

Love and Light

SSSSO (UK) – monthly update



9th July 2006

Postcard from Prashanti

Dear Readers,

Sai Ram to you all. I hope you have all enjoyed the lovely weather we have had during the last few weeks. June, for the United Kingdom, was another busy and exciting month; where we were honoured to have Mr Kalyan Ray, who has been appointed by Swami as Chairman of the newly formed global Education Committee, visit us to share his thoughts (please see Special Feature). It was also a month of meetings for all, at the Regional, Wing and Council levels. June has also been a time of learning the human values of sportsmanship through sporting activities in the UK Calendar – the World Cup, Wimbledon, Test Cricket and, of course, the most prestigious being the R3 SSE School Sports Day (written up in this edition).

It is a year since the UK faced some testing times with the bombings of the 7th July. It is a time for reflection and contemplation on what we have, as individuals, done during the past year to promote peace across the country and community – but, most important of all, within ourselves.

By the time you read this edition of Love and Light, I will be in Prashanti with our Beloved Bhagawan, passing on prayers from the UK for peace and unity, as requested by so many of you. I pray that you will have a wonderful Guru Purnima on the 11th of July, reflecting on what you have learned from your Teacher.

Love & Light

Shobhna Patel, UK Chair

Sathya Sai National Interfaith Forum

We are very fortunate to have Phyllis Krystal with us on Saturday 29th July 2006

Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1
11.00am – 4.00pm

(Lunch will be served from 1.00pm – 2.00pm)

Phyllis Krystal will be sharing her experiences with Sri Sathya Sai Baba as well as conducting a workshop on 'Cutting the Ties that Bind'

We are all bound by invisible chains, things that bind us, block us, and keep us from being who we really are. These ties come from childhood, from the family environment, culture, fears, or reactions to events that took place years ago. For over 60 years Phyllis has been developing a counselling method using symbols, reverie and visualisation techniques that help people detach from external authority figures and patterns so they can rely on their own Higher Consciousness as a guide and

teacher. This method can help us to cut the ties that bind us to anyone or anything that acts as an authority and exerts control over us.

Detachment from such control will allow us to remove the accumulated layers of conditioning which obscure the inner light of the Higher Consciousness. Topics that will be covered are: 'Symbols for Protection'; 'Cutting the Ties that Bind'; 'Removing Restricting Roles'; 'Removing Limitations'; 'Destroying Negative Traits'; 'Making Decisions' and 'Balancing the Opposites'.

For more information, please contact:

Rita Chudasama, Co-ordinator,

Sathya Sai Interfaith Forum, on 07967 372 128

**** YOUTH ONLY ****

National Youth Satsang with Phyllis Krystal

Phyllis Krystal has graciously agreed to conduct a National Youth Satsang for the youth on **Sunday 30th July 2006**. This Satsang will be on youth-related topics such as Spirituality, Relationships, Parents, Marriage, Peer Pressure and many other topics that challenge us during these modern times. Phyllis has requested that only Youth should attend this Satsang. For further information please email: [Shitu Chudasama](mailto:Shitu.Chudasama@sathyasai.org), National Youth Co-ordinator: ritashitu@hotmail.com

Isle of Wight Satsang

'Living with Sai'

Ryde Theatre, Lind Street, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 2NQ

Saturday 12th August from 11.00am – 2.30pm

Refreshments from 10.00am – please bring a packed lunch.

This is an invitation to the 'Isle of Light' (as Swami calls it!) Annual Satsangs have been held there since 1990 and were founded by Pat Hathaway who is 90 this year. The Council has adopted the Satsang to enable it to continue. Region 6 and Region 1 are jointly organising it this year. With Ian Maclean continuing as MC, keynote speakers are Kiran Patel, National Spiritual Co-ordinator, and Raj Selvakumar, R1 Spiritual Co-ordinator, who will both be talking on how knowing of Swami has transformed their lives and about their inner relationships with Swami. Italian resident on the Isle of Wight and professional sitar player, Anna Maria, who trained with a master of the sitar in India for more than ten years, will enchant us with her playing. Meet, mix and mingle with kindred spirits then enjoy the delights of this magical island for the rest of the day! For more information and to register attendance contact: livingwithsai@yahoo.co.uk

National Ladies' Day 'Giving Wings to Our Hearts' Saturday 14th October 2006

This event aims to have an equal number of lady delegates (ten) from each of the eight Regions, making total attendance eighty, as a gift for Swami's 80th Birthday year. This system is to promote evenly balanced connections amongst attendees and the programme intends inspire the delegates to take back ideas and initiatives to their Regions. Attendance will be by selection and shortly, all Centre and Group Chairs will be receiving forms for interested ladies - of all ages and backgrounds, who feel motivated to attend - to apply. Please apply! If you are not selected (number restrictions) then please support your sisters from your Region who do attend. We shall endeavour to assist in travel arrangements and overnight accommodation to ensure that distance is not a barrier. The venue is one mile from Junction 12 on the M1.

Rosemary Perry, National Vice Chair

Region 1

Health Awareness Walk-in Clinic

Brixton Centre hosted a medical Walk-in Clinic on the 4th of June. General medical and dental services were provided to the local populace throughout the day. Young doctors from the Region participated alongside senior doctors.

Guru Purnima Celebration

Bromley Sai Centre celebrated this early, on the 10th of June. Many devotees from the Region graced the occasion. The event began with the chanting of multi-faith prayers and Guru Stotram, followed by devotional singing. Two guest speakers spoke on the significance of Guru Purnima: Bala Balaraman, former UK Chair, spoke extensively about its significance. A young speaker, Master Janahan Elansie, of Bromley Sai Centre, followed this speaking about 'Devotion to the Guru'. Our Regional Spiritual Coordinator, Raj Selvakumar, spoke on 'The Seven Stages of Human Development' and how the Gurus play their part in each of these stages. A medley of songs to the Guru and Aarati followed this. Light refreshments were served to the devotees.

'Unity Bhajans'

This first of what is to be a R1 bi-annual spiritual event was held on the 17th of June at the Tooting Centre. Most of the Centres from the Region jointly attended the occasion.

A 'Sai Oriented Centre' format was followed and the altar for Swami was simple and beautiful. The event began with the singing of all the main faith prayers and was followed by the devotional songs performed by Centre and Group lead singers.

Assisted by members of the Youth Wing, this event was presented in a slightly different way: All the lead singers

had to know the meaning of the songs they chose to sing and this meaning was explained, by two Youths, before the commencement of them. The meanings of all the prayers and the songs were printed out and given to all the devotees who attended this event. At end of the singing a three-minute meditation was held during which a melodious devotional song was sung softly and slowly to the music of an electric guitar.

At the end, the Spiritual Co-ordinator of Lewisham Centre spoke, with great impact, on what Swami has said about devotional singing and its values. Afterwards, light refreshments were served to all.

Keith Sabesan, Chair Region 1

Region 2

Sacred Journey to the Heart of Wales

On Saturday 1st July, two coaches, filled to capacity with 152 loving individuals, left from Rayners Lane, Harrow, at 7am. The journey began with 3 Oms, the recitation of the 'Saithri' mantra and the chanting of 108 'Gayatri' mantras. Through the dedication and hard work of the Region 2 Service and Spiritual Co-ordinators, the members, active workers and office bearers of Region 2, were able to enjoy a most enriching, unusual and very spiritual experience - a pilgrimage to Skanda Vale.

Skanda Vale is a community in Wales that consists of a nucleus of monks and nuns and comprises three separate Temples, one dedicated to Lord Subramaniam (Lord Murugan), one dedicated to Maha Shakti, (the Mother aspect of God) and one dedicated to Lord Ranganatha (Lord Vishnu, the Preserver) in all his aspects.

There was a spirit of unity throughout the coaches as all came together in singing devotional songs and watching DVDs of Baba on the TV. The journey took about four hours. We arrived in plenty of time to gather for the procession of Mata. We all joined the procession and followed the holy men of Skanda Vale, singing and clapping as we descended to the temple of Lord Subramaniam. At midday a ceremony for Mata was conducted by the Order of monks who take care of Skanda Vale. The atmosphere became filled with such Divine vibrations that they were almost tangible. A plentiful lunch was served to all present at the Temple. The next ritual for Mata was to be held at 6.00pm at an outside venue so that all could have the Darshan / blessings of Mata. The crowds are large for Skanda Vale at this time of the year because of this auspicious occasion. The holy ceremony in the evening proved again to be charged with divine vibrations, with the holy men chanting and singing the Glory of Mata with such devotion and sincerity. At the end, the senior Swami of the Order gave a brief discourse on the power of Mata and spoke from his own experiences on what it means to surrender to the divine principle no matter what form you choose. The senior Swami continued in

Cont'd... admiration of the monks and Swamis of the Order who came from all over Europe to dedicate their lives to God and to give selfless service to Skanda Vale in making it what it is today – a true gem hidden in the depths of this land. It was humbling to see that those Swamis that had piously performed rituals and sung the glory of the Lord earlier, were also engaged in the fundamental daily upkeep of the temple and its surroundings – not to mention the cooking and feeding of the pilgrims that had come from all over. Their worship of Mata was a continuous expansion of selfless love and a life directed toward the omnipresent Shakti. Reminded of the words of Sathya Sai Baba, fundamental to Skanda Vale is the worship of God in His universality, without recognition of any differences based on religion, culture or ethnic origin. God is one, though His names are many. The Community does not seek to convert others – rather, the aim is to enhance the original faith of each individual by encouraging personal spiritual experience. In essence it was like 'A journey from ourselves to ourselves'. The day ended with Prasadam being served to all and our long journey back to each of our homes.

Senthil Kumarathevan, R2 Spiritual Co-ordinator.

Region 3

Anniversary of Focus for Peace

On Sunday 18th June, the Peace Pagoda in Milton Keynes celebrated its 26th Anniversary. The Pagoda was established in 1980 to remind people to live harmoniously together in love, tolerance, patience, respect and non-violence. Monks and nuns of the Japanese Buddhist sect, Nipponzan Myohoji, built it. After the devastation caused by the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the leader of this sect endeavoured to build 'Peace Pagodas' all over the world. Sacred items of Lord Buddha are said to be inside the Pagoda. This was the first Peace Pagoda to be built in the western hemisphere. It has beautiful gardens around it. Devotees from Milton Keynes, Bedford and Luton Sai Centres supported this year's celebrations. Some members helped tirelessly with the preparations of making flowers, planning the event and setting up the altar. Other volunteers pitched in on the day by providing and serving food for more than 400 people and policing the car park. The programme began at around 10.00am with invocation prayers followed by multi-faith prayers. There were many messages of Peace and Faith. After lunch a variety of musical, dance and cultural programmes entertained participants. The concluding dance was a dedication to the Goddess of Learning – Mother Saraswati by the SSE Children of Luton Sai Centre. The event was a great inspiration to all who attended and a reminder that peace begins through united prayer and a change in oneself.

Kishor Kumar, Chair, Region 3

Region 6

Region Cuts its Ties!

A Regional Satsang was held at Park Barn, Guildford, on June 17th, in which our Region's 'Golden Oldies', Yoga Kamalanthan, Chair of Woking Group, and Jeff Dunster, former Group Chair, both shared wonderful experiences of Sai Baba in their lives. The Regional Youth Co-ordinator, Rima Patel, told us how Swami had influenced her betrothal and wedding ceremony, and Eddie Appoo introduced and gave us the experience of 'Cutting the Ties that Bind'. This was as a precursor to Phyllis Krystal's visit to London in July. The way he taught was innovative and many were deeply moved.

Visit to Rochester

At the Rochester Centre's Open Meeting, on July 1st, the R6 Co-ordinating Committee gave a presentation on each Wing's function and the projects now being undertaken in the Region. This included a talk on the UK's Sathya Sai Schools given by Prabodh Mistry. New links and understandings were forged with this musical and dedicated Centre.

Philippa Malcomson, Chair, Region 6

BISSE

'SSEHV Teacher Training' in Casablanca

The first Sathya Sai Education in Human Values training was held at the American School, Casablanca, organised by the SSEHV group of the Casablanca Sathya Sai Centre, on the 1st and 2nd of July. One hundred and twenty teachers attended from fourteen schools.

At the invitation of The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (TAISSE), Carole Alderman, Director, and Christina Wilson, a French-speaking trainer, of the British Institute of Sathya Sai Education (BISSE), facilitated the two-day training. The whole training took place in French.

A very positive atmosphere developed in the auditorium during the first day. During the lunch break one participant remarked, "Look – teachers from different schools all talking to each other. That has never happened before. This, in itself, is enough."

On the first day, the teachers were introduced to the five values and five teaching techniques through lectures, brainstorming, pair shares and interactive activities. Fun was had when the art of listening was discussed and an exercise given which enabled them to explore this subject further. A DVD showing SSEHV in Holiday Schools in the UK was shown.

A 'Reflective Exercise' was given on Love (Prema) and stories and songs brightened the day. Later, in the afternoon, groups of five were formed, each having to practise one of three lesson plans. Before leaving, one group demonstrated their lesson plan on the stage. At the end of the day, the teachers left, tired but happy.

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

BISSE continued...

The next day began with the teachers demonstrating their lesson plans to each other. Because of the large numbers, three groups of five, totalling 15, (each having been given a different lesson plan) were allocated classrooms, so that all the teachers experienced each of the three lesson plans. They enjoyed this activity and later requested that the UK 'SSEHV Book 1 for Six Year Olds' and 'Book 1M for Seven Year Olds', be translated into French and Arabic.

Later, a Reflective Exercise was given on Non-violence and the teachers were asked to feel it in themselves and BE 'Ahimsa'. The majority of the teachers were Moslem ladies and it was wonderful to see how wholeheartedly they did these exercises.

One particular area examined, was 'Not Wasting' and ways of not wasting were brainstormed. A presentation was given on 'The Elicitation of Values in Curricular Subjects'. Time was given in the afternoon for the different schools to examine and report back on how they would take SSEHV further.

By the end of the two days the participants were overjoyed, creating poems and songs and were very expressive in their appreciation of the course, saying that the Sathya Sai Values would be implemented the following day.

The day after the course, the organisers, Tony and Chitra Mirpuri, and the BISSE trainers, were invited to one of the schools. It was a small private school with children from 2 to 11 years. The head teacher's father had started the school to bring good education at a low cost to children whose parents would not otherwise have been able to afford it. On entering the school we were delighted to see the values symbol already painted on the wall near the entrance to the playground. After being shown over the pre-school and primary school, a meeting was held with the head teacher who wished the school to become a model 'values school' for Morocco. Mrs. Mirpuri agreed to support them in this endeavour and BISSE agreed to provide educational resources.

Carole Alderman, Director, BISSE

SSE

R3 SSE School Annual Sports Day 2006

The sweat, the tears, the excitement, the exhilaration! Oh, yes! It was that time of year again – Region 3 SSE School's Sports Day! Their fifth Annual Sports Day was held on the 2nd of July and, as usual, the children were eager and raring to go to win as many points as they could for their respective houses. Even the parents and the teachers couldn't resist and got involved with the sporting events of the day.

The gorgeous weather, provided by Swami, only added to the atmosphere of fun and cheer. The races all went smoothly and all participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Once the grand finale relay races were over,

the certificates, trophies and awards were presented by the UK National Chair, Shobhna Patel. Presentations commenced with certificates being awarded to parents who regularly participate in the Sathya Sai Parenting Study Circles held at the school. As was quite rightly said, 'All the children are winners' and, as such, each student was presented with a suitable video on either a celebration in Prashanti or on Sri Sathya Sai Baba and His life. Reflecting Swami's schools and university in India, and many other walks of life, students at the Region 3 SSE School are nominated for an award that is given to reward excellence in attitude, attendance, behaviour, character, discipline and enthusiasm throughout the academic year. Suitable 'Sai' books were presented to nominees from each class and medals were given to each outstanding boy and girl from every Group Year at the school. The suspense was finally brought to a climax as the winning team was announced.

The exemplary behaviour and excellent discipline shown by the students of the school – despite the heat, excitement and tiredness – was exceptional. Overall, it was a thrilling, fun-packed, family day. Not just for the students but for everyone present. Until next year...

'Keeping Children on the Spiritual Path in Today's World'

The third General Parents' Meeting for the academic year was held on Saturday 10th June at the Region 3 SSE School. It was very well attended by parents and guests from participating Centres and Groups.

The special guest speaker for the morning was Kiran Patel, National Spiritual Co-ordinator, who spoke very eloquently on the main topic: 'Keeping Children on the Spiritual Path in Today's World'. All appreciated his gift of varying the pitch of the message appropriately, to suit parents and students alike. Interweaving personal accounts into the topic, he brought humour and inspired personal reflection. Students have a renewed understanding of the need to maintain their spiritual diaries daily and strive to improve in areas where they are lacking.

In conjunction with the talk, an exhibition of students' work and photographs was displayed for parents and guests to peruse. Lakshmi Puvanendran, Coordinator, Region 3 SSE School

SSSSO UK Bookshop

The bookshop has a NEW WEBSITE. Please visit it at:
www.srisathyasaibookcentre.org.uk

CRB Procedures for SSSSO UK

In early August the first phase, training and processing of ID Verifiers, will take place. Notification of next phases will be fully circulated and all applicants will be prioritised for attendance at processing 'surgeries'.
Rosemary Perry, Lead Signatory, CRB Steering Group

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SPECIAL FEATURE

A Ray of Inspiration!

Saturday the 17th of June was a landmark day in the history of the SSSSO UK. Mr. Kalyan Ray, Chair of the Education Committee (EC) for the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation (SWF), flew into London to meet with key Organisational office bearers, trustees, teachers, educationalists and other invited guests at an open meeting at Sai House in Harrow.

The room was positively buzzing as people took their seats at around 10am. Ishver Patel, Central Co-ordinator for the UK & Ireland, welcomed everyone and introduced Mr. Ray by stating that an audience with Mr. Ray is like talking to Bhagawan! The 90 minutes that followed with Mr. Ray were sheer inspiration and love in action!

Mr. Ray shared with us how the SWF came into existence and why the EC was one of the first divisions to be established. Set up under the guidance of Prashanti Council and through the direct command of Sathya Sai Baba, the SWF holds the highest level of responsibility in terms of governance for all Sai activities outside India. The task is mammoth, but as Mr. Ray repeatedly said, "With God, everything is possible".

The EC became operational in March 2006 and, at present, has seven members representing different parts of the world, with more than 150 years of collective experience in developing human values education.

As part of his presentation, Mr. Ray shared some of his experiences in delivering human values education globally from a lifelong learning process. He also outlined a clear vision for the future:

"Everyone should share – the joy of Educare".

This vision is in preparation for when Sathya Sai Baba will leave his physical form in 16 years. It is based on the premise that it is the birthright of humans to recognise and experience their inner Divinity. Therefore the primary objective of the EC is to advise the SWF on all aspects of education. Three key factors will act as guiding principles in this process, namely: Order, Authenticity and Accountability. Mr. Ray firmly stipulated that the EC is not a bureaucratic department, but a task force working with people at ground level. The primary requisite for individuals in this process is:

"Self-confidence – with that, all else follows."

One of the first tasks for the EC is to prepare a 'Global Overview' of all activities taking place, including the historic perspective of their development, the impact made, the lessons learned and assessment of the

opportunities for the future. Initially, the target date for completion of this report was November 2007. However, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chair of the Prashanti Council, suggested November 2006. Sathya Sai Baba wholeheartedly, and somewhat mischievously, agreed... That's about 18 weeks to collect, collate and write about Sai Education all over the world!

So, the heat is on. Our Central Co-ordinator, through the UK Council, has been busy gathering information, as the UK's contribution, to take to India for Guru Purnima later this week.

From this overview, a comprehensive 15-year strategic Sai Education plan will be developed to integrate and harmonise human values into a lifelong learning process for all citizens of the world. This long-term plan will be governed by three core principles:

1. **Authenticity** – that all activities undertaken adhere to the core teachings of Sathya Sai Baba
2. **Unification through uniformity and flexibility.** Sai Education will be organised as a whole with generic parameters at a macro level. At a micro level, local needs will be a priority.
3. **Accessibility** – Sai Education and, "The joy of Educare", must reach everybody and be totally inclusive in its nature.

To support this process, four Regional Consultations are currently being planned over the coming year, to be held in London, Asia Pacific, Africa and Latin America. So, as Mr. Ray said, the next few months are going to be exhilarating, exciting and exhausting... as there is much work to do.

"When we work together in the spirit of love, as one family, one team, what greater joy could there be."

At the end of his presentation, Mr. Ray graciously took questions from the floor. As part of Ishver Patel's concluding remarks he called upon the collective UK to work together to make this vision a living reality. Shobhna Patel (UK Chair) gave the vote of thanks and guests were then treated to a wonderful lunch, courtesy of Region 2 volunteers. Mr. Ray spent the rest of the day meeting various individuals and committees, learning more about Sai Education activities in the UK. His visit had truly left everyone feeling uplifted and ready for action...he was, indeed, a 'Ray' of inspiration!

Anita Devi, for the SSSSO UK Education Wings