



May 2012 Edition

Quote

Embodiments of Love!

Spirituality does not mean a life of solitude. True spirituality lies in understanding the unity of the entire humanity, and giving up the sense of attachment and hatred. The principle of atma is the same in everyone.

What is the form of the Atma? Sugar has a form, but can anyone describe the form of sweetness? Sweetness can only be experienced, it cannot be explained. Similar is the case with the atmic principle too. It is ancient, eternal, attributeless, formless, pure, unsullied and immortal. The sweets such as mysore pak, gulab jamoon, burfi, etc., may vary in name and form, but sugar is the same in all. Likewise, names and forms are different, but the principle of atma is one and the same.

~ Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Editorial

Dear Fellow Pilgrims,
Loving Sai Ram to you!

The past two weeks has been a delightful and wonderful experience of Divine Love for hundreds and thousands of our devotees throughout the UK. We started with Sai Smaran, Gratitude Bhajans offered at His Divine Feet; we then had the National Sai Remembrance Day which will undoubtedly remain in our memories for years to come. Not to forget the National Easwamma Day, held after so many years which brought parents and children of all ages from around the country in unison to reflect His Glory. This was a period of celebration, in thankfulness for having being conferred with one of the greatest boons that anyone could ever wish for, that of having crossed His physical path.

Overarching this excitement, we had the highlight of the company of Dr Sanjay Sahni, Director of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Brindavan Campus who apart from attending the National events toured UK to share Bhagawan's message of Love with fellow devotees. We experienced the feeling of constantly being close to Bhagawan. These were precious and very unforgettable few days indeed!

With our thirst for our Divine Master not quenched, we have organised "Sai Jyothi", our National Pilgrimage for 2012 to Prasanthi Nilayam, our spiritual birthplace - please visit the link below for registration and further details

<http://www.srisathyasai.org.uk/national-programmes/nationalpilgrimage2012/>

Dr Kiran Patel,
UKCC Chair Person

The Glory of Motherhood



The Vedas declare 'Maatru Devo Bhava', Mother is verily God. Our mother is our first God and Guru. It is the mother who first points her child to it's father, who then takes the child to the Guru or teacher who in turn guides the child towards God.

Bhagawan reminds us that our foremost duty today is to revere our mother as divine and serve her regardless of country or circumstance. Maternal love Swami says, is akin to that of the Creator who projects and protects the infinite cosmos in a countless ways.

There are many notable examples in daily life of the divine quality which motherhood represents. The cow which sustains us with it's nourishing milk represents the divine as mother. The earth takes care of man in many ways; the earth represents the divine as mother. The country or motherland which provides us protection, cares, loves, provides us our rights and offers us chances to serve also represents the divine as mother. The sacred scriptures given to us by the great seers and saints which reveal to us the purpose of our human life represents the divine as mother.

Swami says that the physical mother or Dehamaatha is the first of the 'Five Mothers' that the child encounters. Her role is the greatest and most crucial in showing the child the importance of the other four mothers, namely Gomaatha, Bhoomaatha, Desahmaatha and Vedamaatha.

Bhagawan has demonstrated to us through his own example by dedicating the 6th of May as Easwamma Day, the day that is earmarked to revere and honour the 'Chosen Mother', Mother Easwamma. It is a day where the children of the Balvikas or Sai Spiritual Education movement across the world celebrate it as Children's Day and show their gratitude to their mothers. Mother Easwamma was the embodiment of simplicity, selfless love, patience and compassion. By remembering her greatness and saintliness, Swami teaches us the importance of honouring our mothers at all times.

The SSE children, parents, teachers, SSE alumni, Sai youth and elders of the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation of the United Kingdom came together on the 5th of May 2012 in Hatfield, Hertfordshire for the National Easwamma Day celebrations to express their heartfelt gratitude to their Beloved Mother Sai in what was a truly sacred and joyous occasion for all to witness and experience.

"If you honour your mother, the Mother of the Universe will guard you against harm"

~ Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Mrs Vidyulatha Narayan
National SSE Coordinator

Education Wing - SSEHV at Stokes Wood Primary School Leicester

SSEHV started at the school about two years ago. It started with me doing morning assemblies on Tuesdays. The assemblies are based on Human Values Stories delivered through PowerPoint's. The children's behaviour improved over this time. I then started a lunchtime Good Values Club for a few children. This year we have started introducing the guided light visualisation and the link to it is available on the Website / Blog of Abbey Primary Community School and the children are encouraged to do silent sitting at home. The school also displays the 'Quotation of the Week' and the children make posters based on Human Values. The assemblies are attended by the teachers and a governor of the school. Soon I am planning to give INSET to teachers on introducing the values in their classes.



Dipak Kumar
Good Values Club

National Easwamma Day 2012

In this world, there are many relationships but none equals the relationship that exists between a mother and child. Thus, mother is given the utmost importance in human life. Even Divine Incarnations, including our very dear Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, revered their chosen mothers immensely and taught humanity the glory of motherhood through such exemplary conduct. It is in this context that Easwamma Day is celebrated the world over by Sai devotees, commemorating the passing away of Mother Easwamma, Bhagawan Baba's Chosen Mother, on 6th May 1972. Children attending SSE (Sai Spiritual Education) classes offer their gratitude to mothers for their love and sacrifice through participation in various activities on this day.



This year in UK, the Easwamma Day celebrations were joyously held at a national level on Saturday the 5th of May 2012 in Hatfield, Hertfordshire. About 550 devotees, including 175 children and their parents from all the 8 Regions of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in the UK, participated and made this day a memorable one. Preparations were underway for many months preceding this day, and every child, parent and teacher participating in the celebrations worked sincerely in love, harmony and devotion to Bhagawan Baba. They made drawings, wrote poems and articles, prepared music programmes, songs and chants, short plays and multimedia presentations. The entire country and the SSE Wing seemed to buzz with enthusiasm and energy, and most of all the children naturally were very eager! The theme chosen for this event was centred around expressing gratitude to the '5 Mothers' that Bhagawan has taught us to revere. These include, apart from our physical mother (Dehamaatha), our Motherland (Desamaatha), our Scriptures (Vedamaatha), our Cattle (Gomaatha), our Mother Earth (Bhoomaatha).

As the day dawned, the cheerful little hearts filled the venue and its ambience with a sense of unsullied joy and beauty. Devotees walking in could instantaneously feel the warmth and brightness enveloping the venue, despite the slightly cloudy and cold weather outside. The main stage which was tastefully decorated in shades of white, blue, gold and pink, and which was adorned by the kind and loving visage of Mother Easwamma and the beautiful form of our dear Lord Bhagawan Baba added to this inviting and comforting experience. A professional band was playing some upbeat and

uplifting music in the background as delegates were settling down in their seats. There was an prevailing sense of eager anticipation and expectation, and one could hardly wait for the programme to begin and unfold the joys for the day. And one didn't have to wait long!

At the stroke of 10.30 am, the programme commenced with a procession by the children. They marched in a disciplined yet cute manner to the tune of "When the Saints go marching in" carrying banners, flowers, and various symbols representing the theme for the day. These were reverentially offered at the main altar on the Stage. The children then invoked the blessings of the Lord and the Mothers by chanting prayers and by group devotional singing. The SSE teachers and children then made a pledge to Swami and below is the children's pledge:



Dearest Swami, we the children of the United kingdom stand before you with all our love to take this pledge.
I promise to love, honour and obey my mother and father.
I promise to be truthful, gentle and kind in my thoughts words and actions.
Dear swami, I promise to help and comfort those who are in need.
I promise to do my best in all my tasks and remember to be thankful for the all that I receive.
With this pledge I pray with all my love for your presence in my life today and forever more.

The National SSE Co-ordinator Mrs Vidyulatha Narayan, set the scene for the day with the welcome address , and introduced the keynote speaker, brother Sanjay Sahni - Director SSSIHL, Brindavan campus . Brother Sanjay Sahni enthralled the audience with stories that portrayed the love that mother Easwaramma had for the Lord, and spoke on sacrifices that mothers make for their children. He narrated stories from his own life and the sacrifices his own mother had made for him. He showed a small video clip shot in Africa that showed how the maternal feelings of a buffalo herd had resulted in the herd chasing away a pack of ferocious lions (!) that had captured one of their calves, and the courage they showed to retrieve the calf.



The next ninety minutes were filled with the lovable and loving offerings of gratitude by the children from all the 8 Regions. Each Region, in their allotted time of 10 minutes, presented an item on an aspect of motherhood and the 5 Mothers. Children from Region 8 chanted and explained the significance of the Vedic chant Manthra Pushpam; children from Region 7 enacted scenes depicting the lasting influence of mothers in building the characters of great personalities such as Abraham Lincoln, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela etc; children from Region 6 offered a presentation on Mother Easwaramma, Mother Mary and Putli Bai (mother of Mahatma Gandhi); Region 5 children offered a song and dance item offering gratitude to the 5 mothers; Region 4, and Region 3 children including those from the SSE School in Region 3 made musical offerings; Region 2 children made a multimedia presentation on our responsibility and duty towards respecting our environment and mother earth; and Region 1 offered a talk expressing gratitude and love to one's physical mother and our Divine Mother Sai. These renditions touched the hearts of all those present, and from every lip there arose a spontaneous blessing and prayer for the welfare and happiness of all our little angels.

Then came Lunch! And what a delightful lunch it was! The squeals of delight from the children that reverberated in the dining hall as they were treated to pizza and potato wedges, reached a crescendo when their eyes fell on the....you guessed right..... ice cream! Even the adults joined in the merry and mirth and some even moaned in mock, "why can't we have pizza instead of this rice and curry? We are also children of our parents!"



Following lunch, children were engaged in group activity such as arts and crafts, and a treasure hunt while the adults were treated to a second helping of brother Sanjay Sahni's deliciously divine stories and insights. He seemed himself to have enjoyed the company of the guileless hearts, and his talk in the afternoon reflected this joy in great measure. He also participated in a Q & A session giving everyone present rare insights and higher understanding. None wished for this uplifting session to end, but it had to nonetheless!



The finale for children and adults was an energetic, fun-filled, toe-tapping musical rendition on values by the highly talented and devoted Sai sister, Renu Gidoomal! Renu had everyone singing along, children especially but the adults too, and the enthusiastic participation of the children in singing along to the song "I am a little ant" seemed to bring the roof down! All in all, it was a fitting finale to a wonderful programme.

The programme concluded with the offering of Arati to the Lord, and a souvenir for each child to take away. But looking at their beaming faces, it was clear to see that they were taking away much more than the souvenir!

Pravina Patel
SSE Teacher

National Sai Remembrance Day 2012 - Celebrating the "Religion of Universal Love"

Like a feast to a starving man,
Like rain for the parched earth,
Like a child to one yearning for a son,
The Lord comes to protect Dharma, And save the virtuous and the good.
-Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



It may have been the wettest April on record in UK, but the rains could not dampen the spirits of the 1500 devotees from around the country who had gathered in Leicester, for the National Sai Remembrance Day. Indeed these were not April showers - in our hearts they were verily summer showers in Brindavan, as we had amidst us as our Chief Guest Sri Sanjay Sahni from Brindavan! A year on since Swami's physical departure, apparently so much had changed and yet so little in reality! Deep down we know He had not gone at all. No doubt He is closer to us than ever before, eager to connect with us than ever before!



It is well known that Constant Remembrance of the Divine Lord confers the experience of oneness with the divine, as demonstrated by many supreme devotees of the Lord such as the *gopikas*, the cowherdesses during the Krishna Avathar. The *gopikas* regarded the Lord as their constant companion and their most precious treasure. Their hearts thus filled with this divine consciousness, they saw the divine in everything and everywhere. They realised that *Jnana* or supreme wisdom is nothing but the awareness and experience of this Oneness.

The National Sai Remembrance Day afforded everyone of us another opportunity to fill our hearts with such divine consciousness and Love. Looking around at the tremendous love that had gone into arranging everything, from the breath taking altar to the warmth of the Sevadals, it was clear that this was going to be a day to remember.



'There is only One Religion: The Religion of Love' is the Divine Declaration of Bhagawan Baba. In the spirit of this Universal Message, the program commenced with a beautiful procession by the SSE children led by representatives from various religions and faiths. And though varied in language and melody, each leader chanted to the same tune of that one divinity that envelops and resides in all. After the prayers and chantings, the children of the Sai Spiritual Education Choir delighted everyone by giving a sublime rendition of two songs they had performed in Swami's Divine Presence in Prasanthi Nilayam during the National UK Pilgrimage in 2012 - George Harrison's 'All you need is love' and 'My sweet lord', before finishing with Samasta Loka Sukhino Bhavanthu. The divine synergy of Love for God that emanated from the Stage occupied by these leaders and children enveloped the ambience in the auditorium, and an immensely positive vibrations of hope, harmony and peace were experienced by one and all.



Opening Address by Dr Kiran Patel



Dr Kiran Patel, National Chair of the SSSS Organisation in UK, gave a warm welcome, reminding us of the glory and purpose for which the Poorna Avatar had come. He inspired us by stressing the importance of Swami's mission - the brotherhood of man, and how we should all make His mission our own life's mission simply by loving more and more.

'Love is My Form' Keynote Address : Sanjay Sahni Part 1

We were blessed to have with us, as our esteemed guest for the day, brother Sanjay Sahni, Director of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Brindavan Campus, who gave a rapturous, awe inspiring talk.

Behind the many wonderful experiences that he shared with us about the time he spent in the Divine Presence of our dear Bhagawan, his message was simple and clear, although one that is often forgotten: Swami is always with us! This was lucidly expressed as a *Manthra* given by Swami during the 1986 Guru Poornima celebrations- *Devudunnadu* (Telugu) - which translates to 'God is'.

If we understood this, brother Sanjay Sahni said, we could not do any wrong. Our lives would be sanctified and we could participate fully in his Divine Mission. If we understood this, we were certain to experience him, in every corner around us; filling everything, pervading everything.

'Prema Vahini' Eternal Stream of Divine Love : Musical Tribute by Ustad Dharambir Singhji MBE

After a hearty lunch we were treated to an elevating musical performance by Ustad Dharambir Singh, one of the most prominent sitar players and Indian music teachers in the UK. He was accompanied by his illustrious and well known disciple, sister Roopa Panesar, who had the good fortune to perform in the Divine Presence of Bhagawan in Prasanthi Nilayam; by Kaviraj Singh on Santoor; and by the Tabla duo of Gurdain Singh Reyatt and Upneet Singh. Ustad ji's humility and love for God were abundantly evident in his introductory words and his musical rendition.

Their soulful and unique way of playing left us all enthralled, each one of the musicians displayed great talent, skill and expertise. And we all sang wholeheartedly when they performed one or two familiar bhajans.



'Living in God is Realization' : Sanjay Sahni Part 2

As the music drew to an electrifying finale our eager ears were captivated once more by the continuation of Sanjay Sahni's talk.

"Living with god", he said, "was education, living for god was service, and living in god was spirituality". Spirituality was nothing short of realisation!



Using the example of Hanuman, he reminded us that we should all become perfect servants of the Lord. The whole Ramayana was enacted to show to the world the sterling example of Hanuman- his love for the Lord, his unflinching faith in the Lord, and his readiness to serve the Lord at all times. In the same way Swami came to show to the world the love in action exemplified by his devotees - this paradigm is now our opportunity to carry this ideal of selfless service and transform our lives.

The Lord does not discriminate between colour and creed, young and old. All were entitled to play a part in this divine mission. The only qualification was steadfastness of faith and unswerving love for all beings. Brother Sanjay concluded - Swami's physical mission may have been over, but that was just the first part to this divine saga. The second part was only now commencing when we the devotees will work in unity and love, and achieve great things in His Divine Name.

It is difficult to describe how lucky we were to hear from a man who had moved so close with Bhagawan and whose life in every way echoed Bhagawan's message. We were all more fortunate than we could ever imagine!

Valedictory Address: Mrs Manjula Sood MBE,

Finally, a riveting closing address was delivered by Mrs Manjula Sood, Deputy Mayor of Leicester City Council and Chairperson of the Leicester Interfaith Council. Sister Manjula gave practical and powerful ways with which we can apply Swami's message in our day to day lives. She stressed the importance of working together with all faiths to serve humanity. And yet, more than her words it was her character - how she had adhered so steadfastly to human values even in the midst of public life- that was truly a ray of light unto us all.



The day was brought to a close by an exhilarating session of uplifting bhajans. It seemed as if all hearts sang, prayed and conversed with the Divine within, expressing gratitude and deep love. Indeed the day would not be forgotten! It was the first of its kind in 2012, but certainly not the last. And the higher message the day seemed to convey was to live every moment of our lives in the eternal presence of our loving Bhagawan, and in the constant divine consciousness that the entire cosmos and every living being in it are reflections of the Divine. Just as the *gopikas* of Brindavan!



Subo Gunasegaram
Youth Wing, UK

Region 1 - YAP "Whats Next"



The monthly regional Young Adult Programme (YAP) allows youth from across the region to congregate with like minded individuals to discuss and understand the teachings of our Beloved Lord. This month, the youth were privileged to be joined by Selvakumar uncle, former National Spiritual Coordinator, to discuss the topic, "What's Next...". With Swami having left His mortal coil, Selvakumar uncle emphasised the point that we are all divine and that divinity resides in all. The youth felt comfortable in their surroundings and found it easy to share experiences of instances where it has been hard to constantly find the divine especially those with whom we work or even by-passers on the street. Uncle explained that we should emanate love to all and should not have wavering faith in situations where we feel we need Swami's guidance. He used the analogy that our faith is like a bucket and Swami's love is water flowing from a tap. His love is

infinite but through distraction and the five evils of Kama (lust), Krodha (rage), Lobha (greed), Moha (attachment) and Ahankara (ego) we limit the size of this bucket.

This was one of many teachings uncle shared with us. There was plenty of positive feedback from the session and a few thoughts were;

"Selva Uncle touched our hearts by sharing both his experiences and valuable lessons which we can use in our day to day lives. One lesson I took home is that of surrender: the three steps to surrender is to see Swami as yours, see yourself as Swami's and finally, see both you and Swami as one. Uncle shared both his love and beautiful experiences with us, which left us with goose bumps and I will treasure this study circle forever. Thanks Uncle."

"Selva Uncle had a very interactive session with the youth and shared his experience on how having pure faith in Swami helps you all the time. He emphasised on the importance of the 5 human values and this should be the basis of how we lead our lives."

"As always it was a pleasure to be addressed by uncle, his positive energy gives him an indescribable glow. We all felt inspired by his words and we look forward to have him as a guest again!"

"Uncle Selvakumar spoke about Satyam Shivam Sundaram during his talk and highlighted that we should not just speak truth, but speak the truth softly, beautifully and at the right moment. Expanding on this, what really opened my eyes was when he said, "Saying a truth at the wrong time is worse than lying at the right time." This made me realise that although we should not lie, we should also select when and what we say with grace and patience to uphold the concept of Satyam Shivam Sundaram."

Overall, March's YAP was truly inspirational where youth were able to contemplate Swami's teachings whilst being in good company. YAP is open to all youth and is held at Sai Mandir on the 3rd Friday of every month commencing at 7:30pm. For more information please contact region1saiyouth@hotmail.co.uk

Jai Sai Ram
Gobika Mohandas
Shadow Region 1 Youth Co-ordinator

Region 2 - Young Adults Programme : Transformation through Service



On Sunday 29th April, Harrow-East youth hosted our regional Young Adults Programme (YAP) on the theme of 'Transformation through Service'. The session consisted of a two-part presentation, a short play, interviews of youth and our Youth Pledge. The message was simple; God is in all of us and we should Love all and Serve all. With Swami's grace and blessings, the session was phenomenal and the journey was a joyful one.

In our presentation we shared Swami's teachings on service and tried to address the questions - why should we serve? How should we serve? Then we concluded with existing service opportunities for the youth to take part in. Swami explains to us, that service is what He gave us our body for. When we serve, selflessly, we broaden our hearts and widen our vision. We start to feel what we have. Within the presentation we also emphasised that it's not just doing Seva that is important but it's doing seva with the best possible attitude. We also tried to highlight the importance of our motive and intention that prompts us to serve. What we felt is that we should serve in a way that leads to inner transformation, i.e. to saturate ourselves with love, surrender our ego, and leave the results to Sai.

We also had a play which showed the journey from a disengaged youth, to the beginnings of an inner transformation. Our main character was Lilly (or Lalita!) who was an ordinary, career-minded woman, with a love for Swami and also singing, but no interest in seva. Lilly was 'persuaded' to join in with Narayan Seva, and with each homeless person she served she started to experience a sense of oneness, and then slowly developed an attitude of selflessness and unity.



Another item was the youth interview video where we interviewed youth from across the UK during National Gratitude Bhajans. The Youth really shared some beautiful messages which made sense in a practical way too. We asked the youth the same question -Why do you Serve? With what mindset do you serve?; and What happens if you have no time? The Youth shared some interesting and inspiring experiences from their own lives and seva activities. We are grateful to these youth for sharing these gems.

The process of preparing YAP helped us to engage in satsang and we learnt a lot from each other. Working with my fellow Sai Youth was such a joy. At times we laughed so much that we were practically in tears! The preparation was a nice way to constantly be thinking of Swami's messages. For example we would be reading and replying to our emails to develop the presentation, play etc, and so whether on the bus or on lunch breaks, we were focused on how we are going to make our lives HIS message!

For me personally it inspired me to serve more in the wider community and has also positively changed my attitude towards my own work, where I had been struggling in the few months before our YAP.

I look forward to the next YAP, and hope to see you there.

With Love & Light
Amisha Jogia,
Harrow East Youth Co-ordinator, Region 2

Region 3 - May 2012 Update

Iford Sai Centre Ram Navmi, Hanuman Jayanti and Easter celebration 7th April 2012 and Easter and Remembrance day at Greenford Centre

An exciting evening started with centre devotees arriving early and eager to take part in a triple celebration. The altar was brightly illuminated with gold and blue lights and wonderful shades of lilac, gold and white draped the beautiful huge photo of our Lord Baba. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Lord Rama and Lord Hanuman also adorned the altar. Garlands and flowers seemed to be full of life as everyone settled down for the start of the programme.



The evening started with Omkars, Gayatri mantras, Vedam chanting and multi-faith prayers. Baba says 'Bhajan is a disciplinary process by which 'Kama' and 'Krodha' can be kept away. In this busy age of fear and anxiety the remembrance of God and repetition of his name is the one means of liberation that is accessible to all'. Group devotional singing commenced with Ganesh and Guru bhajan followed by sweet loving voices of the young ones who provided a glorious musical which created enormous vibrations in our lovely temple. The bhajans included Rama bhajans, Hanuman bhajans and hymns which became very vibrant and energised everyone present. Readings were researched and presented by SSE group 3 and youths emphasising the meaning of Ram Navmi, the true devotion of Lord Hanuman and the total essence of Easter and our Lord Jesus Christ. The beautiful prayers concluded with the message of love and compassion, for which our Lord Jesus Christ sacrificed his life. 'Heavenly father, through your holy spirit, remind us how much you love us now, we praise you for your love, thank you for loving us, fill us with love so that we might be your mission-partner today! Amen.



Easter and Remembrance day Ilford centre and Greenford centre on 8th April 2012

On the next day, 8th April Easter Sunday Ilford Sai Centre were kindly invited by brother Deepak Khazanchi from Greenford Sai centre to remember our Lord Baba's physical departure on the 24th April 2011, which caused us all deep anguish and grief and irreparable sense of physical loss. However 8th April reminded us that Baba lives with us and will always be in us, around us in his love form.

The programme consisted of uplifting and beautiful devotional songs by both centres. The musicians and Choir group from Ilford Sai Centre made a musical offering after endless practices which were truly inspirational.

The morning ended with Greenford Sai Centre giving an inspiring talk on Easter and also arranging one of the youth Andrew Ring from Ilford centre to do a reading on Easter.

Aarti and food prayer was followed by a delicious Mahaprasadam which left everyone mesmerised by a wonderful experience. This was a truly moving day which touched hearts and souls of everyone present and left a loving smile on everyone's face. Sai centres working together as one, shows great unity and total success in performing Swami's teachings.



Sheila Ring
Spiritual Convenor, Ilford Sai Centre

Easter - At Manor park Sai Centre

Swami has said "Let the different faiths exist, let them flourish, let the glory of God be sung in all languages and Respect the differences between the faiths and recognise them as a flame of Unity". Therefore bearing in mind his teaching with respect of Unity of faith, Manor Park Sai Centre once again celebrated Easter on the 14th of April with serenity and joy. The Gandhi hall in the Froud Centre was transformed from a simple hall to a beautiful Multi faith altar with Green and Yellow decorations. Accompanying the altar, a Gold cross gleamed out in the centre. Fresh daffodils, Easter egg candles, a handful of Easter eggs and chicks were what made out altar complete and traditional. The soft and uplifting Christian chant music settled the ambience and set the atmosphere for the evening.

The programme consisted of devotional singing, a short play performed by SSE children, several inspiring video clips including one of Swami's discourses on the message behind Easter and to conclude with a very well known and prominent guest speaker, Mr Patrick Handley. Mr Patrick spoke to us that evening about the true meaning of Easter. He recalled many stories about Jesus and pinpointed out the many harsh and vicious events which Jesus endured. Not only did he talk about Jesus but he also related the Jesus' teachings to those of Swami's. Many of us were inspired whilst some were touched by the story of Jesus Christ. To lighten up the mood, Mr Patrick remarked the morning of Easter Sunday when Jesus had resurrected. This day signifies and represents new life and hence chicks are a common symbol for this event. It is a day where we can reflect on the good and bad we have done and then learn from our actions, entering a new way to life. When Christ rose up from the dead, it was a sign of a new beginning with love and peace.

To bring an end to the evening and add warmth to the festival, we were served with delicious hot cross buns. Whilst eating, we also remembered the significance behind those tasty soft buns. They were not there just to satisfy our tummies but to remind us of the cross on which Jesus was crucified. The cross is extremely significant and vital for all Christians. I believe many of us from Manor Park Sai Centre can all agree that we have learnt many things about the celebration of Easter and that it is a day that we cannot forget!

"Jesus renounced everything to become fit for service to Mankind." ~ Baba

Abbiramy Rajan
Manor Park Sai Centre

Ladies Seva Activity: Monthly Craft Workshops - Region 3

Our ladies continue to meet monthly at the Lady of Lourdes Church in Wanstead, Essex, joining forces with the local church community and various charitable groups to sew and knit garments for both children and the elderly from less privileged backgrounds both here in the UK, as well as overseas.

We have recently witnessed a great deal of enthusiasm as "new recruits" join the group each month, armed with their sewing machines (often retrieved from attic or garage), ready to learn new skills - or at least brush up on old dress-making techniques, long forgotten. The dedication of the participants and their eagerness to please Swami with their "seva" has been very touching, not to mention the tireless efforts of our workshop facilitator who has been very exacting in Swami's high standards in terms of the finished product!

On the knitting front, stalwarts from the local church community appeared at last week's session - much to the delight of our ladies - and made their contribution by completing some woollen garments for the elderly. In fact, they so enjoyed themselves that they have promised to put in a regular appearance, having scribbled down the dates of future workshop meetings in their diaries.

Also the request for second hand, clean clothes must have filtered through successfully as several large bags of clothes turned up at the workshop and were taken away by one of our Sai sisters who had recently received a request for warm woollens from a Sai centre overseas.

Finally, some of our ladies were shown how to make beautiful, hand-made cards for Swami as a special offering due to it being Remembrance weekend.

But the highlight for everyone came at the end of the session, when all gathered before the small altar of our Beloved Swami and sang His Aarti song, with each participant offering Aarti to Him - turn by turn. It was a meaningful end to a productive session as everyone focussed on HE who had brought them together, surpassing all differences of race, creed, religion or colour.

With Swami's Grace, we sincerely hope that others will join this service activity. If anyone is interested in knowing more, please do get in touch.

Om Sri Sai Ram
Sutopa Sen
R3 Ladies Co-ordinator

Region 4 - SSE Study Day

On Sunday 11th March the SSE Group 3 and Group 4 (formerly LOTUSS) of Region 4 came together in Leicester with the most captivating, humbling and hilarious guest speaker - Dr. Mahesh Narayan. With a depth of spiritual knowledge and personal experiences he enlightened everyone around the topics of good company, karma and faith. The interactive sessions started off with a discussion on the companionship of Krishna and Arjuna from the Gita. Dr. Mahesh gave some practical examples which everyone could relate to in their daily lives. The importance of good company was stressed upon as also the adverse effects of bad company.

We briefly discussed karma - meaning the act of doing action, nishkama karma - doing desireless action and akarma - action that is done without any intention to gain the consequences by dedicating all action to GOD.

With excitement we moved on to talk about faith interactively. It was evident that faith meant shradha and not bhakti (devotion) as some thought. Even though we are all born with faith some people needed an experience to awaken the faith which may be dormant. However, Swami states ,

"...Some declare, "Experience first, faith next." This is similar to the declaration, "Swim first, water next." Have faith enough to practise the advice; learn to revere the directives. Then you attain the experience - SSS vol15-26.

Adi Sankara, in his Kathopanishad commentary defines Shradha as Astiky buddhi.

Dr. Mahesh illustrated this with an example where by two people were fishing for days and one gave up after awhile thinking there was no fish in the lake, but the other continued in his firm belief that he would catch fish. True to his faith he eventually did catch fish.

The session was concluded with a question and answer session with a role play by each of the SSE Groups . It was a joy to see them shine in confidence and produce dynamic role plays in a matter of minutes on topics that were discussed.

Some feedback from the young adults :

"We really enjoyed the session as he related spirituality to our daily lives" - Trisha

"The delivery and stories were really good as we could relate to them in our lives "

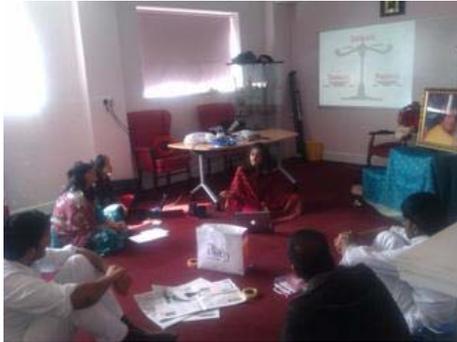
- Akshay

Many of the other teens had similar views.

Most of us know that SSE education plants the seeds of human values into our children. As the children turn to their teens their minds start to become inquisitive and explorative, academic education appears to take priority. At this age it is even more important that they are guided and mentored to help awaken the discriminative power that's dormant within.

Arun Gohil
Region 4

Region 4 - Youth Satsang : Healthy "Living the Sai Way"



On 14th April 2012 the youth of Region 4 congregated in satsang to discuss the divine teachings of our Beloved Lord and draw upon specifically on the spiritual aspects of how food affects our thoughts.

The satsang was held in Leicester with youth attending from Birmingham and Coventry. The three hour session commenced with Vedam & Bhajans, followed by a thought provoking video of Swami's discourse on this all important topic. An Ice Breaker led into a brief talk to introduce our topic. The scene was set and the youth were enthused to discuss and enrich their minds to gain further understanding of what "Healthy Living the Sai Way" really meant.

Some of the thought provoking questions we discussed included:

"Our body is afflicted with diseases by eating improper food. It is necessary to protect the body. Why has God given you this body?"

"It has been given to you to realise yourself. But you forget this real purpose and concentrate your mind merely on the body. After all, what is there in the body? Body is impermanent and short-lived like a water bubble. If you understand this, your life will be blessed."

What effects does a non-vegetarian diet have on our mind and body and what does Swami and other spiritual scriptures say on this matter?

By consuming animal food, animal tendencies are aroused. Men today are behaving in a manner worse than that of wild animals in the forest. They have become cruel, pitiless, and hard-hearted. There is no sympathy or understanding even between man and man. The main reason for this condition lies in the kind of food that is consumed.

"As is your food, so are your thoughts. Food conditions the nature of the mind. Mind guides the thinking. Thinking results in action. Actions lead to commensurate or matching results and effects. This chain of action between the food we eat and the results of our actions highlights the fact that meat eating leads to beastly actions and the concomitant evil effects." Sathya Sai, *The Avatar of Love*, p. 132

All the key messages and answers to the questions were extracted directly from Swami's discourses and Sai literature.

The youth who attended found this an invaluable session and welcomed regularly congregations. The Youth of Region 4 will continue to congregate in these forums throughout the year. The next youth satsang will be held in June and will continue the theme of "Healthy Living the Sai Way " (Please speak to your youth coordinators to get involved).

Region 5 - Mahasamadhi Celebrations

The Regional Mahasamadhi celebrations were organised in Oldham, on Sunday 29th April, at the Indian Association Hall. Despite poor weather, a large number of devotees attended to make the event a truly memorable one.

The programme commenced at 2pm with the lighting of the lamp whilst the Shivopasana mantra was chanted vibrantly. Multi-faith bhajans followed, signifying the divine message of unity of faiths.

Bharat Sisodia, the former Region 5 Chairperson, welcomed the gathering. He highlighted the subtle individual transformation brought about by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba during His mission.

Youngsters from the Nritya Jyothi Dance group performed a popular dance titled "Swagatham Krishna." It was a vivid display that described Sri Krishna's beauty and his divine playful acts. Sri Krishna even as a little boy killed demons and proved his divine power and might. He thus protected humanity out of His immense love.

Please see the link below for the song on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwf-PSp2fJ8>

Mrs Trupti Patel, the president of the Hindu Council North, paid tribute to Swami. She said that Swami is the Kaliyuga Avathar who rejuvenated the Sanathana Dharma. Swami's message is universal and He always highlighted the time immemorial principle of Vasudaika Kutumbham - the entire creation is a single united family.



The SSE children gave an outstanding performance. They sang three melodious and very meaningful songs: In The Garden Of My Heart, Sai Maatha Biddalam, and I Keep Feeling Your Love. The whole gathering thoroughly enjoyed the musical offering and sang in one voice to give chorus for the songs. Sai Maatha Biddalam is a popular song written by the Grama Seva group of Hyderabad, India. Swami first heard this in the early 1990s and said that it should be sung in every corner of the world as it carries the message of Swami's entire mission.

Sanjay Vaja gave a presentation based on Swami's life and the various service projects that He initiated. Sanjay swiftly but smoothly managed to go through the life story of Bhagawan, from His birth until His Mahasamadhi last year. It was indeed an eye opener when it was mentioned that Swami gave over 1,000 discourses during His Avatarhood. At every stage, Swami catered to the needs of humanity. He started a small general hospital as early as 1956. He then expanded his service projects, which now include world class educational and medical institutes. The water project provides the basic necessity of life for over 750 villages. Sanjay concluded by showing a very humorous and playful side of the divine Lord in the form of a conversation between Swami and an inquisitive child.

Rakesh Joshi, a renowned musician from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Manchester, gave a wonderful musical tribute to Bhagawan. He started off with Ganesh Vandana, followed by two very popular bhajans. In particular, the bhajan 'Sai Baba Bolo' left the audience enthralled. Just one week earlier, he performed the same in front of the Shirdi Samadhi in Shirdi. The last bhajan - 'Jyoth Se Jyoth Jagathe Chalo' - summarised the message of the Lord. The song describes how to spread the light of love around us; how the river of love should flow forever, sweeping everybody with it and wash away their miseries. This great bhajan felt particularly apt for the occasion.

Please see the link below for the song on Youtube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-c05xPlw5w&feature=related>

We were very fortunate to have Kiran Patel, the National Chairperson, as the guest speaker for this grand occasion. In spite of his extremely busy schedule, with the National Mahasamadhi Celebrations only the day before, Kiranbhai managed to attend and delivered a soul-stirring talk. He described how he came to the divine mother and spent around 30 years in His presence. Swami entered Kiranbhai's life and has taken care of him at crucial times. When unrest broke out in Uganda, Swami arrived in the form of a policeman to help his parents to safety. Kiranbhai also shared some rare and intimate interactions with Bhagawan whilst he was at Brindavan, and leaving the audience in spiritual bliss. Every interaction carried a divine message and exemplified Swami's omnipresence and omnipotence. He reiterated that our life is His message and His mission is now our mission. We now have to shoulder the responsibility of carrying Swami's divine mission forward.



Lastly, we concluded with bhajans and delicious prasadam was served. The event was hosted by the devotees of Greater Manchester Sai Centre, all of whom worked incessantly to make this day a success. Nishal Govindji, Region 5 Youth

coordinator, was the compere of the event and she managed the whole session efficiently.

We are very thankful to the Indian Association for providing the venue which allowed us all to enjoy this wonderful event. Everyone left spiritually charged and it was indeed a very enlightening and uplifting session.

Region 5 - YAP: Bhajans, Why do we need them?

In Region 5's second YAP we aimed to delve deeper behind the reasons why we do bhajans and how we should be doing bhajans in order to maximise the personal and group benefits of doing this type of Sadhana. Alongside this, we looked at what Swami has said about bhajans in His discourses and the discipline with which He expects us all to conduct ourselves in bhajans.

Why should we sing bhajans?

On discussion, we all found that bhajans is one of the many ways in which we can all get together and celebrate the glories of the Lord together and that when this is done as a group the vibrations created are far greater than is possible individually. Swami has said that group bhajans purify the environment and thus is an excellent way of removing the negative energies that pollute our world today.

How should we sing bhajans and who should sing bhajans?

We also had extensive discussions on how bhajans should be done correctly and how much importance should be placed on how we sing bhajans. Is it okay to sing however we are able and however we prefer, provided we have pure devotion? Luckily, amongst our youth we have an alumna from Swami's University in Anantapur, who has been fortunate enough to sing in the physical presence of our Lord many times, so we were able to get the answers first hand from her.

The conclusion we came to was that **nothing is necessary other than pure devotion** when it comes to bhajans, since He is *Bhava Swaropa* (Embodiment of Devotion). Devotion when singing bhajans is defined as a taste for the Divine name, connection with the Lord and gratitude to the Almighty.

However, Swami also said that although devotion is a must, **lead singers should sing responsibly** indicating the need to practise and deliver the bhajan correctly, in a way that will not disturb the peace of the other participants.

Guidance given by Hari Subramaniam

The session was concluded by watching a video about the role of bhajan singing as part of our Sadhana, by Hari Subramaniam, one of Swami's bhajan singers. The video gave us many more answers about how bhajans should be conducted and the importance they have in our lives, as given by Swami to His own bhajan singers.

This YAP was a fantastic opportunity to get the youth of the region together to discuss these salient points that come up regularly. This discussion also came at an ideal time as preparations are made for the programmes in the year ahead. With Swami's Grace we will be able to implement His guidelines into our centres across the region to make bhajan singing as He would want it to be.

Jai Sai Ram
Harshul Measuria
Greater Manchester Sai Centre

Region 6 - Youth Wing: i2I Self-Knowledge Workshop - III: "To Be"

"The mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation of man. Hence the mind is highly sacred and powerful. Due to lack of understanding of the power of the mind, people are not able to grasp the glory and majesty of God. Master the mind and be a Mastermind."

~ Sri Sathya Sai Baba

We must have a thorough understanding of the nature of the mind, before we try to control our mind and the quietening of our senses. To help with our clarity or understanding of the Spiritual Knowledge of the Self we have been guided to observe our own inner landscape. This is one of the aims of the i2I workshops. Our third workshop was mainly attended by youth members of Region 6.

Over the last couple of workshops we have come to understand that in Self -knowledge, there is nothing to know; because you can never know what you are, you can only 'BE' what you are. It is an intuition, an up-coming and so what we are is not an object of knowledge. The Self is completely, absolutely, self-knowing without any intermediary. Why? Because the spiritual Self is the Knower; the mind is not the Knower and is not identified with the spiritual Self.

One of the exercises we did to help us understand this concept was conducted in two parts:

In the first part we had to write down what we saw: and basically we all gave a literal description - "flowers in a cup...petals are white and red on top...water moving about. However, I went the extra mile and wrote "2 roses in a cup with H2O"!!!

This confirmed that in our day-to-day involvement with objects we do not really perceive things as they are, but see only the projections of the ego. Unless our perceptions are allowed to blossom in ego-less silence, we cannot really know reality. In seeing the object it should come to us in its completeness, untarnished by the projections of our mind.

In the second part of the exercise, we were asked to remain silent for a few minutes with our eyes closed.

On opening our eyes we were asked to see how we function, the way we think and act, and not get stuck in the process of observing the objects.

We were also asked to notice where the seeing automatically brings us to: which was our peaceful, natural vacant state.

If you like, it was important how the result of this seeing acted upon us. For in this state there was spontaneity, free from tension, free from reaction.

This exercise demonstrated that once an object appears in Silence the object does not belong to the mind; it belongs to Totality, Stillness, Awareness, Eternity, name it what you wish, but emphasizing that we can only Be As We Are.

We had some varied and interesting responses from this exercise:

"Seeing it for what it is - just seeing" "I know what it is, but that's not it." "No reference, just being it." Peacefulness." "Stillness"

"Beauty that was initially perceived in the roses was no different to the cup or the water or anything surrounding it. It was present. It was."

"Beauty," "Love," "Absolute Stillness and Peace."

What is "To Be?"

I have come to understand that 'to be' is to be free from the 'I-concept' or ego, to become free from conditioning - to look without memory, without the accomplice to the conditioning. When we are free from memory there is more choice and in this way of being all our intelligence and all our creativity are at our disposal.

Accepting is also a state of openness; where we let go fully and are completely open to whatever happens to us. It really means that we do not allow our mind to interfere with our perception, thus allowing us to live every day as a new day. The best way to do this is from stillness, from the light of Totality, which is not constrained to the senses and where the mind is used as a vehicle for carrying out functions.

Therefore, can I face life with an open mind, free from intention, free from any preconceived ideas? Can I look at life from complete innocence? These are a set of challenging questions, which I will continue to contemplate upon in my daily life. And when I find myself moving away from my sense of being, I can always inquire what is most joyful for me and face my surroundings and others with this joyful feeling.

"Contact your own reality in the silence that you create by quietening the senses and controlling the mind. There is a Voice that you can hear in that silence. The true witness of your having listened to that Voice is your behaviour." SSS vol.5 p.153

I look forward to the next set of workshops and to further my understanding of the concept of "TO BE", which is so beneficial to our self-transformation.

Nuleen Panday & Beverley Kissoon, Region 6

Region 8 - Scotland Satsang With Professor Sanjay Sahni

Scotland was blessed on 29th April 2012 with a visit by the Emeritus Professor Sri Sanjay Sahni, an ardent devotee of our beloved Bhagawan, one who was very fortunate to have spent many years in close proximity to Bhagawan and an excellent speaker.

The satsang was held at Edinburgh Sai Centre, 2 Granton Road. The programme commenced at 2.30pm with a short bhajan.



Dr. Sahni narrated many incidents of how Bhagawan showered His Grace on him, including how he fulfilled every small desire such as giving apple prashadam and making him win the lucky draw for a cricket match. Swami showed him that He will be there wherever His work is done and shower His Grace. In one such incident, at one eye camp, Swami poured amrit from a picture in the middle of the night to the chosen few students who were doing voluntary work looking after patients who had undergone cataract surgery.

Brother Sahni emphasised that we should seriously believe and follow the five-letter mantra GOD IS. Not GOD WAS or WILL BE but GOD IS HERE AND NOW. He mentioned that it is very rare and fortunate to be born at the time of the advent of the Avatar and one must make use of every opportunity to practise Swami's teachings and yearn to merge with Him.



He pointed out to us that the best way to please Bhagawan is to participate in His mission, foster and practise dharma in our lives and lead our lives with love. He asked us to lead a contented life and be always happy.

He brought back many cherished memories of Bhagawan to many devotees and energised us with his talk.

Sai Smaran - National Gratitude Bhajans 2012

On Saturday 21st April, devotees from across the UK united together in Watford, London for Sai Smaran; a loving offering of bhajans expressing our gratitude at the divine feet of our Beloved Lord Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

As the sacred vibrations of Vedic chanting sanctified the hall, the proceedings commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Kiran Patel, UK Chairperson.



Kiran Uncle spoke on the importance of offering our gratitude to Bhagawan, our God and Guide, even if it was just a drop in the huge ocean of Love that Bhagawan has showered on us. He congratulated the youth for taking the initiative and playing a lead role in organising such a significant event and encouraged the youth to continue with such energy and enthusiasm both now and in the future, in line with the expectations of Bhagawan and in accordance with Sai Ideals. He reflected on how devotees coming together on this day in humble and sincere prayer in itself is a miracle, and how fortunate we all are for being a part of the divine legacy of our Bhagawan. He shared his feelings on the importance of bhajans, their ability to transport us in to the divine presence, their ability to manifest the divine form instantly, and the joy and ecstasy with which they transform our hearts. Bhajans, he mused, were probably the most significant aspect of the divine legacy of our Lord. Kiran Uncle urged all to have Swami in focus whilst chanting His Divine Name, and sing with the feeling of doing so with His Will.



The Bhajans commenced with a musical offering. The melodious sound of the flute, keyboard and tabla stilled our minds aiding our preparation to focus on Swami and receive him in our hearts. A video of Swami's beautiful darshan, life and legacy was being played in the background. This was then followed by an inspirational outpouring of love and gratitude to our Beloved Bhagawan through six hours of continuous Bhajans.

The sincerity and devotion which exuded through the Bhajans filled the room with divine vibrations. Devotees sang in unison, offering their gratitude to our Lord. This love and unity also was evident as the youth and service wings worked together in serving devotees refreshments throughout the day. As the Bhajans came to a close, there was a stillness and profound silence. All that could be felt was Swami's divine presence through the divine vibrations created throughout the six hours of loving and devoted singing.



With all our hearts, we offer our deepest gratitude to Bhagawan for His Love and Blessings and pray to Him to enable us serve as worthy instruments in His Divine Mission.

Shyam Jamnadas
National Youth Co-ordinator

Youth Wing - SSLTP Module 2: Self Leadership

The second module of Sathya Sai Leadership Training Programme (SSLTP) took place at the International Conference Centre in Sunbury, Middlesex. The weekend commenced from the evening of 13th April to Sunday 15th April and was focused on Self Leadership.

The weekend commenced developing and improving our oral presentations skills, with short personal presentations that were evaluated by our SSLTP "buddy" (previous graduates of the programme), for a subsequent feedback.

Saturday morning we started off with our daily spiritual routine: Suprabatham, meditation and physical exercises and was followed by group presentations. Group presentations consisted on the analysis of several companies/organisations such as: Tesco, Starbucks, NHS and the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, in terms of their vision, mission and values. We had to study these cases using our critical view and relate it to what we had learnt from the authors seen in the previous module.

We also had the privilege of being in the company of Mr. Alan Morgan who is an advisor and investor for the financial services sector. His presentation helped us understand more about the characteristics and skills of a good and effective leader and his impact on the development of an organisation taking into account its culture, and the quality of relationships between its members.



On Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning our discussion was based on several historical leaders and learnt what characteristics correspond to a great leader and which ones correspond to a good leader. We also discussed their leadership styles in terms of communicating and persuading people.

During the rest of the day we discussed what involves the term 'To Be' in the process of leadership. It was largely focused on group interactive sessions, which led us to reflect deeply about our character, personality, values, paradigms, aspirations and how these aspects must be continuously observed by ourselves in order to be constantly aware about who we really are, who we think we are and what others think about us.

At the end of the weekend every individual received feedback on observations arising from the presentations delivered at the start.

In my opinion this module was the beginning of a long journey of self-reflection and self-transformation towards self-realisation. Since those 3 days of training, the meaning and importance of leadership started making sense in my life. Now I believe leadership involves the development of our character through flourishing our inner and 'virgin' values, where character is the beginning and the end of leadership.

What I took away from this weekend is that there cannot be leadership without "being".

I pray to our beloved Swami to help us to be humble listeners and guide us in this journey of self-awareness.

With Love,

Greys Penaloza
(SSLTP Candidate on 2012 programme)

For further information on SSLTP please contact SSLTP Co-ordinator (Deviesh Tankaria), or the National Youth Coordinator (Shyam Jamnadas)

Data Protection Act 1998

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