

Love and Light!

SSSSO (UK) - monthly update



9th April 2009

Holy Days ...Always

Dear Readers, Sai Ram!

Last month 'Love and Light' went out on March 9th the date that, this year, marked the birth of the Prophet Mohammed, which is a special holiday for many in the Islamic faith and was celebrated by Muslims all over the world. On this day, Muslims celebrate by focusing on the life and teachings of Mohammed. They sing songs and say special prayers. An important part of this remembrance is on how he forgave even his most bitter enemies. As they do on all their holidays and special happenings, Muslims give generously to the poor – charity is a very marked aspect of their faith.

This month, 'Love and Light' comes out during the time of the Passover - the season when Jews commemorate the liberation of the Children of Israel who were led out of Egypt by Moses. It began at sunset yesterday and finishes on April 16th. As with many festivals, from a variety of religions, heavy emphasis is laid on cleaning the house thoroughly!

Holy Week is, for Christians, the solemn week leading up to Easter Day, from Palm Sunday (5th April), which marks the return of Jesus to Jerusalem for the Passover when the welcoming crowds waved palm fronds as he passed by. Today people make simple crosses from Palm leaves. Holy Week ends on Easter Monday.

'Love and Light' comes out, too, on Maundy Thursday, which this year, is today! This is also called 'Holy Thursday' and is the feast or holy day on the Thursday before Easter that commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles. The 'Last Supper' was probably actually a Passover meal. The name 'Maundy' is derived from the Latin word "mandatum", meaning a commandment. Jesus Christ, at the Last Supper, commanded: *'And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.'* John 15:12

It was during the Last Supper that Jesus washed his Disciples' feet. Until 1689 it was the custom in England for the King or Queen to wash the feet of the poor, reminding them that their purpose is to serve their subjects. Every year on this day, the Queen attends a Royal Maundy service in one of the many

cathedrals throughout the country. She distributes 'Maundy Money' to male and female pensioners from local communities near the Cathedral where the Service takes place (they are all retired pensioners recommended by clergy and ministers of all denominations, in recognition of service to the Church and to the community). Yesterday, each recipient was given two purses – a red purse containing a £5 coin celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Accession of Henry VIII and a 50p coin to mark the founding of Kew Gardens, and a white purse containing 83p in special Maundy coins because the Queen is 83 this year. Good Friday is tomorrow and, of course, commemorates the day that Jesus was crucified. 'Good' in this instance derives from 'God's Friday' (just as 'Goodbye' comes from 'God Be with Ye').

Easter Sunday is held on the first Sunday on or after the first Full Moon after the Spring Equinox; and the main focus for this special festival is at Sunrise to acknowledge the discovery in the early morning of the empty tomb, with the stone rolled away, and the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus. The lead up to Easter Sunday began over six weeks ago with Ash Wednesday, on February 25th this year. It is a day when Christians try to emulate the example of Jesus' solitary 40 days and nights in the desert, by giving up luxuries, fasting, practising self-discipline, praying more and attempting to overcome their faults. Christians mark their foreheads with ash on Ash Wednesday to show their commitment to Jesus Christ and God. The palm crosses woven for Palm Sunday are burned to create the ash.

The 3rd April saw the celebration of the birth of Lord Rama the seventh Avatar in the Hindu faith; and today, on the Full Moon day of *Chaitra*, there is also the celebration of the birth of another wonderful Avatar, Hanuman!

Today is also the Buddhist 'Theravanda' New Year! ...And April 14th will see the celebration of Guru Nanak's Birthday! He was a great religious innovator and founded the vibrant Sikh religion.

...Do enjoy these richly sacred times – today and EVERY day!

**Love and Light,
Rosemary Perry, National Chair**

National Sathya Sai Retreat 2009

We have found the most perfect new venue for the 2009 Retreat, which will be held from Friday 28th to Sunday 30th August, at the Exeter University Campus, just off the M5 in Devon. It is a truly first class facility, with beautiful grounds that are filled with ancient trees, wide open spaces, interesting floral specimens and really comfortable, modern accommodation buildings, all in easy walking distance (for those who wish to) of the ancient City of Exeter.

This year everyone will be housed in one building, all rooms have en-suites, there is a superb dining room with panoramic views across the City and it is here we shall display the extensive 'Sai Baba Exhibition' and at the other end of this very large and comfortable meeting area, the Sathya Sai Bookshop stall. Arthur and Poppy Hillcoat from Australia (Swami's 'Ambassador of Love') have been invited and have agreed to be our main Speakers this year – sure to be full of wise and wonderful words.

There will, as always, be an interesting selection of workshops, but if just 'Being' is what you are looking for, there will be plenty of time and space for that as well.

This year, we have agreed that to help with the cost of the weekend, payment can be made in three instalments in May, June and July. For those of you who have been to the National Sathya Sai Retreat many times before, you will be delighted to know that, at this venue, all bedding and towels are provided by the University. Quite a major reduction in packing!

Please disseminate this information as far and wide as possible so that everyone can plan to be with us for a weekend that will show: "The Only Constant Is Change".

Application forms will be available in the very near future.

Caroline Vasey (for the National Sathya Sai Retreat Planning Group)

Regional 'ROAD' Shows

Last year, the UKCC had planned to take a 'Regional Office Bearer Training Days' (ROBTD) to each of the Regions but this has been broadened into: 'ROAD Shows' (where 'ROAD' = 'Regional Organisation Awareness Day') and anyone and everyone from the Region's Centres and Groups may attend who is interested.

It was as the result of feedback at the first ROBTD, held in Region 1, on November 29th

2008, that we changed the name of the event to broaden the availability beyond just 'office bearers'.

With three 'ROAD Shows' already undertaken, (and with a fourth one coming up in R7 this month) the remaining Regions 4, 5 and 6 are busy setting dates for theirs. We already have the following firmly set in our calendar:

December 5th: Region 2

At all these days all – or the vast majority - of Council members will be there with you, making presentations, answering your questions and helping to facilitate discussions **relevant** to you and your Region.

We hope that it cuts down travel and cost for you if we all come to you rather than you all coming to one general national day! We really look forward to meeting you all there!

UKCC

Region 2 "Unity in Diversity" Region 2 SSE Sadhana Camp 2009

Region 2 has run two successful SSE 'camps', one in 2006 and one in 2007. Having learned a lot from arranging these they are now running another one, the Region 2 SSE Sadhana Camp 2009.

This camp is being held from the 23rd to the 26th July 2009, in a beautiful residential activity centre in Dorset, overlooking the sea.

The children will be under the supervision of fully trained and qualified staff at the camp, along with Youth and volunteers from our Organisation to assist and help set an ideal example for them.

This event promises to be filled with fun, laughter and challenges all underpinned by Swami's teachings and the 5 Human Values.

A fantastic range of spiritual experiences will be offered to all the attending children through the medium of a wide range of activities that will build leadership, team spirit and self-confidence, whilst nurturing the Human Values inherent in us all... It will provide a great opportunity for all involved to really put into practice the principle of Unity in Diversity.

The aim is to take up to 150 SSE students aged from 7 years to 15 years. Volunteers are also welcome to attend. Swami has often reminded us that HE does not need us, but provides opportunities for us to be a part of His mission.

It is in this spirit, that we are looking forward to bringing together both the SSE Students

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and the volunteers to take part in this wonderful opportunity to deepen our spirituality, serve, have fun and be in a Prashanti style atmosphere for 4 whole days and three nights!

More information can be found on the Sai Youth Website, www.saiyouth.org.uk, or send your questions/queries to: ssecamp@saiyouth.org.uk.

Region 2

SSE Sadhana Camp Planning Team

Region 4

Coventry Centre SSE Open Day

On Sunday 8th February 2009, from 10.30am to 1.00pm, the Coventry SSE Wing launched the Sai Spiritual Education programme in a 'big' way. Open Day invitations were sent out to 150 people on the Centre's mailing list and about 20 were personally delivered to acquaintances, friends and relatives.

The aim of the Open Day was to encourage those who had heard about Swami to come and find out more about what the SSE programme has to offer and what its benefits are.

This wonderful day began with all the children coming to the front and reciting some universal prayers. Vina Mistry, the Centre's SSE co-ordinator introduced our Centre Chairperson and he talked about how his own children are still attending SSE and how they have benefited from the programme.

Coventry Centre has truly been blessed to have within it two very experienced SSE teachers who have been conducting this selfless service for over 25 years! They were the two original devotees who first started 'Bal Vikas' - initially in two Centres in Coventry - before finally joining forces towards the late 90s. Both Savitryben and Bhagwatiben presented a slide show on the SSE Programme, the five Human Values and how these are taught using the 'Five Teaching Techniques'. They also talked about the benefits of the SSE programme for children and how Swami has devised the programme in such a way that it's a complete character development programme to make our children better citizens in the wider world today.

The talk was followed by a video of our existing SSE children talking about their mothers, which was lovely. This was captured in a short movie made by one of our youth. Then a beautiful and colourful slideshow was shown on stage, highlighting the children's participation at various events, outside of their SSE classes, including the 'End of Year SSE Picnic and Games Day'.

We then had an insight into the negative effects on young and tender minds of media such as TV, video, computer and DS games.

Reena Govindji, a professional psychologist, who has been through the SSE programme herself, made this presentation. Her talk was interactive with both positive and negative images on the slides. She simply asked how each one felt when they looked at the images. It was evident that the negative images caused negative emotions; which was then related to how young tender minds can get affected without even trying. The fact that nowadays children are de-sensitised by the amount of violence they are exposed to in this modern age, we, as parents, as teachers, need to guide our children by moving them away from these, and empowering them to make the right choice from within.

We then lightened the mood with a role-play on 'The King and the Minister', with some male volunteers from the audience guided by Naginbhai, our spiritual co-ordinator, as he narrated the play, whilst the other adults mimed the actions. The moral behind this story was to be optimistic that everything happens for the best. This was well received and everyone enjoyed the drama.

Our guest speaker Sanjay Samani from Leicester then enlightened everyone with his 'heart to heart' talk on his own personal experience of SSE and how it had an impact on his life; and how the seeds sown at a young age stayed with him throughout his life. He talked about the opportunities SSE gave him to lead teams when he was involved at youth level and the self-confidence gained. Then he talked about his love and faith in God and how it had helped him throughout the challenges in his life, which brought tears to many in the audience. It was a truly inspiring speech and one well worth listening to.

The day finished with some light refreshments and many parents registered their children for the SSE programme. It was a truly wonderful day that had all the Wings integrated and working together as one team.

Mala Patel,
Assistant SSE Coordinator Coventry Centre

...And Now a Personal Reflection on the Parenting Workshop:

Upon reflection, the first three things that came into my mind after the workshop, can be summarised in these three words

- Powerful
- Insightful
- Knowledgeable

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It is very important for parents who send their children to SSE classes to understand what their children are learning, as this needs to be applied at home. However if parents are ignorant of this, then it defeats the whole object of Swami's teachings.

The workshop gave me insight into what is taught at SSE, and how we can work as a family to apply these teachings and bring harmony within the home.

It reminded me of the five basic Human Values of Love, Peace, Non-violence, Right Conduct and Truth.

The workshop focused on how imperative the home environment is, and how children can learn not only from the positive processes of joy, peace and harmony, but also from anger and misunderstanding. We also looked at the 'five processes' that make the home and how Swami's vision transcends techniques and purely focuses on love and thus to empower the parents to conduct their family lives in keeping with his teachings.

We also looked at how dynamic parenting can be so empowering and we learned how disempowering non-dynamic parenting could be.

I look forward to the up-and-coming study circles, as the workshop was a taster to what is to follow. I do hope many parents join me at these study circles, to support our children and their gurus. I would like to personally thank the gurus and all who organised this important workshop. The evening enlightened me to work alongside my family and to foster love, discipline and harmony in the home.

By Sejal Modha

Ramesh Mistry, Region 4 Chair

**Region 7
'ROAD Show'
Regional Organisation
Awareness Day
Sunday 19th April 2009
10.00am to 4.30pm
(Refreshments available from 9.30am)**

**Venue:
Savernake Community Hall
Savernake Street, Swindon SN1 3LZ**

The day will consist of short presentations by members of the SSSSO UK Central Council (UKCC), many thought provoking items, participatory sessions, role-play and a film.

This is an interactive meeting where you will have the opportunity to put questions directly to the UKCC members.

This is useful not only for current Office Bearers, their 'shadows' but also for future

Office Bearers and, in fact, all members of the Region.

How many times have you wondered why we are doing things in a particular way?

If you need answers come to the 'ROAD Show' on Sunday 19th April.

If you are from Region 7 and have any queries or require directions to the venue please contact me.

Ram Thiagarajah, Region 7 Chairperson

YOUTH An Offering to God

Swami has blessed and given permission for a very special 'Youth Sadhana Camp' to take place in Prashanti in August (from the 1st to 13th of August 2009) for the UK Sai Youth. The trip is being organised and coordinated by the Heart Valve Bank and with Sri Ajit Popat leading it, with direct guidance from Bhagawan.

There has been a circular in pdf format that provides further details on the trip, dates for future meetings that all participants need to attend; and an application form for completion if you wish to go. Also included are all necessary contact details. Should you have any other queries please feel free to contact your Regional Youth Coordinator or myself.

There is a web link that has been set up for the trip with up to date information as well as preparatory notes on various activities planned (it will be updated over the course of the next few weeks). The link is:
www.sadhanacamp.org.uk

This really is a wonderful opportunity and a great blessing that the UK youth have all been given, to participate in this programme. Please pass on this information to all your peers and youth groups.

**Mathan Arulvel,
National Youth Coordinator**

"The cleansing of the body may keep physical illness away, but the disease of the mind requires inner cleanliness. A perfume applied to the body might please the company around, but good thoughts and sweet conversation will please them more and for a longer time. As soap is for the body, truth is for speech; both have a highly cleansing effect. The mind has to be cleansed by proper education in the crucible of renunciation. The intellect has to be purified by universal vision conferred by wisdom."

~ Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Bookshop

The bookshop has a regularly updated website. Please visit it at:

www.srisathyasai.org.uk

DVDs are often being compiled and released along with new interesting books.

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"Carols and candles, readings from the Bible and stage representations of the incidents from the life of Jesus are not enough; Jesus declared that the bread of the Last Supper was His flesh and the wine was His blood. What did He intend to tell mankind? He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are He Himself and ought to be treated so. No distinction should be made among them friend and foe, as we and they; everybody sustained by bread is His Body; every body with blood in its veins is animated by and activated by Him. That is to say, every living being is Divine."

~ Sathya Sai Baba

Love and Light SSSSO UK Diary Dates 2009

Month	Date	Event
April	18th	UKCC Projects Meeting and the SSLTP Graduation Ceremony
April	19th	Region 7 'ROAD' Show
May	6th	Easwaramma Day
May	9th	Buddha Purnima
May	31st	UKCC 2nd Quarter Meeting
June	6th	Joint Regions' 1,2,3 & 6 Multi-faith Day
June	7th	NWC Meetings
June	13th / 14th	Regional Meetings
July	7th	Guru Purnima
July	11th	UKCC Projects Meeting
August	28th - 30th	National Sai Retreat
September	12th	UKCC 3rd Quarter Meeting
September	13th	NWC Meeting
September	19th	SSE National Teachers' Day
September	26th / 27th	Regional Meetings



BISSE

British Institute of Sathya Sai
Education

Find out more about

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values:

www.BISSE.org.uk



The SSSSO UK
National Website

is to be found on:

www.srisathyasai.org.uk