



Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation (UK)

Love and Light

www.srisathyasai.org.uk



"Aspirants must always have the inward look; if they allow the mind to wander outward, they cannot identify their own faults. It is hard to get rid of pride and self-love or ego (Ahankara), for the mind has been allowed to flow in the direction it likes for several ages. Pride prevents the inner vision and confuses the examination of the mind. Some aspirants get very angry when others discover and announce to them the bad traits they possess. If you wish to achieve success, you must bow down to those who point out your faults, and you must endeavour not to entertain those faults any longer. Those prone to anger should be vigilant even about the most minor matters that might provoke them and remove such impulses; because if they are careless, they cannot progress in the least. Such people must cultivate a humble, loving spirit. Then the bad traits will disappear" - Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Dear Love & Light Readers,

Jai Sai Ram !

I hope the Eternal Light of our Beloved Swami touched all our hearts at Diwali and may that Divine Light remains with us always to guide us from darkness to light! I would like to wish our Gujarati Sai Family a very happy New Year and may this New Year brings you ever so close to your spiritual goals with the blessings of Bhagawan Baba.

After a very successful National SSE Conference with Bro. Nimish Pandya and Sister Kamala Pandya, a number of UK devotees are making their way to Puttaparthi, India to participate in service activities at the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum, an architectural splendour which encapsulates the story of our Bhagawan's Glory.

November is a very special month in the Sai Calendar because we celebrate the anniversary of the Advent of our Lord Sai, these celebrations also include Akhanda Bhajans and Ladies day.

Sometime ago, devotees expressed a desire to Swami to select a date where they could celebrate singing the glory of God's name in their own places and countries. Swami affectionately gave his blessings in a divine discourse on 14 November 1976, for devotees all over the world to do non-stop devotional singing for a full twenty-four hours starting at 6:30pm on Saturday ending at 06:30 pm on Sunday. The name Akhanda Bhajan was born! Swami stressed that Akhanda-Baja must not be just for that time but be as continuous as breathing itself if it is to deserve its name.

In 1995 Bhagawan Baba instituted a 'Ladies' Day' on November 19th as a sacred day, dedicated to women.

On 23rd of November, millions of devotees from all over the world flock to Prashanthi Nilayam to catch a glimpse of the Divine and to pay ho mage to our Sweet Lord. For many years, Swami blessed us with His darshan on the ornamented Chariot followed by a huge and most wonderful procession. This year, His physical presence will be sadly missed by many of us but as we celebrate His birthday this month, let us remind ourselves of what Swami told us:

"Know that I am within and without you. There is no difference. Rid yourselves of the petty matters forevermore.

You are now in Me and I am now in Thee. There is no difference. My darshan will pour forth from Me to and through you. You may be unaware of this constant action. Be ever pure of heart and soul, and mankind in your lifetime will benefit from your unique qualities'.

"This I say to all My Devotees from the Lord's Mountain Top where all the Universes become one. Be about My work, My beloved Bhaktas. Your breath will carry the scent of the blossoms of Heaven. Your example will be that of Angels. Your joy will be My Joy.

As children of God, may we all live in unity without giving room to any differences and look for opportunities to serve selflessly to make our lives His message!

On behalf of the Love & Light editorial Team and UK Central Council, I look forward to welcoming you all to the National Birthday Celebration on 26th November 2011 in Leicester and to the first National Christmas Programme on Saturday 17th December 2011 in Swindon.

Lovingly

Gayatri Bikoo
National Service Coordinator



Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation UK

National Birthday Celebrations 2011

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Om Sri Sai Ram!

On behalf of the United Kingdom Central Council & Central Trust, it is my great privilege and pleasure to invite you, your family and friends to attend a special Birthday Programme to celebrate the Divine Advent, life and message of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on Saturday 26th November 2011.

For several decades the life and teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba have inspired and touched the hearts of countless people throughout the world, and inspired them to lead more spiritual, purposeful and moral lives. In the United Kingdom too, His timeless and universal teachings have attracted spiritual seekers from different faiths and spiritual Organisations.

For the convenience of all devotees across UK, including London, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, the National Birthday Celebrations will be held in Leicester (Midlands region) at the Ramgarhia Community Centre. This venue accommodates 1300 people, and so as to make it possible for more devotees to attend this important event and share the joy from its proceedings, the Programme for the day will be held in 2 Sessions. The Morning Session will be held from 10.30am to 2.30pm, and the Afternoon Session will be held from 3.30pm to 7.30pm..



I am also very happy to share that we are indeed very fortunate to have with us on this day, two long standing devotees and eminent international speakers: Leonardo Gutter from Latin America and B S Vijayasai from Bangalore, a former alumnus and faculty member from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prashanti Nilayam, India. Both speakers have been blessed with numerous experiences and insights by Bhagawan, and have often addressed gatherings in His Divine Presence in Prashanti Nilayam and Brindavan. The programme will also include concerts by acclaimed musical artists as well as devotional singing and prayers. Little doubt then, that we will be blessed to enjoy a 'spiritual feast'!

As the demand for participation in such a programme is high, all devotees wishing to participate are requested to register beforehand to avoid any disappointment on the day. Guest Passes will be issued on a first-come-first-served basis only, irrespective of Region. Therefore it is important that you register early and secure your entry for the Programme. Please see below for more details regarding Registration.

Date: Saturday 26th November 2011

Venue: Ramgarhia Community Centre, Ulverscroft Road,
Leicester, LE4 6BY

Session 1 (Morning): 10.30am – 2.30pm

Session 2 (Afternoon): 3.30pm – 7.30pm

Registration details:

- Anyone wishing to attend the National Programme will be required to register on-line via www.srisathyasai.org.uk/national-programmes or via your Regional Chair
- Registration will be open from **Tuesday 18th October 2011**
- e-Guest passes will be required for admission (the venue can only accommodate 1300 people in one sitting)
- e-Guest passes can be obtained once you register on-line or via your Regional Chair. You will require an e-Guest pass for each member of your family. One pass will be issued per registration. If you have multiple people in your group please register them individually.
- You will need to select the session you would like to attend. If selecting both please select a preferred session. If your preferred session is full you will be given the option to attend the other session.
- Please note that we will close registration for a particular session once the maximum quota is met and you will then be directed to the next available session.
- Registration will be closed once both sessions are full and your respective Regional Chair will be notified of this.

- Devotees are very welcome to attend both sessions, if they wish to, (subject to availability) as the content in both sessions may differ slightly.
- Please print out your confirmation email which has your unique e-Guest pass and bring this with you when attending your session.
- Please note that due to health & safety entry could be refused to anyone without a valid e-Guest pass if our numbers have reached the maximum limit. Therefore please register early to avoid any disappointments.

This National Birthday Programme will be in addition to all the Centre level and Regional level celebrations taking place throughout November, and is another sacred and befitting opportunity to express our love and gratitude together as a nation, to our Loving Divine Master.

For further information or if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact:

National Secretary – **Kiranbhai Patel** or National Service Coordinator - **Gayatri Bikoo** on national-programmes@srisathyasai.org.uk

(Your emails will be forwarded to them and you will get a response back straightaway).

We look forward to welcoming you on the day!

Lovingly, In Sai Service

Shitu Chudasama
National Chair
Central Council of United Kingdom
Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation



"Come, examine, experience, have faith. This is the method of utilising me. I have come to give you the key of the treasure of bliss, to teach you how to tap that spring, for you have forgotten the way to blessedness. If you waste this time of saving yourselves, it is just your fate. Very few of you desire to get from me the thing that I have come to give you: namely, liberation itself. Even among these few, those who stick to the path of spiritual practice and succeed are a handful. Your innate laziness prevents you from the spiritual exercises necessary to discover the nature of God. This laziness should go. It has to be driven out of man's nature in whatever shape it appears. That is my mission. My activities and movements will never be altered, whoever may pass whatever opinion on them."

"I know the agitations of your heart and its aspirations, but you do not know my heart. I react to the pain that you undergo and to the joy that you feel, for I am in your heart. I am the dweller in the temple of every heart. Do not lose contact and company, for it is only when the coal is in contact with the live embers that it can also become live ember. Cultivate a nearness with me in the heart and it will be rewarded. Then you too will acquire a fraction of that supreme love. This is a great chance. Be confident that you will all be liberated. Know that you are saved"

- Divine Discourse : 23 November 1968

National Tribute to Victor Karnu October 2011



**Victor Karnu
1928 - 2011**

On Saturday 22nd October, numerous Sai devotees gathered at Oxhey Wood Primary School in Watford to remember and celebrate the life of Victor Kanu who passed away on 3rd September this year.

Victor was a leading light of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) who inspired many people in the UK, Zambia and around the world to teach the programme and adopt it in their own lives. What was clear from all the tributes paid to him during the afternoon by people who had worked with him closely for many years was that Victor was himself a living embodiment of human values. Swami Himself described him as "pure white on the inside". People remembered him as a guru, a mentor, a father-figure and a constant source of support, inspiration and wisdom.

His booming voice, tremendous energy, skilful oration, sense of fun and love of food were all remembered with great fondness, as well as his unshakeable faith in Swami, his outstanding self-discipline and his all-consuming passion for SSEHV. The event was organised by the Institute of Sathya Sai Education (ISSE) UK.



Victor Kanu - Guest speaker on Human Personality and Human Values; Human Values in the School Curriculum; Training of EHV Teachers and Faculty Members; Setting up of Sathya Sai Human Values Centres for children.

The first reminiscences were from Mel Griffin who knew Victor in London in the late 1970's and early 1980's and narrated stories from his life as a political exile, secondary school teacher and spiritual aspirant and leader.

Dr Daksha Trivedi and Judith Berry talked about Victor's work to promote SSEHV in the UK during the 1980's, sharing fascinating archive clips and press cuttings. Usha Lim and Kapil Dudakia recounted very touching personal stories of ways in which Victor had impacted their own lives.

Dr Madhavi Majmudar and Som Bahanda spoke of some

SATHYA SAI EHV CENTRES

GRAVENEY

The Sathya Sai EHV Centre of Graveney was officially formed on the 8th January 1987 when a small committee, of parents and community members met. This was followed by a full parents meeting on the 19th January with about 150 people.

The aims and objectives of the SSEHV programme and activities were presented and parents gave written consent for their children to attend the Saturday classes for 1-2 hours. Registers were kept and lesson plans followed.

The class started with 20 and grew to 50 multi-racial and multi-religious children with ages ranging from 5-15yrs. Two classes were formed, Juniors and Seniors. 6 professional teachers, 6 parents and 4 assistant student teachers assisted with lessons and activities.

A time table of lessons and programme of events were drawn up for the whole

First day at SSEHV Graveney Centre

of the many challenges that Victor and his wife Geneveva faced in setting up the Sathya Sai School in Ndola which became known as the 'Miracle School of Zambia'. Although many of us were no doubt aware that the Kanus gave up their lives as they knew them and sold their house in London and most of their possessions to raise money to build the school, hearing about the difficulties they faced in doing this (which included death threats and grave logistical problems) really brought home what an incredible demonstration of faith this was. People tried to stop them and told them they were mad but they only listened to Swami.





Vinod Lad and Carole Alderman, who could not be present in person, sent moving personal reflections on what Victor had meant to them and how much he had helped them in their own SSEHV work. The talks were interspersed with sweet and uplifting songs from the SSEHV programme performed by Zita Starkie and Richard Braithwaite.

Prof Keshavan Niranjana, Director of the ISSE UK, compered the event with a light touch, and delicious food was served to attendees by devotees from the local Sai centre.

It's not possible to relate here all the colourful stories and examples of Victor's life and character that were told on the day, but suffice to say that the overall impression received was of a very great man who was deeply loved by very many people. He had an impact not only at the highest international levels, by introducing SSEHV into the UN's water programme, but also on a very personal,

individual scale – not least for all the hundreds of children labelled as drop-outs and failures whose lives have been transformed by the Sathya Sai School of Zambia.

Everyone who knew Victor was affected by him because he was a powerful force for good, a living embodiment of SSEHV. He summarised his belief in the effectiveness of SSEHV across the globe by declaring at the World Education Conference held in 2008: One may wonder whether this awesome "Sai Model" which is producing wonderful young men and women can be replicated elsewhere outside India. The answer is resoundingly yes, because Sai is everywhere, within us, around us, above us and below us. Replication is applicable and inevitable: if we have faith in our Bhagwan and allow our lives at home, in the Sathya Sai Schools and Institutes, and everywhere become true reflections of His Life and Teachings, as a Model of Excellence; if we are not afraid to use His Name when we return to our respective countries; if we do not chase other models; and if we do not believe we are the doers instead of being instruments in His Divine Hands; if we adopt the policy of inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness, and togetherness rather than separateness."

Although Victor is greatly missed, we are very grateful for his life.



National Christmas Celebrations 2011

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Om Sri Sai Ram!

On behalf of the United Kingdom Central Council & Central Trust, it is my great privilege and pleasure to invite you, your family and friends to attend the National Christmas Celebrations on **Saturday 17th December 2011**.

In 1978 Christmas was celebrated for the first time in Prashanti. Swami sang the song: **"Love is My form, Truth is My breath, Bliss is My food; My life is My message, expansion is My life, No season for Love, no reason for Love; No Birth; No death"**. He continued to tell all those who had gathered for the Christmas celebrations: "If anyone asks you to talk about Sai Baba, I want you to sing this song. It will convey my whole message. Tell them, Love is His form and His life is His message. Develop the feeling of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God." Therefore, Christmas is a time of great happiness and joy. It is a time which demonstrated the great Love God had for all of mankind. It is also a time of personal reflection. A time to ponder on our relationship with God.

Our Christmas programme will take place in **Region 7** (South West Counties of England and Wales). We hope this will assist devotees travelling from all parts of the country. Please note that your Regional Team may be able to organise coaches if there is sufficient demand so please do liaise with them.

Furthermore, please kindly note that this venue can only accommodate 400 people. As demand for attending the Christmas programme may be high, I would like to encourage everyone who wishes to attend register in advance. As with the National Birthday registration guest passes will be issued on a first-come-first-serve basis only, irrespective of Region.

"My Command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." John 15:12

Programme & Registration details below:

Date: Saturday 17th December 2011

Venue: Punjabi Community Centre, Kembrey Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 8AZ

Time: 11.00am – 3.00pm

Registration details:

- Anyone wishing to attend the National Programme will be required to register on-line via www.srisathyasai.org.uk/national-programmes or via your Regional Chair
- e-Guest passes will be required for admission (the venue can only accommodate 400 people)
- e-Guest passes can be obtained once you register on-line or via your Regional Chair. You will require an e-Guest pass for each member of your family. One pass will be issued per registration. If you have multiple people in your group please register them individually.
- Please note that we will close registration once the maximum quota has been met.
- Please print out your confirmation email which has your unique e-Guest pass and bring this with you on the day.
- Please note that due to health & safety entry could be refused to anyone without a valid e-Guest pass if our numbers have reached the maximum limit. Therefore please register early to avoid any disappointments.

If you require any further information or if you have any queries relating to the National Christmas event please do not hesitate to contact the below: National Vice-Chair: **Mel Griffin** or National Service Coordinator **Mrs Gayatri Bikoo** on national-programmes@srisathyasai.org.uk and your emails will be forwarded directly to them.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the love and support you have given this year by attending these National events. Eight such events have been offered this year. You will agree that these occasions have provided us wonderful opportunities to come together as a nation and express our love and gratitude to our Divine Master Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, especially in a year made so poignant by the suddenness of His Mahasamadhi. These events have also been helpful in enhancing interaction, understanding and unity amongst the members of our Organisation across the country, thus making us all stronger in our spiritual endeavours. Let us pray to Bhagawan to continue granting us such opportunities in the future that expand our hearts, broaden our vision and minds, foster unity and kinship, and allow us to experience the Sai Message of Unity and Love in our lives. I thank you once again for your continued support, and look forward to welcome you at the National Christmas Celebrations.

Lovingly, In Sai Service

Shitu Chudasama

National Chair

Central Council of United Kingdom



Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation UK

National Christmas Celebrations 2011

“My Command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

John 15:12



Special Christmas Celebrations to include Traditional Christmas Service,
Musical Programme, Guest Speakers, Nativity.

Date: Saturday 17th December 2011

Time: 11:00am - 3:00pm

Venue: Punjabi Community Centre, Kembrey Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 8AZ

Contact Names:

National Vice-Chair, Mel Griffin

National Service Coordinator Mrs Gayatri Bikoo

Please email: national-programmes@srisathyasai.org.uk

Online Registration required via:

www.srisathyasai.org.uk/national-programmes

Region 1 (London - South East & West)



Sai Laksharchana- 15th October 2011:

Region 1 was very fortunate to host the divinely blessed Sai Laksharchana, chanting of the Lord's name 100,000 times, on Saturday 15th October 2011 performed by uncle Vadgama. Just over 120 Sai brothers and sisters including children from across the Region 1 and 6 gathered at the Sai centre of Tooting.

The day commenced with prayers and group devotional singing by SSE children and youth. Throughout the Sai Laksharchana, Uncle Vadgama uplifted the day by sharing his experiences. Together in unison, with joined hearts and hand, everyone chanted the powerful mantra 'Om Sri Sathya Sai Krishniya Namaha' and each grain of rice were offered before the Divine Lotus feet of our beloved Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It was beautiful to see youths, adults and children offering yellow rice grains while chanting together.

The day concluded with group devotional singing and Mangala Aarti. Each family received a book Sri Sai Satcharita as prashadam from Uncle Vadgama.

YAP – Young Adult Programme - Friday 16th September

On 16th September, the Sai Youth of Region 1 gathered together for their monthly YAP (Young Adults Programme). This month's programme was focused on the quote: "Make your life a rose that speaks silently in the language of fragrance." We discussed: what opportunities we have, as

Sai devotees, to become leaders; how can we be more proactive in serving neighbouring communities; and what influences in our everyday lives can help us to become more like a rose.

During the course of our discussions, it was clear to see that the opportunities for leadership are numerous and open to all. Many Sai Youth highlighted that uncoordinated leadership resulted in the recent UK riots. It was clear to see that more time and effort is needed for helping nearby communities. One Sai Youth suggested contacting other organisations in the nearby area which could be beneficial in understanding the diverse cultures. When discussing the influences in our everyday lives that can help us become like a rose, the Sai youth came up with many examples such as friends, family and Sai colleagues. One Sai Youth took the metaphor of the rose literally and stated that, with the beautiful rose, there come the thorns; another Sai Youth noted that we do not have to take the good with the bad, as it is our choice to discriminate between what is right and what is not. Overall, the Sai Youth felt very inspired after the discussion, aware of the many different opportunities for leadership as well as a greater understanding of how to change our lives to become more like a rose.

Jay Mistry

Brixton Sai Centre

Service for Peace at Merton Sai Centre



To celebrate London Week of Peace, Merton Sai Centre held a "Service for Peace" at the Sai Mandir on the afternoon of Sunday 25th September. As part of their contribution to the service, Group 1 SSE children decorated beautiful white doves of peace with brightly coloured stars and sequins, which were then cut out and used to decorate the entrance to the Sai Mandir. The service began at 3pm, with English and Sarva dharma bajans, and continued with the chanting of multi-faith and vedic prayers by the SSE children. This was followed by readings from the Hindu holy scriptures in Sanskrit and in Tamil. The children from the Sai Spiritual Education classes read passages on Peace from the United Nations and ended with quotations from our beloved Swami on unity and peace.

The Rev. Andrew Wakefield, vicar of St. Andrew's Church in Wimbledon, completed the service by reading the Beatitudes from the holy Bible (Gospel of St. Matthew 5:3-10) and talking about this year's theme for London Week of Peace, which was "Giving Back". The service concluded with Arathi and everyone chanted Swami's exhortation for peace and happiness for the world " Samastha Lokah Sukhino Bhavanthu".

After the service, the wonderful refreshments by our sevadal ladies provided everyone with the perfect opportunity to enjoy each other's company and continue the interfaith dialogue. The service was well attended by approximately 150 devotees and members of other faiths and left us with a feeling of great joy and with renewed determination to continue to "give back" to the community through the voluntary work that we do in His name.

Commemoration Of Avatar Day



On Thursday 20th October, to commemorate Avatar Day, a picture of Swami's Samadhi was installed in the Sai Mandir, Effra Road, London SW19. When news of Swami's passing reached us in April, the Mandir was kept open and continuous Bhajans and Namasmara took place, as thousands of devotees came to the Mandir to gain comfort and express their loss of our Lord's physical form. The Mandir stayed open all night on the day of the funeral and we watched together, as one family, the live streaming of the last rites and placing of the body in the Samadhi. So the

installation of this large photo of His Samadhi in the Mandir marked an important milestone for the devotees.

After half an hour of chanting of the Gayathri, the assembled devotees watched as Sridhar Iyer (Priest) from the adjoining Ghanapathy Temple unveiled the photo and chanted vedic prayers of blessing and consecration, as he placed flowers around the picture and placed the tilak on the picture of Swami and on the marble cover of the Samadhi. We then all joined in a very poignant rendition of the arathi song, as Sridhar Iyer moved the sacred flame around the picture and then to the main altar. A special Bhajan took place after that and, as we watched, many of us were filled with great emotion. A sense of peace and joy descended on the congregation, an acknowledgement that having this depiction of Swami's last resting place in the Mandir acted as a salve to our troubled minds, an understanding of the true nature of our Lord and the understanding that it was now time to focus on the next part of Swami's mission – our inner transformation.



Please Note Sathya Sai Bookshop

**The bookshop will be closed from
Wednesday 21st December 2011 to Sunday 08th January
2012.**

Reopen Monday 09th January 2012.

**Sri Sathya Sai Books UK
19 Hay Lane,
Kingsbury,
London NW9 0NH**

Region 2 (London - North East & West)

Region 2 Gram Seva in Prashanti Nilayam

On Sunday 25th September 2011, with the Grace and direct instruction of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Sai Kingdom (United Kingdom) Grama Seva Group stepped onto the hallowed ground of Prashanti Nilayam to follow the command of Bhagawan Baba and carry out Grama Seva together with Bhagawan's own Students. The group consisted of 46 brothers and 24 sisters all eager to participate in Grama Seva as instructed by Swami. The group had been brought to the Lotus Feet by Sri Ajit Popat, affectionately known as Swami's "puppet."

After arriving early in the morning, the group attended their first Maha Samadhi Darshan in the Sai Kulwant hall at 4pm.

The following day after morning darshan, the Grama Seva boys were invited to attend the meeting in the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning Auditorium on "Grama Seva 2011, an offering at Thy Divine Lotus feet." Here they had the fortune to listen to many distinguished faculty speakers such as the Vice-Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Sri B.N. Narasimhamurthy, Sri Sanjay Sahni and Professor A Sudhir Bhaskar. They all spoke on the history of Grama Seva, the importance and significance of it and the feelings one should have when offering Swami's prasadam. Videos and photos of the planning and logistics work that goes on behind the scenes were shown. This included the preparation of Swami's prasadam, packaging and uploading onto the vehicles.



With the immense grace of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the UK Grama Seva Group had an opportunity to offer a small token of love to Swami's Samadhi, which included the chanting of Purusha Suktam and Narayana Suktam and this was followed by bhajans and a bhajan medley.

Professor Anil Kumar announced the start of Grama Seva from Wednesday 28th September 2011 onwards for 9 days culminating on the auspicious day of Dasara. During his address he also thanked the UK group for the continuous participation in the Grama Seva Activity alongside Swami's students and faculty members for the last 9 years.



The first day of Navratri happened to be the commencement of the Grama Seva Project 2011. Each day of Gram Seva the UK Grama Seva Group was privileged to follow behind the Veda group in doing "pradakshina" around Swami's Maha-Samadhi and the Mandir



before proceeding to the Tata Sumo Vehicles allocated for them to travel in, as per Swami's Divine instructions.

Transport for the Students consisted of over 35 trucks which were also loaded with supplies. Supplies included sarees, dhotis and food (consisting of Pulihora Rice and Ladoo). As the vehicles left the Prashanthi gates, all participants shouted "Jai Bolo Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Ji Ki Jai!"

The UK Grama Seva group had been split into 7 teams of up to 6 people each and each group was allocated different villages where they were to serve alongside Swami's students and faculty members. The UK Grama Seva group were extremely fortunate to be able to visit the Grama Seva Kitchen where Swami's Grama Seva prasadam are made in their tens of thousands over night, every night, to be distributed the following morning.



The villages covered over the 9 days were in the Kota Cervvu Mandal, Puttaparthi Mandal and Bukkapatnam Mandal. These districts are made up of many smaller villages, each of different sizes with the largest consisting of over 500 houses.

Swami's message and Love could be seen to be reaching out to the world, as the villagers were waiting with broad smiles for the arrival of the Grama Seva workers. The villagers had washed the front of their houses and painted rangoli to welcome Swami's students.

The Grama Seva began with bhajans, (Nagar Sankeertan) sung whilst walking through the main streets of the village to sanctify and purify the environment with God's name.

The Service was conducted in true Sai Spirit by adhering to the maxim "Service to Man is Service to God." This was carried out from 9am until all of the houses within the district were covered.

Jai Sai Ram.

Article submitted by West Drayton Group

Region 2 SSE National Sewa Day – Be the Change

On Sunday 25th Sept, 'National Sewa Day' thousands of good-hearted people across the world came together to perform service and experience the joy of giving in its truest sense. With this year's Region 2 SSE's participation in this collective endeavour, we hope that children, parents and teachers 'seeds of service' are watered so that acts of kindness and public service are performed more often by the 'family of Sai'. We were blessed with glorious sunshine and over 82 SSE children, parents and teachers from neighbouring Sai Centres (Harrow West, Mill Hill, Pinner & Slough) took part from 9.45am to 1.15pm with only a short break.

SSE children, parents and teachers, all joined forces in various tasks from potato picking, weeding and preparing prashad in the kitchen which was later consumed by all volunteers.



'Family of Sai – Love in Action' by all of Swami's children from the age of 2 years to adults.

Whatever the task, the devotees happily smiled and went off to their duty.



Teachers supported children from every class.

SSE nursery child and parent working in unison while gathering their 'aloo's'.

Parents and children happily dug in wherever they saw a space. 'Great Teamwork'.



The children and teachers are on top form and seem to love their seva job going by their 'SMILES' and all were 'Happy, Happy, Happy'.

Do they ever stop smiling? Isn't it great? White shorts – maybe not so white in the end!

Do you like the red t-shirts? They are 'NATIONAL SEWA DAY' t-shirts. See how much our muscles will grow by the end of today.

Should Our Regional SSE Co-Ordinator change his day time job?

All who were present showed the 5 D's (Duty, Discipline, Devotion, Discrimination and Determination). Just take a look at the smile and pride on this teachers face.



The children were so keen to carry on working, they literally only stopped for about 15 minutes and were back in the field collecting 'aloo' (potatoes).



'Look what I picked up. Now I just need to find mummy to make some chips as this is my biggest pick of the day.'

The potatoes were then sorted into small, medium and large sizes.

The devotees collected nearly two carts of potatoes. That was tonnes of potatoes.



Look what we picked up together with our big helpers.

It's show time (that is, Potato Showtime). SSE show and tell time.

It was an impeccable and united front.

Almost all of the SSE children and teachers were treated with a ride on the bull and cart.

This wonderful seva experience ended with all of us thanking our Dearest Swami. We were treated to a special Hare Krishna prashad and some children even had the energy to feed the cows and hopefully in turn they will have the strength to keep ploughing the field.

Submitted by Bhupendra Solanki
R2 SSE Coordinator



Region 2 : SSE Teacher Training 'Lead by Example – Be. Do. Tell.'

On Saturday 1st Oct, around 50 SSE teachers and trainers across three regions (R2, R3 & R6) gathered at the R2 Teacher Training Workshop.

All participants were greeted with a loving smile and a light breakfast to whet our appetite. Our appetite was further filled with heartfelt prayers and a Ganesh bhajan to kick off the workshop. Bhupendrabhai (R2 SSE Coordinator), welcomed everyone and informed us how the day will be interactive with an opportunity to ask questions and share best practices in delivering Swami's 5 teaching techniques: Prayers, Meditation (Silent Sitting for younger class), Story Telling, Group Devotional Singing, and Group Activities to Develop and promote the 5 Human Values and their Sub-Values.



Sister Vidyu (National SSE Coordinator) reminded us of the history of 'Bal Vikas' now referred to as 'Sai Spiritual Education' (SSE) in UK. She offered some reference as to how the foundation of SSE programme had been planted by her grandmother and mother from an early age and how the fruits since have shaped her personal spiritual journey to the present day. Sister Vidyu reminded us that we should all be using the original syllabus and the revised syllabus for Group Y1, Y2, Y3 & G2 Y1) will be cascaded via the RSSEC in the coming weeks.



Dr Rakendu, Child Psychologist, highlighted the importances of influences of people around the social interactions e.g. home/parents, school/teachers, friends, extended family and others. Also highlighted was how the teachers should deliver lessons to the age and development of the child/class. Hence:
From birth to 2 yrs – Child has object awareness.
Nursery (2 to 6yrs) – classifies objects by speech development.
Group 1 (6 to 9 yrs) – able to learn concepts such as numbers, size, weight etc.
Group 2 (9 to 12 yrs) – thinking is logical – concrete.
Group 3 (12 yrs and above) – abstract thinking capable of analytical and critical thinking. Problem solving.

Further explanations were given around the Group 1, 2 and 3 understanding and reasoning behaviours, including the imbibing of moral and "children with special needs" was covered. The important aspect that came out of this talk was that teachers need to be very caring and sensitive when placed in a situation where a child has been identified as requiring more attention. Uncle Chun, NSSE Trainer, covered the importance of silent sitting and storytelling and delivered it in a very entertaining way. Uncle Chun reminded us that children suffer from stress as much as adults do and we need to think what our children could be going through. Silent sitting as a technique, when taught to the children will be a tool that they can use forever to help with stress. There is a very positive side effect of silent sitting when it is taken seriously.



Region 3 (London - East & Central)

Akhand Bhajan
from
Saturday 12th November 6.00pm
to
Sunday 13th November 6.00pm
(24Hrs) at the following venues.

East London

Christchurch Primary School,
Wellesley Road,
Ilford, Essex,
IG1 4LQ

Central London

Coram Fields Nursery,
93 Guilford Street,
Russell Square,
WC1N 1DN

Mill Hill

St Andrew's Primary School (next to
Orange Tree Pub)
Totteridge Green
Totteridge Lane
N20 8NX

Milton Keynes - (Singing for Peace! – Multifaith)

Japanese Buddhist Temple
North Willen Park, Willen Lake, (Access
via Brickhill St. V10),
Milton Keynes, MK15 0BA

Ladies Day – 19th November **PROGRAMME**

10:45am	3 AUMS, Prayer & Bhajan
11:00am	“Something Beautiful for God” – Workshop
12:30pm	LUNCH
1:30pm - 1:50pm	Prayers & Bhajan
1:50pm - 1:55pm	Introduction for afternoon programme
2:00pm - 2:20pm	Speaker – Mrs Gayathri Nadella (Former Sai Student & Region 5 SSE Co-ordinator)
2:20pm - 3:50pm	Cultural presentations by R3 Ladies
3:50pm - 4:05pm	Bhajan & Aarti

Venue: Lady of Lourdes Church, 51 Cambridge Park Road, Leytonstone, E11 2PR

PLEASE DO BRING YOUR FAMILIES – ALL ARE WELCOME!

Swami's Birthday Celebrations

19th November – Luton and Milton Keynes Sai Centres – 5.00pm to 7.00pm at Wigmore Church Hall, Crawley Green Road, Luton, Bedfordshire. LU2 9TE.

20th November – Thurrock Sai Group – from 10.00am at Orsett Village Hall Orsett, Essex RM16 3ER

23rd November – Mill Hill Sai Centre – from 5.00am to 6.00am at St Andrew's Primary School (next to Orange Tree Pub) Totteridge Green, Totteridge Lane N20 8NX

23rd November – Foster Hill Sai Centre – from 6.00am to 7.30am and from 8.00pm to 9.00pm at 71 Foster Hill Road, Bedford, MK40 2EX

23rd November - Manor Park Sai Centre - 8.00pm to 10.30pm at Christchurch Primary School, Wellesley Road, Ilford, IG1 4LQ.

23rd November – Chelmsford Sai Centre – from 7.00pm at Great Baddow Millenium Community Centre, Baddow Road Chelmsford- Essex CM2 9RL

23rd November - The East Suffolk Sai Group – from 12.00 noon at Moat Hall, Main Road, Darsham, Suffolk, IP17 3PP. Telephone 01728 668 404.

24th November – Arkley Sai Centre – from 7.30pm at The Village Hall, Brickfield Lane, Off Barnet Road (A411), Arkley EN53LD

24th November – Hatfield Sai Centre – from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm at Green Lanes Primary School, Green Lanes, Hatfield Garden Village, Hatfield AL10 9JY.

26th November – Edmonton Sai Centre- from 7.30pm at St. John Ambulance Brigade, 32-36 Claremont Street, Edmonton London N18 2RR

26th November – Ilford Sai Centre – 7.15pm to 8.30pm at St.Peters & St.Pauls Parish Hall 342 High Road, Ilford Essex, IG1 1QP

26th November – Bedford Sai Centre – 7.00pm to 9.00pm at Cauldwell Community Centre, Althorpe Street, Bedford MK42 9HF

26th November – London East Centre – from 7.00pm at Upton Centre, Claude Road, Forest Gate, London, E13 0QB

27th November – Mill Hill Sai Centre – from 8.30am at St Andrew's Primary School (next to Orange Tree Pub), Totteridge Green, Totteridge Lane, N20 8NX

27th November – Walthamstow Sai Centre – from 9.00am at Stonydown Park School Pretoria Avenue, Walthamstow, London, E176JY

27th November – Finchley Sai Centre – from 10.00am at Compton School, Summers Lane, Finchley, London, N12 0QG

27th November - Region 3 – 2.30pm to 6.30pm - Hariben Bachubhai Nagrecha Hall, 198 - 202 Leyton Road, London E15 1DT

Guest Speakers - **Sri Krishna Subramaniam** Gold Medalist Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and **Sri B.S.Vijayasai** from Bangalore Ex Student and Lecturer Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher learning, Regular Mandir Singer and part of production team " A Bridge Across Time"

Region 4 (Midlands)



Leicester Diwali & New Year Programme.

The Diwali and New Year celebrations at Leicester were not one to be taken lightly! There were rows upon rows of mouth-watering delicacies offered as part of the Ankut, vibrant Rangoli patterns on display, and divas lighting up the sacred path. Devotees from all over Region 4 came and joined us on this special occasion and were joined by our National Chair Shitubhai Chudasama, Vice-Chair Mel Griffin, National Secretary Kiranbhai Patel and our National SSE co-ordinator Sister Vidyulata Narayan.

The day began with some beautiful bhajans, followed by talks from our esteemed international guests. Present on the auspicious occasion were Mr and Mrs Nimesh and Kamla Pandya from India.

Nimish Pandya is presently the District President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Mumbai and is a member of the Council of Management of Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Maharashtra. He is on the Sub Committee of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust relating to Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, India. He is also on the National Council of Sathya Sai Schools in India. He has been actively involved in the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Programme for several years and has been associated with the Education In Human Values Programme since its inception.

Mrs Kamla Pandya is a two time Gold Medalist from Bombay University in Psychology and in Jurisprudence. Married by Bhagwan at Parthi and under Bhagwan's Directions, she studied Law after marriage and changed her profession from teaching to pleading and is presently a practicing advocate in Mumbai. She has been a Bal Vikas Guru since the tender age of 17 and is presently the Deputy National Co-ordinator for SSS Bal Vikas Education in India. She has been an EHV Faculty Member right from its inception in 1981.

Brother Nimesh addressed the audience with his personal experiences that highlighted the divine nature of Swami as a Supreme Master and how Swami's whole life was his message. He told us why our Organisation differs from any Organisation in the world – because never before has an Avatar come onto Earth to tell mankind he is also God.

He then exhorted all devotees to take note of the following key messages of Bhagawan;

- It is first time in the history of mankind that an Avatar came on the face of the earth not to make each one of us his followers, Bhagawan was eager to tell us **not only is He God but We are also God and that it is our destiny and he wants us to live that destiny and achieve it in this birth itself!**

- The second most beautiful thing Bhagawan did was to disclose the simple address of God. Man has run helter-skelter to Temples, Mosques, Gurudwara's and different places in search of God but Bhagawan came and told us **"Look Bangaru, look nowhere else. I am right here sitting in your heart and dealing with everything you have to do."**

- The third most important thing that Bhagawan told us was very clear. He said, **not only I am residing in you and seated inside your heart but I am the same god that resides in the hearts of each and every one of us!**

It was Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who for the first time in history undertook a massive evaluation exercise of making man the prime creation, for **we have created a world where everything is valuable and we are least invaluable. Bhagawan changed that completely and made us the most valuable and everything least valuable in our lives!** This is the gift and the grace of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Q: What is the devotion we must offer to Swami's Mahasamadhi?

Bhagawan did not define devotion as japa or dhyana or bhajan. **He defined devotion as that in a human being, where the human being is at peace always both in happiness and sorrow. And that 'Samabhav' was the devotion that Bhagawan defined and expected from all of us.**





Today it is a challenge for all of us to ensure we retain our peace both in happiness and sorrow at all times because that is the life breath, that is the devotion Bhagawan is expecting out of all of us.

He shared some profound words with us and gave us many practical anecdotes from his life, all in a jovial and down to earth manner.

SSE Presentation

The next item was a short presentation by the Group **2 SSE** children on the characteristics/qualities of Lord Ram, his brothers Bharata, Laxman & Shatrugna, Mother Sita and Hanuman;

Lord Ram - Despite being a divine incarnation, Lord Ram lived like an ordinary human being and faced the ups and downs of life. His pious personality and unperturbed devotion to the highest ideals of humanity reflect how an ordinary human being should lead their life, always adhering to the path of Dharma – righteousness.

Mother Sita – She represented loyalty, piety, saintliness, balanced nature, patience and forbearance. She was a symbol of sacrifice and the ideal woman.

Hanuman - Represents the ideal selfless devotee. He is the symbol for physical and inner strength, perseverance and devotion. Another name for Hanuman is 'Sankat Mochan.' Sankat Mochan' means remover of troubles. In the Ramayana Lord Rama turned to Hanuman to help him search for Sita.

Sister Kamla Pandya

Our next guest Mrs Kamala Pandya spoke of the importance of Balvikas/SSE in a child's life. And how once the seeds have been sown, they shall surely sprout! She also mentioned the integral role that parents must play in their children's participation in SSE classes. Mrs Kamala Pandya led a very interactive session with the audience with many interesting stories and lessons to learn from SSE.



She asked the parents of SSE children if they knew what was being taught in classes. Some answered with "Values" and "Swami's teachings" but she stated that parents should have more understanding of what their child learns and gains from SSE and how their support at home will bring out the best in their child.

She suggested that all office bearers and active members must sit in to observe SSE classes, so that they can understand the Values in more depth and be better equipped to reinforce the teachings at the centre as all members are role models for the children.

She also told us what the three S's in SSSO 'Sri Sathya Sai' symbolise;

- 1. Silent Sitting:** this must be the start of each and every day (even if only for 2 minutes), to reconnect us with our Source and empty our mind of unnecessary thoughts.
- 2. Self-Study:** reading Sai literature or any good books every day, even if it is only a paragraph to help us analyse our thoughts and motives, observing how we act and react with the world.
- 3. Self-Audit:** at the end of the day we must reflect on our thoughts, words and deeds – we must endeavour to learn from our mistakes and continuously improve ourselves.



The whole atmosphere was light-hearted and engaging, with the added aroma of some amazing food! The programme then came to a close by the serving of Ankut Mahaprashadam of 54 different dishes offered to Swami by the devotees to celebrate the Gujarati New Year.

Youth Session

After the programme, the Youth were very lucky to have a Sathsang with both Mr Nimesh and Mrs Kamala Pandya. Their caring attitudes were easily seen as they attended to each person's questions with thought and support. They told us that the most essential ability a Youth should cultivate is to master the mind – we should be able to listen to our intuition and act on what it tells us, above all else. Brother Nimesh gave personal examples from his profession as a lawyer to convey that we can achieve excellence only when we listen to our inner voice and follow our principles with conviction, without hesitation or fear. All in all it was a brilliant day. The Youth session even overran because nobody wanted to leave!

Riddhi Parmar

Leicester Youth Coordinator

Bhavin Jivraj

Leicester Active Youth

DISCOVER
A UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL
ENVIRONMENT
FOR YOUR CHILD

SATHYA SAI SCHOOL
INDEPENDENT NURSERY, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL
WHERE CHILDREN EXCEL
ACADEMICALLY, SPIRITUALLY AND MORALLY

OPEN DAY
SATURDAY 26TH NOVEMBER
FROM 10A.M. TO 4P.M.

Sathya Sai School – Leicester (UK)
Bede Island, Narborough Road,
(At the cross road with Upperton Road),
Leicester, LE3 0BT

Tel: 0116 254 6400
email: info@leicester.sathyasaischool.org.uk
www.leicester.sathyasaischool.org.uk

DEVELOPING CHARACTER ALONGSIDE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The SSE National Conference 2011

The National conference for SSE/Balvikas was held at the Merton Sai Centre in Wimbledon on the 29th Oct, 2011. The theme for the conference was **"Living with God is Education, Living for God is Service and Living in God is Realisation."**



We were blessed to have two eminent speakers, who have spent the major part of their lives dedicated to BalVikas/SSE and the Sai movement in India. Brother Nimish Pandya and Sister Kamala Pandya spoke from a wealth of personal experience of over three and a half decades in the Sai Organisation and Balvikas.



Brother Nimish started his talk with a story of the great master Confucius, travelling in a convoy of carriages through northern China, during the winter. The scrolls containing his teachings were in the last carriage, which unfortunately went through thin ice and drowned. A disciple of the master jumped into the freezing water at great peril to his life and dived repeatedly to retrieve the scrolls. The remaining disciples looked on in shock and terror. The disciple retrieved the last of the scrolls and dropped dead of exhaustion and hypothermia. When asked by the other disciples, the master replied, "All of you are willing to lay down your lives for the master, I am glad that at least one of you was willing to die for the message." How relevant this story is to all of us "devotees". Bhagavan has his own definition for the word "devotees", as He stated in his letter to His elder brother Sri Seshama Raju, written in 1947- as "One who has equal mindedness in joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain..."

He said the essence of SSE and SSEHV was in practising before preaching. The voice of God is the "Preranaa" or inspiration from within. The Conscience is the Master (When Swami tells us to follow the Master, Face the Devil ...) He illustrated this point with a beautiful personal experience with Swami. When we put this into practice it is Dharma (right conduct).

Following Dharma leads to Shanthi (Peace). This in turn results in Ahimsa (Non Violence) as understanding.

The Balvikas model is an inspirational model not an instructional one. The fundamental purpose of these classes is not merely to teach the child prayers, bhajans and stories and do silent sitting and group activities, but to train them from an early age to quieten their minds, in order to hear the voice of their conscience. When put into practice the children gain Self Confidence, attain excellence and acquire the quality of leadership. Harmony in thought, word and deed, i.e. listening to the conscience is the way to attain peace.

He stressed on spiritual ego and referred to it as the "Snake of 99" (Snakes and ladders!) being the most



dangerous. The sense of doership separates man from God. The entire talk was illustrated with personal experiences and insights gained at the lotus feet of Bhagavan.

This was followed by an interactive workshop based on the conference theme, where all the delegates got an opportunity to formulate three key take home messages.

All credit goes to the love and tireless work of Region 1, who provided a sumptuous feast for lunch and this was followed by a further inspiring session which included a lively panel discussion. The panellists were Bro. Nimish and Sister Kamala Pandya, Gowri Mylvaganam formerly National SSE coordinator and Karthik Prashanth an alumnus of SSSIHL.

There were three workshops with lively group participation on multi faith prayers (Roni Ramdin) Vedic chanting (Anand Venkatraman) and Child Psychology and special educational needs (Dr. Rakendu Suren)

Our second Keynote speaker Sister Kamala Pandya alternately made us laugh and cry with her loving message to the SSE teachers. She laid emphasis on the attributes required of a teacher being **Quality, Attitude, Approach and Commitment**. The quality of practising before preaching; the attitude of love and approach of Treating the Class – Handle with Care! And finally commitment. The name SSSBALVIKAS contains the sadhana essential for teachers; we need to do Silent sitting, Study of spiritual literature and Self introspection in the form of a spiritual diary for ourselves prior to implementing it with the children. The vowels in the word balvikas represent the three principle paths to God realisation i.e. Attitude of love-Bhakthi marga, Introspection-Jnana marga and Action-Karma marga.



This was followed by talks by four alumni of the SSE programme in the UK highlighting how the programme had influenced their lives. The conference concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by the current national SSE coordinator Vidyulatha Narayan and a soul stirring rendition of Bhajans by the Sai Youth of UK.

Report from the National SSE Conference planning group

National Service Wing

“Be the change you want to see in the world” - Mohandas K. Gandhi

The second annual Sewa Day on Sunday 25th September 2011 brought thousands of volunteers from all over the United Kingdom and fifteen countries across the globe including the USA, Kenya, United Arab Emirates, Australia, South Africa, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Mauritius to participate in a day of community volunteering.

The Sewa Day initiative as a concept aims at helping others in need by sacrificing one's time without wanting anything in return. Service is the first step along the spiritual path (Baba).



Communities, celebrities, politicians and businesses including Croydon council, Metropolitan Police, banking group Lloyds TSB PLC from across the country took part in local projects designed to relieve poverty, help the environment and bring joy to people.

Selfless service has been the spiritual foundation on which the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation rests. Volunteers across all walks of life from the SSSSO UK joined forces to share in the wonderful experiences of service to the community on Sewa Day. Service is worship and each act of service is a flower placed at the feet of God (Baba).



Unity is very essential for the progress of the Community (Baba). We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love (Mother Teresa). For the progress of humanity, work alone is not adequate, but the work should be associated with love, compassion, right conduct, truthfulness and sympathy. Without the above qualities, selfless service cannot be performed (Baba).

A wide variety of service activities from all regions of the SSSSO UK were offered ranging from cooking and serving at Soup kitchens, entertaining the senior citizens, cleaning temples, working on the farm and distributing leaflets for the hospice.

R1 - Soup Kitchen at Spires and general help in the Wimbledon temple.

R2 - Potatoes and vegetables harvest and clearing of weeds at the Hare Krishna temple in Watford, distribution of leaflets for St Luke's hospice, Soup Kitchen at the Missionaries of Charity, Entertaining 92 seniors in Norwood



green Care Home,

Entertaining seniors from age-Link at Greenford Centre and entertaining seniors from Brent in Alperton Centre.

R3 - Potatoes and vegetables harvest and clearing of weeds at the Hare Krishna temple in Watford and assisting Macmillan Cancer support by holding a coffee morning on Saturday 24 September.

R4 - General Seva at Sathya Sai School, Leicester

R5 - Cleaning of temple and collection of plastic tops throughout the week concluding on Sunday 25 September.

R6 - A Tea party at home for lonely seniors and gardening, painting and general handy work in Gemini Associate Home.

R7 - General Seva at Sathya Sai School, Leicester

R8 - Singing and teaching bhajan and slokas at a local temple.



Many volunteers from the community joined us to do service on this day whether on the farm, in the Soup Kitchen at the Missionaries of Charity and in distribution of leaflets among others. Serving selflessly together was indeed a beautiful moment for all.

If you lift the hand to serve, to help, to console, to encourage another man, you are lifting it for God, for God is in every man (Baba).

"I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy, I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy." Mother Teresa

Gayatri Bikoo
National Service Coordinator

FOOD SAFETY TRAINING LEVEL 2

Three types of purities are said to be necessary with regard to food. These are

1. Pathra Shuddhi (purity of vessels): The vessels for cooking must be clean and pure.
2. Paka Shuddhi (purity of the process of cooking): The process of cooking should not bring impurities. The person who prepares the food and serves must not only be clean in dress, but clean in habits, character, and conduct. He should not allow his mind to dwell on wicked or vicious ideas.
3. Pachaka Shuddhi (purity of food materials): The provisions used for cooking has to be pure and of good quality. They should have been procured by fair means (Baba).



Preparing and serving food to the public form a big part of our commitment in service activities and whether it is preparing food at home to deliver to our less privileged brothers and sisters in the community, helping in soup kitchens or cooking food for devotees at events, everyone involved in food handling has a special responsibility for safeguarding the health of consumers and ensure that the food they serve is wholesome and perfectly safe to eat.

The UK and European Food Hygiene Regulations requires all food handlers to be trained and to exercise his or her duty of care to enable them to handle food safely.

On Saturday 29th October 2011, a second Food Safety Workshop was organised at Oxhey Wood Primary School in South Oxhey with twenty two participants mainly with devotees from region 2 as well as Priti Chouhan from Lidget Green centre in region 5 together with 11 Sisters from the Missionaries of Charity of Elephant & Castle and Southall.

The workshop was kindly offered by Mrs Shanthi Uthayakumar who is a Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner and BRC Food Safety Auditor and who has been running her own Hygiene & Safety Management company for about 15 years.



The workshop is aimed at all food handlers and everyone who is involved with food safety issues. The course covered:

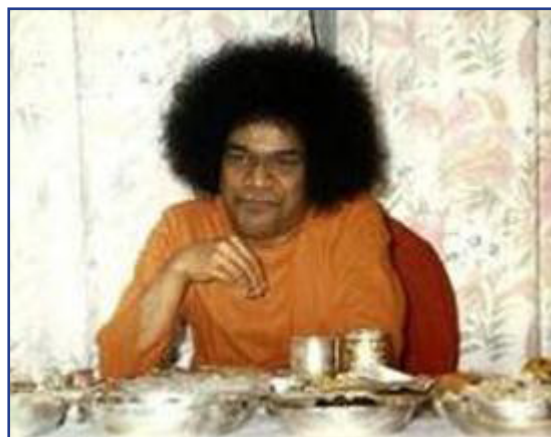
- Legislation
- Food Safety hazards
- Control and prevention of food poisoning, illnesses and diseases.
- Application and Implementation of food safety controls (HACCP).

The assessment was done through a multiple choice examination from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health which is a professional, awarding body at the forefront of environmental and public health and safety. Once successful, the certificate is valid for 3 years and is recognised internationally.

More workshops will be held in 2012 – one in March and one June/July. Watch out for further details! If you are interested in attending, please let your centre chair or regional service coordinator know.

Oh Lord Hari, You are the food, You are the enjoyer of the food, You are the giver of food. Therefore, I offer all that I consume at Thy Lotus Feet.

Gayatri Bikoo
National Service Coordinator



Regional Announcements

Region 2

Akhand Bhajans

Date: Sunday 13th November 2011

Time: 5.45am – 6.00pm

Venue: Oxhey Wood Primary School, Oxhey Drive, South Oxhey, Watford, WD19 7SL

Region 5

Akhanda Bhajan

Lidget Green Sai Centre, Bradford: 6.00pm to 9.00pm on Saturday 12th November at 252 Legrams Lane, Bradford, BD7 2HR

Newcastle Sai Centre: 4.00pm to 8.00pm on Saturday 12th November

Northwest Sai Centres (including Greater Manchester, Bolton & Sandbach): 6.00am to 6.00pm on Sunday 13th November at Veda Mandir, Thomas Holden Street, Bolton, BL1 2QG

Regional Birthday Celebrations:

Sunday 27th November from 10.30am to 14.30pm at Indian Association Hall, Schofield Street, Oldham, OL8 1QJ.

Region 7

Akhand Bhajans

Date: Saturday 12th/Sunday 13th November

Time: Starting at 8.00pm on 12th November and finishing at 7.00pm on Sunday 13th November 2011

Venue: Claverton Down Community Hall, Claverton Down Road, Bath, BA2 6DT

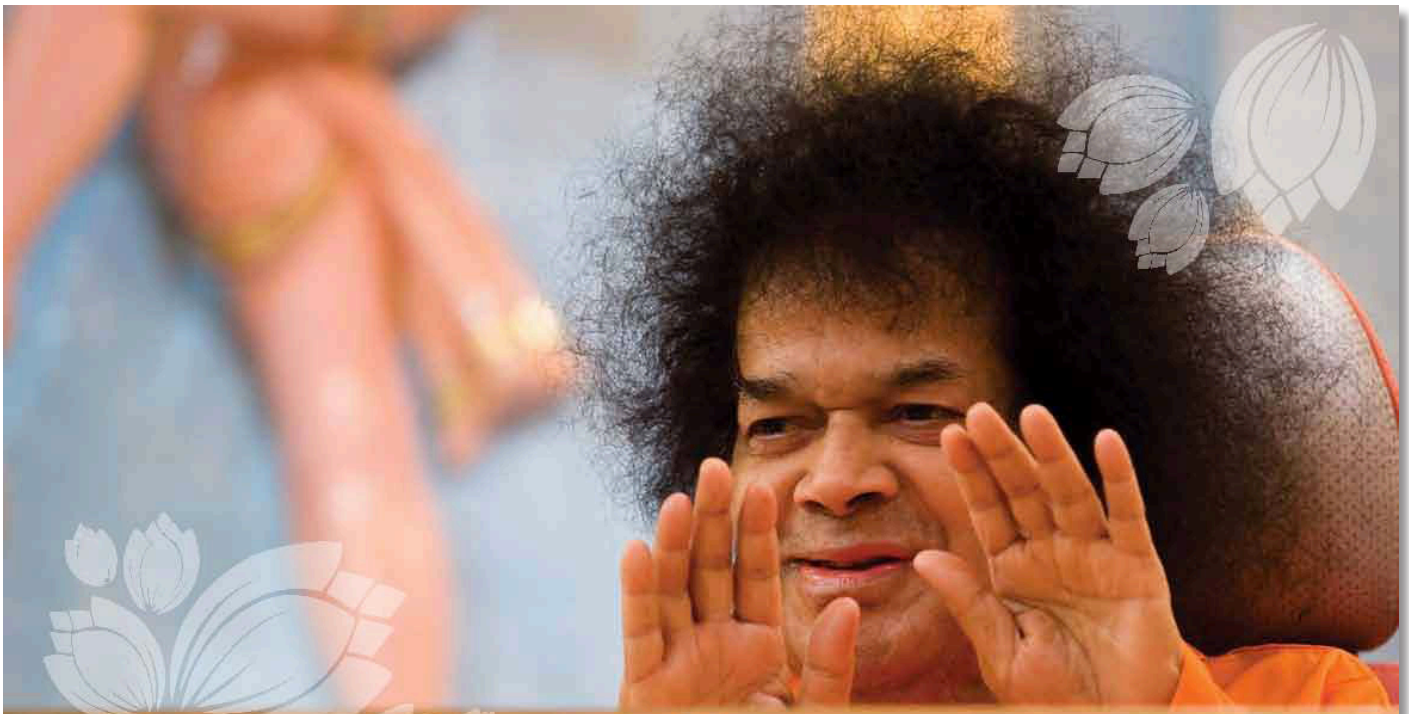
Swami's Birthday and Ladies Day Celebrations

Date: Saturday 19th November

Time: Starting at 1pm with lunch finishing at 5pm.

Venue: Hindu Community Centre, 64 Swindon Road, Cheltenham, GL51 4AY





 Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation, UK

NATIONAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

DATE: SATURDAY 26TH NOVEMBER 2011

VENUE: RAMGARHIA COMMUNITY CENTRE
ULVERSCROFT ROAD, LEICESTER, LE4 6BY

SPEAKERS : Leonardo Gutter, Member Prasanthi Council | B S Vijayasai,
Former Student and Faculty Member, SSSIHL, Prasanthi Nilayam |
And a Music Concert by Eminent Artists from UK

PROGRAMME: Session 1 : 10.30am – 2.30pm (4 Hours)
Session 2 : 3.30pm – 7.30pm (4 Hours)

TO REGISTER VISIT : www.srisathyasai.org.uk/national-programmes

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT :

Kiran Patel - 07429 138 939 or Gayatri Bikoo - 07984 792 109

or email : national-programmes@srisathyasai.org.uk

Lord Ganesh-The Spiritual Significance



It was a short while ago when I was doing a talk about the spiritual significance of each aspect of Devotional singing / Bhajans when I was questioned by a group of loving Western devotees who asked me about the presence of the statue of Lord Ganesh in the Altar. He felt that our beloved Swami's teachings were Universal and not religious biased and hence the presence of Lord Ganesh's statue gave the impression that the devotional singing session was conducted in front of a Hindu orientated Altar rather than a Universal or Multi-Faith Sai Altar.

With the guidance of our beloved Swami and the wisdom bestowed by Him, I explained to the total satisfaction of the devotee the significance of the presence of Lord Ganesh's statue and the spiritual message Lord Ganesh represented. At the end - the devotee was quite satisfied that Lord Ganesh represented a universal message and was able to accept it happily. I now most humbly wish to share this with the rest of my Sai family.

Very often the popular message - that if you pray to Lord Ganesh - He will remove all obstacles in life - is greatly misunderstood or misinterpreted. Have you seen or followed an elephant in a jungle walking through the shrubs and trees? The elephant is so large, heavy and powerful, the jungle vegetation virtually crumbles under his feet and its body weight simply moves the trees and shrubs apart. In the event if you were walking behind this elephant - you now have a clear and unobtrusive pathway in the jungle to walk through without any hindrance.

So in real life what does this mean? The jungle is our world where we live with all sorts of challenges, hindrances and obstacles and the elephant signifies the higher Wisdom that gives the strength and confidence to mankind to meet these challenges and overcome the obstacles. This means that Lord Ganesh signifies the wisdom bestowed by the divine on mankind who will use this Wisdom to walk through the jungle of life in this world overcoming obstacles by boldly facing challenges.

What further does this elephant form of Lord Ganesh signify and what other messages does this form give us?

The large ears of the elephant signify that we must listen well whilst the constant flapping of the ear-lobes gives us the message - **Hear no Evil** - that is "flap-away" messages that are evil. The truncated elephant face of Lord Ganesh urges us **to speak well and less** - that is speak wisely and only when necessary - sufficient to convey the message and also signifies the cultivation of inner strength to **Speak No Evil**.

All deities have an animal assigned as the vehicle to them and Lord Ganesh's vehicle is a tiny mouse. There is a mythological story behind this that explains how the mouse became the vehicle for Lord Ganesh. The story is about a powerful saint named Savupary whose wife Manomaya was constantly harassed by an "asura" or demon named Kravunchan. One day the Saint Savupary got angry and lost control over his emotions and cursed Kravunchan to turn in to a mouse. Also remember that the mouse has a habit of biting or tasting anything that it comes across. Even as a mouse the asura or demon was still going around biting and tasting everything that he came across. Saint Savupary now feeling sorry for this Mouse guided him to seek the wisdom of Lord Ganesh to overcome these desires which he did. Eventually Lord Ganesh accepted this mouse as His vehicle.



The message this story implies is that the mouse signifies the Worldly Desires or Kama that mankind suffers from. In order to overcome this and cultivate will power one needs the higher Wisdom through the grace of the God one believes in. By making the mouse as his vehicle under His control – Lord Ganesh signifies the need for higher Wisdom that is required by mankind to overcome the Kama or worldly desires which in fact is one of the six negatives qualities or obstacles that impede spiritual progress of mankind.

Another interesting practical feature is how a tiny mouse can carry around the heavily featured Lord Ganesh on his body. This signifies the fact that when you have the grace and blessings of the God you believe in – then God becomes an indweller in the hearts of the devotees residing as an eternal companion, light as a feather without causing any discomfort to the devotee.

In the same vein, when the carer of the elephant or the mahout wants to climb up on to the back of the elephant, the great beast lowers its trunk or bends his great pillar like legs to enable the keeper to climb up. This signifies the situation when the devotee earnestly and sincerely yearns to acquire spiritual or higher Wisdom that will enable the devotee to realise the true identity and purpose of human birth, then God enables the devotee to achieve this by giving all the assistance necessary to “climb up” towards this Wisdom.

And finally – in front of Lord Ganesh – as a mark of respect and devotion, it is traditional that the devotees knock the extreme corners of their forehead with crossed hands and clenched fists and also hold their ears and do sit-ups referred to as “Thoppu Karanam”.

Scientifically it has been discovered that doing this initiates fresh circulation of blood to the brain and thus assist in “recharging” the brain function. The sit-ups helps improve the circulation along the spine and the limbs, resulting in a feeling of freshness and alertness. This exercise is now being recommended to those who suffer from memory loss and absent-mindedness. In other words – Healthy mind in a healthy body is the message behind this traditional “Ganesh exercise”.

For the journey of life we need a healthy body and mind with higher Wisdom that will allow us to face the journey with courage and confidence and rather enjoy the journey than lament over the obstacles on the journey which are in fact placed there by the divine for our own good.

Therefore “Lord Ganesh” virtually signifies all the above discussed and is a Universal Messenger of divine wisdom for all devotees and not symbolic of Hindu religion. This is the reason that even in Prashanthi we have Lord Ganesh as you enter the holy premises and is called Ganesh Gate.

Jai Sairam
With humble Pranams - Raj Selvakumar



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