

Love and Light

SSSSO (UK) - monthly update



9th August 2005

Greetings from the Holy Abode!

Dear friends,

Sai Ram. I've just returned from a whirlwind trip to see our Beloved Swami and WOW! ... How wonderful it was to see Him again! Though looking frail at times, Swami had that magic sparkle He displays no matter what 'pain' He may be going through. Even during the days we didn't physically see Him, you felt that He was there with you wherever you were. It was enthralling to see those BIG eyes peering through the glass as the 'Sai-mobile' glided past silently!

I hope you will enjoy reading this month's edition that has captured events dear to everyone's hearts - children - National Teacher's Day and a 'Puttaparthi Special' from our Central Co-ordinator, Ishver Patel. I hope I will see many of you at the Sathya Sai Retreat where we will be fortunate enough to hear the rich experiences of Robert and Rita Bruce from the USA.

Love & Light

Shobhna Patel, UK Chair

Prashanti News

I was fortunate to spend a few precious weeks during July in Prashanti Nilayam. Swami, despite His physical health, was giving darshan everyday. During this short period, several significant events took place:

Publishers Conference on 19th & 20th July. Over 150 delegates from numerous countries came together to discuss how the International Sai Organisation can ensure that Swami's teachings are not diluted when promoted in the various languages around the world. The outcomes will be shared with Centres/Groups.

Concert by the Sai Symphony Orchestra on 20th July. The Sai Symphony Orchestra, comprising 59 musicians from 17 countries, performed a concert of Western Classical Music in the Divine Presence. The orchestra, led by Swiss conductor Klaus Maurer, prepared the programme in only five days. The members of the orchestra performed as a unified group, epitomising Bhagawan's message of 'Unity in Diversity'.

The one-hour programme opened with the *Marriage of Figaro Overture* by Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The next selection was the last movement of *Symphony No. 7* by the German composer Ludwig Van Beethoven. This work conveys determination, a strength that comes from unwavering faith in God. Next came the humorous *Italian in Algiers Overture* by Italian Giacomo Rossini.

Then the orchestra played two *Slavonic Dances* by Czech composer Antonin Dvorak. Another piece by Beethoven followed, this time the 4th movement of his *Symphony No.5*. This symphony expresses Beethoven's own struggle with adversity, and his ultimate victory as expressed in the 4th movement. The final work on the programme was the *Boda de Alonso* by Spanish composer Geronimo Jimenez.

At the conclusion of the concert, Swami was very happy and asked that the orchestra play more. The orchestra responded with a joyful and spirited repeat performance of the Jimenez *Boda de Alonso*.

Swami showered the conductor with affection and materialised a chain for him.

Guru Purnima Celebrations on 21st July.

(The full transcript of the Guru Purnima discourse is on the international website: www.sathyasai.org.)

Swami's discourse emphasised how everyone has to face the consequences of his/her actions, that no one can escape the results of their actions. Ignoring this, we keep acting the way we like. Knowing what is good and bad, we still are not able to give up the bad. It is all of our own making.

The results of our actions are inevitable. In fact, the consequences can come back with ten fold intensity. The only way out of this cycle is to be the recipients of God's Grace. With God's Grace, the consequences can be reduced. For example, the medicine in a bottle will have its effect only before the expiry date, beyond which it ceases to make any impact. So too, God's Grace can postpone the Karmic consequences to a date after which, they will have no significant impact! With Divine Grace, any obstacle in life can be overcome. God has removed obstacles from the lives of so many devotees, but some people try to test Him. This is a mere waste of time. God will never yield to such tests.

Deserve God's Grace; all beings can escape the consequences of their actions by God's Grace. Whatever spiritual practice (sadhana) you may do, never forget God. Life is very important, even more than the human body. With prayer, you can sustain this life. Even a silent prayer will do.

God is in the heart of man. Life may come and go. Worldly difficulties will come and go. But never disconnect yourself from God. To deserve God's Grace, chant His Name and keep singing His Glory. 'All of you who have assembled here today have earned the highest profits. Retain it safely with you.'

Please use your initiative to distribute this monthly newsletter as widely as possible to all devotees and interested parties.

Inter-Faith Conference – The Religion of Love on 22nd July. An interfaith conference was held with representatives from Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism to talk about love and peace as expressed in their religion. The first speaker was Maulana Wahid Uddin Khan – Islamic Scholar founder President of the Islamic Centre in Delhi. The theme of his talk was 'Islam and the Concept of Love & Peace'. He quoted many passages from the Koran and the Hadis to illustrate how Islam is a religion of Love. The second speaker was Dr. A. T. Aryaratna – founder of the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka and former President of the World Parliament of Religions. He opined that the more you study religion in depth, the more you discover that it is nothing but Love.

The afternoon proceedings started at 4 pm. Representing Christianity was Father Henry Faren who expounds the universal tenets of Love of all religions on TV and radio. After Father Henry was Rabbi David Zeller for Judaism. The Rabbi wove several songs into his talk. The final speaker was P. S. J. Rama Shastrigal, Sanskrit pundit and scholar, Asthana Vidwan of Padhuga Trust Madurai and Asthana Vidwan of Rajarajeswari Alayam Ramnad Samsthanam. He spoke in Tamil, with a translator simultaneously translating his talk into English.

Ishver Patel – Central Co-ordinator

'Part-time devotion can only receive part-time grace'
Sanathana Sarathi, April 1995, P91

SSEHV National Day 2005

This year's Sathya Sai Education in Human Values National Day is taking place on Saturday 17th September 2005 from 10.00am to 3.30pm at Bentley Wood High School, Clamp Hill/Bridges Road, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7. It will be an interactive day with expert speakers including international education advisor, Neil Hawkes, and Allan Foster, Curriculum Advisor for Citizenship, PSHE and RE for Kent – as well as music and exhibitions.

Please contact **Pamela Nash** on **01784 244494** or **pamelanash@waitrose.com** to register your place.

Sathya Sai National Interfaith Forum

Saturday 10th September 2005, 12.00pm – 4.00pm
at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1

This Interfaith Forum will examine various spiritual perspectives on the meaning and value of the natural world and its relationship to Nature and Divinity. The theme: "Our Divine Nature" will be brought alive by inspirational talks by a wide variety of speakers, dances by young children, poetry recitals and songs.

Rita Chudasama – Chair, SSNIF

Editorial Note on Two Points

Having attended the recent International Conference for Editors and Publishers at Prashanti Nilayam, this editorial team will now adopt capitalised first-letter pronouns for Sathya Sai Baba. Apologies to those who submitted articles with capitalised pronouns in the past. We had wrongly felt that these capitalised pronouns for Swami were creating a sense of religion. Also, Dr Michael Goldstein confirmed that the terms 'Sister' and 'Brother' are not to be used as 'titles' in our Organisation (in any context). These rulings do apply to all SSSSO (UK) material in whatever medium.

Editor

Region 1 News

SSE Exams

Annual SSE exams were held on 2nd July. All eligible children were encouraged to take the examinations. Eight children from Group 3, Year 2 and 16 children from Group 2, Year 3 sat the exams.

SSE Sports Day (Theme: "Life is a game, Play it")

Thanks to the unified effort from Region 1's team organising the SSE Sports Day, a very enjoyable and spiritually uplifting day was had by all the children, parents and organisers.

All the children who took part were encouraged to learn that taking part is more important than winning. The Youth helped to plan and execute the event under the guidance of SSE teachers, coordinators and other senior SSE people from the Region. This was all organised effortlessly through the Centres. The Mayor and Mayoress of the Royal Borough of Kingston were the chief guests.

Mohan Thiagarajah – Region 1 SSE Coordinator

Region 4 SSE Children's Pilgrimage to Swami for Guru Purnima 2005

A group of SSE children (Sai Sharanam 2005) from two centres in Region 4 undertook a pilgrimage to Swami from 10th to 26th of July. The group of over 100 included 35 children accompanied by 14 teachers and family members. This was the first time for the majority of children to be in the physical presence of the Divine.

For the children and the rest of the group their Sadhana started in January. The preparations included fortnightly activities consisting of group devotional singing sessions, Study Circles, practices and having satsang with guests who narrated their personal experiences of Swami.

The whole group was blessed when Swami acknowledged them by speaking with the group leaders and accepting the loving letters written by the children.

Mukund Patel – Chair, Region 4



SPECIAL FEATURE

National Teachers' Day 2005

'Make Me a True Reflection of You'

'Spiritual discipline is just a matter of holding a mirror before the real self. The mirror, if it is clean and well polished, reveals oneself and therefore is realisation'

Baba

Sunday 17th July saw 150 SSE teachers, from around the UK, gathered to celebrate National Teachers' Day. The theme was 'Make Me a True Reflection of You'. The ambience of the venue, the altar, the table set up, the informative, exciting, interactive and fun topics covered was intended for us to really use the day to look within and take a step closer to becoming a 'true reflection' of our beloved Lord.

Region 7 Chair, Jey Sivaloganathan, was the dynamic compere for the day. After the rendition of the theme song, 'To You O Lord I Belong,' the thought-provoking, audio-visual expressions via Power Point presentations posed the question, 'What is education?'

Sharmila Parikh, National SSE Wing Co-ordinator introduced each Regional SSE Co-ordinator and extension members, who provided an update on the various National SSE projects. The musical interlude, provided by the Region 3 SSE School Orchestra, was an uplifting and inspirational moment.

Our guest speakers were Sister Jayanti, of the Brahma Kumaris, and Dr Upadhyay, a consultant ophthalmologist. Both spoke of their personal experiences and the early influences of their parents and grandparents who empowered them through their wisdom and love. They inculcated 'Love all, serve all'. Sister Jayanti spoke of the parents' role as the 'first teacher' by spending quality time with their children, telling them stories and feeding their minds. Keeping children occupied in many extracurricular activities such as music and sports keeps them focused on positive activities rather than the TV. By the practice of personal spiritual practices (sadhana), we grow stronger, calmer and are able to render loving service to others. Sister Jayanti concluded by quoting Sai Baba, 'Start the day with love, fill the day with love, end the day with love.'

Dr Upadhyay spoke of teachers neither being born nor created but coming from within. Teachers and parents need to allow children to explore, question, seek answers, be creative and experience the beauty of God.

They need to listen to children and retell stories from the scriptures and from the lives of great men and women. He concluded by saying, 'You have become SSE teachers because of the past good deeds you have done to merit this. Swami has placed you in this position to not only speak His words of Truth (Sathya), Right Conduct (Dharma), Peace (Shanthi), Love (Prema) and Non-violence (Ahimsa) but to practice them'.

The interactive sessions in the afternoon provided an opportunity for networking, sharing ideas, creating origami, exploring teaching skills through demonstration and discussion, watching and participating in story telling activities through use of props & drama, all of which served to enhance the skills of those present and reflect within.

The multi-sensory, inspirational, memorable and, for some, a life-changing day concluded with another powerful slide presentation which showed that the essence of education is: 'To know the self in you is the same self in everyone.'

Lakshmi Puvanendran

Region 3 SSE School Coordinator

(& NTD planning group)

Diary Dates 2005

UKCC Meetings: Quarterly

National Wing Meetings: Quarterly

National Sathya Sai Retreat: 19th – 21st August

Interfaith Days: 10th September; 10th December

SSEHV National Day: Stanmore, 17th September

Isle of Wight Satsang, Ryde: 18th September

BISSE Dates:

SSEHV Intensive Training, Michele White, Shrewsbury, 7th – 12th August

SSEHV Exhibition, Michele, Stourbridge, 19th – 21st August

Values Alive Event, Michele White, Leicester Central Centre, 25th September

Values in Parenting, Lark Beecham, Juliet Bell, Southsea, Hampshire, 27th September, 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th October, 1st & 8th November

ExCEL 2005: Excelling in Careers, Exams & Life – September 2005. Contact Shitu Chudasama on ritashitu@hotmail.com for further information.