

Saying Goodbye to Akhil Chopra

By Ashok Malhotra

The entire day of 18 August 2005, seemed too long, the waiting appeared endless.

The flight landed in time at 01.05am on the night of 18/19 August. Waiting for the body of my beloved nephew Akhil Chopra was painful because of the realization that we were receiving Akhil's body, and not Akhil alive. I was meeting my son Gaurav Malhotra after more than 2 years, but the usual pleasure of such a meeting was missing. He was accompanying Akhil's body from the USA. The staff at IGIA was extremely co-operative and all airport formalities were quickly completed. We proceeded to the Customs cargo area and along with Akhil's elder brother Nikhil, took possession of Akhil's body. We all rendered quiet prayers in our heavy hearts for Akhil as his casket were being loaded in the lorry.

We stopped at Shree Ram Sharnam (SRS) temple at Kalka ji extension, New Delhi, where Akhil's mother Uma Chopra and other relatives and friends were waiting. Akhil's casket was decorated with the flowers taken from the feet of his gurus Swami Satyanand and Maharaj Premi ji. With the chanting of mantras, the convoy followed Akhil to Haridwar. When we reached Kankhal Ghats the casket was opened with much sorrow and grieving. The ritual bath with Ganges water was done by his brother Nikhil. The Raksha Bandhan ceremony was done by Akhil's cousin Shweta Malhotra. Standing there , I wondered whether it was coincidence or God's plan that Akhil's departure was delayed from Houston by a day just to ensure that his last rites were done on this auspicious day of Raksha Bandhan and Poornima, the full moon day. The holy pyre was arranged at the banks of Ganges. Akhil's body was consigned to the holy fire after worship. I could not see it but I felt in my mind that Akhil was liberating himself, rising in the sky leaving his body remains to merge with the five elements. The return journey from Haridwar without Akhil was with heavy heart. We talked about all that Akhil had accomplished in such a short span. We all feel that we have achieved very little even at age 50-60, a drop in the ocean when compared to Akhil's achievements by age 28. He did not belong to us and was from a different world. Earlier we missed his affection, now we miss his presence.

The prayer meeting was held at Agarwal Bhawan in KalkaJi area, New Delhi with aprox. 350 people in attendance. Before this, the close family circle opened Akhil's possessions. Most valuable was the discovery of his diary. He wrote on many aspects of life itself, and at a very high spiritual level. His brother Nikhil Chopra and I have decided to convert all these writings into a book called " Path to Salvation as Understood by Akhil Chopra." His parents want to spread Akhil's message of love and global dharma towards the betterment of humanity at large. Relatives also got to see a DVD presentation of the homage paid to Akhil in Houston. We were surprised and proud of Akhil's achievements.

Akhil's grieving mother, my younger sister Uma Chopra, has this message to convey. "I pay crores and crores of homage to my loving son. May god give peace to the departed soul. Not only I, but the whole world has lost a precious son. I want that his good, selfless services to nature and humanity and all living things - and his goodwill be spread to the whole world. He was ready to sacrifice his own interests for his family and all. I wish him to come to me as my son birth after birth." We are thankful to all and to Star Pipes Products for all you have done. Our loss renders us speechless, but we find great consolation in the fact that Akhil will always remain alive through his ideas, messages, and his deeds.