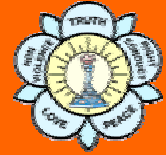


# Love and Light

SSSSO (UK) - monthly update



9<sup>th</sup> December 2005

## Greetings from Prashanti Nilayam...

Dear Readers,

Sai Ram! I and many of the UK Council members have just returned from the 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations of our Beloved Lord in Puttapparthi and what a joy it was to see HIM in HIS Glory - please do, if you get the chance to, have a look at the Prashanti website for the photos of the events around the Birthday. The atmosphere in the packed Ashram was electrifying. Bhagavan, in His usual loving manner, provided free meals for all the devotees during the Festival days around the Birthday. The 8<sup>th</sup> World Conference brought together over 4,000 delegates from overseas countries and 10,000 delegates from within India to come together to listen to eminent speakers on the fundamental aim of the Organisation - 'To raise the inherent divinity within man!' I shall share the discussions and eventual outcomes through the usual line of communication once they are received from Prashanti Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and Holy Christmas and may God grant your wishes for 2006. Love and Light,

**Shobhna Patel, UK Chair**

## News from the SSE Wing

**Sharmila Parikh, National SSE Co-ordinator** says "Congratulations and well done!" to all the UK SSE Class Group 2, year 3, and Group 3, year 2 & 3, children; for the completion of National SSE Examinations & Projects and for receiving certificates.

### 'Loving God - A Child's Way'

This is a garland of 108 poems and illustrations put together in book form by the SSE children of the UK as an offering to Swami for His 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The children of the Slough Sai Centre initially inspired the poems, written with the theme of 'Loving God'. Later all SSE children nationwide became involved. This National Project has been an endeavour involving the children, their parents and their teachers in a joint effort to compose a gift for our Beloved Swami. Please join us in congratulating the children of the United Kingdom for sharing their relationship and their love in the beautiful innocent expressions they have contributed. The book will be available by Christmas 2005 from the Sathya Sai Bookshop. **Subita Mahtani, Region 2 SSE**

**Editor's note:** On 21/11/05 this book met with Swami's very loving approval and blessing, when it was presented to Him by our Central Co-ordinator and Zonal Chair.

## Region 4 Birthday Celebrations

**Sat. 19<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2005: '80 Years of Love in Action'**

On a crisp and frosty morning, 1400 people gathered in the Ramgarhia Hall, Leicester, welcomed by the regalia of colour and reverberation. The first sight to greet them as they entered the main hall was a 3m by 3m image, suspended from the ceiling, of Swami with His open palms raised in a Blessing and reassurance to, 'Have no fear', (the 'abhayahasta mudra').

Anticipation filled the air, as groups of children with teachers, youths and adults gathered near the stage. A descending silence became a hum of bated breath.

Suddenly, Aums (pranava) reverberated throughout the hall and ignited the chanting of the Vedas, to lead the procession. The snaking youth proceeded with gusto, unfurling a parade of children and adults from the different Centres. Colour and costume with singing, moved alongside boards revealing the different stages of Swami's life from miracles to discourses, capturing the Divine quotes and depicting '80 years of Love in Action'. The procession uncoiled like a serpent, intertwining along paths around seated guests and finally disappearing to leave the hall in pin-drop silence.

This was broken by melodious Devotional Songs, followed by a multimedia SSE drama based on the ten Avatars, which served the audience with a medley of choreography, music, and costumes depicting the Lord in different incarnations. Next came a superb serving of profound messages of Human Values by the children of the Sri Sathya Sai School of Leicester, who enchanted the audience with their sweetness, delivering precise playlets with a professional air. Swami's former students formed a panel to discuss the glory of Swami through personal experiences. This was followed by a Youth drama first performed in the Divine presence in the Sai Kulwant Hall in 2004, entitled 'Service is a Golden Opportunity to Mankind'.

Soon, a medley of songs energised the audience and melted into a musical performance preparing the children to gather around the numerous Birthday cakes baked by all the Centres. Balloons and a cacophony of party poppers joined the Birthday song. Soon children from each Centre were performing Aarthi. The Birthday celebrations permeated the hearts of the audience with love and happiness the event then concluded with a celebratory dinner. **Mukund Patel, Chair Region 4**

"Pure bliss is the innate nature of man." Sai Baba

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

## Region 5 Gatherings

### Birthday Celebrations

Over 350 people from throughout the region joined together to celebrate Bhagavan's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday hosted by Lidget Green Sai Centre. Children from Lidget Green performed dances, role-plays and a presentation on Swami's life. There was a multi-faith theme to the programme with a speech from the Jewish faith and an inspirational performance from the local Church choir. The Regional Youth performed a musical presentation based on one of Bhagavan's Ladies' Day discourses and they gave an uplifting performance. The main guest speaker was Karthik, who shared his experiences of Bhagavan gained whilst studying in Swami's college. The programme concluded with group devotional singing and the cutting of the Birthday cake.

*(Kamal Chouhan, Chair of Lidget Green Sai Centre)*

### Ladies' Day Celebrations

On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2005, Ladies' Day was celebrated by approximately 200 devotees from Region 5 in Rainhill, near Warrington. SSE students from Bradford, Manchester and Warrington commenced the celebrations with heartfelt prayers, and later gave short speeches about great women. Children from the Sathya Sai School of Leicester recited Vedic prayers and created a captivating atmosphere, turning it into that of Prasanthi Nilayam. They later performed two excellent short plays on Florence Nightingale and Mother Teresa. Guest speakers included Susan Hardwick and Usha Lim. The Youth performed a narrated instrumental, based on one of Swami's Ladies' Day discourses, which was described by some as 'unique.' The programme ended with group devotional singing and by wishing Swami a 'Happy Birthday'. A very talented devotee made an exceptional Birthday cake in the form of the multi-faith ('Sarva Dharma') emblem. The programme truly captured the essence of Ladies' Day and was a day to remember. *(Harsha Puri, Centre Youth Coordinator)*

Articles submitted by Sanjay Vaja, Chair Region 5

## Region 6 Celebration

Over 100 people attended an afternoon of devotional offerings for the 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday on November 19<sup>th</sup>. After a shared lunch, Kevin Cooper, R6 Vice-Chair welcomed everybody and explained that everyone would join in a minute's silence after each item and then leave in silence at the end to carry away the atmosphere of the occasion. The programme included Vedic Chanting, Indian folklore Dance by children depicting the Wedding of Lord Rama, Multi-faith prayers by children, readings of short stories illustrating the loving care of animals and birds, a meditation with bell and gong, recitation of devotional poems, more children's dances and finally, the session closed with an energising set of devotional songs. *(From full report by Maurice Allen)*

Submitted by Philippa Malcomson, Chair Region 6

## Region 7 Events

12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> November 60-70 devotees sustained an 18 hour overnight regional 'Global Devotional Singing' (akhanda bhajan) held at Claverton Community Hall, Bath. It was an uplifting and very energising event.

19<sup>th</sup> November: 180 people attended a combined Regional 'Ladies' Day and Birthday Celebration' at the Punjabi Community Centre, Swindon. There were talks, presentations, music, songs and many children from the region presented plays and sketches.

Pilot Regional SSE classes started in Bristol in September 2005. They are being well supported by teachers, helpers and parents. Currently, there are three parallel classes being held every fortnight. Approximately 25 children are attending in total.

Region 7 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday offering to Swami: A booklet of articles written by devotees within the region.

## Calling All Sai Youth of the UK

"Come next year (2006)... not this year... but come next year with all the youth... come in November for Birthday." - *Sathya Sai Baba, Kodai, April 2005*

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2005, the 'National Youth Pilgrimage 2006' proposal was placed at the Lotus Feet of Swami. The application form is now available to download, for any Sai Youth aged between 16 - 35yrs and resident in the UK, from the website:

[www.saiyouth.org.uk](http://www.saiyouth.org.uk)

The National Youth Pilgrimage is a personal journey of both inner and outer transformation. There are only 16 years to go with the present Avatar; time is fast slipping away. The National Youth Pilgrimage is an opportunity to reconnect our head, heart and hands to the service of Sai and assist in putting into practice Swami's Teachings, which we so often neglect. Swami is the sole guiding force behind the planning and execution of the Pilgrimage and I am sure He will once again make it a unique and spiritually elevating experience. The National Youth Pilgrimage will again embody many facets and spiritual dimensions. A special Pilgrimage meeting will be held on 18<sup>th</sup> February for Youth to come and decide whether they would like to join this 'once in a lifetime' opportunity.

In 2006, only one National Youth Pilgrimage will represent the UK. This will also be the last such Pilgrimage and places are limited. Therefore they will only be guaranteed on a first-come-first-served basis. The deadline for returning the completed application forms is: 27<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

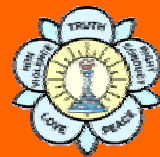
Shitu Chudasama, National Youth Co-ordinator

## Diary Dates 2005 –2006

UKCC Meetings /National Wing Meetings: Quarterly  
NOBC 2006: Saturday February 4<sup>th</sup>, Stanmore, Middx.  
Regional OBCs: on 25<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup> February 2006

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## SPECIAL CHRISTMAS FEATURE

### Extracts from Swami's Christmas Day Discourses

In order to illumine the path and help him (man) overcome these troubles, sages, seers, realised souls, divine personalities and incarnations of God take birth in human form. They move among the afflicted and the seekers who have lost their way or strayed into the desert, and lead them into confidence and courage. Certain personalities are born and live out their days for this very purpose. They can be called 'born for a purpose' (*karana-janmas*) for they take on a birth (*janma*) for a cause or purpose (*karana*).

Jesus was a *karana-janma*, a Master born with a purpose, the mission of restoring love, charity and compassion in the heart of man. He had no attachment to the self, nor paid any heed to joy or sorrow, loss or gain. He had a heart that responded to the call of anguish, and he went about the land preaching the lesson of love. His life was a libation for the upliftment of humanity. Like most seekers, he first searched for the Divine in the objective world. But he soon realised that the world is a kaleidoscopic picture created by one's own imagination, and sought to find God within himself. His stay in the Himalayan monasteries in Kashmir and in other centres of Eastern asceticism and philosophical inquiry, gave him greater awareness...

Jesus' original name was Isa which, when repeated, is Sai. *Isa* and *Sai*, both mean God (*Ishwara*), the Eternal Absolute, the 'Being-Awareness-Bliss' (*sath-chit-ananda*). In the Tibetan manuscript, at the monastery where Isa spent some years, his name is written as 'Isha', which means the Lord of all living beings. When Jesus proclaimed that he was the Messenger of God, he wanted to emphasise that every one is a messenger of God and has to speak, act and think like one. This is the true branch dealing with action and its reaction (*karma-kanda*) of the ancient truth (the *Vedas*): The spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) of work (*karma*), prayer (*japa*), service (*seva*) and meditation (*dhyana*). When progress is furthered, Jesus asserted, each one can recognise all as sons of God, children of God, brothers and sisters of oneself and, so, deserving of worship. The branch of the *Vedas* dealing with contemplation (*upasana kanda*) is the scripture in the eternal universal religion (*sanathana dharma*) for this stage. Finally, knowledge ripens into wisdom and the goal of spiritual wisdom (*jnana kanda*), another branch of the *Vedas*, is



reached when each one realises, "I and my Father are one." **Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1978**

**Christ declared that God could be realised only through love.** Once a high priest in Jerusalem called Jesus and asked him: "Are you King of the Jews?" Jesus replied: "I do not say so." The priest told Jesus: "You are leading the people astray by your wrong teachings. You are telling them that everyone can enter Heaven only through you." Jesus said that he had been telling the people to seek the Kingdom of Heaven. The priest asked: "Where is that Kingdom?" Jesus replied: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you, within everybody. When this is my teaching, how can I be accused of claiming that the Kingdom of Heaven can be attained only through me?" How did Jesus get the courage to speak in this fashion? It was because he was proclaiming the truth. Truth is born of love, which comes from faith in God. **Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1987**

**There is a custom of putting up a Christmas tree on this day and worshipping it.** The genesis of this custom can be traced to Germany. A preacher by name of Jensen from England once visited Germany. When he was travelling in Germany on his mission, he noticed some Germans attempting to offer a child's life as sacrifice to propitiate God who, they believed, lived in an oak tree. The priest was worried and questioned them why they were offering an innocent child as sacrifice to a tree. As they asserted that God lived in the tree, he took an axe and cut the tree. To his surprise, an inexplicable vibration from head to foot shook him. He noticed the form of a child between the two portions of the tree that was cut by him. This incident teaches the truth that God lives not only in human beings but also in plants and trees. From that time onwards people started putting up a Christmas tree and worshipping it on this Christmas day. The system of worshipping Divinity in many forms including plants and stones, which originated in Bharath, has been prevalent for a long time in other countries also.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1992**