

Love and Light!

SSSSO (UK) - monthly update



9th November 2009

24 / Heaven

Dear Readers, Sai Ram!

The **Global Devotional Singing** or '**Akhanda Bhajans**' are drawing to a close, in just a few minutes, as I write this. The near-to subsiding energies are almost tangible as I tune into them. What a wonderful event, each year, these 24-hour continuous singing marathons are.

Not only are we ourselves purified through the vibrations of the sacred songs but also the atmosphere around us is cleansed and polished as well.

Then, to know that this is actually happening, simultaneously, worldwide, is quite awesome and unifying, too! Small groups may gather for a few hours, here and there, large Centres and Regions may have hundreds converging on one place – but it actually doesn't matter about how many there are present. What matters, is what is in our hearts as we sing!

Often, in our Organisation, strong emphasis is laid upon 'Bhajans' being sung seamlessly like a super gleaming express train rocketing by! The presentation and quality of delivery is indeed highly important but it must never become the goal itself.

'**Bhajan Coordinators**' hold much sway in large Centres and therefore carry much responsibility to ensure that all are given a fair chance to sing and that cosy cliques are not formed with 'favourite' singers etc.

This year, in a wonderful Leela or Cosmic joke, we were all caught off-guard by a fairly last-minute change in the dates for 'Akhanda Bhajans'! Well done, all of you, for adapting so very well to this change! I hope my letter to you all, that was sent from me on the 21st October, to all Regional Chairs for immediate distribution to all of you, went some way towards explaining what occurred and apologising to you for circumstances 'beyond our control'!

It was also sent out on the 'Love and Light' network to ensure that devotees, who live quite some way from Centres but like to attend such functions, would also know of the change.

Over the weekend of the 24th and 25th of October the UKCC held its third '**Vision Weekend**' in the New Forest, in Hampshire.

The dedication that brings people straight from work, from all directions, on a Friday evening, to converge upon an unknown venue deep in the countryside arriving in the dark, is most touching. (This applies, too, to many different kinds of events that are held all around the country for different sections of our Organisation's members.)

Our stay in two large timber lodges was very fruitful and filled with happiness and fun. We were building on the outcomes of our previous two Vision weekends, and it was apparent that we are in a harder phase or stage.

Our first weekend in 2007 was about peeling back the accreted perceptions of what we think this Organisation is all about to more deeply understand what its true purpose is. By identifying or re-acquainting ourselves with that true purpose we would, surely, be in a better position to serve the needs of the Organisation's members. As Office Bearers we realised then, that we are here to provide and run a '**Spiritual Gymnasium**'. The more we contemplated this brilliant analogy, the more perfectly it fitted. Our 'job' is, we decided, to ensure that the correct apparatus is in place for the individual to transform themselves in accord with Swami's Teachings. As the team running the Gym we would need to provide for a variety of needs. We would need to ensure that the Gym presents itself to newcomers of every background, as a welcoming and pleasant space. The equipment would need to be in good running order and the team and coaches would need to be exemplary.

Any literature would have to be up-to-date and fully representative of what is on offer – catering for all needs and wants.

What would make this Gym appeal to someone who would like to connect up with other followers of Swami's Teachings and explore them? It might be that every aspect of it would embody a very subtle yet perceptible difference.

A difference that, when analysed, would be recognised as everything being imbued with the five **Sathya Sai Human Values** of Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Non-violence. So, in a way, it is not WHAT we do that matters but HOW we do it...

Last year, in October 2008, we went further and began to chart the various points required to bring us to our Vision, over time. The Council has no desire to annoy anyone by 'forcing' change and we certainly don't advocate 'change for change's sake'. Yet, change is a vital part of progress towards improvement. Acceptance of change is essential on the spiritual path because the world is characterised by constant change and the True Self is characterised by its eternal changelessness!

So for the True Self to peacefully live in the world and **allow** 'Self-realisation' to naturally occur (rather than **try to make it happen**) it must tangibly be perceived within us as the still central point in the 'eye of the hurricane'. The hurricane is the play of Karma, and the whirlwind action of 'cause and effect' in the three-dimensional world (whirled?).

When I first came to my post in 2007, I was keen to resurrect 'office bearer training' and it seemed to me that, to help in that, we needed to break down the perception that the Council is the 'Bank of Knowledge' and rarely makes payments or loans but lives for its own interest!

I felt that, firstly, we needed a book similar to the useful 'Manual', in order to share out the knowledge that exists, into a 'cooperative'. We want to 'empower' not 'disempower' ...and 'knowledge is power', they say.

Hence, the creation of the 'Handbook' that was produced a year ago with your valuable input.

Then, as you know, we decided to regionalise Office Bearer Training but immediately, at our very first such event last year, in Region 1, we realised that what we wanted to offer was in fact, in demand by everyone ...not just OBs! Hence the ROAD Shows!

Last year, we identified 'umbrella categories', such as: 'Empowerment', 'Inclusivity' and 'Interaction with the Wider Society'. Each of these categories would be relevant in different ways, at the level of '**Individual**', '**Organisational**' and '**Societal**' level.

Under these headings we have a raft of items that will improve our service to you and to newcomers – with your help.

Several areas of change that are listed are already in place or on the horizon. However, it is surprising that in such a large organisation it is hard to find the help that is often needed to progress things swiftly.

In the Spiritual Wing, '**Remote Study Circle**' or '**Distance Learning**' is proposed via modules (entirely based upon Swami's Discourses) to be placed upon the national website. They will bring together resources to

support the true understanding of specific and generic topics in the light of Swami's teachings. These may then be used by the individual (who may, perhaps, not be living near a Centre), or used by a Centre or Group (for a series of themed Study Circles) or, indeed, by anyone at all who is interested and who finds them whilst surfing the net! They will have links to film clips and clearly identified source material from Swami's innumerable discourses over the years.

The first of these are hoped to be in place by November 23rd this year! By that date too, a DVD that can be reproduced for every Centre and Group will be finalised. This is a '**Familiarisation DVD**' upon which, Council Members/Facilitators are explaining the purpose and features of various programmes, trainings, etc. that are currently available and on offer.

Next year will see the first '**National Spiritual Carousel Training Day**' in May. This will offer 'tasters' of spiritual programmes that are already in place. It will also offer a variety of workshops on vital subjects such as 'Group Devotional Singing', 'How to Run a Successful Study Circle' (including a mock-up in which to learn how to obtain the most from it), 'Welcoming Newcomers', 'Coaching Communication Skills', 'Using Positive Language', 'Conflict Resolution' and various aspects of Centre practice, etiquette, dress etc.

We hope to, soon, develop new organisational '**Literature**' – creating more awareness of what we do and giving **you** something worthy of Sri Sathya Sai Baba to represent yourselves to newcomers and to other organisations that you work with closely or are about to forge bonds with. We also need improved literature for our own internal cohesion. E.g. our 'Manual' seriously needs updating! **Outwardly**, we need **to enhance our 'Universal' and 'Interfaith' approach** and to diminish or, even better, to dispel the perceptions that we are a 'cult' or even a Hindu sect. We can enhance wider understanding of our true purpose and projects by emphasising the five Eternal Values that ideally should underpin and permeate all that we do. One thing your current Council would very much like to change is the outmoded perception that we are here to create unnecessary 'Red Tape' that makes your life difficult! We are here to serve you to the best of our ability and that will naturally entail some sensible rules!

Love and Light,
Rosemary Perry, National Chair

Sai Spiritual Education Training

We are happy to announce that on Sunday 6th December 2009 we will be conducting two separate training / refresher sessions for LOTUSS (Life's Opportunity To Understanding Self and Spirituality) and Sathya Sai Parenting Study circle (SSPSC) facilitators.

LOTUSS

"The age span between 16-35 is crucial, for that is the period when life adds sweetness to itself, when talents, skills and attitudes are accumulated, sublimated and sanctified." ~ Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The LOTUSS programme, aims to bridge and cater for the most crucial gap between SSE and Youth (16-18yr olds). The programme geared to address these two crucial years, is designed to look at both their *inner* world, with modules entitled 'Looking Within', 'Ego', 'Developing Myself', and the *external* world with modules on 'Communication and Relationships', as well as 'Good Company'. In addition, students also look at 'Life with Swami', which intends to further develop the connection with the inner divinity and also examines how to integrate the various teachings into all areas of life, thus spiritualising all actions.

Sathya Sai Parenting Study Circle

"Parents must feel that they are servants appointed by the Lord to tend the little souls that are born in their households, as the gardener tends the trees in the garden of the master." ~ Sri Sathya Sai Baba

"If a nation is to prosper, improvements must start with parents." ~ Sri Sathya Sai Baba

If you are a parent or a grandparent and have an understanding of Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) in the UK, then this SSPSC training is ideal for you. As a trained facilitator you will be able to inspire and empower parents to be better 'Sai' parents; instilling the values of love, truth, peace, non-violence and righteousness in their children.

The aims of the day will be:

- To provide an overview and purpose of LOTUSS and Sathya Sai Parenting Study Circles
- To understand the roles and responsibilities of being a facilitator
- To provide feedback from those running the LOTUSS programme and SSP Study Circles.
- To enable you to initiate or re-energise either or both the LOTUSS programme and SSP Study Circles within your respective

Region/Centre/Group

- To provide an opportunity to work together with the Spiritual wing/the SSE wing and the Youth wing within the Region/ Centre/ Group

This is an ideal opportunity for anyone who is interested in being trained to facilitate the LOTUSS programme or SSP Study Circles or it can simply be a refresher for those who wish to re-energise sessions that are currently being run. Please note that the training sessions will be run separately.

LOTUSS facilitators training

Sathya Sai Parenting Study Circle Facilitators training

Date: Sunday 6th December

Time: Registration from 9am - sessions start from 10am - 4.30pm

Venue: 'Leicester HQ Building', Narborough Road (corner of Upperton Road), Leicester LE3 0BT

Prior registration is essential and details of this can be obtained via your Regional SSE coordinator or from your Regional Chairs.

Lakshmi Puvanendran, National SSE Coordinator

YOUTH

'Sense Control'

On the 10th of October 2009...

East London's Nagrecha Hall summoned sparks of anticipation and youthfulness that seemed to grow and intensify as the day progressed. It was like the entire hall was filled with positive pulsating energy that at the same time stayed perfectly encapsulated within each individual present... young and old.

Golden-Coated Nuggets of Insight

As I write this article I have been consciously and unconsciously reflecting on this event, the beauty of divine insight is that it appears when you least expect it; from when you are cleaning your bathroom at the crack of dawn to when you are watching downloaded episodes of 90210 in the confines of your bedroom. Whilst inspiring ideas were freely passing and leaving my thoughts I had the confidence to believe that the essence of each message would stay imprinted somewhere within me, possibly nestled somewhere within my higher consciousness. Transposing my thoughts to words, however, was something that I was putting off due to what felt like an overwhelming feeling of having other tasks mounted on my 'to do' list. In retrospect, one could say I was experiencing sensory

overload; I was drowning in a mesh of polite commands that I had set before myself, and, as the lists expanded I blew further afield leaving what appeared to be a smudge of urgency dispersing into space. Now that my senses or stress levels have reached a plateau those golden-coated nuggets of insight have now retrieved themselves and have resurfaced to the forefront of my mind. (Thank you Swami- surrendering paid off.)

As irrelevant as you may believe this last paragraph to be, I beg to differ; I believe it was my highest self, implementing the concept of 'controlling one's senses' into my life, so that it would create an inspiring and thought-provoking read for others, like yourselves, who are now entangled in the very process of de-coding these words. For example, that feeling of immense suffocation and cloudiness I had been experiencing only moments before was nothing more than me allowing my senses to overrule my true self and thus my divine capabilities.

Prior to the satsang...

I attempted to plan this article (10 points for enthusiasm ...right?). I kept asking myself "Which senses?" "Controlling the senses, how?" Unfortunately, I found myself at a dead end; imagine the feeling of 'writer's block' now coat that feeling over your entire mind like a fabricated umbrella that runs on for miles; all that result are feelings of emptiness - a smoky vacant hole of nothingness, that's exactly what I felt. It was like Swami was blessing me with temporary sensory deprivation as opposed to instant gratification to colourful ideas and visions. *Frustrating*

After having experienced this bout of 'grey space' it dawned on me that in order for me to understand the importance of my sense control so that I could accurately portray a message, I first needed to let my senses run wild (sensory overload) as well as let my senses retract and feel numb for a while (sensory deprivation). At this point, as a reader you might be turning your nose up (possibly throwing me a dirty look) and saying to yourself, "Sensory deprivation? How is that relevant? She didn't experience a loss of sight or hearing or even taste, what is she on about?"

Well... this leads me on to my next point - my definition of what senses are and the axis within which they rotate:

On Wednesday the 21st of October I was brushing my teeth and frowning at myself in the mirror when it hit me: our senses can be split into two aspects; peripheral senses and a central sense - our mind is our central sense organ and much like the heart it

pulsates continuously. It is the mind that responds to and transmits messages to our peripheral senses. Our peripheral senses consist of our hearing organs, our eyes, our sense of touch and smell and our tongue. Our tongue however encompasses an element of duality; it provides one with a sense of taste but also delivers speech. Our mind extracts information from our periphery sensory organs, grapples with our sensations and generates our perceptions, which ultimately reflect how we respond to our world.

...I wouldn't like to say I have been pigeon holed into one area of specialty just yet, but since having studied normal and disordered hearing for the most part of two years, for my masters degree I have a personal interest in deafness and the impact it can have on one's quality of life.

Sitting in the Nagrecha Hall, in Leytonstone, complemented my textbook knowledge by offering me the opportunity to, once again, retrace my steps back to the origin of all of our senses - our mind.

I will now begin to explain how the day unfolded and ultimately led to the amalgamation of numerous thoughts and ideas - which in essence became the party bag that I happily accepted from this divine party ☺.

The Satsang

I can remember quite vividly how the Nagrecha Hall was beautifully decorated, the effort from those that had helped, revealed itself through the delicate placement of flowers and the thoughtful arrangement of the golden chains which skirted the stage and glistened with the afternoon sunshine.



The day started with an assortment of bhajans, I remember rubbing the goose bumps from my arms whilst clapping to 'Son of Shiva'. I could see rows of white clothing in my periphery (the brothers) and a colourful array of saris surrounding me all of which were enrobing about 150 voices singing happily in unison. The passion that was being

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released from the singer was clearly reverberating across the room.

Rosemary was first to speak and in her signature, elegant and articulate way, she set the scene by briefly introducing herself and then reflecting on what 'sense control' means to her. Mathan followed on, detailing forthcoming events, particularly the Region 91 Youth Conference (to be held jointly by the UK and Ireland next April) and its very many important themes.

As the day progressed, the youth broke off into smaller groups, which were complemented by office bearers and inspirational others. The purpose of holding the workshops was to create an intimate space in which one could freely discuss the meaning of 'our senses' and 'sense control' and how this ties in with Swami's vision. I had the pleasure of working with Saima Rajasingam who co-ordinated my group. We were given various art-based materials and were told to represent our thoughts on the senses through these objects. It was quite evident that all my 'sisters' were singing from the same 'hymn sheet or bhajan book' as we all produced similar 'artwork'; we tried to depict the 5 senses by creating a balloon faced individual.



There was however a profound exception which was generated from Rosemary Perry and Rita Chudasama; their team had created a miniature Swami from play dough that stood above 5 lollypop sticks. This, in my opinion, represented the idea that Swami is the creator, who has given us our senses and plays a pivotal role in influencing us as to how we should use our senses in a way that is congruent with his teachings.

Sai, Saima and Ears

During the workshops I started to build a rapport with Saima – our facilitator - and as we were 'chit-chatting' about the lovely Mexican-themed food, low and behold, we discovered that we were both students at the same university studying the same course -

Audiology; the study of the hearing sense organ. From that moment on it became extremely apparent that Swami was very serious about this theme and how the youth of today need to spread his message. I heard it loud and clear again and again; Swami would not hesitate to merge like-minded individuals and their resources together. This was certainly starting to feel like the beginning of a magical journey.

During the afternoon, the shock and excitement slowly evaporated and was gently replaced by a feeling of peacefulness that quilted me. I felt ready.

With Swami's divine grace I had the opportunity to participate in a sketch that was centred on the theme of Swami's divine glow. Even though the play offered me the perfect platform to unleash my repressed Essex accent, it gave me and (I'm sure) all the rest of the attendees a chance to consolidate this poignant truth: In order to be a peaceful, glowing spiritual aspirant we need to invoke discipline into our daily lives by committing to activities such as 'Japam' (repetition of a sacred name with a rosary or prayer beads) and meditation.

As I 'air-kissed' my Sai sisters and made my way home, I started my quiet reflection on the meaning of sense control – the essence was beginning to chime within me. I began to ask questions: "What is it that defines me?" and, "How is sense control something that I can implement into all aspects of my life; working, academic, personal and spiritual?" Sense control, for me, became the following:

...Reema should control her senses by:

- Giving her thumbs a break from her blackberry...
- Not watching Neighbours, Hollyoaks, What Katie Did Next, the Hills AND the City all in one night, rather have an early night or sign off the day by reading some Sai literature...
- Saying goodbye to her friends after one hour on the phone - as opposed to pressing redial and chit-chatting for another whole hour...
- Not spending excessive amounts of time on her hair and makeup and rather using that time for meditation... I guess it is time to temporarily pack in the hair straighteners...
- Eating out only once a week rather than have Nando's twice a week with TGI's scheduled somewhere in between...
- Controlling the amount of boot purchases she makes in a season; ankle boots, calf boots and knee boots in every colour is slightly excessive...

- Not always articulating her thoughts to someone who does not appreciate or respect her...

Sensory overload = Alarm Bells aka Tinnitus

I have recently returned from a 'Tinnitus Advisor Course' where I learnt about factors that lead to tinnitus. Tinnitus is a perception of ringing that occurs without the presence of an acoustic stimulus. A common trigger for tinnitus is anxiety and stress. This course thus made me realise that sense control = self-control; and that when one loses that element of control within their senses, their body can respond to this negatively. This reaction can manifest in numerous ways, one of which is tinnitus.

Having now digested this pool of information I then began to think of sensory control and what that means to me. In my opinion when one experiences 'inner peace' the senses are all 'in synch' or at equilibrium. It is only during this time when our mind, body and soul have all reached this state of equanimity that the voice of God can be heard.

I once remember being held up by public transport (rolling eyes) and it was getting extremely dark outside, the younger version of Reema would have panicked, her heart would have pulsated past the boundaries of her chest for everyone on the platform to see. This time it didn't; I refrained from losing that control, instead I steadied my thoughts and projected my fears on to Swami. Within seconds I could hear Swami saying, "Don't worry, get on this train and get off at this station, not that one - but this one, and - when you do I will be waiting outside for you, on that street in a black cab". The instructions were extremely detailed and very precise. To put things in perspective I had never ventured to this particular area at this time of night nor settled myself into a black cab. When I arrived at my station I kept my cool and sprinted across the road (ok, I was wearing heels, so it would be more realistic to say that I walked at a faster pace). There, across the road, was a black cab with its light on. Swami was waiting for me, just as he had said.

Beyond the five senses

As you read the last few sentences of this article and gulp down the remainder of your tea, I would like to hope that you have taken away something new and something tangible that moves you. These thoughts that you have now absorbed did not ignite from a book or a speaker; these were divine packets of information that cascaded into my consciousness on the perfect day and at the

perfect time. And, had I not retracted myself from the burdens, worries and fears that my senses often indulge in, these thoughts may not have prevailed.

Written by Reema Sharma

Photography: Jana Sivananthan

Submitted by Mathan Arulvel, National Youth Coordinator

SSLTP 2009/10

The voyage has begun....

On the weekend of the 23rd, 24th and 25th October 2009, the Sri Sathya Sai Leadership Training Programme (SSLTP) officially commenced. The induction weekend was set in the peaceful and scenic location of Marwell Activity Centre, near Winchester, in Hampshire.

In May 2009, the SSLTP Coordinator, Deviesh Tankaria, was fortunate to be in Prashanti when our Divine Teacher blessed this year's SSLTP. Later, on the 7th July 2009 (the auspicious day of 'Guru Purnima'), the application forms formally went out to all Regions and Centres in the United Kingdom.

Completed application forms soon began to come back, and each person who had submitted their application form had an inspirational story behind how they came to apply. From this moment onwards, we knew that it was not we, the committee, who were selecting the candidates but Swami Himself was hand picking the cohort for this year's programme!

The 7th SSLTP cohort commenced at 9pm on the 23rd October with offerings to the Lotus Feet of Sai Baba. Deviesh welcomed the candidates, and in his welcome note he brought into perspective just how fortunate we all are living in the Divine presence. He stressed how we all have been given the opportunity to serve in the current Avatar's mission and we should all seize the opportunity. Deviesh went on to talk about how Sai Baba has guided him and he talked about his personal experiences over the years, highlighting that one should have faith and devotion, and that if one surrenders everything he will achieve the impossible.

On the 24th October Sri Kandiah commenced the day's proceedings with yoga at 7:30am. During the yoga class, Sri taught techniques for healthy living and leading ideal lives. The one-hour class truly set us up for the day.

After breakfast, Sri talked about the history of SSLTP and the significance of '**TO BE: TO DO: TO SEE: TO TELL**' that is the 'Mahavakya', or 'Great Utterance', on leadership. During the dynamic session, Sri

stressed the importance of 'To Be' and how our character shapes the type of leader we are, "Bhagawan's definition of leadership is not based on power, position or social status. In fact, leadership can be defined as the sensitive and intelligent use of power". Laavanaya Krishnandaraja and Shilpa Sharma, last year's graduates, then spoke about their experiences and how SSLTP has transformed them. Shilpa went on to talk about the importance of literature.

Mathan Arulvel, National Youth Coordinator, then concluded the day by leading discussions on leadership, in the context of the world we live in today. A short video clip was played highlighting the importance of the part we play in the shaping of the world today with the theme 'Be the voice of change or become a figure or fact'. The day ended with devotional songs and Arathi.

The final day of the weekend, 25th October, commenced with Suprabhatam in the morning, followed by a yoga class, putting into practice what we had learnt the day before. Sri Kandiah and Mathan Arulvel then facilitated Module 1 of the Sri Sathya Sai Leadership Training Programme, The Vision, Mission and Teachings of Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Mathan talked us through the history of Sai Baba and His vision. In his talk, Mathan describe the Sai Organisation as a vehicle for transformation, explaining the importance of putting into daily practice the teachings of Swami so that we can play a part in his mission, which is the establishment of 'Sanathana Dharma' - eternal righteousness.

The weekend concluded with a vote of thanks and a short video presentation leaving everyone present feeling uplifted and full of excitement. It truly felt like we had created pure peace for ourselves!

Let us wait and see the journey that our Beloved Teacher has planned for the next 14 months! Watch this space!

Deviesh Tankaria, SSLTP Coordinator

Region 5

Newcastle Youth Satsang 'Sadhana - The Journey'

"Karma Marga, Jnana Marga, Bhakti Marga -
All lead to the same destination"

~ Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The satsang was truly an elevating experience physically, mentally and spiritually. The sight of the beautiful shrine, decorated with dazzling candles, immediately set the illuminating mood for the Satsang.

We kick-started the day at 6.30 am with

'Om karam', 'Suprabhatam' (a very sacred song to welcome the new day) and Devotional Songs thereby instantly engaging us in the 'Bhakti Marga' - the Path of Devotion. Only when I opened my eyes after the Suprabhatam did I realise that I was not in Prashanti. The divinity within me was definitely awakened during this session.

Then, we had a brisk Hatha yoga session for over an hour. Many of us were first-timers to Yoga but this only augmented the motivation of our yoga teacher, Ms Doreen Musgrove. She started off saying "Yoga is a systematic process of spiritual unfolding". So by that I understood that Yoga is not just a series of physical exercises but has something more to it. Although it was only a taster session, I realised that the path of yoga teaches us to harmonise our individual consciousness with Universal consciousness or God. It was a very refreshing experience.

Some of us had made cheese sandwiches for breakfast but we had no time to eat them as we were rushing to Durham Cathedral for a spiritual tour. We had to gobble the sandwiches, in the car, on our way to Durham. We reached it on time and to our surprise a Cathedral youth discussion group was about to start. The topic they had chosen was, coincidentally, 'The Journey'. The discussion was presided over by one of the Cathedral clerics. ...I don't think it was a mere 'coincidence'. It felt as if it was definitely Swami's plan for the Newcastle youth! After the discussion we participated in Matins the Morning Service. As the church organ started playing we were all moved to tears, as it was one of the most heartening experiences we've ever had as a Sai youth group. During the tour, we also tried to contemplate on what our best friend, 'Prakriti' (nature), teaches us during spiritual journeys. We then discussed Swami's discourses on the journey of Jesus Christ from duality to non-duality.

We returned to Newcastle from Durham and had a quick lunch. We then sat down to have a discussion on 'Jnana Marga' the Path of Knowledge and Wisdom, through a study circle led by Kailash on the topic 'Tat Twam Asi' - meaning 'That Thou Art'. It was an interactive session that allowed us to share our thoughts on this subject.

This was then followed by an enlightening Meditation workshop - 'Raja Yoga' - the Yoga of Meditation, presided over by Ravi Ramiah. He shared his experiences as to how Raja yoga had enabled him in developing 'Sama-drishti' (equal-mindedness) that can lead us to God. The topic was "Look at Him — Look

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into Him”, which dealt with seeing the True Self in everyone. We had a few questions left unanswered at the end of the session but Swami decided to answer them in the ‘Thought for the Day’, the following day.

Our youth then did some role-plays on some stories told by Swami, in order to understand how we can dedicate all our actions to God on ‘Karma Marga’ the Path of Action. In this way, we understood that ‘the doer’, in everything, is actually our true self. Finally, we ended the day with Devotional Songs and Arathi. After which, we dispersed, realising that our spiritual journey has already begun!

Written up by Praveena (Newcastle Sai Centre)

Flood relief in India

The floods in Andhra Pradesh, a few weeks ago, left 250 people dead and millions of them homeless. Baba lodged a thought in a Newcastle Sai Centre member’s mind to plan a service project towards Flood-Relief. We contacted the parents of a Newcastle Sai Centre youth, who are in Andhra Pradesh, and requested them to organise the project. The family was very glad to pursue this effort. As a token of our love towards Swami’s 84th Birthday we decided to choose 85 homeless families, from the worst affected areas, and distribute a hamper each containing 5kg of rice, ½ kilo of lentils, a bed sheet, kitchen utensils and biscuit packets for the children.

The region’s ‘Mandal Revenue Officer’ of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, carefully chose the 85 families, to make sure that the aid reached the most deserving families. The Police department of that area also backed the initiative and made sure they were present all through the distribution to maintain order. By Swami’s grace, the event was a great success.

All articles submitted by Harish Thampy, Chair, Region 5

The Wonderful Friends of the Sathya Sai School, Leicester

In August 2009, the Sathya Sai School Leicester moved from its former home in Belper Street to the Sri Sathya Sai Charitable Trust’s newly purchased building on Narborough Road/Upperton Road.

A school moving premises can be compared to the way a patch of ground is prepared for planting:

- First the ground has to be dug up and weeded, similarly the new building had to be cleaned up
- Then the ground is prepared, similarly the

building was decorated

- Seeds are planted, the school is moved
- Seeds are covered up, the school unpacks and settles
- Seedlings start to grow, the children come to school and take root there
- A fence is placed to guide and protect the plant, teachers come to guide and protect the children

With water and nourishing minerals we have beautiful plants, and, similarly, with Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Non-violence - and lots of patience and understanding - we have model citizens!

All the hearts represent all the devotees who arrived from all over England and from the rest of the UK, too. They prepared the building, decorated it, helped with the move and there are others that continue to help. You are all like the droplets of rain and the rays of the sun that the Lord sends for the plants to grow, He sent you to help us to grow and expand.

On behalf of the school children, parents, staff, and management, I would like to say THANK YOU!!!!

Our First Open Day on Saturday, 26th September 2009 went really well. The Secondary children shone in their roles as escorts for prospective parents and visitors. They spoke with confidence as they showed the new parents around the school. Watch this space for news of the next Open Day so that **you** can come and visit **your** school.

Mrs Usha Lim, Head teacher

Article submitted by Prabodh Mistry

Region 3 Divali Celebrations at SSE in Coventry



This year Divali (Hindu New Year) brought arts and crafts to the Centre. The children

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enjoyed experimenting with a variety of art materials including sequins, glitter and glue. With these each child made a Divali card or a Divali tile.

At the beginning of the arts and crafts session, on Sunday 11th October, the meaning and background of Divali was discussed with the children. The older children contributed with the story of Divali and what it means to them.

The younger children made Divali cards with their parents. Each of them was different with a unique style. The tiles were decorated by the older children and were more difficult to get the materials on, but the children did a fantastic job. We have some very talented children in the Coventry Centre.

This event was thoroughly enjoyed by children, parents, grandparents, helpers and teachers.

Written by Kamini Patel
Submitted by Ramesh Mistry, Chair
Region 4

Sathya Sai Bookshop

The bookshop has a regularly updated website. Please visit it at:

www.srisathyasaibookcentre.org.uk

DVDs are often being compiled and released along with new interesting books:

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Love and Light SSSSO UK Diary Dates 2009		
Month	Date	Event
November	19th	Ladies Day
November	23rd	Sathya Sai Baba's 84th Birthday
November	29th	UKCC 4th Quarter Meeting
December	5th	Region 2 ROAD Show
December	6th	NWC Meeting
December	12th/13th	Regional Meetings



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