

Love and Light

SSSSO (UK) – monthly update



9th May 2006

A Mother's Pride...

Dear Readers,

Sai Ram, and welcome to May's edition of 'Love and Light'. I am sure many of you, like me, cannot believe where this year has gone – we are nearly half way through 2006! ...As Swami has said on many occasions, "...time waits for no-one."

I know a lot of Centres and Groups have spent the weekend celebrating 'Easwaramma Day' (see articles). I was fortunate enough to attend Region 4's Sathy Sai School presentation in Leicester on Sunday 7th May, to hear about and see the wonderful work being done by the school and also to listen to the school's enthusiasm and, most important of all, their faith in Bhagawan.

(If you would like to learn more about the schools, please contact: ravi.manchanda@the1group.com).

The desires that Mother Easwaramma had were always for the good of the people and not for herself, for example she desired to have a school built in Puttaparthi so that the children didn't have to travel long distances. This desire Swami granted and a small school was built. Swami asked Easwaramma if she had any more desires, she said that she wished for a small hospital to be built for the people of Puttaparthi. Swami granted her wish and had a hospital constructed. Around the time of Easwaramma's wishes, Mother Teresa, whom I was fortunate enough to meet, was also constructing a small hospital and starting a school in the slums of Calcutta in order to help the downtrodden. She, too, was a lady who went about her work without any desires for herself.

Mother Teresa shared the following story with many people:

"I once picked up a woman from a garbage dump and she was burning with fever; she was in her last days and her only lament was: 'My son did this to me.' I begged her: 'You must forgive your son. In a moment of madness, when he was not himself, he did a thing he regrets. Be a mother to him, forgive him. It took me a long time to make her say: 'I forgive my son.' Just before she died in my arms, she was able to say that with a real forgiveness. She was not concerned that she was dying. The breaking of the heart was that her son did not want her. This is something you and I can understand."

Love & Light
Shobhna Patel, UK Chair

Sathy Sai Parenting Facilitators' Training

Sixty people enrolled and attended this training day, held on 2nd April 2006, in order to enthuse, inspire and motivate themselves towards becoming future facilitators of Sathy Sai Parenting Study Circles (SSPSC) across the UK. Phil Heaton (former UK Chair) provided facilitation tips and laid a strong foundation for the purpose, need and uniqueness of the programme. Dr Pasupathy-Rajah (a grandparent) provided first hand experience through his reminiscences. A wonderful team of facilitators enabled group discussions on problem solving, topical and empowering titles, pertinent to parenting.

Sharmila Parikh, National SSE Co-ordinator

Melodious Ways of Worship

An enormously successful workshop, facilitated by Hari Subramaniam, an ardent devotee of our beloved Lord since 1979, was held on Friday 14th April 2006 from 1pm to 6pm. Jointly hosted in the spirit of unity, commitment and love by Regions 1, 2 and 3, it was held at the Compton School in Finchley. The presentation was aptly titled, 'A Journey Into the Nine Forms of Devotion'. It wafted the 250 people, fortunate enough to attend, away to a spiritual haven, where we heard beautiful true-life experiences and devotional songs illustrating the 'Nine Forms of Devotion'. Those that had not previously heard Hari's vibrant experiences could not have imagined what was to come, following the biographical introduction by Kishor Kumar, Chair of Region 3. Every experience narrated and every devotional song sung by Hari was carefully chosen and conveyed with a tremendous 'Sai-Love' that was quite overwhelming. Hari's melodious voice, a miracle gift of our beloved Lord Sai, made the whole programme enjoyable and as sweet as the nectar of the Divine. The love that emanated was so intense and deep that it touched everyone's hearts and made many devotees openly cry. Hari explained each of the following aspects with honesty and sincerity: 'Sravanam' is listening to the Lord's stories, 'leelas' and miracles. 'Kirtanam' is singing the glories of the Lord. 'Smaranam' is remembering the Lord's name. 'Pada Sevanam' is serving at the Lotus Feet of the Lord. 'Archanam' is worship of the Lord. 'Vandanam' is prostration to the Lord. 'Dasyam' is cultivating the attitude of being servant to the Lord. 'Sakhyam' is cultivating the attitude of friendship with the Lord. 'Atma Nivedanam' is offering oneself to the Lord in a state of complete self-

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surrender. Thanks to Hari, these nine forms will now have a different dimension and hold a deeper meaning for all those who attended. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Satish Melwani, Chair, Region 2 and the offering of aarthi by Shobhna Patel, our UK Chair.

Spiritual Coordinators of Region 1, 2 and 3

Sathya Sai Leadership Training Programme (SSLTP)

Outward Bound Weekend ('OBW') 21-23 April 2006

This is a weekend where principle-centered leadership training meets team dynamics and a large dose of fun! The weekend (one of eight SSLTP modules) is an opportunity for candidates to develop their leadership skills, through participation in challenging outdoor activities, and apply SSLTP principles and learning in a practical environment. For candidates and the SSLTP Co-coordinating Committee alike, the OBW is an eagerly anticipated and fundamental component of the course.

Candidates arrived on Friday evening having driven through some of the most spectacular scenery in England. The activity centre (Avon Tyrell Youth Centre), situated deep within the New Forest (Hampshire) is surrounded by nothing but woodland, heather, wild horses, ponies and deer! The OBW started with the purifying resonance of Omkar through the beautiful, listed manor house, followed by a preliminary introduction, briefing and not to forget house rules! After an early rise on Saturday morning to the sounds of the forest, we enjoyed a hearty breakfast (all meals were completely vegetarian) and a relaxing walk on a lovely sunny Spring day. The centre facilitators then explained the programme for the day. The brief was: To be prepared for several tasks which would involve a lot of quick thinking, planning, delegating and working together to achieve the team goals.

The candidates were divided into two teams to complete several tasks throughout the course of the day. Each task would earn materials for building a raft to cross a lake at the end of the day once all tasks were successfully completed. The activities brought out the daring, the challenging, and the caring characters within all candidates. The day was about teamwork and caring for others while recognising the strengths of each individual in the group. By the end of the day candidates were all exhausted, very dirty and not to mention soaked from being thrown into the lake! On 'Day Two', after morning yoga, we were fortunate enough to be joined by two guest speakers, from the Hampshire Mental Health Trust, who spoke to us about leadership, morals and principles within the National Health Service giving us their perspective on reconciling tough management targets/objectives and principle-centered leadership. After a high-ropes activity, helping

us to overcome personal fear, excel in self-confidence and increase our self-belief, the weekend (filled with much laughter, lots of joy, great learning curves and very special memories for us all) ended. Watch this space for information on the next intake for the SSLTP. **Saiswarupa Bharti and Satish Melwani, respectively SSLTP Co-ordinator and Vice Co-ordinator**

'Sainet' and R3 SSE

Brother Kalyan Ray, Senior Advisor to the UN on 'Habitat', and who initiated the 'Sainet' programme to commemorate the 80th year of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, attended the Region 3 SSE School on Saturday 26th March. He spoke to parents, teachers and children about the life saving bright orange mosquito nets, appropriately emblazoned with the words, 'Love all, serve all'. The children learnt how these relatively low cost and simple items could protect the poor and vulnerable people of Africa and Asia from succumbing to Malaria, the killer disease that is transmitted by mosquitoes. The children, through their continued practice of 'Ceiling on Desires', will utilise their savings to contribute to both 'Sainet' and 'Eye to Sai'.

Kishor Kumar, Chair Region 3

Despondent Teacher Feels Inspired

The Sathya Sai School Leicester recently advertised two teaching posts. The advertisement caught the eye of a teacher, taking a break from teaching, who had felt rather despondent with the system and the priorities imposed upon state schools. She was so inspired to learn about the Leicester School and its emphasis upon emotional and spiritual development that she spent hours looking at the school's website and wrote to the head teacher, Mrs. Usha Lim, thanking her for her efforts.

Prab Mistry, Sathya Sai Schools Committee

BISSE Fluent Abroad

Book 1 of the Lesson Plans for 6-8 year olds has now been translated into Arabic and is available from Carole Alderman. BISSE has recently been able to help the Moroccan SSSSO Chairperson's wife by giving her our 'Presentations for Teachers'. These have been translated into French. These are further examples of our successful co-operation within SSEHV internationally.

Carole Alderman, Director BISSE

Region 4 Makes Plans

The Region 4 'Regional Office Bearers' Conference' was held on Sunday 19th March 2006 in Coventry. For the Regional Co-ordinating committee, it was an early start with a meeting before the delegates arrived for the conference. In total 63 delegates attended. Special guests for the day were the National SSE Co-ordinator, Sharmila Parikh, and Prabodh Mistry who represents the Sathya Sai Schools. The Regional Chair set the scene for the day, and then the Regional Wing Co-ordinators

reported on the achievements of last year and announced the National Wing plans for 2006. After a shared lunch, the delegates attended Wing Workshops, where they discussed the work plans and agreed on the activities to be undertaken by the Region for 2006. The SSE wing had an added opportunity to speak with the National Co-ordinator and have questions satisfactorily answered. The Centre Chairs gave an account of the activities carried out in 2005, and it was very encouraging to see how busy the Centres were last year, and the variety of activities being undertaken in all the wings throughout the Region. Probodh Mistry gave an insight into the Sathya Sai Schools focusing on the Leicester school, and then invited questions from the attendees. Following on from the workshops, the Regional Wing Co-ordinators outlined the work plans for 2006 and the Regional Vice Chair, Ramesh Mistry, then concluded the session by summarising the tasks ahead and giving a vote of thanks.

Mukund Patel, Chair Region 4

R3 Honours Easwaramma

The Region 3 SSE School held a wonderful 'Easwaramma Day' celebration on Saturday 6th May. Sai Baba has declared that the 6th of May should be celebrated as 'Children's Day' – a day when all children are to be reminded of the ideal Mother.

The children collectively chose the 5 Sathya Sai Human Values and presented poems, 'role play', raps, quizzes and a debate on this theme. Nursery children enraptured those present with their poem on Mother Teresa and their own personal 'Love is...' statements. The Group 1 children's acrostic poem and short sketches on peace highlighted the need for daily prayers, care of the environment, caring, sharing and that co-operation achieves more. Group 2 looked at 'Mothers of Nations', through various examples of noble women who have had a very positive and profound impact on the world, as role models, by way of the compassion, truth, duty, service, forbearance and determination they have shown in carrying out their tasks. Group 3 looked at Mother Easwaramma's qualities and her three wishes for a hospital, schools and water for the people of Puttaparthi. The rap version of Rudyard Kipling's poem, 'If', emphasised one of Swami's teachings: to treat all of life's ups and downs with equanimity and fortitude. Group 4 presented a convincing debate on 'Violence vs. Non-violence'. Examples from world scriptures and 20th /21st century life were given. The whole event was very well attended and parents and friends were very appreciative of the children's performance. The special guest of honour, Patrick Handley, advisor to the Bishop of Brentwood, commented on the professionalism of the teachers and the wonderful nature and discipline of the children.

Kishor Kumar, Chair Region 3

Message of Love at the Mela

A team of doctors and specialists from the SSSSO UK travelled from London and Bath to Swindon, Wiltshire, to serve others and to share pure SAI love at a 'Health Mela' held there on 29th April 2006. Representatives of the SSE School in Bristol also joined in. The event was organised by Swindon Council in conjunction with Swindon Sai Centre. Various other local organisations attended. The SSSSO UK organised the 'Free Walk-in Health Awareness' clinic where advice on a variety of health issues (blood sugar, blood pressure, oral hygiene, dental check up, eye tests, glaucoma testing and advice on back-related conditions by a chiropractor) was offered on a one-to-one basis. In addition, a 'Bone Marrow Donors Clinic' was held in collaboration with the Anthony Nolan Trust, and the National Blood Service joined hands with the SSSSO UK to promote awareness of the need for blood donation. The event was formally opened by the Mayor of Swindon Council and the Local MP, both of whom spoke of the good quality of this event and hoped to have it again next year. Some 200 people visited the 'Health Mela' and BBC Radio Swindon and the local press was present to witness the event. If you are a medical or healthcare practitioner and would like to join us to serve others, please contact me.

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R1 'Spiritual Awareness' Day

Based on the National Spiritual programme for 2006, Region 1 conducted an 'Awareness Workshop' on the Nine-point Code of Conduct in April. The evening started with Vedic chanting and group devotional singing by the youth. Those who attended were divided in to nine groups and one 'point' of the code was given to each group. Each researched into their respective 'point' and made a presentation to all present. This provided a fresh perspective to seasoned devotees and gave insight for newcomers.

Easwaramma Celebration

The annual Region 1 'Easwaramma Day' celebration performed by SSE children took place on the 1st of May. The programme started with Vedic chanting followed by a march past of all the SSE children with salutation to His lotus feet. Children from Kingston, Brixton, Bromley, Lewisham, Wimbledon, Tooting and Merton took part in a varied programme that included: Devotional Singing, five plays: 'The idols of Mother Easwaramma', 'Recycling', 'Abraham Lincoln', 'Maya to Master', 'Green Glass'; a talk about the significance of Easwaramma day, a poem 'Sai the Truth'. Chief guest, Central Co-ordinator, Ishver Patel enlightened everyone with his speech.

Keith Sithsabesan, Chair Region 1