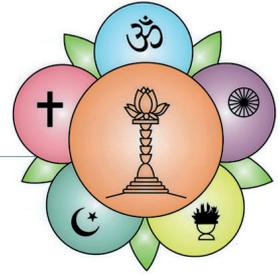


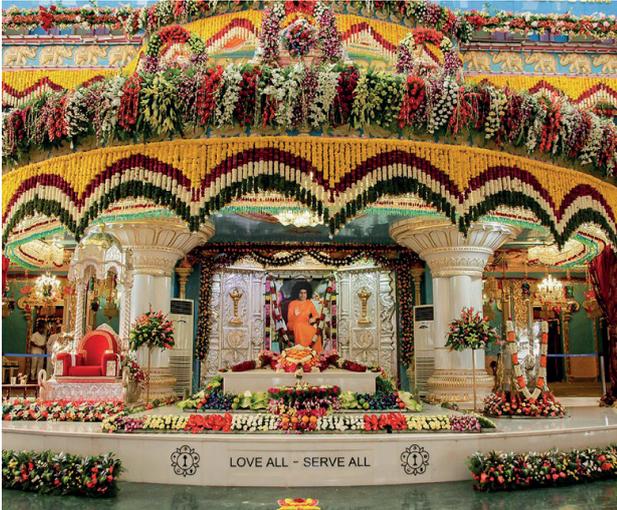
SRI SATHYA SAI GLOBAL COUNCIL

Zone Europe

LOVE ALL – SERVE ALL



ॐ Sai Ram



As you may or may not have heard, the Sri Sathya Sai Global Council has been constituted in Prasanthi Nilayam on 24 July 2021 on Gurupurnima with an impressive ceremony in Sai Kulwant Hall under Swami's loving eyes and everlasting blessings. This means some formal changes for devotees all over the world, which we would like to inform you about today on Swami's behalf. To make it easier to understand for those who are not familiar with the bureaucratic intricacies of the organisations, we are keeping the presentation as simple and brief as possible. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Important note: You will not receive any further e-mails from us unless you explicitly declare this. Please simply send us an email with your name and preferred email address if you would like to continue receiving information or exchanges of any kind: mail@sssglobalcouncil.eu

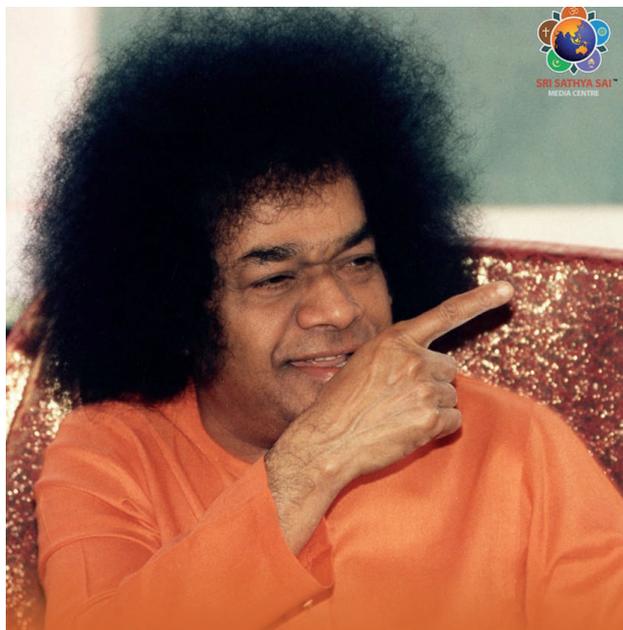
What does the „Global Council“ stand for?

The Sri Sathya Sai Global Council is modelled on the United Nations and will regulate, administer and guide the affairs of devotees from all over the world. The administrative headquarters is, of course, Prasanthi Nilayam. The Global Council is distinct from the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust (Swami's central trust which financially manages and supervises all other trusts and projects) both in terms of content and personnel.

The aim and purpose of this organisation is to carry Swami's mission, teachings and values collectively into the 21st century and further into the future. Based in Puttaparthi, ashrams, mahasamadhi, universities, hospitals, schools, seva and charity projects and all other known contents naturally remain at the centre of activities. For devotees all over the world, too, nothing changes externally; all activities, groups and centres continue to function as before. With the small peculiarity that groups and centres have to register individually or also as a country together with the Global Council in India, so that we know who belongs to the Sai Family and who would rather go their own way. This is on the one hand a step of inner clarification, a commitment to Swami and His work, and on the other hand a formal and necessary administrative act. Individuals cannot register, they have to find a group of like-minded people. They are nevertheless welcome to contact us if they wish to affiliate with Prasanthi Nilayam. The elders among us know how much Swami emphasised the importance of community and groups. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions about this process: mail@sssglobalcouncil.eu



The significant change will be that there will no longer be global chairpersons, i.e. no „deciders“, but all decisions will be deliberated and decided democratically by majority in different committees (one for international and one for national-Indian). Of course, such a body needs a chairperson or spo-



“
Because you are not filling your heart with love, many evil qualities are finding their way into it and destroying your very humanness.”

kesperson, this function is currently filled by the widely known and highly respected Mr. Chakravarti (former Vice-Chancellor of the University), but he has no veto power and also only one vote, like all other representatives (for example, Zone Chairs). The Global Council replaces all previous structures, which formally remain in their familiar form (groups, centres, coordinators, national leadership, zone chair) but may have to be reorganised. The Managing Trustee of the Central Trust, Mr Rathnakar, Swami’s nephew, will not sit on the Global Council, will not have a vote and will also not have a veto. The so-called „Prasanthi Council“ known to some will be dissolved and replaced by the Executive Committee Global Council, which will provide a broader base and more democratic

A nice idea, which has been successfully practiced in many countries, is a member survey in the sense of a vote.

processes. This committee will include more devotees from more countries.

Another new feature will be that devotees in countries and zones will be freer to adapt to local culture, laws, customs, needs and so on, or may have to. The cumbersome, sometimes oppressive bureaucracy of the past is to be dismantled.

So far, the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation India, where about 95 percent of the world’s registered devotees are active, and dynamic countries like England, Nepal, New Zealand and other Asian countries have completely opted for the Global Council. In addition, there are many groups and centres from various countries, for example USA, Canada, South Africa and Australia, which means that at least 97 percent of the devotees registered in Prasanthi Nilayam worldwide have declared themselves to belong to the Global Council, Ashram and Swami.

A nice idea, which has been successfully practised in many countries, is a membership poll in the sense of a vote.

Why a „Global Council“?

„After all, everything has worked well in the past, why change anything?“ There are two main reasons for this: One main idea here is to make the formerly hierarchically tight organisational form with Swami in physical presence at the top sustainable and capable of acting for the next generations through a structure that is independent of persons and, above all, personalities. Swami managed everything himself, almost to the last day, an unimaginable, quasi superhuman achievement. No normal human being can accomplish this, and as we all know, Swami did not appoint a „successor“, but only an heir, administrator, representative, Sri Rathnakar, who heads the Central Trust (the Foundation). Mr. Rathnakar does not speak for, instead of Swami or Swami „through“ him, but Mr. Rathnakar, as an ordinary human being, tries to implement Swami’s teachings in the management of the Trust and Ashram to the best of his ability. In the Global Council, the voices of individual countries should be heard bet-



ter, because we are all heirs of Swami, it is up to us to put his teaching into practice to make the world a little better. An organisation is only as good as its elements. Only a formal structure with many office bearers but without content will not last.



Note: During his lifetime, Swami had started to unite the various (sub-)foundations and organisations under the umbrella and supervision or management of the Central Trust, to reduce administration and to optimise processes.

This project is now being continued with the Global Council.

Another idea in favour of founding a Global Council is that from 2011, i.e. after Swami's Mahasamadhi, not everything worked so well. On the one hand, there were increasing difficulties within the various organisations and on the other hand, there were considerable challenges outside the organisation. We do not want to say more about this at this point. You all know this.

A rather unknown quote for quiet reflection: *„The demons (danavas) are those who trample on love and consider inferior qualities as important, while the humans (manavas) are those who consider love as the only quality to be fostered and inferior qualities as snakes to be destroyed. Bad conduct and bad habits distort the humanness of people. Hearts filled with the nectar of love indicate genuine humanity in people. By love (prema) is meant love that is unsullied, unselfish, devoid of impurity, and continuous.“* Sri Sathya Sai Baba - Prema Vahini.



Is our Global Council based on Swami's will at all?

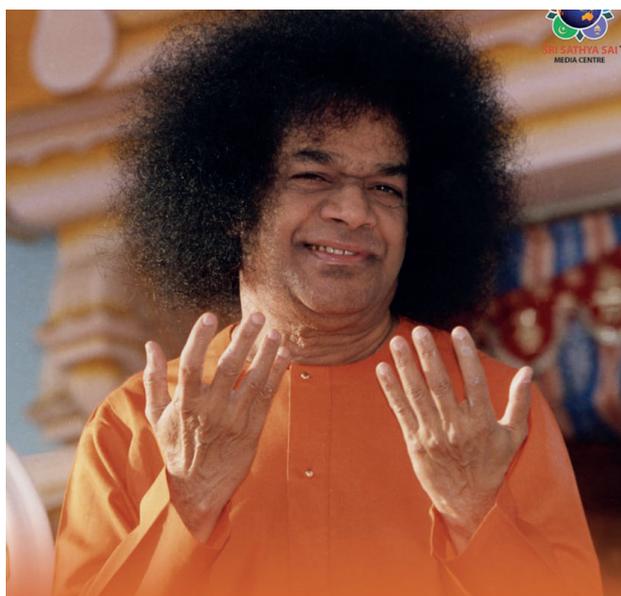
If we equate word and will with Swami, then the best way to answer this question is in His own words as an expression of His Will. You can find the original speeches on the website www.srisathyasaiglobalcouncil.eu:

„At this juncture, there are a few doubts that are tormenting people. Some are unable to understand the feelings of the active workers of Sathya Sai Organizations worldwide. They are unable to recognize their relationship with the world council. We are making efforts to appoint a representative head in each of the overseas countries. What should be the method of appointment of this representative head? Who should appoint? Some people have certain misgivings. They feel that based on the aspirations of the devotees in a particular place, and as per their liking they can select their own representative. But if misunderstandings crop up between groups, eventually this will transform into an election system based on politics. In such elections, Love will be completely dead. If we wish to develop Love, we must not get into 'election' but opt for 'selection'. That selection must be through the Central Trust. Devotees should not quarrel, stoke controversies and should not try to indulge in unnecessary debates and arguments. Embodiments of Love! Truly, the pure and sacred feelings that are present in Sathya Sai organisations are being noticed and recognised by the world. Being normal humans, leading a worldly life, it is possible that a few may commit mistakes. But those stray acts will never hurt the organization. Truly, the sacrifice done by Sathya Sai Organizations is beyond description.“ Sri Sathya Sai Baba, November 21, 1980

„There is one other matter. Hitherto we have had a world council. As there were smaller number of devotees, it was possible to have it that way. Now, the Sai Centres have grown on large scale in overseas countries, more than in India. Therefore it is not possible for an individual to shoulder the entire responsibility. Hence, we have appointed a president



for the Indian Organisation, and given the responsibility of overseas organisations to the respective countries and discontinued the world council from today. It is better that in each country, just like in India, five or six people can join together and run their organisation in accordance with their culture and environment. However, if too much freedom is given it may lead to chaos and confusion. Therefore they should report the happenings there to India time to time. Whatever activities and methods are adopted by the Indian organisation, must be emulated to the extent possible by the overseas organisation keeping in view their own place, time and situations in their countries. All their activities must be informed to India. Now, that office is at Prasanthi Nilayam which is the head office. These changes are implemented only in order to give more encouragement and support to the Sai Organisations which are spreading far and wide. Do not search for any other reasons. Let there be no misunderstanding in this regard. Don't waste your time in unnecessary talk and ensure that the reputation of Sai Organisation is not damaged in any way. All are one and all of you should live like Children of God!" Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 24 November 1987



“
Take care of your character. Your happiness and your reputation will then be automatically taken care of.
 ”

We briefly summarise the most important things:

- Firstly, Swami had already set up a World Council in the 1980s to guide and direct the Indian and „overseas“ (foreign) devotees. He discontinued this form of organisation for good reasons, namely the escalating administrative burden and the rapidly growing number of centres outside India. As a reminder, in the 1980s there was no internet, email, WhatsApp et cetera, travel to India was costly and inconvenient and phone calls to India were immensely expensive. Basically, however, we can see here the idea of a Global (World) Council, which today (after his Mahasamadhi) can be made cheap and efficient thanks to electronic communication. This organisation is now created with the Sri Sathya Sai Global Council in: Prasanthi.
- Secondly, Swami leaves no doubt as to where he would like to see the headquarters of this new organisation and where the threads should come together: Prasanthi Nilayam.
- Further, there can also be no misunderstanding as to where and by whom devotees from all over the world are appointed to the respective offices and where they report to: Prasanthi Nilayam.

These are Swami's own words. Period. Every devotee is free to believe them, to internalise them, to take them to heart, or not. No compulsion, but free will, but any discussion seems superfluous. Swami wants love, and it is voluntary.

„The Lord judges the devotee by the purity of his heart and not by the kind of worship or Japa he performs. Even if you do not practise worship or meditation, it is enough if you have cleansed your heart. The Divine will then enter it.“ Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sanathana Sarathi, September 2004

„I have Swami in my heart and I want to be neutral.“

For one thing, spiritual organisations were started by Swami Himself, so He must have had something



in mind, for example, that all devotees can network and exchange, help each other: one family, one caste, one humanity, one planet, one creation - one love. A community of like-minded people provides meaningful support for the spiritual seeker, an organised and above all structured form provides opportunities for seva (service), exchange (satsang), support and orientation, transfer of knowledge and common growth, at the same time it provides contact with and connection to the ashram and thus to Swami's teaching and love.

In the course of time Swami has often changed, improved, renewed and restructured things, therefore a stubborn adherence to a certain structure is certainly not in Swami's sense of change, growth and transformation. „Detachment“ is high on the list of desirable qualities for all devotees.

The function and purpose of a Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is to manage various affairs, so the first seva function is to serve the members of the organisation and all other devotees. Swami has always been very clear that selfless service must come first, especially for office bearers, not image, post, power, influence, admiration or personal gain. Love all - serve all. We all know this core statement only too well. When an organisation's raison d'être becomes an end in itself, with only the administration of its own personnel policy in the foreground, it loses its true character, its meaning, its direction and its external impact. The taskmasters serve themselves, the members „serve“ the taskmasters – this must be avoided. There is a danger of the ego trap. For the Dasara festival on 27 September 2006, Swami gave a speech on the theme, „Give up selfishness and strive for selfrealisation“, to be read in the Sanatana Sarathi magazine of October 2018. In this speech, he also said that God is the only changeless principle. Everything else is in change.

Our Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is meant and made by devotees for devotees, the members, centres and so on „belong“ to the devotees (who do the work), not to the organisation. A spiritual organisation in Swami's sense is more of a self-governing entity, like a club or a cooperative, not a company with ownership claims of any kind. These ideas of

(grassroots) democracy, self-governance, transparency and cooperation characterise the spirit of the Sri Sathya Sai Global Council. Swami is above all, not a worldly „leader“. And Swami resides in Prasanthi Nilayam, Andhra Pradesh, India. And in our hearts.

„Every thought leaves an impression on the mind, so be ever alert that contact with evil is avoided. Ideas which are opposed to spiritual tendencies, that narrow the limits of love, that provoke anger or greed, that cause disgust---these have to be shut out. For the saadhaka this is a very essential discipline. He must sublimate such thoughts before they cause an impact on the mind, and should concentrate on the very source of the thinking process. This can be achieved by the practice of equanimity, unaffectedness or balance. This attitude is the mark of the jnaani (liberated person) and is called jnana-shakthi (the power of wisdom). Of course it is not easily acquired. The path of devotion and dedication---the bhakthi-marga---is easiest for most. It is attainable by love, for love leads you quickly to the Goal.“ Sri Sathya Sai Baba - Divine Discourse, Nov 14, 1976.

„I have Swami in my heart and I want to be neutral.“

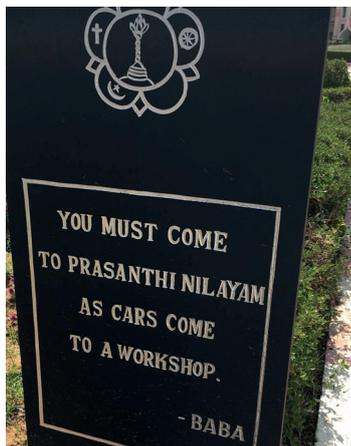
This thought is currently occupying many minds around the world and is, of course, all too understandable. Bureaucratic changes do not directly affect most devotees. The original plan was to simply announce a formal change and unite the various organisations one-to-one without much noise. Surprisingly, this plan was refused, sabotaged and boycotted. As a result, this now leads to a decision-making situation for each individual. Swami has always been very clear about this too: Once you have decided for me, then stick to it. You cannot serve two (or more) masters (masters, teachers, gurus). Swami himself used to say, „Followers I have many, devotees I have few“.

So inevitably the question arises here, what constitutes a devotee? The answer is very simple. On the one hand we need a heart connection to Swa-



mi, a clear inner commitment, but on the other hand we also need an outer decision to live Swami's teachings, values and principles, to put them into practice. Freely according to the motto: „Hands that help are holier than lips that pray“. This is where community matters. So if someone is committed to human values, for example satya as truth, but is in an environment of dishonest people, the result will be that this person will either feel very uncomfortable or will conform to the environment for social reasons. Therefore, the focus is on good company and a positive community. Morality is the foundation of spiritual development.

„An ethical life is the foundation for attaining the stage in which all human acts subserve the above-mentioned three needs. This ethical life is based upon discrimination between truth and falsehood. Just as the pearl is retained while the shell is discarded, the essence that is truth must be accepted and the nonessential rejected. Then again, individual exertion and divine grace should both be existent. One should also constantly practice the great lesson that the body and the Atma are separate. This is a highly beneficial exercise. Such discrimination



Sai Baba, Prema Vahini

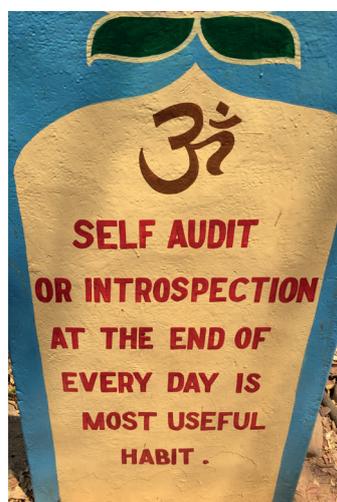
A spiritual organisation should provide freedom and liberty for individual development, not manipulate people. So if it is your innermost desire to travel to Prasanthi Nilayam, that is between you and Swami, nobody should talk you into it „you don't need to, you mustn't, you have Swami in your heart“, or anything like that. Nobody.

(viveka) is necessary for all aspects of life —secular as well as spiritual. It is indispensable for realising the truth, the truth that persists in creation, existence, and destruction, the truth that is God Himself.“ Sri Sathya

„You call yourself a human being. Unless there are values in you, how can you be called a human being? It is only when you develop noble qualities that you are entitled to be called a human. God will protect a person with human values by constantly guarding and guiding him. Hence, develop human values; do not crave for money. We often come across people changing jobs with a hope to get high salaries. Do not develop this craze for money. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. Develop morality and love for God. When you develop love for God, the demonic qualities in you will be removed. When people get rid of the demonic qualities, society itself will change into a better society. You will earn a good name.“ Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 22 November 2009

So what specifically is changing?

Some people insist on Swami's word and want to follow it as law to the letter, that honours them. But that is exactly what the Sri Sathya Sai Organisati-



on Global Council is trying to do, as stated in the original quotes above. Other people shy away from change, want to hold on to the old and virtually fight the new. As we all know from our lives, this strategy is neither sustainable nor future-proof. A frozen and dried-up

branch breaks off, an ossified tree falls. Life is change, growth, transformation, or as Swamis sang, „My life is expansion, expansion is my life.“ In the Bhrathiya Paramrtha Vahini he wrote, „Expansion is a sign of life.“

Consequently, the change in the Global Council brings the opportunity for newness, as the worldwide Sai family becomes more directly and equally connected in the Global Council, so that all voices are heard as much as possible. Some organisational levels and offices will be eliminated in order to stre-



amline the bureaucracy and make it more efficient and international. At the same time, new offices are being created, such as women's representatives. As Swami clearly states above, there will no longer be elections at the national level, but rather selections from Prasanthi, which will be determined by the Global Council (to prevent cronyism, nepotism, intrigue and post haggling - seva is the focus). Further, reports, deliberations and the like are shared with Prasanthi, where Swami says they belong.

In Swami's lifetime, his saying was, „*No 10,000 horses can take you to Prasanthi Nilayam unless I allow it.*“ Consequently, the Ashram will continue to guarantee open doors and warm welcome to ALL people from all over the world, unless they violate rules (the official code of conduct for devotees also applies), decency, customs or laws. Prasanthi Nilayam remains our home, our centre, destination of all journeys.

Of course, the Sadhana Trust – Publications Division in Prasanthi Nilayam retains all copyrights to Baba's image, sound and other material. This specifically means that translation and publication of books, discourses, Thought for the Day, Sanathana Sarathi, audio material (Radio Sai) and so on may only be done with the written permission of the Trust. This also applies to extracts and longer quotations.

The Thought for the Day coming from Prasanthi Nilayam can be found on the website: www.srisathyaaisglobalcouncil.eu and the social media linked there including Telegram. Also translations of the monthly magazine Sanathana Sarathi, which Swami understood as a bridge to his devotees all over the world, are in preparation. If you feel called to join this seva in your language please contact us.

For proper decision making in silent reflection, a few more quotes for inspiration. Just ask Swami for guidance, discernment and transformation:

„It is easy to conquer anger through love, attachment through reasoning, falsehood through truth, bad through good and greed through charity. No reply should be given to the words of the wicked. Be at a great distance from them. That is for your

good. Seek the company of the good people, even at the sacrifice of your honour and life. But do pray to God to bless you with the discrimination needed to distinguish good people and the bad. You must also endeavour with the intellect given to you. Whatever acts a good or bad person may do, the fruits thereof will follow him and will never stop pursuing him.“
Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sandeha Nivarini

„When you intend to harm another, the evil recoils on you. The grief which you suffer is only an echo of the grief you inflict in another's heart. So when you have injured another, pray for pardon. Repent and resolve never to do it again. Through genuine prayer, mountains of evil can be pulverized and destroyed. From now on, decide that your words shall be soft and sweet, your acts beneficial to others and your thoughts always about how to serve others who are weaker and less prosperous.“ Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 12 December 1976.

We look forward to an inspiring and uplifting collaboration and welcome all who wish to connect with the Sai Mission in a new way.

In Sai Service
Philipp von Dietlein
Chair
Sri Sathya Sai Global Council Zone Europe

23 November 2021

