

Love and Light

SSSSO (UK) - monthly update



9th June 2005

Greetings from Bath...

Dear Friends -

Sai Ram! ... Having just returned from our UK Council meeting in Bath and from recently addressing the devotees at Ellen's Green Satsang on Bank Holiday Monday, it has given me another chance to travel further out to see England's green, green pastures. We have some exciting news to share with you all in this month's newsletter - please make sure you don't miss that special event!

Love & Light

Shobhna Patel, UK Chair

Summer Showers come to the United Kingdom...

Sai Ram! I am pleased to share with you all that, as part of the UK's commemoration of Sathya Sai Baba's 80th Birthday, we are launching 'Summer Showers United Kingdom 2005' with the arrival of Geetha Ram. Swami has again graciously given his permission for Geetha to address the devotees of the UK.

Geetha is the daughter of Dr Padamanathan, who walks behind Swami in Whitefield. Her family was one of the first families to move around with Swami when he proclaimed his divinity at the tender age of 14. She has witnessed many extraordinary events that will captivate any audience for hours, for example, young Sathya once sent Vibuthi through the telephone for her sick grandmother. If you have ever wondered what the young Sathya was like, his humorous character, his compassionate nature and, most important of all, his majesty and divinity as the Lord of Puttaparthi, then this is an event not to be missed. The dates of Geetha's talks are:

2/3rd July - Scotland - Region 8

5th July - North of England - Region 5

6th July - The Midlands - Region 4

7th July - Bath - Region 7

8th July London - R1/2/3

Please contact your Centre/Group chairs for venue and time.

Shobhna Patel, UK Chair

'If it is not possible to give up attachments, the association of great persons should be acquired. Good persons are the remedy for attachments.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba (Garuda Purana, P. 49)

The Power of Love...

Tired and in need of an energising weekend?

The Sathya Sai Retreat, 19th - 21st August, will give you the opportunity of listening to Rita and Robert Bruce speak of their experiences with Swami (they lived in his house for a year) and on the Retreat theme, 'The Power of Love'; attend workshops on Vastu (Vedic Feng Shui), Meditation, Taize, Yoga and other activities. Please speak to your Centre/Group Chair or visit the UK website www.srisathyasai.org.uk for the application form.

Sathya Sai Retreat Committee

Sai Spiritual Education

Sai Ram! Since the last time the SSE wing wrote in 'Love & Light' I have had the pleasure of visiting **Region 1** (Wimbledon) on the 2nd April to propose a Regional School similar to the Region 3 SSE School. An Introduction to SSE took place in **Region 5** (Bradford, West Yorkshire) where we had an exciting day filled with fun & learning attended by 15 people.

If you are in either of these regions and want to assist with Regional SSE Schools please do contact me.

National SSE Examinations 2005

National SSE Examinations for children in Group 2, year 3 and Group 3, year 2 are to take place the weekend of 2nd/3rd July. We take this opportunity to wish all our children the best.

If you are an experienced teacher and would like to assist towards writing or marking the examinations, I would love to hear from you.

National Teachers' Day 2005

We will be holding our National Teachers Day on Sunday 17th July 2005 at the Winston Churchill Hall, Middlesex. (*Please note that this is a new venue*). The theme for this year's Day will be 'Make Me a Reflection of You'. The day will be filled with inspiring guest speakers, interaction, the opportunity to network and share ideas, to have fun and to celebrate 35 years of Sai Spiritual Education in the United Kingdom. A special request for **ALL SSE Teachers to attend** the programme and an invitation to those who feel inspired to find out more about this facet of our UK Organisation. Please register your attendance by 30th June with your Regional SSE Co-ordinators. For further information on the above or to receive the flyer please contact **Sharmila** on c.parikh@tesco.net

SSE Lesson Plan and Teachers' Manual Update

...Can you help?

Assistance is required for updating the Teachers' Manual. I would really like to hear from you if you specialise or have skills in any of the following – *we really need your help!*

- Child psychologist, to write a section of the manual
- Editor and/or Proof Reader to assist with fine-tuning the manual
- A person who is fluent with the Data Protection Act and any other relevant current legislations required by Educational Authorities within the UK
- Researchers. We are also looking for anyone who is willing to carry out any further research required for the revision of the Teachers' Manual
- Designers, cartoonists, printers, etc.

You will be able to do a lot of the work whilst in your own home!

Email today to: c.parikh@tesco.net

Sharmila Parikh, National SSE Co-ordinator

Region 4 Easwaramma Celebrations

Regional level Easwaramma celebrations were held with SSE children from six centres participating in the programme.

The programme consisted of GDS, children's rally and short items of drama and dance by the SSE children.

The programme theme was the 'Transformation from Unity of Faiths to Human Values' as represented by the Organisation symbol. The children, dressed in costumes depicting the five faiths of the symbol, marched into the hall whilst chanting the key verses of prayers. On approaching a covered symbol, they uncovered the faith symbol represented by their attire and chanting. On completion of the rally, the unity of faith symbol was fully uncovered and at the same time a symbol depicting the values was placed on stage.

The various drama and dance items by the children were based around the values that we all need to imbibe in our daily lives including an item where all devotees joined in performing a synchronised dance movement led by the children on stage.

Mukund Patel, Chair Region 4

Sathya Sai National Interfaith Forum

Saturday 28th May 2005 at Conway Hall, London.

This extensive programme, called 'Music for the Soul', included 'Pocimur' (a C of E Choir), Tibetan singing bowls, classical Indian music, Judaic singing, African drumming, a brass ensemble and presentations by Prof Ian Hall and Air Chief Marshal Suri. Every soul who attended the day seemed to thoroughly enjoy it and every body enjoyed the wonderful food!

Editor

News from Region 5

Satsang in Oldham

...to celebrate Easwaramma Day – Sunday 8th May.

Over 200 people – both Sai and non-Sai, attended the 2-hour programme. They were treated to beautiful devotional singing, award-winning dances depicting scenes from Krishna's life, and a talk from Air Chief Marshal Suri covering many aspects of Sai Baba's teachings and linking in with the meaning and significance of Easwaramma Day.

Tameside 'Harmony in Community' Project

A 'Meditation for Beginners' day was held on Sunday 22nd April for the general public in the Tameside area (nr Manchester) as part of our community upliftment project called 'Harmony in Community.' This day follows on from two 'In2Self' courses held in January and April for the general public (similar to SSISAP). The aim of this project is to take human values into the Tameside community. The day was part of the 'Health is for Life Festival' in Tameside and publicised across the Tameside area.

Sanjay Vaja, Chair Region 5

Region 1 Easwaramma Celebrations

Region 1 celebrated Easwaramma Day on 2nd May. All the centres that run SSE classes gave an item and participated in the event.

Over 500 devotees and friends attended the programme. Dr Shanthi Prameswaran was the guest speaker.

K.S.Sabesan, Chair Region 1

Diary Dates 2005

UKCC Meetings: Quarterly

National Wing Meetings: Quarterly

National Sathya Sai Retreat: 19th – 21st August

Theme: 'The Power of Love'

Special guests: Rita & Robert Bruce

Interfaith Days: 10th September; 10th December

SSE Activities: National Teachers' Day: 17th July

National SSE Examinations for children in Group 2, year 3 and Group 3, year 2 to take place the weekend of 2nd/3rd July

BISSE Dates

Sathya Sai Values in Parenting:

Coventry, 26th & 27th June, 3rd & 4th July

Shrewsbury, 24th – 27th July

Values Alive Events:

Shrewsbury, 24th – 27th July

Wembley, Middlesex, 26th – 30th July

Teacher Training Day, Maidstone, Kent, 6th July

SSEHV National Day: Stanmore, 17th September

Isle of Wight Satsang, Ryde: 18th September



SPECIAL FEATURE Fiery Spiritual Insights from Brindavan...

A small group of us visited Brindavan to be with Swami who had recently returned from Kodaikanal. Although we were very excited, the trip was overshadowed by the recent injury that Swami had sustained in Brindavan where he had fractured his right arm and had possibly injured his hip. I, like the thousands sitting there, couldn't contain my tears when Swami was brought into the hall assisted in a converted sofa wheel chair. Swami can instantly cure himself but he never uses his powers upon himself, a quality of supreme selflessness that he demonstrates to the world, not a tinge of selfishness in him.

After earnest prayers from devotees, Swami announced the performance of the Maha Chandī Yagna, which included other Yagnas as well. A Yagna (also called Havan or Homam) is a religious ritual performed to invoke the blessings of a particular deity by invoking Agni, the God of Fire. This event is very rare and special to have taken place in Brindavan with Swami himself as the presiding deity. Swami sat and presided over the Yagnas until they were finished which again is very rare. These were performed for all humanity.

Swami had specially called a group of well-versed priests from the famous Mookambika temple (Kollur, located at the border of Karnataka and Kerala states) to oversee the Yagnas.

Monday, 16th May 2005, marked the inauguration of the Yagnas. The Dhanvantari Homam was performed for one's health. In spite of his physical limitations, Swami was strictly following the required codes clearly demonstrating that his life is his message. For example, Swami had to bless the offering at different stages of the Yagna. When doing so, Swami, with assistance, put a lot of effort into standing up. He also used his right hand although it was injured.

I can recollect a small incident that happened whilst Swami was presiding over the Dhanvantari Homam. Just as it was time for flowers to be offered to the Homam, Swami pointed his finger to a garland on one of his large photographs.

Lo and behold! The garland then snapped and fell down as though it wanted to offer itself. What a marvellous sight to witness!

The other Yagnas performed were:

Sudarshana Homam - its performance stops dangers and perils from occurring.

Maha Ganapathy Homam - dedicated to Lord Ganesha to remove obstacles from one's path.

Rudra Homam - performed to avoid danger in life.

Mrutyunjaya Homam - dedicated to Lord Shiva and is performed to remove fear of death.

Chandi Homam - a very unique sacrificial rite that can alleviate suffering caused by hostile elements.

To perform this, a pit approximately seven feet deep was dug in the Sai Ramesh Hall.

Wednesday 18th May 2005 was the conclusion, the grand finale (Poomahuthi), of the Maha Chandī Yagna. The fire had to be lit the day before. In the morning, the fire was so intense that huge logs had to be constantly fed in to sustain it. Flames up to seven feet above ground level could be seen i.e. approximately 14 feet high. It was a great sight to see with Swami sitting and witnessing the proceedings. Lots of things were offered to the Yagna - sweet rice, coconuts, flowers, mangoes, watermelon etc. Whilst these events were taking place, the Sai Organisation performed the Maha Chandī Yagna throughout all the States of India.

The most unexpected thing happened at the end. Swami couldn't resist his devotees. He asked for help to stand and very slowly took a few steps. He then asked for his car to be brought. In spite of all the pain that we could see, Swami sat in the car and went amongst the devotees before returning to Trayee Brindavan, a clear demonstration of the power of love.

It was certainly a very unforgettable experience, which I shall always cherish.

Kiran Patel, National Spiritual Co-ordinator