowledge into the four Vedas—Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva—and scribe of the 18 Puranas (ancient Hindu legends), also completed by him on this day.

A Rainbow Is a Promise . . .



ASPECTACULAR RAINBOW appeared over the hills in our neighborhood at about sunset, April 22, 2011, (USA Pacific Daylight Time). We think this may have occurred very close to the time Swami left his body. I had been up on the roof of our house in Ventura, California, doing some repairs, and was starting to clean up when I sat back to enjoy the view from the roof. It was a beautiful scene of hills, ocean, birds, and a few wispy clouds. The feeling was very peaceful, and I had the thought that I should try not to be so focused on getting things done, and take more time to “smell the roses,” as they say.

I had just gotten down from the roof and entered the house when my wife Shelley said she thought it was raining. I said, “It couldn’t be, because I was just up on the roof, and

there was no hint of rain. Maybe it was the sprinklers.”

Going back outside to investigate, I discovered that indeed, it was raining lightly. I then looked up and saw the most brilliant, complete rainbow I had ever seen in all my 59 years. I yelled for Shelley to come quick, and she hurried out because of the urgency in my voice. I

pointed to the sky and asked, “Have you ever seen a rainbow like that?”

I said, “I wonder if Baba just left His body!” I rushed to the front yard to look at the other end of the rainbow and ran into our neighbor, Josh, standing in front of his house. I asked him if he had seen the rainbow. He had and commented that he had never seen a rainbow like that one around this area. He said, “Where are we, in Hawaii?” We weren’t the only ones to notice how unusually brilliant this rainbow was. The following week, the local paper featured a photo of the rainbow on its cover page (see photo). I do feel it was a sign from Baba letting us know He is with us always.

—**John Harrison**

Ventura, California

Photo by Tim Ball – *Ventura Breeze* newspaper

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Recent Arrivals

Advent III, by Michael J. Hollander, shares autobiographical details, including his early years and experiences with Sathya Sai Baba. Of particular interest are his insights about the relevance of Swami's universal teachings to all, regardless of religious or cultural background. BW-007.....\$8.00

Beacons of Divine Wisdom, Part I Originally published in Telegu under the title, *Divya Jnana Deepikalu*, this book is a compilation of articles written by Bhagavan Baba to benefit students and society. Swami has written about the life history of various Avatars, Puranic characters, spiritual personalities, and exemplary Indian devotees. BI-434\$6.00

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Vani: Lessons for Daily Life, Vol. I, compiled by BV Ramana Rao, presents a number of sweet and interesting parables cited by Bhagavan Baba during innumerable discourses. The original Telegu poems and parables have been translated into English in this volume. BI-433\$5.00

Grace and Faith by Nirmala Vikram, recounts personal experiences of the author and her family while in the presence of Sathya Sai Baba, plus lessons that Swami taught them to strengthen their faith. BI-436\$5.00

Sathyam Sivam Sundaram, Vol. 7, is a continuation of the biographical series on the divine life of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, covering the years 1994-2001. BA-209\$8.00

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Bhajans: A Bridge Across Time, Vols 1–16, contains over 200 bhajans performed by Swami's students in his divine presence. Packaged in a zipper-case with a small booklet describing the contents of each album. SCE-701 ..\$30.00